

ZEN & TEA ONE FLAVOR

*The Definitive Review**Article by Lord Kaiya the Pious & Unbiased*

It is my great honor and joy to find myself, unexpectedly, the only person in the world qualified to announce to you the publication of Wu De's newest book, *Zen & Tea One Flavor*. There have been allusions to it here and there over the last year, just enough to leave us all impatient. Those of you that have been a part of that I am happy to say the wait is over! I think you will find as you read it that this is exactly the book you were secretly wishing would be written and find its way into your hands all this time. And I don't think that is a reaction that will be reserved for the members of this group who have been in contact with this tradition for some time now; it's a book that is called for and needed within the scope of modern tea literature, and we can only hope that it will be received as such amidst the seemingly endless list of titles out there today which seem to be so stuck on either the physical qualities of tea or its historical story (and even then only as it relates to man, not really tea itself) rather than its spirit.

I'm sure most of you have already read *The Way of Tea*, and some of you have had the good fortune to read *Faces of the Master* as well. If not, don't let this review discourage you; in their own way, each one is a prelude to and even a part of *Zen & Tea One Flavor*. Nonetheless, I have to say that this is my favorite of the three, to the extent that it's possible to compare what are certainly still very individual works, each with its own definitively unique content. In *The Way of Tea* we are led through some of the more delightful bits of factual tea history and masters, followed by a look into the philosophical aspects of a life of tea. In *Faces of the Master*, we do not even see the word tea appear at all as we journey through the semi-fictionalized (or not, who can say?) lives of legends whose existence even those by-the-book historians must acknowledge. In *Zen & Tea One Flavor*, however, there is something that is at once a combination of Tea's history, philosophy, and legends into something greater than any of these things individually, and also into something more ordinary at the same time.

As the introduction itself states, "...the essence of Zen is more easily communicated through art and life than it is in words, though it can indeed be instigated by language." Appropriately, then, at the beginning of every chapter we are first met with a beautiful illustration, followed by a Zen/Tea story, and then the author's commentary on the story, serving to fill in (or perhaps rather to widen) the gaps, as needed. Poignantly and in the spirit of the Zen circle, called an "enso", each chapter then finishes with a bit of poetry for inspiration. Lastly,

we are treated to the ten-part illustrated journey of an unknown tea saint as he climbs the 10,000-foot pole of Zen only to leap off of it; a summary-in-action of the process pointed to throughout the book. They are based on the famous ten ox-herding pictures of Zen.

I found this book to span the whole spectrum of what I could want from a book. From the simple perspective of a reader of books, I was delighted and entertained by many wonderful and unique stories, clever insights and beautiful illustrations. From the perspective of a normal guy who finds himself sometimes caught up in various forms of 'rush' and 'things to do', I found daily motivation not only to take time out to sit down for tea, but even inspiration that could transform my 'rush' into relaxation with the constant reminder that my tea preparation is my day-to-day activity. From the perspective of a person of tea, I found endless inspiration and boundless insights; an expansion of my ability to see the aspects of the Universe in each cup and the cup in each aspect of the Universe. Lastly, from the perspective of someone walking a spiritual path, I found a powerful tool that I could use daily to enhance my practice, spending just 15 minutes in the morning first reading the story then another 15 that night or the next day reading the commentary after the story had some time to steep, preferably washed down (and washed away!) with a few bowls of tea.

In short, then, I will state the obvious: I highly recommend this book. Especially because it is the first book ever published to contain my most Holy and Magnificent Name, thus rendering it a priceless collector's item, and possibly of great import in protecting your soul from certain Doom at the End of Days; if they arrive prior to the publishing of my own book. That book will be entitled "Give your Life-savings to Kaiya the Generous & Receive Redemption from Eternal Suffering One Flavor." In the meantime, however, get this book, or better yet come and visit us and we'll give you one for free!

* You can order the book via Amazon or directly from the publisher at: <https://wwwcreatespace.com/3966017>
One Hundred Percent of the profits go to support our center, free publications and roadside tea stalls.

Zen & Tea

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