

From the Editor

In February we enter the Lunar New Year, lighting lanterns for a healthy, happy and prosperous year for us all. But let's not forget the abundance we're already surrounded by—I sure won't. I'll be traveling throughout most of this year, from Bali to “Down Under,” then on to America, Europe and Russia—all on the steam of a teapot. And that means a lot of bowls and cups received and shared, heaps of smiles and hugs as well as all the reminders of how grateful I am to you and to Tea. I hope to see you out on the tea road in the year of the little red rooster!

Gratitude is what Global Tea Hut is all about. When it's boiled down to its essential liquor, this project is a momentum to share tea, driven by a deep love for tea in all its forms. In the deepest sense, we drink tea together in silence, around the world, and nothing can really be said about that. A great Zen master once supposed that all the sutras are just footnotes to meditation (Zazen). In the same way, all five years of this magazine could be seen as footnotes to the ceremonies, casual or formal, that we've shared together or alone around the world throughout these years. But there is something to talk about as well. That's what people do, after all. It is deeply rewarding to share and grow together, learning about tea history, processing, brewing methods and other linear aspects of the rich and vast tea world. From ceremony to magazine, from magazine to Center and then from Tea Sage Hut to the tea gatherings so many of us are hosting or attending around the world, this experience is worth raising a bowl to! I've never felt like an owner, or even a founder of this experience, but I am very proud—proud to be a part of this community.

We have a great, tea-filled road ahead of us this year, with three or four issues devoted to some rare kinds of tea you have probably never tried—and even if you have, you'll be excited to dive deeper into their history, production and lore. We also have another issue in our Classics of Tea series and another introduction to a great Chajin here in Taiwan. First and foremost, we must remember that the brewer is the most important aspect of any tea session. More than any pot or tea, water or fire; more than any skill or talent, the best tea is served from the heart. As the old saying goes, “The path from the mind to the hand travels through the heart.” It has always been our intention to cover tea holistically in these pages, devoting issues to community, food, meditation and ceremony, as well as tea history, production, brewing and teaware art. And we are also committed to improving your lives, which is why we've started this year with an issue on diet and now one on the heart.

In this issue, we are going to discuss tea and meditation, delving more deeply into the relationship between the two. In some ways they support one another as separate practices, and, in another very real and important way, they are one and the same. Tea prepared with a meditative mind

is a powerful practice in and of itself and it is the aim of all meditative practices to encourage the peace and balance we achieve on the cushion in all our affairs. Meditating more doesn't just mean more retreats or more meditation periods in any given day, but also a continuation of the insights we cultivate in our tea-making, cooking, walking and through all the vicissitudes we face in our lives. Like the bowls coming into and going out from the center of a tea ceremony, tea and meditation are one and they are apart in turn: tea is very conducive to a seated meditation practice, helping us focus and stay awake and also helping us to translate more of our meditative mind into our quotidian affairs. Apart, we drink our bowls separately; but then the bowls come in to the center and we become one gathering again, and tea *is* once more meditation itself.

We are also going to start a new series in this issue. Many of you have asked us for more detailed brewing instructions. You may have noticed the new symbols on the Brewing Tips page, offering suggestions for ideal methods for preparing any given month's tea. We've decided to take the time this year to capture some of the ceremonies we practice photographically, allowing you to see some of the steps we use to prepare tea, along with some tips so that you can cultivate these practices at home, creating ceremonial space for you and your loved ones. Every few months, we'll explore a different method of tea preparation with a kind of visual guide and tips that will help us to achieve one of our long-term goals of creating some textbooks to guide those who need help navigating the immense tea world, with all its teaware and brewing methods, to find the way of making tea that best serves your heart. Eventually, we will put these works together, add to them and edit a series of hardbound *Guides of the Hut*.



Further Readings

This month, we're going to publish some extras on red tea from the March 2016 issue. We are also going to publish the series on the Five Basics of Tea Brewing, which are always helpful and, in combination with the ceremony guide of this issue, will help you serve tea better.

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