

# Letter from the Editor

**I**n December, the weather turns cold while the tea seems to grow warmer in proportion to the fading of the year, which dwindles like the light. With the holidays, there is a confluence of people that either results in wonderful memories or equally rewarding challenges. A nice bowl of tea can make all the difference—both in terms of one’s own peaceful state of mind and in helping us to have deeper connection with our loved ones. Try serving tea to your friends and family this holiday season and see if it doesn’t make your time together more heartfelt! I know from experience that a bit of tea goes a long way when it comes to family gatherings. Some heart-centered time together in silence is often the perfect antidote to the more challenging facets of the season.

Holidays at the center are joyful occasions. Everyone, including the guests, has to cook a special dish. We have a bountiful potluck that way, with tons of abundance to celebrate. There are usually gifts and good cheer as well, and the more heart you put into the occasion of celebrating old and new friends, the less cheesy the holiday spirit becomes. Many of our guests that have had the fortune to be here over the holidays have shared with us that it was one of the best holidays they’d ever celebrated. Of course, you will all be here with us in spirit this year. We’ll be sure to set out some cups and bowls for you all, and say prayers of gratitude at our feasts, wishing you all an abundant and happy holiday season and a very bright new year! In many ways, the figurative Hut that we all meet in each month—through these pages and sharing these teas—is also a reason to celebrate gratefully, for the global community and tea family this all represents.

The new year is going to bring some amazing improvements to Global Tea Hut. We hope to take a few more journalistic tea trips to help you learn about the history, folklore, farmers and, of course, share some organic tea from new regions. We are also working hard on some new and innovative ways to connect you all to each other, focusing on building an online platform that facilitates such communication, including posts, contact messages and local/international events. Like always, we have some really great teas in store as well!

We’re always reminding you that what is called “black tea” in the West is actually red tea; and that the mistake wouldn’t ordinarily be a problem if it weren’t for the fact that there is a whole other genre of tea that is the real black tea. So if you call red tea “black tea” then what do you call black tea? Well, we thought it was time that we revisited the topic of real black tea (not red tea), and not just in writing, but more importantly with our bowls and cups. Our favorite black tea is Liu Bao,



which is a place in Guangxi that literally translates to “Six Castles”. The traditional black tea from Liu Bao is rich in history, flavor and Qi and brews up a rewarding session, especially when it is cold outside.

As many of you know, the gongfu practice that we cultivate here at the center was taught to us by Master Lin Ping Xiang of Malaysia. Liu Bao tea is a lengthy chronicle, with Malaysia as one of its main characters, and is therefore a favorite tea of our teachers. In sharing it with you, we hope to connect you to that lineage and all the positive energy of our tea brothers and sisters there.

There is nothing more exciting for us than introducing people to new and wonderful teas, opening the door to whole new genres to explore—each one so rich and varied. For some of you, this will be the return of an old friend, for others one you’re getting to know better, though many of you are meeting for the first time. But whether you’ve known Liu Bao a long time or are just meeting now, you will find that cultivating a relationship to aged Liu Bao is life-changing.

*Wu Fei*