

Letter from the Editor

In September, we enter the final quarter of the solar year. It's also a very important month in the Chinese lunar calendar because it is the largest moon. This month, the weather starts to get cooler and the first hints of autumn arrive. We find that our teas start to shift from green teas, sheng puerh or more lightly-oxidized oolongs to darker, more heavily roasted oolongs. Cliff Teas, especially, start showing up with more frequency.

The Moon Festival, or Mid-Autumn Festival (*Zhongqiu Jie*), is one of the most important Chinese holidays of the year. The full moon of this month is considered to be the largest of the year, and family members gather to have picnics or meals and stay up to see the full moon, which is a symbol of abundance, harmony and luck. It is also a romantic time, and you'll see lovers out on benches holding hands celebrating the fullest moon of the year. Chinese people eat pomelo as a symbol of fortune and abundance. They are huge and delicious, gifted to the center from many family and friends. We also eat moon cakes, which are traditional sweets with an egg yolk in the center, combining sweet and salty—like life. (We prefer the ones without the eggs, however, some of which are made with amazing pineapple filling!)

Every year, children hear a retelling of the story of Hou Yi and Chang'e, who lived during the reign of the emperor Yao, around 2200 BCE. Hou Yi was Heaven's archer and Chang'e was an attendant to the Mother of the West. They fell in love and were eventually married. Some of the gods were jealous of Hou Yi, however, and slandered him to the Jade Emperor who then banished the two lovers to live a mortal life on earth. Hou Yi hunted for the couple and they were abundant on earth. At that time there were ten suns in the sky. Each one was a three-legged bird that roosted in mulberry trees around the world. Each day, one of them would ride across the sky in Mother of the Sun's chariot. One day, however, they all rushed out together and dried up all the lakes and caused a huge drought, killing many people. Emperor Yao asked Hou Yi to shoot down nine of the bird-suns, which he did. The emperor gave him a pill of immortality as a reward, advising him to meditate and fast for a year to prepare himself. While he was away, Chang'e noticed the light coming from the pill he had hidden and ate it. She floated up into the sky. Hou Yi tried to follow but couldn't. She floated up to the moon. Once there, she coughed up half the pill and asked the rabbit who ruled the moon to make some more Elixir of Life for her lover. If you look closely at this month's full moon, you can still see the Jade Rabbit pounding herbs to make the elixir for Chang'e. In the meantime, Hou Yi meditated enough to



rise up and live immortally in the sun, longingly watching his beloved. The two are only united at the full moon of the Osthmanthus month (September), which is why this month's moon is the fullest and brightest of the year—testament to their love...

Membership around here is increasing all the time, and with hearts full of gratitude we acknowledge all the efforts you have put into helping spread the word. Thank you! We hope you feel like this is *your* Global Tea Hut as much as it is ours. Not only will you find an improvement in the quality of these envelopes as membership increases, but all the proceeds are going towards a center that also belongs to you. All the tea and teaware here are for learning and sharing. And a little bit of that travels in each of these envelopes every month!

This is a good month to share some tea. We have an exciting month planned for you, with some great tea and articles to learn from. Aside from just inviting new people into the Hut, take the time to look around and get to know some more of the people already here. You might find a lifelong friend sitting somewhere nearby! There's a list of local tea sessions happening at the end of this magazine. If none are close to you, maybe it is time to start one and get your name up on next month's list!

We hope and pray that the last quarter of this year is as full for you as the bright and radiant Osthmanthus Moon. With this package of tea and magazine, we send our enduring affection. We also have added some prayers for your happiness, health and fortune! With bowed heads and lifted bowls...