

From the Editor

In October, we start moving outdoors to drink tea in the mountains, often on the way to fetch spring water each Thursday. Gathering water is one of the highlights for guests who visit the Tea Sage Hut. We go in lieu of morning meditation, maintaining silence throughout the entire trip, which is a thirty-minute drive into the nearby mountains, followed by a pleasant hike up the temple stairs to the most stunning tea water in Taiwan (not to mention some incredible views as well). On the way back down, we'll pull over at one of the many tea huts that one sees throughout the mountains of Taiwan. These huts are often built by donors who wish to make space for tea in Nature. That's the spirit of tea, awakening harmony without asking anything in return—leaves and water shared with heart.

Long ago, though not too long, farmers in China and Taiwan would leave large teapots on well-worn trails with a few bowls stacked on the spout to keep bugs out. Passersby could then stop and have some refreshing tea on their journey. Master Lin always says, "take a rest for a longer journey," meaning that if we are to live long and well, we all need to take pauses now and again—hopefully every day! I've always been amazed that some farmer or tea lover would hike out down the road every few days to change the tea and water in those large pots, called "gong hu," without asking anything in return, not even a thank you, since they wouldn't ever meet the travelers with whom they shared the tea. That's a true love of kindness. Nowadays, people wouldn't even think it safe to drink from them, no matter how delicious the tea was. We need such unseen goodness now more than ever! Though most of us can't leave big pots of tea around town for travelers, we can still pass on the gesture of pausing quietly for rest, relaxation, meditation and contemplation—the kind of pause that only tea can provide. And that is why, for this month, we decided to give you the opportunity to give, which is often the greatest gift there is. We've included an extra tea in every envelope. Sure, you could take this as a chance to have more Elevation this year. But wouldn't it be better to start a friend, neighbor or even a stranger on their tea journey? And how better to do so than with the tea that so many of us started our own journeys with?

Elevation is the only tea we send out every year. Each year, the Elevation month is a chance for us all to return to our beginnings, to practice brewing leaves in a bowl. Since so many of us literally started with this

tea, it is the perfect opportunity to remember what this Global Tea Hut was founded on: community, spirit and a connection to Nature, self and others through tea. As we always say in these pages, *advanced techniques are basic techniques mastered*. There is always more we can add to our foundation. All of the techniques we use to properly prepare tea in its simplest form, leaves in a bowl, are also used in the other brewing techniques we practice, and taking the time to focus on the basics is always worthwhile, no matter how far we've traveled. Take the time to practice tea in its simplest form, to have a ceremony around the ordinary. When we find the sacred in a simple bowl of leaves and water, we can have gratitude for the abundance and glory in every precious moment we walk this Earth, even in our grief.

Last October, we did a "Tea Around the World" issue, which was essentially a whole issue of the section of Global Tea Hut we call "Voices from the Hut," in which we shared the experience of members around the world. At the time, we said we would like to make an annual tradition of publishing an issue of your own words, so we thought we would combine our two annual traditions of Elevation and "Tea Around the World." Since this is the fifth year of Elevation, we feel we've thoroughly covered the farmer and tea in past issues (though we will return to that in the Tea of the Month article), so we asked the community for Elevation stories, experiences, trips to Sun Moon Lake, etc. We hope this magical tea further solidifies this community, bringing us all closer together!



Further Reading

- 1) *Tea of the Month*, Issue 33, Oct. 2014, pp. 3-8
- 3) *A Bowl of Tea*, Issue 4, May 2012, pp. 3-6
- 4) *Sun Moon Lake*, Issue 19, August 2013, pp. 21-23
- 5) *An Introduction to Red Tea*, Issue 50, March 2016, pp. 11-14
- 6) We also have more *Elevation Stories* up, too!

*Further Readings are all posted on our blog each month.