

From the Editor

In April, we move into the heart of spring. Tea buds are opening to another year's rain and weather. This flush will never happen again. Though some of the teas come to our door again, we're meeting for the first time. This is our one chance to meet—our one encounter. For a tea lover, this is the season when the emperor sips the first flush, heralding the official beginning of a year. The teas that are harvested now will define many of the sessions we'll share this year.

At the Center, we're seeing the sprouts of many newly planted endeavors begin to arise. We have renovated the Center itself to include another tea room and an office to create this magazine. Also, we rented a quite large garden right next door to the Tea Sage Hut and have begun to plant what will hopefully turn into a large and abundant source of food. Some of you who haven't been here in a while will be happy to find out that we have, for some months now, incorporated a daily, one-hour service period into the schedule. And a few of these hours will, each and every week, be devoted to the cultivation of our new garden. Like the farmers who are praying for grace, we also hope that with some love and hard work, we can improve the diet and experience of the Center by growing as much of our own food as possible.

As this community grows, all the many and new ways that this experience is growing from the humble roots of a simple Center and magazine, with each of you a blossom on the many branches around the world, renders us awestruck before the spring fragrance of a truly global tree. Some of you continue to ask us how you can support. The most important service we need now is to spread awareness. We would never ask you to speak on our behalf unless you truly felt called to. But if you do love this Global Tea Hut, please let the world know—sing about it through whatever social media you use! Now is our time to grow!

We have begun to look further into the future, when there are many more Global Tea Hut members, and to ask ourselves what other meaningful projects, beyond just building Light Meets Life, we can initiate to change the tea world and to improve the lives of our members. We have discussed hiring journalists and photographers to explore tea stories across Asia and find new organic teas, and about ways of contributing more towards environmental awareness and communication between organic farmers. We've also talked about hardbound anthologies of Global Tea Hut articles, like all the seven

genres of tea in one book or the many classics we hope to translate over the years. And, with the upcoming annual Global Tea Hut Trip, we have of course been discussing future gatherings and tea tours. These and many more exciting landmarks are just around the corner for us all.

Speaking of the great Global Tea Hut milestones, this issue is surely a huge triumph of our story! Hui-zong is one of the most important emperors of the Song Dynasty, and one that all Chinese remember from middle school classes. He tragically lost China to the northern "barbarians," ending his life in seclusion. Most historians suggest that his love of the arts was the country's downfall. He neglected the throne to pursue painting, calligraphy, poetry and tea—brewing his elixir with his own august hands. Critics throughout the ages found his calligraphy and painting peculiar and surrounded his legend with controversy, often suggesting that he put his name to paintings that weren't his own... I hope this introduction has sparked your interest, and your passion for tea is fueled by the pages to come.

The emperor's *Treatise on Tea* is one of the most important tea texts in history. Adding to the Western understanding of tea with the translation of another classic swells our hearts! For my part, there is a tremendous joy in imagining this brightest of characters sneaking off to brew tea in some hidden corner of the palace. Forbidden from such mundane tasks, he would have hidden his tea set away—stealing there to find the same solace we seek. You could constellate the tea skies with such a scene. Let's raise a cup of his favorite kind, white tea. We bow to you, old brother. Be at peace.



Further Reading

Each month, we are also adding the Further Reading articles to the blog on our site (www.globalteahut.org/blog). This month, the best supplemental resource is the *Cha Jing* from September 2015, which is now up on the Past Issues page! The blog also has a story of Wu De's, which present an alternate ending to the emperor's story; one born of spirit!