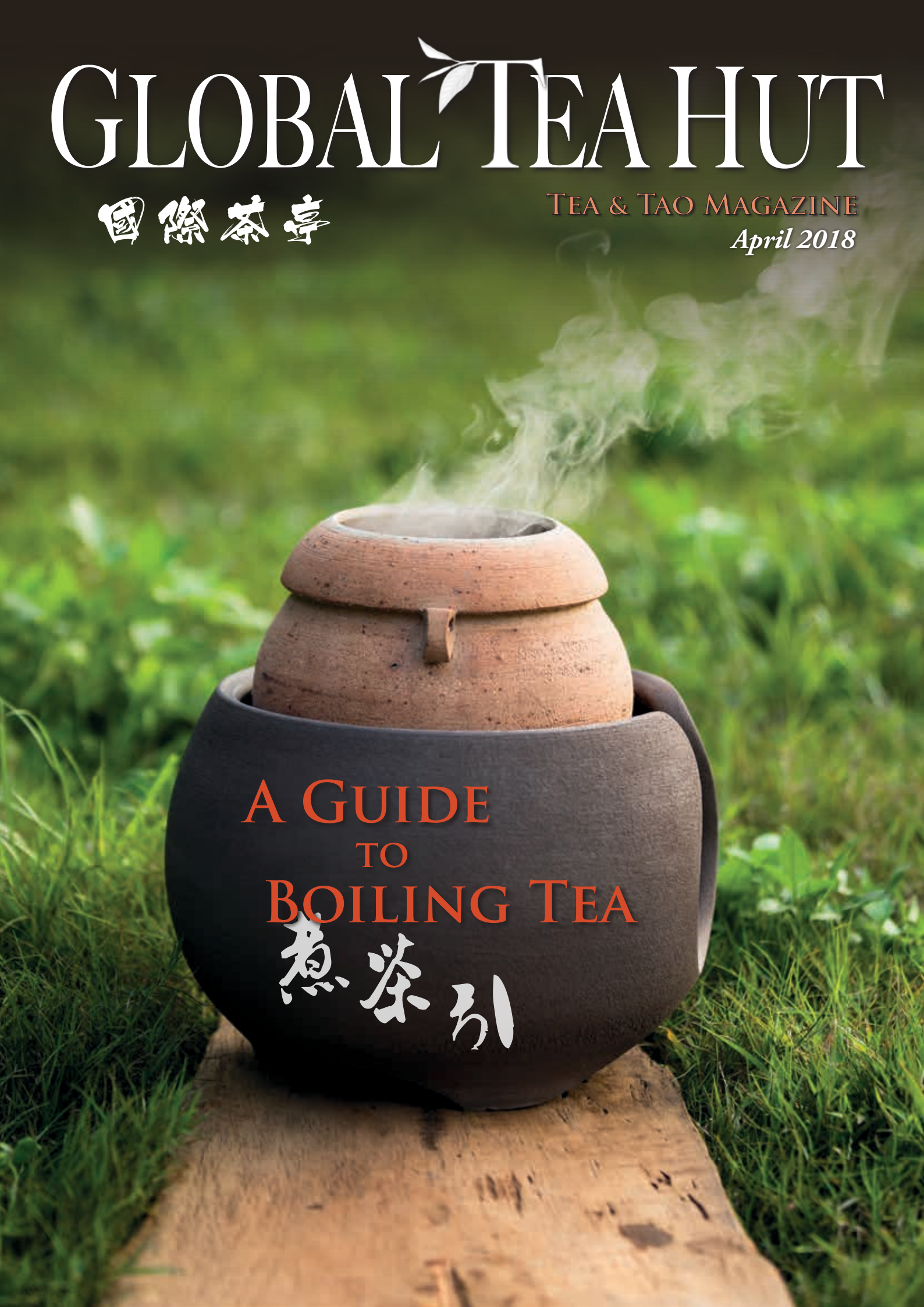
GLOBAL TEA HUT

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE
April 2018



A GUIDE TO BOILING TEA

煮茶引

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Tea & Tao Magazine

Prairie Sky

This month, we continue our series of brewing guides for bowl tea. Boiling tea is one of the oldest and most rewarding brewing methods, and an experience that every Chajin should have. In this issue, we'll explore the three ways we boil tea here at the Hut while pots around the world start steaming with a great black tea.

Love is changing the world bowl by bowl

Features

Traditions

From the Editor

In April things are quiet at the Hut, as we are all away on the annual trip. We never schedule courses for April, as travelers on the trip often want to come stay before or after. Very soon, however, the second half of the year's courses will be posted on the Tea Sage Hut website. The first harvests of the year start coming in as well, which means tons of samples from China and Taiwan to taste our way through. With trips and tea harvests, April is always an exciting time of year for us. We sincerely hope that all of you get the chance to come along on one of our trips at some point in the future!

The last six years, I have traveled between five and seven months of every year on large teaching tours on all the continents. This year, I am taking some much-needed rest by focusing on staying in Asia until September. I have been hard at work on the magazine and our books, as I'll discuss below, and teaching here at the Center as opposed to long flights over the oceans. Though I love your hugs, and the tea we share together, I see this extended period near home as a way of recuperating so that there can be more tea gatherings in the following year. I am also enjoying teaching in Asia, as I have focused on the West over these last few years. And I will be back in Spain for the annual Casa Cuadrau retreat in October and in the United States at the end of the year, teaching in several cities and a retreat at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, which I am very excited about.

At the beginning of the year, I hosted some teachings in Hong Kong, which went extraordinarily well. I met some beautiful tea people and witnessed the beginnings of a community in a place that already has a rich, vibrant and very deep connection with tea. Sometimes a shift in perspective, looking at what we know so well in a new way, can brighten our lives, casting sunrays that transform the simple aspects of life into glowing sparkles that fill our hearts with gratitude In May, I will be offering a retreat in Japan with my brother, teacher and friend, Dave Melladew. We will also be working together in Bhutan in the autumn and maybe Shanghai some time this year as well. The collaboration began with the retreat here in Taiwan last September, which we covered in the February issue this year (you can also buy the discourses on our Bandcamp website). Our teachings, approach and overall philosophy harmonize perfectly. Dave's teachings on Traditional Chinese Medicine, martial arts and specifically Qigong apply perfectly to all things tea, adding a depth to my tea practice. And the Qigong sessions also improve one's tea practice, changing the flow and movement of the body mechanics and posture of tea preparation. Rooted in the same history, source and flow through ancient China, the complements of the two are exceptional and rewarding. Our retreats offer the chance to be treated with acupuncture, herbs and dietary guidance, to practice Qigong and meditation and, of course, develop or deepen a tea practice. We hope to hug some of you at these upcoming Asian retreats in Japan, China and Bhutan!

As some of you may know, we have a long-term plan to publish some tea textbooks. We hope to have five tea brewing guides, one book for each of the seven genres of tea and some other books as well. I also have two of my own books that are getting close to completion. One of the barriers to creating these books, however, is all the time I have to spend working on Global Tea Hut. Eventually, I realized that the two projects can work together, supporting one another. I have since tried to focus on finishing my books and the first of the textbooks by publishing the remaining chapters serially in these issues—thereby knocking down two pears with one swipe. This issue is amongst the last of the sections of our first tea brewing textbook, which will be all about bowl tea.

So far, we have published issues with guides on leaves in a bowl and sidehandle tea brewing, both of which are unique to our tradition (at least in the modern era). In this issue, we will throw some leaves into the oldest pot there is: the "*ding* (鼎 釜)" or "cauldron" for boiling tea. We will offer guides for all three methods of boiling tea and the history behind each one, as well as why you would choose one of these methods over the others. There is a lot of lost joy to be recovered from rejuvenating the most ancient of all tea brewing methods, as more of any leaf comes out in the boil than it ever could in the steep, offering us the opportunity to drink our way into deeper layers of the leaf than we can with other brewing methods. Hopefully, this issue will start a fire under many kettles, sidehandles and cauldrons around the world and with magical leaves tossed in, rolling and unfurling in the boiling water, what's ladled out will open eyes, change lives and invite new and magical explorations into tea.

–Further Reading–

This month, we recommend rereading the previous two bowl tea guides we did, as many of the basics apply. The first was on leaves in a bowl in the February 2017 issue. The second sidehandle guide is in the October 2017 issue. Past issues are on our website. We will convert all of them to .html soon. They will be searchable by many tags!

TEA OF THE MONTH

Over the course of this month, we will be exploring boiled tea, including why we boil tea, which teas to boil and even some guides for how it is done ceremonially. Boiling tea is very rewarding. We find it to be among our favorite brewing methods. Whenever we serve roadside tea to passersby, we always boil tea in our cauldron as it creates a calm, serene day and lasts a long time. In order to discuss boiled tea, we of course need a great tea to boil. We often boil sheng puerh, shou puerh or black tea. The sheng and shou are often blends, and boil very nicely, but there are certain black teas that were literally made to be boiled. These teas were grown and processed with the intention of boiling them, and they are therefore the paragon of boiled tea. We thought choosing such a black tea would be great for our first issue devoted to boiled tea. And as the weather is getting warmer for most of us, they are also suitable to this time of year.

Before we start discussing our Tea of the Month, we must once again drive home the difference between red tea and black tea. What is called "black tea" in the West is actually red tea (*hong cha*). Red tea is oxidized completely during production, whereas black tea is characterized by post-production artificial fermentation. Its liquor is actually red. We have covered this to some extent, but it is important to the producers of black tea. A year ago, we met with two farmers from Liu Bao, in Guangxi Province, and they were so happy with our efforts to honor and respect true "black tea," returning it to its proper place in the West, that they broke out a celebratory fifty-year-old Liu Bao tea and congratulated us again and again, cup after cup! And their gratitude was definitely sincere, as was our respect for black tea producers, like the Hunanese producers who made our Tea of the Month, who also deserve to have "black tea" restored to its proper place in the world!

There were traditionally three types of black tea produced in Hunan: *fu cha* (茯茶), which is brick tea like our Tea of the Month; *qian liang* tea (千兩茶), which are giant logs of tea, taller than a man; and *tian jian* tea (天尖茶), which could be translated as "heavenly tips," sometimes called "heavenly basket (天籃)," as these are baskets of all-bud black tea, which represent the highest grade of black tea from Hunan. Our Tea of the Month is a brick tea, a *fu cha*, which is the oldest and most produced of the black teas from Hunan.

Most of the black tea produced in Hunan was exported to Tibet, Mongolia and other parts of Central Asia. The trade in black tea has gone on for centuries, but it is unclear when Hunan started producing bricks for export. Some argue that it began in the middle of the nineteenth century, while other scholars push the date back many centuries, including Hunan in the production of bricks traded to Sichuan, Tibet and Mongolia centuries ago.

In ancient times, tea was really one of the underappreciated measures of peace. When even a "Great Wall," extending for leagues, didn't really work to pacify the border, tea often did. The Northerners loved tea so much they were willing to trade their precious horses for it, which the Chinese desperately needed to travel and soldier. And there were occasions where threatening to stop the flow of tea succeeded in deterring or postponing conflict when other measures had failed. In fact, these bricks represented a form of currency throughout much of dynastic China.

In these places, the tea was boiled for many hours with salt and then mixed with churned butter, cream or milk (often the following day). In Tibet and Mongolia, this tea became part of the daily offerings to the Buddha and other deities, and was regarded as sacred. Some material anthropologists suggest that the tea alleviated vitamin deficiencies caused by the primarily meat-based diet in these countries, and was therefore a health necessity, but the fact is that these cultures valued tea as sacred offering, ceremony, hospitality for guests, health and as part of daily life. In other words, all the reasons that tea is consumed around the world, and why it is the second most consumed substance after water.

Aside from the *tian jian* baskets, all the black tea in Hunan is made of *huang pian* (黃片), which are essentially the leaves left on the tree to grow.

Prairie Sky (草原天)

Hunan, China

1990s Black Tea

Han Chinese

~500 Meters

黑茶 茶磚

The left side is the initial, wet fermentation, then drying and then the "golden flower storage" to the right.

This includes both the large towers of *qian liang* tea and the brick tea, like our Tea of the Month. *Huang pian* are often sorted out of other kinds of tea, whether puerh or other kinds like oolong, in post-production. Tea pickers are often paid by the weight of what they have picked in a day, and therefore often ignore the instructions of the foreman and pick larger leaves to increase the weight of their bags or baskets with less effort. In oolong production, such larger, thinner leaves turn yellow in processing, which is why they are called "*huang pian*," which literally means "yellow piece." Energetically, these leaves are softer and more Yin. As leaves grow, their cells stretch out and become photosynthesizers. From a more traditional perspective, you could say that the emerging buds are the outward Yang expression of the tree's energy from the root up and out, whereas the older leaves are taking energy inwards and are older and more Yin. Since the leaves are stretched out, it means they are far less juicy, thinner and more brittle when dried. They lack the vibrancy of younger leaves, which is why they are rarely used in tea production. Such leaves are often kept by the farmers and served in the household as a result.

Processing

Much of what makes Hunanese black tea unique, including brick tea, *qian liang* towers and *tian jian* baskets, is the complicated processing, which includes more post-production fermentation than any other kind of tea. Of course, the qualities of any tea are as much in the terroir, the soil, climate and type of tree as the processing. *Fu cha* is very unique because it is made from summer leaves, left to grow on the trees longer. The varietals in Hunan are mostly medium-leaf—something between a small-leaf bush and the large-leaf varietals of Yunnan, which are used to make puerh. This affects the chemistry of the tea as well as the subtler, energetic properties, which we will discuss later. Larger leaves that are left to grow big and dark green have more chlorophyll, catechins and minerals. As we will discuss later, research suggests that these larger leaves also have more fluorine, which may make them detrimental if consumed in large amounts over long periods of time. Summer tea has absorbed more sun, and is therefore warmer according to Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Usually, larger leaves are even more bitter. Tea was literally called "bitter herb (*tu*, 荼)" long ago, because, like all Camellia trees, the leaves are exceedingly bitter. For most teas, this is mitigated by using buds, which haven't yet produced chlorophyll, tannins or catechins, and are, therefore, much sweeter. Processing also helps change tea, through oxidation (withering) and firing, which de-enzymes the tea and thereby decreases its bitterness. But *fu cha* is made completely of older, larger leaves, which are very bitter when plucked and chewed. The tea that is

The Processing of Hunan Fu Cha

湖南茯茶製作工藝

compressed into bricks, however, is mild and sweet because the fermentation in the processing changes the nature of the mature leaves.

All three Hunan black teas usually go through twelve steps of production, which makes them one of the most complicated and skill-intensive teas to process, akin to oolong. The complicated processing and unique leaves, larger and harvested in summer, make Hunanese tea very special, indeed. The twelve steps could be divided into three stages, with the first two considered production phases and the last post-production. The first stage consists of: plucking/harvesting, firing to de-enzyme the tea, first rolling, piling (wet fermentation) for around twenty-four hours, including periodic separation to prevent the tea from clumping, a second rolling to break down the leaves and then drying (traditionally with pine wood fires which roast the tea dry). After this, the tea may rest for a short time. Then, the second stage begins: the tea is steamed to re-moisten/soften the leaves and compressed into towers in the case of *qian liang* tea or bricks in the case of *fu cha* (*tian jian* tea is left loose, packed into bamboo baskets).

Then the third phase: while the bricks, towers or baskets are still moist, they are put in a special storage area that encourages the proliferation of "golden flowers," which are a unique, medicinal fungus that grows in this area on this kind of tea. (We will discuss golden flowers in more detail in the following section.) The quality of Hunanese black tea is in large part measured by the number of golden flowers on the tea. In some factories, previous batches are mixed in. Usually, a warehouse with spores is enough for the flowers to flourish on the tea. After this fermentation stage, the tea is dried, packaged and goes for a final storage period. Traditionally, teas were stored for years before going to market, but it is usually a shorter period nowadays, leaving storage in the hands of the consumer. Our Tea of the Month, Prairie Sky, is more than twenty years old, which lends the tea depth and helps mellow it out, making for a smoother boil.

The unique leaves used to make this tea, picked only after they have grown large, the incredibly complicated processing and the growth of golden flowers all make Hunanese black tea unlike any other tea on Earth. Nowadays, many people steep Hunan black tea, but traditionally it was made to be boiled, and it certainly responds much better to a boil than a steep. There's a rich heritage in Hunan—worth exploring more deeply. In fact, we hope to devote an entire issue to *qian liang* black tea towers, as we have a great connection to a farmer who uses wild trees from a forest.

This month's tea offers us a chance to explore a topic we'd like to cover in more depth in future issues, which is health and tea. Before we begin our exploration, though, it is worth pausing to review some Traditional Chinese Medicine...

三寶

the Three Treasures

Andy Taylor

As you get to know more of Chinese culture, with its many rich traditions, beliefs and practices, you discover that the principles on which it's all founded are not at all separate, but derive from the same root philosophy. The calligrapher and martial arts master's movements both originate from their center, or *dan tian* (丹田); the farmer and fortune teller both use the lunar calendar to predict a harvest or an auspicious date for a wedding; and the soup at dinner and medicine from the Chinese doctor both contain ingredients to help strengthen the blood and benefit the eyes. And so many of these aspects of Chinese culture—from language and religion to tea, medicine, poetry, art and craftsmanship—all relate to the way of Heaven and Earth (Yin and Yang). The ancient Daoists believed Human to be between Heaven and Earth, as no dissociation exists in the mutual relationship between all three. That which is of Heaven and Earth, is also of Man. And so living within the Dao means living in harmony with Heaven and Earth energy.

Ancient Chinese culture saw health as based on the three special substances or energies, known as the "Three Treasures," or "*san bao* (三寶):" Jing, Qi and Shen. These energies may be translated as "essence," "vital energy" and "spirit-mind," though they cannot be fully understood through their English equivalents. Let's dive into these concepts, which date back to the Yellow Emperor…

The first treasure, Jing (essence, 精), is the original force of life, the true Yang of life and root of our vitality. Early Chinese medical texts refer to Jing as the basis of the human body, constituting all of our blood and fluids. It is the material that fosters our bodies' development and sexual reproduction, as well as controlling our birth and growth, eventually waning as we age into death. In a broad sense, Jing gives our body form and substance and connects us to our ancestral past through the genetic code. In the Chinese Medicinal paradigm, Jing is classified into two types: our genetic code, given to us by our mothers and fathers and further back, our ancestors' ancestors, is known as Pre-Heaven Jing (*xian tian zhi Jing*, 先天之精), literally the "essence of early Heaven." This can be viewed as the stock that we are given as we enter this world. After birth, Post-Heaven Jing (*hou tian zhi Jing*, 後天之精) or "essence of later Heaven," is the Jing that we acquire ourselves, beginning at infancy, through intake of food and water. At birth, our Jing determines the constitutional strength of the body and a deficiency at an early age can be seen in slow growth or poor development of the brain, bones, teeth, structural deformities and even mental retardation. As adults, it manifests as impotence, lower back pain, deafness and balding, thinning or graying of the hair. Ultimately, the complete loss of Jing results in death.

Of the Three Treasures, Qi (氣), or "energy," is the one that is most familiar in the Western world. All movement and transformation within the Universe arises from Qi. It has many forms and functions and human life depends on its existence. We are continuously breathing Qi, eating Qi, and interacting with Qi in every moment of our lives. Our state of health depends on the condition of our Qi. Any lack or stagnation of it will cause imbalances in our body, creating dysfunction and disease in the organ systems. If Qi is depleted, we must nourish it and if there is too much, it must be moved. The generation of Qi occurs through the transformation of the air we breathe and the food we eat. Within our bodies, Qi has five basic functions: activating, warming, protecting, transforming and containing, all of which relate to one another. Our Qi flows within our body through the meridian or channel system nearer to the surface of the body. This channel system, accessed through the exterior portion of our body, connects to our internal organ systems at the deeper level (this explains how acupuncture affects bodily functions through the insertion of needles into the body at particular points on the channel system).

Our first two treasures join together within the body, developing into the third treasure, Shen (神), known as spirit-mind. This is the energy behind our mental, creative and spiritual being, our consciousness and awareness, and that which connects us to the Divine. If, as the Daoists say, the meeting point of Heaven and Earth is Man, then Earth energy is the source of Jing and Qi and Heaven energy is the source of our Shen. It resides in the heart and can be seen through the eyes—as the saying goes, "The eyes are the windows of the soul." Unlike Jing and Qi, Shen is not passed on from our ancestors. Shen is developed ourselves, in our daily lives, cultivated through meditation, prayer, music, dance, tea, art, writing or any creative activity that aligns us with a higher state of consciousness. The state of our Shen is often determined by how we choose to orientate ourselves to the world. The way we relate to other people, or better yet, the way we relate to everything in this world, creates a shift in our Shen. All thought, intention and interaction influences Shen, our spirit. Are you able to regard the mundane as sacred? Are you able to see the light when mired in darkness? For us Chajin, Tea acts as a medium to create space for a calm, peaceful spirit, though that space is not limited to our tea room and the equanimity felt from drinking Tea does not leave us after the pot has been cleaned. We continue to brew Tea throughout our day in regard to everything that we do, cultivating an omnipresent, mindful and harmonious Shen.

With the wisdom passed down from the ancient wise ones, we are able to facilitate our own understanding and connection to Heaven and Earth. We are at the meeting point, and have access to the method and medicine to cultivate our own Three Treasures, Jing, Qi and Shen. Now it is up to you to live in harmony with Great Nature, nurture your own vitality and align your spirit with your Dao, which is the Dao! In that way the micro and macro align, realizing harmony.

Golden Flowers, Health & Tea

Some of the magic of post-production fermentation isn't in the tea leaves. Scientifically, little is known about many of the molds and bacteria that arise naturally in fermented teas like puerh, Liu Bao and other black teas. Most of these teas grow in humid areas, so molds, fungi and unique bacteria are present in and around the trees. As the tea is fermented, each cake, brick or batch of loose tea will be different. Even sheng puerh, aged naturally over time, is susceptible to mold, and not all of it is bad for us.

When it comes to black tea, Chinese people have always determined the quality of Hunanese and other black teas by how much "Golden Flowers (*jin hua*, 金花)" they have. This is especially true of the brick teas of Hunan. In fact, Hunanese brick tea is intentionally fermented in conditions favorable to this mold, and any brick without it is considered lower quality. As for other kinds of black tea, Liu Bao tea was not characterized in this way, though it is sometimes found with this mold on it. For some reason, this particular mold very rarely grows on puerh (aged sheng or shou), though puerh has many other kinds of molds and fungi.

Also known as *Eurotium cristatum*, most of the golden bunches are actually spores. In recent times, black tea has started to grow in popularity and some Liu Bao and Liu An teas are also fermented under conditions that promote Golden Flowers.

There have been medical studies in China suggesting that *Eurotium cristatum* can be effective in treating diabetes, promoting metabolism and as a digestive aid, and even potentially assisting in the treatment of cancer patients. Though Golden Flowers have been used medicinally in China, Mongolia and Tibet for centuries—where most brick black tea was exported to—further research is still needed.

Health & Tea

Human health is complicated, let's face it. We have so many healing modalities and as many ways of measuring health, from looking at our physical bodies, longevity and freedom from disease and discomfort, to including mental, emotional and even spiritual health in our evaluation of health. And what about the environment? Couldn't we include the health of an organism's environment in its overall well-being? Isn't the pollution of the river an aspect of the fish's health? And then what about society? Can a person be healthy in a time of social upheaval?

There is a lot to health, even when you exclude the bigger picture and just focus on the body. Even the most cursory survey of dietary advice will yield a tremendous array of often conflicting advice about what we should or should not eat. And tea is no different. We try to avoid health claims surrounding tea, as they often stem from biased studies paid for by vested interests that hope to purport that tea can offer this or that benefit. There is no doubt that when tea is grown in a healthy environment with biodiversity and free of agro-chemicals, it is great for our health. And we would argue that it is one of the few kinds of medicines that do appeal to the bigger picture of what health is: keeping the body healthy, the mind and spirit at peace and facilitating peaceful connection between people, which is the backbone of non-violent dialogue and democratic civilization. Still, there is a lot of controversy about tea and health, and much of the research seems to focus on one of the simplest, cheapest teas—the tea of the ordinary man, Hunan brick tea.

There is some research that suggests that the metallic taste in *huang pian* puerh and brick tea from Hunan comes from the use of "later leaves," which are larger, and lots of stems. Some researchers suggest that these larger leaves have a higher accumulation of fluorine (F), which can result in fluorosis, a kind of fluoride poisoning that affects the bones and teeth. So far, this research is not completely conclusive, requiring more study. If you have come across these studies with regard to brick tea from Hunan, don't be worried. There is not an immediate threat from drinking black tea or *fu cha*.

金花健康和茶

First of all, the problem was related to Tibetans/Mongolians who were drinking very large quantities of these brick teas every day over years, and second, we suspect that this may be due to negative environmental changes over the last decades. Anyway, we would suggest avoiding the consumption of large quantities of brick tea, especially later in life. But drinking a bit of aged brick tea from the 1990s will not cause any harm and will actually be quite healthy for all of us.

On the other end of the spectrum, confusing the issue, there is also a tremendous amount of research suggesting that brick tea is very healthy for us, lowering blood pressure, helping with blood sugar and therefore diabetes, cholesterol and, of course, the ever-important weight loss. Recently, it has been argued that the bacteria in brick tea and the Golden Flowers, increase metabolism, and Chinese and Japanese studies have both "shown" that it is the "best" tea for weight loss. Some of this research was endorsed by the companies producing this kind of tea, however. We would suggest that there is a physical benefit to drinking tea and certain teas may indeed offer particular benefits, but our approach is, like the ancients, to view tea as a "Shen tonic (神補品)," which means as a "spirit herb." Tea helps us to calm down, live more peacefully and to connect with Nature and each other. If it provides physical benefit, that is great, and we hope that more research helps to verify this, but in the meantime, these are reasons enough for a tea practice. It is good for us—for our spirit—and, so long as it is produced in a healthy way, certainly not bad for the body either!

Beyond the more scientific approach to health, we would also like to offer a different approach that focuses on trusting our bodies, Nature and life, looking to our own connection to ourselves and plant medicines instead of waiting for a lab report to tell us what is going on inside of us. Perhaps the combination of these approaches results in a more holistic health and healing.

There is some debate about the molds that develop in fermented teas like puerh and black tea. There aren't any known cases of mycotoxins in these teas, but the possibility is there. Some white spores on puerh tea will give it a musty flavor, which people may or may not appreciate. Traditionally, almost all aged puerh was musty, having been stored in Southeast Asia. The tea wasn't as valuable as it is today and was often left to age naturally, with little human intervention. As puerh has increased in value, however, tea lovers are more concerned with how their tea will age, putting more effort into controlling the storage environment. In the future, we will be able to share more experiments and results, as tea is aged in new environments around the world, some conducive to better aging and some not so good.

Although many people think of mold as bad for us, it isn't inherently so. Our bodies are full of microorganisms. We need them to survive. There are bacteria all around and throughout our bodies, and by number they account for the majority of cells in us. While we find that the presence of certain white and yellow molds on aged sheng and other black teas enhances their Qi, and in the case of Golden Flowers makes them sweeter, we aren't doctors and wouldn't recommend using this tea to treat any illness. You need to take responsibility for your own health, consulting physicians, Western or Chinese.

Putting aside disclaimers about how we won't be responsible for your health, we drink this type of tea a lot and it is great. As we mentioned above, there are no known cases of mycotoxins released from Golden Flowers—to the contrary, there are several studies promoting their medicinal benefits, Western and Chinese. Also, there is research that demonstrates that the molds and bacteria in most teas are mitigated by the temperature of water used in tea preparation.

There is a magic in the relationship between the millions of microorganisms in fermented teas and our bodies. This is a big part of what makes puerh and aged teas special teas. We have talked here a lot about the scientific aspects of these molds, but we should also recognize that it is hard to say how much of the Qi in any aged tea is from the leaves and how much from the microorganisms. Without humidity, puerh and black teas don't ferment. The changes they go through over time are related to the presence of bacteria, itself the defining characteristic of fermentation—in anything from cheese and yogurt to kombucha.

From the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine, brick tea is thought to be very good for the digestion. Of the five elements of earth, wood, fire, water and metal, digestion is earth. Brick tea is very earthy, with some wood as well. Most of the qualities of brick tea align with digestive influences in uncanny ways, perhaps more than any other tea. As we discussed, this tea is harvested in late summer when the leaves are larger, which is the season of the spleen (digestion) according to the traditional calendar. Also, the color of digestion (spleen) is yellow, which relates to the golden flowers that are intentionally cultivated on this kind of tea. This, coupled with the digestive benefits of microbes, does suggest that our Tea of the Month may have a positive effect on our digestion. The Tibetans and Mongolians certainly testify to this fact, arguing that it has been a digestive tonic for their people over centuries.

Whether or not this month's tea helps treat physical symptoms, boiling tea for a few hours is an incredibly relaxing activity and that certainly is good for our well-being. In the end, a rested and relaxed mind is great for our physical health and for our overall quality of life and is therefore healthy.

茶 Prairie Sky 草原天

Prairie Sky, and all Hunan brick tea, is a simple, ordinary and earthy tea. Old scrolls associated it with the earth and wood elements, in fact, and suggested that boiling this simple tea helped to ground us. Monks still boil this tea throughout China and even in Korea, arguing that it opens the channels and centralizes the body's energy, much like a Five Element blend (which we discussed in detail in the February 2016 issue). Brick tea harmonizes our bodies, especially when boiled, centering the flow of Qi through the channels and with a grounding force that can help to stabilize the digestion and bring balance to the body and spirit. Our Tea of the Month is a Hunan *fu cha* from the mid-1990s, and its age has helped to mellow the tea out, lending it more grace and an even more stable energy. It is also sweeter and more delicious due to the aging!

This kind of brick tea is very simple, harking back to less complex times when tea was boiled all day over an open fire, perhaps in an old wood kitchen or even a Mongolian horse-trader's tent—the open sky and prairie an infinity just beyond the flap. Visitors come and go, while the tea boils on all day. This tea was traditionally thought to be "inferior," like most things traded to the "barbarians" beyond the borders, but such simplicity actual caters to the spirit of tea, which is unpretentious and frugal. The fact that this tea is shared in temples and tents, and has been for centuries throughout the Himalayas and plains of Asia, under prayer flags and other lost shrines, as well as in small gatherings of friends and wise men, sharing song and cheer—all of this makes it shine with the glow of the extraordinary that Tea teaches us to celebrate in our daily lives. We find gratitude in the simplest places, like a steaming bowl of tea and the smile we share it with.

When this tea is boiled properly with a bit of salt (we will suggest leaving out the churned butter, cream or milk), it is smooth and delicious. One of the magical qualities of Prairie Sky is how patient it is. You can boil this tea all day and it will just keep giving, growing sweeter and more delicious as the hours grow more serene, bowl by bowl. It is a mild and unadorned tea, without any flashy flavors or exciting aromas. This tea is earth: boiled wood and grounding minerals. It stabilizes the energy of the body and helps ground our day. The flavors are mild, tasting of rocks, minerals, sweet metal, wood and late summer forest. The growing sweetness, which increases the more the tea boils, helps harmonize the digestion and center you in the core. The energy is neither Yin nor Yang, but rather a very healthy balance. Like Liu Bao and other black teas, Prairie Sky has the amazing ability to be either warming or cooling, depending on the time of year you boil it.

We recommend a good book, a very deep meditative space or perhaps a few of your dear friends or family who want to have a lasting conversation over many bowls of tea. This tea is to be boiled over long periods, growing better and better with every bowl. Take the time to explore its depths. Though it is uncomplicated, it is deep. The simplest things are often the deepest. We hope that this month's tea is a great introduction to the world of black tea, Hunan brick tea and, most importantly, boiled tea ceremonies!

茶道

Boiled *Sidehandle*

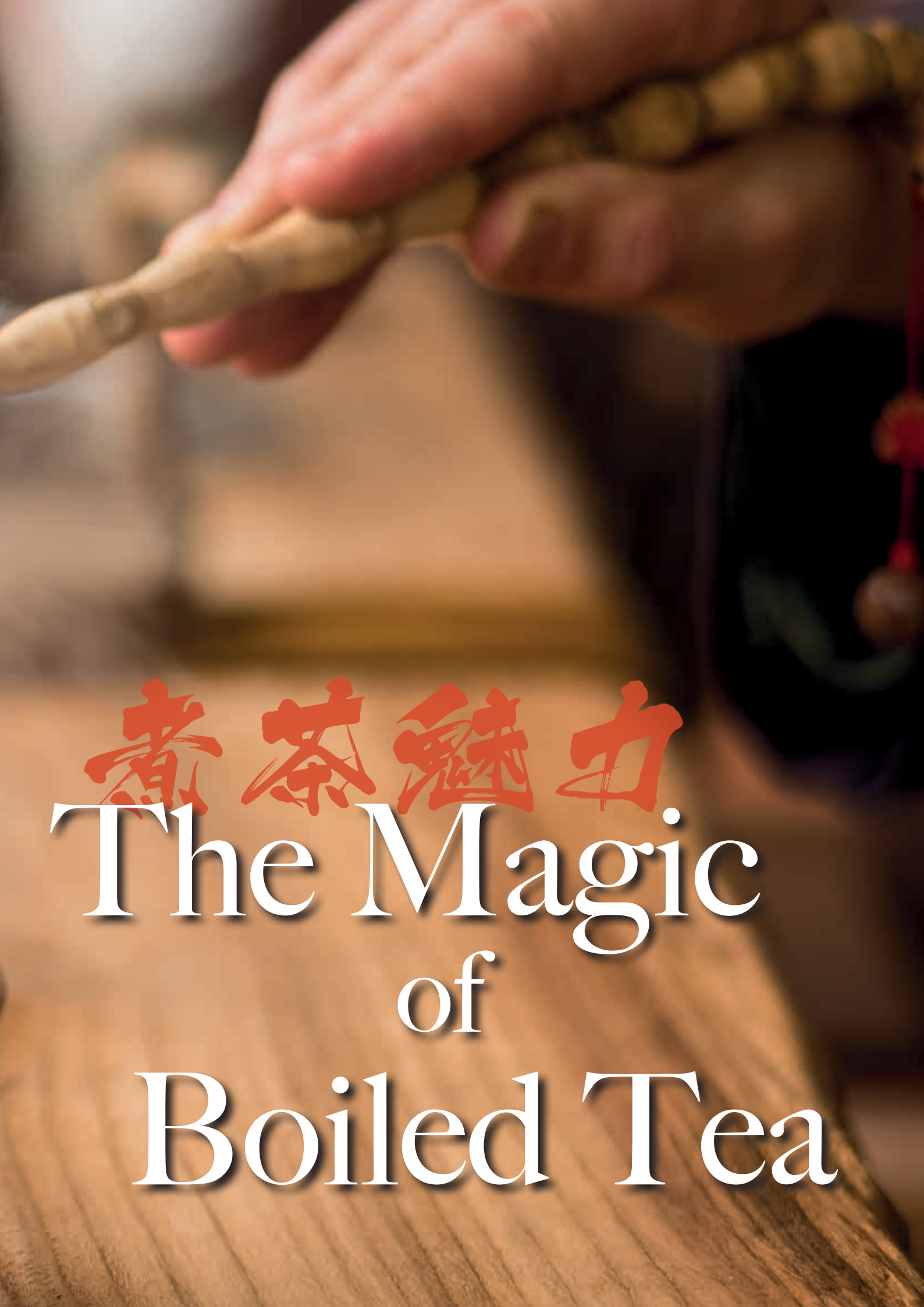
Water: *spring water or best bottled*
Fire: *coals, infrared or gas*
Heat: *as hot as possible, dragon, 100 °C*
Brewing Methods: *boiled or sidehandle (boiled is way better)*
Steeping: *boil away for hours (the tea gets better over time)*
Patience: *hours of boiling*

茶 When boiling tea, heat will make more of a difference than any other method. For that reason, we strongly recommend using charcoal or at least a gas stove for heat.

Brewing Tips

You can brew this month's tea in a side-handle pot as usual, but you will miss out on so much if you do not boil it. That is, after all, the very essence of this month's issue. But don't feel bad if you cannot boil this month's tea. We want you to be happy and free. Let us suggest/recommend/advise you to boil this tea, which really is a joyous experience that every tea lover should have!

The simplest way for you to boil this month's tea would be to use a cooking pot. If you are interested, you can follow along with the guide for a cauldron ceremony, replacing a devoted cauldron with a normal pot on a gas stove. We would suggest using a camping stove, however, rather than a stove top in the kitchen, so that you can take the tea to your tea space or even outdoors, which would be so much nicer. That way, you can also make a nice chaxi, which will make the experience much better. You will also need some mineral salt (we recommend pink Himalayan salt), some bowls and a ladle of some kind. Again, if you don't have anything to use as a ladle, you can just use a good-old-fashioned soup ladle/spoon and use that to decant the tea into bowls. If you do end up loving the boil as much as we do, then you could think about investing in some proper teaware for this kind of tea preparation. In the meantime, have fun this month and give it a try.


煮茶魅力
The Magic
of
Boiled Tea


不老丹

This is a very exciting issue for us, as it represents a further opportunity to share our brewing methods with the world. We have already offered guides to leaves in a bowl and sidehandle ceremonies, so this is the last of the three types of bowl tea we practice. In this issue, we will offer guides to all three of the ways that we boil tea, but first it would be nice to have a bit of context for boiling tea, especially since it is one of the oldest brewing methods on earth, dating back millennia. In ancient times, people boiled all their herbal medicine, including tea. The aboriginal shamans often mixed other plants, herbs, fruit, ginger and even chili with tea, but also boiled the tea itself. Sadly, modern tea lovers often regard this method as primitive and ignore the many wonderful benefits of a good bowl. We hope that this issue inspires you to boil some tea. Wu De's insights into the origins of boiled tea and the relevance of this method today are a great place to start, as we move from the general history and lore to the specifics of how to boil different kinds of tea in the following guides to boiling tea.

茶人: *Wu De*（無的）

Boiling tea is one of the oldest brewing methods on earth, extending back to the very first bowl of tea. They say that the legendary emperor, the "Divine Farmer" Shennong, was meditating in the forest as his cauldron boiled away. The sun dappled his old face, carving deeper shadows into the wisdom wrinkles by his eyes. A slight breeze swayed his long hair around his calm face, dancing with the leaves he wore as a robe. The same wind broke free a single leaf from the tree he sat under, which curved, fluttered and swayed before falling to a rocking descent back and forth as it fell through the vigorous steam and into the old cauldron, sucked under by the frothing dragon water. The old sage was attuned to his brew, with medicine in his soul, feeling the new herb in the water like the tree felt the breeze that broke the leaf free. His leonine eyes fluttered open and his palms came apart from meditation. Looking into the cauldron, he carefully smelled the aroma, glancing up at the tree from which the leaf had fallen. He reached out with his delicate and worn hand and stroked the bark of the tree, closing his eyes and reaching out with his heart to communicate. After a few deep breaths, he grabbed his old, cracked bowl and ladled out a bowl of the steaming brew. The liquor was light, but the old sage had spent his life in the forest wearing leaves. One sip was enough. His whole being shifted and all the wrinkles left his face. He sighed deeply; a lifetime of herbalism, exploring and studying the plants and their language through endless miles of mountain and forest, through sickness and healing—a lifetime of study and searching culminated in a single fortuitous sip from a happenstance leaf. Unable to contain himself, the old sage looked up at the tree, smiled and exclaimed out loud: "This is the empress of all medicinal herbs!"

From the legendary first sip through most of the aboriginal prehistory of tea to the earliest history, tea was boiled. In fact, almost all herbs were boiled. Boiling plants for medicine is the first medicine, and though most cultures have moved on to medicine based on chemistry, which can offer us more consistent results and many incredible innovations towards curing diseases, all of modern medicine is based on the work of the early herbalists who advanced human knowledge of the natural world. And the medicinal use of herbs should and does continue, playing an important role in our health and well-being, which isn't necessarily in competition with allopathic medicine. Plant medicine can expand our understanding of health to include ideals Shennong, and all our ancestors, took for granted. Herbalism can offer a more holistic approach to human health and well-being that includes a relationship to the environment and each other in our ideas of health and happiness.

In truth, Shennong represents the birth of civilization. He is called "Divine Farmer," because he taught his people agriculture. He is also the father of Chinese medicine. He represents the collective tribal wisdom of all the pre-civilized chieftains and shamans, as well as their culture folklore, which of course evolved into and facilitated the birth of civilization. He represents the indigenous wisdom, in this case with regard to health. And there is a lot we can learn from the traditions that formed our civilizations, for only in connection to our roots can we truly grow strong crowns that are free to explore the sky. Only when we learn from our past can we truly grow up strong and independent.

The ancients viewed health in terms of harmony: harmony within the human body, mind and spirit as half of health; the other half being the harmony of the individual with the environment—human and Nature, the micro and the macro. Similarly, social health was found through the harmony of the people in the village, the harmony of the villages to the states, the states to the empire and the empire, once again, in harmony with the cosmos. Nowadays, harmony as health has been replaced by a prevailing outlook of health as freedom from disease and discomfort along with extending our longevity. However, the ancient goal of harmony, within and without, isn't any less significant because we are afforded a much deeper and more pronounced understanding of the natural world through our scientific research. For example, as our industry, and the economy that motivates it, grows more and more destructive to the land, air and water, we are facing very concrete examples of how unhealthy a life lived out of harmony with our environment can be for us socially, psychologically and physically. We are also working to solve these issues, like creating renewable energy sources that aim to power our growing dependence on technology in a way that doesn't harm the earth. Maybe we could all benefit from boiling some more herbs…

Boiled Tea in Classic Times

In the Tang Dynasty (618–907), the simple boiled tea of the forest and rural countryside made its way to the mainstream, mostly through the efforts of the great tea sage Lu Yu. We have translated Lu Yu's famous book, the *Tea Sutra* (茶經, *Cha Jing*) in the September 2015 Extended Edition. The *Cha Jing* is the most important book on tea in all the vast history of China. In Asia, great works and their authors are revered with such heartfelt devotion that generation to generation their status grows, until eventually Lu Yu is a god of Tea worshiped by farmers and merchants of the Leaf throughout the empire. For its influence alone—for the thousands of cups and bowls raised to Lu Yu, and for these very bowls we drink from, each a heritage and legacy of Mater Lu's own bowl—for this alone, we who have heard the call of this same plant spirit should read the *Cha Jing* fervently and with the respect it deserves. The Tea Sutra wasn't Master Lu's only work, or even his only writing on tea, but it is the only one that survives to this day. Even in his lifetime, this important book had enough influence to popularize boiled tea in the court and studios of scholars and nobles throughout the Middle Kingdom.

Starting in the Six Dynasties (220–589), eremitism became an ideal in the life of mainstream Chinese people. Previously, in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), nobles almost exclusively sought service in the empire and the mountains were reserved for saints, monks, shamans and other seekers. In fact, in the Han Dynasty, rural places were looked down upon in contrast to "civilization." But in the Six Dynasties, due to political chaos, more and more nobles sought refuge in the mountains. They even took to the mountains as a form of protesting the government through non-participation. As eremitism became more and more esteemed, nobles began building garden retreats in the city or its surrounds and retreating to these temporary refuges whenever they had time. This is the era in which landscape painting, poetry, Buddhism, more formal Daoism and other pursuits were popularized by literati who favored the rural, natural mountainside over the city. This admiration for eremitic life in the mountains continued to grow throughout the rest of dynastic China until the modern era. Not only was it respected for a noble to renounce the world if the politics of the time were not moral, but the brightest nobles were expected to have experience in retreat. From this time on, the aesthetic of all art, poetry and even politics was influenced by an idea of retreat to the mountains, and tea would soon follow.

As more of the nobility fled the capital in the turmoil of the Six Dynasties and retreated to the mountains, more rural crafts, culture, spirituality and other aspects of life made their way into literature and poetry. Han Dynasty literature and poetry was almost all focused on the empire and the city, but by the time of the Tang Dynasty, which was a great renaissance in China, almost all the arts favored the mountains. And it was at that time that the boiled herb, the Goddess of all Herbs Herself, made Her way into the hearts of the nobles, scholars, poets and artists of China. For tea has always been the greatest way to "bring Nature to society (茶帶自然入社群)." Through tea, the nobles could travel the distant, foggy crags and paths beyond waterfalls in the comfort of their own homes, without leaving the city. They sought to ennoble this simple act of boiling tea into a more refined ceremony, aggrandizing what was simpler in the forest amongst the shamans and Daoist mendicants boiling tea.

While the aboriginal shamans and Daoist healers cloudwalking in the cliffs boiled their tea simply, whether with a cauldron or a sidehandle pot, Lu Yu and other scholars sought to refine every aspect of the process from the leaf to the bowl. It was at this time that the simple sun-dried herb started to be processed in more complicated ways, attempting to bring out certain qualities from now-domesticated varietals or to highlight the best in wild varietals while mitigating the bitterness and other undesirable qualities. Tea was no longer the domain of the forest, the "holy men" who have always had the radical for "mountain (山)" in their descriptor (仙). Now it had found its way from distant temples to the kingdom, and slowly the people's reverence for tea grew until the empire revolved around it: all the four major religions incorporated it into their practice (shamanism, Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism); the calendar was built on it, with the New Year beginning when the emperor had the first sip of the first tea; it became a currency used to pacify the northern tribes in exchange for horses; tea rituals evolved into the Chinese wedding ceremony; and it developed into a social beverage used in conversation and hospitality throughout the empire in every home, eventually facilitating this in homes around the world.

The nobles of the Great Tang advanced tea processing to suit a much more delicious and otherworldly brew. The tea went through a complicated de-enzyming through steam, was ground and compressed into small cakes and roasted dry over a fire.

To read about this process in more detail, see the September 2015 issue. And as they developed the tea processing, so did the brewing evolve. First, a whole new kind of artist and craftsman came into being to produce teaware—a field that has continued growing even into modern times. New fancy silver or iron cauldrons were made, ceramic bowls, ladles, urns and much more.

The small tea cakes were roasted just before brewing to enhance the flavor. They were then ground into a powder on location with a roller. The water in the cauldron was brought to a boil, sometimes taking a bowl out to cool the water later. A pinch of salt was added to make the water smoother, the tea thicker and smoother (which we have found to be effective). When the water was the perfect temperature, the tea powder was stirred in and the liquor was left to boil to the "sublime." After it was ready, the tea liquor was ladled into bowls that had a thick head of frothy foam on them.

Though these kinds of cakes are no longer produced, and besides some nostalgia no one is brewing tea this way, the devotion and effort to create tea in a way that combines Nature spirit with artistic tradition and brewing skill has continued to this day. It was at this time that the spirit of tea grew into more than the wild, unrestrained boiling of herbs. Tea was now the steeping of leaves and water—the leaves representing the Nature brought from the mountain to society and the water the culture used to glorify it. The same Nature spirit valued by shamans and Daoist healers now could be surrounded with great art and method, bringing more complex and rich ceremony to the art of imbibing this medicine/beverage. And this magic is continued by many Chajin today.

The Need for the Boil

There is something powerful about a boiling pot of herbs. It connects us to our heritage and to simpler times when fire was the center of human life, when hearth and home were synonymous. Sipping boiled tea reminds us that no matter how far we've evolved technologically, life is still about water, plants and heat. Through this ancient alchemy of water, fire, earthen vessels and leaves, we remember that we are these elements and that Nature is not something "out there" that we go to visit in parks, but also "in here" as we are the air, the water, the plants and trees, mountains, rivers and even the stars, especially our star. Of course, our relationship to Nature and the pursuit of balance and harmony, within and without, is available throughout our lives, in all that we do. But there is magic when a product of Nature meets our senses so perfectly that it awakens presence, bliss and awe. And as Shennong said, this is the empress of them all—amplifying and reaffirming our need for harmony with Nature in every sip. And somehow, boiling takes us back to those primal times.

All tea is about slowing down, resting in the breath of a moment, connecting to our inner nature,

which is an expression of Nature, and cultivating harmony with ourselves and each other in our most evolved form: calm, peaceful, understanding and in service of one another's health and happiness. Somehow, boiling tea makes more room for these powerful, life-changing qualities to grow, just as it gets deeper into the leaf and offers more of the medicine. Boiled tea sessions are long. They last hours, and you have to show up with a greater investment of time and energy, devoting more of your day to tea. The commitment is a part of the healing process.

The mortar and pestle have been around for thousands of years, as have other methods of grinding and milling. And yet, very few formulas were traditionally ground into powder in Traditional Chinese Medicine, and those that were, were ground for specific reasons. When allopathic medicine became global (for good reason), many traditional medicine practices were forced to evolve or go extinct. Chinese herbalists began wearing white coats, to look like allopathic doctors, and started offering herbal formulas in capsules or powder packets that can be taken on the go. The modern lifestyle doesn't have time for two, long one-hour boils a day—the modern lifestyle doesn't even have time for dinner! However, any herbalist can tell you how much more powerful the herbs are when they are boiled whole. This is akin to eating whole food, as opposed to processed ingredients. We'll talk about the role fire plays in this kind of healing a bit later; for now, I'd like to explore an insight I recently had regarding the boiling of herbs: *healing time.*

Recently, someone dear to me was being treated by a wonderful Traditional Chinese Medicine doctor here in Taiwan. I went along to a few of her appointments because I wanted to support her and also to meet the doctor, for whom I have great respect. We had a discussion about the points I just mentioned, and she fully agreed that taking capsules or powder packets was far less effective than boiling whole herbs. We agreed about the historical/traditional precedent for boiling, the fact that boiling extracts much more from the plants, the role of fire (which we'll discuss shortly), and much more. But then she offered another factor

I had never thought about before, which blew me away and changed my understanding of tea. She said that spending an hour twice a day to boil herbs forces the patient to set aside at least two hours a day to focus on their health and healing. This alignment of the mind and spirit towards getting better is powerful.

All too often, we want a quick pill that relieves our issue and allows us to go back to our lives, ignoring the fact that we aren't well. This often leads to more severe health issues down the line. Periods of "dis-ease" are warnings that we need to slow down, rest and recuperate and focus on lifestyle changes that will prevent future ailments. The Old Man said that the wise deal with problems when they are small. In other words, preventative medicine is the best medicine! The Chinese doctor who brought this up is an incredibly wise woman. She looked up at me from her needles and pointed at me with one: "Don't underestimate the power of focusing your energy on healing, and on shifting your attitude towards health. I encourage my patients to meditate while their herbs are boiling. Not only do these meditations bring more peace and balance into their lives, but they also are forced to set aside time that is devoted to dealing with the health challenges they are facing, towards getting better and what that means to them, to the causes of the illness and what they can change with regards to their lifestyle. It seems obvious to all doctors that an ill person needs *time* to recover, which is why all doctors prescribe rest, but it really does need to be emphasized in this day and age, where people want to grab a pill like a cup of coffee and keep on moving, when, all too often, it was that pace and that lifestyle that caused the illness in the first place."

This conversation underlined why tea is such an important practice: it is a time devoted to peace, to connection with Nature, our own wise hearts and to each other, celebrating our family and friends and making new ones. In Buddhism, we say that making space for meditation is the primary meditation. If we want to be calm and present, we have to set aside time to practice. If we want to create lives that are in harmony with Nature, we must remember our connection to the Earth. And if we want the world to be at peace, we have to start by connecting to our own loved ones, increasing the circle of family until we are all one. We have to devote time to our own health and well-being, our family's health and well-being, our friendships, our societies, our environment and so on… And boiling tea just offers more—more from the leaves, more time to sit and many more bowls to awaken our connection to ourselves, Nature and each other.

I am very grateful that my tradition has passed five brewing techniques on to me, and they each function so gloriously in different situations. But many of you may be surprised to hear that if I had to retire to the forest with just one brewing method it would be boiled tea. Of course, this would mean I wouldn't be able to brew all the wonderful kinds of tea in the world, as many don't respond well to boiling, but I'd be happy with less. I'd be happy with the oldest method and what it connects me to heritage-wise; I'd be happy with the fact that it takes so much longer, forcing me to devote my whole day to tea; and I'd be happy with how much more alchemical, mystical and filled with all-around sorcery it is. Every time we serve roadside tea, we always boil, as it lasts the whole serene day. If it weren't for the honor of creating this magazine, teaching and helping serve at this Center, if it were up to me, I'd serve boiled, roadside tea every day, earning just enough rice to stay alive! I guess I'm a wizard at heart. Boiling tea just tickles the part of me that delights in blending, boiling, cooking, steaming, ladling out thick brews of powerful herbs…

Fire & the Boil

After water, fire is the most important element in tea preparation. Heat plays an important part in what makes boiling tea so special. Heat is the teacher of tea. Without heat, it would take many hours, if not days, to extract the essence from the Leaf. Heat is what draws out the flavor, aroma and energy. Heat extracts the juices from within the cells of the leaves and infuses the water with the tea. And the quality of heat makes a huge difference in this: what kind of fire is used and how quickly or slowly the water boils. When using charcoal to boil tea, the heat is much more pronounced, breaking the cell walls of the leaves down over time and drawing out the deepest part of the leaf.

Boiling tea exposes the deepest essence, drawing out flavors, aromas and energy we can never experience when steeping tea. For many of the teas we boil, there are intense mineral flavors, which are often hinted at in the later steepings of many teas, especially oolongs like Cliff Tea. These flavors are much more pronounced when we boil, suggesting that deeper in the cells of the leaf we find more of what the plant takes from the earth, rock and soil. Most teas will grow sweeter as they are boiled over hours, with a lasting sweetness that lingers on the breath (*hui tian*, 回甜).

Surprisingly, we find that the longer we boil a tea, the smoother it gets. Master Lin often says that as one progresses in tea, enjoying many sessions over the years, one more and more drinks structure. The texture, energy and structure of tea become more of what we enjoy as we drink it. This doesn't mean we ignore flavor and aroma, but that they aren't as important, and not because we've forced ourselves to turn from them, or as any statement of judgment, but in the natural course of experience—effortlessly we shift our focus to structure, as it is more rewarding. All paths are a movement from the gross to the subtle, and tea is no different. When we start out, we are all enthralled by the subtleties in the bouquet of fragrances tea has to offer, and by the world of exotic flavors each variety offers. Over time, we begin to focus on the structure of the tea, the energy and how we feel drinking it, communicating less with the body of the tea and more with the energy. This is like any marriage, which starts with physical attraction and moves more deeply into the soul as the years go by, becoming more and more of a heart connection, sharing deep unspoken connection and daily life together. As the old saying wisely suggests, "The amateur drinks tea with the mouth and the master drinks with the whole being."

Aside from the very finest, rarest teas prepared gongfu with absolute precision and mindfulness,

the smoothest tea you will ever experience is the later bowls of a boiled tea session! And, in fact, these bowls are more consistently smooth and energetically pure than the finest teas. Since these types of sessions have such different ambiances and are pursued with a different spirit, there really isn't much point in comparing them. However, recognizing that boiled tea provides the kind of smooth and subtle softness you can find in very high-quality teas prepared with great skill is testament to what boiling the right leaf can unlock.

Aside from opening doorways in the leaf not otherwise accessible, there is another reason to boil tea. The heat that is the teacher of the tea is not just responsible for extracting the flavors, aromas and energy that make the liquor what it is; heat is also what moves the medicine throughout our bodies. And this was one of the main factors that the wise Chinese doctor and I discussed in our conversation about how much better boiling whole herbs is than taking capsules or powder packets. She also agreed that the heat not only brings more out of the herbs, making for a thick, steaming bowl, but that the heat moves the medicine through our bodies to the place where it needs to go. Not only does the heat move the medicine, it is also penetrative, helping us to absorb what's needed from the plant, which is why it was traditionally called the "teacher" of tea. It extracts the lessons and then helps us digest them. The doctor even mentioned (while she wagged another needle at me) that she always suggests that if her patients insist on taking powder packets because they don't have time to boil herbs, at least they should drink a glass of hot water with the packet to help the herbs circulate and penetrate.

Boiling tea makes for a hotter bowl, and not just in temperature. There is an indescribable way in which the quality of heat changes. Guests at the Center often make such comments when we compare water heated on an electric stove with water heated on charcoal. For one, the charcoal-heated water steams more, but more importantly, it feels hotter. We have even done blind experiments where the water was the same temperature (within 1–2 degrees) and everyone could still recognize the water heated on charcoal, expressing that it was hotter. The heat just feels deeper, more penetrative and to misuse scientific terms, more "atomic," as if every atom was full of heat. The same is true of boiled tea: it just feels hotter and the heat penetrates the body more deeply and for a longer period, lasting way beyond the bowl. This means that the medicine the heat is carrying also goes deeper, opening the body, mind and spirit more to the tea and the messages it offers: chemical language that resonates with our body's chemistry to align us with Nature, spirit and each other.

Types of Tea for Boiling

Long ago, when all tea was boiled, there wasn't much tea processing to speak of. Tea was picked and sun-dried. As brewing methods evolved, so did tea processing and vice versa, with new brewing methods developing to bring out the best in new kinds of teas. Without any firing, rolling or fixing, the thick cell walls in a tea would be impervious to steeping, and even the hottest water would only result in a soft, clear and watery brew. Without the skillful processing of leaves to bring the essence to the surface of the leaf through oxidation (cellular breakdown), rolling, firing, etc., the only way to extract the essence of the tea would be to boil it, which is exactly what the ancients did. Part of the reason we are so grateful that our tradition has five brewing methods is that we can prepare almost every kind of tea there is with one of these five methods (there are a few outside our scope, but not many). This also means that not every kind of tea is great for boiling.

The best teas for boiling are sheng puerh, shou puerh, black teas like our Tea of the Month and sometimes oolong, especially spent leaves (we cover boiling spent leaves, which we call "revivifying" on p. 31 of this issue). You can also boil some white teas to great effect as well, especially white puerh teas. Finally, if you have access to any "unprocessed" tea, which means picked and sun-dried (kind of like white tea without the intentional oxidation), these are also incredible teas for boiling, even for long hours.

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We have some Taiwanese wild leaves that were just plucked and sun-dried and they are amazing when boiled, especially in the summer. They boil sweeter and sweeter, with a delicate coolness that is refreshing and delicious. We find green tea, oolong and red tea less "boil-able," though oolong can be nice in later boils, which is why we only ever boil it as spent leaves from another session. Green and red teas get too astringent and strong when they are boiled.

The best teas for boiling are made from slightly larger leaves—leaves that have been left on the tree to grow up, in other words (as opposed to the varietal, i.e., large-leaf or small-leaf). Sometimes this means what are called "*huang pian* (黃片)," though not always. The term "*huang pian*" comes from oolong production, where large leaves are sorted out as undesirable, because they are always yellow in color due to the oolong production process. Puerh made from such large leaves or, especially, black teas like the brick tea that we've sent you this month are the queens of boiling. These bricks made from larger leaves were created to be boiled. As we discussed in the Tea of the Month article, they were made for export to Tibet, Mongolia and the outer reaches where they were boiled with milk or butter. Even without the milk or butter, they make for a sweet and delicious boil. Even when we are boiling sheng, shou or black tea, we like to add in a bit of *huang pian* to the blend for boiling.

Five Element blends are always great for boiling, so we recommend you look through the February 2016 issue where we discussed Five Element blending techniques. In the winter, we often boil Five Element blends. These teas will fuse much more pronouncedly in a bowl than they ever could steeping them, which makes the five-element effect much stronger in a boiled version, centering the energies of the body and opening channels. If any of you have any Earth's Treasure Five Element blend left, try boiling it using the methods we will discuss later in this issue. You will find that all the things you love about that tea will become much more pronounced!

Alternatively, it can be very nice to boil a young shou with a bit of aged Liu Bao or even aged sheng puerh. In the summer, we either boil black tea, like our Tea of the Month, or sheng blends. Our sheng blends are usually composed of two younger sheng teas and one slightly aged tea (usually around ten years old). The young shengs should balance each other, one providing flavor and the other Qi, for example; or, perhaps, one is bitter and pungent and the other sweet and delicate. A small amount of aged tea adds depth to the brew. One example of this using teas some of you are familiar with would be to use Forest Bridge with a small amount of Boundlessness or Mountain Gate and a dash of Ordinary Treasure. That will make for a stellar boil!

The Dragon & Phoenix Both Rise

Boiling tea creates an immersion of tea, heat and water beyond what steeping can achieve. From Shennong's first sip to the aboriginal shamans, from the great masters like Lu Yu and Lu Tong to the early imperial cauldrons, tea was boiled throughout the Middle Kingdom for millennia. If you look carefully, you can see these old texts in the calligraphy of steam that pours endlessly from your own pot or cauldron. They say that each and every hour of tea is a distillation of every tea session that's ever been. Watching the steam unfurl from our cauldron and lithely curl around the ladle of each bowlful, hour after hour, this old saying begins to make sense, as poetry tends to do when you have some tea in you.

The five elements of water, fire, earth, wood and metal merge with greater synthesis when we boil tea, as they find a way to swirl in and through one another, especially when we use a cauldron. The mysterious gate opens more readily for me when I boil tea, and I find myself nostalgic for the days when so-called "tea doctors (*cha bo shi*, 茶博士) wandered down from the highlands to heal people with tea. We share boiled tea by the bowl by the roadside, and we have seen many a passerby have their day changed by such a steaming bowl. There is an elemental magic in these steaming bowls—one that opens hearts and minds.

While people may experience tea differently, from a peaceful calm to meditative presence, from connection to the Nature that courses through you, awakening the mountain, wind and rain that live in you to the warm heart space of camaraderie in a few hours of tea—all of this is amplified by a long boil. Throughout this issue, we are going to explore some of the methods for boiling tea in our tradition. There are many others. In the September 2015 issue, we explored the way that tea was boiled in Lu Yu's time, for example. We hope that you take the chance to explore this brewing method and find it as rewarding as we do.

茶 Shennong is a legendary emperor who ruled for a thousand years. His name means "Divine Farmer," as he taught the people agriculture and therefore civilized China. He is also the "Father of Traditional Chinese Medicine." His figure represents the collective wisdom of all the tribal chieftains and shamans of pre-civilized China, which, of course, were the foundation for the development of later science, culture and philosophy.


正信筆

Five Basics of Tea Brewing

茶人: Connor Goss

While we covered the five basics a few years ago, reviewing them is of great importance. Spending the time to review each of the basics, no matter where we are in our tea journey, offers us the chance to renew our understanding and reignite the fires of inspiration and dedication towards practice. It is important that we go back to the beginning, from time to time, back to the foundations of our tea practice. A house can only be built on strong foundations, and similarly we cannot build a strong tea practice if our basic techniques are weak or from an uninformed place.

As is often said in our tradition, *"Advanced techniques are basic techniques mastered."* We never really graduate from one level to another, learning something and then setting it aside when we think we have learned all that we can. We will always be students who can benefit from taking the time to go back to the basics. Wu De often says that the masters are those who have passed on and the rest of us are lifelong students! For the beginner, these basics are an essential foundation before or alongside any brewing guide, in any method. For the more traveled Chajin, this review is an opportunity to sit with those first bowls of tea shared, steeped in beginner's mind and the slight nervousness that one experiences when beginning something for the first time, and experience each of the basics with new eyes. Let us carve out this time and space to renew our practice, renew the roots of this tree that has grown strong with our energy and discipline. These basics will always be of importance in our tea practice, especially when we begin practicing brewing gongfu tea where these basics are most applicable, though that is not to say we do not benefit from practicing each of them when brewing bowl tea.

It is through discipline and practice that we deepen our practice. There is always something deeper and subtler to explore, experience and become. Therefore, we could spend years studying and practicing the basics without penetrating the depths of their meaning or form. We are never done, in other words—there is always more to understand and penetrate. The tea ceremony has no beginning or end in time or in space, which is how this Cha becomes a Dao. Preparing for the ceremony is a part of the ceremony, so is cleaning up, and so is the way we live, eat, meditate, treat others—all that we are affects our tea, which means all that we are *is our tea!* And no matter where we are in our tea journey, or what method we are practicing, the roots will always be important. Here are the Five Basics of all Tea Brewing:

五個基本泡茶

回歸基礎

不忘初心

1. Separate the tea space in half and do everything on the left side with the left hand, and everything on the right with the right hand.

2. Circular movements of the left hand are clockwise and all movements of the right hand are counterclockwise (both towards the center).

3. Kettle in the off-hand.

4. Settle the heart. Never, ever, ever… (times ten) pick up the kettle until your heart is still.

5. Stay with the tea.

Separate the Tea Space

The first of the basics is that we practice dividing our tea space down the center. All movements on the left side are done with the left hand and all movements on the right side are done with the right hand. Much of the basics of tea brewing comes from the need to cultivate greater fluency and remaining rooted and centered while serving tea. Through separating the space, we are then required to use both of our hands equally when brewing tea, which naturally brings us back to the center of our body, our *dan tian* (丹田), allowing our movements to flow from our heart.

A practical and simple, though no less important, reason for dividing the space and using each hand on its respective side is to protect our teaware. Reaching over the space with the opposite hand puts our teapot, and often other teaware, in a blind spot, and then when we return to the center, it is easy to accidentally knock things over with an arm or the sleeve of a shirt.

We also practice dividing the tea space as a way of honoring our guests. It is traditionally considered in Asian culture quite rude to turn your back to your guests when serving tea. This means that we must change hands, often passing things to ourselves while brewing tea, from one side of the space to the other. In this way, we cultivate greater balance energetically and physically. We become more present with the tea and guests.

Circular Movements

The ergonomics of our bodies profoundly influence how we brew tea. Through making our movements circular and inwards into our center, we are moving in harmony with the natural design of our bodies, with the movements of our arms and shoulders finding no resistance. We move with more fluency, promoting a greater flow of Qi through our bodies. This touches on the second, deeper reason why we move towards the center when moving in circular motions. It relates to the flow of energy, Qi, in our bodies. When we move in harmony with the ergonomics of our bodies, the Qi in our bodies flows differently, from the center. There are no disturbances in the flow. You can even try sitting on a chair, or on the ground, and move your hands both inwards and outwards a few times. What differences do you notice between the two? Which feels smoother and without resistance?

Kettle in the Off-hand

We hold the kettle in our off-hand to cultivate greater balance between both sides of our bodies. Often, we rely on our dominant hands too much, forgetting that we have two hands, so through using both of our hands while brewing tea, we cultivate more balance in our bodies, and allow for greater flow of subtle energy.

Always place the kettle on the off-hand side and use the off-hand to handle the kettle. This is one of the most important basics of tea brewing, allowing us to cultivate greater balance in our practice. Often, especially for people who are right-handed, we neglect the use of our off-hand. Using our strong hand for everything in daily life, our off-hand becomes weak and forgotten. Brewing tea should be balanced, coming from the center of our bodies. Through using the off-hand to handle the heaviest object when brewing tea, we begin to strengthen our bodies, becoming more balanced overall in our practice. As both sides of the body grow more balanced, energy will flow more smoothly through our arms.

Perhaps the greatest reason for this basic is to bring fluency into our tea brewing. While largely applicable to gongfu tea, we will also notice benefits when serving bowl tea. The pot should always be placed and used in the strong hand; this is important for overall balance, physically and energetically.

Settle the Heart

We must learn to calm our hearts and still our minds before we pick up the kettle, before we begin steeping the tea—steeping ourselves into the teapot. We do not want to become unsettled or distracted while preparing the tea. We take a few moments to breathe before beginning to fill the bowls and teapot—a pause that allows us the space to still our racing minds, dissolving the internal dialogue, and calming our hearts that dance around erratically.

There is nothing that will improve your tea and practice more than a heart that is free of disturbances. It is important that you take the time between each steeping to center yourself, to become rooted in this moment, in this beautiful occasion to serve tea for yourself or others. Try taking a few deep breaths, internally reciting a prayer or mantra that brings you stillness and calmness or we often practice connecting the kettle with the pot at the Center and recommend this to guests. We do this by placing one hand gently on the kettle and one hand on the pot, resting there a moment or two, feeling the connection between them that flows through our bodies, through our hearts. Is there a blockage somewhere or a poor signal? This will be easier if you have already steeped the tea once or twice, as the water and tea have already met and there is some connection already flowing. Feeling and creating this connection requires patience and stillness. But remember, do not make your guests wait an hour to drink tea because your heart is not still. As you grow more in your practice and tea brewing, you will be centered and rooted more easily. At first, as with any art or discipline, we must force or awkwardly practice the movements; in time, however, we become them. That is how we learn to step out of the way and let tea do what She does best—what she has been doing for millennia and hopefully will into the future.

Stay with the Tea

Now we move inwards, into more of the internal state of mind that we seek to inhabit while brewing tea. We place our hands with gentle composure in the middle of the tea space, whether that is on the ground or on a table. We focus with all of our awareness, inhabiting a state of samadhi as we pick up the kettle, fill the teapot, steep the tea and hand out the bowls. There is no space for anything else. No space for distractions or idle conversation with a friend. There is only the tea and this opportunity to show up and serve. We stay with the tea always.

And then—only then—once the bowls are handed out may we take a step back and let the guests enjoy their tea and their own journeys. We stand back a moment, while they drink their tea and then we begin again, and again.

There should always be pausing in conversation while pouring the tea: spaces in between the conversation, even if it is simply a casual tea session with friends. Traditionally in Chinese culture, it was considered rude to talk while pouring the tea, as the mind of those words, of the brewer, will go into each bowl. What about internal dialogue? How does this affect our tea brewing? The next time you brew tea, best to try alone and observe whether the dialogue within, or lack thereof, influences your tea brewing. Are you less mindful or present with the tea? Or is there no discernible difference? The mind in which we complete a task determines the outcome of the task. Does internal dialogue and communication prevent you from staying with the tea?

Boiling Spent Leaves

Before we get started on the ceremonial guides for this month, we thought we would offer a guide to the more casual side of boiling tea. One of the questions we are asked often online and in person is what we do with the leftover leaves from our finer teas after a session is finished. There is nothing like extending a treasured tea beyond the initial session with a bowl. Not only are these bowls rewarding, but they make us feel like we are honoring the tea and allowing it to say all that it has to say in the world—fully enjoying every drop. This is how we do it!

One of the most common reasons for boiling tea is to raise a second brew from spent leaves. After we've brewed one of our favorite teas, whether as bowl tea or gongfu, it is wonderful to have another session later on, or even the next day. When a tea is precious, we honor it by enjoying every drop to the last. Boiling a fine tea after we've brewed it also escorts us further than steeping can go, allowing us to learn from the deepest part of the leaf—often where the minerals shine in every sip, as the depths of a tea are often like the mountain it was born from. Some of the language that we find deep in a tea, only unlocked after the tea has been steeped and then boiled for some time, speaks in flavors more ancient than Tea even. There is great enjoyment in such a tea, boiled to life again.

Usually, it would be impolite to serve a tea that we have already steeped and are now boiling to guests. We always want to serve fresh leaves for our guests, unless they are close friends or family and are wondering about a tea we have previously steeped, or maybe they were present at the original steeping and are now joining us for the second chapter. Otherwise, we would never invite a guest for such a tea session. If you really want to share a revived tea with a certain guest, you could serve them a session of bowl or gongfu tea first and then move on to boiling the spent leaves of a previous session.

For the most part, such revived sessions are casual, unless we are boiling the tea alone, in which case we could take a more meditative/ceremonial approach to boiling a tea like this. In such a case, we would follow the same steps as an ordinary sidehandle boil ceremony (as discussed starting on p. 43). Actually, Wu De mentioned that some of the best sessions of his life were re-boiled teas that he drank alone, in a meditative posture. He said that a few were very fine Cliff Teas and that others were very well-aged puerh that he had shared the day before at a gathering with others and been lucky enough to take the spent leaves home. "To me, such sessions are powerful expressions of just how deep tea goes. They force you to travel beyond the flavor and aroma to what the tea is, chemically and spiritually. I don't think it's coincidental that such bowls taste of minerals, rocks and earth. There's a message in that, but it's one we cannot use words to discuss. You'll have to drink this truth, which is true of all tea, but even more of sessions like those…"

Materials

We encourage you to give this a try, reviving tea that you've brewed previously. In order to do so, you will need a pot for boiling. We use a sidehandle that we have set aside for this, but you could use a ceramic pot or a glass kettle. We would recommend not using your ceramic kettle, a *tetsubin* or silver *ginbin,* as the tea may influence the water you boil in your kettle, changing the flavor. It is much better to have some vessel that is devoted exclusively to boiling tea like this. The ideal options are a large Yixing zisha pot on a small alcohol flame or a silver *ginbin* dedicated to boiling. You could use the Light Meets Life kettle for this purpose to great effect, but then it wouldn't be as useful for making water, which might be sad. Next best would be a sidehandle or a small ceramic kettle devoted to boiling. If the sidehandle you use for ceremonies can withstand a flame, you can use the same one as it will be used for tea brewing anyway.

Of course, you will need other teaware as well: cups or bowls, a nice *chaxi* (茶席), a large bowl (which we will discuss in the method) and a stove. Once again, it is worth mentioning that charcoal will make a huge difference in this kind of brewing. This doesn't mean you cannot revive tea with alcohol, infrared or gas, or that charcoal doesn't benefit other types of brewing, which it does, but in boiling the heat is very essential in extracting the essence of the tea. For that reason, charcoal will be so much more noticeable in these sessions. We have boiled tea on infrared, gas and alcohol, and had some nice sessions that way, but charcoal is still a must from our perspective.

Types of Tea

Most of us are abundant in tea to drink, so we won't want to revive most of the teas we brew by boiling them in a second session (we have even boiled some teas for three or more sessions). More often, we can simply prepare a new tea on a new day, as opposed to boiling the previous day's tea. As we mentioned, we would avoid doing this for guests as it doesn't honor them.

There are sometimes extenuating circumstances. Usually, it is a fine tea that is worth reviving/boiling to make a second session. This often means that the tea is rare, expensive and worth honoring to the very last drop of a session and then beyond, boiled until it is water. Wu De once boiled a tea for a week and then steeped it overnight for a month or so after that. No doubt, that was an extraordinarily rare tea! The teas that respond well to this are all rare, and usually aged. We revive aged puerh, aged black tea, fine oolong (especially Dancong or Cliff Tea), aged oolong and, more rarely, other aged teas (Wu De says he once revived a well-aged red tea). Puerh, black tea and oolong are essentially the teas that will respond well to revivification through boiling. However, you can revive any tea you like. Though we usually switch to bowl tea, you can use gongfu cups.

Method

If you plan to revive a tea, it is important that you not leave water in the teapot, just the leaves. You can also take them out and place them in a covered bowl, Tupperware or other enclosed container. We don't want the leaves to dry out, though, so don't leave them too long. Usually, one day is the most we would wait to revive a tea through boiling in this way. If the tea dries out, you can still boil it, but you will lose some of the essence and it won't boil as long, either—essentially becoming less patient. If enough time elapses that the tea dries out, it is probably a sign that it wasn't the tea to revive.

In order to revive the tea as well as possible, you will need to know approximately when you want to have your boiled tea session. This is because it is ideal to soak the tea in cool spring water for around a half an hour to an hour before boiling. We should use the highest quality water possible—the same water we use for brewing tea. Place the leaves in a large bowl, preferably ceramic or metal, and pour room temperature spring water over the leaves, allowing them to soak for around an hour. We often cover the bowl, at least with a cloth, so no dust will fall on the surface of the water. This wakes the leaves up and gets them ready for boiling. After the hour is up, we strain out the water, holding the leaves back with a hand (you could use a strainer if you want). We place the leaves in a small bowl and take them to our tea space. This step is important as it wakes the tea up, opens the cells and washes off any of the dust, mold or other bacteria that have clung to the wet leaves through the night. Energetically, you could say that the soak

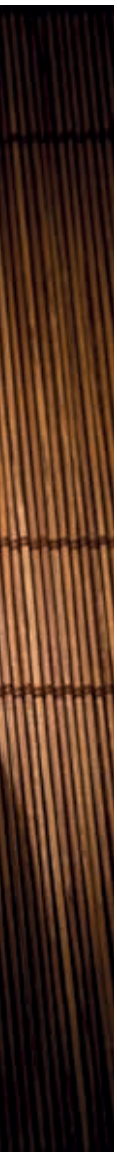
opens the pores and brings the tea to life, making it a new tea in terms of the boil. (If you want, you can experiment, soaking half the leaves and skipping this step with the other half. We have done this experiment several times. We think you will notice the difference very clearly.)

As with the boiled tea ceremonies we will discuss in this issue, we get the water boiling before adding the tea. If you just dump the leaves in, they will float and not start boiling right away. For this reason, it is always helpful to take a stick or tea utensil and spin the water into a vortex after it is boiling, and then quickly add the tea leaves into the center of the funnel.

If you are boiling a puerh or black tea, you can add a very tiny amount of salt to this boil, but we never add mineral salt to a revived oolong, as the minerals in these teas, especially Cliff Tea, are already strong enough. You can try a bowl or two without it and then make up your mind about whether to add some or not.

The first boil should go for a bit longer, at least a few minutes, to wake the tea leaves up and get them opening again. After that, the amount of time between pouring will be determined by the tea and your taste. If you want to, you can add a pinch of fresh tea to the boil as well. This is a great way to improve these sessions. We like to use the dust from the bottom of the bag for this. If, for example, we have a great gongfu session of a well-aged puerh and then want to revive it for a boil the next day, we will go through the steps discussed here and then before the session return to the jar we took the tea from and collect a few pinches of the dust from the bottom, perhaps by emptying the jar out onto paper and then putting the leaves back. Then, after we add the leaves that have been soaked in cool spring water, we add in this powder as well, making for a much brighter session.

Taking a very special tea and bringing life to it for a second time is one of the greatest joys a tea lover can know. When a tea returns like this, it is like *hui gan* (回甘)—the returning of a minty, fresh feeling on the breath after the tea has been swallowed. Though the session is over, its echo returns, bearing sweet music, faint but sweet reverberations of the chorus…



We almost always turn our spent leaves revivification boil sessions into bowl tea, but technically you could boil your spent leaves from a gongfu session and then continue to pour the boiled leaves into gongfu cups. Perhaps you would then even use much of the same teaware you were using in the original session. However, there is something special about drinking this type of tea in a bowl.

The most important step in the whole process of revivifying your leaves is to soak the leaves in water for a half an hour to an hour before the boil. This releases the leaves, opens them and rinses off any dust, awakening the leaves.

Preparing for Tea Ceremony

茶道

Throughout our short lives, we often ignore the precious small moments. We accelerate towards goals we've created, passing over many beautiful and inspiring opportunities. Tea teaches us to slow down and celebrate the microscopic present moment. We learn that the quality of heart we invest in preparing for something influences the outcome and determines our ability to appreciate it. If we rush to get to the experience, preparing in a sloppy way, our fast-paced mind will not allow us to enjoy the goal once it is reached. Preparation is the ceremony itself!

茶人: ***Wu De*** (無的)

It is always important to recognize that preparation for a tea ceremony *is* the ceremony, not something that leads up to it. This is true of all art, in fact. The way the veggies are chopped and cared for in preparation determines the final dish as much as any of the steps of cooking a meal. Similarly, the way the pigments are ground will affect the color of the painting as much as the brushstrokes. Practicing for the concert is really as much the essence of the concert, and plays as great a role as any of the stage props, speakers or even the audience itself. Recognizing that how we prepare for our ceremonies is a part of the ceremony itself is the doorway we walk through, kicking the dust from our shoes, to start out on the journey of Tea. The point at which you realize and begin to practice daily life as either tea ceremony or getting ready for tea ceremony, and that both are truly one, is the point at which tea becomes a Dao—a way of life and a means of self-cultivation. Until then, tea is something you do, drink or entertain as a hobby. There is nothing wrong with that, but we all need a way of living, for without a road we are lost. If tea is not your path, merely an ally on the journey of life, then use it to help you find your Way, or deepen your connection to that path, wherever it takes you. But in all paths, we must come to realize that everything we do in life is a part of our practice.

When we realize that our preparation for tea ceremony is the ceremony, and add to that the understanding that all we do is really preparation, we start *living* our tea. We realize that how we do anything is how we do everything. We are *always* preparing tea—in every step, every breath of every day. In the end, no matter how we define ourselves, as an artist, musician or Chajin, we will spend much more of our time on earth walking, tying shoes, chopping veggies and getting ready for bed than we will doing the activity we value most, whatever it is. And when we come to see that how we do these mundane things does, in fact, influence how we paint, make music, dance, yoga or tea (whatever our Dao is), then we cross into a *life* in harmony with that Dao. To practice Tea means to live it. It isn't just in the times when we sit for tea; it's in the way we walk, clean, create our living space, treat others—it's in our heart.

In this way, Cha Dao achieves what all the ancients in the Far East sought: to align the micro to the macro and vice versa. The great Zen master Dogen said that when one truly understands one teaching, she understands them all; and to understand a grain of sand is to understand the entire universe. Each tea ceremony is a condensation of all the ceremonies past, present and future. It is, in fact, an expression of all that has ever been, since the beginning of the world,

and all its many rotations, orbits, seasons, months and days—all the stories of all mankind have brought us to this time and place. Here in this moment in space and time, we hold this bowl; we hold the universe unfolding.

Preparation

Preparation for a ceremony can be divided into four parts: materials, cleaning, *chaxi* and the heart-mind. All are paramount aspects of any ceremony, and serve not only as the fundamental ground on which the tea is prepared, but also are as much the practice as the ceremony itself.

As the world grows more and more in favor of the rush, we develop a culture of goal-orientation. Sometimes this is beneficial, but it also comes at a price, for with our eye on the prize, we often ignore the things we dispose of along the way to get there, causing harm to our environment and quality of life. There is an old Indian story in which the student asks the master how long it will take to become wise. The master replies "five years." The student is impatient and feels five years is too long, so he asks again, this time offering to meditate and pray every day. "Ten years," the old master retorts without even glancing from his meal to the student. "But what if I become a monk like you and practice all the time?" To which the old man snaps "Fifteen years!" The young student is very confused. Scratching his head, he asks, "How is it that every time I devote more of my time and energy my goal of wisdom drifts further away?" The master likes this question, and looks up from his food with a 'now we're on to something' kind of smile. "Glancing up from what you're doing to stare down your goal means you occasionally bumble up, slowing down your overall progress. With one eye on the goal, you are half-blind, and will only be able to pay partial attention to whatever you are doing in the moment, meaning that half your work will have to be corrected later. With both eyes on the goal, you are completely blind; it will then take you thrice as long to walk the same road… I suggest focusing on this moment, as all that will develop later is dependent upon it. Only in being present, here and now, can you develop wisdom. Let go of what that may or may not look like in the future." Staring out the window of the junior high school with a heart full of envy for the high school students, we forget that they too were once in junior high. We also don't realize that in doing so, we aren't paying attention to the lessons being offered now, all of which lead to the high school next door.

One of the key ingredients in a life of tea is slowing down, developing patience and mindfulness in order to invest the smallest things with more heart and soul. In doing so, we learn to live more fully in the moment, being present, and to slow down enough to be drawn into the small things in life—the magic of the ordinary. When a cup of tea begins to draw us in, the steam is a glorious vision, the small dings of teaware are a tiny symphony and the aromas and flavors of the tea pull us deeper into the moment, which begins to stretch out over the mountainous horizons the tea inspires. In this way, we learn to appreciate and recognize the details of our lives. For if you can invest a cup of tea with all your heart and soul, you can also learn to live in this way, seeing the beauty in swaying leaves, a dandelion or a small insect—the way we all did when we were children and the moments and world were more awake. We can therefore start an exploration of the four aspects of preparation in reverse—with our own hearts and minds.

There is an old Chinese story in which the student asks the master calligrapher how to brush the perfect scroll and the master replies, "perfect yourself and paint naturally." This applies equally to any art, including tea. The most important part of any ceremony isn't the tea, water or teaware; it isn't the brewing method either—it's the heart and mind of the brewer. Self-cultivation begins when you realize that your own internal state creates the tea. A bowl made by a still heart leads the drinker to stillness. As we begin to deepen our presence and recognize the importance of small things in our lives, our tea brewing improves. This is a vortex, as the mindfulness and reverence for the moment improve our tea, which then teaches us to live more mindfully and in presence, which improves our tea and so it continues in outward-growing spirals…

The easiest and best way to help cultivate the heart and mind for tea is to begin a meditation practice. In fact, tea is meditation in motion, and is really the leaves that sprouted from the branches and trunk of a life rooted to the cushion. Daily morning and evening meditation will do more for your tea practice than knowing temperature, buying a better kettle or even sourcing better tea leaves. What's more, the best leaves will have been processed by a calm, serene mind and the best kettle will also have been made from such a channel. The path from the mind to the hand travels through the heart. Meditation helps us to learn to still the mind and calm the body, making for a loose, easy and free posture without any channels blocked. A calm mind concentrates easily, growing more sensitive to movement and change, and more still and free, allowing the tea to brew itself. This is why our life here at the Center begins each and every day with seated meditation. In pacifying the mind to stillness, we prepare for tea ceremony. Tea ceremony, for us, therefore, begins with a seated meditation practice. After all, Cha Dao is eighty percent cleaning, inside and out…

Cleaning

One of the ways people around the world show respect to their guests is by cleaning. But keeping our tea space, teaware and our hearts clean is also a large part of living tea as a practice. We shouldn't underestimate the effects a clean space has on the mind, bringing peace and a settled heart. When we enter a simple, clean space, we immediately start to calm down and return to our heart. Keeping the space clean and pure also honors the tea space, the occasion, whether drinking tea alone or with guests, our teaware and the tea itself. As we clean, we learn to honor the moments of tea, inviting more awareness and presence into our lives. Each movement of the dust rag is the same as lifting a ladle to pour some boiled tea or raising the bowl to the lips. The tea has already begun the moment we decide to clean our tea spaces.

The act of cleaning itself is also a powerful practice. The commitment to keeping our tea spaces clean, both before and after ceremonies, can have a great and lasting effect on how we live our lives. A cluttered mind will clutter the space in which it lives, and that space will encourage the mind to be more cluttered. Likewise, a simple, clean and spacious heart-mind will create a space that resembles this, which will still the mind of those who visit such a space. As we practice keeping our tea ceremony spaces clean and pure, we show respect to our guests, who all feel honored by our efforts, and we also cultivate purity, respect and stillness in our own lives by cultivating a space that resembles our heart's view of the world. And deep down, we all thrive in a clean, peaceful environment that is healthy for body, mind and spirit. In a tea practice, we strive to create this for our guests, holding the space within which they can return to the peace already in their hearts by drinking some tea in quiet and allowing the energy of the plant to guide them there.

We shouldn't underestimate the role that the ambiance of the room plays in the ceremony, just as we mustn't undervalue the practice of cleaning before and after tea ceremonies, which is a vital part of living a life of Tea. Strive to keep the space pure, orientating away from cleaning as an unwanted chore to an approach where cleaning is a purification necessary for a great ceremony. Choose to see that all the work that goes into cleaning the tea space before and after ceremonies is a way of showing your love to your guests. It is also as much about cleaning and purifying the heart as it is the space. In this way, we wash away the line between physical and spiritual, inner and outer and begin to live in a world without separation—where practice is life and life practice. We clean, then, for its own sake, as an expression of the purity that is our true nature. And in such a space, we share our hearts with others who also desire such peace.

On the day of a ceremony, even a more casual one, you should spend time cleaning. We honor our guests by cleaning and decorating. In this way, we also honor the occasion itself. Taking the time to make a session special is actually what does set it apart! Clean everywhere, even the places your guests will never see, as the purity of the space is a real energy and not just a show. After you have cleaned sufficiently, you can start on the *chaxi*.

Chaxi

All tea ceremonies start with the "stage" or "*chaxi* (茶席)." The truth is that the output of any system is determined by its input. Tea grown in a healthy environment without agrochemicals and with lots of biodiversity makes beautiful, healthy leaves. Similarly, the more you put into a tea ceremony, the more you get out of it. The more we prepare, the more we honor the occasion and our guests. This includes cleaning, decoration and also the practical elements of a session, like which teaware to choose, gathering spring water when possible, charcoal and heat, music if you wish to play some, incense and every other detail of the environment the tea will be prepared within.

Chaxi is focused mostly on honoring the occasion, one's guests and the tea of choice. There can be a theme that facilitates this, like a full moon or congratulations for one of your guests. Most often, on a day-to-day basis, we practice honoring the occasion by connecting Nature to our tea sessions. This is easy outdoors, since Nature surrounds us and is, therefore, our *chaxi*, but indoor sessions often strive to bring Nature inside, reminding us that this session is a part of a bigger world. This means autumn leaves in the fall, spring flowers in the spring, and so on. A *chaxi* is a mandala: a temporary work of art that connects a moment to Eternity. We create them to honor this precious time and space and to welcome our guests. We also prepare a *chaxi* to honor the tea we are preparing, and the hard work of the only true tea masters in the world: *farmers*.

One of the great legacy of tea sayings that has been handed down over generations is "*Ichigo ichie* (一期一會)", which is Japanese for "one encounter, one chance." Any discussion of *chaxi* would be remiss without an exploration of this poignant expression, as it speaks to the underlying spirit of a great *chaxi* and the session that will take place upon it.

Before the session begins, this expression asks us to remember that this tea session we are preparing for is unique, pregnant with possibilities. It reminds us to treat it with the same respect and attention we would give to a once-in-a-lifetime meeting with someone very important, which it surely is. Like that same empty page that was the beginning of all great works of literature, music and art alike, a clean and clear tea space waits for us to impress upon it our intention for the next session, and the *chaxi* represents those impressions put on the paper like musical notes, quietly awaiting someone to sit down and play. The energy and intention we put into these moments will greatly determine the outcome of this meeting.

This intention and the state of mind with which we carry it out are just as important as our intention and state of mind when the session begins. Don't rush to set up a tea session in order to get to the point where the tea-drinking begins! After all, if the instruments are not in tune or the stage improperly set, it doesn't matter one bit how well the music is played later on; it's going to be disharmonious. Taking the time to thoughtfully prepare a new *chaxi* is also an important part of beginning to extend an awareness of "making tea" beyond the brewing and drinking. If we *really* can't reset the table, without any sense of urgency or rushing, we can at least do so in the mind, reflecting quietly while the first kettle is boiling on all the ways that we are different today than we were yesterday, perhaps. Anything at all that instills us with a sense of the uniqueness of this moment in time is worth contemplating. We might reflect on the emotions experienced the day before, or something that had seemed important once that has now passed away. We might notice that new smudge on the floor or the way the sunlight has changed since spring. The subtler the better, but even more superficial changes such as a new freckle or haircut are worth acknowledging.

When we prepare for tea, we first clear off and clean the table and then decorate our tea stage, and the desire to honor our guests and the occasion is where our *chaxi* practice begins. A well thought-out, well-arranged *chaxi* says to your guests: "You are important to me. This time and occasion are important to me. I am honored to welcome you into my home." This is why creating a *chaxi* for every tea session is so important. It demonstrates a heart of respect that recognizes the uniqueness of the time you'll have together. It also celebrates the occasion itself—the precious time shared in sacred space, drinking tea.

We have seen beautifully decorated *chaxi* at many tea events in which all of my attention went straight to the elegant and flashy elements of the design. The themes were obvious, but what was missing was the guest of honor—Tea Herself! This is akin to hosting a party and paying so much attention to the surface-level details that amidst all the lights and banners and music, you forget to invite the guest of honor! A well-designed *chaxi* should always invite our attention towards the tea.

The design should have a clearly defined subject and background. In other words, it should be clear from the beginning that tea is the subject. Every step in the design must stem from this understanding. *All* elements of your design should draw attention towards the tea. That includes the runner, tea pillow, scoop and stick, and any other element or utensil used. Tea sits at the center of the *chaxi,* so the elements should focus our attention on the center of the stage. Remember, *chaxi* can be translated as "tea stage." And like in theater, the backdrops, music, lights and other elements should draw the audience's attention to the star, not detract from her performance. Otherwise, Tea becomes lost among the elements, without the due respect She deserves. It is, after all, a *tea* ceremony, so we must keep our priorities straight and remember whom we're throwing the party for!

In order to design a *chaxi,* we must understand the occasion. Who's attending our session and how many guests are there? What tea will suit them? What season is it? What's the weather like? All of these questions and more should go into your *chaxi*. Intuition is also important, though beginners should probably stick to the functional. When we understand the practicalities of the occasion, we will be able to choose a suitable tea, the appropriate brewing method and be able to design our *chaxi* accordingly.

It is important to focus first on function and then form. A *chaxi* that looks beautiful but doesn't function well is like a fine teapot that delights the eye but doesn't handle nicely when brewing tea. The ideal is almost always a *chaxi* that is functional and beautiful, like food that is both nutritious and delicious. And in the beginning, focusing on function first will be very helpful. We should get the basics down and not let our creativity get in the way of the session that's trying to unfold. This is not to say we shouldn't express ourselves creatively, but rather remember that anything which draws attention to *us as individuals* is drawing attention *away* from the guest of honor, which is worth repeating throughout this discussion: *Tea Herself!*

Knowing which brewing method we will use makes a big difference in our *chaxi* design. *Chaxi* for gongfu tea, while not lacking in beauty, is often more contained around the brewer and is designed, like this method itself, to make the best cup of tea possible, which means it will naturally be a more function-oriented arrangement. Traditionally, gongfu tea was reserved for smaller parties of up to five people, which meant a smaller tea space. Therefore, additional elements quickly became unnecessary and only the essentials remained. When designing a *chaxi* for gongfu tea, we stick with the necessary tools to brew the finest cup of tea possible, and then refine and highlight with decoration. Often, the essential elements themselves can be decorative, like choosing a fine waste-water basin, for example.

Chaxi for bowl tea, on the other hand, while not lacking in function, may appear to be more aesthetic in its design, which is appropriate for the purpose of the method: to share tea as medicine with sacred intention in ceremony. It's therefore easier to make the mistake of letting aesthetics override function, but the function should be well-integrated into the design of this kind of *chaxi* as well. Bowl tea is appropriate for both large and small tea sessions, so utilizing space for function and form becomes more of a challenge. A *chaxi* for ten people is quite different than one for three. Knowing how many guests there will be plays a large role in the functional elements that will guide in the arrangement of a *chaxi* for this kind of ceremony.

A well-made *chaxi* should have a theme. We should ask what it is that we want to express. It helps to keep our themes general in the beginning and then work towards more refined, specific themes as we get better at arranging *chaxi*. Obvious themes can be based around certain events, like Chinese New Year, anniversaries, birthdays or other important events. We may also theme our *chaxi* as an offering to our highest self when alone, or a friend or family member far away, setting aside an extra bowl or cup of tea for the person in mind. The possibilities are limitless…

A *chaxi* is a *mandala*: a piece of art connecting this brief moment in time to a universal teaching and/or the cosmos. This can be achieved by using symbolic elements in your design. For example, a small statue of the Buddha, a *vajra* (a symbol of spiritual power), a red or gold runner or a sutra, just to name a few, are powerful images, symbols and colors that express a lot of meaning. Use them wisely, for the right occasion and in conjunction with tea—never at its expense!

There are many ways to theme our *chaxi* around Nature, the season or the weather. For example, we may strive to make our guests feel cool in the summer. A small water feature might be used to this end, or a blue runner that could symbolize a cool river. In the cooler months, we can create a warm ambiance by using certain colors, like orange and red, and/or arranging the elements in a tighter configuration. There are always seasonal elements, often just outside our front doors, which we can bring into our design to bridge the boundary between inside and outside, Nature and Tea. Flowers, greenery, rocks, moss, leaves and more can all be brought inside to connect us to Nature.

If we really want to improve our *chaxi,* we have to get started designing and arranging such glorious stages, which, of course, means hosting more tea gatherings and serving more tea in general! We should find the motivation and inspiration we need, and practice arranging many different *chaxi*. We must remember the four key points we covered in our discussion of *chaxi*: Honor our guests and the occasion, remember the guest of honor is always Tea, design with function and form equally, and, finally, choose and express a theme that suits the occasion.

An inspired stage allows Tea to play Her part, unfolding us into our own open hearts. We find ourselves inexplicably calm when we enter a beautifully set tea stage. We feel honored as guests, also recognizing that Tea Herself is also honored, and that this encounter with Her and each other is precious, and our only chance to meet one another in a fleeting world. If you combine such a stage with great acting, the performance is life-changing. This means that once the stage is well-made, we still need our actors, which are the proper materials and brewing methods to complete the performance.

Don't rush to set up a tea session in order to get to the point where the tea-drinking begins! After all, if the instruments are not in tune or the stage improperly set, it doesn't matter one bit how well the music is played later on; it's going to be disharmonious. Taking the time to thoughtfully prepare a new chaxi is also an important part of beginning to extend an awareness of "making tea" beyond the brewing and drinking. If we really can't reset the table, without any sense of urgency or rushing, we can at least do so in the mind...

Materials for Tea

So far, we have discussed the heart that makes fine tea, the cleanliness of the environment and the *chaxi*, or stage the tea will be prepared upon. This is like having a restaurant that was built on love, with a passion for healthy delicious food and a great, clean and beautiful ambiance prepared for the guests. But we still need good food or it's all in vain. We'll need the right pots and pans, the right ingredients and the skill to arrange them all into fine food. Otherwise, the heart that opened the restaurant, cleaned and decorated it, making a fine location, will not be fulfilled. This all must culminate on the plate. And great chefs always do their own shopping. They don't entrust this sacred role to even their assistant chefs, for they know that the ingredients will make the meal. Of course, a great chef can do more with an onion and stale bread than the average person can, but they must have more than this—they must have great veggies to make a great salad. Similarly, we must have the right materials to make nice tea. This means good tea, teaware, water and fire, as well as the brewing methods to put it all together.

Attention to detail is the mark and making of a Chajin. Over the years, we learn to focus in on the teaware we need to brew in the methods taught to us by our lineage. Following a method is where this starts, as one cannot begin to approach the vast mountain chain of teaware unless one starts with a method and hopefully a teacher and tradition. Once we figure out how we are going to brew tea, we can begin to cultivate the teaware necessary for the method. These bowl tea guides we have published in these pages (leaves in a bowl, sidehandle brewing and now this guide to boiled tea) may be a starting point for some of you. If we want to start with leaves in a bowl, for example, we only need some nice bowls and maybe a kettle. As we move from the gross to the subtle, we may refine and get a nice tea bowl that is well-crafted in the proper shape with the right-sized foot, depth, angle and thinness in the rim. We may choose one that is well-fired with light glaze so we can appreciate the liquor. And the path moves on. The same is true of other brewing methods, whether sidehandle, gongfu or boiled tea, as we shall discuss in this issue.

Of course, creating a nice ceremony would not go well without fine tea. A tea exploration can begin with many maps, like a more intellectual one that uses the Seven Genres of Tea as a compass to explore the tea world. But we always recommend starting with tea that is produced in harmony with its environment. Leaves do not arise *ex nihilo*—they do not come from nothing. *The leaves are an expression of the tree's relationship to its environment.* This means that the leaves come out of the tree, and are composed of the nutrients the tree absorbs, the water it drinks, the sunlight it photosynthesizes and all the other factors that keep the tea tree alive. This is its terroir. And as we travel further in tea, terroir becomes more and more important. We realize that if the environment is healthy, the tree will be as well, and then so will the leaves. If the environment is not healthy, neither will the tea tree be. This could be said of all living organisms, and is a teacher for how we should live our lives.

We always recommend the pursuit of what we call "living tea" in our tradition. Living tea has six characteristics: living tea is seed-propagated, as opposed to cuttings; the tea trees have room to grow—upwards to produce large crowns, and between trees, allowing the plants to organize themselves; living tea is grown in full biodiversity, surrounded by natural ecology; living tea is, of course, grown without the use of any agro-chemicals (the Terrible Trio: pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilizers); and the relationship between the farmer and trees is one of respect and reverence. Within the character for tea is the radical "human," as Tea is a relationship between Nature and Human; finally, no irrigation or fertilizer of any kind (even organic fertilizer). This allows the trees to be independent, developing strong and deep roots and connecting to the energy of the mountain.

Water and fire are also key ingredients in a tea ceremony, bringing the alchemy of all the elements together. When you have a cultivated heart, a good clean space with a bright and beautiful *chaxi*, then a proper brewing method with good teaware and tea and add in nice water and fire, you have the recipe for transformation—the alchemy of immortality. There is no easier, faster and cheaper way to improve *all* your tea than collecting nice water. Water is the Mother of Tea and fire Her teacher. By finding good, natural spring water and heating it over coals of fire, we bring all the elements together, restoring sun, water and wind to the dried leaves, which resurrects them in us, alive again like the forest they once were. Both water and fire are each deep studies in and of themselves, which show us the source of life and tea.

With all these elements only, we are ready to sit for a bowl of tea. And each of these elements is a universe unto itself, with history, depth and truth. We could explore the heritage and mastery of a teapot, bowl or cup for issues of this magazine, just as we could discuss water, fire or finding the proper tea for a lifetime. We could include the farmers who collect and process the tea, and how their skill must in many ways mirror all that we have discussed here if they are to achieve mastery and create leaves that are art. Don't farmers have tradition and method? Shouldn't they also be cultivated, calm and still? Isn't cleanliness an aspect of a nice space for tea production? And don't they also need fire, water and well-made instruments? The same could be said for the creation of teaware, utensils, urns or any of the other accoutrements of tea ceremony—each a world unto itself, involving the cooperation of disciplines and of the elements of Nature and spirit…

With a prepared heart, which has spent some time in meditation, we clean our tea space and make a nice *chaxi*. Feeling calm, we gather the best instruments we have: the right living leaves, teaware, water and fire and set them out with calm grace. At this point, we'll need a method, which is where our journey leads onwards in this issue…

A GUIDE TO BOILING TEA WITH A SIDEHANDLE

Materials:

- *A large sidehandle that can withstand boiling*
- *A stove*
- *A kettle or two for adding water to the sidehandle*
- *Another heat source for the kettle(s)*
- *Bowls*
- *A jian shui (建水, waste-water container)*
- *Salt in a small jar (preferably mineral salt, like pink Himalayan salt)*
- *A stick or tea utensil for stirring (use this month's gift!)*
- *Tea (ideally, sheng puerh, shou puerh or black tea); amount based on the size of your pot*
- *Chaxi materials*

Preparation

Every tea ceremony begins with cleaning up the space and making a *chaxi* (茶席) or "tea stage." When making a *chaxi*, we think of the guests, the occasion/theme and the brewing method. We keep in mind the four key points in arranging the stage: always use the stage to honor the guests; remember that the guest of honor is always Tea Herself, and She should be the focus of the arrangement; design with form and function in mind, so all the teaware and decorations are arranged properly and won't interfere with the proper movements; and, finally, choose and express a theme that suits the occasion and brings foundation and harmony to the gathering.

Preparation is not something we do in order to have a ceremony or to get ready for a ceremony; it is the ceremony itself. This understanding is what makes Cha a Dao, a Way of life. We really can extend this wisdom to all areas of life, realizing that meditating the morning of our ceremony is also preparation for the ceremony, or that what we choose to eat for breakfast will also influence our tea brewing that day. Similarly, we can choose the depth of our *chaxi* as well. With the understanding that everything in the tea space is a part of the "stage," we can include the clothes we wear as the brewer, whether or not we play music, and if so what kind of music, even the time of day and therefore lighting in the tea space can play a role in the creation of our *chaxi*. The more effort we put into cleaning and decorating, the more we set the occasion apart. Our guests will feel this effort, as if they have strayed out of the profane and effortlessly found themselves in another, more present and sacred space.

With boiled tea, it is nice to have the stove and sidehandle out as part of the *chaxi*. This means that we may have to pay special attention to our seating arrangement. Unlike a kettle, a sidehandle for boiling should be on the strong hand, so right-handed for righties and vice versa for lefties. If the stove is taller, it may block our ability to pass a bowl to that side, so we should try to leave that side empty and let the guests sit in an arc from the center fanning towards our off-hand. Alternatively, we could seat our assistant (*cha tong*, 茶童) on that side and balance the space out in that way. It is often nice to leave the bowls off to the side, as opposed to having them out as part of the *chaxi*. That way, you can take them out and arrange them after your guests have been seated. Also, we will want to rinse the sidehandle before boiling, though it is ideal to have the stove going before the guests arrive. For this reason, the empty sidehandle will have to be off the stove, perhaps resting on a small trivet set aside for this purpose. Knowing that the sidehandle will be next to, as opposed to on the stove may play an important part in deciding how to arrange your *chaxi* for this kind of gathering.

The Flame beneath the Dragon

All tea is improved by charcoal. Gas is a strange flame, burning but without the wood that should be the source of elemental fire. The same is true of alcohol, really. And electric stoves only produce heat without any flame at all. While it is true that a charcoal stove will improve all of one's tea, prepared in any method, this is especially true of boiled tea. When boiling tea, the tea and water will be exposed to much more heat for a much longer duration and the heat will penetrate the leaves much more deeply. This is part of the magic of boiled tea and why it is so great, but it also means that it is worth breaking out your charcoal brazier if you have one. If you don't have a brazier available, we recommend at least using gas to maintain a higher and more consistent heat. However, when we boil our tea roadside, guests at the Center and passersby can all easily taste the difference charcoal makes in this king of tea.

In this kind of ceremony, charcoal is really much more important than with other kinds of tea, since we will be boiling the leaves on direct heat for some time. Of course, we can still practice this method with another heat source, but we should do our best to acquire some nice hardwood charcoal and a stove. We will all surely notice the difference in tea boiled on charcoal! It is deeper and more full-bodied, smoother with a longer-lasting aftertaste.

Washing/Purification

Every ceremony in the world begins with purification. We wash the teaware as a gesture of kindness and hygiene, offering respect to our guests by demonstrating the cleanliness of the teaware. We also purify the vessels of our ceremony, inviting the spirit of tea to enter a clean and sacred space within each bowl. Washing all the teaware is symbolic of washing off the dust of the world, ordaining ourselves and our guests to sit down free of all our egoic masks. We have entered a sacred, purified space with this gesture and are now free of all our worldly attire, setting aside social class, gender, race or any of the other ways we distinguish our fellow human beings—in this space we are all equals, we are all monks and nuns, which is to say that we are all holy. There are no masters and students in the tea ceremony either, only tea and heart.

Since it will take some time for our water to boil, a boiled tea ceremony starts a bit differently from other bowl tea ceremonies. We begin by rinsing out the large sidehandle we will use for boiling. We pour some water into it, replacing the lid. At this point, we gently bring out the wastewater container (*jian shui*, 建水). We keep this to our side or behind us to honor the space and our guests. We softly rotate the water around the inside of the sidehandle and pour it out. We then put the *jian shui* back behind us or to the side and fill up the sidehandle, placing it on the stove to start the boil.

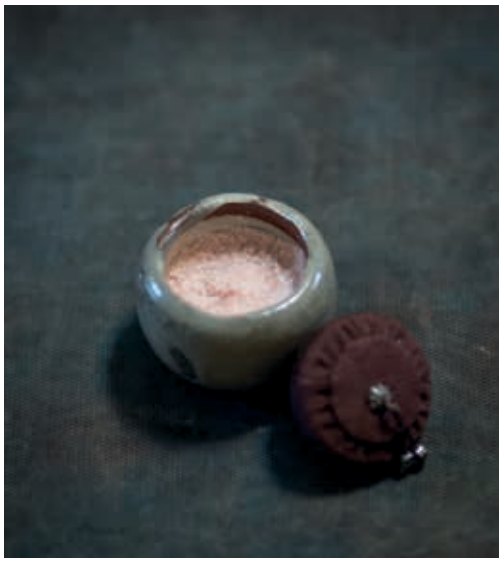
We then bring each bowl to the heart and then turn it outwards three times before placing it before us on the *chaxi*. Remember, a ceremony is to turn attention into intention. We should use every fiber of our being to prepare tea, filling our heart with this moment, this time and place, this gathering, these guests and this tea. If our hearts are still and present, our tea will be boiled in this presence and our guests will then sip stillness, sighing in satisfaction as our tea leads them into the heart we all share.

After all the bowls are out, we usually like to pause and breathe. We can then bring the *jian shui* back out to the *chaxi* in order to rinse the bowls. As we pick up each bowl to wash and purify, we first bring each and every bowl to the heart and then to the *jian shui*. Aside from the significance of centering our ceremony in the heart, this is done for a few practical reasons: first of all, from the strong hand side, bringing the bowls to and from the center means that we carry them around the pot in ceremonies where there is a pot in the center, like with sidehandle brewing, preventing any chance of knocking the pot with our hand or arm. Secondly, from the off-hand side, bringing the bowls to the center makes it easy to switch hands so that we can rinse the bowls properly.

To rinse the bowls, the off-hand is like the fork of a bicycle wheel. It is extended straight and does not move (this is important as our washing will be awkward if we try to coordinate the movement of both hands). We extend the off-hand with the fingers straight and unbent to allow free circular rotation of the bowl. We hold the bowl over the *jian shui* at a forty-five-degree angle and rotate it towards ourselves with the strong hand (we also expel waste-water towards ourselves to honor our guests). The aim of this circular movement is to rinse off/purify the inner and outer rim of the bowl, where your guests' mouths will touch. We will have to practice the angle and speed of the rotation—if we move too fast, the water will spill out without rolling over the lip of the bowl and purifying the outer rim, and if we go too slow, the water will roll down the side of the bowl and burn our hand. We always know when the bowl is rinsed completely, as we feel a wetness on the inside of our thumb once the bowl has spun a full 360 degrees. At this point, we put the palm of the off-hand into the curve of the bowl and use the strong hand to shake the bowl three times, removing any excess water. Once the bowls are all rinsed, we can return the *jian shui* to its place beside or behind us. We won't need it anymore.

Adding the First Salt

The salt thickens the boil, adding a depth to the liquor and a clean fullness to the water. We add the first salt before the tea. As the water starts to come to a boil, place a very tiny amount of salt into the stirring water and stir it in with your utensil/stick. The amount of salt depends on the size of your sidehandle, but it really must be a very small amount. We don't want the tea liquor to taste salty. It should enhance the tea without a trace, like the Old Man says of all true masters. It really makes a huge difference when you use mineral salts, as opposed to sea salt. Try to find salt like pink Himalayan salt, which is full of other minerals. This makes the water thicker, softer and brings a depth and *umami* to the tea liquor.



Adding the Tea

Once the water is boiling, you will have to watch the lid. Practice using your large sidehandle a few times before your first ceremony, so you will know how full it can be without boiling over once the boil reaches "dragon water," which is also known as "old man's hair." A sidehandle that is made for boiling will have proper ventilation so it won't boil over even when the water is churning like a dragon, and you can therefore keep the lid on. But some sidehandles are multi-functional, and may also be used in sidehandle ceremonies. These might need to have the lid off during boils, and only return the lid for pouring. With such pots, we will include a nice lid rest in our *chaxi*.

The water is boiling like a dragon, the first salt has been added and is now dissolved and the lid is off the pot: it's now time to add the tea. If we just add the leaves into the pot, they will float, and only open up slowly, affecting the quality of the first few bowls negatively. For this reason, we stir the boiling water with our utensil or stick. Create a small tornado in the center of the pot and quickly pour the leaves from a dish or tea scoop into the center of the vortex, which pulls the leaves down into the water and starts the boil immediately. This will help create uniformity throughout the session.

Boiling On, the Dragon Flies

Boiled tea ceremonies should be reserved for those days when we have more time to spare. A boiled tea ceremony lasts longer than other types of bowl tea. We should reserve adequate time to boil the tea many times, extracting as much essence from the tea as we can. Also, the deeper boils are where the real magic happens. The first few bowls will really be more like steeps than boils, as the tea liquor will get dark quickly and we'll have to decant very quickly. But as the session unfolds and the leaves unfurl, each boil will grow longer and we will penetrate more deeply into the leaves' essence. You can also add your tea slowly, a little at a time rather than all at once to help grow the boil. The best teas for boiling, like sheng puerh, shou puerh or black tea, will get sweeter in later boils as well, developing a sweet, mineral depth that is so rewarding and very much worth the wait. Setting aside a gloriously open morning, drifty afternoon or hazy evening to do nothing but boil tea is a joy every tea lover must experience!

As the boils grow longer, we mustn't forget to add another pinch of salt every two boils or so. The bowls will come in and go out, just as they would for a leaves in a bowl or sidehandle sessions, only the pour will come from the sidehandle we're using to boil the tea. If we empty the sidehandle with every boil, it is helpful to have a trivet. After we hand out the bowls, turning each one outwards to offer the guests the part of the bowl our hand is not on, we can then refill the sidehandle and return it to the stove to boil on. In the early boils, we may have to leave it aside and time this right, as these early boils will be more like steepings, but as the session unfolds, we'll want to refill it immediately after handing the guests their steaming bowls so that the sidehandle can boil longer (watch the lid, remember). Since the liquor will be piping hot, it may take our guests longer to finish their tea, leaving the pot more time to boil away.

Ending the Ceremony

We always leave ample time to clean up after the last bowl of water and the departure of the guests. If we do not clean up, we fail to honor the uniqueness of the "one encounter, one chance" we just participated in. Cleaning honors the ceremony, the space and our precious teaware, which we hope will last for many years of ceremony. The *chaxi* is a mandala, an altar, and a cluttered altar means a sloppy relationship to the Divine, and, in this case, to Nature and the spirit of Tea as well. For this reason, we always clean up after the ceremony so that there is not a single trace of it left. Just as preparation is not getting ready for the ceremony, it is a part of the ceremony, so also is the cleaning-up process. How we clean up and care for our tea space and teaware is the practice, as much as the brewing is! We are always brewing tea: either preparing for a session, in a session or cleaning up after one. Life is Tea and Tea is life.

It is always important to end a tea ceremony, as ceremonial space must be closed just as it was opened. Otherwise, our guests will feel as if they are still in sacred space even after they have left. This will be awkward for them as they attempt to return to daily life. Of course, a boiled tea session may be casual and include a nice conversation, but this is a guide to boiled tea ceremony, and anyway, even a casual session should be ended properly.

In the Far East, it was traditionally considered rude to tell guests to leave. Even now, it is not pleasant to do so. This is why tea ceremonies always end with a bowl of water. After many bowls of tea, everyone will understand that a bowl of water signifies the end of the tea ceremony. This water washes away the sacred space, as the first water purified the bowls, leaving without a trace. In a ceremonial setting, this would be the point at which silence could be broken and the guests could ask some questions before departing.

It is traditional to take the time after a tea ceremony to rest in the intimacy that has just occurred, as opposed to rushing to clean up. This may only take a few minutes. As we wipe the bowls and clean out the tea, we can pause and breathe in the wonder of the beauty that just unfolded. We try to remember the highlights of the ceremony, the peace and stillness experienced, wishing our guests well. We may recall their faces with a smile, hoping that their day was brightened by this ceremony and that they fare happily and safely on their journeys from here. Wishing each guest well, we can place our hands on our hearts and sit in the now-clean tea space, opening our hearts more and sharing the merits and peace of the ceremony that just occurred with all beings. We hope that this peace unfolds in glowing Saturn-rings of bliss that carry out in echoes through the whole universe.

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Global Tea Hut Expansion Packs

Expansion VI: Boiled Tea

We've developed a new and exciting way to expand your tea education. If this trial run works and you find these expansions fulfilling, we plan to offer three or four of them a year. Each will come with two or more teas that expand upon the topics we are covering in that issue, allowing you to taste more, rarer and sometimes higher-quality examples, in order to learn more about various genres of tea.

It is once again time to expand your tea experience with our sixth Expansion Pack. We created these opportunities to have an Expansion Pack to help educate the community on the topics we cover in these issues of Global Tea Hut. The best way to learn about tea will always be to drink lots of tea. The more tea you drink along with your studies, the more you will actually understand genre, region, processing method or, in this case, brewing method. By drinking many samples while you read and learn, your tea wisdom evolves along intellectual and experiential lines.

Of course, twelve teas a year may seem like a lot to some tea lovers, but it is actually just a very small sample of a very vast tea world. We do our best to find rare and exciting teas to send with this magazine each month, affording you an opportunity to taste your way through the tea world. However, we do face some limitations in that. First of all, there is way too much great tea in the world. Not all of you have a desire to drink your way through every genre. Twelve teas a year may be enough. But enough of you are enthusiastic to learn and explore these topics that we started offering these expansion packs to create a tea foundation for certain issues that extends beyond the Tea of the Month.

Secondly, due to the large quantity of tea we need to send out in these envelopes and financial limitations, since the average donation for an envelope is around twenty-three dollars a month, we cannot always send the best examples of any genre of tea, though we do always send the best we can find in this amount for this price. In other words, some higher-quality teas are just too limited in quantity and far too costly to send out in Global Tea Hut. Occasionally, a kind friend donates to this community and we can send a rarer tea, like December's Liu Bao, "Ma Bao (馬堡)," partially donated by our friend Henry Yiow. But such instances aren't frequent. And other times, even if a friend were willing to donate the tea, there just isn't enough for all of us—yes, some teas really are that rare. This month's Expansion Pack, for example, has a 1960s Hunan black tea brick that costs around $800 for a 2kg brick, which is rather costly, indeed. And, aside from that, there are only a few of these bricks around these days. This may be the last time we ever try one, in fact.

Therefore, these Expansion Packs allow us to offer those of you who are interested the chance to drink more and better teas within a specific topic, so as to grow your understanding of quality and have more breadth in your drinking experience, which really does flesh out the articles of the magazine.

We do not make these Expansion Packs as fundraisers. They are sold with only the slightest markup, which allows us to have a flat shipping rate (easier for us) and covers the places it is more expensive to ship to. We only create around fifty Expansion Packs, so they will never really raise a lot of money. They aren't part of our Light Meets Life fundraiser, in which we offer tea and teaware to raise money for our future Center. Nor are these Expansion Packs for Global Tea Hut. The time we put into researching and sourcing these teas is purely motivated and only for those of you who really have an interest in drinking more types of tea within that particular topic.

2009 Youle sheng puerh

Himalayan salt for the boil

2009 Lincang sheng puerh

1960s Hunan black tea brick

煮茶

Five Element blend with cha tou (茶頭)

We hope this is transparent, and that you understand the pure-heartedness of this offering, which is for your tea education, should you be interested, and that you don't feel like these pages are advertising.

This month, our sixth Expansion Pack is all about boiling tea. We love a nice long boil. Wu De always says that if he weren't working so hard on these issues, the Center and traveling, he would "monk it up like Baisao" and offer boiled tea roadside for donations, living off whatever he made each day. Boiled tea, along with leaves in a bowl, is the oldest brewing method on earth. Paired with the right tea, boiling can bring out more flavor, aroma and medicine from tea than any other brewing method. We created a set of our favorite teas to boil, along with a little Himalayan mineral salt to add to the water (just a pinch) with each one. These teas will help you experience the best of all the types of tea we like to boil:

This amazing Expansion Pack is $60 + shipping

www.globalteahut.org/expansions

茶 40 grams of 1960s Hunan black tea brick

This is like our Tea of the Month, only much older. This is the classic boiled tea. Nothing boils like a good Hunan brick made of larger leaves. These teas only start to be great after a half-hour of boiling, getting smoother and sweeter by the minute once they pass that mark. Once you have boiled this for a long time and reached that sweet spot, this black tea will offer up some of the smoothest sips of tea you can find on earth.

茶 1X 8–10 g (*varies*) ball of 2009 Youle sheng puerh

We like to boil a sheng, especially in the summer. These balls are great, as they open up slowly and perfectly as you boil and aren't very astringent.

茶 1X 11–15 g (*varies*) ball of 2009 Lincang sheng puerh

This ball is less delicious than the Youle, but has much more powerful Qi, offering you the chance to see what difference energy versus flavor plays in a boil.

茶 60 grams of a special shou puerh Five Element blend

Those of you who have sat for Five Element sessions with Wu De know how lucky we are to have this Five Element blend in our Expansion Pack VI. You can read more about Five Element tea in the February 2016 issue. All the shou puerh teas in this blend are aged, dating from the 1990s to the early 1980s. One of them (the water) is what is called a "cha tou (茶頭)," which are the balls that form at the bottom of the piles used to artificially ferment shou puerh tea. Remember, shou is piled, sprayed with water and covered in a thermal blanket to ferment, much like compost. Even with stirring, the moisture and heat at the bottom of the piles causes some of the tea to form into very hard balls called "cha tou." These balls cannot open with steeping, and are perfect for boiling. They really only shine in a boil. The cha tou in this blend are from the late 1990s.

茶 A packet of pink Himalayan mineral salt

A Guide to Boiling Tea in a Cauldron

Materials:

- *A large cauldron/pot for boiling*
- *A ladle for drawing tea into the bowls*
- *A stove*
- *A kettle or two for adding water to the sidehandle*
- *Another heat source for the kettle(s)*
- *Bowls*
- *A jian shui (建水, waste-water container)*
- *Salt in a small jar (preferably mineral salt, like pink Himalayan salt)*
- *A stick or tea utensil for stirring (use this month's gift!)*
- *Tea (ideally, sheng puerh, shou puerh or black tea); amount based on the size of your pot*
- *Chaxi materials*

Preparation

This tea brewing method is ideal for roadside tea, as you can make one large cauldron of tea and serve bowls all day to passersby. It is also one of the oldest, if not the oldest brewing method on Earth. Since we use this for roadside tea, our *chaxi* is mostly permanent, but you could also make a special *chaxi* for this. We have created a large wood table that splits in two so it will fit in the car. We place a cloth over the split to cover it up when serving, which is two-sided: orange for cold days to make guests feel warm and blue for hotter days to make them feel cool. We cut a round hole in the table to hold the brazier. We commissioned a cauldron and ladle stand from Master Chen Qi Nan, whom we have written about in several issues of Global Tea Hut. The frame around the table offers us a place to hang the name of the tea we are serving any given day. We had the names of the teas we serve carved into old pieces of wood we hang from strings above the boiling tea.

For this tea, you will need a ladle. You could use a bamboo *hishaku* from the Japanese whisked tea ceremony or make your own. We made ours with a hollowed gourd and a stick of bamboo cemented together. By cutting off the shallow end of the gourd, we created a spout for the ladle. This is also very helpful because it allows us to insert one or two small filters so leaves are strained out of the bowls we ladle. If you cannot create a ladle with a filter, you will have to practice skillfully stirring the boiling liquor with the ladle pressed against the inside wall of the cauldron to draw tea liquor without leaves, much like you would use a large spoon to draw broth from a soup without any of the veggies.

For this kind of ceremony, we like to have the water and/or tea going before the guests arrive. For the purpose of this guide, we will describe the ceremony as if the water in the cauldron were boiling already, with a pinch of salt already dissolved inside, and then we add the tea once the guests arrive and the bowls are cleaned. But having the boiling cauldron steaming away as part of your *chaxi* is a wonderful touch. This kind of gathering is especially wonderful on a cold or even chilly day. Arriving at a serene tea space with a large cauldron steaming away warms the soul, making the guests feel cozy, much like the sight of a fireplace makes us feel warm before we sit next to it. As with the sidehandle boiled tea ceremony, this kind of tea really benefits from the use of charcoal, creating a much deeper heat. When boiling tea, there is no substitute for charcoal, but don't feel like you cannot enjoy some boiled tea without it.

準備製茶

Washing/Purification

Washing the bowls is a bit different with a cauldron boil. As with all bowl tea ceremonies, we like to keep the bowls off to the side and only bring them out after the guests have all sat down. We bring each bowl to the heart and rotate it outwards three times—to the left for guests sitting on the left side and vice versa for guests sitting on the right half of the space. After all the bowls are out, we ladle some water into each one, using a half a ladle per bowl one by one (how full the ladle is may depend on the size of your ladle). At this point, we bring out the *jian shui* and wash the bowls, bringing each one to and from the heart as we do for all ceremonies. This allows us to go around teaware for the strong hand, and switch hands for the off-hand, obeying the Five Basics of Tea Brewing (discussed on pp. 27–30 of this issue) and grabbing the bowls on the right side with the right hand and those on the left with the left hand. Obviously, we wash the bowls with our strong hand on top. Remember, the off-hand makes the fork of a bicycle. The fingers are together and straight out, without curling or gripping the bowl. This hand does not move. The strong hand rotates the bowl towards ourselves, so our waste water does not splash towards our guests. Once we feel a wetness on the side of the thumb, we know the bowl has spun completely around and we place the side of the bowl into the palm, grabbing it with the strong hand to give it three nice shakes and thereby remove excess water. After coming to the heart again, we place each bowl back. After we have washed all the bowls, we can put the *jian shui* back beside or behind us. We won't need it in this ceremony anymore. Below is a more detailed review of the technique for washing the bowl and some of the challenges many beginners face.

Technique

We wash the bowls by holding the bowl in the off-hand. Make the off-hand into a bicycle fork, with the thumb forming one side and the four fingers held together forming the other side of the fork. This hand does not move. (This will be very important if you are to rinse the bowls properly.) The bowl spins through this hand much like the wheel of the bicycle spins through the fork. The strong hand then grips the ring of the bowl and spins it towards you (you don't want to pass unclean water towards your guests). Hold the bowl at a forty-five-degree angle. The ideal is to have the water clean the inside of the bowl as well as the outside of the rim where your guests' mouths will be touching. In order to achieve this effect, you will have to master the correct angle and speed. The speed will be more difficult than it sounds, so you may want to practice at first with cooler water. If you go too slow, the water will run over the edge and down to your hand, burning you; and if you go too fast, it will shoot out and won't clean the outside rim. Like most things, you have to do it just right. You will know when you have cleaned the entire way around the bowl because you will feel the wetness return to the thumb part of your forked off-hand. At that point, put the palm of your off-hand into the curve of the bowl, much like a martial arts palm-attack, while holding on with the strong hand, and shake the bowl up and down to flush out the last drips of the excess water. Then, repeat this for every bowl, making sure to clean your own last.

Adding the First Salt

As we mentioned in the sidehandle guide, adding salt thickens the boil, deepening the liquor and making it richer and more full-bodied. It has more of what the Japanese call "*umami*," as a result, which means it is savory but only slightly so. If you can taste the salt at all, you have added too much. We just want the smallest pinch. The first salt is added when the water starts to boil. We recommend using a coarser salt with minerals, like Himalayan pink salt or Hawaiian black salt, for example. Experiment with using salt and not and let us know what you think. We find that the tea gets less of a "boiled" or "spent leaves" kind of flavor if you add a pinch of salt every two or three times you add water.

Adding the Tea

After the salt, it is time to add the tea. We like to have the tea out as part of the *chaxi* for gatherings with a cauldron. If you just toss the tea in, it will float, taking a long time to start boiling/steeping, so we like to take a stick or tea utensil and swirl the water in the cauldron into a vortex, quickly dumping the tea down the funnel of the swirling, churning water. This sucks the leaves in, distributes them all throughout the water and creates an even boil right from the beginning. We usually add our tea slowly over the course of a long session, starting with a larger amount and adding little pinches as time drifts into eternity. The best teas for boiling are sheng or shou puerh and black tea. We often boil blends.

沸騰鳳凰升

從灰燼到火焰

茶道

Boiling On, the Phoenix Rises

We ladle each bowl one at a time, filling the ladle very carefully if you do not have a built-in filter/strainer as we do in our gourd ladle. You'll want to be careful to not get leaves into your guests' bowls. This will come with practice and technique: push the ladle against the side of the cauldron and angle the liquor into the ladle, preventing leaves from getting in. As the session goes on, the leaves will open up and sink and this will become easier to achieve. We bring the bowls into a semi-circle each steeping and then pour one ladle for each bowl in a row, filling our own bowl last, of course. Then we hand each bowl out, turning it outwards with our wrists to offer the part of the bowl our hands were not on to the guests. The bowls breathe in and out, are filled and then empty, again and again, as the tea boils away…

Boiled tea sessions last a long time. You really do need several hours with a deep and meditative mind, an interesting conversation, powerful stillness, a good book, several albums, etc. The best teas really only open up after hours of boiling, getting sweeter and smoother. Master Lin often suggests that as we drink tea over the years we begin to appreciate texture and structure more than flavor and aroma. Not only are such bowls sweet, but they can be among the softest, smoothest and most perfectly structured teas you can have outside of a gongfu session with a very fine quality tea. The later boils are the best, and very much worth waiting for.

As the bowls pass by, you can boil a kettle, two or three, on another heat source and add water to your cauldron as you need to. You can also add pinches of tea if you desire, and we usually add a small pinch of mineral salt every three bowls or so, but this will depend on the size of your cauldron. You never want to taste the salt. It should smooth the water, add depth and umami to the tea, without adding a taste at all. Be sure to use only the smallest amount.

Ending the Ceremony

It is always worthwhile to end a tea ceremony, even if it was casual. We do this to wrap up the sacred space and close the circle. This allows our guests to make an easy transition back into their ordinary lives without feeling like the step out into the tea space impaired their ability to flow back into their day. Tea ceremonies should improve our day and help us to live more skillfully, as opposed to being a movement so far out that we struggle to return to daily mind and quotidian life. Also, it is rude to ask your guests to leave, or to acknowledge the end in any way. By having a non-verbal symbol that everyone immediately recognizes as the end of the ceremony, we can comfortably move on without asking anyone to leave. Of course, this has always been achieved with a bowl or cup of water.

In this ceremony, you will have to use your kettle to offer water, as the cauldron is full of boiling tea. We just fill the bowls from the kettle—each with a small amount of water, handing them out as we would when they are filled with tea. This signals the end of silence in a quiet tea session and the time to leave if the conversation has already started.

After a ceremony is completed, we always leave the proper amount of time to clean up properly, as part of our practice, and rest in the space, filling our hearts with appreciation for our guests and gratitude for the one encounter and opportunity. What a precious chance to sit with others and share heart space over the course of a long boil! We wish each of our guests a happy and healthy journey, hoping that the tea we've shared lifts their hearts and shines smiling on their faces, affecting all those whose paths they cross on this day. We pray that the peace we've cultivated in this tea ceremony fills all the hearts and minds of all beings around the world. If any of us can wake up to the stillness and joy in our hearts, then we all can!

龍和風盤繞

Tea Wayfarer

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you, 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 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 Morgann Demarks.

I never fancied coffee. The taste, the feeling, the aroma. Tea has always been my ally. In the infancy of my relationship with Her, I sat in Her presence for the interest of ritual and taste, and to welcome in a gentle state of alertness. She was always with me though. Before and after meals, traversing the globe, on retreats, patiently waiting in a cupboard, a pantry, the kitchen of a restaurant until our next encounter. However, we never went deeper than sweet admiration. I never extensively explored why I felt so drawn to Her comfort, her light, and I never got to fully express my gratitude for the clearing she created for me so early on. And then it all shifted.

It shifted the day I walked into Tian Wu's tea ceremony for the first time. I had no idea what to expect or do. In the weeks leading up to the ceremony, I found myself deep in the rabbit holes of the Inter-webs searching for a "tea ceremony," but I felt deeply clouded in my quest. I had a vague conversation with a friend who had previously attended one, but the exchange left me desperately dehydrated in curiosity. I was determined to find Her in this form and connect with those who wanted to meet and know Her in this way. My fondness for the Internet continually ebbs and flows, but the day I discovered the ceremony, I was thankful for it as the vessel that facilitated our first ceremonial encounter.

En route to the ceremony my brain and body were all a-flutter. The nerves and excitement manifested as butterflies in my being and a cacophony of questions in my mind. Not dissimilar to the feelings that arise before meeting a potential lover, when being interviewed for a desired position or embarking on foreign terrain. Who would be there? How long will it last? Why was I called to this moment?

The incense was lit, the music began, the first bowls were poured and our journey began. I closed my eyes and immediately felt the solace of verbal silence. I put everything down and rested on a bed of meditation. A bed found in a house of refuge built on a foundation that had been constructed many years prior. And although an infinite work in progress, a perpetually reliable structure and friend. And after that first sip, that house became a home, a union. A marriage that would change my life immeasurably. The confluence of two allies that have carried me through the most mundane and centrifugal moments of my life ignited a knowing that this was one of the most meaningful things I will experience in this existence.

And from there I took my first step into my adolescence with Her. A coming of age that has the potential to last for decades as I grow up with Her as my guide. Since that sacred meeting, Tea has taken my life by the spiritual reins. I have allowed my time and being to become spacious and fertile ground for her to thrive in. Whenever and however I can, I make space for her. Space in the form of people, space in the clearing of clutter, space as devotion, space as a way of showing up. And with that space She continues to grow rapidly, gradually, intentionally and subtly. And with that growth, a garden of opportunity has come to fruition. Opportunities that allow me to learn about Her in ways I never knew I could, opportunities that allow me to learn about myself in ways I never knew I would.

茶人: ***Morgann Demarks***

And as I bring this to a close, I feel a well of appreciation to share these words from a month-long stay here in the generous and sacred container of the Tea Sage Hut. My brief odyssey with Tea brought me here a few months ago to sit for a ten-day course to deepen and cultivate my practice. That path led me back here yet again to immerse myself in service, humility, and most of all, a life of Tea. What Tea has shown me thus far extends beyond my most elaborate visions and deep imaginings. The Leaf has shown me acceptance through the finest and most simple teaware, multitudes of warmth from both conventional and beautifully complex sources of heat, true serenity and turbulent waves through the acquisition and consumption of water, and the truth of boundless connection. Connection to every living being here before us, with us, and the ones that will go on without us. And when I say us, I am reminded of the family of Brothers and Sisters I am endlessly grateful to meet, learn from, reflect with and love, as we come back to remember with every bowl shared.

Inside the Hut

Coming Soon to Global Tea Hut Magazine

茶主題: *Annual Trip*

茶道

茶主題: *Classics of Tea*

茶主題: *Chajin Stories/Biographies*

茶主題: *Tianmu Bowls*

If you serve tea regularly and would like some extra magazines or tea tins to give out to help spread the word about Global Tea Hut, please let us know. We are also looking to donate magazines to public places.

We are trying to expand by connecting with podcasts, blogs, journalists and other communities. If you have a suggestion, please email our PR point person, Emily Cross at: emily.global.tea.hut@gmail.com

We are hiring a full-time accountant to manage Global Tea Hut and Light Meets Life finances. It is our intention to send you a financial report of our books every year, starting this December.

We will be publishing the first of our textbooks this year. We are very excited to start what will be a long-term project to create five brewing textbooks and seven tea textbooks—one for each genre of tea.

Take a picture of you and your loved ones opening Global Tea Hut or drinking the Tea of the Month and #tag us on Instagram. We will be selecting five people who post their experience to receive free tea every month from now on!

We have several exciting retreats this year. All of the info and links to sign up will be on our social media and on the websites of the venues themselves. From May 21st to the 25th, Wu De and Dave Melladew will be teaching a Zen, Tea & Qigong retreat in Ago Bay, Japan. They will have another such retreat in late October in Bhutan. The annual Zen retreat at the Casa Cuadrau will be in early October this year, from the 1st to the 9th. Finally, we are excited to host a retreat at the Esalen Center in California from Dec. 7th to the 9th.

April Affirmation

I am receptive

Do I shut down or fill up? Can I be a better listener and receive more? Is my bowl empty or full? I choose to empty my bowl. I have an open, receptive and infinitely vast mind with room to grow and improve, learn and expand.

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. Make sure you apply early for courses as they fill up fast (this is why we need a bigger, more awesome Center).

We have opened all the ten-day courses to service! This is exciting for those of you who have already taken a ten-day course and want to come serve one. You can apply on the website. This is also another way to visit if a course is full!

Our longer course for older students will be over the course of two weeks in late August. This course is for those who have been initiated into our lineage and will cover aspects of this practice in greater depth than we have ever gone. Contact us if you are interested in attending. Dates will be announced soon.

We have three new long-term volunteers here at the Center: Rivo, Signe and Jaanus. All three are from Estonia. Raise a bowl for them and their contributions!

www.globalteahut.org

The most boiled Tea magazine in the world! Sharing rare organic teas, a magazine full of tea history, lore, translations, processing techniques and heritage, as well as the spiritual aspects of Cha Dao. And through it all, we make friends with fellow tea lovers from around the world.

GLOBAL TEA HUT

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE