

Light Meets Life

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For the past five years we have opened the doors of this little home in Miao Li, hosting hundreds of tea lovers from around the world. Some come for solace and meditation; some come to just have some tea, a good veggie meal and be on their way; others come to learn about tea lore, preparation and delve deeper into the Way of Tea. And there are those who come and stay longer, participating in serving tea to people and learning how to carry on with that at home. Our center is always open and everyone is welcome. Everyone who comes drinks some nice tea and eats a delicious meal, leaving full—in body and spirit. We tea and feed people; it really is that simple. There isn't anything else going on here. We meditate, drink tea, have impromptu lessons, eat, drink tea, meditate...

We are an open tradition, which means you can take what you need from this center. There are those that aren't so interested in using tea as a part of a spiritual life, viewing it more as a hobby, or great past time. They come to learn how to make a better cup. And we teach them the skills they'll need to do so, showing them any one of the five brewing methods in this tradition. Others want to learn how to live a life of tea, learning deeply from the teas we drink and listening to them, as plant teachers arisen out of Nature to teach us harmony. That is available, too.

For the past several months we have felt the need to expand, and build a bigger center. A new, permanent center would allow all the residents to live together and for us to host the growing number of visitors each year. In December we were blessed to receive around three acres

of gorgeous land with a waterfall, river, cliffs and incredible views all around. It will be a great place to meditate, drink tea, and also grow our own tea, affording visitors the chance to not only learn how to prepare tea, but to walk and talk with the trees and even process some tea.

Many of you have asked how this came about. It was all rather sudden. There is a Taiwanese brother who comes here occasionally on Saturdays, meditates and drinks some tea and then goes home. His name is Tom. He is generally rather quiet, only occasionally asking questions relevant to his own tea or life. One day, after having come for a year or two, Tom meditated as usual, but when he sat down for tea we noticed that he kept checking the time on his cell phone—not his usual behavior. Finally, he politely asked to be excused. He said he had to leave early to go to a meeting. We said of course, and then he poured out the metaphoric tea he'd been waiting to share: "I have to leave early because I am having a meeting with someone to buy land for you." Two weeks later, we got to see the property and were stunned at how the Universe was responding to our need for a bigger and better center.

We intend to continue our personal, free style of learning. We do not want this tradition to crystalize in any way. There are no rules. In the first ever English book on tea, John Blofeld said that "the art of tea is artless." We hope that every tea lover can come and take away something worthwhile from our center. It will truly be a place where light meets life, in every aspect.

One of the traditions that we do hope to initiate after the center is built is to start an ever-burning fire in





a hearth in the main building where the tea rooms will be. Many Native Americans believed that the fire in the center of the village was sacred, and that if it were extinguished so would be the tribe. They, therefore, carried the coals in a horn when they moved. By never letting this fire out, the center of our tradition will burn ever-bright and warm. We also want this to symbolize that everyone, everywhere is always welcome. If you are having a bad day in Estonia or Florida, you can remember that those coals are at that very moment burning and that all you would have to do is walk through the door—day or night—and we'd be ready to put a kettle on. Perhaps in such a momentary rumination, your spirit will indeed travel there...

We want you to know that we are building a home for us all: a place where a steaming cup, a meal and a bed are always waiting for you. You will always be welcomed with a hug and a celebration, and you'll leave that way to. And like our center now, we will keep everything completely free.

Wu De is on his way to LA and SF to raise money for the center, and we have been doing some abundance prayers. We recently met an architectural firm that has built temples and monasteries in Taiwan, China and

Japan for years. The photos of their work are stunning, and tremendously inspiring. They have an amazing eye for detail and incorporate very powerful materials: stone, old wood, bamboo, water, etc. They are also very good at building with, rather than against the land. We are confident that they could help us build the greatest tea center that has ever been. They do have a minimum for which they will take the project, however. We are praying that they will build our center and that some open-hearted donor(s) will help us achieve our mutual dreams, having seen the vision we are already building in our hearts.

Should any of you wish to contribute or have any ideas for ways to help us realize this vibrant dream, please contact us. You can donate at the Center page of our GTH website or send a check to:

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Or [contact](#) us for other ways to support