

# From the Editor

In July, the sun passes its zenith and tea moves towards a warm, relaxed vibe at the Center. We have fewer guests and more afternoon tea, and our teas turn towards young sheng puerh, organic *shincha* from Japan (which provides us the opportunity to delve into rarely-opened boxes and use our Japanese teaware, as well as some rarely-seen brewing methods), and, of course, Liu Bao, which can be very cooling. Amongst the ten greatest tea sessions in the life of a Chajin, one would surely have to be a lazy summer afternoon with no schedule or time to speak of and some lovely green tea or Liu Bao to drink by the bowl.

Sometimes I find it difficult to know how to introduce Global Tea Hut to someone, especially when time is limited. You could start with the magazine, of course. There are other English-language tea magazines, and quite happily so, but none as holistic, covering the entire spectrum of Tea from history and lore to production and processing, and from antique to modern, linear to spiritual. And any discussion of the magazine need mention that it is ad- and skill-free, without any financial agendas. Though many beautiful tea merchants gather here, this isn't the place for their tea business, but rather for their tea hearts. But there is so much more to this experience than the magazine, starting with the all-important fact that it comes with tea—tea we all share together around the world. Some of us retreat and enjoy the tea alone; others use it with the magazine to learn and to educate themselves on tea; and many of us share it with others, using these teas as an opportunity to practice service and grow through the giving.

Why bring this up? Well, the point is that, when introducing Global Tea Hut, there is rarely time for the aspect of this experience to which this month's issue is testament: *community*. Even if you cursorily summarize the magazine and tea it comes with, leaving out the gift, how do you describe the global tea community? This isn't a business for us—it's a *family*. Each year, we have these issues devoted to our now-annual trips to tea-growing regions. Such activities take this project off the page. They connect people in life, as the Center also does. And this is what makes Global Tea Hut truly unique. Without the heart of connection, this is just more wasted paper and ink. (By the way, we are working on a digital version of Global Tea Hut.)

This year's trip was a stunning example of the best Global Tea Hut has to offer—the real perk of membership! Twenty-five of us traveled to the rural jungles of

Yunnan, the birthplace of Tea, to sit beneath old trees and share bowls, to learn how tea is made by making it ourselves and to travel further down the Dao of Cha. As we do on all our trips, we made a sincere effort to bring all of you with us: we spoke of you often, hand to heart, as we made your tea, and sent prayers to you during meals. Travelers on this trip made heartfelt and very real sacrifices to capture the trip through photography and video. Deep bows to Renata and Ilyas for missing many important experiences in order to let you all in. They carried the burden with honor and grace, knowing very well that it meant that many who could not come with us due to financial or geographical obstacles would at least see the journey and connect to us in spirit.

If none of this expresses the intangible and most important aspect of Global Tea Hut, perhaps my greatest highlight from the trip will. As most of you know, Master Tsai went with us this time. (If you haven't met him yet, you can read all about him in the January 2016 issue.) Anyway, a switch flipped on day seven of the trip; the change was natural, effortless and happened so quickly that many probably missed it altogether. But not me. It flattened me. I was in tears, crying privately several times over the course of the rest of the trip. At first, it may seem like nothing special, but it captures the essence of what being in Global Tea Hut does to you: For the first time, Master Tsai started saying "*our* Center." From day seven on, every single time he spoke of the Center or Global Tea Hut, he used the word "*our*." If you haven't yet felt the "*our*" in "*our* Center" or "*our* Global Tea Hut," may you do so soon. And if you already carry that feeling in your heart, may this issue celebrate and deepen the very real and true sentiment that this is indeed *your* Center and *your* Global Tea Hut!



## Further Reading

This month, we have two special bonus articles by Taiwanese masters Zhou Yu and Huang Chan Fang, both of whom are mentioned in this issue. These excellent articles will be up on our blog shortly. Enjoy!