

FINALLY!!

THE NEWS YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

As many of you know, our center here in Taiwan is an amazing place with three tea rooms. It is a magical building, filled with the light of hundreds of visitors, tea and food, smiles and good memories. It is, however, small for the traffic we are already receiving, and it looks like so many more of you are planning to come in the next year. It's hard to top the good news of far away friends coming for tea, but we think we can right now: this month a good friend and supporter of Tea Sage Hut donated around three acres for us to build a permanent center!

We are so excited to announce that we are half-way there. As all of you know, it has long been our dream to build a center that would outlive us all—we wrote about it in previous issues of this newsletter. It is amazing to see the universe responding to our dreams, and to watch them take form. We envision our center as a home for all of us. You are all welcome, ever and always, just as you have been to this our smaller (though still lovely) center in Miao Li. We see a bustling place with plenty of room for visitors, annual ten-day gatherings where all the members of this Hut can meet up for some good food,

tea and fellowship. Wouldn't it be great to meet the many brothers and sisters sharing this tea with you in person?

The land is just outside the town of Da Hu, Miao Li county, in the mountains. Unbelievably, it has a waterfall, a river with clean drinking water, cliffs and fertile land for growing vegetables and tea. That's right, we hope to have a thriving tea farm within five or ten years! Maybe one month of each year's Global Tea Hut will be tea we've grown and processed ourselves. It is our aim to create a fully sustainable community, using green and eco-friendly building materials, solar electricity and hot water, as many dry toilets as possible, organic ecological and arbor tea, a vegetable garden capable of sustaining most if not all our foodstuffs and of course Earth-centered, spiritually-minded human beings to maintain it all. We hope to be almost completely self-sufficient and act as a paragon for other sustainable communities in Taiwan and throughout the world.

Originally, we had dreamed of a more accessible center somewhere just outside the city, but our vision has changed in the last year to include a tea farm. We take many of our visitors to produce their own tea while here anyway. It will be nice for you to be able to interact





Part of our waterfall

with center trees, which we aim to grow ecologically with room between each tree as they grow deep roots and tall crowns—true living tea, as we have so often discussed in these newsletters. The area is bathed in morning mists every day, has its own river with mineral-rich soil, rocks and cliffs and vibrant green all around. There is a vast array of plant and animal life, ensuring fertility. Also, there is little else around—the air, land and water are all pollution-free. It is a fine place to grow some tea, which means it's also a nice place to meditate, calm down and drink some tea in quiet.

We plan to start with four buildings. The main hall will house tea rooms, Zen gardens, koi ponds, storage for tea as well as the kitchens and dining halls. We plan to build it out of stones quarried from the land itself. This will make the building strong and long-lasting. We hope to decorate in a Japanese style, with flying roofs, using antique wood, tatamis and simple décor throughout. Then, there will be three guest houses to start. Each will include four beds, a private bathroom and closets. We hope to use a lot of bamboo in the construction of these,

as there is a huge bamboo grove on the property. Bamboo can last up to five years before repairs are needed, and we will therefore have a constant supply. This is a cheap and environmentally friendly way to build our guest houses. Finally, we will build a meditation hall on the terrace near the waterfall. It, too, will be built in a Japanese style.

We also visualize a fully landscaped center with Zen stone gardens, flowers, and gorgeous trees. The tea will be grown on three or four stone terraces, and we also have a sizeable area for growing vegetables. With a bit of landscaping, you will be able to see the waterfall from anywhere on the property. It will be a place of solace and serenity, with plenty of opportunity to get close to the Earth as well.



Construction

While receiving the land is a tremendous gift, we are only halfway to our goal. We still need to raise the money to build. We think that it will take between 300 and 500,000 USD including all landscaping and decorations. We can do this in stages or all at once, depending on how much we are able to raise. We pray that others will contribute with an understanding that this is to be a home for all tea lovers—the world's only free tea school/center devoted to Cha Dao.

We see three potential avenues for fundraising: firstly, we are creating a self-sufficient, sustainable community and hope that economically-minded donors and/or environmental concerns are willing to support us as such; second, we are creating a tea school/center with free classes from several tea masters happening year round. All classes, room and board and expenses will be completely free. For that reason, we hope that many tea lovers around the world will be interested in participating in this monumental project. Finally, our center will be a place of meditation, Zen. We hope that meditators seeking a place to do spiritual work freely will be interested in contributing. When we speak of Zen, or Ch'an, we are not referring to any organized religion. On the contrary, we hope to create a completely free spiritual center where you can come and practice in any way you see fit, as long as it does not disturb the order of the center. All forms of meditation are welcome. We intend to provide meditative space, food and lodging that you can use in your own way.

If any of you would like to make a donation to our project or have any insights as to how we can raise

these funds and reach our goals, please contact us. There will be a page up for center donations on the Global Tea Hut website (www.globalteahut.org) and we will be putting up a video shot at the site soon. We will be updating you in all the following issues of these newsletters, so you will know how things are progressing. It has been raining a lot lately in Miao Li, so we don't have many good photos of the land to show you yet, but they will be forthcoming, both in future newsletters and on the website. In the meantime, these will have to do...

This is an exciting holiday season, indeed!

Finally, before we forget, we'd like to share the name of our future center with you: **Light Meets Life** (光壽無量)*.

**The Chinese is actually deeper, literally translating "Light Meets Life and Becomes Infinity."*



