

# From the Editor

**I**n February, we celebrate the Lunar New Year, often with a special-occasion tea like this month's. We've been going to the hot springs every week, warming our bodies from the inside. We like to mix shou puerh with red tea in the mornings and to drink aged or roasted oolongs in the afternoon. A great aged sheng is also nice around this time of year, especially in the evening or at night—warming you through and through and encouraging a cozy, warm and peaceful night's sleep.

We honestly feel that Global Tea Hut is well on its way to becoming the best tea magazine in the world! And of the qualities that set it apart, the holistic breadth of topics we cover is arguably this magazine's defining feature. You can find tea magazines that discuss tea events, industry, and even some coverage of production, but we also bring you translations of tea experts, modern and ancient, history, folklore and, perhaps most importantly, the spiritual dimension of Cha Dao. Sometimes you can even find all these topics in a single issue of Global Tea Hut. Other months, like this magazine, focus on one area of tea. And if you are more interested in linear topics, the next issue may highlight just that.

There is an ancient saying that "Zen and Tea are one flavor," which is why a tea lover should have some understanding of Zen, at least as an important context for the evolution of tea culture over time. Throughout the following pages, you will realize that Zen is much more than a sect of Buddhism. In its essence, "Zen" refers to the meditative mind itself. And as such, Zen is non-sectarian. All of us have access to a meditative mind. It is therefore unnecessary to read this issue in terms of Buddhism, though the teachings of the Buddha may be discussed. We aren't promoting a religious view, in other words, but rather exploring the historical relationship between Zen and Tea, the essence of what makes tea so beneficial in a life of meditation, and then sharing some experience from Chajin who are using a tea practice to live more mindfully.

The best way for all of us to experience the Zen in Tea (and Tea in Zen) will be to brew up a strong bowl of this month's "Zen Blend" and repose into that still place where words cannot intrude. If Global Tea Hut educates the mind, fills the heart with warmth and connects people around the world, it will indeed find its place amongst the greatest tea publications ever printed!

And speaking of connecting to each other, we have some big news for the coming few months. Starting

next month, you may notice that the next few envelopes will be a bit lighter. Don't shake them up and down looking for the gift to fall out; there isn't one. We have a much better gift in store: *a new website*. We have been brainstorming for months and months about how to connect this huge global community, especially since so many of you are always emailing us and asking, "Who are the Global Tea Hut members in New York?" Or wherever else you're traveling. We now have a good idea of how we can facilitate this and even have a team of web designers to get it done. The next phase of this process was to discuss the funding for the rather complicated website we are building, featuring a live stream of conversation and events, member profiles, messaging and much more. Eventually we realized that the best way to pay for our new site was with the gift money. Consequently, we are going to use a few month's worth of gift money to give you one big gift. Those of us who have a birthday in December, like me, will understand the concept of getting a bigger gift for two celebrations rolled into one. We are very excited about the new site and all the wonderful friendships and tea sessions that will result from it. We can't wait to see how it unfolds, improving the lives of Global Tea Hut members around the world!

We'd like to introduce another great improvement to every issue of Global Tea Hut! From now on, you will find a list of articles at the bottom of these Letters from the Editor. We've put together a list of past articles that will make reading this issue much more rewarding. Refresh your understanding of useful terms and ideas, or read some background information for the first time. Either way, this list will help enrich your learning this month. You can find all the past issues you'll need on our website for free:

## Further Reading

- 1) *The Production & Processing of Puerh Tea*, Issue 32, September 2014, pp. 15-24
- 2) *Puerh Tea Leaf Sizes*, Issue 35, December 2014, pp. 7-8
- 3) *Factory Codes*, Issue 32, September 2014, pg. 35
- 4) *Tea of the Month*, Issue 12, January 2013, pp. 2-3
- 5) *Living Tea*, Issue 39, April 2015, pp. 17-22
- 6) *Fire, The Teacher of Tea*, Issue 43, August 2015, pp. 9-14
- 7) *Greg Wendt's Teawayfarer*, Issue 2, March 2012, pp. 13