

When you begin down an Eastern path, and Cha Dao mostly heads East, you quickly realize the important role language can play in our thinking, and consequently our insights. For the most part, we come to love the ancient spiritual words in languages like Sanskrit and Chinese—for their subtlety and breadth. There is one English word we’ve come to like better than its Eastern equivalents, however: “Enlightenment”. When most people think of “Enlightenment” they see in the word the “light” and are reminded of the light in us, which we all travel towards. But “light” in English has another meaning: not heavy! Being enlightened means, literally, lightning up! Don’t take yourself serious, or anything else for that matter. There is an old Indian saying: “beware the spiritual/religious man that takes himself seriously!” And many of you know how we here do so love laughter and humor. We thought that these newsletters might be getting a bit heavy and that we would en-lighten them up.

This month, we thought we’d offer you up a small helping of some of the funny tea memories we’ve shared. There are many involving burps, farts, nude tea or other inappropriate topics (don’t even mention the “Armpit Tea Incident” of 2011) but we thought we’d keep it wholesome this month, resorting to a more mild-mannered form of humor. If your sense of humor tends more towards the slapstick, send us an email and we will send you our two-hundred-page manual of “How NOT to Brew Tea,” which includes several dozen of Kaiya’s mishaps, with illustrations of course. As the great food and tea critic Mortimer J. Snerd said of the book, “...it’s a hilarious ride through the bumbling, crashing, breaking, chipping, falling down shards of teaware; not to mention spilled, lost and mislabeled tea—a strong brew to keep you laughing through your next several kettles worth of tea, though laughing so hard you might find it hard not break some teaware of your own.”

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## FUNNY TEA STORIES

 In a peaceful old tea shop, we sat around the antique table in quiet, drinking an Oolong and leisurely slipping in and out of conversation. The old master decided to brew an aged Puerh, despite the fact that two of the guests weren't really tea lovers. Perhaps he saw in them a longing for quiet, and wanted to share a memorable afternoon with them. He scooped some eighty-year-old Puerh from a jar into a small dish, sending it around the room for us to admire and smell. There were five of us, three tea lovers and a couple. The husband had a mild interest in tea, and was obviously the reason they had found themselves there that afternoon. The wife, however, was completely uninterested and betrayed the fact that their stay had been way too long and way too quiet for her taste. When the dish of old Puerh came to her, she held it up to her nose and inhaled deeply—at that moment she sneezed violently, scattering the old Puerh all over the table and guests. Needless to say, we all laughed uproariously!

 One time we were drinking some quiet tea from bowls. The Cha Xi was an elegant Japanese cloth, some flowers and a small bowl on the left to be used as the kensui, the waste-water bowl. A friend who was coming only for the second time showed up twenty minutes late and sat down at the only open seat, to the left. He saw us quietly sipping our tea from bowls and before anyone could stop him, swiftly grabbed the waste water and gulped it down. You can only imagine what he thought of our tea!

 One time we were serving tea to a large group of people, fifteen or so, at someone's house while they were out of town. In order to do this, you need one or two people to help bring water and one to serve the tea. On that night, there were only two of us: one pouring and one preparing water. I was the one pouring the tea. About halfway into the session, the water stopped coming. This went on for some time, so I sent another friend to go see what happened. She went upstairs and began fetching the water herself, and continued to do so for the rest of the session. Afterwards, we found out that the one preparing the water upstairs had gotten hungry and opened the fridge to see what the owner had to munch on. Seeing some caramels, he quickly garbled up three of them. It turned out that they were marijuana caramels, and so he stopped fetching water altogether, maybe even forgetting about the tea session entirely. The other student found him on the sofa, smiling contentedly.

 One friend asked permission to smell a few teas in the various jars around my tea room. I said okay, and got busy preparing water for the tea we were about to drink. He didn't know that you can't really smell powdered matcha the way you do normal tea, and stuck his nose in it. When he came and sat down at the table, his nose was all green. We let him stay that way for the whole session, giggling gnomishly all throughout.