

From the Editor

In September, the weather in Taiwan turns to tea. It cools down and the oppressive heat of the summer lifts, allowing us to open the doors and drink a greater variety of tea. And then there are the rains: a tea session in the rain is one of the true joys of a tea lover. The sibilant drone lulls you and encourages the tranquility of the bowl. It is a joy to be inside—dry, warm and full of contentment for all that you have in your life. At such times, oolong seems to bring the right melody for that drone of rain, and we find ourselves drinking traditional oolongs, aged oolongs and also Cliff Tea all the time. Of course, that also means more gongfu tea around the Center.

Though it means a lot of extra work, this is one of our favorite times of year. The Extended Edition of Global Tea Hut is a chance for us to get into a single topic more deeply, making lasting contributions to the tea world. We do this in lieu of a gift. And we spend several months discussing and planning, thinking about which topic we'd like to explore more fully, knowing that these issues are a big part of the education in tea that Global Tea Hut provides. Our first year, September 2014, we created the largest English-language publication on puerh tea (except for a sociological work by a Yunnanese scholar), which has since become an invaluable source of tea wisdom for the thousands of tea lovers who have downloaded and read the online version. Articles from that monumental issue have also been posted in many of our Further Readings posts on our blog, which enhance and contextualize topics and also point out relevant articles we've already published. Then, in 2015, we translated and annotated the entire *Cha Jing* by the Tang Dynasty tea scholar Lu Yu. The hundreds of annotations alone have made the translation a much-needed contribution to the scholarship of tea. Lu Yu is the most famous of all tea sages, and his influence is without rival.

This year, we've decided to stay closer to home, exploring and learning about Taiwanese tea together. Taiwan is, after all, one of the tea capitals of the world. As such, making an issue about Taiwanese tea, including culture, brewing methods, history, etc., would have exceeded the pages of even an extended edition. We had to focus our exploration a bit more. We decided to cover the many, varied oolong teas of Taiwan: where they grow, some of their history, how they are processed, what varieties they are made from, and so on. You could say that this issue is a geographical survey of Taiwanese oolong tea, including not just where each tea is made, but how. As you will see, our preferences for organic, traditionally processed oolong have steered this vessel and very much determined the orientation and destinations on our journey.

Traveling further into any tea region, history or topic exposes just how vast, rich and varied the tea world is. This can be intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. It can also be inspiring. Even after decades of study, I am often amazed at how much there is still to learn. Like a true romance, I want to know everything about my beloved, recognizing also that I can't. "Still in love after all these years," Master Lin often says.

We hope that this issue inspires you to learn more about, discuss and appreciate Taiwanese tea. Taiwan is our home. We love it here. The people are amongst the kindest in the world and tea is very much at home here: in every home and in all social settings—from monastery to family gathering—inspiring peace and tranquility as well as friendship, hospitality and a love for kindness. And though it may not always be overtly discussed, we hope that all the interest, curiosity and demand for Taiwanese tea that this issue generates will bring more of the right people to the tea table: *you!* There is a growing organic, sustainable movement in Taiwan, amongst farmers and tea lovers alike. But it is struggling. All the farms we'll visit in this issue are, of course, organic and sustainable. However, the majority aren't. While it's wonderful to discuss tea processing, teaware, brewing, culture and all else tea related, none of that will matter if there isn't any tea. What will an issue on Taiwanese tea mean in fifty or a hundred years if there aren't any leaves? Wouldn't we be a part of the problem if we caused a great demand for Taiwanese tea from various regions without this caveat? Explore and drink, as no magazine—no matter how extended—will be as educational or as rich as a tour of Taiwanese teas in the drinking of them. But do so responsibly, caring about and preserving the teas you explore and the environment that made them. This is the Global Tea Hut way!



Further Reading

This month, we hope to expand this already in-depth issue to make it one of the most comprehensive publications on Taiwanese tea ever. We hope that this issue will contribute to a growing awareness of how wonderful and beautiful Taiwan is.

**Further Readings are posted on our blog each month.*