

From the Editor

In December the weather starts to turn cool in Taiwan, which means we begin our hot spring season. Every Friday, from December to February, the whole Center spends the morning at the hot springs, soaking and drinking tea. We usually prefer a shou tea blended with some dian hong. (If you haven't yet tried that, you definitely should. It takes some time to get the amounts and kinds of tea right, but when you find a good match of a certain shou and dian hong, and the right ratios, it is a magical treat on a cold day!) At the Center, the colder weather means we start drinking more shou and aged sheng puerh, as well as black teas (often boiled), like Liu Bao. The winter is always tea-centric for everyone around the world, and it often seems to feel like more people are drinking tea with you.

Of course, December also means the holiday season is upon us, which we know can be stressful for a lot of people. But if you approach this time with the right attitude, it can also be a highlight of the year. As with most things, orientation is everything! Here at the Center, we try to make the holidays an extra-special time of year. We put all our heart into decorating and making or purchasing heartfelt gifts. There is a magic when you allow the gift-giving space and time to honor the gift itself, as well as the one who gave it. We usually make a shou puerh holiday blend to accompany our gift-opening, mixing in ginger, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and some kind of natural sweetener. Then, in the evening, everyone helps prepare a wonderful vegetarian feast and we share our gratitude for the past year. You are all undoubtedly in our hearts at this time of year. My heart swells with gratitude for each and every one of you. May each of you be warm and full of bright tea this holiday season, surrounded by love and loved ones. May your gratitude also swell as you honor your beautiful tea-filled year on this Earth!

This coming year is going to be a big one for Global Tea Hut. We can all feel the trembling currents of a rising wave of energy that will take this experience to the next level. We now have a translation budget, as you can see, so almost every issue will come with translations of Chinese authors from now on. This will add perspective and depth to the content, expanding our tea education to new arenas. We will also release an app in this year that will connect all of you in amazing ways. Finally, we hope that as membership continues to grow, this will be the year where we start the processing of making our Center permanent: purchasing more land and starting the building process. The world needs a free tea center and school, with tons of different tea courses taught by different amazing tea teachers, without any financial motivations involved and devoted to promoting a spirit of tea that is shared freely between those who respect the Earth and each other. And we're going to build it, you and I—together!

This month we return to one of our favorite teas: Liu Bao. This time, we're going to dive deeper into the topic, exploring more of the production, history and lore. Sometimes, people may feel that a magazine like this could run out of topics, being published every month, year after year. But that way of thinking underestimates just how vast the tea world is—lifetimes of travel! What's more, one can dive deeper into the same genre or topic, exploring deeper waters each time (as those of you who have been around in the Hut longer will know.) We hope that this issue will not just be a review of Liu Bao, but rather will start with a review of the genre and then slowly descend into deeper, darker brews than we ever have before, uncovering some aspects of Liu Bao that have never been discussed in English. This is, in fact, one of the more important goals of Global Tea Hut: to offer a deeper, richer and more holistic coverage of tea, from production to history, folklore and science to spirit and ceremony. And to this end, check out the new Expansion Packs we're introducing on pp. 41-2!

Liu Bao is an amazing tea, highlighting some of the best sessions of my entire life. Along with all the wonderful articles exploring new facets of this rich tea, we also have an amazing example to drink together this month—the best Liu Bao we've ever shared. Have an amazing holiday season! We look forward to sharing another wonderful year of Global Tea Hut with you all, and we're so excited for all the improvements to come. Stay tea-tuned.

This month we'd also like to introduce you to our new translator, Emily Foate, who, along with Michelle Huang, has been essential in making these magazines extra rich. Emily and Michelle are tremendous assets, and after exploring many translation options, we can't express how fortunate we all are to have them on board. Raise your bowls to them each month as you read our Chinese articles!



Further Reading

This month, we hope to expand this already in-depth issue to make it an even more comprehensive publication on Liu Bao. We translated many more articles than we could possibly print, so this will be one of the richest Further Readings ever!

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