



國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE
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翠玉烏龍



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Cover photo: Wu De picking this month's tea



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Letter from the Editor

In August, the summer begins to move away from us. It's time to head outdoors for those tea sessions we've been planning, perhaps serving tea to kind strangers at the park! As we always say, this is a tradition of service—every aspect of Global Tea Hut is about serving tea. You can learn more about tea by serving it than any other way. In that way, the spirit of these envelopes extends beyond you and the people you know, and out into your community: changing societies, changing the world! One bowl at a time...

Here at the center, we spend the summer drinking some organic green teas, spring oolongs (like this month's tea), a lot of newborn sheng puerh and a small amount of freshly harvested Japanese green tea (called "shincha", which literally means "new tea"). Such teas are cooling and nice on a hot day, reminding you that tea is the antidote for everything: warming when you are cool and cooling when you are warm! As I always say, "If you have problems, drink some tea; if you don't have any problems, drink some tea!"

We have had a great summer. Because the weather is nice at home, and very hot in Taiwan, we tend to have fewer guests in June. This means we can take a break from serving you all, work on some improvement projects around the center and I can go to Malaysia to learn some new tea wisdom from my master. I had a great trip this summer, returning with an assortment of tea, teaware and new lessons to share. Also, we installed a whole new shelving unit in the main tea hall here, which opened up the room, making it feel twice as large as before. We used antique wood we purchased from a warehouse in Northern Taiwan. Through a beautiful synchronicity, we found a local carpenter who enjoys tea and is also a meditator and a vegetarian. He did an amazing job! You can see a bit of his work behind us in the videos...

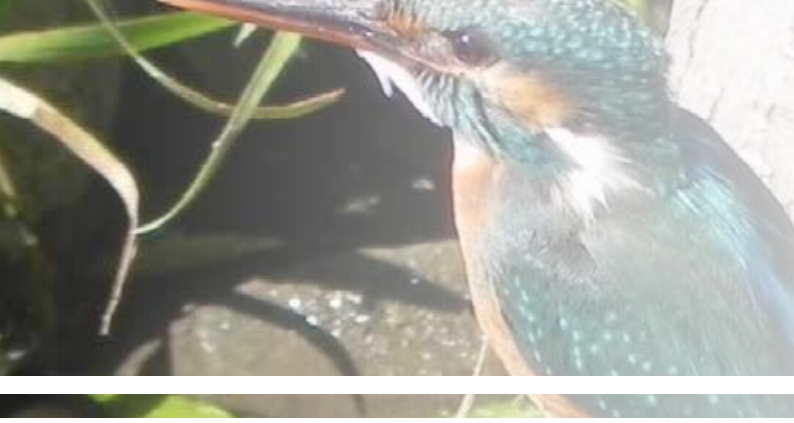
And that brings us to the biggest change to the Global Tea Hut experience: *the videos!* Of course, one of the lesser aims we have in making these video discussions is to help promote this magazine, opening this community to more people and generating the energy to build our future center. But that isn't the primary motivation behind them. We really just want to continue improving and enhancing this experience, adding new content in more media forms so that the experience of receiving Global Tea Hut gets better and richer from month to month. And we feel very proud of all the work we've put into achieving that aim: the magazine looks stunning, the articles are improving and the new videos add a whole other dimension. We want them to give more of a face to the authors and help you feel what it's like to visit the center for those of you who haven't yet been here. We also



want to expand upon the article in the magazine, adding tangential and interesting backstory for those who want to hear more. Whether you have ever been here or not, the videos leave you with a feeling like you have dropped by for some tea and a chat—an experience our guests love when they are here and miss after they go!

We are deeply grateful for all the help you have given in promoting this magazine and all it stands for. We are growing steadily. And we hope that you find us true to our word: *as the membership to Global Tea Hut increases, so too will the experience improve!* We hope to travel more, gather more journalistic articles, introduce you to more tea farmers and producers, as well as teaware artisans and, of course, find more excellent teas to share with you! We hope that the improvements we've already brought to the tea table are motivation enough to encourage you to keep sharing Global Tea Hut.

This community has changed so many lives for the better—ours most of all! And as it grows, we get closer to building a permanent place we can all visit and share tea spirit, learning and self-exploration. With these envelopes we send to you all our prayers for your health and happiness, as well as a heartfelt invitation that you come visit us in Taiwan and see how your funds are utilized to share tea wisdom, and awaken harmony through Cha Dao.



Tea of the Month

SPRING 2014 TSUI YU OOLONG

MING JIAN, TAIWAN

In 1644, the Manchus once again conquered China, beginning the Qing Dynasty. Around that time, huge waves of immigrants moved to Taiwan to start a new life, often running from the economic/political problems resulting from such dynastic change. Most of these immigrants came to Taiwan from Fujian, one of the brightest leaves on the great tree of Chinese tea, for Fujian is the birthplace of Oolong tea, as well as many other kinds of famous tea. Even today, it is a certain stop on any tea lover's tour of tea mountains, including Wuyi Mountain, where Cliff Tea (*Yan cha*) is grown, Anxi, birthplace of Iron Goddess (*Tie Guan Yin*) and Fu Ding, where white tea comes from... It should come as no surprise, then, that the settlers from such a tea land would bring tea with them, hoping to plant it on the magical island they saw shimmering above the mist, rising out of the ocean like the great turtle their beloved Guan Yin rides through the Heavenly waters.

The tea that those early settlers brought thrived in Taiwan, especially in the mountains. The soil is rich in volcanic minerals and the mists that come in from the seas fill the valleys and highlands with the moisture that tea loves. The humidity, temperature, rainfall, mists and clouds as well as the gravelly soil are all ideal for tea growth—so much so that you have to wonder if the Fujianese found that out after they brought tea, or if they brought tea after they realized how suitable the island would be for the cultivation of tea. Of course, the destiny of the tea trees was also rewritten by the journey across the straight...

One of the ancient names for tea is “Immovable”. All the earliest tea sages had to find wild tea trees, gathering leaves like any other sacred herb. It took a long time for tea to be domesticated. For many thousands of years, tea trees were of the forest—a medicine that the shamans and Daoist mendicants sought out for its spiritual effects. Eventually, though, tea was domesticated, and then carried further than it could have spread on its own. Soon enough, tea was propagated on many mountains in China, and new varieties started to evolve, with amazing new characteristics, flavors, aromas and Qi.

Like many plants, every tea seed is unique, allowing it to rapidly evolve to new environs. And without any of the grafting technology used in plantation agriculture today, all the traditional teas were what we call “Living Tea”, which, as many of you will remember, means that they were seed-propagated, allowed to grow, lived in biodiversity and were cultivated with respect. The early farmers quickly realized that when they moved tea to a new

location, it changed completely to suit its new home. As a sacred herb, tea has always decorated Chinese relationships, from business deals to spiritual transmissions, offerings to the gods and even weddings. Even today, the Chinese wedding ceremony surrounds tea: the bride makes tea for the groom, and his acceptance of the tea into his body is an acceptance of his new wife. One of the other aspects of why tea was used in such relationships is precisely that they also hoped these commitments would be “Immovable”.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the tea trees planted in Taiwan quickly developed unique personalities due to the terroir here. It's amazing how quickly this happens, especially when skilled craftsman are involved. Not only do the trees evolve into new varieties naturally, but farmers begin to create new hybrids, researching the differences in search of wonderful new teas. They also adapt their processing methodologies over time, listening to how the leaves want to be dried. Great skill (*gongfu*) is always a listening to the medium. In tea brewing, for example, we try to brew the tea as it wants to be brewed. Similarly, master tea makers adapt their processing to suit the leaves, the season, the rainfall, etc. Saying that they processed the tea the way it “wanted” to be processed is perhaps misleading, but English lacks the proper sentiment. More literally, what we mean by this is that as new varieties evolved to new environments, influenced by the unique terroir there, the farmers also evolved their processing—testing and experimenting, “listening” to the results as they drank each year's tea, and slowly changing their methods to bring out the best in the tea. In fact, bringing out the best qualities of that variety is what we mean by processing the tea the way it “wants” to be processed. You could say the same about brewing any particular tea.

With the help of the Portuguese, Dutch, and later the Japanese, Taiwan tea production would gain international reputation. From 1895 to 1945 Taiwan was under Japanese rule. At that time, the Japanese sought to increase all agricultural production island-wide, and took a great interest in Taiwanese tea. With the help of local farmers, they formed the *Taiwan Oolong Tea Research and Development* in 1926. They focused on research into new varieties of tea that would be suited to different terroirs around the island. They hoped to optimize desirable flavors, aromas and other characteristics in Taiwanese oolongs and also promote a greater resistance to pests, foreboding the detrimental effects pesticides could have on sustainable agri-



culture. They also brought large-leaf seeds from Assam to central Taiwan, creating the plantations near Sun Moon Lake that were later abandoned, after the Japanese left, and have recently been tended again to produce marvelous, wild red tea.

After the Great War, much of that early research was continued and many unique varietals were created to suit Taiwan. In the 1970's the three most famous varietals unique to Taiwan were put into practice, often called the "Three Daughters": Golden Lily (*Jing Shuan*), Kingfisher Jade (*Tsui Yu*) and Four Seasons Spring (*Si Ji Chun*). Some of you who have been in the Hut for a while will remember that we sent you Mr. Xie's Four Seasons Spring in June of 2013. At some point, we'll also send out Golden Lily, so you'll get the chance to taste all the Three daughters.

The Three Daughters have played a large role in propelling Taiwanese tea to such prominence in the tea world over the last few decades—an eminence that has brought positive influences to the island, in the great surge of economic growth for farmers and aboriginals, as well as the development of one of the world's richest and most vibrant tea cultures, but also negative influence, for the great increase in demand for Taiwanese tea has also increased the need for agrochemicals and therefore caused a lot of environmental destruction. Now is the time for

Terroir & Tea

"Terroir" is a French word that is generally used in discussions of wine, but it is so applicable to tea as well that most tea lovers have adopted it into their discussions of the Leaf. Terroir denotes the special characteristics of a place, found in its geology, geography, climate and even cultural heritage, which interact with a cultivated plant species to create unique expressions. Terroir is the soil and weather of a particular region; the geography and culture of the people and their relationship to the plant, and even the microorganisms and their interaction with the plants. Every place has a unique soil composition, pH, minerals and climate—all of which create a distinctive tea. When we talk about a tea's terroir, we are speaking to the unique environment that created it, one which couldn't be reproduced. Even if you took a grafting of a tree and cloned it elsewhere, it wouldn't be the same since the sun would be weaker or stronger, the soil composition different, etc.

those of us who love Taiwanese tea to use its pivotal role in the tea world to begin encouraging farmers to produce the same magical varietals of tea we know and love, only in more sustainable ways! And our tea of the month helps further that dream!

Later on in this issue, we'll focus on a deeper understanding of the varietals of tea in Taiwan. For now, let's move on to our tea of the month, which is one of the Three Daughters, *Tsui Yu*.

“Tsui” is a very old, traditional character in Chinese which refers to the lovely blue-green color of a kingfisher’s feathers and “Yu” is jade. As you look longingly into the depths of these small rolled balls of tea, you will notice a bluish green hue. Even on the trees, the leaves have a bluish-green cast to them. It is known for having the aroma of flowers and the taste of fruit. Nutty and sweet, it can often taste like seaweed, lima beans, lotus, peaches or plums, cassia or lilac, depending on where it was grown, from which season (it’s terroir in other words), as well as the processing.

The quality of oolong tea is always as much dependent upon the skill of the maker as it is on the trees and terroir. Oolong is the most complicated of all tea drying, requiring more steps and a greater adaptation from season to season depending on the weather and the leaves. Our tea was grown organically in Ming Jian by our beloved Mr. Xie. And Ming Jian is home to more *Tsui Yu* than anywhere else in Taiwan.

Taiwanese oolong production follows the general pattern that all oolong does, with variations in the degree of oxidation or roast—making oolong the most varied genre of tea, spanning an huge spectrum of oxidation from greener oolongs, like this month’s *Tsui Yu*, to more heavily oxidized teas like Eastern Beauty. Oolong is picked and then withered outdoors and indoors. As it is withered it goes through the most characteristic step of oolong tea: shaking. (If you are interested, you might want to check out the story of how oolong got its name in the September, 2013 issue of Global Tea Hut.) The indoor withering occurs on large, circular bamboo trays that are deftly tossed by the farmers with a skill that makes it seem simple, when in fact it is very difficult to make the leaves dance properly (you may spill them all, or even toss them in your own face as Wu De once did). The withering is to begin oxidation as well as to allow the moisture to depart the leaves so that they are limp and can be manipulated (they would break if they were rolled right after plucking). The shaking then bruises the leaves, causing cellular changes. The best tea producers can dance and shake the leaves in such a way that only the edges will be bruised, leaving a slight redness around the edges.

After withering/shaking, the tea is then fried in a dry wok to kill a green enzyme in the tea that makes it bitter. In fact, this stage is called “kill-green (*sa chin*)”. This also arrests oxidation. This means that different degrees of withering will result in higher or lower oxidation in oolong tea. After the kill-green stage, the tea is rolled. This breaks down the cells and shapes the tea. There are two shapes of oolong tea, striped and balled. The striped teas, like Wuyi Cliff Tea, are rolled across bamboo trays with ridges to break the cells and twist them into long stripes. Balled teas, like our tea of the month, are rolled in twisted cloth that tightly compacts the tea, shaping it into small balls that unfurl when you steep the tea.

The final stage in the processing is to roast the tea dry. Some traditional oolongs then undergo a later, stron-

ger and longer roast to deepen the aroma and flavor. Our tea, however, is a lightly-oxidize, green oolong, so the roast is just to dry the tea and seal in its freshness.

Tsui Yu is an amazing tea, especially when it is organic. It is great to drink in the summer, as it is cooling and refreshing. We find that Mr. Xie’s *Tsui Yu* is smooth with hints of lilac, seaweed, nuts or beans. It finishes with a lasting sweetness that lingers on the breath (*hui tian*). The energy is bright and uplifting, reminiscent of summer skies and grassy parks. They say that all *Tsui Yu* has an aroma like wild flowers and flavors of fresh fruit. Do you find that in this tea?

In drinking this month’s tea, you are drinking a bit of Taiwanese history, as this tea is so emblematic of this island and its tea culture. As it is home to our center, we take pride in the amazing teas and tea culture Taiwan has to offer, trying our best to expose our guests to as much as possible. Our love for Taiwan and her teas also leaves us heartbroken when we see the environmental impact unhealthy tea production has. This tea is an amazing solution: beautiful, delicious and bright tea grown completely organic and sustainably by those who are as devoted to the preservation of Nature and Taiwan as they are to tea itself! After all, the daughter is a reflection of her mother...



*Through the wind soughing the pines
And past the cyan bushes
That cling to the cliffside,
The kingfisher warbled
At the passing brook.
“Do you hear the distant kingfisher?”
Tea asked with a sip.
Straining, I listened again.
“I do indeed,”
I replied with another draught.
“Then enter there.”*

—Wu De

Brewing Tips for This Month's Tea

This month's tea is ideally brewed gongfu. As we've mentioned often before, it is difficult to provide proper brewing instructions without first knowing what kind of teaware and water you're using. For that reason, we encourage you to contact us at globalteahut@gmail.com with any specific brewing questions.

The best way to brew gongfu tea is with an Yixing pot, a tea boat of some kind and some porcelain cups. As this is a green, lightly-oxidized oolong, it is best if the water is not too hot (somewhere around 90 degrees Celsius). We recommend not using a thermometer, though. Remember, "gongfu" means "skill", it means "mastery". To master tea, you'll want to learn to use your senses. Try looking at the size of the bubbles, for example. Look for what the Chinese call "fish eye", which are the medium-sized bubbles that come before the tempest of a full boil (called "old man's hair" or "dragon water" in Chinese).

First, rinse all your teaware. Then place your tea in the pot. As we mentioned before, a good rule of thumb is to cover the bottom so that you can still see the bottom, like the first fall of autumn leaves covers the ground (such generalities will only get you so far, but it's a start). Rinse the tea, pouring the wash away quickly. Then begin steeping. Remember to shower the pot both before and after pouring (see this month's Gongfu Tea Tips). At that point, you can decant the tea into the cups in circular motions, moving from cup to cup to ensure the liquor is consistent amongst them all.

Another tip for this month's tea is to take small sips. Oolong is better enjoyed in fine, small sips, as the aroma and flavor will unfold more fully that way. Also, the Qi of oolong comes into the subtle body through the mouth and nose, in upward-moving energy.





TAIWAN TEA VARIETALS

WU DE

There is magic in the way tea trees have changed over time, evolving into new varieties based on their terroir. When you see just how much variety there is in the tea world, you can't help but feel some awe, as well as a sense of great excitement and adventure, for there is so much to learn, so many teas to taste and so many cups to share! Some of the famous varieties of tea are wild mutations, created by the energies of Nature and Earth, while others are the genius of generations of farmers and masters who devoted their lives to the Leaf. And looking back at the many millennia of culture, heritage and spirit that have gone into tea, a Chajin (tea person) can't help but be overwhelmed with gratitude.

Many authors, especially in English, write that all tea is *Camellia sinensis* and that the differences in teas are all in the processing. There is truth in this, though it is also potentially misleading. It is important to remember that processing methods developed over time in response to certain varieties of tea, which in turn evolved in response to a particular terroir. Farmers were learning, honing their skills through some trial and error, as well as a deep connection to a life of tea. It would not be correct to say that oolong, for example, is just a method of processing tea, because that processing was advanced to suit certain varieties of tea. And as oolong varieties have changed, moving from place to place (whether naturally or carried by men), so too have processing skills adapted and changed, creating a whole array of different oolongs. So you could say that oolong is both a processing method and a variety (or more correctly varieties as there are now many).

Nowadays, there is a lot of experimentation, processing teas from one region in the way that they are made elsewhere. Like most of the modern world, this fusion is due to faster communication, more access to information, easier travel and a greater connection to the rest of the tea world that modern farmers enjoy. And a lot of that is great. People traditionally only ever bought tea from tea shops, but nowadays many people can purchase directly from farms, often resulting in a fair trade for the farmers themselves. And some of the new experiments do result in amazing teas, like the purple red tea from De Hong many of us know and love. But the majority of such teas don't turn out well, like the modern attempts to cultivate Taiwan's Three Daughters, as well as *Ching Shin* oolong, in Vietnam and Mainland China. No matter how nice the trees or the skill of the farmer, you can't find the same quality elsewhere. In other words, a Taiwanese tea processed like a Wuyi Cliff Tea might be a nice tea in its own

right, but it will never compare to a real Cliff Tea, at least not by Cliff Tea standards.

When it comes to Taiwanese varieties, there is a lot of misinformation and debate about details. Much of what a farmer understands about the fine details of tea genetics, hybrids and varieties is uninteresting to us. Still, a basic understanding of the main varieties of oolong that has made Taiwan famous is worthwhile, especially the "Three Daughters" as they are called. In exploring the amazing variety of tea that has made Taiwan famous, we can learn about the heritage, culture and history of tea here, and also about the amazing variety of energy and healing available through tea.

Many of you will recall that there are two broad categories of tea trees, big leaf and small leaf. Big leaf tea trees are the original tea, born in Yunnan. They have a single trunk, with roots that grow deeper and more downward-facing. As tea traveled north and east, whether propagated naturally or carried by man, it evolved to suit the colder climates. Small leaf tea is more of a bush, with several trunks and, of course, smaller leaves. In fact, the further north you go, the smaller the leaves—until you get to Japan where the leaves are so small they are like needles when they are dried and rolled. And all oolong tea is considered small leaf tea.

Oolong tea in Taiwan can be broadly divided into two main categories: the traditional varieties that were brought from the Mainland and the hybrids which were researched and developed specifically in Taiwan. As we discussed earlier in this issue, when we explored the tea of the month, the traditional, classical varieties were brought over with immigrants during the Qing Dynasty. The native hybrids, on the other hand, are the result of decades of research that began when the Japanese controlled Taiwan from the end of the nineteenth century up until WWII. The work the Japanese initiated, with the help of local farmers, continued after they left and resulted in the creation of the Three Daughters of Taiwan tea in the 1970's, all of which have contributed greatly to the success and fame of Taiwanese oolong. In order to better understand and appreciate Taiwanese tea, let's explore these varieties...



Tea Sage Hut guests Lindsey and Sam picking tea at Mr. Xie's organic farm

Traditional Oolong Varietals; Gentle Heart Oolong (*Ching Shin*)

At the start of the Qing Dynasty, farmers transplanted several varietals to Taiwan, mostly bringing them from Wuyi. All the varietals that they brought were lesser-known and under-valued teas. The famous varietals, like the Four Famous Teas of Wuyi, were protected and weren't allowed to travel. Even within Wuyi, it isn't easy to get cuttings of first, or even second generation Da Hong Pao, for example. Several of these varietals were later abandoned, found to be unsuitable to Taiwan's unique terroir, while others still thrive here—in new and bright forms only found on this island.

In Beipu, where Eastern Beauty comes from, they have *Huang Gan* and *Ching Shin Da Mu*, the latter of which can also make a nice green tea. In Ping Lin, and to a lesser extent also Beipu, there is also the Wuyi Cha varietal (sometimes called “Da Ye”, which means “big leaf”, though that's confusing because it isn't a big-leaf tea tree; it merely has larger leaves than other varietals in Taiwan). There is also the legendary *Tie Guan Yin*, brought from Anxi, Fujian and cultivated primarily in Taiwan's Mu Zha region. The most famous of the tea varietals that were brought here from the Mainland long ago, however, is *Ching Shin* oolong, which means “Gentle Heart”.

Some say Gentle Heart Oolong is named after the tenderness of the fresh leaves, while others suggest that the name refers to the fact that this kind of tea tree is sensitive. *Ching Shin* doesn't do well at lower altitudes, since the trees can get sick easily, having delicate constitutions. *Ching Shin* is by volume the largest percentage of Taiwanese High Mountain Oolong, thriving at high altitudes where the air is fresh, clean and cool. Of the four tea vari-

etals we are going to discuss in this article, *Ching Shin* is closer genetically to Four Seasons Spring (*Si Ji Chun*). It also produces the best, and highest quality of Taiwan high mountain oolong teas. With the right terroir and processing, a *Ching Shin* oolong can shine brightly, indeed.

In order to distinguish these four teas, you have to look at the leaves, their shape, and most especially the veins. All tea leaves have a central vein that travels from the stem to the tip, but it's the branching veins that help determine the varietal. *Ching Shin* and *Si Ji Chun* both have branching veins that join the central vein at angles from 30 to 60 degrees, while *Jing Shuan* and *Tsui Yu* display veins that come out at an 80 to 90-degree angle (almost straight). You can then separate the pairs by looking at the shape, because *Tsui Yu* and *Ching Shin* are longer and thinner shaped, while *Jing Shuan* and *Si Ji Chun* are rounder. We'll highlight these characteristics again as we discuss each varietal individually.

Ching Shin tea has a dark green hue when viewing the bushes in a row, though color is never a clear determiner—not without analyzing the leaves. The foliage is also not as dense or vibrant as *Tsui Yu* or *Jing Shuan* cultivars.

Ching Shin tea is often produced as lightly oxidized oolong nowadays. It has a refreshing flavor with a light liquor that tastes of flowers, green leafy vegetables or orchids. The light greenish-yellow to yellow liquor is clear and thin, with some bitter astringency at the front, and a lasting *hui gan* (a sensation of cool, mintiness on the breath) when it is processed properly. The Qi is light and uplifting, cooling and breezy.



*Ching Shin oolong is the best of
Taiwan's oolongs when it's made right*



Notice the 30-degree veins of Ching Shin



The Three Daughters

Golden Lily (Jing Shuan)

Jing Shuan oolong is a hybrid that was established in the 1970's. Its Taiwanese number is TW #12, though farmers often refer to it as "2027" or just "27". These numbers refer to the process the *Taiwan Oolong Tea Research and Development* used to classify the teas as they were developing and testing them. As mentioned above, the leaves of *Jing Shuan* are more round while the branching veins come off the central vein at an almost right angle (80 to 90 degrees). From a distance the bushes have a yellowish-green hue, which may also help distinguish this cultivar. *Jing Shuan* tea is primarily grown on Mt. Zhu in central Taiwan. It doesn't thrive in the extreme cold of very high altitude gardens or plantations like *Ching Shin*, but isn't as susceptible to cold as *Tsui Yu*. When it is healthy, *Jing Shuan* has more vibrant foliage than other varietals.

Jing Shuan is one of the easiest of the four teas to distinguish. The dry leaves have a golden, yellowish-green

hue, as does the liquor. *Jing Shuan* is famous for its milky texture and fragrance—often referred to as "Milk Oolong". There is misinformation in the tea world that this name is due to using milk as fertilizer, but the name actually comes from the tea liquor itself: *Jing Shuan* is thick and creamy, and if the terroir is right, with more sun, and the processing done well, it has a definite milky aroma which is very pleasing. Its fame has resulted in fake "Milk Oolongs" produced in Mainland China that are sprayed with artificial milk flavors post production, giving them a strong and unnatural fragrance of milk. (Yuck!) Real *Jing Shuan* has only a subtle hint of a milky fragrance in the aftertaste. The thick, oily liquor coats the throat. It has a deep and lasting Qi that resonates inwards.

The undergrowth is a sure sign this tea is organic



*Jing Shuan has an oily liquor
and slightly yellowish-green leaves*



Jing Shuan leaves are rounder



Kingfisher Jade (Tsui Yu)

Tsui Yu oolong is also a hybrid which came to life in the 1970's, after decades of research. In the Taiwanese index it is TW #13, though farmers often refer to it as "2029" or just "29". Like *Jing Shuan*, the leaves of *Tsui Yu* have veins at 80 to 90-degree angles, though they are long and arrowhead-shaped. When you stand back from a field of *Tsui Yu*, the leaves have a bluish-green (kingfisher) tint to them and they are more vibrant, with lush foliage than all the other four varieties we will discuss here. *Tsui Yu* dislikes cold weather, so it can't be grown at very high altitudes. It is predominantly grown on Mt.

Zhu and in the lowlands around Ming Jian, where our tea of the month comes from.

As we discussed earlier in the magazine, *Tsui Yu* has a flavor of seaweed, lima beans and often fruit. It is more famous for an aroma of wildflowers and an after-taste of fresh fruit. Some say it tastes of lotus or lilac, others say cassia or peach. Much of this depends on the terroir, the season and the skill of the producer. The Qi is Yin. It centers you in the heart.

There is a slight blue tinge to the leaves



*Tsui Yu can't grow at higher altitudes
and has a thicker, lush leaf and liquor*



Notice the 80-degree veins of Tsui Yu



Four Seasons Spring (Si Ji Chun)

Though you could perhaps call *Si Ji Chun* a hybrid, it is a natural, wild varietal that arose in Mu Zha. Since it is a more natural varietal, it is heartier than the others. This is a testament to one of the principles we always promote in these pages when discussing what we call, “Living Tea”, which is that the leaves produced by man will never compare to Nature’s. It’s possible to further distinguish manmade teas by calling them “cultivars”. These trees yield buds at least four times a year, which is where its name comes from. “*Si Ji Chun*” might also be translated as “Four Seasons *like* Spring”, referring to the fact that this bush can produce as much in other seasons as in spring. It is also thought to be the youngest of the Three Daughters, coming into commercial production in the 1980’s. *Si Ji Chun* does not have a Taiwan classification number, since it evolved naturally. Of the four teas here,

Si Ji Chun is more closely related to *Ching Shin* than it is to *Jing Shuan* or *Tsui Yu*. The leaves of *Si Ji Chun* are round in shape, with veins that shoot off at 30 to 60-degree angles. The leaves have a light green hue, with less foliage like *Ching Shin*. The buds of *Si Ji Chun* are often a gorgeous reddish hue when they emerge.

As many of you will remember from June of 2013, when we sent out this fabulous tea, *Si Ji Chun* has an exuberant, golden liquor that blossoms in a fresh, musky floweriness. It is tangy, with a slightly sour aftertaste, like the *Tie Guan Yin* varietal it evolved from. Many Taiwanese compare the aroma to gardenias. Of these four teas, it is the most distinguishable flavor. The Qi is cleansing, pushing outward from the center. It rises up in gusts, and leaves you feeling refreshed.

Notice the red tinge in the buds



*Si Ji Chun is the most unique tasting of
the Three Daughters: bright and tangy*



Notice the 45-degree veins





Gongfu Tea Tips

TO SHOWER OR NOT TO SHOWER

WU DE

Much of the skill and art of gongfu tea is in maintaining temperature. Ideally, the transmission from kettle to cup should be uninterrupted. This is energetically ideal, as the water into the pot and tea into the cups is then smooth and without distortion. Obviously, it is impossible to avoid a loss of temperature and energy, as many of you who have tried the first, primary experiment using three identical cups (given several times in these magazines over the years) will know by now. Friction inevitably causes a loss of Qi, aroma, flavor and mouthfeel, as well as temperature. Still, we hold to the first ideal of gongfu tea in our tradition, “preserve the heat and begin to absorb peace.”

Imagine you found a pure mountain spring whose waters brought healing to people, only it was inaccessible to ordinary folks (maybe up a steep cliff). Given unlimited resources, what would be your criteria for designing a way to bring these healing waters down and share them with humanity? Of course, you would know from the outset that no matter what you do, there would be a loss of potency in transporting the water down the mountain. Still, how would you design your system? You would focus on two factors: materials and efficiency. To preserve the healing energy and great flavor of the water, you would want to use the best quality materials to pipe the water down. Having unlimited resources, you might even try silver or gold pipes. Secondly, you would know that every twist and turn, every zig and zag of the pipe would be a loss in the energy of the water, so you would focus on keeping the pipe as straight as possible.

Hopefully, you can see how this analogy applies to tea and tea preparation in gongfu style: we also want to extract the liquor from the tea and deliver it to our guests in as fine and pure a way as possible. And to do that, we also will need to focus on materials (teaware) and straightness (undisturbed brewing). “Gongfu” literally means “skill” or “mastery”, so in gongfu tea we need to learn how to evaluate teaware and its effects on our tea liquor, as well as the different brewing methodologies. For that reason, we propose that this month you participate in an experiment designed to teach you (always experientially) about temperature preservation...

For this experiment you will need one porcelain cup per participant, a decent quality *handmade* Yixing purple-sand teapot (not slipcast and not made from cheap ore if possible) and finally a small, slightly indented dish or even a bowl. This dish should ideally be ceramic, pref-

erably porcelain, rather than plastic. It need not be made especially for tea—a nice porcelain bowl from your tableware is acceptable.

Again, we suggest using only 1-2 grams for the same reasons we’ve mentioned in previous issues, because a familiar tea allows us to focus as much on the sensations as the flavor. We should also emphasize, as before, that it be a tea you are comfortable with—even the same tea you’ve used in other experiments.

Rest the Yixing in the bowl or dish. For this experiment you will do three successive steepings. You will have to pay close attention each time, though, as you’ll only get one “real” chance (we’ll explain why later). It isn’t critical that you follow our order, but it may be the easiest way to experience the discrepancies: First, steep the tea by showering the pot with hot water before you even open the lid, filling it up, and then showering it again after you have replaced the lid. We’ll call this “showers before and after.” Pour directly from the Yixing into your porcelain cup, without any pitcher. Like previous experiments, drink quietly and try to focus on the sensations in your mouth, upper palate and throat as much as you do on the flavor. For the second steeping, shower the pot before you fill it, but not after. We’ll call that “showers before.” Again pour directly into the cup and drink fully. For the final steeping, fill the pot and only shower it with hot water afterwards—obviously “showers after.” Then try that cup. (You may also want to add a “no showers” brew to the experiment, as well.)

You won’t be able to repeat the experiment as accurately as the first time. This doesn’t mean that we suggest you quit, but the differences just won’t be as pronounced in later tries as they were the first time, since the different methods will have affected the tea. An alternative that solves this problem, though in a cumbersome way, would be to have three pots, dishes and cups and relegate one to each kind of “showering”. That way, you could drink of them together as well, rather than consecutively. That isn’t necessary, though. How did the different ways of showering the pot affect the tea liquor?





Here we are using an Yixing tea sink instead of a boat

I grew up in Florida, and iced sun tea was still a tradition in our family, the first tea I ever experienced in fact. There was always a big jar brewing on the back porch when we would go to my grandmother's house. So it was a nostalgic return to the past for me when Wu De announced that we were going to be brewing sun tea regularly this summer. All you need is a glass jar, some tea, and a spot that gets strong direct sunlight for several hours. If you have a particular event coming up and you really want to make cold tea quickly, there is an alternative. You can lightly boil a pot of concentrated tea, then add cold water to dilute it, and leave it overnight. But tea made this way just isn't the same. It's boiled tea, served cold. Tea brewed in the actual heat of the sun over hours and hours is completely different.

So now that you have acquired a day with good hot sun, you can prepare your jar, and perhaps the space it is going to steep in as well. You might want to put some stones or crystals with particular properties into the jar. If you have any kind of sacred space already outside then of course put your jar there, or if not, you can prepare one by drawing a medicine wheel or sacred symbols onto that spot. You might consider putting a sacred object under or on top of the jar, or writing positive words on it.

You might need to experiment a bit to figure out how much leaf to put into the jar. You can start out by lightly covering the bottom. Then treat it as bowl tea: If it's too strong, use less leaf, if it's too weak, use more. This will also depend on the tea; lightly processed teas like green tea or young sheng puerh will need more leaf than heavily processed teas like red tea or shou puerh, but they are also less forgiving if over-steeped. Put it out at about 11am and then bring it back in around 4 or 5pm, so that it receives the strongest sun of the day, and put it in the refrigerator after that.

This isn't my grandmother's iced tea, incidentally. We use living tea. Recently, we used the same tea we just went to Yunnan to find for you and press into cakes this year. Far from complaining about our untraditional brewing method, Tea spoke to us also of how comfortable She was and how happy She was that we had brought Her such nice cool water to bathe in under the sun-filled sky—returning all Her natural elements and revivifying Her. Her Qi was utterly different than when we used hot water a few days before. It was subtler, gentler, but amazingly powerful. Nobody expected the Qi to be so strong in cold tea; it was really surprising. There was a one-pointedness

to it, something less diffuse, but it still filled the whole body.

Usually when drinking tea the heat of it causes a lot of physical changes in the body that can easily be confused for the Qi of the tea, so I think this was the first time I had ever had the chance to drink a living tea without those distractions. It's really something special. I find it very hard to describe other than to say that She was obviously quite happy, and there was nothing about the experience that qualitatively suggested these bowls of cold tea were in the "beverage" category. There was just as much back and forth available between drinker and Tea in those bowls as in any other I've ever drunk before. It really is entirely up to the drinker! We could bring in just as much sacred intention and ceremony to this kind of tea as any other. If you wanted, you could even meditate for all those hours, just as we meditate the handful of minutes waiting for the

In the case of sun-brewed tea, we are actually resuming the very same energy that brought those leaves to life in the first place...

water to boil. In fact, I had a sense that in some way, the tea was happier like this. After all, when we use charcoal to boil the water for tea, we are only offering an imitation of the sun's heat to revivify the leaves. In the case of sun-brewed tea, we are actually resuming the very same energy that brought those leaves to life in the first place.

But on the other hand, something great about approaching tea as a Dao is that we are not limited to one approach to tea. We practice being comfortable dropping all our pretensions and just enjoying a refreshing glass of iced tea after lunch in the summertime. And often it is skillful to let go of our approach for other reasons, such as those moments when we just want to share space with someone that normally has no relationship to tea. In that spirit, it seemed only natural to even further drop any pretensions and start serving iced tea on our outings in



Sun tea brewing by the center's Buddha in the garden

these blazing summer months. Like our beloved story of Rikyu, which you can hear in last month's Global Tea Hut video, we aren't serving tea because we want to demonstrate how to make tea, or to compare teas or tea brewing methodology. We are simply sharing. Last year, we sat sweating bullets in the heat each month, sharing very little of our steaming hot tea with passersby, who turned quite naturally instead to the ice cream booth! We did choose so-called "cooling" teas, such as green teas and young puerhs, but there's not much of a chance to explain that to people who aren't sitting down because it is clearly so hot! If we are truly Chajin then we will see that if preparing iced tea is the best way to connect to someone, then that is the best kind of tea to make for that occasion.

It is amazing to notice the resurrection of Tea. Deprived of air, water and sun. We reopen these leaves and find them living again. Heated by the sun, they resonate in a way they can't otherwise. In the summer, a bowl of fresh, cool sun tea can awaken a deeper love for the healing medicine of tea.





Teaware & Artisans

IMPERIAL CELADON

ETHAN THOMPSON

According to most versions of the story, the Shogun Ashikaga Yohimasa (1436-1490) was given a Song Dynasty celadon bowl for tea which became his most prized possession. Through use, the bowl developed a crack, so the shogun sent it back to China to be replaced. Apparently, the Ming potters returned the bowl with a metal clamp fixed over the crack, apologizing that no one alive at the time could replace the bowl. This story, and others like it, would affect potters up until the modern day: it became gospel that even the official kilns of the Ming Dynasty could no longer reproduce celadon masterpieces, called “*qing ci*” in Chinese. The art of Song Guan would remain a thing for museums over the course of the next few centuries. Only in the modern era would potters of China, Taiwan and Japan begin to confront the challenge of celadon once again.

What is *qing ci*? This special kind of glazing was invented and mastered during the Song Dynasty (960-1126 AD). The clay and glaze both have minute amounts of iron in them that reduces during the firing process. The work then develops blue, bluish-green or even jade-green colors. However, it is the sky-blue celadon pieces that have always captured the admiration of collectors and potters alike. Sometimes the glaze is intentionally crackled and cracked. These cracks sometimes ask the tea drinker to only use them for one kind of tea, but the cracks will eventually stain brown and give the piece an antique ambience. The high firing temperature and temperamental nature of the clay and glaze make this form of pottery very difficult and time consuming to create. Potters regularly lose pieces to flaws. The iron will often react and come to the surface, causing a blemish that will send the piece to the scrap pile. Sometimes potters will add powdered iron to cover the surface with these dots, but should one or two occur accidentally in the blue pieces, the piece must be abandoned.

Traditionally, the best Song Guan pieces used dark brown clay with traces of iron in it. When fired they will have the “brown rim and iron foot”, as it was referred to in ancient times. Because of the iron, the clay fires a deep-purplish kind of dark brown. This is seen in the foot. As the layers of glaze roll down the cup or bowl, the translucent rim also takes on a purplish-brown hue. Many of the potters in Taiwan and elsewhere have started using iron-free red clay. The bottom of these pieces will be red and the rim a golden brown. Though not as beautiful, these pieces are far less sensitive and can therefore be produced in larger quantities and in less time.

We have found that this kind of celadon teaware, especially the cups, is most useful for drinking puerh teas, and especially young sheng puerh. The obvious reason that this kind of celadon is good for puerh is that the glaze is one of the thickest in all kinds of pottery. The soft, thick glaze keeps temperature in, which is important for Puerh, and adds a nice cottony texture to the liquor as it enters the mouth, softening an otherwise bitter/astringent tea.

Celadon has always been a refined ceramic, attracting the attention of royalty and connoisseurs for centuries. Holding a beautiful cup or teapot is more than pleasing to the eyes. The colors change in the light from jade to sky blue, to a cyan of the deepest, clearest ocean. Beyond that, the cups are so soft and smooth, and don't really feel like ceramic at all. The liquor, then, is smooth and softer when sipped, and the taste clear. There is nothing more one could desire from teaware than to enhance the beauty, taste and ambience of a tea session. Traditional celadon teaware has the power to inspire a session, and lend it an ambience of refinement.



*Soft skies
Cloudy tea
Billows past
Jade dreams
That awoke me
From a thousand-year slumber.
Celadon eyes
Clear and bright
See the same as before:
Soft skies
Cloudy tea
And jade dreams.*

—Wu De



A beautiful celadon jar sealed with wax, storing a lovely Ali Shan tea for later years



A beautiful celadon pot with a wood handle and gold inlay



Notice the difference in the rim of these cups, one purple clay and one lighter. The darker is much more beautiful.

Imperial Celadon



Celadon has unseen cracks that slowly fill with tea oils, like this well-used bowl



*One of our favorite celadon implements:
a cha he for presenting tea leaves to guests*



A MARKET FOR HOPE

MAX RAPHAEL

As many of you know, we travel each month to Taichung, central Taiwan, to serve tea at an organic farmers' market. For many reasons, this is one of our favorite regular activities at the center. You may be wondering—*why*?

In this tradition, we often say we practice *serving* tea, not *making* it. To truly practice this, from time to time, we must step outside of our usual boundaries—even physically—to connect with those who otherwise would not find their way into our space for tea and Stillness. Hope Farmers' Market provides such an opportunity. Set in Taichung's Xitun District, just outside the hustle and bustle of the city, the market runs every second Saturday of the month from 9:00am to 2:00pm.

The location alone offers a wonderful setting for tea: lotus ponds stretch along the main courtyard; a small waterfall gently flows nearby, with gazebos and humble trees offering shade from the summer sun. Still, it's not the physical setting that makes Hope Market a valued opportunity to share tea. The spirit behind the market is so unique—and relevant to what we practice at our center—that we thought it worthy of a special focus.

Hope Market began in 2007, founded by Chen Meng Kai. Not only is it Taiwan's first farmers' market, but it also operates on a unique, progressive model that has since inspired many other well-known organic markets in Taiwan. Beyond an agricultural initiative, Hope seeks to rebuild the social fabric between farmers and the rest of the community, as well as to deeply reconnect us all with Nature.

Each month, over thirty vendors set up at Hope, offering organic produce, organic food products, and even recycled, eco-friendly clothes and handicrafts. When we first came across the market, it seemed too good to be true. The harmonious collaboration of so many conscientious individuals, and the spirit behind their work were all too inspiring!

Before creating Hope, Chen Meng Kai was the dedicated owner of an organic restaurant. He created dishes mostly using ingredients from small-scale organic farms in Taiwan. Working closely with these farms, he became very familiar with both the importance and struggles of running small organic operations nowadays. He would learn how after the difficult and costly process of getting certified—farmers likely would have trouble selling their produce, due to a lack of outlets and difficulty competing in the markets that existed. These challenges, of course, are not unique to Taiwan. Indeed, many farmers may find

it difficult to succeed as an organic operation and turn to other methods, despite being aware of the potential harm to the environment and to their own health.

However, an even subtler issue beneath such environmental issues is our own disconnect from Nature. It's this disconnect that allows us to make choices that put profit or convenience before anything else, such as the health of the land we depend on for our own health. For if we clean up one environmental disaster, but don't 'clean up' our own distorted values and views that allowed the problems to happen, how can we know for sure that we have solved the issue? We must dig up the roots rather than just trimming a weed that will eventually grow back. As Wu De so often says, "Our world doesn't have environmental problems—it has *people problems*!" Chen Meng Kai's answer to many of these challenges certainly brings renewed 'Hope.'

At first glance, the monthly market is a vibrant and family-like affair, connecting shoppers intimately with farmers and vendors that are truly dedicated to conscientious farming and living. Beneath the surface lies an organization with goals and activities that span far beyond the monthly market. It is a close-knit cooperation of like-minded farmers, food producers, and other vendors, along with several teams of dedicated volunteers. These members share what they have to offer—organic produce, resources, knowledge, even labor—in a seamless, harmonious exchange. For example, when one farmer is ready to harvest her crops, the other farmers and volunteers of Hope will team up to offer their labor and assistance. Beyond the five percent taken from vendors' sales to upkeep the market grounds, almost no money is exchanged within Hope. Without the usual influence of money, members rally behind a single goal, with a work ethic that is pure and wholesome.

At any booth in the market, you are sure to be greeted by warm smiles and genuine hospitality. It was here, after all, that we met Mr. Xie, dedicated organic tea farmer and strong supporter of Global Tea Hut. He has contributed to your teas of the month multiple times, including this month!

The 'Hope philosophy' is built on ten points, including ethical treatment of crops and the environment, creating self-sufficient communities, eating healthily and seasonally, and a mutual sharing of expertise, ideas, and help in any form. Besides the vendors and farmers, there are several autonomous teams of volunteers involved in Hope. Each team, called a "Tribe," takes on different



The market surroundings are stunning, including lotus ponds

responsibilities or projects, from organizing farm field trips for the public, to developing new processing or packaging methods for the farmers' produce. For potential volunteers and vendors alike, Hope carefully screens candidates, even requiring several classes and an interview to become a volunteer. With such a close-knit operation, Mr. Chen and his team ensure that one's overall approach and beliefs align with the overall organization.

Between the monthly farmers' markets, members are constantly meeting at the Hope Education Center in Taichung to share farming knowledge and techniques, ideas for new projects, or simply, a meal and some hospitality. Each week, "Tuesday Salons" are also held at their center. At these events, a different vendor or farmer will hold a workshop for Hope members and the public, sharing their unique expertise with the community. Classes might range from organic farming science to a workshop on making miso. Before each class, a dinner is cooked onsite using fresh produce provided by the different farmers.

Within moments of stepping onto the peaceful courtyard, this same camaraderie of Hope Market can be clearly felt. Vendors and volunteers alike are constantly moving around the grounds, helping each other set up each morning. Later in the day, different farmers will visit our stall, sometimes gifting us with a bundle of vegetables or a large bag of bee pollen, firmly refusing any repayment!

By striving to improve organic farming methods and promote ethical, eco-friendly products and projects, Hope Market is making great outward strides in healing the world and our connection to it. However, we shouldn't overlook the connection inward, which we mentioned earlier. This alignment with the truth of our own hearts is needed just as much today as it ever was before. This is what our humble tea stall can offer to the market—inner harmony with Nature to correspond to all the outer work they do. You could say we provide the spiritual medicine while the other stalls heal the physical.

Looking out past the table on which we serve tea, Hope Market indeed looks like an enchanting world. Strolling along the lotus ponds, buyers visit one vendor's stall after the next, interacting face to face with honest farmers and bright smiles. Children idly play near the waterfall before enjoying a bowl of healthy, nourishing food cooked onsite by community members.

While giving off a strong communal and family-like vibe, it is of course still a market! Vendors are working hard to sell their goods to patrons to earn their livelihood; busy mothers are juggling bags of produce while trying to keep an eye on their children. The truth is, even when many of us go to shop at our favorite farmers' market on the weekend, sometimes we find that we cannot fully enjoy it. We are still pulled this way and that—perhaps our child is also tugging us in the direction of

the ice cream vendor. Even in this cheerful environment, we can lose ourselves. Sitting down for a bowl of tea, one may find a bit of stillness. Sometimes this stillness is shared over one or two bowls of tea; other times, a guest might drop his or her Saturday afternoon plans, and stay for two hours. Sometimes people are talkative, eager to learn more about our center or about tea. Other times, not much is said at all, and tea is shared in a silence that diminishes even the hubbub of the market surrounding us.

In any of these moments, we are simply being Here, holding space, offering connection in our own way. As *Chajins*, facilitating this moment is one of the most important aims for our tea. Through the simple act of sharing tea, we once again remember the simplest gifts—that we are breathing, we are alive, sharing this moment together for the first time. All of the conditions for joy are already here and now. In this way, even though we share so many ideas and beliefs with the other farmers and vendors at the market, we can benefit the market by standing out in one unique way: our agenda is to share tea, and nothing else. We do not aim to promote our center, ask for donations, or even to engage in discussions about tea!

Our ‘roadside tea stall’ indeed resembles the one that Baisao the tea seller set up to share tea with passersby—a huge improvement from our previous arrangement of preparing tea on the ground. Our welcoming tea stall communicates our offering perfectly. Made of found

antique wood, the stall has an earthy, natural feel. Carved, painted signs hang from a piece of aged bamboo above, indicating the tea we are serving on a given day. Sharing organic, living tea with our guests is our way to facilitate connection with Nature, others and with ourselves.

Whether serving tea to the public or to our closest friend or partner; whether indoors or in Nature, it is important that our guests feel comfortable. Hopefully without any instruction, they silently know how to connect with the session. Since the atmosphere of Hope Market is already welcoming and open, guests often settle into the tea experience quite naturally. Sitting across from us at our new tea stall, there is no question of “what” we are doing at the market. However, one question that some people may still ask is “why?”

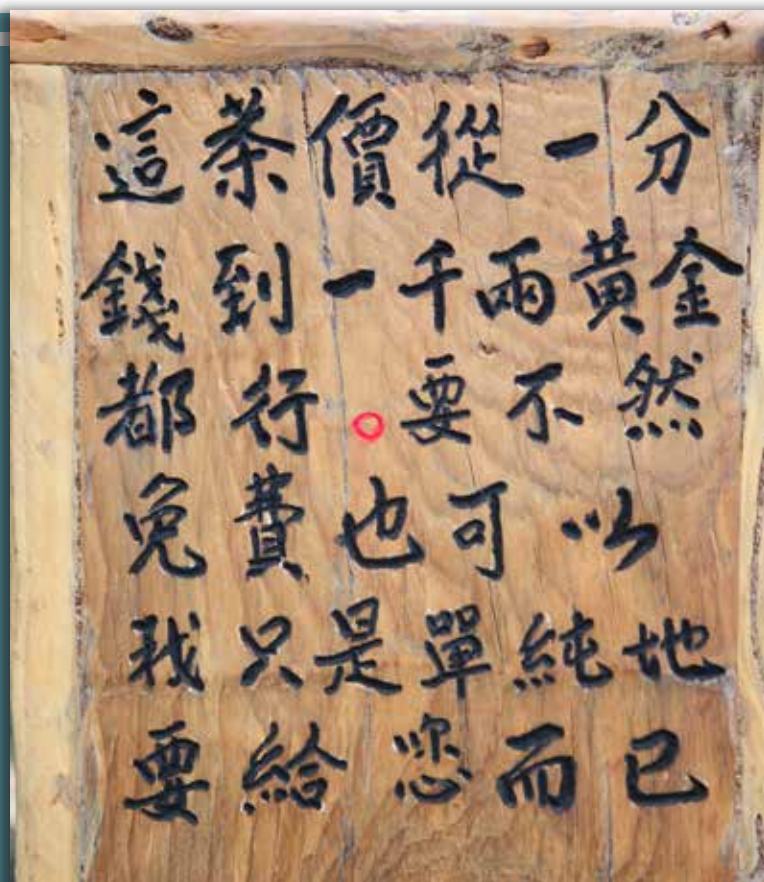
With this in mind, Hope Market is such a fitting place for such service, as our approach to tea is so similar to Chen Meng Kai’s approach to the market: to re-establish the intimate link between humans and nature, and between people themselves. Certainly, people connect at Hope Market. The farmers and vendors connect with the public, making friendships along with sales. The community becomes more connected under the umbrella of a greater purpose.

Just this past month, we served iced tea for the first time at the market. Our *kama*, usually used to heat boiled tea, was filled with ice, over which we poured freshly sun-

Our donation box. It reads: “The price of this tea is anything from one cent to a thousand in gold; otherwise it’s free. I only wish I could give it to you for less!”

Roadside Tea

With charcoal, mountain water and old-growth leaves we sit and serve tea simply and freely from bowls. There is no aim in erecting our roadside huts, other than to offer a bit of calm space and a pause for tea in a bustling world. Our work is pure and simple, unadorned and non-sectarian. We aren’t preaching any philosophy or theory, nor promoting any technique or tradition. We aren’t offering anything more than a warm smile, friendship and loving-kindness through a bowl of tea and the accompanying calm.





brewed sheng puerh. (*You can read more in-depth about sun-brewed tea in this current issue*).

The gentle, cooling energy found in each bowl offered a penetrating calm amidst Taiwan's intense summer heat and humidity. In the same way that organic fruits and vegetables purify our bodies, we hope to refresh people spiritually—to ground them in this moment, in their very hearts.

As we become more eco-conscious overall, the words “connection to Nature” frequently come up. Of course, this suggests a deeper understanding of where our food comes from, and treating the Earth with greater care. However, from the view of our Tea Tradition, there could be an additional meaning of “connecting to Nature.” This involves a nonverbal recognition of Nature, and all its qualities, already existing within us. Drinking tea more

and more with our entire being, we can come to experience this deeply for ourselves.

Not every place we travel to serve tea facilitates this connection in such an unobstructed way. This is what makes Hope Market special. Serving tea here reminds us of the greater purpose behind healing our disconnect with Nature, and the deeper spirit of our practice of tea.



*We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors,
we borrow it from our children.*

—Native American Proverb



The author and Shane serving sun tea at Hope!



The signs tell what tea we'll serve that day. The first sign says "iced", and the second, "sheng puerh"



The Eight Bowls

STUDY, CONTEMPLATION & PRAYER

SHANE MARRS

With the first two bowls of moral uprightness and meditation now steeping within us, we partake of yet another bowl as we continue along our journey through the Eight Bowls of a Life of Tea. The leaves are only just starting to unfurl...

As we take our first sips from this bowl, it reminds us to engage in daily acts of humility and gratitude. There is always an opportunity to bow deeply and always something to be grateful for. It reminds us to study earnestly; the teachings of the wise, past and present, abound to guide us. It reminds us to carry out contemplation and prayer; life is a miracle in constant flow, and we give praise to stay connected with that fact. All of these qualities compliment our meditation and tea, just as Zen is the daily state of being based in both wisdom and meditation.

Study & Contemplation

If someone told you life is about doing what you want, most of us would resort to a teenage interpretation of doing *whatever* we want, essentially being a slave to our own impulses and indulging in sensual pleasures. But, in a manner of speaking, life really is about doing what you want. The question isn't just, "what do you want?" but rather, "what do you *really* want? What really matters?"

Through study and contemplation, paired with meditation and tea, and further combined with the bountiful teachings of masters past and present, there is no lack of fuel on the path towards awakening and liberating ourselves. And it is only in really knowing ourselves that we may confidently answer the questions above. We engage in academic study not simply to accumulate knowledge for its own sake, but to accumulate knowledge for the good of all beings, and to be able to articulate ourselves in practical situations. Categorizing and analyzing information is, at least spiritually, only useful for mapping our journey. It should not be used to describe reality as it is, because conceptual understanding can't do that. At least not absolutely.

At the center, we study all facets of tea. Of course we address the spiritual aspects in every tea session, gaining experiential understanding of the Leaf in every sip. That happens daily. But we also hit the books, write notes, conduct experiments, study sutras, review texts, reflect on affirmations, visit farms, and generally learn by working with the Leaf in all capacities on a daily basis. This helps us broaden our understanding of Tea in all its various forms.

We become equipped to articulate all aspects of tea, from farming and harvesting, processing and ageing, brewing and serving to history, folklore and culture, and even science and technology. Tea is a beverage, a hobby, an art, and a Way of life. Here at the Hut we like to cultivate a deep understanding of all the different approaches to tea. The most important part of any tea ceremony is the heart of the brewer. And that is what makes tea a Dao, and the mastery of tea a mastery of the self. For that, we'll need some tools...

Prayer

Prayer is a connection to something greater than the self (call it what you will—perhaps your higher self). To acknowledge this inner state of being, or our higher self, we make altars adorned with flowers, fruit, incense, tea, and light. This sacred space is a reflection of our own sanctity. Bowing before the Buddha, I bow not to some historical figure but to the Awakening and Stillness in me. Each bow before any altar is in part to acknowledge a quality within. It is here at the altar where proper prayer can take place. If an altar is to be our connection to the Divine, to a power greater than ourselves, it should subsequently be the cleanest place in our house. Fruit and flowers should be beautiful and fresh, offerings of tea should be made frequently, and incense lit daily. In prayer, we do not seek to petition the Divine with our desires, but rather to practice humility and gratitude, forgiveness, loving-kindness, healing, and to ask for knowledge of the Divine will and the power to carry it out—for the good of all beings.

At our center, our tea stage (*chaxi*) is also an altar, a beautiful and clean place dedicated to connection with ourselves, others, and with the spirit of Tea. Guest and host bow deeply to each other through the simple act of serving and receiving tea.

Humility

A great stalk of bamboo, strong yet flexible, tenacious yet light, will often develop a great arc, bowing in a modest attitude. Like this, we too can find great inner strength, flexibility, tenacity, and levity in bowing deeply. Qualities such as humility and surrender are often associated with weakness, though there is great power in the acts of bowing and surrendering. At the altar, prayer can

always be accompanied by bowing to bring more humility into our lives. The simple act of laying yourself before something greater than yourself will immediately humble you. Partly for this reason, the famous Japanese tea master, Rikyu, incorporated a small door (*nijiriguchi*) as the main entrance to the tea space. Each guest would essentially crawl or bow in order to enter the tearoom, symbolizing the humbling act of shedding one's social status. No matter who you were, samurai or peasant, laborer or scholar, everyone bowed equally upon entering the tearoom. This was in recognition of the equality and sacred oneness of each guest with each other and their host.

Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh, and the greatness which does not bow before children.

—Khalil Gibran

The whole of this third bowl is simply to bow, to give thanks; to learn and grow, and to connect to the Divine through prayer. There are countless opportunities to embody these qualities for the person of tea. And all of them can be achieved at the tea table. Bowing deeply in prayer and giving thanks for the miracle of life, we learn everything we need to know. Wisdom flows downhill; put yourself beneath it and let it flow in...

Our three main prayers

Gratitude

There are countless things to be grateful for all the time. Just witness how much is happening on your behalf in every moment. Your heart is beating all the time. Your body is carrying out innumerable processes without any conscious effort on your part. A complex miracle of molecules in motion is the state of existence at any second of your precious life. There is *always* something to be grateful for. A healthy dose of gratitude is then naturally projected out onto the world where we find unlimited blessings to continue being grateful for, through sickness and through health. Prayers of gratitude for the endless blessings that shower us daily remind us that life is precious and worth celebrating. It also reminds us how short our time here really is, so that we treasure our opportunities.

Forgiveness

As Wu De always says, "If all were known, all would be forgiven." Though we may not have the capacity to know everything, we can give and receive forgiveness through daily prayer. In forgiving others, we ourselves are also forgiven. There really isn't much to be said here. Everyday, forgive those who may have wronged you through action of body, mind, or speech. Grant pardon. In turn, also ask that you may be forgiven of the same. Forgiveness is in accordance with the teachings of the wise. Personal experience is easily generated to confirm those teachings. Simply forgive and forgive simply. Wu De asks us to try a week of resentment versus a week of forgiveness, for self and other, and then you can decide which energy you wish to surround the rest of your life with.

Loving-kindness

As you may know from reading about, and ideally experiencing the second bowl of tea, meditation plays a key role in the life of a student of tea. At the center, we always follow our meditations with a period of loving-kindness, yet another opportunity to practice gratitude and to generate a healing energy for the good of others. Loving something you do is greater than the act alone. People can be silent because it is good for them or because they have to, but to love silence is powerful. Similarly, you can meditate because it is good for you, but that isn't as powerful as a true love of meditation. So too loving to be kind is a force greater than kindness. Of course, we always say, we are not here to learn how to *make* tea, but how to *serve* tea. And so, a love of serving tea for the benefit of others is what we are really seeking in ourselves. For these reasons we practice loving-kindness through various mediums, such as prayer, serving tea, and meditation.



Tea Wayfarer

*Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these magazines in order to help you get to know more people in this growing international community. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and tea are becoming, as the tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of the tea fuels some great work in this world, and we are so honored to share glimpses of such beautiful people and their tea. This month we would like to introduce **Sabina Padilla**:*

Tea found me two years ago in Los Angeles at a yoga festival called Tadasana. I remember walking into the Tea tent on a gloomy Spring day, and the energy was so inviting I knew in that instant that I wouldn't want to leave. There were five tables serving tea and I was seated at Wu De's table. He served me my first bowl of Tea and my life changed at that moment. I had a sense of familiarity, as though I could feel a lineage pulling me back in time. I felt Tea had been in my life before. Wu De spoke to us about Cha Dao and I was so moved by everything he said, that his words of wisdom stayed with me all this time. And, of course, he told us about Tea Sage Hut and I knew one day I would visit.

A year later, my dear friend and tea sister, Taylor, invited me to her monthly Full Moon Tea Ceremony and brought this beautiful tradition back into my life. Sharing space with ten strangers in silence was such a powerful experience. Each bowl of Tea spoke to me in different ways. Tea is nature's medicine, and nourishes my mind, body & spirit, harmonizing me with all the elements. The energy in the room shifted throughout the session and by the end of it we came out brothers and sisters. It was incredible to experience how we all connected without using words to communicate.

Eight months later, after completing my Vedic Meditation Initiator Training in India, I traveled to Tea Sage Hut to deepen my love and reverence for Tea. I arrived at the doorstep of this sacred space with no expectations and my cup empty, ready to be filled with wisdom and tea. The moment I opened the door the energy of this magical center filled me with an overwhelming sense of peace and I felt like I was returning home. Wu De, his beautiful wife, Joyce, and the resident students welcomed me into their family with open arms and open hearts. Their hospitality and enthusiasm for Tea deeply nourished me. I was moved by being fully immersed in Cha Dao: the way life flows in the day-to-day activities, from Tea ceremonies, to cleaning, to collecting water from a mountaintop, always mindful and present. As Wu De says, "How you do anything, is how you do everything," and these wise words have left me witnessing how I interact with everyone and everything I encounter—from the way I speak to someone to how I



hold my Tea bowl. Each person at the Hut exemplified what it truly means to be selfless and to be of service.

After collecting my first set of teaware, I have left Tea Sage Hut inspired and humbled at the opportunity to share this beautiful tradition with my family, friends and clients. I will be incorporating tea ceremonies at the end of my Ayurvedic Nutrition & Lifestyle Workshops. I've come to see tea as a medicine, and I believe that it can be such a great aid in creating and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It certainly has done so for me!

I am also a meditation instructor, and I can already foresee many of the ways that Tea is going to influence the group sits I lead. In that way, a lot of the bowls we share together each month will have a greater influence. On my trip, I realized just how much tea and meditation are the same, learning new ways to share them both.

If you find yourself in Los Angeles or Miami, I would love to meet each of you, my extended Tea family, and have the honor to serve you Tea. You can connect with me at: sabina.padilla@gmail.com

Inside the Hut

Global Tea Hut sessions around the world:

- In Los Angeles, there are Global Tea Hut events every Thursday at 6 PM and Sunday at 9:30 AM. To reserve a spot, email Colin at livingteas@gmail.com.
- In Barcelona, Spain, Global Tea Hut member Antonio holds tea events each month at Caj Chai Teahouse. Contact him at info@cajchai.com for more info.
- In Moscow, Russia, there are frequent tea events. Contact Tea Hut member Ivan at teeabai@gmail.com or Denis at chikchik25@gmail.com for details.
- In Nice, France, GTH member Sabine holds regular tea events at the tearoom Les Causeries de Blandine. You can email her at sabine@letempsdunthe.com.
- In Darwin, Australia, Sam holds GTH tea events on Fridays at 6 PM. Email him at sdsgibb@gmail.com.
- In Tallinn, Estonia, Chado tea shop holds events most Friday evenings at 7 PM. Contact events@firstflush.ee for more details. Also, Timo Einpaul and Herkko Labi both hold small weekly tea events in their homes in Tartu, Estonia and Tallinn, Estonia (respectively), on Wednesdays at 6 PM. You can email Timo at timo@sygis.net and Herkko at herkots@gmail.com.

Our goals for the rest of the year:

- Increase membership to 2,000 by January 1st, 2015
- Hire an architect and begin building in 2015
- Incorporate Global Tea Hut in Taiwan so we can offer Taiwanese visas to foreign volunteers

Ways in which Global Tea Hut will continue to improve as we get near our goals:

- At 1,000 members, we'll start traveling more to research articles on tea and teaware, and to source new and different organic teas. As an awesome side-effect, this will allow us to connect organic farmers to each other and to you!
- At 1,500 members, we'll start translating modern and ancient Chinese and Japanese tea wisdom to English. In many cases, these will be the first translations of major Asian tea texts into English!

How you can help:

- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Use social media and email to share our videos, our links and membership to Global Tea Hut. Post photos of your tea sessions and GTH envelopes. Spread the word to people who may benefit from membership as much as you do!
- Share each month's tea with friends. Show them the newsletter and tell them why you love your subscription. Tell them we need 2,000 members this year to begin construction on the world's best free tea center.

Center News

- Before you visit, check out the center's website (www.teasagehut.org) to read about the schedule, food, what you should bring, etc. We've had a big increase in our number of guests lately, so if possible please contact us well in advance to arrange a visit.
- We just pressed organic Ailao sheng puerh cakes from 1000-year-old trees as a fundraiser for our new tea center, Light Meets Life. We will also press two more types of cakes, including a snow chrysanthemum shou puerh like we pressed last year and "Golden Vajra", May's tea of the month (only in cakes).
- Wu De will be at the center until October working on two new books! After that he will be teaching in Spain & France. Contact Antonio at Caj Chai Teahouse (info@cajchai.com) for more information about dates and events.
- There is a lot of momentum towards a more permanent tea space in Moscow. Say some prayers for our friends there!

Tea Inspired Poetry

When the mind, having freed itself from the trammels of past and future, is fully concentrated on the Here and Now, a whole range of pleasures involving ears, eyes, nose, palate, and mood can be enjoyed by two or more people who have come together to make and drink fine tea.

—John Blofeld