

# From the Editor

**I**n February, the weather in Taiwan is cool, so we boil teas like black tea bricks, Liu Bao and sometimes shou puerh. We also sit for some nice bowl tea or gongfu sessions with the same teas, throwing the occasional aged or traditionally processed oolong into the mix. Our trips to the hot springs continue, and we always take an Yixing thermos with us to sip from when we are there. Our usual hot springs tea is a dian hong mixed with a shou. You should experiment with blending these teas if you haven't yet. When done properly, it can be amazing in the winter! Usually we do a seventy/thirty split, with shou being the primary tea in the blend.

This is also a special time in Taiwan, as it is Chinese New Year. Firecrackers explode all around us everywhere as families gather to celebrate. We have big dinners to attend, full of cheer and happiness all around. You can see lion dances all around town, with thunderous drums and gorgeous colored costumes. There are even contests held to see which team has the best costume, music and dance routines. Everyone is celebrating throughout the island, which is more carefree than usual. It is a great time to visit Taiwan, though certainly not the quietest, which is why we try to schedule our courses around the New Year celebrations.

This is an exciting year for Global Tea Hut. We have some beautiful issues planned, and as our budget increases along with our membership we have more room to translate articles, including a special in our Classics of Tea series, not to mention more travel to exciting tea regions to cover the processing, history and folklore of teas and tea regions we have never explored together, and, of course, some exciting new teas to drink together over this Year of the Dog. We need your help to continue this trend and reach our goal of 10k subscribers by 2020, which will build Light Meets Life, the biggest and best tea center in the world! As you can see, helping spread the word and growing this global community not only helps us build our center, it also means more improvements in the experience itself, including better and more varied information and tea, as well as more Global Tea Hut trips to tea growing regions!

This is an important issue. We have tried to create more balance throughout these issues, covering tea holistically, which means processing, science, history, folklore and more. We never intended for this magazine to be a mouthpiece for our tradition. The Center can serve as that, protecting and transmitting the teachings of our lineage. These magazines, on the other hand, have always been about a growing community of tea lovers around the world. And, for that reason, we have tried to cover tea from all perspectives, inviting all of you to contribute articles and translating the ideas, opinions and insights of various authors here in Asia, as well. We hope that these magazines, especially over the course of a few months, provide something for everyone interested in tea. We have a reputation for being "spiritually focused,"

which is not necessarily a bad thing, though it is not entirely true either, as we feel we have achieved a balance of linear and spiritual topics, offering as much information about tea as we do discussions about tea as a means of self-cultivation. But we do intend to devote at least one issue a year to tea and meditation, as this is central to our message.

When we host events around the world, we always try to offer a balance of tea ceremonies, workshops on tea as self-cultivation (Cha Dao) and linear workshops, which are more like lectures that offer information on tea, tea regions, processing, etc. We love tea. We love learning about tea. And that means on all levels, intellectually and spiritually. For us, balance has always been the goal. It is great to read about tea processing and lore, but without a deep practice this can become too lofty, heady and disconnected from actual tea preparation. Similarly, too much spiritual discourse and we can become ungrounded, not understanding the simple, quotidian spirit of tea, which has always been unadorned and very grounded. A bit of Heaven and a bit of Earth is the Way of tea, and of Zen. And we hope that you feel like we do, that Global Tea Hut is a perfect balance of both styles of education.

This is our second edition devoted to Tea and Zen. The first was published in February of last year. These issues allow us to explore the relationship between meditation and tea, and also to cover all the various retreats we have hosted in the last year, which were important, life-changing gatherings for many of the people in this community. We hope that the insights offered in these pages help deepen your meditation practice if you have one, or encourage you to begin including meditation into your tea life, as the two are truly "one flavor."



## —Further Readings—

This month, we recommend re-reading the November 2017 issue, which is packed with all kinds of articles on shou puerh, many of which will provide a deeper context for this month's tea. Also, since this is part two of our Zen & Tea series, you could check out the February 2017 issue on the same topic.