

# GLOBAL TEA HUT

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

May 2019

超越平凡的恩典  
工夫寶驗

GONGFU  
EXPERIMENTS



## MOUNTAIN PASS

For a long time, we have been planning a few issues on gongfu tea, starting with this collection of experiments. We cannot wait to explore one of the most amazing ways to prepare tea and to create and conduct experiments together. For that, we will, of course, need a wonderful oolong to see us over the pass and down into the sunny valley.

*Love is  
changing the world  
bowl by bowl*

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2018 Light Meets Life

Traditionally-processed

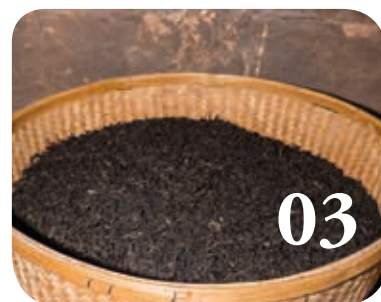
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recycled & recyclable



Soy ink

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# From the editor

**I**n May, the weather is very warm in Taiwan. We start tasting the first Taiwanese spring teas and get some samples from the mainland to begin understanding which Light Meets Life fundraiser cakes we'd like to press. This is also a peaceful time at the Center, as we have all arrived back from the Annual Global Tea Hut Trip (which we will share with you soon) and are exhausted. We meditate, drink a bit more tea, study and catch up on work. This peaceful, quiet time without courses is perfect for recharging before we start serving once more, and also a wonderful time to start tasting tea to share with you.

We will be posting the schedule for the second half of the year soon. We hope that more of you get the chance to come for a ten-day course and deepen your tea practice. The courses here continue to evolve. We hope to include flower arranging, incense ceremony and Qigong in the coming months or years, enriching the experience to include all areas of a life of tea and make it worth re-taking a course. Of course, if you have taken a course in the past, you may also want to come serve a course, which is an amazing opportunity to not only give back to the Hut, but also to learn a lot about tea in this tradition. After all, as we always say, our aim in this lineage is not to learn to make tea, but to *serve* it!

This year, we hope to put together some "starter kits" for those beginning their tea journey, consisting of bowls + Elevation tea, bowls + sidehandle + tea and so on. We hope this will help spread the practice and further our mission to let Love change the world bowl by bowl. Also, we hope that as more and more of our friends take an interest in tea ceremony, realizing the peace it brings to their lives, this family will grow and we can realize our goal of building a permanent Center in the mountains of Taiwan, architected from the ground up to be the world's best tea school and Center. Let us know what you think of such sets, and if you think they would help turn someone you know on to tea. If everyone in this community got just one friend to join Global Tea Hut, we would be building your Center right now!

For a long time, we have wanted to approach the topic of gongfu tea in an issue of Global Tea Hut. It is a difficult topic to cover because it is, first of all, so wonderfully vast. Of course, this will have to be the first of many issues to come that cover the topic. The second obstacle to the creation of this issue lies in the fact that there are actually many lineages of gongfu tea in the world (we may do an issue covering more of them in the future), and we aren't sure how to approach the areas where some of them head off in different directions or even contradict one another (which is rarer—they are mostly in agreement). As we have often said, we do not want this magazine to be a mouthpiece for our lineage. The Center can be a place to hold and transmit this lineage. We hope that this magazine can be of service to all tea lovers of the world, sharing information, wisdom and art with Chajin from various ways, practices and lineages, as well as hobbyists and even those who

utilize tea as a healthy beverage. To that end, we try to translate articles written by tea experts from various points of view, and to cover tea-growing regions and tea culture around the world, limited more by our volunteer staff and by budget than by any philosophical boundaries.

This month we will also be launching our fundraiser for Light Meets Life. The time has finally come, and we hope that all of you continue to support us at this critical time.

If there is to be a philosophical guideline to this magazine, let it be environmental, as opposed to an expression of our lineage. We hope that articles expressing the teachings of our tradition are regarded as one voice amongst many that you can read in these pages. The only criteria we have for covering tea topics is that those involved put the Earth first, focusing on those who are producing tea in a sustainable way that is healthy for farmers, for the environment and for us, the consumers. The second, minor guideline for content in this magazine is that we will not endorse any vendor, factory or product other than our own fundraiser to build your free, non-profit Center, Light Meets Life.

This doesn't mean that we won't include articles written about or from the perspective of our tradition, but that we are open to other articles written by and for other viewpoints and lineages. As our budget, staff and scope increase, so will the variety of articles we publish. (Long-term members can testify to the fact that this has already happened.)

In order to overcome this issue, we have decided that our first gongfu issue should focus on experiments—and experiments that are offered to you without conclusions, meaning that you can come to your own experiential wisdom and use this to decide your brewing method. We hope that all of you cultivate a love for experimentation and a desire to conduct these and many more experiments. Happy gongfu experimentation!



## —Further Reading—

This month, we recommend starting with the September 2016 Extended Edition on Taiwanese oolong, which will provide a great context for our Tea of the Month. You may also want to read the June 2016 issue about gongfu versus bowl tea, which will help us understand their relationship.

# TEA OF THE MONTH



Over the course of this month, we will be drinking a traditionally-processed oolong. How could it be otherwise when we are discussing gongfu tea and conducting gongfu experiments? The term “gongfu tea (工夫茶)” means “tea made with mastery through self-discipline,” or more simply, “tea with mastery.” Nowadays, we usually think of gongfu tea as a brewing method, but it originally referred to oolong tea—specifically Wuyi Cliff Tea (武夷岩茶), which was the first oolong tea. Oolong tea requires great skill to produce and is the most complicated of all types of tea. The quality of oolong is greatly influenced by the hand of the maker, and the difference between a skilled master and his students is very evident in the liquor. For that reason, when oolong tea was developing, it was called “gongfu tea.” Only later did a brewing method develop to prepare this skillfully-made tea. Just as you would want to cook a very specially-grown organic heirloom tomato with skill, making a special dish as opposed to something quotidian, so also did early Chajin wish to prepare this precious tea with skill that brought it to its full potential, unlocking all the subtle fragrances in a fine cup of oolong. In a very real way, gongfu tea preparation and oolong grew up together, and like a story of old, eventually fell in love and were married.

Oolong is a semi-oxidized tea. Traditionally, most oolong was oxidized between 40-70%. A dark, rich and properly roasted oolong can be stored in paper and gets better with age; it has no expiry date. In the 1970s, an economic boom in Taiwan (due to all the “Made in Taiwan” products sold worldwide) brought a dramatic rise in tea culture throughout the island. Very soon, traditional, small and artisanal farms were replaced by large plantations that could keep up with the growing demand. Farmers adapted their processing to make it easier to produce and also brew. They created a much more lightly-oxidized oolong based on the production of green tea, which is easier to make in large quantities and also easier to brew. But it is traditionally-processed oolong that best facilitates gongfu brewing.

Our Tea of the Month is a traditionally-processed oolong from Zhu Shan Village (竹山鎮) in Nantou County. It is MOA-certified organic, with a beautiful roast and the right

amount of oxidation. This is an amazing tea for drinking or aging. Its quality put it out of reach for us, but thanks to the generosity of Master Tsai Yizhe (蔡奕哲), who protects this farm along with others, we are able to share it with you.

MOA stands for “Mokichi Okada Cultural Services Association International.” It was created by Mokichi Okada (1882–1955), who started three great projects in his lifetime: a “Mokichi Style Detoxification Treatment” for land, “Natural Agriculture, Drinks and Food,” and “Fine Arts and Culture.” These three projects created affiliated groups of people with common goals to help each other. His overall aim was “to allow humanity to expand and flourish, helping create healthier people, families, regions, countries and culture.” His Japanese natural agriculture culture movement created the Da Ren (大仁) farm in 1982, and then in 1991 developed standards for healthy, organic agriculture. They began to set up branches and create a social system for theoretical and practical cooperation amongst farmers in Japan.

In April of 1990, a group of people who cared about Nature and were concerned about environmental pollution wanted to change the situation in Taiwan. They joined the Japanese MOA International Association and created a sister organization to educate farmers and legally certify organic food and drink island wide. This Taiwanese foundation was formed to explore and seek health and happiness for humankind and to guarantee environmentally-sustainable MOA natural agriculture, expecting this ideology and the sustainable agriculture techniques behind it to spread all over the world. MOA certification is rather rigorous, and they do a great job of ensuring sustainable, organic agriculture without much of the bureaucracy or financial interests that trouble a lot of organic certification worldwide. Watching out for the MOA certification on teas is a good way to enter the world of organic Taiwanese teas.

Mountain Pass is thick, rich and deep with an upward-moving Qi that can raise up a whole day. It is fruity, nutty and floral, with a bouquet that lasts forever in the cup. It is also very, very patient when prepared properly, so be sure to set aside a few hours to properly enjoy this amazing tea! This will be a special month!





Mountain Pass (山隘口)



Zhu Shan Village, Taiwan



2018 Traditional Oolong



Taiwanese



~600 Meters



山隘口

超越平凡的恩典




茶道

# A DEEPER SESSION

## Further Exploration into Our Tea of the Month



 ver the course of this month, we will be drinking a traditionally-processed Taiwanese oolong and discussing oolong roasting. Roasting is a huge aspect of oolong tea in terms of processing and quality. It is a topic we often summarize briefly when introducing oolong tea, since it is a world unto itself. This deeper session into our Tea of the Month was greatly helped by the writing of masters Tsai Yizhe (蔡奕哲) and Chen Yuting (陳郁婷), who have both contributed large portions of this article and also donated our Tea of the Month. Let's all raise cups to them!

Before we get into the roasting of oolong, it may be worthwhile to review some basics. Oolong is the richest and most refined of tea chests, filled with more varieties of tea than you could explore 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!

The master farmers are changing the way they make tea each and every season. Everything from when they pick to how long they fry 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, and 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 is a vast territory of tea.

Oolong tea requires the most refined and complicated of all tea production and the greatest skill, the presence/absence of which can refine or ruin a tea. Each kind of tea finds its quality in some ratio between three things:

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

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 all three are equally important. It's not enough to have great teas in a nice environment, for the processing will have as much to say as Nature. This is true of all teas, as a manifestation of Heaven, Earth and Human energies, but none as profoundly so as oolong tea—the dragon soars higher than all the other teas in the world!



The basic steps that make up all oolong production are: harvesting, withering, de-enzyming, rolling and roasting. But these steps are a part of almost 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. But production in larger quantities, as well as a movement towards more modern production, 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 thumb to feel the humidity during indoor withering, and then ask his sons to bring a can full of charcoal to place in the back right corner of the room since he felt the humidity was too high there. Sensitivity and skill are a must in fine tea production.

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—creating a perfect red ring around the leaves' edges, which requires great skill.

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 oolong, 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 roasting. 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* (毛茶) is done, they will then roast the tea slowly and with care.

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

As we discussed in previous issues, the majority of Taiwanese oolong tea is produced from the Qing Shin (青心) varietal, including our Tea of the Month, which was brought to Taiwan from Wuyi. They are very sensitive trees, which get sick easily. As Taiwan started to expand infrastructure, culture and prosperity in the 1970s, 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 who 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. But that doesn't mean we don't enjoy a lightly-roasted oolong now and again. They can be spectacular! But a nice roasted oolong can change your day. Since this issue is all about experimentation in gongfu tea, why not try brewing a lightly-oxidized oolong and our Tea of the Month side by side in the same session and see what you think?



## Introduction to the Roast

With help from Master Chen Yuting (陳郁婷)

In the past, tea mountains were not easily accessible to the outside world. So, tea makers used locally available wood charcoal to roast the tea leaves, to reduce the moisture content and preserve the quality of the leaf. These days, transportation is a much more developed, technology has progressed and the focus of the market has also shifted toward high-altitude, lightly-oxidized teas. The equipment used for roasting tea has been replaced by electric equivalents, such as electric roasting machines and roasting frames. Naturally, these are very convenient and save on labor; the tea makers simply need to set the time and temperature and the machine does the rest. By comparison, the traditional method of roasting oolong tea over a wood charcoal fire is already very rare. Yet this charcoal roasting method is not to be forgotten; many tea enthusiasts consider the roasting technique an essential point to consider when choosing teas.

Charcoal-roasted tea is so called because it is made by starting with traditional semi-oxidized tea, then using wood charcoal to roast it a second time. Careful heat regulation is essential to the success of this process. Wood from dragon eye (*long yan*, 龍眼) or acacia trees makes the best charcoal, as it gives the dried tea a special sweet fragrance that is very popular on the market. The charcoal-roasting process involves steps such as lighting the fire, burning the fuel, turning over the ashes and regulating the temperature. Not only is it very time-consuming and labor-intensive, but it also requires a lot of experience and expertise—it's the most difficult to control of all tea-roasting methods. And if the roasting process isn't carried out successfully, it will reduce the quality of the finished tea, giving it a burnt, smoky flavor.

If we want to deepen our knowledge of charcoal-roasted tea, we need to know about the management of the tea gardens, the tea-making process and regulating the fire for the roast. Mr. Zhan Xunhua (詹勳華), a respected senior member of Taiwan's tea circles, believes that "for the *maocha*, on top of selecting the raw leaf, the

most important thing is for the water content to be removed quickly during the withering step. The roasters need to really understand this process of removing the water."

However, in recent years, due to a number of factors, we've been seeing a lot of teas that are insufficiently oxidized and still have a very high moisture content, as well as impure aromas, grassy or pungent odors. These elements that should have been removed during processing remain within the tea. To solve this problem of unwanted odors, the tea makers dry the tea in a roasting machine. Although at first this may appear to have successfully removed the odors, the problem still remains concealed within the leaf, and the tea is liable to develop strange odors again after some time.

When it comes to the consumer market, tea sellers will often repeatedly machine-roast the tea at high temperatures, sometimes even until it chars. This produces a dark-colored liquor that they call "old tea." Other tea sellers who don't understand the process of change that charcoal-roasted tea undergoes will simply justify themselves by claiming that "good tea doesn't need to be charcoal-roasted; only bad tea is charcoal-roasted."

A master charcoal-roasted tea maker looks at the tea leaf just like a master chef looks at ingredients: taking the weather and environmental conditions into account, the tea master must carefully examine the tea leaf for minute changes in aroma throughout the charcoal-roasting process. The master roaster must be able to detect any deficiencies during the roasting process and adjust the fire or timing accordingly, to make sure any unintended odors dissipate and that the final dried leaf is left with the pure aroma of the tea itself. On top of this, these adjustments can produce a multitude of different aromas to suit consumer tastes, such as a sweet aroma or the fragrance of honey, ripe fruit, cane sugar or rice. The charcoal-roasting process has a unique ability to bring out the fragrance, mellowness, richness and character of the tea. A fine roast makes all the difference in the world.

One of Taiwan's old charcoal-roasted tea masters once told me that from his many years of experience, he'd noticed that the heat from a wood charcoal fire had a very noticeable ability to penetrate the tea leaf quickly. Though you couldn't recognize it immediately with the naked eye or a thermometer, during his own roasting experiments he noticed that when you place the tea leaf over the fire for roasting, it will immediately give off an unpleasant, almost urine-like ammonia smell, which would then be eliminated in a very short time! An electric roasting machine, on the other hand, takes more than six hours to eliminate just some of the unwanted odors. After the tea leaf has been through several rounds of rolling and charcoal roasting, the leaves gradually become more tightly curled, and the moisture in the leaf slowly dissipates. Using a well-controlled charcoal roast to dry the leaf improves the fragrance and flavor of the tea, as well as eliminating unpleasant odors and decreasing astringency.

The ultimate goal of charcoal roasting is to completely eliminate any unintended odors, such as pungent vegetal aromas, a "green" flavor or odors resulting from too much moisture. Charcoal roasting is also the best way to stabilize the quality of the tea leaf, and it produces a leaf that can be stored for longer than other teas. This is why the old masters all use wood charcoal fires to roast the tea to thoroughly stabilize its quality, and then sell it once it has cooled down (traditionally the next year). Charcoal-roasted oolong has a mellow, full, sweet flavor and a beautiful bright amber-red liquor—when held up to the light, it's even more captivating than red wine. The liquor has an enchanting fragrance that emerges at first sip and a flavor that lingers in the mouth. It has a sweet aftertaste and salivation, which is thirst-quenching. Thanks to all these qualities, there is no shortage of tea enthusiasts who are willing to wait for its long journey to maturity to enjoy the deeply captivating, lingering flavor of such wonderful traditional tea. Our Tea of the Month is one such traditionally-processed tea worth waiting for!





## Deeper into the Roast

With help from Master Tsai Yizhe (蔡奕哲)

In his classic *Tea Sutra* (茶經), Lu Yu (陸羽) says that “there are nine skills one must master in a life of tea: processing the leaves, discrimination of quality, understanding the utensils and their use, preparing the proper fire, understanding and selecting suitable water, proper roasting of the tea, grinding the tea into powder, brewing the perfect elixir and drinking the tea... firewood contaminated with oil or mere kitchen coals are not suitable for brewing tea.” After discussing the importance of controlling the fire for roasting the tea, he goes on to mention the tools and method employed for roasting: “A fire pit called a *bei* (焙) is dug to dry the tea. It is two feet deep, two and a half feet wide and ten feet long with two-foot high clay walls above ground. A two-and-a-half-foot long bamboo skewer called a *guan* (貫) is used to string up tea cakes ready to be baked dry.” Later in the book, he also goes on to describe a certain type of tea storage container: “Behind the door there is a fan and a stove with constant low heat. This maintains the freshness of the cakes. However, for people living in the South, during the rainy season, a fire will be needed to keep the tea dry.”

The great Emperor Song Huizong (1082–1135) also conducted quite a lot of research about the ratio of charcoal and ash for drying tea; in his *Treatise on Tea* (茶的論文), he wrote that “when roasting, one should build a fire in the center of the brazier first, then cover most of the wood with ash, while still leaving room for the flames to breathe.” Qing Dynasty writer Zhou Liangong (周亮工) wrote in his *A Song of Fujian Tea* (閩茶曲) that “tea from before the spring rains is good, yet still too new. Before its internal heat has been dispelled, it is not fit to pass the lips. But when stored until it is deep red, it triples in value; every household displays last year’s vintage.” He also touches on the importance of roasting for oolong tea. From all these examples, we can see that the ancients were very particular about roasting, storing and drinking tea. For further reference on the topic of tea storage

methods, we suggest you take a look at the article Master Tsai wrote in the October 2018 issue of this magazine, entitled “Aging Oolong Tea Well.”

The changes that the leaves undergo in processing are mainly related to oxidation—an enzymatic change due to exposure to oxygen. Tea leaves are composed of about 5–8% lipids. When the lipids, amino acids and carotenoids within the cells in the leaves are exposed to air, they break down, which has a large impact on the flavor of the tea. For oxidation to occur, there must be enough water in the leaf to act as an intermediary; this means that the moisture content should be reduced to below 3–4% before the tea leaf can be packaged and stored. This is because once the water content is reduced beyond this point, the water remaining in the leaf exists in a monomolecular structure, effectively forming a protective layer on the surface. This makes it difficult for the moisture in the air to penetrate the leaf and influence the state of the tea. When water absorption causes the moisture content in the dried tea leaf to rise above 5%, this starts to produce unbound water, which brings more moisture from the air into the leaf. It will soon begin to interact with the surrounding oxygen, causing gradual oxidation and deterioration of the leaf. When the tea leaf absorbs enough water for the moisture content to rise above 6%, this produces “condensed water” (also known as “capillary water”), which forms a sort of water channel in the leaf. This speeds up the effects of oxidation and the deterioration of the leaf. This is a major reason why the tea needs to be charcoal roasted to dry it out. But if water reduction was the only requirement, then surely modern drying or roasting machines could achieve the same result. So why, then, do we still place so much emphasis on charcoal-roasting tea—particularly traditional oolong?

The earliest charcoal-roasting method involved placing the tea on a roasting rack over a stove fired with wood charcoal. About three kilograms of tea could be dried in each batch, which was enough for those days.

Later, the method evolved to include digging a round roasting pit in the ground, which would be smoothed out using a mud slurry. The pit was generally about 45-60 centimeters deep, and the roasting time was adjusted as needed. The amount of charcoal placed in the pit was decided based on the anticipated volume of tea and number of roasts. Bricks were placed along the upper edge of the pit, and the roasting frame was placed on top. The gap between these two is beneficial for dissipating some of the heat and allowing the air to circulate. The roasting frames were traditionally made out of woven bamboo, with a woven bamboo tray stretching out in the middle of the frame. The tea was placed on this tray to dry over the flames. The drying frame had an upper and lower layer that were freely interchangeable, so they could easily be swapped around to

keep the temperature even. Nowadays, the frames have just one layer.

As well as containing carbon, wood charcoal also contains hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and small amounts of other elements. In charcoal production, the wood is first dried, which releases the moisture content in the wood as steam. As the firing temperature rises, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, acetic acid and methanol are released while heat is absorbed. As the temperature rises more, the structure of the wood further breaks down and more gases (carbon monoxide, hydrogen, methane, and carbon dioxide) and vapors (water, acetic acid, methanol, acetone) are released, as well as tar. The heat rises further and more tar is burned off. The entire firing process happens in the absence of oxygen. If oxygen were present, the wood would combust and burn to ash instead of

turning into charcoal. Once the heat reaches combustion point, the wood ignites and continues to burn and carbonize until it becomes charcoal. The most superior choice of charcoal for traditional tea roasting in Taiwan is made with wood from a tree species named *Lagerstroemia subcostata kochne*, or “*Jiugong* (九穹)” in Chinese. Unfortunately, this wood has been quite difficult to buy in recent years, so hard, long-burning dragon eye wood charcoal has become the top choice; acacia wood charcoal, with its steady flame, is also a good option. Once charcoal ignites, it won't easily stop burning, and if the charcoal is too soft, the fire won't burn evenly, which can lead to unintended odors.

There are two charcoal-burning methods: the Yin method and the Yang method. With the Yin method, the charcoal is first ignited outside of



the stove and heated until it glows red all over. Then it is inserted into the stove piece by piece until it is packed tightly and evenly, before being covered with a layer of charcoal ash. As the fire keeps burning, the charcoal is consumed layer by layer and sinks downward, eventually burning away into ash. The moveable charcoal stoves that are commonly seen today generally use the Yin kindling method. The Yang method, on the other hand, is lit using “mother coals.” The stove is first filled with charcoal, which is then struck to break it into pieces and packed down firmly. Then, two or three sticks of red-hot burning charcoal are placed in the center and covered with charcoal ash. This allows the flame to slowly spread through the charcoal. After all the charcoal has gradually ignited, the tea can be roasted. The Yang kindling method is only used when the

roasting is carried out in a pit dug in the ground. Masters of the traditional tea-roasting method in Mount Wuyi, Anxi County and Taiwan all use the Yang method.

Ash plays a very important role in these charcoal-roasting techniques. Charcoal ash is largely composed of potassium carbonate, which is not flammable. Varying the thickness in the ash layer on top of the charcoal is a crucial way of regulating the temperature of the fire. The skill of covering the charcoal with ash is a very tricky temperature-controlled technique in the charcoal-roasting process. Aside from regulating the temperature, the ash layer also serves to insulate the charcoal from the air, preventing it from burning up too quickly and hence lengthening the burn time. Master tea roasters are very serious about protecting the ash layer and take fastidious care

of it. To preserve the ash, they cover it tightly with sackcloth, which is best suspended in the air, hanging from the beams of the roasting frame. They also take care never to casually put the ash down on the ground, as no matter how clean the floor is, the ash is bound to pick up odors and moisture from the ground. Even the smallest unintended odor is liable to affect the purity of the tea’s aroma after roasting is complete. Tending the fire during roasting involves a skilled process of spreading out the ash to regulate the temperature. The crucial factor in determining the final quality of the tea is the interaction of temperature and time; these must be regulated carefully so that the flames don’t become too fierce and scorch the tea. In the past, masters of traditional tea roasting could judge the temperature of the roasting frame simply by feeling it with their palms.



茶 The roasting process of oolong tea requires a tremendous amount of skill, and each farm or shop holds its methods secret. Back in the day, many more farmers provided maocha to shops, and it was the shop owners who then passed on roasting skills from generation to generation, roasting their teas to suit their customers’ and their own tastes. Nowadays, very few shops continue this tradition. Most farmers roast their own tea. Here we see the fire being started in the Yang method Master Tsai discusses above, and then covered with ash to control the temperature and make sure the tea doesn’t get burned. The farmers will come and check the leaves constantly, feeling and smelling them to know when they are done. Like most steps in the processing of tea, farmers do not use clocks or other devices to know when a tea is ready. Whenever we ask them “How long does it take to X?” they always reply, “Until the leaves are like this!” and hand some over for us to smell as an example of proper processing. Depending on the type of tea, this process can go on for hours, or even days. Some teas are even periodically roasted as they age, continuing the roasting process indefinitely. (We prefer aged tea that is unroasted.)



Their aged, thickly-calloused hands were the most effective thermometer. They used the “feel with your hands, smell with your nose” method to observe the temperature and the aroma of the tea during the roasting process. Based on this, they would judge the current state of the tea and decide what their next action should be.

In ancient times, fire was called “the essence of Yang.” A record of this appears in section fourteen of the *History of the Eastern Han* (後漢書): “Fire is the essence of Yang.” The way I see it, charcoal roasting is not simply a question of temperature; rather, it’s a question of energy. Fire is the heat and light produced when a material combusts, which are types of energy. Lighting a fire requires a combination of three things: a flammable material, a combustion point and an oxidizing agent. If even one of the three is missing, it’s impossible to start a fire. Fire exists in a state of matter outside those of solid, liquid and gas: a “plasma state.” (In 1879, plasma was identified by British physicist Sir William Crookes as the fourth state of matter, alongside solid, liquid and gaseous states.)

We can relate this to the concept of “internal heat” in Traditional Chinese Medicine, which is literally called “fire (*huo*, 火).” It is caused by heat; excess heat results in “generative fire (*hua huo*, 化火),” which is unhealthy. In a four-season climate, the five elements of weather—namely wind, cold, heat, damp and dryness—can all cause “generative fire” due to an excess of heat. The Yin and Yang attributes in various foods mean that they also fit into the categories of cold, hot, warm and cool. Foods with the property of “Yang within Yang” are very powerful, while those with the quality “Yang within Yin” are gentler. Using charcoal fire to roast the tea dries it out, producing caramelization and the Maillard reaction. In addition to this, the water contained in the leaf plays a very important part in the roasting process. As the old tea masters say: “With the help of water, the fire unfurls the dead wood; the water travels through the capillaries and unfurls the nature of the tea.” That is to say, through steps such as heating, roasting, unfurling, disintegration, cleansing, resting and cooling the stove, the tea is gradually cleansed of its impurities—including

the so-called “two waters (生, 青二水),” “raw” and “pure” water, which are traditional terms for the substances in tea, as well as tannic acid and theophylline. Thus, the original nature of the tea is restored.

Once everything is “cleansed,” the tea will have a sweet flavor and a cool energy; it won’t produce internal heat or cause any dryness or discomfort in the throat when drunk. Once the tea has attained these qualities—pure, sweet and cool—it can enter the “periodic roasting” stage, which could last three to five days, months, or even years. There’s a saying that goes: “If the tea isn’t roasted properly, then the painstaking labor of a whole year’s worth of spring tea will go to waste.” This goes to show the importance of the roasting process.

Aside from living in Taiwan, Master Tsai has also spent long periods of time immersed in the tea regions of Mount Wuyi and Anxi. He has witnessed the process of making and roasting traditional Wuyi tea and Anxi Tieguanyin many times. These two major tea regions have preserved the traditional oolong tea roasting method for hundreds of years. The charcoal-roasting process that happens after the oolong enters the refined processing phase can certainly be considered a specialized skill; at first glance, it doesn’t appear to have many steps, but on closer inspection, the charcoal fire must be so carefully manipulated that it’s almost like magic. No wonder Qing Dynasty scholar Liang Zhangju (梁章鉅) expressed such admiration for it: “The Wuyi roasting method is the finest in Heaven or Earth.”

The charcoal fire, the roasting frame, covering the fire with ash—these visions in the mind of a tea lover, let alone the things themselves, become ever more distant with the passing of years. The handprints of the old tea masters on the roasting frames, the tales of traditional roasted oolong—these images are just like the unique charm of traditional charcoal-roasted oolong, and the fragrance that curls up from each cup of tea. They steep deep within the heart of each one of us, adding to the ancient charm of this wonderful tea and making it truly worthy of our reflection. Let us hope that our love for teas like this month’s revives this dying culture!





# Brewing Tips

冲泡技巧 完成好茶

Our Tea of the Month will only truly shine in all its glory prepared gongfu, and considering the theme of this month's issue, it seems fitting to prepare the Mountain Pass this way. However, if you do not know how to brew gongfu or do not have the right teaware, do not fret. You can brew Mountain Pass in a sidehandle or even leaves in a bowl. In fact, watching a few balls of this tea open so magnificently in a light-colored bowl will be very enjoyable. But the fragrance has many layers that will not really blossom save in a gongfu brew.

A lot of what we "taste" in a tea is actually fragrance. In other words, tea has much more fragrance than it does flavor. Enhancing and enriching one's experience of the aromas of tea is a great way to increase enjoyment. This can be done through using the right water, fire, teaware and brewing method. We recommend good spring water, charcoal and a purple-sand pot with porcelain cups for bringing out the best in this month's tea. We will come back to fragrance shortly...

In previous issues, we have discussed the energy of tea, which means the flow of subtle sensations throughout the body. This movement is called "Qi (氣)." Sometimes, tea lovers mistake the gross effects of Qi moving or even chemistry in the body for Qi. For example, warmth in the chest or extremities is not the Qi; it is the gross effect of the Qi moving. And a lot of energy or a feeling of alertness are caffeine, rather than Qi. Qi is, of course, a very complicated topic, and such over-simplifications betray the depth and nuance of it. For now, we would just like to discuss the way different teas enter the subtle body and catalyze movement and some practical advice related to that. We can then perhaps devote a whole issue to Cha Qi (茶氣) in the future.

In general, darker teas like Liu Bao and puerh enter the subtle body through the stomach and chest. If they are strong, they will then catalyze large waves of movement throughout the body—moving from the core to the extremities. Lighter, subtler teas can enter through the mouth. Oolong almost always moves upward and enters the subtle body through the head and back down the spine, often catalyzing orbital movements around the central axis. This often makes oolong heady and uplifting. It also means that much more of oolong enjoyment takes place in the air—the fragrance.

If all of this is too ungrounded for you, let us bring this back to some brewing tips: puerh and other dark teas are best drunk in large cups, taking as much liquor into the mouth as is comfortable—big gulps, in other words. Oolong, on the other hand, moves upward and is best consumed light and softly. For this reason, the smaller the gongfu cups are for oolong tea, the better. In fact, as gongfu brewing was being developed, the earliest cups were thimble-sized. A smaller cup forces one to take tiny sips. The tinier the sip, the better an oolong will be. You can experiment even with a larger cup, taking larger sips and then small, followed by the absolute tiniest sip you can achieve—try to take in only a drop. You will find that this releases more fragrant oils, making the tea more delicious and aromatic, as well as more energy into the subtle body, creating a long-lasting upward flow that may result in a spiral of Qi down the spine and around the root, traveling back up the front of the torso. As this is an issue on experiments, why not give a small sip a try?



Sidehandle



Gongfu



Leaves in a Bowl

**Water:** spring water or high-quality bottled

**Fire:** coals, infrared or gas

**Heat:** try different temperatures

**Brewing Methods:** gongfu, sidehandle or leaves in a bowl

**Steeping:** flash, flash and longer (gongfu)

Longer steepings if leaves in a bowl

**Patience:** 20 steepings gongfu / 3-5 in a bowl

茶 If you are going to brew this month's tea gongfu, try to maintain temperature as long as possible, not allowing the pot to cool down. If you are brewing sidehandle or leaves in a bowl, be careful with amount.



# The Origins of Gongfu Tea

茶人: Wu De (無的)



**T**ea is aimless, purposeless, intentional surrendering of the impulse to do. We make tea for the sake of making tea. Succinctly, the aim of tea is *tea*... All discussions of tea should start with this caveat—that exploring the purpose of our tea may make sense in terms of education and developing our brewing skills, but ultimately should be dropped when the kettle hits the coals. In gongfu tea, the aim is to make the finest cup of tea possible, to bring out the full potential of any given tea, knowing how to brew the tea with skill (gongfu). However, even our focus on making the best cup possible will frustrate our ability to do so if we overthink it during the actual act of brewing. Before and after discussions are fine, in other words, but when the wind sighs the pines, we must still our hearts to brew tea well.

Our tea life isn't just about a greater connection to Nature through the Leaf, but an attunement with our self as well. We must therefore cultivate both inner and outer harmony, a flow from the absolute into the relative. We learn this flow through the practice of gongfu tea, refining our sensitivity and grace as we prepare finer and finer tea over time. We must spend adequate time doing exercises to refine our palates, our sensitivity to tea and its Qi as well as some academic study of tea and spiritual matters both, in order to refine our intellects as well. We should be able to articulate tea and spiritual matters and feel comfortable doing so. A mastery of tea includes a grace with all kinds of teaware, preparation, discussion and presentation. We should know dry leaves by appearance and smell and be able to prepare them with

a grace and beauty that transcends the ordinary. We should strive to brew the tea the way it wants to be brewed, recognizing its inner nature and becoming a graceful part of that flow. We should also develop our aesthetic sensibilities, in recognition that beauty comes from the Divine, and that it significantly affects our ability to transform others through tea as well. A beautiful tea arrangement aids in one's transformation. All of this refinement should temper our spirits and teach us how to live in grace.

As we have often discussed in these pages, “gongfu (工夫)” means “mastery through self-discipline.” Interestingly, there are two different characters for the “gong” part of “gongfu”—either “工” or “功.” One emphasizes inner power (discipline) and the other is about long-term work and dedication.

# 工夫茶源

傳統本質存留傳承



The latter is often used with reference to Buddhist meditation and the lasting effects of disciplined self-cultivation. We see both characters among tea writings and find that the combination of the two captures the depth of what “gongfu tea” means: a dedicated, focused practice of self-cultivation through tea.

Nowadays, the term “gongfu tea” has become generic, often referring to any brewing method, whether it is skillful or motivated by dedicated practice or not. To us, this is the worst use of the term, as it reduces gongfu tea to meaninglessness, suggesting that no matter how one brews tea, it is gongfu tea so long as it includes “Chinese” implements. If there is not intention or focus devoted to the craft, if there is not a cultivation of skill towards finer cups of tea and if there is

no discipline, how can we rightly call such a practice “gongfu tea?” Actually, the method and implements are less relevant than this spirit of skillful cultivation of technique and disciplined focus on the craft. So long as one has a true passion for tea and is working to discipline oneself and cultivate one’s tea knowledge and brewing skill, that is gongfu tea.

The term “gongfu” also has another meaning as well (I know this can be confusing, but it only reflects the depths and profound historicity of tea, which is inspiring): it also refers to a particular cluster of lineages that all began in Chaozhou (潮州). Originally, “gongfu tea” referred to the brewing techniques of southern China exclusively. These techniques were born in Chaozhou and then quickly spread to Fujian and Taiwan, where they evolved

down several branches. These brewing techniques began in the early Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). At that time, most Chajin in China were brewing tea in large pots with large cups, allowing the tea to steep for longer. In fact, this Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) method was the common brewing style Westerners first encountered when they began trading with China, which is why Western countries often brew tea in this so-called “brown betty” style even today: larger teapots, long steep times and bigger cups. (Of course, Westerners added a handle to the cup and milk and sugar to the tea.) In those days, gongfu tea was a local brewing method in the south. So far, “gongfu” is any brewing method that involves a dedication to mastery through self-discipline and also a specific type of brewing from Chaozhou.

# THE BIRTH OF SKILL

Understanding the origins of “gongfu tea” in terms of the local brewing traditions that began in Chaozhou, as opposed to the more general use of the word as “skill/mastery through self-discipline,” can be helpful in one’s practice. Of course, when discussing how and why something as culturally nebulous as a tea brewing method arose will always result in over-simplification. First of all, these lineages did not arise spontaneously out of nothing, but rather grew out of existing tea traditions—evolving and developing out of older tea methods. When it comes to history, there is always more context and more to the story than can be elucidated by an entire book on the subject, let alone a small article such as this. Human behavior and society are complicated, so let us approach this summary of how and why gongfu tea evolved in southern China as just that: a summary, keeping in mind that more of the tale which will be left untold...

In our brief summary, we are going to cover three different factors that contributed to the development of gongfu tea in southern China and their relevance to us as practitioners of either a lineage derived from these directly or at least as tea lovers devoted to cultivating ourselves and our tea brewing skills. It is worth repeating that these three factors are not the whole story of gongfu tea, though they are important chapters indeed: martial arts, poverty and oolong tea. Let’s discuss each, one by one.

## Martial Arts

Martial arts play an important role in the development of these brewing methods because many tea lovers have been practicing Qigong for centuries. The two practices evolved together, one influencing the other. In fact, we spoke earlier about the two characters used for “gong” in “gongfu tea.” One of the first characters, “功,” is derived from martial arts, which is a kind of gongfu (a kind of mastery achieved through disciplined self-cultivation). In the West, we are more familiar with

the Cantonese version of “gongfu,” which is “kungfu.” Since most of the masters who developed gongfu tea were practicing martial arts, the practical and philosophical aspects of Qigong and other martial arts are also incredibly important in gongfu brewing.

Philosophically, the martial artists brought their cosmology and energetic anatomy to their tea practice. This means that the Chinese cosmology greatly influenced this brewing method, and we should make an effort to study things like Yin and Yang, the Five Elements and the three treasures of Jing (精), Qi (氣) and Shen (神) in order to contextualize our tea practice. (We have covered these topics in past issues of *Global Tea Hut*, so it may be worthwhile to search the archives. There are also many wonderful books on these topics.) Understanding this philosophical foundation influences many aspects of a tea practice, including, but not limited to, selecting a tea that is in harmony with the weather, the season and the energetic needs of one’s guests. It also facilitates a deeper understanding of the medicinal properties of tea in terms of these traditional approaches, as opposed to a scientifically-based allopathic approach to tea research (which also has value, obviously). This philosophical framework also helps connect us to the lineage of Chajin who have come before us and facilitates dialogue, since it arms us with all kinds of jargon we can use to learn about and express our understanding of tea in general, and certain teas or sessions specifically.

The martial arts elements of gongfu tea also influence one’s practice on a much more fundamental level, as all the movements of skilled gongfu brewing were born out of the understanding of the body (physically and energetically) cultivated in those ancient techniques. Tea movements are derived directly from martial arts, in other words (at least in gongfu tea). This covers everything from how we lift the pot to how we decant the tea, and everything from the muscles in the arm used to make circular motions to the energetic flow of Qi through our

beings as we do so. Let’s look at one example that will be relevant now and later on in our discussion: conservation of energy.

Preserving energy is important in martial arts for both philosophical and energetic reasons. In Chinese cosmology and medical theory, there is an idea similar to our Western idea of entropy. According to this theory, based on an observation of the energetics of Nature, the more energy used, the greater and faster the degradation of the system. Chinese people observed that the animals and plants that live the longest, like tortoises or redwood trees, all move slowly. They realized that conserving energy created peace and tranquility, as well as the potential for longevity—and living long is important to a person devoted to self-cultivation, not so that they can enjoy the pleasures of this realm for longer, but rather so that they can dedicate more time to their spiritual development for the good of all beings.

This preservation and economy of energy is also practically relevant in martial arts, as it is in life. When an opponent attacks us, the ideal is that we are not there when their fist lands, so they strike air. The next best scenario is to deflect, using their own momentum and energy to lead them away from us—guiding their energy with as little of ours as possible. Finally, the worst solution is to block/defend, as this injures us as well. And this is all as true of martial conflict as it is of the challenges and vicissitudes we all face in life: it is always ideal to “not be there” when the fist of life lands, meaning that if we are transparent and egoless, the “offense” has nowhere to land.

When we pour tea using as little of our own power as possible, the tea pours itself effortlessly. The less my muscles and energy are used, the less of me is in the tea. This means the signal of the tea is clearer and more potent. Like a good audio cable, we then channel a pure and clean tea sound to our guests. The less of my mind, body or energy is in the cup, the purer it will be. For that, I have to get out of the way, stilling my heart and using as little en-

# 技藝的誕生

ergy as possible. When my movements are frugal and gentle, I also disturb the tea less, which means it will be calmer and smoother, less ruffled—like a slowly drawn breath aligned with movement in Qigong. Practically speaking, this influences all areas of brewing gongfu tea, like allowing the pot to “fall” naturally when we pour into the cups, drawing back as opposed to pushing, creating smoother and more effortless tea. Such tea is always finer. And such smooth and fine cups also bring us to the second important factor that led to the creation of gongfu brewing in southern China, which is poverty.

## Poverty

The conservation of energy that we just discussed in the previous section could be thought of as a kind of poverty—poverty of movement and energy expenditure. But moving onwards, this aspect of gongfu tea has a spiritual and an earthly side to it. On the down-to-earth level, poverty means just that: the people in southern China were poor. And all human action, whether individual or social, has an economic element. In other words, we are all, in part, economically motivated, as are the societies we create.

The brewing methods that were popular throughout the Ming and into the Qing Dynasty were not very economic, involving large, ornate teapots and cups that required large amounts of tea for each session. The people of southern China wanted a brewing method that utilized small amounts of tea that could be prepared in a way that increased the number of steepings you get, meaning that one could be satisfied with far less tea brewed over a longer time in many short steepings. The number of steepings we get from a tea is called its “patience (耐泡).” The patience of any tea is, of course, also to do with the production of the tea itself, and will be determined by the terroir and varietal, as well as the processing method and even the skill of the farmer who created it. But tea arrives to us

unfinished, like the ingredients in a fine dish of food that must be completed by the chef. The quality of the vegetables also depends on how they were grown and by whom, but only a great cook can bring out their quality, fulfilling their potential. Similarly, in order to get the best steepings, and more of them, we must use the proper brewing method and do so with skill. Patience is therefore partially dependent on the method and skill of the brewer, which means that cultivating brewing skills will extend one’s sessions over more cups, which leads to the same degree of satisfaction for less tea, and that in turn means that we save money.

In his seminal work, the *Tea Sutra*, the “Tea Saint” Lu Yu said that the “spirit of tea is frugality.” This can be translated many ways: that the essence of tea is conservation of energy, as we discussed earlier, for example, or perhaps that simplicity is the true soul of tea. All of these workings of his aphorism are true and potentially enrich our tea practice. The old sage is also highlighting the spiritual dimension of the poverty within a tea practice, which it shares in common with most spiritual traditions of the world.

Jesus and Buddha both held poverty as central to their teachings, worldviews and practices. But it is worth understanding on many levels, from the surface to the depths, that what these great masters were proposing when they taught poverty had nothing to do with economics. By poverty, the Buddha did not mean a lack of money or goods (and neither did Lu Yu for that matter). As a spiritual practice, poverty has nothing to do with how much money one has. If being poor resulted in wisdom and spiritual cultivation, this would be a much merrier world indeed. One can be poor and miserable, full of desire for things one doesn’t have and jealous of those who have such things. Economic inequality also causes all kinds of individual and social challenges, and this suffering is not easy to solve. In fact, much of the world’s political debates over the last few centuries have revolved around the dilemmas caused by a desire to protect

liberty and also create more equality, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive but are certainly a real trial for us to sort out—as the news makes obvious. So if the masters weren’t talking about a lack of money or resources, then what did they mean by saying that poverty was central to their practice?

Spiritual poverty is all about two things: cultivating a spirit of simplicity and humility, and, consciously, actively renouncing worldly desires. Tea teaches us to find the extraordinary in the ordinary. There is a Zen saying that “nothing is more uncommon than to see the uncommon in the common, and most humans have become so commonplace that they require the extraordinary to see the uncommon.” Most of our lives will be spent in simple situations, pursuing ordinary tasks, not in the bigger-than-life peaks we occasionally experience. If we can learn to appreciate doing nothing (sitting around drinking tea), we can then live richer and fuller lives, content with whatever is happening—be it great or small. Actually, we are surrounded by miracles all the time, if we but look with clear eyes, for even the most mundane activity like drinking tea or doing laundry is actually contextualized in a giant and incredibly awesome cosmos full of supernovas, comets, northern lights and all the great and small magnificence that is this amazing world. Poverty is also about renouncing worldly desires, which must be an intentional and active practice as opposed to a circumstantial lack. This practice of poverty is, in other words, more about our internal orientation than it is about what we “have” or “don’t have,” since the great masters understood that none of us really “have” anything. We simplify our hearts, not our environment (though the two may harmonize in the end).

In truth, when we say that poverty motivated the creation of gongfu brewing, we mean a few different things, from the mundane to the spiritual, and all that is between: actual lack of resources and a conscious cultivation of frugality.

This technique evolved out of an earthly desire to save money by brewing tea in a way that increases patience, using small pots and cups and a method that brings greater satisfaction with less tea, and also a spiritual poverty based on simplicity and renunciation of worldly desire. My master always says that if you are not moving towards using fewer and fewer tea leaves, you are in contradiction with the Dao, which is Nature. He means that the Way is a returning, a softness, and that if our sensitivity is truly increasing, then we need less and less tea. If the medicine is working, in other words, our need for it should decrease. This echoes the words of Sen No Rikyu: “Imagine your life without tea; if it is any different, you have yet to understand tea!”

***“Nothing is more uncommon than to see the uncommon in the common, and most humans have become so commonplace that they require the extraordinary to see the uncommon. Most of our lives will be spent in simple situations, pursuing ordinary tasks, not in the bigger-than-life peaks we occasionally find. If we can learn to appreciate doing nothing, we can then live richer and fuller lives, content with whatever is happening—be it great or small.”***

## Oolong Tea

The creation of oolong tea is the development of gongfu tea. And no factor is more relevant to gongfu brewing than oolong tea. In point of fact, the term “gongfu tea” must, once again, be complicated, because the term originally referred not to a brewing method, but rather to oolong tea, which wasn’t called “oolong” in the early days. Oolong tea began in northern Fujian’s Wuyi Mountain. The tea from Wuyi is today called “Cliff Tea (岩茶),” and Cliff Tea was made with such complicated processing that required so much skill and lifelong discipline to produce well that it was called “gongfu tea.” Even today, it takes decades to master the production of fine Cliff Tea. For example, the family we stay with in Wuyi (the Huangs) only passed on supervision of production to the son after more almost three decades of apprenticeship, ensuring the transmission of their skills.

So, in the early days, the “gongfu” in “gongfu tea” still referred to mastery through self-discipline; it just denoted skill in terms of tea processing rather than in the preparation of the finished tea. However, as time went on, a method of brewing this masterfully-made tea was needed. In order to honor the craft and devotion of well-made oolong, it needed to be brewed properly. Chajin sought to honor the hard work and skill of the tea masters who made the tea by devoting themselves with great focus and dedication to developing brewing methods that would bring out the best qualities of this tea, and thereby fulfill its potential in aroma, flavor and energy. Gongfu tea is a tea as much as it is a brewing method, in other words.

thing spectacular. And if we lacked the cooking skills to do so, we would probably invite a friend over to help. When you think of it in these terms, you can easily understand why Chajin of the past developed gongfu tea brewing to prepare gongfu tea, honoring the heritage of the tea trees and hard-won mastery of the producers by brewing the tea to its greatest potential. Over time, the term “gongfu tea” became associated more with the brewing than the processing, and the tea crafted with such skill came to be known as “oolong.”

Just because gongfu tea brewing is star-crossed to oolong tea (helplessly in love for eternity) doesn’t mean we cannot successfully brew other types of tea this way, but it does help explain where this brewing method came from. And together with martial arts and poverty, we can contemplate the implications of this vast heritage of brewing methods. Understanding the drive that motivated these techniques in the first place connects us to those who passed these methods on to us and also helps us to align our spirit with the practice. More importantly, the implications of what created gongfu tea brewing have real practical significance that can drastically improve our ability to make a fine cup of tea. I invite you to contemplate all the implications these three factors of martial arts, poverty and oolong tea can have on your own gongfu practice, and better yet, develop some experiments to test some aspects of this type of brewing.

Of course, some of our tea should be for pure enjoyment, but it is also important to set aside some time for practice, improving our techniques and testing various teas, types of teaware and brewing methods against one another (using a system like the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea discussed in the following article.) Though our traditions are important, remember, in the end, the truth is always in the cup.

The heritage of gongfu tea also inspires us to excel and discipline ourselves in the practice, which results in the dedication that makes our tea practice worthy of the title “gongfu.”





# The Ten Qualities

十品質



*Before we get into experimenting with our gongfu brewing, we first need a standard to apply to these experiments. Without qualities that we predefine as “better” and “worse,” we cannot experiment at all. And these qualities have to be shared, so that we can communicate our results with each other, work with a teacher and even know which techniques are facilitating improvement in our own practice. In our tradition, we use the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea, which we will share with you now. If you don’t want to use this standard, any will do, so long as you stick to it throughout all your experiments.*



茶人: Shen Su (聖素)

There is a beautiful blend between art and science in this topic of tea, bridging wonder and awe with rationality. Our primary approach to tea will always err on the side of art, as it always has, but the linear addition of rational criteria found within the Ten Qualities that we use to define a fine cup of tea is most welcome. Drinking tea in ceremony and approaching the Leaf primarily as an art form doesn’t mean we can’t refine our palate, talk about the nuances of each infusion and connect through tea in a more linear way. In fact, we are quite fortunate in our school of tea that the gongfu brewing method facilitates exactly that relationship, which is perhaps why Western tea drinkers who hail from more scientific backgrounds have taken to gongfu tea more so than other brewing methods. No matter your background, we feel it is a worthwhile endeavor to explore the detailed map of gongfu tea through a study of the Ten Qualities.

For us, a rigorous, evidence-based understanding of tea is essential for respecting the roots of this traditional brewing method. At the same time, however, it’s all about balance. It’s not healthy to become overly critical or serious in our attempt to navigate the rich world of tea. Tea should bring ease and lightness into our lives, making us feel calm and awake. The world is heavy enough without adding burdensome weight to our tea! For that reason, we suggest having fun with tea ex-

periments and when studying the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea. They should bring more joy and color to your relationship with tea, not hinder it with white lab coats and dreary facts.

Our experience has shown that understanding the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea tremendously helps our tea practice, allowing us to communicate clearly, gauge our progress, work with a teacher and honor the roots of gongfu tea, which is what we would like to share with you in this article.

### *Traditional Gongfu Tea*

When we talk about gongfu tea, we inevitably need some definitions to help communicate clearly. The term “gongfu” refers to anything that requires mastery through self-discipline. It’s a term that can be applied to many mediums and artforms, like martial arts, cooking, archery, and, of course, tea. It means to perform that activity with skill through self-discipline and practice. We therefore think of “gongfu tea” as brewing tea with skill, developed through self-discipline over a great period of time. But we need to further define “gongfu tea.” Let us remember that gongfu tea is a regional, local tradition developed in Chaozhou in southern China. Therefore, we also refer to it as “traditional gongfu tea,” which is important because nowadays “gongfu tea” can be seen in many forms, and often means any brewing

technique using a small pot and small cups. This isn’t necessarily a bad thing, but it is important to clearly define what we are talking about so it is not confused with the menagerie of methods under the same name that developed over time, often deviating from the source of gongfu tea.

We are very fortunate in this tradition because this pure form of gongfu tea has been preserved and passed down from generation to generation to the point where we can enjoy and learn from it in modern times. It has adapted and evolved over time as well, but those adaptations have stemmed from a deep connection to the spirit of tea, a connection cultivated over decades of diligent practice, experimentation and reverence for the Leaf. We are also bestowed with the honor and responsibility to practice it in its traditional form and also pass it down to future generations.

### *The Need for a Standard*

The next step is to elaborate on what we mean by “skill.” If gongfu tea means to brew tea with skill, how is that achieved and what does it yield? It’s *not* about brewing tea however you like it. The “however-you-like-it” method isn’t really a method but more of an attitude, and a useful one in certain situations. The however-you-like-it attitude is ultimately tolerance—live and let live, in other words.



Tolerance is an essential tool to help you navigate life a little more gracefully. However, brewing tea however you like it doesn't give you a standard by which to measure your progress, discuss the results with peers or allow a teacher to criticize your efforts. However-you-like-it is too subjective. If you like it brewed *this* way and someone else likes it brewed *that* way, you wouldn't be able to agree which method is better because it has been reduced to personal preference. However-you-like-it is fine if you're simply drinking tea by yourself, but it doesn't work if you want to make better tea in a way that can be discussed with others. That requires a goal and a method.

So, what is the goal of gongfu tea? Let us mention here that tea is ultimately an aimless activity and should be enjoyed for its own sake, but for the sake of communication about tea in its more linear form, we will address the goal here. Gongfu tea is really about

making the finest cup of tea possible. "Finest" is also very subjective, which is why we need a standard to measure it against. We call that standard the "Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea," which we will discuss below. When we have this standard, we can talk about what makes a fine a cup of tea. Not only can we discuss it with others, but we can experiment to verify how different teaware and brewing techniques measure up against that standard, which hones our understanding of tea and allows us to make educated decisions in our brewing practice.

When we have a method (experimentation), a standard (the Ten Qualities) we can evaluate ourselves, make clear progress towards a finer cup of tea and develop our tea brewing skills. As well, our teachers can criticize our results in a way that helps us grow along the path. How would we work with a teacher if all our criteria were subjective and based only on what we like?

## Quality is Ultimately Arbitrary

Though we need a standard to gauge our progress in gongfu tea, ultimately, the quality we perceive is mind-made and mostly arbitrary. There is no ultimate objectivity in tea because tea is an art, not a science. The finest, most expensive tea and the simplest, cheapest tea are both products of Nature and will return to Nature in one way or another, and Nature won't bat an eye at our mind-made price tags. But as far as gongfu tea goes, we need a target to work towards, and so we've chosen a set of ten criteria that are more objective than others. For that reason, we temporarily set aside the qualities of flavor and aroma when discussing a fine cup of tea, as these senses are particularly subjective and are strongly linked to our upbringing and memory. A tea that tastes or smells of grass to



one person can easily taste of orchids to another, and they can argue endlessly but will never agree as to whether those qualities make it a fine cup of tea or not. On the level of taste and aroma, there simply won't be much room for agreement. Therefore, they are not useful targets for us to aim at because they are too personal, and so, we only temporarily set them aside to make way for what we consider to be more objective qualities. Nevertheless, you'll be happy to know that as teas become finer based on the Ten Qualities, the flavor and aroma come along for the ride and also "improve."

### *A Rational Way to Talk About Quality*

Before we finally get to the standard set of qualities, let's consider one useful analogy first. Imagine a wide-ranging

sample size of people, including different genders, ages, ethnicities, and especially, personal preferences. In front of them are an equally wide range of clothing outfits, all of different sizes, styles, materials, etc., and we ask them to choose their favorite article of clothing. As you can imagine, there will be quite a large range of choices. Small groups of people might choose the same thing here and there, but in general, the variety of choices will be large because it's based on personal preference. Now, let's consider blind-folding the participants and asking them to choose the most comfortable article of clothing. This requires each individual to use their sense of touch to make the choice. Though it's only hypothetical, you can imagine that a much larger group of people will choose the same article of clothing (obviously not 100%) but much larger than the first trial. Why is this? Because most people can agree on what *feels* comfortable to

the touch regardless of personal preference. This is why when someone comes home and wants to "slip into something more comfortable," generally they opt for breathable materials like cotton, hemp, silk and other natural fibers that feel soft and smooth on the skin. So, even though what the participants chose might not appeal to their personal preferences, they can at least agree that it feels soft to the touch. This is exactly what we want to do in defining a fine cup of tea. We "blindfold" our sense of taste and smell, as it were, and feel with the mouth what is most comfortable when drinking tea.

The set of qualities we use to talk about gongfu tea will always be relative, but that doesn't mean we can't exercise more objectivity in our approach to defining quality. In fact, we can use rational, intelligent criteria to design our system for evaluating fine tea, while maintaining a primary approach to tea as an art or self-cultivation.

Like the hypothetical experiment above, we have to closely examine the sensations in the mouth to do this. Like clothes that are comfortable because they are smooth to the touch, tea is fine when it is smooth in the mouth. Being sensitive to the way tea feels in your mouth allows us to articulate *why* the tea is fine or not. Moreover, because we are making observations based on mouth sensations that are more objective (not completely objective, but one could say that these qualities are “inter-subjective,” which is an important step towards objectivity), we create a platform for agreement and rational discussion. This is why the standard is so important. The more objective the experience can be, the more agreement between people there will be.

These are the qualities that we use to define a fine cup of tea. This is the standard we use in our experiments to help us move towards making and serving finer tea. Notice that they do not include flavor and aroma, which we have temporarily set aside to help train our sensitivity towards noticing these more objective qualities. Keep in mind that we only utilize these qualities in the realm of gongfu tea. These are not suitable to use when drinking bowl tea or sidehandle tea, for example, which are more ceremonial brewing methods that focus on connection, meditation and accepting things just as are, which means completely dropping these Ten Qualities. Bowl tea is much more of a ceremony. In bowl tea, there is no quality, in other words.

When trying to observe these qualities within experiments, don't worry if you can't notice them all in the beginning. Work with what you can observe. That often means focusing on just one or two of the criteria. With time and practice, your sensitivity will increase to the point where you can start to observe more and more of these qualities in fine teas. Remember to have fun when approaching tea in this way. It's a new and refreshing means to explore tea, not a test worth stressing over. Learn to use them when necessary and drop them when not. If we all share them, it also gives us a meaningful way to communicate our experience with one another that makes discussion so much more enjoyable, and that also fosters growth.

## 實驗的重要性 *The Importance of Experimentation*

Experiments are the methods used to hit the target, which in this case is to make a finer cup of tea. They are the means by which we achieve our goal. They allow us to clearly communicate what we are doing, how we are doing it and why that's important. The more experiments we do, the stronger the foundation is upon which we can stand with confidence and talk about tea.

If nothing is done arbitrarily in gongfu tea, then everything is done with purpose and the experiments help to reveal that purpose. We can use the results of these experiments to then make educated decisions in our brewing practice and to understand why it has been done like this for so many hundreds of years. In other words, experiments allow us to have a rational discussion with others about gongfu tea, working together to improve our brewing skills. That is gongfu!

As well, when using the standard set of Ten Qualities, we can gauge our progress to determine if we are actually making finer cups of tea or not. Moreover, we create room for our teachers to criticize our efforts in an attempt to guide us along the way towards making finer tea.

We are very fortunate because this pure form of traditional gongfu tea has been preserved by teachers before us and then passed down to our generation. Part of that preservation was the result of doing many experiments. We must make an effort to do some experiments now and again. If we experiment or practice too much, tea becomes a chore, so we should all, of course, remember to take the time to just drink tea, relax and enjoy. However, too much of that and we never improve our skills, so we must also learn to balance that with a desire to practice our brewing skills and conduct

experiments. Along with a regular practice and experimentation routine, it is very helpful to develop the ability to create experiments that allow you to isolate factors in teaware or method. For example, if you want to know what effect prewarming the cups has on tea, how can you isolate that factor and experience its effect? Fortunately, we have you covered in terms of prewarming the cup, as we have covered that experiment in past issues and have done so in this one as well on p. 45. After reading how we have isolated that and other factors in tea brewing throughout this and other issues of Global Tea Hut, you may want to practice creating your own experiments that can help you to isolate and A/B test the types of teaware or brewing methods you are interested in understanding experientially. Then, try them with your tea friends. Experiential wisdom always reigns supreme!

# 知原由

技藝在於心和手



# THE TEN QUALITIES OF A FINE TEA

## 1) *Splash to the upper palate*

This is an excellent quality to start with. It's easy to sense and happens right away with a fine tea. The sooner it splashes and the further it travels across the palate, the finer the tea.

## 2) *Travels back on its own*

A fine tea doesn't require us to push it back. It should move from the front of the mouth to the back, almost like air traveling back on its own.

## 3) *Smooth, round, thick, structured*

This is one of the main criteria for a fine cup of tea. All fine teas are smooth in the mouth with a round-like structure that is thick and held together, as opposed to unstructured tea that can be sharp, thin and coarse in the mouth.

## 4) *Coating*

If you close your eyes, you should be able to sense the tea anywhere in your mouth. Lower quality teas sink or get stuck near the front, but fine tea will coat the entire mouth no matter where you focus your attention.

## 5) *Goes down on its own: Easy to swallow*

Just as the tea travels back on its own, it should continue in this same manner and swallow very easily, as if by itself, not pinching the throat or forcing us to swallow.

## 6) *Soothing on the throat*

Next, after a fine tea coats the mouth and swallows easily, it should also soothe the throat, making it feel comfortable and coated.

## 7) *Salivation*

Good teas cause salivation, as opposed to drying out or parching the mouth. It's a refreshing sensation that almost feels as if you continue drinking the tea after it's been swallowed.

## 8) *Fragrance rising up the back of the nasal cavity*

Teas that linger in the front of the mouth and nose are lower quality teas. Fine teas have a fragrance that moves and rises up the back of the nasal cavity or the inside of the back of the neck. This can be likened to high-quality incense that is gentle and slowly rises from the back as opposed to cheap incense that "smacks" you in the front of the face.

## 9) *Hui gan (回甘): Minty coolness on the breath*

We liken this to the sensation of chewing peppermint gum on a snowy mountaintop and breathing in and out deeply. It's not the flavor or aroma of peppermint, but that cooling, refreshing sensation returning on the breath after you've swallowed the tea. This is not to be confused with "*hui tian* (回甜)," meaning "returning sweetness."

## 10) *Deep and relaxing Cha Qi (茶氣)*

This is a more subtle quality that goes beyond mouth sensations, but we include it here because all fine cups of tea have this quality or effect. It's easiest to think of this as a general sense of ease and relaxation, but it is also a topic with countless layers to unfold.



# Gongfu Experiments



# 工夫實戰





# Classic Three Cups

## Materials:

- 茶 Three identical, white porcelain gongfu cups per person
- 茶 Kettle & heat source
- 茶 Teapot
- 茶 Tea you're familiar with

**Tip:** We always recommend using a tea that you are very familiar with. When using new teas, we can be distracted from the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea by the exotic aroma and flavor of a new tea. It is therefore very helpful to choose a tea we know well for experimentation, staying focused on texture.

## Procedure:

The procedure for this essential experiment is simple. Heat your water. Before it's fully boiled, pour it into one of the three cups. There is no need to pre-warm your cups. (In fact, please do not pre-heat as it will influence the experiment.) Pour half the water from the first cup into the second cup. Then pour half the water from the second cup into the third cup. The first cup should contain half the water, whereas the last two cups should contain one quarter each. Starting with the last cup, quickly drink back and forth between all three cups, recording your observations as you go. Repeat at least three times, making sure to pour accurately from each cup to the next. You could easily do this experiment with more than three cups. The effect will only get stronger the more cups you add, so if you do not notice a difference with three, adding more may be helpful.

Then, when you have finished using water, try the experiment one more time with tea. Try drinking the tea in the right order, from last cup to the first (from worse to better). It is also helpful to not allow too much time to pass between cups, passing them to your mouth for sips as quickly as possible.



## Importance & Implications:

This is one of the most important and simplest experiments to do. It's the one we do most often with guests at the Center. It is always the basis on which all experimentation is founded. The differences are usually very apparent, and the results are applicable to every aspect of tea brewing. A skilled Chajin can create many and varied experiments based on the conclusions of this one. It is, therefore, essential to gongfu tea training. There are literally hundreds of implications to which the results of this experiment can be applied. This experiment shows us the effects of heat loss and friction, demonstrating the effects of contact between a hot liquid and multiple surfaces. In this case, we are not experimenting with different types of surfaces (i.e., materials), but rather the number of surfaces the water/tea liquor touches. In other words, what happens when the water/tea touches two versus three surfaces (versus four or five if you like)? Contact definitely affects the tea. But how? And how does that apply to our choices of teaware and method?

# Choosing Water

## Materials:

- 茶 Three or more types of spring and/or bottled water
- 茶 As many white porcelain cups as types of water
- 茶 Kettle (if you want to try the experiment hot as well)

**Tip:** It really helps a lot if the cups you are using for these experiments are all tulip-shaped and exactly the same. The tulip shape can help with experiencing the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea, and the uniformity helps isolate the factors you are experimenting with.

## Procedure:

For this experiment, buy at least three different kinds of bottled water. You can also collect spring water as well. In fact, it is helpful to have some spring water alongside the bottled waters. Water we gather ourselves may be worse in terms of the Ten Qualities, but is still better for us because gathering our own water connects us to this basic aspect of life and encourages us to take regular hikes in Nature—both of which may outweigh the quality of the water itself. In other words, we might choose a slightly worse spring water we gather ourselves over a better bottled water for all but the most sensitive teas. However, these experiments aren't about the lifestyles changes a tea practice can bring, but rather the ability/skill/gongfu of choosing water.

Randomly choose two, pour equal amounts into two cups, and drink them side by side, back and forth. Make notes of any differences you notice. Based on the ten qualities listed above, choose one of the two bottles that you feel is more suitable to make tea, and then compare it against the third bottle of water. Remember, water should have no aroma or flavor; it should quench your thirst, and like any good tea, it should be round, smooth, soft and easy to swallow. Continue with this process of elimination until you've decided which water you feel is most suitable for tea. If you have a good source of spring water, perhaps compare your top bottled water to the spring water, and again, see if you can notice any differences. You may want to repeat the experiment with hot water.



## Importance & Implications:

The best and easiest way to improve your tea is to improve your water. A cup of tea is 99% water, so obviously, better water will go a long way towards helping you make better tea. This is the cheapest way we can improve all of our tea. Water is all about source, storage and preparation. This experiment focuses more on the source of the water, but you could repeat it with the same water stored in different vessels to see what effect your water urn is having on your water. You can also do this experiment with a single favorite water modified by bamboo charcoal, crystals or medicine stones. But first you should know the quality of water sources available to you. You may come up with a list of different waters for different purposes, which is incredibly useful. For example, a certain expensive bottled water may be great with precious teas, like a special aged oolong, but not necessary for day-to-day tea practice. For that, you may want to choose a water you gather yourself, which allows gathering water to be a part of your practice. After you have chosen your water, you can do the aforementioned supplementary experiments with storage and modification.







# Heat Sources

## 茶的热源

### Materials:

- 茶 Gas stove
- 茶 Electric burner (infrared or a hotplate)
- 茶 Charcoal and brazier
- 茶 1 to 3 kettles (Also, a teapot if you want to use tea)
- 茶 1 white porcelain gongfu cup per person

### Procedure:

You can do this one with tea or just with hot water. Some people find it a little difficult to discern the differences with only water, whereas other people find the tea and the time between each steeping too confusing. It's up to you, and it's a good idea to try both eventually. If you have three of the same kettle, then you can fill them with the same volume of water and heat them at the same time. Note that each heat source will heat your kettle at a different rate, so you may need to time how long it takes on each heat source, in order to bring them to a boil at the same time. If you only have one kettle, which is more likely, then you just have to test each heat source one at a time, recording your observations as you go and being patient to heat up the fresh water for each heat source. You only need a little water in your kettle. If you have access to charcoal and a brazier, you will want to drink the water or tea from this heat source first, then move on to the other heat sources. As always, focus on the sensations in the mouth. Think about the quality of the heat as a texture in your mouth. Is it penetrating and structured, or spiky and uncomfortable?

### Importance & Implications:

Our experiments wouldn't be complete without testing the different heat sources out there. After water, which is considered the "Mother of Tea," the next most important aspect in preparing a fine cup of tea is the fire—the "Teacher of Tea." Fire extracts the essence of the Leaf. Without heat, it would take hours to brew a tea. Fire also catalyzes the fragrances and flavors of tea, as well as the movement of its medicine in our bodies and into our subtle bodies. But not all fire is equal. Learning the difference between heat sources—their impact on the water and the tea—is incredibly important, as it may help you create a list of different heat sources for different teas, much like we did in the previous experiment for water.



# Cold Water into Hot Water



## Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 1 white porcelain gongfu cup per person
- 茶 Teapot & tea you're familiar with (to try with tea)

*Tip:* We always recommend trying just about every experiment with water and tea both (except choosing a water source, of course). Usually, Chajin find one or the other easier to distinguish—either they are distracted by the tea, or, the sensations of the water aren't distinct enough. Both is always better.

## Procedure:

For this experiment, we like to heat our water and drink a few cups just to familiarize ourselves with it. You could also drink a few cups of tea as well. Remember to use a tea you are familiar with—otherwise you will get distracted by the newness. Then, add a cup or so of cold water to your kettle and bring it back to a boil. It is best if the kettle is only halfway full at this point so that not much time passes between the before and after cups. You may also want to set a cup aside to drink later on, so you will have both of them to try at the same time. The sounds can be revealing at this point: if you listen carefully to the first boil, you can match the sounds up to make sure the temperature is roughly the same for the before and after cups. Once the water has returned to a boil, drink the water again or steep some tea and record your observations. What did adding the cold water do to the structure of the water? Of the tea? Which do you notice the difference in more—the tea or the water? Use whichever of the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea is most distinct to you, and try to discern what effect, if any, this has on the water and/or tea liquor. For this experiment, you can also focus on flavor/aroma for one cup.



## Importance & Implications:

We notice a tendency at shops, on the Internet and around the tea world to add cold water to hot water. Some people have reasons for this; they say they are “refreshing” the water, which is very interesting. They feel the water is improved by the addition of cold water. Is this true for structure? Is it true on any other level? Noticing this, we should, of course, develop a desire to understand experientially for ourselves. Some others just do this because it is more convenient. For us, we never do things just because someone says it is “better,” or, worse yet, unconsciously because it is convenient to do so. If we make a choice in our gongfu method, we want it to be conscious and based on a clear understanding of the effects. Even exceptions should be made skillfully, understanding the consequences of doing so and doing our best to mitigate them. If it is better to “refresh” the water, we want to choose that. If not, then we should adapt our brewing style accordingly—only experimentation will tell the truth. Remember, the cup doesn't lie!



## Materials:

- 茶 Porcelain gaiwan (盖碗, lidded cup/bowl)
- 茶 An authentic Yixing purple-sand clay teapot
- 茶 2 white porcelain gongfu tea cups per person
- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 6 grams of tea you are familiar with

## Procedure:

Prepare your teaware and tea space. Weigh three grams of tea for the gaiwan and three grams for the teapot. It is important that this experiment be precise. Of course, you can also do this experiment with water first, which we recommend, but different amounts of tea can skew the results, so it is best to use a scale to weigh the tea. Then, clean and preheat all teaware (cups and brewing vessels). Add the tea and give it a rinse (a very quick infusion to clean off any dust and to help the leaves start opening). Pour heated water from the kettle into one of the brewing vessels. Let it steep for roughly the time you think it will take to decant (roughly five to ten seconds). Pour water into the second brewing vessel. Use a timer or count in your head the length of the infusion (again, precision is important for this experiment). Remember, you should brew the tea lighter than usual. Decant from the first vessel into the cups, followed by the second vessel. Starting with the tea from the gaiwan, drink back and forth between the tea brewed in the gaiwan and the teapot—keep moving back and forth sip to sip. Write down your observations and repeat the procedure for as many steepings as necessary.

## Importance & Implications:

In this experiment we will be using two brewing vessels at the same time. We would not recommend pouring the gaiwan and the teapot with two hands simultaneously for the safety of the teaware. (Also, the differences between our right and left hands can actually have a dramatic effect, which is another experiment.) We are looking for any differences that exist between the water or tea brewed in the two brewing vessels. That includes aroma and flavor, and all of the usual mouthfeel suspects: temperature, smoothness, viscosity, movement, splash to the upper palate, ease of swallow, production of saliva and hui gan (回甘, minty fresh sensation returning on the breath). This experiment demonstrates the importance of material and shape of vessel on tea brewing. Like for all good tea scientists, conclusions should only raise more questions and thereby create the foundation for future experiments. Can you think of some experiments to isolate the factors of material and shape and explore those individually?



茶壺



蓋碗

# The Fairness Pitcher



## Materials:

- 茶 1 pitcher (茶海, cha hai, glass or porcelain)
- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 A teapot (preferably authentic purple sand)
- 茶 2 identical white, porcelain gongfu cups per person

*Tip: One trick that we have found helps a lot for an either/or (A/B) experiment is to hold the two cups in your left and right hands at the same time and sip back and forth, cup to cup. This is very helpful, as the differences can be experienced immediately. However, the two hands can make a difference, so you may want to switch steeping to steeping.*

## Procedure:

Place one of your daily teas into your gongfu teapot. (Remember to brew the tea lighter than you are used to.) Line up a cup alongside the pitcher (or half of the cups, if you are conducting this experiment with others). It's often difficult to preheat all the cups and the pitcher, so don't worry about preheating—keep it simple. Always, try to isolate variables. Decant the tea and pour back and forth into the pitcher and the nearby cup(s). Try to pour fluently between the cups and pitcher. If you are used to brewing tea by pouring directly into your cups without using a pitcher, then you can think of the pitcher as just another cup for this experiment. The smoother you pour between the cups and the pitcher, the more effective this experiment will be at isolating the pitcher's influence on the tea liquor. (We are trying to make the liquor in the cups and the pitcher of even consistency.) Then, as fast as you can, pour the tea from the pitcher into the other empty cup(s). Take both cups, one with tea from the pot and the other with tea from the pitcher, and drink them back and forth, recording your observations. Repeat at least three times to discern the effect the pitcher is having on the tea versus the tea poured directly into the cups.



## Importance & Implications:

A pitcher or “fairness pitcher/cup (茶海)” can make tea brewing more convenient, and so it has become one of the most used implements in the world. It is beneficial practically because it makes tea brewing more casual, and is called a “fairness cup” because the liquor inside has an even consistency, so that every cup gets the same tea. But what effect is it having on the tea? Remember, we leave nothing to chance! We experience everything, so that when we choose teaware, we aren't following a fad, but are actually making educated decisions about what teaware and brewing method we want to use. To really understand when and when not to use a pitcher, this experiment is essential. What are the pros and cons of using a pitcher, and do the sacrifices outweigh the gains? Where and when did the pitcher even come from? What's the most appropriate situation in which to use a pitcher? Remember that this piece of teaware is modern. This should not influence our experimentation. After all, many modern innovations are wonderful. Traditional gongfu tea method decants directly into the cups, and the aim is also even consistency. This experiment is related to one we have already done and has many implications.







# Preheating the Cups

## Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 2 white porcelain gongfu cups per person
- 茶 Teapot & tea you're familiar with (to try with tea)

*Tip: If you are doing experiments with others, it is always helpful to conduct the experiments in complete silence so we won't be influenced by the opinions of others. Afterwards, we usually go around and let everyone share and then repeat the experiment one more time to include others' perspectives.*

## Procedure:

As usual, steep a lighter tea that you are familiar with in a smaller amount, about two to three grams. As always, we recommend using an authentic Yixing teapot for experiments, but you can use any teapot you own, so long as you are consistent and are familiar with its influence. Remember, we are trying to isolate the factor of preheating the cups as much as possible, honing in on the influence that one movement has to see what its effect is in terms of the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea. Preheat half of the cups with boiled water, and don't preheat the other half. Pour off the water from the preheated cups into your waste-water basin (*jian shui*, 建水), and soon afterwards pour the tea into your cups. Drink both cups back and forth, recording your observations as you go. Repeat two or three times. Move back and forth between the cup that is preheated and the one that isn't, holding both in your hands as you do. You may also want to do this with water, focusing exclusively on the sensations. This experiment is usually more difficult to perceive with plain water, but the subtlety of using just water makes it a useful tool to improve our sensitivity in terms of teaware and brewing method.



## Importance & Implications:

This experiment is another eye-opener. Many people see practitioners of gongfu tea who warm their cups and think they are cleaning the cups between each steeping, though they are actually preheating them. What for, and does it really make a difference? This experiment teaches us a lot about Fire, the teacher of tea. In other words, it opens doorways into the myriad effects that heat has on tea preparation. From the heat source to the pouring method, there are thousands of experiments related to heat that can be conducted as one improves one's gongfu brewing skills. In fact, understanding all the facets of heat in tea preparation is perhaps the most essential of all practical wisdom. Good tea scientists turn every conclusion into more questions, creating new experiments based on the results of the previous one. The results of this experiment determine a lot in one's brewing method, including whether or not to return the cups to the center after each steeping or leave them with the guests and take the tea to them in a vessel like a pitcher. This decision changes the whole flow of a session.

# 杯子的廣



# 關

## The Vast World of Cups

### Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 3 or more different gongfu-style cups  
(different shapes, sizes, materials, glazes, ages, etc.)
- 茶 Teapot & tea you're familiar with

### Procedure:

Weigh about two grams of tea and brew as you normally would. Pour the tea into all your cups and drink back and forth between all of them. Repeat at least a few times, noticing how the shape, size, material or age affects the tea liquor in your mouth. This is an experiment we strongly recommend repeating with water, as it will also demonstrate the differences between your cups. We also recommend repeating this experiment in a few different ways. First, you can start out by just drinking from all your different types of cups, noting the differences in terms of the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea. Then, you can repeat the experiment several times with specific cups, trying to isolate different qualities of the cups and the effect those qualities have on your tea. These latter experiments would be either/or (A/B) experiments. For example, you could compare two cups of similar shape but with different glazes, or perhaps compare cups of the same size and shape that are different ages, isolating the effect that antique cups have on tea. Continue this to your heart's delight. You can do this with tea, water or both. This is also a wonderful opportunity for you to develop your ability to create experiments, teaching yourself to isolate variables. After you have conducted some A/B experiments with different cups, it may be helpful to return once more to a final brewing with all the cups together to see if you can still pick out the details you noticed.

### Importance & Implications:

This experiment is excellent because it's simple, and most people have different types of cups and rarely consider how great an impact the cups can have on the quality of the tea. And does this apply to all tea, or should we experiment again with different types of tea to see if the experiment holds for all tea? This opens up a huge world and helps us focus more on the instruments we use—our teaware. All too often we choose our teaware based on aesthetics, picking whatever appeals to us, or, what is available and cheap. But teaware lasts a lifetime, while tea comes and goes. In fact, we can even hand our teaware down (which is how all this antique teaware got here), so more attention to materials is important and can improve all our tea.

# The Palette of Liquor

## Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 11 or more identical white porcelain gongfu cups
- 茶 Teapot & tea you're familiar with

*Tip:* One helpful thing we have discovered is that many people benefit from creating a system to chart the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea. Using drawings to map one's insights can help to foster new ones. It is also useful for collating information from many experiments and also for creating new experiments. This could be a graph or any other type of chart.

## Procedure:

This experiment is quite simple to do. You merely have your identical cups to one side and brew gongfu tea as you normally would. After each steeping, you set a new cup aside. As the session progresses, you will have a cup set aside from each steeping in the order in which you poured them. That way, you will have an amazing visual picture of the session and smoothness of your brewing skills. Essentially, you will need one cup for you and each of your guests and then ten extra cups beyond that. You just brew tea as usual, setting one of the extra cups aside as you go along, enjoying a normal session of tea. It is very helpful to conduct this session in silence, focusing on your craft. This is easy if you are alone, but may need to be mentioned beforehand if you have guests. In this way, you can really see the effects of your brewing method after the session by bringing the cups back to the table and analyzing them. If there is conversation during your session, it will create obvious gaps in your cups, which may be a useful experiment in and of itself.



## Importance & Implications:

“Patience (耐泡)” refers to how many steepings we get from a tea. Obviously, the number of steepings you get will be determined in part by the kind of tea you're brewing, but brewing skills (gongfu) play much more of a role than you'd think. I have often heard Wu De say (and many of you have probably heard it, too) that you should be able to put a cup aside from every steeping of a session, and then when they are all lined up at the end, it should look like the palette charts on the walls of an art studio: There should be a smoothness from start to finish, with no clear difference from cup to cup. All the colors slowly grade into each other. These changes do not happen suddenly, but slowly and evenly. As we line the cups out, we should see this slow and even evolution in steepings. This means the tea was prepared evenly, by a steady and skilled heart. It also means that, as Wu De always says, our guests will walk away with an impression of the tea itself—overall and complete, as opposed to various steepings that are all drastically different from one another. Having a whole, rounded session like this doesn't just mean your tea will be much more patient; it also means a better memory of the tea—consistent and true. We want our guests to feel as if they understand the tea they just drank.





## Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 1 white porcelain gongfu cup per person
- 茶 A teaboat (cha chuan, 茶船)
- 茶 Teapot & tea you're familiar with

## Procedure:

Rest the teapot in the teaboat. For this experiment, you will do three successive steepings. You will have to pay close attention each time, though, as you'll only get one "real" chance (we'll explain why later). It isn't critical that you follow our order, but it may be the easiest way to experience the discrepancies: First, try not showering. For the second steeping, shower the pot before you fill it, but not after. We'll call that "showers before." Then steep the tea by showering the pot with hot water before you even open the lid, filling it up, and then showering it again after you have replaced the lid. We'll call this "showers before and after." Pour directly from the Yixing into your porcelain cup, without any pitcher. Like previous experiments, drink quietly and try to focus on the sensations in your mouth, upper palate and throat as much as you do on the flavor. You won't be able to repeat the experiment as accurately as the first time. This doesn't mean that we suggest you quit, but the differences just won't be as pronounced in later tries as they were the first time. An alternative that solves this problem, though in a cumbersome way, would be to have three pots, dishes and cups, and relegate one to each kind of "showering." That way, you could drink of them together as well, rather than consecutively.

## Importance & Implications:

Much of the skill and art of gongfu tea has to do with temperature, as these experiments show. Ideally, the transmission from kettle to cup should be uninterrupted. This is energetically ideal, as the water into the pot and tea into the cups is then smooth and without distortion. Does friction inevitably cause a loss of Qi, aroma, flavor and mouth-feel, as well as temperature? (You can look to the first, "Classic Three Cups" experiment for the answer to this.) And does that matter? This is another area of tea brewing that will determine the course of your gongfu journey, as there are two styles of gongfu brewing: "dry brewing (gan pao, 乾泡)" and "wet brewing (si pao, 溼泡)." The difference lies in the content of this experiment, as those who dry brew do not shower, and wet brewing means showering. Is this choice just preference? Aesthetics? It is always best to understand experientially!



# 淋水蒸氣帶來平靜

超越平凡的恩典

在蒸汽和光裡迷失



# Fluency Versus Precision



## Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 2 white porcelain gongfu cups per person
- 茶 Teapot & tea you're familiar with (to try with tea)
- 茶 A flat tea tray for the cups & coasters if possible

**Tip:** One tip that is also a kind of experiment in and of itself is to pay attention to your posture when conducting gongfu experiments. We have found that it is especially helpful for beginners to sit up very straight when trying to develop a sensitivity to the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea. Try straightening your spine without causing discomfort.

## Procedure:

Place your cups on the flat tray. The tray catches any spilled water as you pour fluently into these cups. The other cups are then placed on coasters, separated from one another but in the same configuration as on the tray. It is very helpful to isolate this variable if the coasters are the same material as the tray (in our case, purple-sand). Alternate between pouring methods with each infusion, pouring precisely into the cups on the coasters and more fluently into the ones on the tray. Pouring fluently means a continual pour from cup to cup without breaking the pour, gracefully filling each cup equally. Your cups should be placed together on the flat tray. Pouring precisely means breaking the pour between each cup, making sure not to spill, and placing the pour as precisely as possible, going back and forth between all the cups and filling them equally. For both methods, each cup should be equal in terms of volume and infusion. After you have filled both sets of cups with tea, taste them back and forth and notice the differences. You can also repeat this experiment with water, pouring from the kettle precisely and fluently in the same manner as the teapot.



## Importance & Implications:

There is something life-changing about the relationship between the pour and the tea liquor that we serve, because through this experience, we start to question which other movements affect our tea. Does the placement of my elbow matter? How about my shoulders? This experiment opens up all kinds of experiments into proper movements and highlights the relationship that martial arts has to the development of gongfu tea brewing, which Wu De discussed in his article in this issue, "The Origins of Gongfu Tea." The implications of this experiment, and others that focus on the way we move our bodies, can have lasting effects on our tea brewing and our lives, as the conclusions we find here may inspire us to change the way we engage in other daily activities as well. This is, in part, what makes tea a way of life—a Dao. The smallest aspect of our practice can ripple out and eventually change the way we walk, talk and live our lives. We hope this experiment inspires you to create others that focus on the movements in gongfu tea.



# The Space in the Teapot

## Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 2 identical white porcelain gongfu cups per person
- 茶 1-2 teapots & tea you're familiar with

*Tip: When doing experiments with a teapot, it is helpful to both include and take away the results of other experiments, adding dimension to your exploration. In other words, if you found that showering the pot is better, you may want to not do so during this experiment and then add this in later on, or repeat the experiment with it, stacking your results.*

## Procedure:

The ideal method of undertaking this experiment would be to have two identical purple-sand gongfu pots. As usual, use a lightly brewed tea (fewer leaves/shorter steepings), with the same amount in each pot (this is very important for this experiment, so it is ideal to use a scale and weigh out two to three grams for each pot). Then, brew the two pots side by side. Completely fill one and pour water up to 75-80% of the way in the other, leaving space in the pot. Steep them for the same amount of time, and then pour each into its own respective cup. (For the purpose of this experiment, you may want to time the steepings on your watch or count in your head, though we don't recommend such a practice in general.) Taste them back and forth, starting with the liquor from the completely filled pot (you can switch in later steepings, or, better yet, go back and forth from steeping to steeping, starting with the cup from the full pot one time and then the cup from the partially-filled pot in the next). Focus on the Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea and also note the temperature difference between the two cups. It is important to repeat this experience for many steepings, since the results are subtler than other experiments in this issue.

This method obviously requires two identical *zisha* pots—identical in terms of shape, clay, size and so on. For those of you who do not have two, you can still try the experiment using just one pot. Again, remember to brew your tea lightly and then alternate steepings between 75-80% full and completely full. Because you are not comparing the cups side by side, you should definitely take notes. You could also do a whole session one way and then another session using the second method. We recommend all of the above—the more you practice, the deeper you understand.

## Importance & Implications:

Once again we explore heat, though this time indirectly. This experiment has a lot of implications when it comes to the shape of the teapot you choose in gongfu brewing, which is one of the questions we get asked the most at the Center. The shape of the pot also determines the amount of space inside and the way it preserves heat due to the pressure that leaving space or not can cause. This influence is more minute than some of the previous experiments. We wanted to include one subtle experiment in this issue, involving something incredibly subtle. This shows how deep this practice of experimentation can go. Every path is a movement from gross to subtle, and gongfu tea is no different. As we progress, we increase in sensitivity and what used to be regarded as having little to no influence becomes drastic. Also, small things add up in the end, so any given point may not matter too much in terms of the final cup, but many little details added together can have a great impact. It is also important to return to these experiments again and again—even the ones you can feel clearly, as this will encourage a “beginner's mind” and help us to deepen our understanding. For subtle experiments like this one, it is essential. If you think about it, this experiment ties into some of the others in this issue...

# 茶壺的空間

色即是空 空即是色

茶道





茶是識



# The Brewer's Mind

## Materials:

- 茶 Kettle
- 茶 Any heat source
- 茶 1 white porcelain gongfu cup per person
- 茶 1-2 teapots & tea you're familiar with

## Procedure:

The experiment itself is very simple: get together with some friends who all know each other very well. Ideally, you should choose a tea you are all very familiar with and have shared many times. With the same teaware, water and tea, switch brewers every few steepings. It is important that the participants in this experiment follow the same brewing method. You can start over a few times if you have the time, switching the order of brewers so that the tea is brewed at different strengths by everyone at least once (since the first few steepings are different from the middle and later steepings). You can also conduct this experiment with two brewers brewing at the same time if you have two sets of identical teaware (it is important that the water, tea, cups, pots and kettles are the same). If there are two of you, for example, you can each brew two cups and then just trade one after each steeping so that you each have a cup brewed by yourself and one brewed by the other. Afterwards, you can have a discussion about the ways that the different brewers affected the tea. Did the flavor, aroma and mouthfeel change? In what ways were the physical characteristics of the tea affected by the change in brewers? What about the Qi? Since you all know each other very well, could you say that any of the ways in which the energy of the session changed match the character of the brewer?

## Importance & Implications:

This is an essential experiment for all tea lovers, as it shows that even if we use the same water, tea, teaware and method, we ourselves also have a very powerful impact on the tea. The mind of the brewer is perhaps more important than any other element in tea preparation. This truth, once experienced, has all kinds of dramatic implications for it means, in essence, that the mind of the brewer is in the tea! This means that we also drink one another when we drink tea, or at least the energetic influence of the other. This is, perhaps, why tea has sat between teacher and student in most all Asian lineages for millennia. What could be more poignant than figuratively and literally consuming the mind of one's teacher? And what about couples—doesn't this have a powerful implication on couples who share a tea practice?

# Oolong Tea

烏龍

2018 TRADITIONAL

OOLONG TEAS

傳統台灣烏龍茶





**O**ur Light Meets Life (光壽無量) fundraiser was created to use some small amount of tea to gather energy and resources towards the building of your future Center. So far, we have raised an extraordinary amount towards that end. Your support is incredible, and we hope to purchase some land very soon and begin making our shared dream of a permanent Center where tea lovers can come and study tea a reality (hopefully for centuries to come). We will architect Light Meets Life to be the greatest tea Center the world has ever known, with all the hospitality and wisdom of our current Center, Tea Sage Hut, multiplied by many times!

Over six years, we have tried our very best to find great teas and teaware at various price ranges and offer them at minimal markup so that you can donate what you wish for them, contributing a lot or a little to this magnificent cause. We are also transparent about our pricing, so you can at any time email us and ask us about our costs for any of the tea or teaware on our site.

We also want to take the time to express that we do not ever want you to feel obligated to contribute to the Light Meets Life fundraiser. Your support in this monthly Global Tea Hut is more than enough. As Wu De often says, “We don’t want you to give, we want you to want to give.” Only if and when you wish to support should you give the amount that is comfortable

for you, and with a free heart. We also want you to purchase Light Meets Life tea or teaware because you genuinely enjoy the tea or teaware, not just because you want to support this cause. We hope that Light Meets Life tea and teaware is good enough to stand on its own, in other words. We have certainly worked very, very hard to make that so.

In the future, we hope to offer a few more types of tea than we have so far, expanding our fundraiser slightly for the sake of raising more energy, and also to provide more types of tea to you, our beloved tea community. This doesn’t mean we are going to turn the site into a large shop with tons of types of tea. We are still committed to keeping this limited to a “fundraiser,” with annual teas offered in the spirit of transparency with donation-based pricing. What we mean by “expand” is that we want to offer a few more oolong, red and black teas along with our usual selection of puerh and dian hong, starting with three magical Taiwanese oolongs.

Firstly, we have an amazing opportunity to share one of the best tieguanyin oolong teas we have ever tried. This immaculate tieguanyin was grown at around 2,000 meters on Lishan, which is incredibly rare. Most of Taiwan’s tieguanyin varietal trees are in the north, in Muzha. High-altitude tieguanyin is very special. This tea is also processed using traditional techniques and is mostly hand-processed.

Traditional processing means deeper roast and more oxidation. This rich, creamy tieguanyin is therefore also an excellent candidate for aging. The tea was aged for three years after processing to allow the roast to mellow out. Nowadays, most tieguanyin in Taiwan and in Anxi is lightly-oxidized greener tea. We prefer the depth and patience of teas like this one. The flavor is full and rich, and very long-lasting. The fragrance fills the room from the teapot even and the Qi is uplifting.

We also have a return of the beautiful Lishan tea we call “Nostalgia,” which was our September 2016 Tea of the Month. The powerful terroir of the highlands of Taiwan combined with a master craftsmanship of this tea results in something that is transcendent. There are two versions of this amazing tea, a light and heavy roast, both crafted with the superb roasting skills of Mr. Tsai Mingxun (蔡明勳). And then see if, cup by cup, you and your guests don’t start to taste what’s beyond.

Each bag is wrapped in traditional rice paper, as all oolong tea was packaged back in the day. The traditional packaging adds charm. Nowadays, it is hard to find a shop-keeper or tea lover that knows how to fold the packages for tea like this. We had to ask an old man! Check them out on the website now:

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

# TeaWayfarer

*Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you 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 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 Marcel Kempf.*

I have traveled far in tea. My journey with tea began around five years ago with Japanese green teas, and I realized that tea was more than a beverage in bags. Shortly thereafter, I was introduced to oolong and puerh by our local tea house, and I started practicing something you could call “gongfu tea” at home by myself or with my partner, diving mostly into the vast world of Taiwanese oolong. Thanks to a classmate at my vocational school who was very interested in Japanese tea and tea culture, I had someone to share discussions and tea with. However, as nice as these tea sessions were, I had no real practice and I felt that something was missing, but I couldn't really tell what it was.

After a few years, I was looking online for more information on tea and tea culture and stumbled upon the words “Cha Dao” and then found Global Tea Hut. I instantly signed up to become a member, hoping to deepen my knowledge and discover new things. I ended up discovering so much more than just information: I found a community, fellowship and a path that has changed my life.

At first, I was just interested in the more linear aspects and articles about tea, tea production and experiments and rarely read any of the more spiritual articles. I work, quite literally, in a very binary occupation, and it took me quite some time and a lot of effort to overcome the behavior of rejecting these other topics. (I am in the IT field.)

In 2017, during my first Global Tea Hut trip to Anhui (and my first time to China at all), I finally started to realize that I was missing out on so much, just because of my inclination to deny all spiritual topics. I had many experiences on that amazing trip that changed my life. I began to see that there was much more to Tea than I had ever thought possible. I had a great time and learned so much about myself and about tea. I would highly recommend that you all take the time to go on one of these trips. They are truly life-changing.

After returning to Germany, I started to listen more to what tea and this tradition can teach me, and my life has improved in so many ways since then—from becoming more aware of my own mind patterns and interactions with the external world through daily meditation, to finally re-starting my martial arts practice after a break of a few years, and, of course, meeting so many beautiful and inspiring people through this leaf.

Looking back, I now realize that I had been yearning for a tradition, for culture and a way of life. I am very grateful for finding it, along with many beautiful new friends, here at the Hut. This community has become so important to me. I can't imagine life without it.



🍵👤: Marcel Kempf, Germany

There's still a long way to go in becoming the best version of myself, but I think I finally found a compass that can guide me there. I feel like the map is also now rolled up and tucked under my arm, though I may have a way to go. Tea has given me a path to walk and the tools to walk down that road, which is a gift that I will always be grateful for. Tea is such an amazing guide on this journey we all find ourselves on. As I sit and drink tea, I learn to find my way.

Recently, I visited the Tea Sage Hut to take a ten-day course. It was very helpful in my practice. I learned a tremendous amount and had the good fortune to reconnect with some old friends who were also taking the course (the kind of serendipity that only Tea can provide). Not only was it peaceful and educational, but it was also celebratory to find old friends here. Through Tea, we make friends all around the globe, which is for me still the most magical aspect of this whole experience.

If you find yourself in Frankfurt, make sure to drop me a message at [marcel.kempf93@gmail.com](mailto:marcel.kempf93@gmail.com) so we can meet and share some time and tea. I would love to host all of you at some point, as I have found that this community fosters great friendship and joy through Tea.

# Inside the Hut

COMING SOON TO GLOBAL TEA HUT MAGAZINE

茶主题: Tetsubins

茶道

茶主题: Classics of Tea

茶主题: Chajin & Teahouses

茶主题: Annual Trip



We need your help to get to a place where we can build your permanent Center, Light Meets Life. (And we do hope that you feel that our Center is yours, not ours.) If everyone in this community helped us find just one friend or a loved one to join Global Tea Hut, we would be looking for land and be breaking ground soon! We really are that close! Please help us spread the word about Global Tea Hut, sharing tea and love with your community in person and through social media. Also, let us know if you need any help in that!



Wu De will be in New York this coming June. We hope to see some East Coast friends at these events, which will be in the second half of the month. Stay tuned to our website for details!



Check out our live broadcasts on Facebook, Instagram and soon YouTube, which we do every month. Also, check out our "Life of Tea" podcast on Soundcloud and "Brewing Tea" video series on YouTube!



Have you listened to our podcast on Soundcloud yet? We have some amazing interviews there. The aim of that forum is to discuss Tea as an aspect of spiritual cultivation. These podcasts are great for a morning session or even a long drive.



Please feel free to write us if you see any mistakes in the magazine, which there are, of course—we are only humans and volunteers at that! We would also love to hear about any criticisms you have concerning the magazine or the Global Tea Hut experience in general. Of course, you can also write to tell us about topics you would like to see future issues cover or, even better, submit an article for our "Voices from the Hut" series. We always love the articles written by and for the community!

## Center News



It is Light Meets Life time!!! We are launching a giant, worldwide fundraiser to make the move this very year. This will be our permanent Center, offering tea courses for the rest of our lives and beyond, serving future generations of tea lovers. Visit [www.lightmeetslife.org](http://www.lightmeetslife.org) now!



Before you visit, check out the Center's website ([www.teasagehut.org](http://www.teasagehut.org)) to read about the schedule, food, what you should bring, etc. Make sure you apply early for courses as they fill up fast. This is why we need a bigger, more awesome Center.



The Center is also open for day visits between courses. If you find yourself in Taiwan but don't have the time to sit a ten-day course, you can also drop by for a visit, share some tea and perhaps a meal. Contact us to arrange a shorter visit. We'd love to share a hug and some tea.



We are saving up to buy or lease a van to drive you around during service periods and to take you to the tea farm and mountain to fetch water during courses.

## May Affirmation

*I focus and cultivate skill*

Do I scatter my energy? Do I feel distracted? I focus and find the depths of what I do. I seek to harmonize my life force with the essence of fewer things as opposed to the surface of many things. In this way, I achieve mastery in this very life.

# 工夫在心



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

*The most experimental tea magazine in the world! Sharing rare organic teas, a magazine full of tea history, lore, translations, processing techniques and heritage, as well as the spiritual aspects of Cha Dao. And through it all, we make friends with fellow tea lovers from around the world.*

**GLOBAL TEA HUT**

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

