

Letter from the Editor

In October, we enter the ninth “Chrysanthemum Moon” of the lunar calendar. The ninth day of the ninth moon is an important day to pay respects to our elders. Nine is an important number in the *I Ching*, and in Chinese it is also a homophone for the word “forever”—so doubling the nine is like doubling forever. This day signifies longevity, and a festival on this day dates back to the third century BCE. Traditionally, people drink chrysanthemum wine or tea and pay respect to their oldest living relative. They also wear dogwood leaves to dispel misfortune. This day might also include a trip to the temple to pray for longevity themselves. Many Chinese people go hiking on this day, appreciate the chrysanthemums and eat rice cakes, often reciting poetry that was written for the holiday.

One story of this holiday’s origin is about a legendary figure named Huan Jing. His parents died of the plague, so he traveled to Zhong Nan Shan to learn medicine and save others. While there, a Daoist immortal took pity on him and gave him a blue dragon sword that could dispel demons. The immortal said another plague demon would arrive on the ninth day of the ninth moon and urged him to gather the people of his village on a hill outside town, luring them with the promise of chrysanthemum wine. Huan Jing took the villagers outside town and gave them dogwood to protect them, though he himself stayed behind to combat the demon. He slayed the demon with his magic sword and was immediately a hero worth celebrating, then to now...

Around this time, it really begins to feel like Autumn in Taiwan. We start shifting more and more into aged oolongs, aged sheng puerh and the occasional shou puerh. The world starts to shift towards a more restive, Yin energy. The days grow shorter, but also lazier. Some tea farmers will have a Fall harvest. That happens once every five to ten years in Wuyi. In Yunnan, on the other hand, it is quite common to have a Spring and an Autumn harvest. The energies of these teas are very different. The Spring tea is vibrant and Yang, while the Autumn tea is usually softer, smoother and less potent. Sometimes Autumnal puerhs are amazing. It’s fun to drink a few at this time of year, as well. We find ourselves turning to Autumn teas from the previous year, though, as the age and rest makes the tea more suitable for the cooler weather here in Taiwan. Since it is so hot in the summertime, the coolness of Autumn is often a relief—a time to finally shut off the air-conditioning.

As you are reading this, I am in Spain conducting a retreat and several workshops on tea and Cha Dao. My heart is over-flowing with gratitude for all the meaning and purpose this community has brought to my own life,



and to the lives of everyone involved. Every single person in this community that I have met is amazing, and we’ve always bonded right away, which assures me that I can say I already love those of you I haven’t met as well!

We hope you notice the improvements in this magazine, as we seek to inform you more about tea and Cha Dao and to do so in the best way we can. Looking back at the magazine from January of this year to this, the tenth month, you can see such a dramatic improvement in the layout, pictures, articles and other content. We have been true to our word that as the community expands, we will utilize some of the growing energy towards improving this experience. And so many of you have also been true to yours, helping us to spread the word!

Let’s continue our effort to get a new member every month so that we can reach our goal. Not only does this result in a better magazine, more varied teas and articles, but it will also fund the construction of our new center, Light Meets Life. This is a unique project, as this experience supports a center that you can visit, learn about meditation and Cha Dao, as well as to retreat and gain perspective. And then, upon returning home, the magazine is more meaningful. Having visited here and met the authors, these pages will be more personal and heartfelt. We want to continue to encourage this movement from magazine to center and back to magazine, even now before we build our future center! A bowl always awaits you at the Tea Sage Hut...