

Letter from the Editor

In November, the weather in Taiwan cools down enough for one of our favorite activities: outdoor tea. There is nothing like packing up a small brazier, some coals and spring water and heading out into the mountains to drink tea! There are small tea huts alongside just about every mountain road in Taiwan. We have some favorite spots, often near springs. There is one small pagoda that literally hangs off the cliffside that we particularly enjoy drinking aged or roasted oolongs in. It is a bit hard to hike all the stuff down the steep stairs, but well worth it for the views and ambiance. Though we don't get to go out as much as we'd like to, it's nice when the weather is so inviting. The first shou tea has already come out, and we're also drinking Cliff Tea as well.

Some years ago I was teaching a workshop on tea at Temple Tea in L.A., when a friend stopped in to visit. She looked at us setting up with the most awestruck eyes I've ever seen, pleading to join the event last minute. But it was full, so we weren't sure. She kept loitering around until, sure enough, someone called and cancelled. She was very excited and sat down front and center, telling me how she had hoped to learn about tea for the last few months or so. From that day on, she was there early in the front at every workshop in L.A., with a verve and passion for tea rarely met with these days. And anyone who has met Tien Wu recently will tell you that her love for tea and desire to both cultivate herself in Cha Dao and share tea with others has not diminished, but rather grown. Her tea spirit is like a good puerh, maturing into ever-brighter cups!

I've always been proud of her and so honored to know her, sharing tea, wisdom and learning together as we both work towards better versions of our self. She is an amazing woman, indeed. Tien uses tea to awaken the feminine, teaching at women's gatherings and retreats all around the world. If you look around this Hut, you will see so many who are here because of her, and because the tea practice can be a wonderful way to empower women, as she and many others are finding. As I came to witness that our approach to tea, these magazines and our center were contributing to the liberation and empowerment of women, in some small way, I shed tears. I am so grateful to be a part of that.

There was a time when women sat on the council of every society on earth, as wise and influential as any man. We lost our way, though, and traveled through many dark centuries of masculine-dominated societies. Only recently have we begun to recognize just how foolish that detour was. And liberating the feminine isn't just a gender issue; it is about celebrating the power of Yin, which we all have inside us, man and woman alike. Our civilization is consuming itself in Yang



excess, and our value systems no longer esteem balance. But alas, some of what I want to say is that the masculine has been speaking for the feminine too long, and yet perhaps I am guilty of the same...

A few months ago I asked Tien if we could do an issue of Global Tea Hut all about Tea and the feminine. She has curated and edited some articles by women with experience hosting tea-centric women's gatherings. There is a lot of wisdom in these writings; and since we all need a balance of Yin and Yang in us, masculine and feminine, there is also a lot that men can learn from these pages, too.

Recently, a dear brother of mine told me of a gathering he held in a teepee for his lifelong friends. They had tea ceremony and talked from the heart all weekend, which was the first time they had ever gathered without alcohol. He said that many of the men were moved to tears, and expressed how they needed such open and honest, safe space in their lives. So let us all take inspiration from these wise women, using this medicine to awaken balance in the world, bowl by bowl...

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