



Cha-Dao

— From Tea to Tao

Ho Tsai-Ping

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Hang-Jia Cha-Dao Research Society 2010

Description of the Publication of this Book

1. The title is ***Cha-Dao*** (茶道). From tea to Tao is what is meant by Cha-Dao. That this new ***Cha-Dao*** is suitable for all human beings—hence there is no need to put the words China or Taiwan on the title.
2. This book is the product of the collective works of one hundred Tea Meetings by the members of ***Hang-Jia Joyful Tea Tasting Meeting*** (行家歡喜品茗會)—hosted and organized by Mr. Ho, Tsai-Ping. It is the crystallization and record of the experiences of tea tasting by many tea friends. It is also the ***Hang-Jia Cha-Dao Research Society's*** (行家茶道研究會) gift and benediction, upon the arrival of the new era of the Earth, to pray for the future generations of human beings.
3. There is no bibliography in this book. The reason for this is that the content of the book is entirely new, instead of rewritings according to some other books discussing on Teas. Basically, only for the sake of correctness in the text and to refer to the new up-to-date knowledge, shall we look for references in the literature.
4. With regard to the names of the teas, both newly devised and established names are utilized. An established name such as *Song Pin* (宋聘), *Hong Ying* (紅印) that is commonly used around tea societies is followed in this book, whereas names such as: *Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas* (行家十二級茶), *Ocean of Love* (愛海), and *Five Elements Tea* (五行茶), are newly created by *Hang-Jia*. The details are given in the text.
5. Teas with established names generally were produced in more than

one batch. They were produced in different years, harvested in different seasons, and each batch was subjected to different storage conditions. Teas designated as Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas are classified according to their ranking levels. Therefore more than one type of teas could be of the same ranking. Sometimes a bin number is given for distinction. Tea is a living force—it will continue to evolve after being stored. The *Joyful Tea Tasting Meeting* had sampled approximately five hundred different varieties of teas. The critiques and records concerning to any specific tea in this book reflect only the specific tea samples brewed at the time of the meetings.

6. Audio recordings were made at each of the one hundred tea sessions, notes were taken and critiques were assigned to each tea. The statements were compiled and edited according to these three sources of records. Though the words may have been modified somewhat in order to render them more concise or salient, they remain faithful and accurate to the original expressions. The chief editor is responsible for the final compiling and editing of all notes.
7. Any record, note, or personal writing that has been chosen, will have the author's full name or surname appended. The *Twelve Level Tea* names have been enlisted as trademark names by *Hang-Jia*. To avoid criticisms on being advertising or endorsing, critiques or reports concerning to these teas will not include the names.
High Truth Beyond the Twelve Levels (級外高真) and *Five Elements Tea* are exceedingly rare and special—as such any report concerning them will have the surnames attached. The *Record of Extraordinary, Precious, and Exotic Teas* (奇香異茗錄) deals with a selection of

teas that are especially difficult to acquire and are precious, and the critique are becoming more splendor. So the Surnames of the critics are giving followed by the notes.

For the sake of privacy and to respect personal willingness, some names or surnames are replaced by other words.

All writings that follow the (*) sign represent the final words or comments on a given tea by Mr. Ho. Any article not otherwise labeled with the author's name, apart from observations and records from the chief editor during the one hundred sessions of Tea Meetings, were primarily critiques by President Ho and edited reports and amendments from all the tea friends. Only very limited proportion was contributed by the chief editor's personal learning attainments. It is not easy to distinguish and to make footnotes in every detail.

8. Critiques of the teas at each meeting were judged not only by physical perceptions, but also spiritual impressions. The tea society's members include young and old, male and female. There were also some changes of the members during the course of the tea meetings. Besides, each person's background, history in drinking tea, body type, and current status of the body varied widely. These variables all affected the objectivity in evaluating the teas. To judge and grade tea is essentially subjective. But between subjective opinions, there are also intersections and compliments, which provide an infrastructure of knowledge, layers of conception, spiritual realms, and creative inspiration. These are still noteworthy and could be verified by future generations. Those who have had similar experiences when tasting tea will find it much easier to understand and corroborate with other people's experiences.

9. The four Sections: *“Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas”*, **“High Truth Beyond the Twelve Levels”**, **“Five Elements Tea”**, and the **“Record of Extraordinary, Precious, and Exotic Teas”** are tasting records for various types of tea. In spite of some slight editing and abridging in places, most of the accounts in these sections have been left in their original forms; therefore they take up a certain number of pages. We hope that the written accounts can in some way approximate the true style and form of these one hundred sessions of spiritual Tea Meetings. This book serves as a witness to these proceedings and is a testament to the Cha-Dao that is verified by the many tea friends’ personal experiences. As such it is not superficial philosophy expressed in words.
10. That the Tea Meetings could be successfully conducted, and this book be successfully completed, included a lot of tasks during the course. These ranged in scope from tasks such as the planning and hosting of the Tea Meetings and providing the tea samples, to others such as typing and key-in to the computer, proof-reading and editing. They were accomplished by many tea friends who voluntarily participated. As a consequence, there had been a pure and sacred atmosphere throughout the whole process. We would like to express our gratitude to all those tea friends who had been directly or indirectly contributed to this work. God bestows upon you—for all that you had devoted shall ultimately return to you.

Dedicated to

***The Supreme—
that resides in the hearts of everyone***

**“They” are the One
We are all in One**

Preface

I would like to thank God for his blessing. I also wish to thank all the members of the **Hang-Jia Cha-Dao Research Society** (行家茶道研究會) who participated and aided in the completion and publication of this book.

Tea can alter the course of mankind's destiny. The twenty first century is the era of energy medicine. Tea is itself one kind of energy. Tea can purify our bodies, purify our lives, elevate our spiritual awareness, and make us peaceful within. It is only when we are peaceful inside that the world around us will also become peaceful.

In China, tea has a history that goes back many thousands of years. Drinking tea is about rediscovering one's spirit and tastes. Through our propounding of **Cha-Dao**, we share the joy of life, and to propagate the truth of the Universe—**Love**. Without nourishment of love, life simply becomes dry and withered. Without Love, we would be lacking vitality and creativity.

Only Love can purify us;
 Only Love transcends the wheel of Samsara;
 Only Love can lead human beings and the Universe towards peace;
 Only Love can guide us to the Grace of Ultimate Virtue.

President of the *Hang-Jia Cha-Dao Research Society*

Ho, Tsai-Ping

January 2, 2005

Description of the Publication of this Book	2
Preface by Ho	7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERNAL COMPONENT

Chapter 1. Tea Meetings— One Hundred Tea Sessions, Ten Thousand Kilometers of Driving

I. One Hundred Consecutive Sessions of Tea Meetings	16
II. Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea House	17
III. Hang-Jia Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings and Cha-Dao Research Society	19
IV. Hang-Jia Cha-Dao Research Society's Missions	21
V. Rename from Tea Tasting Meetings to Cha-Dao Meetings	23
VI. The Book— <i>Cha-Dao</i>	25

Chapter 2. Tea Grade—To Taste the Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas

I. Tea Tasting and the Qi of Tea	29
(i) The Primary Goal is Tea Tasting	29
(ii) The Prerequisite of a Good Tea	30
(iii) Criteria for Grading Good Tea	31
(iv) Guidelines for Grading Old Tea	31
(v) Drinking Tea is for Its Tea Qi	33
II. Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas: Spiritual Names	34
(i) Romance 浪漫	36
(ii) Happiness 幸福	36
(iii) Joy 喜悅	37
(iv) Rainbow 彩虹	38
(v) True Love 真愛	38
(vi) Nectar 甘露	39
(vii) Enlightenment 開悟	39
(viii) Galaxy 銀河	41
(ix) Universe 宇宙	42
(x) Truth, Virtue, and Beauty 真善美	42
(xi) Reappearance of the Grace 風華再現	45
(xii) Return to the Nascent Truth 返樸歸真	46

III. The Meaning of the Ranking of the Tea Names	50
<i>Tea Querying</i> numbered musical notation	51
IV. High Truth Beyond the Twelve Levels	52
(i) Ocean of Love	52
(ii) The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma	54
(iii) One Hundred Year Old Taiwan Oolong	58
(iv) Elixir of Immortality	60
V. The Way of Finding Good Teas	63



Chapter 3. Tea Steeping—Connection with the Universal Energy

I. Turning the Energy Switch	68
(i) The Universe, the Human Body and the Arena of Energy	68
(ii) The Tea Qi and Material Waves	69
(iii) Feeling the Tea's Molecules and the Fineness of Its Energy	71
(iv) How Does One Connect with the Energy of the Universe?	72
II. Improving the Quality of the Tea liquor	73
(i) The Eight Vital Points Concerning to the Tea Liquor	73
(ii) Silver Tea-ware and a Set of Tea Tasting Cups	74
(iii) Appreciating Water and Testing Pot by Water	75
(iv) Hidden Fire and the Flame	81
(v) The Host, Tea Guests and the Number of Participants	84
III. The Mysteries of the Five Elements Tea (五行茶)	86
(i) Mixing Teas	86
(ii) A Brief Introduction to the Five Elements Tea	87
(iii) A Classic Example of Mixing Tea	90
IV. Three Main Themes of the Five Elements Tea	92
(i) Fission	94
(ii) Fusion	
(iii) Balance and Equilibrium	97
V. Extraordinary Five Elements Teas	101
(i) A Once in a Century Five Elements Tea:	
Teas summing up one thousand years old	101
(ii) In Anticipation of an Unprecedented Experiment	105
VI. The Secrets to Steeping Tea	106



Chapter 4. Cha-Dao—It's so Miraculous to Enter Tao through Tea

I. Levels and Stages	111
(i) The Different Levels of Tea Tasting	111
(ii) Stages in Cha-Dao	113
(iii) The Spiritual Realms of Lu Tong's Poem of <i>Seven Bowls</i>	115
II. The Mouth and the Nose—Flavor and Smell	118
(i) Form, Color, and Fragrance	118
(ii) The Fragrance of Puerh Tea	119
(iii) What One Must Know When Smelling Tea	120
(iv) The Secret to Smelling the Fragrance	121
(v) The Sacred and Marvelous Fragrance	122
III. Physical Sensations	123
(i) Chilly, Hot, Soar, Numb, Swell, Aching, Piercing, Itchy, Dizzy and Full	123
(ii) Expelling Bad Qi, Perspiration and Dripping Sweat	124
(iii) Accelerated Heart Beats, Shortness of Breath and Suffocation	125
(iv) Physical Movements and Qi Circulations	123
(v) Testimonials about Tea Qi excerpts	126
IV. Spiritual Reactions	129
(i) Tranquility, Joy and Dissolving	129
(ii) Images	129
(iii) Sleeping, Dreaming and Entering Samadhi	130
(iv) Laughing and Crying	131
(v) Scenes, Sound and Light	135
(vi) Glimpses— Pieces of the Past and the Future	137
(vii) Spirit Roaming	139
V. From Being to Non-being—the Nothingness	139
(i) From Senses to Non-senses	140
(ii) Straight on to the Cool and Soothing Zone—All is Nothingness	141
(iii) The Wisdom Enlightened quickly; All Answers Come Naturally	141
(iv) Absolute Serenity and Return to the Source	142
(v) A Message of Love	143
VI. The Essence of Cha-Dao—Love	146
(i) The Fountainhead is the Ocean of Love	147
(ii) All in One	148
(iii) Gratitude and Sharing	149
(iv) Enlightenment and Practicing—To Create Heaven on Earth together	151
VII. Xing-Jia (行家) and Cherishing Teas (惜茶)	152

EXTERNAL COMPONENT



Chapter 5. Tea Expeditions—Journey of Cha-Dao to Wu Yi Mountain

Day One	August 10, 2005 (Wed.) Night	163
Day Two	August 11, 2005 (Thur.)	165
Day Three	August 12, 2005 (Fri.)	172
Day Four	August 13, 2005 (Sat.)	178
Day Five	August 14, 2005 (Sun.)	183
Day Six	August 15, 2005 (Mon.)	186
Day Seven	August 16, 2005 (Tue.)	193
Day Eight	August 17, 2005 (Wed.) Morning	209
The Day	Monday	213
	<i>The Song of Cha-Dao</i> numbered musical notation	230

Additional Notes and Commentary by Ruaan	232
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APPENDIX

1. How the <i>Hang-Jia Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings</i> were Held	244
2. The Menus of 100 Sessions	248
3. Records of Extraordinary, Precious and Exotic Teas	275
4. A Collection of Songs and Poems	308
5. Illustration of “Tea and Zen are of the Same”	314

INTERNAL COMPONENT

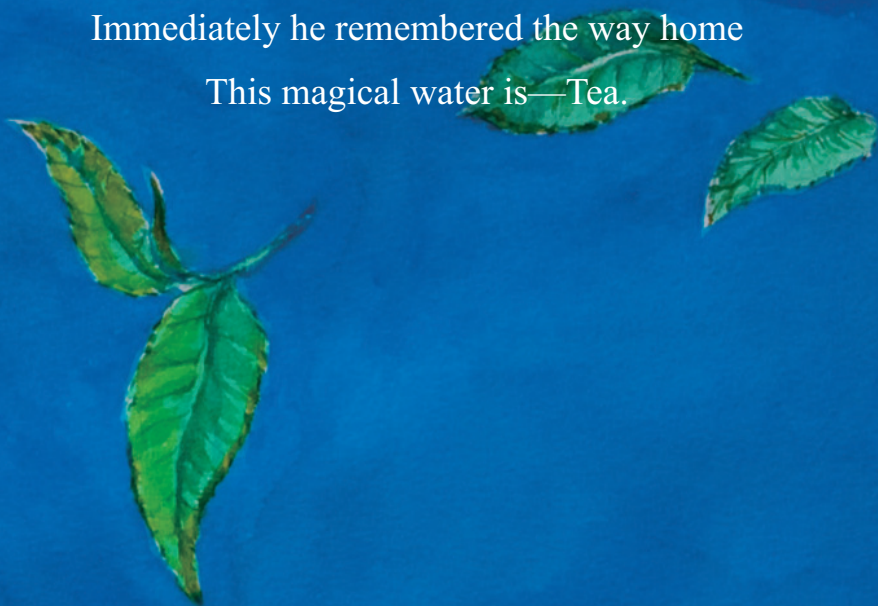
内 篇



A Beautiful Legend

There was once a child of light
Who came to a beautiful planet—
This planet is called Earth
This child of light
Became lost in play—forgetting the way back home.

A guide, hearing his cries, appeared before him
And promised to bring him home
The guide sent heralds to deliver the boy a kind of magical water
Of which the child of light drank -
Immediately he remembered the way home
This magical water is—Tea.



以崇德
增進
共創
人間
自新
和平
無疆

Chapter 1



Tea Querying

Good teas exist in this world for the sake of fellowship.

Through the search for good teas

People of tea are discovering their own spirits and tastes.

Without the spiritual content,

Tea would become a matter of mere ounces and grams—
a superficial and material commodity only.

The “civilization within” determines a person’s affinity with good teas.

While a person is searching for good teas,

Tea is also looking for the one who can appreciate its taste.

The instant a man and a good tea meet,

It may appear to be like a bright moon and gentle soothing breeze

But actually all is lightning sparking upon rocks.

When the senses meet together with the spirit

One is lead towards the realm of beauty and virtue

Tea and Zen thus are united.

“Tea and Zen are of the same”

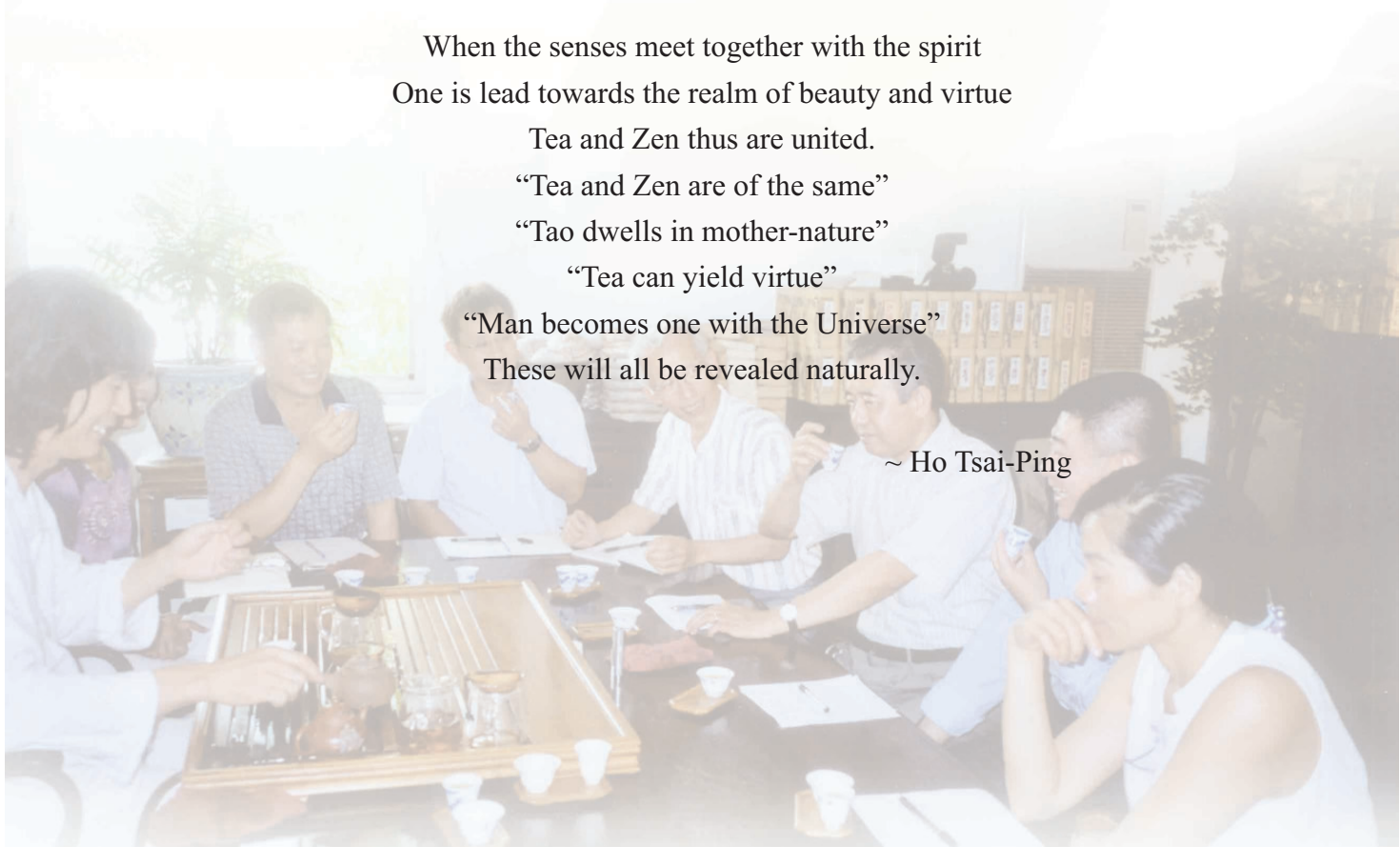
“Tao dwells in mother-nature”

“Tea can yield virtue”

“Man becomes one with the Universe”

These will all be revealed naturally.

~ Ho Tsai-Ping



Tea Meetings— One Hundred Tea Sessions, Ten Thousand Kilometers of Driving

I. One Hundred Consecutive Sessions of Tea Meetings

Our spiritual tea meetings, over the course of two and a half years, held one hundred consecutive sessions. The location for the meetings was a teashop in the village of Gongguan, Miaoli County, in the northern part of Taiwan. The tea friends came from all over the island, and from other places out of island. This small group of tea lovers, drawn by the fragrance and the divine spirit of fine teas, came almost once a week to participate this most unusual “spiritual tea meeting” from all over the place to Gongguan, Miaoli County. If we count the distance based on a roundtrip from Taipei to Miaoli being about two hundred kilometers, then over the one hundred tea sessions this would add up to driving over twenty thousand kilometers by car. It would take ten thousand kilometers of driving even by one way.

What kind of force could attract these tea-loving people, over the course of two and a half years, willingly to travel all the distance, no matter whether it is during hot summer or cold winter, raining or blowing winds, to come to a place like Gongguan, Miaoli?

That is because the *Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea House* is located in Gongguan. The host of the house—Mr. Ho, Tsai-Ping has collected a great amount of fine teas.

▼ Outdoors of Hang-Jia tea house





There are teas all over the world. One can find fine teas everywhere. Why should one bother to travel ten thousand kilometers in one hundred sessions to Miaoli? That is because Hang-Jia not only collects lots of varieties of fine teas that are stored in one place, but whenever the time is right or the occasion calls for it, the host will often generously share with his guests some very high quality teas. In addition, he will give freely his own newly experienced *Cha-Dao*—to enter the *Tao* through tea.

In Hang-Jia, the *Tao* dwells within tea—a concept that is simple and concise. After being confirmed step by step through our own experience of tasting teas, this has been imprinted deeply in the inner spirit. It is no longer *art of tea*, but is truly the *Cha-Dao* (Tao of Tea)—the true *Cha-Dao* that could lead one to return to the spiritual homeland.

The members of the tea society realized later that this was probably a new peak that has never been attained before in the history of *Cha-Dao*. They also came to realize that this new *Cha-Dao* is what is needed for human beings in the twenty-first century.

This book is the summary of the experiences taken from the one hundred sessions of Tea Meetings. We offer the information of this new *Cha-Dao* here, which we would like to share with the world and the future generations.

II. Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea House

▼ Sitting in front of the Tea House's window



The *Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea House* (行家茶葉藝術中心) is situated next to the provincial highway, which passes through Gongguan Village. The building is a single story with a simple and ordinary appearance. It has a small courtyard with a wooden veranda, with flowers and trees planted about its walls, and vines growing up to the roof. Greens and reds are everywhere. The main entrance has a waterfall to the left of it, with water droplets flying continuously as bird songs drifting upon the air—a place so vivid and alive.

The house has a front and a back door, both of which look alike. The door most often is closed, awaiting those who have the destiny to come along. For only those with affinity will ever come along to push, knock at, or kick at the door.

Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea House and the *Joyful Vegetarian House* (歡喜素食屋) cohabit beneath one roof. The couples, longtime advocates of vegetarianism, often entertain guests free of charge, making visitors feel perfectly at home. At a glance, the house doesn't look much like a teashop or an ashram—the owner does not look like a businessman or a spiritual practitioner either. The tearoom looks neither like a meditation hall, nor a grocery store.

On the right hand side of the house, separated by a garden, there is a large flower store with potted plants, flowers, and shrubs. Above the entrance there is a long signboard that visitors or passerby can see from a distance. On the board there are large, bold, black Chinese calligraphy written horizontally with the following words,

“When we extend compassion, mercy, tolerance, and understanding towards others, then we have created the Heaven.”



▲ President Ho / inside of Hang-Jia

Upon entering the teahouse, one first meets with the dining room. On the upper right hand of the wall, there is another scroll written in bold horizontal calligraphy which reads,

“Purifying the body is the beginning of purifying one's life.”

Stepping forward and then to the left, one enters the tea room, with large tea shelves mounted on the far wall, and a rectangular table standing steadfast in the front. The host sits with his back to the wall. Behind him stand four pillars of old Chan-Lian Tea (千兩茶)—just like four chief bodyguards. Above the tea shelves are four more calligraphy notes that read,

“Tea can make one drunk”;

“Through tea one can enter dreams”

“Tea can summon the moon”

“Tea can yield virtue”

The tea table is rectangular and large, being able to seat about ten people. Dressing in white, the host is tall with shoulder-length hair. Seated in the center, he serves tea with an easy grace. Behind him, on the sides of the tea shelves, is a pair of couplets—masterpieces written by the famous calligraphy master Wu, Ji-Ru that read,

“Only Hang-Jia (experts) are permitted to know”;

“Tasting teas joyfully without action”.

The title of the following historic tea meetings is thus called the *Hang-Jia Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings* (行家歡喜品茗會) .

III. Hang-Jia Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings and Cha-Dao Research Society

Unlike normal art-style, social or commercial tea gatherings, the *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings* (May 22, 2003 to December 1, 2005) is a spiritual journey in pursuit of the *Cha-Dao* (*Tao of Tea*).

Although through the course of the Tea Meetings there is generally drinking, eating, and having fun, it was not solely for the purpose of gratifying the belly and the tongue, nor with pursuing sensual delights. Rather, the true purpose of the sessions was centered entirely upon elevating one's spiritual consciousness. Our host shares tea out of love; he is both generous and enthusiastic. The tea friends also responded to in good intention and tried to contribute what they have in some way or



other. The atmosphere of the tea meetings was peaceful and joyful, and accomplishing with each other. The goal is noble and graceful. What would one expect to have such a meeting in this life!

At the beginning, the tea friends were not acquainted with each other. However, they had the same feeling of having fallen into the Heaven incidentally, and together they had created the Heaven. The common thought after the tea meetings is immense gratitude and joy.

Just above the door, inside the Hang-Jia house, hangs a horizontal calligraphy scroll. The tea friends will see it, and will also appreciate it when leaving—

“Hang-Jia is Joyful; it is Joyful in Hang-Jia.”

Tea friends come to taste tea, and through appreciating it they become Hang-Jia (experts). To taste teas in the Tea Meetings is full of joy indeed.

At the beginning of the Tea Meetings, there was no intention of ever writing a book. It was the tea friends themselves taking notes and keeping records of the meetings on their own. The one who kept the records thought of the possibility of publishing a book in the future, made audio recordings simultaneously to preserve the information. After a few tea sessions he realized that requesting the tea friends to jot down notes immediately after tasting the tea was the most accurate and economical way to document their experiences. The recorder thus distributed a memo of the request to get the consensus of the tea friends the nature and the goal of the Tea Meetings, as well as the key points in critiquing the teas.

There were three phases during the courses of the Tea Meetings. This was formed later as the meetings progressed—no one knew at the beginning. In the first phase, one session was held on Thursdays each week, with a single session lasting up to seven hours, critiquing approximately seven different pots of teas. This was determined by the special cause and the need of the task. The teas tasted were in good quality and were sampled broadly—almost all of the teas were of high or supreme fine old teas. See Appendix I for the way and the style of how the Tea Meetings were held.

The results were abundant upon the tea meetings having finished the fortieth session. In order to celebrate the spectacular successes we had accomplished, the Tea Banquet and Music Feast was held. It was comprised of four main activities:

- (1) A Ceremony of Completion was held, with each member being awarded a Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings Commemorative Album;
- (2) President Ho, Tsai-Ping announced the establishment of the *Hang-Jia Cha-Dao Research Society* (June 5, 2004) and the Vice President





Ruaan, Jy- Sheng read its mission statement;

(3) A music concert—“*Spiritual Banquet and the Sounds of Heaven*”

was held for the entertainment of the friends and their relatives and those who are affiliated to the meetings;

After the concert, a delicious vegetarian feast was served, followed by tea steeping in three tables to entertain the tea-loving people.

On that day the weather was sunny and clear, with the help of the tea friends, both the host and the guests had a wonderful time and all went smoothly. There was peace and auspiciousness in Gongguan Village, and the tea lovers together had created the Heaven.

IV. *Hang-Jia Cha-Dao Research Society's Missions*

Cha-Dao Research Society's missions consist of only four lines and twenty Chinese characters—

“To enter the Tao through tea ; To elevate spiritual consciousness ;
To promote peace amongst humanity ; To create Heaven on Earth together.”

(i) **To Enter the Tao Through Tea**

What is *Cha-Dao*? To enter the Tao through tea is the so-called *Cha-Dao*. This is our new definition and the goal to pursue towards “*Cha-Dao*”.

Tao of calligraphy, Tao of chess, Tao of the sword (Kendo), and the Tao of flower arranging, all are called *Tao* (Dao). It then follows naturally that tea (茶, cha) should also be called Tao (Dao). The meaning of *Cha-Dao*, its significance and values should be reevaluated and recognized for mankind in this new century.



When tasting tea, the *Qi* (氣) circulates within the body and makes it relaxed—the pores open and one feels peace within his or her heart and soul. At such times, there is no logic reasoning, and one becomes ignorant of the distinction between oneself and others. One is able to connect with the energy of the Universe—to see lights, to hear the Sounds, and to enter into the deeper realms of Universal consciousness. Therefore, only when one is able to connect with the Universal energy can tea tasting be called the “*Cha-Dao*”. Otherwise, it is merely tea art, tea etiquette, or tea customs. Such practices may be art of living or aesthetics of living, but they cannot yet be counted as real “*Cha-Dao*”.



(ii) To Elevate Spiritual Consciousness

Humanity has the highest level of spiritual consciousness, and as such human is considered the topmost of living beings. The nature of humanity actually consists of three layers:

- (1) One's pre-ordained, original nature (the conscience, virtue);
- (2) The nature one is born with (the upper level of one's temperament, disposition);
- (3) The habits one gains after birth (the lower-level of one's temperament, disposition)—the habits that are cultivated in daily life over long periods after birth.

When appreciating tea, the process not only satisfies the tongue and the nose, but also purifies one's body and soul. As a result, negative thoughts are decreased, and positive energy is increased. When one's vibrational frequency becomes more refined and subtle, the spiritual level naturally is elevated. After a certain period of time, the tea taster will undergo more or less changes in his body, mind, and spirit. Such indicators include feeling cool and refreshing, radiantly complexioned, bright eyed, calm, kind, and gentle, vibration becomes more refined, and sensitivity and awareness increased. Some people will quit smoking and drinking, forsake flesh eating or even become full vegetarians. Some people, upon entering a meditative Trance, will experience new realms of consciousness, and as such will have new realizations and understandings of the meaning of life and the Universe. Due to consistent relaxation, cleansing, purifying, and feeling gratitude, the improvement of the body and mind, and elevation of the spiritual awareness will progress day by day.

(iii) To Promote Peace Amongst Humanity

Everyone wishes for peace, yet the world is not at all peaceful. At the moment, though many people are endeavoring to cultivate peace amongst human



beings by various ways, the strength is obviously not enough. We would like to employ a simple and peaceful method—to contribute our humble effort in promoting peace amongst mankind— simply to share with others the truth, virtue, and beauty of teas.

A good tea makes one happy, reflective, purified, and elevated. Therefore it is a drink of peace and civilization. A small cup of tea soup holds within it the latent qualities of goodness, friendship, and love. People of different ethnicities, regions, religions, and political positions are all capable of sitting down and appreciating tea together. And then they will calm down, become peaceful and more civilized. Hence, tea is the best media for communication amongst people—the best messenger for peace. Let all brothers from all over the world come together to share in this peaceful and sublime tea soup. Let them forget their superficial differences and instead come to realize that within themselves they are all in one.

(iv) To Create Heaven on Earth Together

If Heaven were not up in the sky but rather here on Earth, if Heaven were not somewhere in the future but is here at this moment, if Heaven could be realized by ourselves and we did not need to wait for the charity given by others, wouldn't that be wonderful? This is our dream. Outside of the *Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea House* hangs a long signboard, on which is written in big bold characters,

“When we extend love, compassion, mercy, tolerance, and understanding towards others, then we have created Heaven.”

Over the past year, the *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings* had held forty sessions, and indeed we had borne witness the possibility of creating Heaven on Earth together. Of course the major framework and amenities were provided for us by our host out of his love and generosity. The construction and enhancement of the overall harmonic atmosphere, however, was also created and accomplished by the group of tea friends. Throughout the tea meetings, wonderful events were occurring constantly. At such times one forgot all the worries and was always joyful, became naive and ignorant of the ego—a joy that could not be expressed in words. We had truly created Heaven on Earth within this period of time together. “Sharing the joys of tasting teas and creating Heaven on Earth together”—this is our principal as well as our own experiences. We would like to practice it whenever there is a chance.

V. Rename from Tea Tasting Meetings to Cha-Dao Meetings

After the establishment of the *Cha-Dao Research Society* (June 5, 2004), the *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings* entered its second phase. From the forty-first session to the sixty-fifth session, the manner of appreciating and critiquing tea remained

basically the same as it was in the first phase. However, as the knowledge and experiences were accumulated, the members not only came to Hang-Jia every one or two weeks to appreciate teas. Now whenever passing by, on a whim, on holidays, or without any good reason at all, they would come to stop by in Hang-Jia. Making teas at home had by now become a habit in daily life. They would also love to share good teas with family members and friends as well.

The second stage of the Tea Tasting Meetings ended after the sixty-fifth session (December 30, 2004). The materials accumulated by far were rich and abundant, and the main task had essentially been accomplished. We could have wrapped things up then (Actually we couldn't yet, because there were further developments later), but the tea friends still felt unwilling to call it the end. Therefore, the title of the meetings was changed to *Cha-Dao* Meetings (Jan 8, 2005)—to continue experiencing and verifying the *Cha-Dao* we had been exploring.

Feeling that most of our work was already completed, the *Cha-Dao Meetings* now came together once every one or two weeks irregularly. The manner of tasting and critiquing tea also changed significantly. Now, only when there was a special tea did we take notes. When appreciating tea, we were at ease, relaxed and enjoying ourselves. By now we were paying less attention to the fragrance of the tea, its quality, and the body sensations. Instead, we focused our attention on the replenishing and restoring of the energy, and elevating the spiritual consciousness level—entering the Tao that is difficult to be expressed by language or words.

At this point, the tea society also began to expand outwards. President Ho, after receiving numerous invitations, went with some of the society members to China, to share this *Cha-Dao* with people in the mainland China. During this period, expedition tours were led twice by our president. For the *Eight-Day Tour to Yunnan Seeking the Source of Puerh Tea* (March 6th to 13th, 2004), we traveled to the old town of Li-Jiang, hiked up Jade Dragon Snowy Mountain, walked the ancient tea trade route, and visited tea factories in Xia Guan, Meng Hai, and Da Du Gang.

For the *Ten Day Journey of Peace* (July 10th to 20th, 2004, arranged by the Her-Pin Travel Agency), we traveled to Huhe hot City, and walked the grassy plains of Inner Mongolia. On the return journey, we visited Yi He Yuan, mounted the Great Wall, and visited Ling Yin Monastery along with Tai Hu Yuan.

Lastly, there was the historical *Tour of Cha-Dao to Wu Yi Mountain* (August 10th to 17th, 2005)—a large scale tea banquet that was magnificent and unprecedented.

Four months after returning from the *Tour of Cha-Dao to Wu Yi Mountain*, the tea society completed its one-hundredth session. The spiritual journey of the *Cha-Dao* had completed the full course with great success to round it off. Up till



now, The *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings* had officially concluded on December 1, 2005.

VI. The Book—*Cha-Dao*

The Tea Meetings were held in total one hundred sessions. They were separated into three phases that lasted two and a half years. The members had tasted approximately five hundred varieties of tea. The varieties of teas included fresh, green, black, white, red, or yellow, with assortments covering raw, cooked, old, new, exotic, and rare. We tasted all of them with great joy, and to experience with the heart and the spirit. For a tea gathering lasted such a long period of time that is well-planned and aimed at, with a scope both broad and far reaching, with all participants of high quality, with rather thorough documents for each of the sessions, perhaps had never happened before in the annals of history.

With joy and gratitude after attending the meetings, the tea friends inevitably would like to share with others as a feedback. Therefore, we summarized the records and experiences of the one hundred sessions of Tea Meetings primary based on the written notes, together with the live audio recordings and the tea critiques. We then condensed and made amendments into this volume—**Cha-Dao**.

The one hundred sessions of Tea Meetings were overall planned and conducted by the President Ho, and participated by the society members. Each of them had contributed in one way or another. All the articles had been approved by the President when compiled for publication. Therefore, this book is in essence a product of collective creation. However, President Ho is the sole inspirational figure of the Tea Meetings—the true Founder of the new **Cha-Dao**.

At the beginning of the Tea Meetings, we simply tasted teas without making the announcement of writing a book. While on our way of tasting teas, there had been new developments all the time—finally we came out such a book that is so extraordinary both in style and content. This was really unexpected at the beginning, and the story itself could be called a legend.

The Tea Meetings had some very special arrangements of Fate. The whole process was full of miraculous events, and the experiences were inconceivable. There was objectivity within subjectivity for the tea tasting experiences. During the course of the one hundred sessions, the members kept changing—including young and old, male and female, with all sorts of backgrounds. Each individual had different body type and status at the time. Their tea-tasting histories also varied in certain degree. It follows naturally there were some discrepancies when critiquing teas. All these personal opinions were of course subjective. Though there were differences in the subjective opinions, which were essentially understandable, often these different subjective opinions also complimented with each other. Besides,

these different subjective points of views didn't necessarily contradict or clash with each other. There had been common and consistent conclusions all the time. In any event, the tea friends were always sincere and genuine.

The individual experiences associated with a tea emanated from within and as such are highly personal. When the experience enters into subconscious or transcendental consciousness realms, it might even be mysterious. As the tea sessions gradually evolved into deeper progress, the bodies, hearts, and spirits of the tea friends, all began to exhibit signs of change. Then there started to appear some individual inner experiences. These experiences were initially avoided being discussed by the tea friends, or they were reluctant to talk about. Later, they felt these experiences could not be revealed or they couldn't express them clearly. After some communicating, being made understood that for the sake of publishing this book to benefit other people, only then did they speak out or write out part of their experiences. Even so, because of certain gaps with the established conceptions of the outside world or from scientific point of view, these personal experiences were somewhat reserved or modified at certain key points when compiling into the book.

Therefore, there were only abridged details concerning to the experiences written in this book, nothing more than what truly experienced had been added. The new knowledge and unusual information will naturally come to be questioned and doubted, however, perhaps after few more years, they will come to be normal concept and commonly accepted by people everywhere. The recognitions of human beings towards the inner spiritual realms and the outer world had gone through such process before.

The title of the book—*Cha-Dao* is to faithfully record the spiritual journey of “entering Tao through tea” experienced by the tea friends during the one hundred sessions of Tea Meetings. We now dedicate this book—*Cha-Dao* to represent our gratitude and feedback. That is also the fulfillment of the promise we had made in our previous lives. It is a loving care for the people of the present and of the future, and is a prayer for the worldly peace.

For the Tea Menus of the One Hundred Sessions of the *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings*, please see Appendix 2. (p.248)





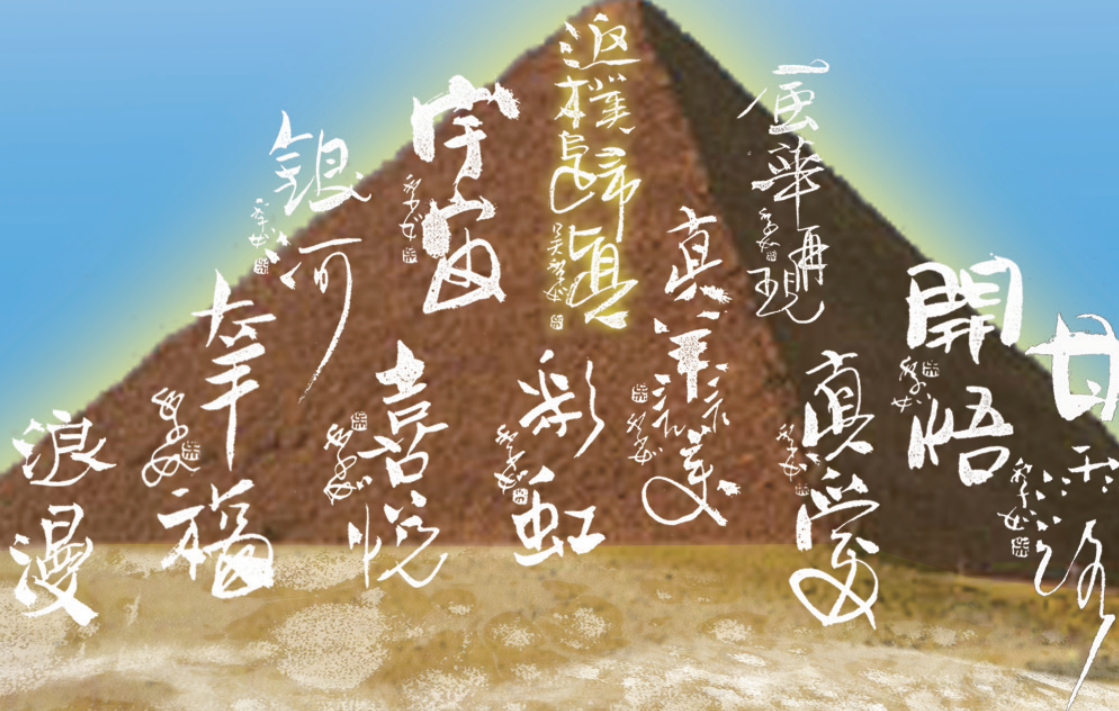
▲ Standing before Jade-Dragon-Snow Mountain

Chapter 2

Chanting of the Cha-Dao

*Ever since I met you
I began to enjoy **Romance**
Sweet, beautiful and heart warming,
Happiness is full of energy,
Life nourishes in abundance of **Joy**,
Revealing the splendor of the **Rainbow**,
And always there is **True Love**,
As long as you know how to share,
Nectar falls from the Heaven,
Moistening the lungs, cleansing the spleen and refreshing—
Once broadened and leveled after **enlightenment**,
Then one sees that it was not difficult at all,
The **Galaxy** is not far away,
The **Universe** though vast, presents no obstacles,
The wondrous realm of **Truth, Virtue and Beauty**,
One could wholeheartedly appreciate the **Reappearance of the Grace**,
Let's **Return to the Nascent Truth** together,
And to bathe forever in the baby soup of the **Ocean of Love***

~ Ruaan





Tea Grade—to Taste the Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas

I. Tea Tasting and the Qi of Tea (茶氣)

(i) The Primary Goal is Tea Tasting

There are various types of tea tasting, including tea as drink, tea tasting, and researching tea. Tea as drink can be steeped at any time and can be prepared casually. All that matters is to quench the thirst and to get refreshed. Tea tasting requires leisure time and a calm, peaceful mindset. It focuses on both quality and quantity. For each pot, only three to five cups are necessary. One may stop whenever the feeling is satisfactory. Researching tea, on the other hand, must be steeped all the way through the end. For a good tea one must have at least ten cups before it is done. Only in this way can one thoroughly get to know the content of the tea. As far as entertaining guests is concerned, for hospitality's sake one may choose either one of the three styles of tea drinking that is most appropriate, depending on the situations at the time and the relationship between each other.

The *Cha-Dao* is primarily concerned with tea tasting, and all the teas we tasted are of course classified as good tea—must at least meet a minimum standard. The basic requirement for a good tea must be: 1. clean; 2. the *Qi* of the tea. An old tea should at least meet the level of Romance or Joy amongst the Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas. Among new teas, there are also quite a few good ones that are clean, fresh and alive, and with strong and subtle tea *Qi*—such as Ching San Leu Xuey (青山綠水), Hong Lao Yin (紅老鷹, Sacred Red Eagle), Song Zhen (松針, Pine



a large leaf of a 400-year-old arbor tree ►
in Yunnan

Needles), Mong Din Gan Lu (蒙頂甘露, Mong Din Nectar) and Bai Ji Guan (白雞冠). All these teas are clean, subtle, and very nice to drink. There are also other teas slightly inferior to these ones.

Only a good tea should be subject to tasting, for only good tea can serve as media and nourishment to enter the Tao. The Chinese word Pin (品) consists of three mouth symbols. This means that even with a small cup, one must taste and sip in three times, not to drink bottom-up in one gulp. With the first sip, the mouth may not be clean, and so it is with the second sip that the tea reveals its true character. The third sip confirms the impression and continues to enjoy.

To calm the heart, close your eyes and focus your attention while tasting tea—this will help you to differentiate the subtleties in the teas, and to enter the inner spiritual realms.

(ii) The Prerequisite of a Good Tea: Clean

What may be counted as a good tea? From a personal standpoint, if you yourself like it then it is a good tea, regardless of the tea type, its production methods, or year. However, such kind of subjective preference will change with one's cumulative experiences in tasting teas and knowledge of tea art.

From an objective point of view, based upon the criteria of color, fragrance, flavor, shape, and taste (feeling in the mouth), one can analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a tea to determine its relative superiority or inferiority. However, such a sensory judgment is entirely dependent upon one's knowledge and experience. It involves more or less subjective opinion—only being able to recognize more clearly and rationally.

Another method is by technological detection—making use of specific equipment and techniques to determine a tea's material elements, its ratio of compositions, and its molecular structure—to quantify by a physical-chemical index. This is a highly objective method, but it is very time consuming, elaborate and costly. It also requires special conditions and access to a variety of instruments. Moreover, even if the numerical data obtained from such a test appears ideal, that still doesn't necessarily mean that the tea will taste good. Just like an audio sound with pretty curves on a spectrometer is not necessarily pleasant to the ears.

The human body has a most sophisticated structure. It itself may serve as a very fine detection instrument. If one could fully utilize its inherent sensitivity, sometimes it could be even more quick and reliable in testing than by using a machine. Therefore, we have to train, to develop, and to enhance its sensitivity—to trust in our own feelings and intuition. After all, it is the one who drinks the tea, not a machine.

There is an objective prerequisite for a good tea—that is cleanliness. The



environment in which the tea grew, the picking and processing, and of course in storage—at all stages cleanliness must be maintained. Any tea that has been contaminated by pesticides, fertilizers, heavy metals, acid rain, paint, or any method of adulteration, naturally is not a good tea. If there is any pollution in the area where the tea is grown, processing, or during the course of storage, it will surely show up in the tea color, tea soup, and aroma. Such teas will be unnaturally bitter, caustic, astringent, sour, numbing, unfocused, and will contain strange odors. Drinking such teas will simply infuse one with bitterness. The mouth will be puckered with astringency, the tongue will be numb, the throat will be constricted, and one will feel nausea—various degrees of side-effects. The experience of drinking such teas will leave one feeling unwell, both physically and emotionally.

Rather than drink unclean tea, it would be better to simply drink clean water. This would be easier, less time-consuming, and more economical both in terms of money and effort. It would also be better for one's health.

We do not necessarily have to drink expensive tea, but we must drink clean tea. A clean tea will most certainly be smooth and appealing to the palate, and it should not repulse us in any way. We can nourish our health with clean tea, entertain guests with clean tea, and sponsor the growth of our body, heart and spirit with clean tea. Tea farmers and tea merchants therefore have the obligation to produce clean tea. Teahouses and tea retailers have the responsibility to sell clean teas, and to educate their customers about how to distinguish. Tea drinkers also have the right or the responsibility to buy clean teas, and to propagate the correct knowledge.

(iii) Criteria for Grading Good Tea: Coarseness or Fineness of the Vibrational Frequency

An even more fundamental criterion for grading a good tea, beyond color, fragrance, flavor, shape, and taste, is the tea's vibrational frequency or the force of vibration—also known as the tea *Qi* (氣).

The superiority or inferiority of a tea can be determined based on its vibrational frequency (force of vibration) that is manifested in the tea fragrance and the tea soup. Other aspects of a tea can be manipulated in order to deceive—only the frequency cannot be manipulated, and thus will never deceive. One whiff with the nose, one sip in the mouth, and immediately one can know the coarseness or fineness of the tea's vibration. If the force of vibration is subtle and fine with very high delicacy, then it is a good tea. This standard is applicable to all varieties of tea—especially the compressed teas and old *Puerh*. Truly fine teas have a very deep and subtle vibrational frequency that could penetrate into the layers of the spirit.

(iv) Guidelines for Grading Old Tea: the Fragrance and the Tea liquor

1. Fragrance: delicacy

All good teas are fragrant, and of fragrances there are many kinds. These may be faint or strong, inherent or obvious, but all teas are ultimately divided in terms of delicacy. From the delicacy of a tea's fragrance one can even determine the age of the tea, therefore a smelling tea cup is a must. With a truly good tea, one whiff and you can feel the *Qi* penetrating all the way through to the fingertips. Just one whiff and one can reach the level of transcendental consciousness.

Generally speaking, the age of a *Puerh* tea should be over seventy years to be able to reach the transcendental realm. The storage year of a tea between fifty to seventy years could reach the subconscious level, while those under fifty years would be still at the consciousness level.

2. Tea liquid: the liquor must be clear, and be sticky and dense.

Some teas smell good but do not to the taste. This is because even though they may be very fragrant, upon entering the mouth, defects in the tea become apparent. Therefore, in general, one cannot judge a tea based simply upon its fragrance, without also tasting the tea liquid.

The liquid will reveal the tea as good or bad in quality. This judgment is made with the mouth. That is, tea is known through the tongue. A truly good old tea has a clear tea liquid, and is somewhat sticky and dense because of the gluey materials in the tea leaves. Only teas that have been stored for more than sixty years will have such a quality of glueyness to them, and only teas with soup that is clear and thick in glueyness can be truly called great teas.

Once in the mouth, with just one roll of the tongue, one can determine the presence or absence of glue, as well as the subtlety of the tea's vibration. If there is glue then it means that the quality of the tea is certainly good.

Where then does the glue come from? From the thick, broad leaves of an old tree, upon being steamed, pressed, and having the inner molecules compacted together to the surface of the leaves. For this reason, the leaves from an old tree that is alive are the most precious. If a tea is made from young bushes, then the glue will be little. Whenever there is thickness in glue, the tea would surely be a classic.

Tea made from the leaves of an old tree, once stored for a long period of time, becomes all the more precious. Even if the tea has been steeped many times and the flavor has become rather thin, upon entering the mouth, the quality of the glue is still very much apparent. On the other hand, if the quality of the tea leaves is low, even if aged for a very long time, this standard will never be reached.

The *Cha Jing* (茶菁) of *Jing Dong* (景東) is one such precious tea made from



old tea trees. Just like *Chen Yun Hao* (陳雲號), new *Cha Jing* is more expensive than *Song Ping* (宋聘). If less than fifty years, then *Chen Yun Hao* is more fragrant, but if it is stored for a long time, then *Song Ping* will surpass *Chen Yun Hao*. Teas such as *Tong Xing Gong* (同興貢), *Shuang Shi Tong Qing* (雙獅同慶), *Song Ping*, *Fu Yuan Chang* (福元昌), *Wan Hong Ji* (萬鴻記), and *Qun Ji* (羣記) are all classic teas—never the same as ordinary teas. One need but close his eyes, take one whiff, or one taste, and immediately can tell the difference in rankings.

In order for the vibrational frequency to become subtle, teas must be stored for some time. Tea can be altered, repacked, or disguised in order to fool the eyes, but the frequency of vibration cannot be altered and as such will never deceive.

The classic teas listed above are all very loose—with the status of the tea leaves uncompressed. However, they are all of very high quality. One whiff, one sip, and immediately one sinks deep within, the body and soul becomes balanced. They could also change the appearance of one's skin. If you drink good tea regularly, your skin will become smoother and more refined. This is also one of their fascinating advantages. The famous *Hong Yin* (紅印, Red Seal) is one such fragrant, sweet, and delicious tea. Its aroma is relatively strong, but the further you steep it, the more refined it becomes—clear and fine all the way through. If you drink it regularly, the status of your body will change quickly. So you have to taste it with a peaceful mind.

Special teas such as *Yun Sheng Xiang* (雲生祥) and *Ke Yi Xing* (可以興) are representatives of the Yi Bang tea-producing zone. Although their leaves are small, still they possess the quality of glue. Their fragrances are different from large-leaved varieties. While the storage year is not too old, small-leaf varieties are more fragrant than the large ones—such teas were the favorites of the royal court. However, after a certain amount of time, the fragrance of the large leaves is superior. The aspects of these two types of tea leaves are different.

That *Ke Yi Xing* could become a classic tea is due to the fact that it is the most perfect and quintessential example of the small leaf varieties.

(v) Drinking Tea is for Its Tea Qi (茶氣)

If one whiff makes you laugh, then the tea is good. If one sip makes you laugh then likewise it is good tea. Though this opinion may be subjective, it is the shared experience of our many *Hang-Jia*.

Within the tea fragrance there is *Qi*. Within the tea soup there is *Qi*. We drink tea for nothing else but its tea *Qi*.

The tea *Qi* is a kind of energy—that is the vibration frequency of the tea. The finer and subtler frequency of a tea, the higher its ranking is. We buy and drink tea is all for this force of vibration—not for any superficial fragrance.

The energy of good tea is astonishing. Upon drinking it, one's face will begin to shine very quickly, as well as the speed of elevation—very amazing.

Good tea contains the power of Yang energy. Present within the body there is the power of Yin energy. When the body's Yin is combined with the Yang of a good tea, one can achieve a balance of Yin and Yang. Through this, all poisons can in turn be annulled. All advanced pursuits require finding balance and harmony. If one could achieve the balance between Yin and Yang, then one would surpass the mundane and become sacred. This can be understood very easily when one experiences it, and after that, one would naturally believe it.

II. Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas: Spiritual Names

Good teas have different levels. The characters of teas are of highs and lows. The Chinese like to use the word *Pin* (品) to describe the character of a poem, a painting, a person, one's behavior under the influence of alcohol, and of a tea are all likewise. The higher the character of a tea, the more difficult and scarcer it is to get.

Unlike the rankings of competition teas (gold medal, special medal, classes) or commercial teas (tribute teas, super teas, grades) that indicate teas by simple marks, the *Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas* is a new way for ranking and classifying teas. It is based on the force of vibration in teas—entirely adopting names in spiritual levels, and the names fit the true character of the tea after tasting. This is a historical innovation that is without precedent.

In July of 2001, after the *Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea* House moved to its current location in Gongguan Village, its host suddenly became inspired and started to rank *Puerh* teas (whether pressed or loose-leaf), based on the degree of fineness of the vibrational frequency and the level of spiritual aspect that could be obtained through each one. He reassigned names to the teas, classified them into the following twelve levels:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Romance (浪漫, Lang`Man`) | 2. Happiness (幸福, Xing`Fu`) |
| 3. Joy (喜悅, Xi`Yue`) | 4. Rainbow (彩虹, Cai`Hung`) |
| 5. True Love (真愛, Zhen Ai`) | 6. Nectar (甘露, Gan Lu`) |
| 7. Enlightenment (開悟, Kai Wu`) | 8. Galaxy (銀河, Yin`He`) |
| 9. Universe (宇宙, Yu`Zho`) | |
| 10. Truth, Virtue, and Beauty (真善美, Zhen Xan`Mei`) | |
| 11. Reappearance of the Grace (風華再現, Feng Hua`Zai`Xian`) | |
| 12. Return to the Nascent Truth (反樸歸真, Fan`Pu`Gui Zhen). | |



The new names of the twelve level teas all belong to different aspects in the spirit. Each tea name is affirmative, positive, and with high energy.

Each of the teas has its own vibrational frequency. The higher the ranking is, the subtler the material waves. However, they all contain with them affirmative energy.

Upon thinking of the tea names, one will feel very natural and at ease. First, the tea names give a hint to the mind, and the level of consciousness naturally is elevated. One then goes further to taste it, to appreciate the spiritual aspect within, gradually one would realize that these are all real things.

Following, are the tasting notes made by members of the *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings*. The twelve level teas have been tasted and critiqued many times. The full length of these records is much longer. Here are only excerpts from them.

The content in describing each of the twelve level teas consists of three parts:

- (1) # ~ a background introduction;
- (2) ☆ ~ critiques made by our members (whether orally or in written form);
- (3) ◎ ~ the concluding remarks or comments.

These twelve level teas were not sampled and critiqued sequentially according to their rankings within one or two tea sessions. These evaluations are drawn from many different sessions over the long course of the Tea Meetings, depending on the circumstances in tasting the specific level of the teas.

The twelve level teas are named by their rankings. There may have different varieties of teas with the same ranking. All the critiques were made solely on the specific tea sample steeped at the time. Tea is still alive and it will continue to evolve over the time.

The tea tasting experiences are of course subjective. Gender, age, body type, diet, status of the body, background in tasting tea, and personal life history, all are affective variables. Individual subjective experiences, however, will have common and intersections in the opinions. Even though the experiences are not necessarily the same, once one understands the reasons behind this, such differences are not only non-contradictory, it is possible that they are the counterpart to the others and thus are mutually complementary.

The statements below are simply based on the facts—honest accounts of the tea members' experiences with the teas. No individual is singled out.



(i) Romance Level one of the twelve levels
(浪漫, Lang`Man`)



This is a 1980 bushy loose-leaf tea, the entry level tea of the *Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas*—the initiating tea for beginners.

☆ The tea liquor is amber colored, at first astringent and then smooth, with a flavor slightly like green beans. The tea fragrance is ordinary. It is somewhat smooth to the taste and has some tea *Qi*, but less noticeable.

◎ After drinking this tea, one feels relaxed and starts to become romantic. Some members begin to recite poetry while others, who ordinarily feel timid about singing, break into song. Some even start dancing, or showing off their talents in other ways. Appreciating tea is joyful and romantic that is fastidious about the taste. Let's start from *a bit of feeling being romantic*. For those who have never tasted tea before—have not yet reached the entry level, or the tea friends who think that *Puerh* tea is just a musty tea, this tea would make one feel new sensations of being *romantic* in the mouth and nose. However, for those who are more experienced in tea tasting, or those who have already tasted teas with higher rankings (such as *Joy or Rainbow*), they might not feel the same.

Teas cannot afford to be compared. Even those teas that have been called the kings of tea, such as *Fu Yuan Chang* (福元昌), Red or Blue Label *Song Pin* (宋聘), when placed next to a one hundred and eighty year old antique tea, will suddenly seem to be nothing special. (See *Appendix III*)



(ii) Happiness Level two of the twelve levels
(幸福, Xing`Fu`)



A 1970's wild growth raw cake, aged more than twenty years. This a *Chi Zhi Bing* (七子餅) in loose flake.

☆ When one smells the fragrance from the smelling cup, one feels a heart-warming sense of sweetness. The body is warm with a feeling of happiness.

The tea liquor is of a dark chestnut color, and the fragrance smells of camphor. The characteristic of the tea is leaning towards Yang. The tea flavor is thick and rich, astringent while making the mouth water. It is



slightly bitter, having a moderate ability for sweet aftertaste (回甘).

The sweetness taste lingers in the mouth without dissipating, and can drive out any unpleasant tastes. It clears the throat, leaving the body with no feeling of dryness or sickness.

The *Qi* is fine and broad, cycling from the internal to the external, clearing all pores of the skin, the tips of the nerves feel thoroughly numb.

The *Qi* can also flow upwards (toward the head), but the level it reaches is still rather shallow. One has noticeable sensations on the surface of the palms. Drinking such fine tea makes one feel touched, grateful, and satisfied—makes one feel loved and cared for.

- ◎ This is a high class, but inexpensive tea. For those people who felt less satisfied with *Romance*, this may serve as an entry level tea of *Puerh*. Tea friends could also start from those teas they themselves like or have feelings. Furthermore, as long as there is feeling or likeness, one does not necessarily have to start from *Puerh*—green teas, *Oriental Beauty* (東方美人), etc all will do. After all, tea lovers would not just taste one special kind of tea.



(iii) Joy Level three of the twelve levels (喜悅, Xi`Yue`)



A 1970's loose-leaf *Puerh*, similar in age to Happiness.

- ☆ The liquor color is a deep mahogany red. Its fragrance is somewhere between camphor and orchid. It has an astringent basis, which is sweet with reasonable smoothness. The tea tastes rather fragrant and is smooth, nourishing as well as delicious. As with *Happiness*, it smells of camphor, but here the scent is clearer, and the flavor is fuller. The material waves are more subtle and finer. The body and mind relax when drinking it. One settles down. The body harmonizes, and one feels a sweet sense of beauty. The *Qi* is quite strong. Simply smelling the fragrance makes one laugh with joy. The fragrance of Joy is clear and refreshing. Between the teeth one feels the *Qi* swelling slightly. The *Qi* reaches ever deeper as it circulates, and one feels it rise up to the crown of the head.

- ◎ The tea's name is nice. Even before tasting, one laughs by mere smelling. The Joy that succeeds Happiness is a light and pleasant feeling.



(iv) Rainbow Level four of the twelve levels
(彩虹, Cai`Hung')



A 1960's loose flake tea, it is older than the previous two levels of teas. Its *Qi* and flavor flutters about hither and thither.

☆The tea liquor is amber in color. It has an orchid fragrance. The tea water is round and smooth, with the fragrance starting to turn and a dissolving *Qi*.

At the beginning one feels the *Qi* moving that is difficult to describe. It makes one sweat, and the body goes limp. One can feel the *Qi* flowing through the Meridians. There are also slight aches where there may be *Qi* blockage or injury.

The tea fragrance makes the mouth water. Its liquor first tastes slightly bitter, and then turns to sweet and leaves the mouth watering. Its *Qi* is strong and subtle, but still not strong enough to go through the entire body. When one focuses his mind and steadies his breath with eyes closed and being in stillness, he can see the colors of rainbow—the inner lights of one's self nature. One feels refreshing upon tasting it. After five cups the spirit becomes clear. While tasting the second or third cups, one no longer feels like talking, and wants simply to stay still.

◎One tea friend said, "I want to drink tea at least this level."



(v) True Love Level five of the twelve levels
(真愛, Zhen Ai')



A 1960's loose teacake, produced by the *Meng Hai* (勐海) tea factory.

☆The tea liquor is deep amber colored—the fragrance has already changed from camphor to that of an agalloch eaglewood. The tea liquor is slightly bitter, but it quickly transforms into mouth-watering nectar. The *Qi* is very full, passing over one like waves that surge one after the other, chasing away the chill.

One feels open minded and the *Qi* flows smoothly. There is the feeling of a



vast expanse. Very easily one moves beyond the mental platform, beyond all anxiety.

After tasting *True Love*, some members take to reminiscing, repenting, etc... It is a very special feeling. Some just become empty and feel nothing.

- ◎ This tea is called *True Love*. What is *true love*? When there is the total absence of desire and ambition for name, profit and fame, only then can there be *true love*. When one's compassion expands, one will have love towards any animals, plants, the nature, and even minerals. If there remains any desire at all, then one has not yet attained *True Love*.



(vi) Nectar Level six of the twelve levels
(甘露, Gan Lu')

- # Loose flakes of 1950's Yi Wu Mountain teacakes. It possesses characteristics similar to those of *Tong Qing Hao* (同慶號).

- ☆ The tea liquor is dark chestnut colored and slightly transparent. It has the classic flavor of Yi Wu Mountain tea—astrigent and mouth watering. This astringency is minimal, and the mouthwatering is great and sweet aftertaste.

It tastes as graceful as nectar. The *Qi* is very fine, subtle, and deep.

At first it tastes very ordinary—not very special at all. The impression is more deep within, more subtle, and makes one feels spiritual and unearthly.

The body sways slightly and there is slight perspiration as the *Qi* circulates throughout the whole body.

- ◎ In order for a tea to reach the level of *Nectar*, it would have to be at least fifty or sixty years old. If one truly calms down to taste it, he will experience a feeling inside that is akin to being bathed in heavenly dew.



(vii) Enlightenment Level seven of the twelve levels
(開悟, Kai Wu')

- # A 1940's loose teacake.



☆The tea liquor is dark brown, warming, smooth, sticky, thick, and makes the surface of one's tongue water. It has the eaglewood fragrance of an old tea.

The first cup there is a slight astringency and sweet aftertaste; Two cups and it tastes of sweet nectar, the whole body feels comfortable and relaxed. After three cups, one feels completely absorbed and detached, having forgotten all sense of self.

The fragrance is elegant and charming—as if from an unknown, distant country. Upon smelling the fragrance, one feels a sense of peace and joy. After the first cup one enters Trance, two cups, and more than half of all tea friends do not reach for their next cup to drink for a long time.

The tea's *Qi* instantly reaches the *Crown Chakra*. One's brain feels like an incense burner, a small stick of incense lit in the center—with smoke wafting and twisting gently upwards. One feels flushed with *Qi* all throughout the body—full and charged with energy that is very fine in frequency, like an endless torrent. This carries on for a very long time.

The tea's *Qi* is calm, peaceful, and deep. I feel suddenly as if having fallen into a realm of nothingness that is between real and nonexistence—enlightened and all is bright yet nothing, aerial amid the cloud and mist, and roaming about the cosmos.

The body and spirit feel comfortable and refreshing without any burden. Mental activity decreases, and slowly I enter into the subconscious realm—serene, quite, and just being there—blissful, tranquil, and peaceful. Upon sniffing, even before I can distinguish the fragrance, I am immediately pulled up. It feels as if there is a very strong and bright light, fiercely shining down upon my head, making me sweat profusely all over my body. Gradually, the strong bright light changes to circle after circle of tiny halos that tightly hug me. The feeling is just so pleasurable. I feel as if somehow, without noticing it, my whole body has simply melted away, vanished, and gone roaming about the vast Universe.

◎The *Qi* of this tea is like a whirlpool, pulling one upwards—straight into the void. It feels very pleasant and one doesn't want to awake from it. This is what *Enlightenment* feels like.

There is also another kind of Enlightenment tea, which is a combination of the Galaxy and *Hong Zhi* (紅芝, Vermillion Fungus). In the summer of 2001, a tea guest from Taipei, claiming to be cultivating the unassailable elixir. As a result of his practice of austerities, he had never once in thirty years laid down to sleep. He requested that *Hang-Jia* mix a jar of tea that would help him in the pursuit of his goal—a mix that immediately upon drinking would lead to enlightenment. This tea was specially prepared for



him according to his body type, and after drinking it he directly lay down and began to sleep.

(viii) Galaxy Level eight of the twelve levels
(銀河, Yin'He')



This is *Galaxy No. 1*—a loose leaf of *Tong Qing* (同慶), with tea leaves from wild growth, large-leafed arbor trees in the 1940's. It was made of new tea leaves grown in spring. Therefore, the energy in this tea and the character aspects are all exceptional.

☆ The tea liquor is a deep, dark, amber color, with an agalloch fragrance. Its fragrance has already transformed with a strong tea *Qi*.

Underneath the tongue it is as if a spring is born—the lips purse. One becomes focused and calms down, automatically entering meditation.

I feel cold up the spine. The tea's *Qi* is very fine, and very swift, flowing without impediment throughout the body. It makes me feel aerial in the void.

It's like clear skies in a dark night—silent, moving, experiencing the void, and elevated.

The fragrance makes the mouth water. It is exceedingly smooth and embellished on the throat, without any noticeable bitterness or sweetness. The *Qi* is very strong and subtle. It passes instantaneously throughout the entire body—the body feels purified and light.

Instantly I relaxed and entered Trance. It felt as if my body was within a silver river of *Qi* flowing through the Universe. The pool of *Qi* within my body and the oceanic *Qi* of the Universe merge and become one. I am lost to any sense of self.

◎ *Rainbow* makes one sweat, whereas *Galaxy* makes the spine feel cold. *Rainbow* makes one want to sit still, whereas *Galaxy* forces one automatically—no need for a second thought.

All teas with the ranking of *Galaxy* and above make one enter into Trance automatically. *Rainbow* can make one see a vibrant array of colors, whereas *Galaxy* makes one feel as if immersed in a river of starlight in the Milky Way—seeing a bright blue sky. *Rainbow* cannot achieve such a level. Teas above the level of *Galaxy* are even more extraordinary.



(ix) Universe Level nine of the twelve levels
(宇宙, Yu`Zho`)



A 1920's loose tea cake, produced by a private tea factory; super strong energy.

☆ Orchid and musk fragrance are both present. A tea reminiscent of ancient times, tasting it makes one feel as if he has returned to the past.

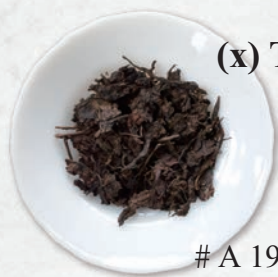
The tea liquor is fragrant and sweet, very thick, but not sticky—yet is very clear. The *Qi* of this tea is most extraordinary—very broad and thick, yet is dense and delicate. After downing two cups, an old elbow injury started to hurt.

The heat in both my hands very noticeably began to dissipate, going from lukewarm down to cool.

The tea *Qi* spreads constantly and without cessation throughout the entire body—spreading like the expansion of the Universe—making me want to continue keeping my eyes closed and sinking within it.

This tea is a highly refined agalloch eaglewood fragrance, being aromatic, thick, and smoky. It melts away all boundaries to the realm of perfection. Upon entering Trance, it is brighter with the eyes closed than with them open. The energy of the light is very strong. Man is also a small Universe, and through this tea the macro and the micro Universes merge as one.

◎ The *Qi* of this tea is even stronger than that of *Hong Yin* (紅印, Red Seal). Upon drinking it, one instantly becomes intoxicated; therefore this tea is suitable for meditation. Some see the Universe within themselves, making them feel very much at peace.



(x) Truth, Virtue, and Beauty Level ten of the twelve levels
(真善美, Zhen Xan`Mei`)



A 1920's loose teacake, with large and fat leaves, it is of a superb quality. Information about the tea producer can no longer be found.

☆ A very beautiful tea, with a very clear fragrance that wafts skyward. Immediately upon drinking it, it is as if my entire body floats



upwards, light as a feather. The whole body feels utterly loosened. Even the spine, hands, and feet all feel completely loose.

The first cup is slightly bitter, without any noticeable or special qualities. After the second cup, one is gradually getting better. I feel as if all present were sitting in a circle, drinking tea in another realm of space and time—all with semitransparent bodies of light—illuminated by a strong light that shines down from above.

With the first steeping it seems that the tea has not yet awoken—still retaining the flavor of a storehouse.

After the second steeping it suddenly rouses, transporting one into an upper realm. There is a very conspicuous tea fragrance and sweet aftertaste finish in the throat.

The tea *Qi* circulates the whole body—like bathed in a shower.

The first cup carries a slight bitterness followed by sweet aftertaste. The tea *Qi* then suddenly shoots straight up to the crown of the head—all the while there is a slight swelling and pulsing sensation.

The second cup carries with it a slight sourness and one feels a wave of heat spreading ever upwards, constantly swelling, until in the end all that is left of feeling is centered in the head. This leaves one feeling weightless like a celestial being—a feeling of spinning.

The third cup, and one feels very peaceful. It is as if a flowing fountain has sprung forth underneath the tongue... as if all time has stopped.

The tea liquor is brown in color, the fragrance like honey. It has a jujube-like sweetness, with a faint dash of orchid and camphor. Just one whiff and one's finger tips feel weak and numb. At the same time, one feels that this tea is also solid and steady. Its strength is deep and broad yet gentle—like a warm wave slowly ascending the body.

The flavor is slightly bitter, with a slight astringency on the surface of the tongue. The tea liquor is smooth and thick. The tea quality is very fine to the point of being exquisite. Upon entering the mouth, the fragrance lingers for a long time without dissipating.

Upon entering Trance, one flows into a beacon of light that is both gentle and sublime.

It is a feeling that is beyond words. Its power is like that of a warm wave from the deep ocean—most extraordinary.

- ◎ One whiff and beneath the tongue becomes like a flowing spring—there is a slight smell of camphor and Chinese medicine. The tea liquor is mild, smooth, and moist, with a vibration frequency that is very subtle. The energy is exceedingly high. It is a tea with vast internal potency.

The entire body feels hot and swollen—like a night sweat. After settling

into Trance, one achieves a space of aerial void—the realm of truth, virtue, and beauty.
One tea friend composed this poem for us on the spot:

*This is a tea that is unbound,
With a spirit that is passionate, surging, and unfettered.
With a bit of sharing,
With a bit of giving,
My heart and soul are satisfied in that—
plain, pure, and elegant.
From within, one emits the depth of life.
Now entranced, it leaves me agog in admiration!
Knowing within and smiling inside,
This is not for tantalizing the tongue—
but for nourishing the soul.
~ Zheng Yan Qiu*

Next, another tea friend offered us a song,

*It is the manifestation of pure truth, pure goodness, and pure beauty.
Realistic and down to earth, the beauty experienced herein.
It is the Auspicious Day of the World of Dharma, the fountainhead of
happiness
It is the wish of all sentient beings.
We wish for all to be happy, for the nation to be auspicious,
and the whole world to be peaceful.*

Lyrics written by Mr. Geng Yun and melody composed by Professor Huang Youdi
(Peaceful and Auspicious)

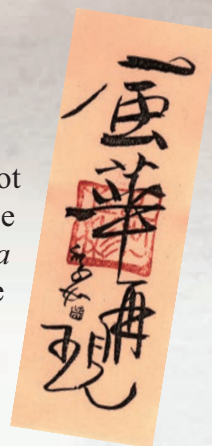


(xi) Reappearance of the Grace Level eleven of the twelve levels

(風華再現, Feng Hua'Zai'Xian')

This tea, aged over eighty years, is a famous tea in history. It is not *Song Pin*, but of the same level as *Song Pin*—very much close to the level of *Blue-label Song Pin* (藍標宋聘). Of the *Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas*, those whose names consist of four Chinese characters, such as *Feng Hua Zai Xian* (風華再現), are all extraordinary. Amongst *Puerh*, there are few teas that can attain such a level as *Reappearance of the Grace*.

☆ This tea is of 1920's. Of the tea aroma, the hot fragrance is enchanting; the cold fragrance can make one enter Trance. The liquor holds the aroma and sweetness within the mouth. Its *Qi* dissolves and is clear, yet its taste is full and thick. If one could taste this tea daily, then even the celestial beings would be envious in admiration. The liquor is chestnut brown, transparent, and bright. The tea fragrance is of wild camphor. The tea flavor is smooth, sweet, and pristine. The *Qi* is thick and tender, yet penetrating—could circulate from the *Crown Chakra* down to the spine. It is extremely fragrant, exceedingly elegant, and carries with it a slight smell of plum or perhaps sandalwood. It is even finer than *Nectar*, a tea that has already transcended the level of material things. All that the third eye can see is bright light. The *Qi* is very strong, very subtle, thick, and solid. Upon settling down, one feels as if all the Meridians of the body are cleared through. It is rather different from *Song Pin*, which comes fierce and strong. The *Reappearance of the Grace* is tender—not too swift, nor too languid. The tea's *Qi* spreads throughout the entire body, which completely unites with the body. After one or two cups, one settles down completely and feels very comfortable. Amid the fragrance, there is another special exotic aroma—like that of the *flower blossoming on top of a pole*. After settling down, there is a force that pulls you continuously upwards that is uplifting. Atop your head, the *Qi* swirls and circles without end. The tea's *Qi* is gentle, tender and long lasting. It makes me intoxicated, and I feel sleepy. The tea gathering could end at this point! “*I am drunk and feel sleepy! You could leave now my friend!*”



The feeling in the mouth is similar to that of *Song Pin*. It is very sweet. The stomach feels warm. The body and heart are likewise balanced and very comfortable—very easily enters Trance.

There is one very special thing about this tea—it is as if all the *Qi* within the body has merged and become one with all the creatures. After that, should there is slight noise in the surroundings, the whole body will tremble along with it.

The fragrances of each of the first three cups were different. Stewed plum, black camphor, and camphor—the fragrance keeps changing.

I felt the *Qi* emitting from the forehead, the neck felt cool, and my legs ached. Upon entering Trance, I saw a white light and then suddenly awoke. Taking another cup, very quickly I entered Trance again and saw a blue night sky. The body felt cool and chilly, and I feel the rapid circulation of the *Qi*.

One feels being one with all beings—venturing very deep inside, and the outside is wide. The mind is washed and cleansed very thoroughly.

It's like that we see suddenly the light of Heaven during meditation—seeing our own true life.

©*Nectar* is still at the layer of material waves, whereas *Reappearance of the Grace* transcends this layer. *Reappearance of the Grace* could make one settle down into Trance first and then blossom. Its fragrance is very extraordinary—far surpassing the level of *Hong Yin*.

The body and the tea *Qi* of the tea become intertwined—this is what is known as *Tea and Tao being as One*.

(xii) Return to the Nascent Truth Level twelve of the twelve levels

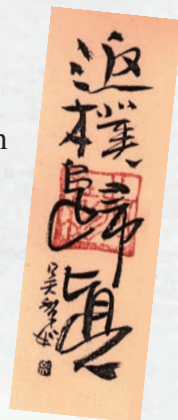
(反樸歸真, Fan`Pu`Gui Zhen)



This is a century-old *Puerh*. It was made as a teacake, but is now in loose flakes.

☆ After drinking the first two cups, I closed my eyes and calmed down. But after the third cup, the eyes felt light, and I couldn't sleep.

The tea fragrance is long, languid, very faint, and thin. It has a less conspicuous fragrance than either *Song Pin* or *Hong Yin*. The tea soup is very smooth and gentle—not going through the entire body—seems somewhat calm and passive. Whereas I thought in retrospect, nature is beauty—one enters Tao with just an ordinary mind.





The name *Return to Nascent Truth* matches perfectly with such experience. Upon entering the mouth, it is most sweet and beautiful. It is teeming with bliss, but then in a blink suddenly disappears. All that remains is a slight sorrow for the beauty lost. Every cup is this way. It reminds us that we should live in the now. Even so, all things are just transient and fleeting.

The liquor is of a chestnut brown color. Its rhythm, upon entering the mouth, is very fine, and it will leave a lasting sweet aftertaste. The tea fragrance changes from camphor to glutinous rice to lotus. The liquor has a thick and undiluted quality to it.

After just the first cup, one feels alert with eyes wide open. After the second cup, again one wants to sleep. One then discovers that there is a strange fragrance, something that is akin to an original fungus culture. From this one can know that this tea is very old. The tea tree is really very old—a wild large leafed arbor tree that is primordial.

The tea *Qi* is peaceful and far reaching, seemingly there and yet feels nothing—it has attained the feeling of omnipresence and of belonging to nowhere. It possesses the power of impact. After the fourth or fifth cup, there is a slight bit of jujube or Chinese date fragrance. Upon drinking this tea, one will sweat profusely. The sweat bursts forth, and afterwards the whole body feels very comfortable and relaxed.

The tea soup is a blackish brown. The tea fragrance is the best scent of honey sweet jujube and fragrant camphor, plus a few dashes of cool mint smell. When sniffing the fragrance, one feels numbness in the fingertips. There's a wave of hot *Qi* that swells, then rises up, and the top of head sweats.

The first cup of tea liquor is slightly bitter, yet clear and elegant. On the surface of the tongue, one feels a bit of astringency, then suddenly the chest feels stuffed with the strength.

The second cup of the tea liquor is smoothly dissolving and gentle soft. Any gases within the body formed owing to diets instantly were adjusted and were expelled with an ill sour smell. One then feels more relaxed.

The third cup, and there is a spring of nectar-like saliva. It is beautiful and sweet, smooth and dissolving. At the same time one can feel that the body is numbed and purified. One is able to even more quickly enjoy oneself in the realm that is uplifted by the tea energy.

The fourth cup, within the noble tea *Qi*, one forgets all sense of self...

This tea is extra ordinary. Simply by smelling it or tasting it would make one transcend the mortal and enter the domain of the sacred, and completely forget ones selfness. It is really difficult to have the opportunities to *taste* such tea in this world. This makes one realize that the *Tao* is born in nature, and that life is extra ordinary.

For the first cup, just one whiff of the fragrance the *Qi* rushes straight to the *Crown Chakra*. The heart beats very rapidly, one feels weak and numb atop the head, and immediately after, one hiccoughs continuously. The tea liquor is loaded with potency—it is slightly bitter, but upon reaching the throat, melts into nectar.

With the second cup, there's no longer any hiccoughing, but now both hands feel limp and numb. With the third cup, one burps three or four times. Following that, one feels completely awake from wandering around. The *Qi* of the tea spins and turns throughout the body, and the entire body feels hot and swelling. It is truly relishing—so intoxicating. The *Qi* oscillates, sometimes weak, and at other times suddenly strong, and it seems real and not real—very difficult to describe.

I cannot find any feeling. Suddenly there is sentence popped up in my head, “I am no longer a bystander.” The one who used to think that *I am a tea taster—you are tasting tea*, that's why you have feelings—when all three become one and are present at this moment, you can no longer find anything to say that it is you who are tasting tea. I cannot describe the feeling of nothing and being—it is, yet it seems is not—you find nothing. When you are the light yourself, how could you be light. He or she doesn't know what is light either.

Now when I am tasting tea I could no longer concentrate on noticing the tea character and the tea liquor. Therefore, whenever I want to describe how I felt after tasting the tea, I found myself having more and more difficult to find something, and further along I didn't know how to describe the tea I had just tasted.

On tasting this pot of tea, all I noticed was that I could no longer play the role of being a critic. In the past, the feeling was separated—I was myself and the tea was the tea. Therefore, to describe whatever feeling there was on a rational level was easy. Because I was the bystander of the *Bystanders see clearly*. Now the tea, me myself, and the *Heaven* have become one—there is the feeling that *Void is being, and being is void*. All I know is that this feeling can no longer be expressed clearly in words or articles. When we are the light or the love, to describe what it is to be *light* or *love* for being the *light* or *love* itself is of the same difficulty.

One tea friend then offered a poem:

*Thought carries no evil
Transparent
With a body like crystal and a pure jolly heart.*



*The summit of life,
 Surpasses the truth of duality
 We then enter the ultimate truth
 A complete life
 When self consciousness dies;
 The climax of life reveals.
 ~ Zheng, Yan-Qiu*

Another tea friend, feeling grateful to our president for sharing such a fine tea with everyone, began to recite,

*“One phrase of nature refreshes the world that is everlasting
 After all the prosperity has gone,
 The pure and simple truth is revealed.”*

~ Yuan, Hao-Wen (One of the quatrain on critiquing poems)

“Each of you is innocent yourself individually,
 No need to ask others all the way again and again
 All you need to do is to heed your conscience to become virtue
 Don’t look into books to waste your time and energy
 The Chien and the Kuen is in essence Yi not for drawings
 What is the figure of your character in heart to be covered by dusts?
 Do not say that me as your teacher is speaking in Zen.
 These words are offered just for your sake.”
 ~ Wang, Yang-Ming (Maxims of Yang Ming)

©This tea is very gentle, but within its softness there is great strength. Simply by hearing the tea's name, *Return to the Nascent Truth*, one can know that the *Qi* brings with it a feeling of nothingness that can be captured in feelings.

III. The Meaning of the Ranking of the Twelve Level Teas

The ranking sequence of the *Twelve Level Teas* is natural and it is true.

To learn how to taste tea, first one must learn how to be *Romantic*—to live oneself a romantic life. Only when one can live a romantic life can there be love, the absence of stress, and a knowledge of how to share. Then one will be happy naturally and you are in *Happiness*. When one is happy every day, then certainly there is Joy and without worry. One's force of vibration is elevated and very soon, every day is in happiness—experiencing the joy to be come to this planet, just like a *Rainbow* full of wonderful colors—one would then create lots of miracles.

Every day becomes easy, satisfying, and creative. Everything one communicates and encounters is *True Love*. Every blade of grass and every tree participates in this loving exchange. Leading a life that encounters *True Love* at every turn, one then comes to realize naturally what *True Love* is. Possessing *True Love*, one enters a higher level of consciousness where simple water tastes like *Nectar*—as if it came straight from a spring in Heaven. A life of drinking nectar is a life without avarice and greed. It is a life of *Enlightenment*.

When each day is enlightened, then one has entered into the *Galaxy*. As one's heart capacity expands constantly, one then enters the Universe. The galaxy in which the earth is situated has some two hundred and seventy million planets, and there are many galaxies within the Universe. To roam all over the Universe and to traverse the Heaven, one thus attains a life of *Truth, Virtue and Beauty*.

With one step further, then there is *Reappearance of the Grace*—just like all the flowers blossoming over one night. In Heaven, the roads are paved with gold, and the tills of the roofs are made with colored glaze. One is connected with the energy of the Universe at any time, and is melting within a great ocean of love. After entering that world, everyone just *Return to the Nascent Truth*, where life is simple, creating new things every day. At present, the earth has not yet attained this frequency.

All the above is simply a borrowing and communicating of the consciousness of higher realms. We hope that all those who understand will thirst for a *Return to the Nascent Truth*, ultimately will also attain this high level and achieve the nothingness.

An even higher level is the *Ocean of Love*. The ocean of love is the manifestation of Love.





The tea names are aptly chosen, each with a very deep meaning. One tea friend took the *Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas* names and put them to the melody of *Amazing Grace*. It fits together quite nicely and sounds very pleasant, and full of spirituality.

Tea Querying

問 茶

詞：何在彬

曲：(Amazing Grace) 奇異恩典

詞配曲：何照清

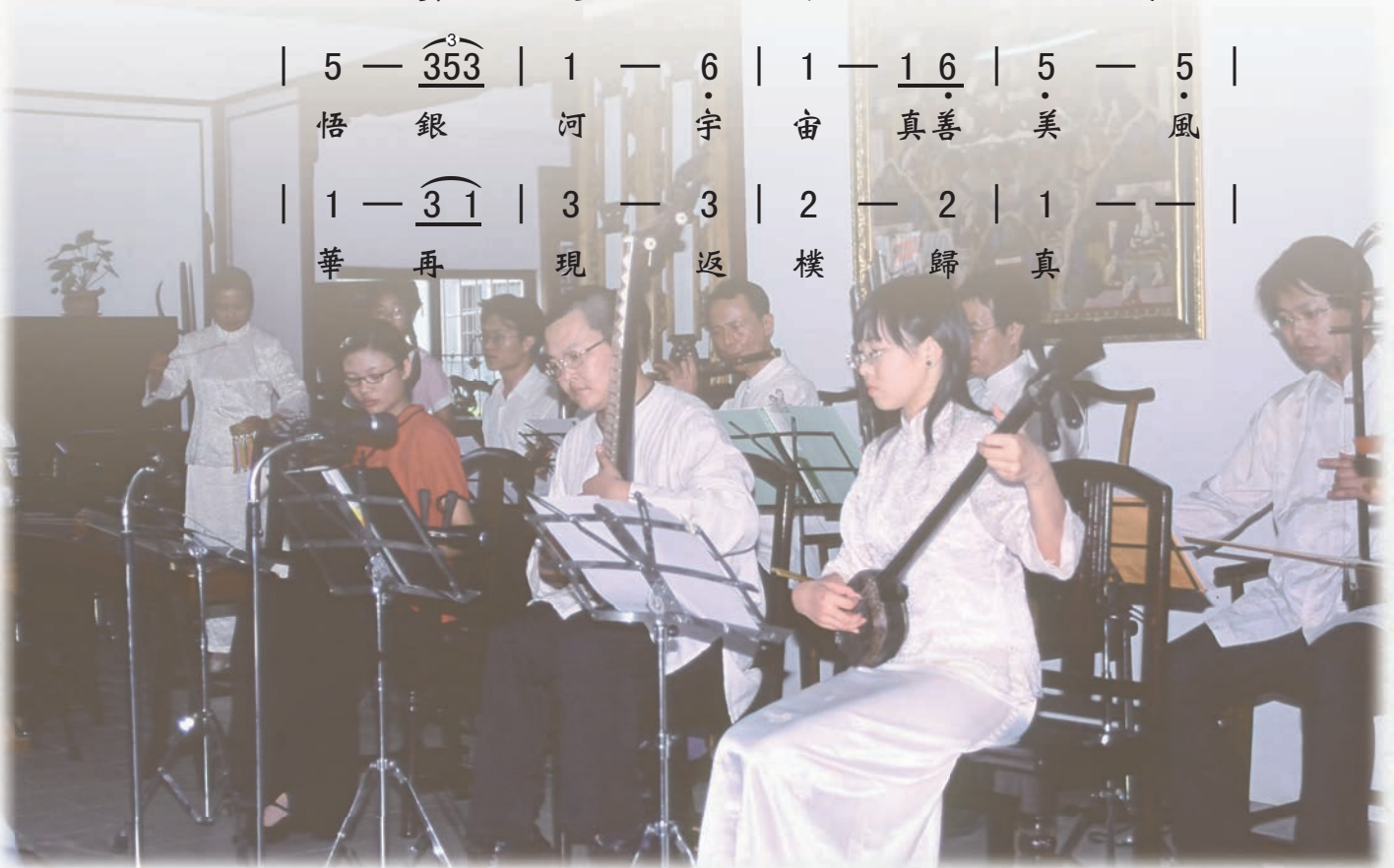
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5 | 1 — 3 1 | 3 — 2 | 1 — 6 | 5 — 5 |
浪 漫 幸 福 喜 悅 彩

| 1 — 3 1 | 3 — 2 3 | 5 — — | 5 — 3 5 |
虹 真 愛 甘 露 開

| 5 — 3³53 | 1 — 6 | 1 — 1 6 | 5 — 5 |
悟 銀 河 宇 宙 真 善 美 風

| 1 — 3 1 | 3 — 3 | 2 — 2 | 1 — — |
華 再 現 返 樸 歸 真



IV. High Truth Beyond the Twelve Levels

The last of the *Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas* is the *Return to the Nascent Truth*. It brings one back to the primal state of consciousness, however it is not yet the highest and the topmost of teas. On many famous mountains treasure trove beneath Heaven, superior teas can often be grown and produced. Either a luxurious hall or a small hut in the wilderness, sometimes a truly fine old tea preserved can also be found. To find one of these teas always comes as a most wonderful surprise. These teas are beyond the twelve levels and belong to truth tea of high quality—all with beautiful qualities and pristine aromas. Some of the teas are even higher than *Return to the Nascent Truth*. They are referred to as *Ai Hai* (愛海) or *Ocean of Love*. Below, a few of these exquisite teas are described. They do not belong to the twelve levels and are called *Ji Wai Gao Zhen* (級外高真) or *High Truth Beyond the Twelve Levels*.



(i) Ocean of Love

(愛海 · Ai Hai)

Ocean of Love No. 1 is a 1910's old teacake from Si Mao, aged approximately one hundred years.

If there is any tea higher than *Return to the Nascent Truth*, it would have to be *Ocean of Love*. Perhaps it is the tea nearest to the Divine.



- ☆ 1. Chiu, "This old teacake has been stored for at least eighty years or above.

The tea fragrance is of elegant agalloch eaglewood and graceful musk. The tea liquor dissolves all boundaries. The fragrance, pristine, the *Qi*, and the transformative aspects are all well represented. It is a tea that enables one to very easily enter Trance.

The tea *Qi* comes in wave after wave without cessation—very subtle and permeating the entire body. It is a good old tea that is really very old."

2. Gao, "The *Qi* is extremely fine, becoming one with the body.

The heartbeat first accelerates, and then the breath becomes very smooth and steady. The mind becomes a complete blank, like white smoke. This is all exceedingly comfortable, and one really doesn't want to come out of this state. In drinking the first two cups, one still experiences random thoughts, but by the third cup there is light.



With the fourth cup, the frequency is subtle and fine, all is a clear and vast ocean.”

3. Pan, “It has a slight fragrance of musk, and upon tasting the feeling in the mouth has attained the realm of dissolution—as of mud entering the ocean. Very ephemeral, as if nothing. It flows continuously without cessation and one enters it without noticing.

Within the stillness, there is clear and plain lucid detachment. I really do not want to give up this moment.”

4. Ruaan, “Just one cup, and before you can even feel the tea *Qi* move, POW! Already it is up between the points of the third eye and the *Crown Chakra*. There is no sense of *return*—it is simply there, *arriving without needing to travel*.

The tea *Qi* has already naturally circulated throughout the entire body, spreading from the inner to the outer layers. The feeling is very settled and steady, soothing like continuous waves rolling over you without cessation. The strength of the love is boundless. That it is called the *Ocean of Love* really does make sense.”

5. Xu, “An intense white light came flashing over. The *Qi* accumulated, compressed in the forehead, and I saw visions such as a waterfall or the Milky Way.

When one calms down and becomes still, the force of vibration upon the chest is very pronounced. Then upon smelling the fragrance, I saw some ocean waves. It is a most peaceful and calming feeling.”

6. Jiang, “A tea of dissolving! Just like a holy chalice—overflowing and yet not to grasp.”

7. It is a taste without taste. My entire being feels soft as cotton, a feeling of very loose—there is nothing.

It feels as if the God is blessing upon you—seems something enters into the body and fixes itself there.

8. Ye, “Unlimited forbearance, like a mother’s love.”

9. Positive energy can dispel negative energy, and tea *Qi* that is of a very subtle vibration can cover over that which is coarser. During the twenty-third session of the Tea Meetings, having drunk some *Song Pin* brought from outside which had been contaminated, the group reacted instantly, many feeling great discomfort in the mouth, chest and abdomen. In order to counteract this, the host immediately steeped a pot of *Ocean of Love No. 1* as a remedy. The results were as follows:

Qiu, “After one cup of *Ocean of Love*, and the top of the head immediately

gets relaxed. After the second cup, immediately I could smell the alcohol that I drank yesterday, as it was being expelled.”

Luo, “The hands felt cool, and the negative energy passed out the pores of the skin—all was washed away.”

Chen, “In drinking *Song Ping*, there was a very dim light over my forehead and the top of my head; whereas in drinking *Ocean of Love*, the entire body is bright and transparent.”

Xie, “In an instant all random thoughts disappeared, and my entire being became pure, calm, peaceful, refreshed with clear mind. It was so relaxing.”

- ◎ The base of the *Ocean of Love No. 1* is not as thick as that of Song Ping, but the subtlety is superior. Song Ping is very famous and is very expensive, whereas the *Ocean of Love* has no known producer. However immediately upon drinking it, it washed away all the negative energy that we had previously imbibed and the belly felt relaxed again. Everybody has experienced by themselves. It is really true.

(ii) The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma (珠峯聖茶)

The third of the Sacred Tea of Tibet made in 2003



- # Tibet grows teas, and the green teas are of the best, which are reverently referred to as the sacred teas.

There are three kinds of sacred teas in Tibet—*White Eagle*, *Red Eagle*, and *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma*. The places they grow, the tea trees, and the fragrance are all different. *White Eagle* grows on mountains about three or four thousand meters above the sea level; *Red Eagle* grows about four thousand meters or above; and *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma* grows about 2250 meters—all these are regarded as *exotic teas*. These teas grow in Tibet, some also grow on the border between Shi-Chuan and Tibet.

This holy tea of Tibet has a unique character and rhythm. All of the three sacred teas are unique and cannot be replaced.

The term *eagle* in the hearts of the Tibetans is synonymous with *saint* or *king*. The sacred teas have a low volume of production and are most precious. They have traditionally been used as tribute to the emperor. In the past, only saints or emperors would have the opportunity to taste them. These teas have been around since the Tang Dynasty, but were never recorded in any tea book, nor do most Tibetans know of their existence.





Here we will only introduce *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma*.

The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma is produced in Tibet along the banks of Lake Yi Gong, at 2250 meters above sea level. From the tea farm, one can get a very clear view of the shape of the Chomolongma. The lake rests in a valley between two high mountains. The fields are at a very high elevation and the mountain valleys are deep. The spiritual energy of the mountain gathers in the valley on the banks of the lake, and pools together, circulating like a whirlpool. The energy concentrates in this basin and does not easily disperse. The sacred tea is of green tea. This feature makes it so that a large amount of energy can be contained within a small handful of leaves.

This tea carries the spiritual energy of an icy and snowy mountain. Upon drinking it, the *Qi* of the whole body gathers in the chest, and there is a feeling like that of being on a very high mountain where one cannot quite get enough oxygen.

This tea is not suitable to be taken on an empty stomach, especially for those with a cold physique.

Drinking a mountain tea like this is said to be able to cure altitude sickness.

Perhaps tourists going to visit the remains of the Mayan civilization in the Andes, might first drink a little high mountain tea, and sleep a few hours, then they will adjust to the high altitude.

- ☆ 1. *Qiu*, “The tea aroma contains an orchid fragrance as well as the scent of the rose.
The tea liquor, even though it is of green tea, has achieved a dissolving state. The tea aspect is slightly astringent. It causes salivation in the mouth, and has a strong sweet aftertaste finish. It is especially good to drink when the body feels hot and dry within. Upon drinking it, one instantly enters a cool, soothing, and refreshing zone.
- 2. *Liu*, “The liquor is tender and nourishing. It has a most extraordinary intense and strong tea rhythm. The tea flavor lingers long in the mouth.”
- 3. *Xiao*, “As if a tiger that has sprouted wings, the *Qi* surges throughout the entire body. The effect of doing ten forms or katas in the martial arts can be achieved instantly simply by drinking some of this tea. This is of truly high class among teas.
The room becomes brighter and brighter, as if entering a chain superstore.”
- 4. *Pan*, “The tea aroma is most fragrant, entering the mouth superbly. It is the most tasteful of today’s teas, though I do not feel any noticeable *Qi* rushing upwards.

The second cup and the taste is rich and dense. There is a nice sweet aftertaste, though there is no presence of intense *Qi*. All I feel is a swaying emptiness at the top of my head.

With the third cup, there is a sensation as if sucking concentrated oxygen, and a great increase in lung capacity. It has a real kick. I feel the sense of a vast expanse as in a dream. On my back, I feel an acupuncture point come unblocked. It is most peculiar because the body has not moved at all.

The fourth cup and surprisingly I feel like attending a group meditation. This is really interesting.”

5. Xu, “Upon entering the mouth, it is fragrant and sweet. There is a hot current that rises from the diaphragm, and then sinks down to the bottom of the feet.

With the second cup there is a very strong orchid-like fragrance, then a sweet taste, and with this the tea *Qi* can be felt rising up the spine.

The third cup is clear and fragrant. It has a faint *Qi*.

The fourth cup and one is sweating. The body is cool and refreshed. One feels the bodily energy is in great abundance. The body feels in harmony, then back to normal—it’s easy to enter into dreams.”

6. Xie, “*Bodhidharma orchid* fragrance, rich with the lasting effect of sweet aftertaste and steady salivation.

It goes down smoothly and moistens the throat, with a very strong *Qi*. It is more subtle and finer than the *Red Eagle*.

Closing the eyes and sitting motionless, it is as if being in the sacred mountain, wherein the abiding feeling is one of harmony and peace.

It has a very high spiritualizing *Qi*. Every time I drink *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma* it transports me there. Before the eyes there is a sea of light, emitting a golden, bluish, brilliant light. It is as if everyone is giving off a golden glow.”

7. Ruaan, “The *Qi* is full, its power abundant. The flavor is rich, exotic and wondrous, similar to the ninth grade lotus flower fragrance.

When the cup is warm, this fragrance is more noticeable. This tea is subtler than either the *Red Eagle* or *White Eagle*. It is pure, rich in spiritual *Qi*.

Fire and ice spring forth together! It has the qualities of both Yin and Yang. Intense heat and a soothing chill exist along side each other! It is a most wondrous tea.

Whether for reasons of *Qi*, flavor, character, or characteristic, *The Sacred Tea of Chomolognma* is surely the topmost of all green teas. It cannot be surpassed or improved upon. I will stop after drinking this. To borrow a phrase from *Ji Zha* (季札) *Observing Music*, ‘I’ll stop after drinking this! If there is another green tea, I would not dare to drink it.’



I feel sacred, pure, elevated, happy, and grateful.”

8. A tea friend from America sent us a poem in praise of *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma*,

*Dwelling on the topmost mountain in the world,
Treading on ice and snow below and touching the sky with my hand,
Sending off the moon in the morning and greeting the rising sun,
Drinking the clear breeze in the evening together with the snow lotus,
The rainbow dances freely above in the air,
Drifting and spraying a fragrance that fills the earth and the sky,
In April, the scene of the spring is beautiful in this earthy world.
Riding the wind and grasping the clouds, I set off to meet the celestial
beings.*

~ Zhou, Ying-Xiong, May 2003

- © Within *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma*, there exists a harmony of Yin and Yang, each one being present in this tea. Originally, the spiritual *Qi* of high mountains covered in snow and ice belongs to Yin; however, within this sacred mountain there also springs the *Qi* of pure Yang. That both types of energy are represented—this is what makes it truly exceptional. By following a high grade *Puerh* with this *Sacred Tea of Chomolongma*, one may come to know the full range of its power and mystery. After drinking *Wan Hong Ji* (萬鴻記), the whole body burned with heat. At this time, to steep the *Chomolongma tea*, one felt overcome by its exotic fragrance—the spiritual *Qi* is overpowering. Just one cup down the gullet, and entire body that was heated before, suddenly switched to a cool and refreshing one. That a young tea could reach the dissolving state is truly never experienced before.
- Why call this a sacred tea? Because one will not be pulled down, no matter how high grade is the tea one drank previously.
- For those who practice the martial arts, drinking this tea will make them feel surging heat throughout the entire body, yet the surface of the skin will remain cool. For the spiritual practitioners, an even higher level could be that there is entirely no feeling.
- That these few leaves, drunk by a dozen or more people could cause them all to feel their *Qi* pathways flowing clear and unobstructed, is certainly an extraordinary one.

Also, after drinking *Five Elements Tea No. 3* (which consists of two types of old *Puerh*—*pure Yin plus pure Yang*), to then steep a pot of *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma*, one can very clearly understand what kind of tea it was they had just drunk.

Five Elements Tea No. 3 is already a very exotic mixture, but to then drink *The Sacred Tea of Chomolongma* in short succession, is an even more profound and mystical experience. This time the fragrances from each of the five cups were distinct. Without swallowing the tea, it simply dissolved on the palate. The entire body felt light and relaxed, without any stresses or anxiety. One quickly entered the cool and refreshing zone. The frequency of the body becomes refined, and the body completely transforms. Pure hardness can be counteracted by pure softness. The water could be both pure softness and pure hardness. This *Chomolongma tea* has restored the forces of five elements to their original states, and harmonizing them. The whole body is left feeling only harmonic, happy, and blissful.

The *Qi* of this tea retains the divine spirit of both ice and snow. It is more terrific if one sip the tea outdoors on a high mountain, along the banks of a river.

Drinking this tea, one's skin becomes supple and very fine, making one look so young. It is truly incredible.

After drinking *Chomolongma tea*, one no longer wants to drink any other green teas. *Tai Ping* (太平) and *Shi Feng* (獅峰) may be drunk in isolation, but if drunk along side with *Chomolongma tea*, their graces will immediately be eclipsed. The elevation is different and their frequency is not as subtle. It feels as if the skull of the head is opened.

The highest level however, is one completely without feeling, where one whiff and all becomes cool and refreshing. All is unblocked and all is passed over.



(iii) One Hundred Year Old Taiwan Oolong (百年烏龍)

This Oolong tea was preserved by the descendants of a government official at the end of the *Qing* Dynasty in Taiwan. It was in storage a minimum of eighty years, and has been kept in perfect condition to the present day. What is most extraordinary about this tea is that throughout the course it had never been re-roasted, thus leaving its *Qi* undamaged. It is the tea with the finest





vibrational frequency native to Taiwan, and is also the most well-preserved tea. Drinking this tea causes one's skin to glow brightly. It is truly a most rare and extraordinary find.

- ☆ 1. Qui, "This old Oolong has not been re-roasted by charcoal. It is being aged naturally.
One drink causes all the pores of the body to open up. It is most gentle and beautiful. It could even be called *nectar from Heaven*.
It has already surpassed the dissolving state."
2. Yu, "So sweet, like the fragrance of fruit juice, the *Qi* feels subtle and smooth. The entire body feels gently warmed, and the palms radiate heat and sweat. The vibration is numbing and can easily be felt."
3. Ruaan, "Upon hearing we were to steep *One Hundred Year Oolong*, immediately I am delighted and even my handwriting has perked up spryly and become elegant.
One whiff caused me to laugh. The power of its love is gentle and without cessation. It is quiet and soundless, however, after utterly penetrating, soaking, and dissolving, it silently caresses every single cell of the body."
4. Jiang, "It is still alive! It is a happy and vibrant tea tree!
The tea flavor is clear and light—the nectar-finish is beautiful and splendid. It has the fragrance of chrysanthemum and camphor, making one salivate to no end.
It is a tea that makes one smile, interacting with the innermost heart. Tea can cause one to enter dreams and doesn't want to wake up."
5. Chen, "The tea liquid is rich and sticky. Simply smelling it makes one feel numb. The light is coming in wave after wave."
6. Huang, "The tea *Qi* is strong. After the first steep it is as if the entire body has become shocked. The *Qi* shoots straight into the depth of my heart, to purge all impurities.
In comparison with the 1930's *Tong Xing* (同興) steeped before, this tea comes on fast and fierce as if wanting to shake one free of their deeper karmic debts."
7. The German, "It opened my heart entirely—all became clear, and there was a sensation of bright light."
8. Yeh, "While drinking the previously steeped 1930's *Tong Xing*, already I had so many experiences. By the time we got to the *One Hundred Year Oolong*, I felt as if my entire body was aglow, as if I suddenly was coming to know myself and suddenly I had found my way back home.
It is so miraculous and blissful—I did not want to come out of it."

◎The older the *One Hundred Year Old Taiwanese Oolong* is the more fragrant and valuable it will be. After opening the jar, the speed it transforms will be accelerated.

While drinking the 1930's *Tong Xing*, one still has mental awareness, it is on the subconscious level—one will automatically meditate and see the light within. If one could see light within, the level is already very high. *The One Hundred Year Oolong* is able to reach the level of transcendental consciousness—submerging into the universe. *Return to the Nascent Truth* in turn is able to reach the second layer of transcendental consciousness, and *the Ocean of Love* can reach the highest level of transcendental consciousness—wherein one's soul becomes purified.



(iv) Elixir of Immortality (不老丹)

A 1940's old cliff tea, the quality right from the early stage is superb. This tea is very well preserved and it is most unique. Although generally we will steep tea in a teapot, when the weather is cold one might boil this tea in a glass water kettle then serve it to many people to drink.

All teas that are called *elixir* will emit great heat in the body and are highly fortifying. *Longevity Elixir* and *Elixir of Immortality* are both fine examples of such *elixirs*.

☆ 1. Gao, "In the beginning there was the scent of winter squash, which then quickly turned to orchid fragrance.

The tea *Qi* is strong, and almost instantly I entered Trance. There appears a white light above the forehead and then all is white.

After coming around again, I investigated to see if the light source might have simply been a fluorescent light above my head. No, the position of the light is different.

This very bright white light carries me away. A flash of lightening and I am gone—very beautiful.

This tea has already transcended the level of mere tea, and language is unable to describe it."

2. Yeh, "A winter melon fragrance to start, it changes with great variety. Extremely clear and sweet, light and dainty, then it turns ever more soft and mild.

It is like a dream or an illusion—one easily enters dreams. There is nothing





more I can say about this steep of tea.”

- ◎ That’s strange, why would the *Elixir of Immortality* smell of winter squash? That a tea can reach this level is most extraordinary! Such fragrance elsewhere can only be found in Heaven. This tea is even higher than *Song Pin*. How is it that it could contain such a tremendous amount of energy? This is the first tea since the beginning of the tea meetings that no one wants to discuss. That we have given it this name is only because it genuinely achieves so high a level.

It truly is a most unusual tea—just too miraculous. There is absolutely nothing to compare it with. If one could drink this tea regularly, it would be a trouble without getting old.

The previous pot was a one hundred year old *Chen Yun Gui* (陳雲貴). The two are rather close to each other.

3. Xie, “*The Tao that can be described is not the true Tao*. If it can be described in words, then it is not that good. There is no need to critique about this tea!

Only in the end, did the fragrance of the rock rhythm appear. It is very strange. No matter how long we cook, still it does not turn to mush. This is a very exotic, special tea.”

4. Xheng, “Just smelling the *Qi* of the tea is enough. No need to taste it. There is no substance to it—just intoxicating—no goodness or evil either. Up above the sky, there are multiple layers of Heaven that is of no boundary. All the planets suspended in the sky none of them will collide, because they vibrate in harmony.

For the quiet soul, the flower within the heart will blossom and release its scent, allowing one to enjoy peace and be at ease.

A lonely mountain stands tall. It has a solitary beauty—free and being there. In the whole world, it has always been there.

To return to the inner spirit, it is so happy, so delightful, and so enjoyable!”

5. Chen, “Time stands still.”

6. Pan, “There is a constant rushing of *Qi* to the head, making one feel the urge to doze off. The entire body feels relaxed and unobstructed.

The feeling in the mouth is nectar-like, as if there were a honeycomb in the mouth, yet its sweetness flows without end.

The *Cliff Tea* liquor mixes with the saliva and creates a sensation in the mouth similar to the taste of nectar.

One feels that the entire body is very, very hot.”

7. Xie, “In these two steepings of tea, the tea’s nature, fragrance, flavor, and

Qi have reached the levels of *Truth*, *Virtue* and *Beauty* and *Return to the Nascent Truth*. In the past when tasting tea, I would always hear a sound next to my ear and also above my head, like that of celestial music. I never understood what exactly this sound was or what it meant. Today, I suddenly realized that this was the *sound of no sound*.

During the last trip, to Guangzhou and Guilin, my realization that *all creatures are in one* is more deepened. Today, after drinking *Chen Yun Gui* and *Elixir of Immortality*, I came to understand within trance that the language of the Universe is none other than this *sound of no sound*.

Amid the serene, I sent a signal to the Universe saying: '*Now I know the mind of Heaven and Earth. I want to merge into it. I am willing to listen attentively to the chorus of Heaven and Earth.*'

As if God was returning my message, I instantaneously received great inspiration and realization. Immediately I felt blissful, and wanted to exclaim: '*I know now. I understand!*'

In truth, it is not that there is no sound to the *sound of no sound*, rather it is the language of the Universe, of God.

This is not imagination; it is a genuine experience. In this moment I have come to realize how very coarse our language is, whereas the sound of no sound of the Universe is truly so very harmonious.

I can also now understand the reason and meaning what our president often said that, '*After drinking a good tea, every cell in one's body will laugh.*'; '*To enter the Tao through tea*'; '*To become One with the Universe.*' Now it seems that every cell in my body is filled with boundless bliss—a pleasant feeling that cannot be put into words.

Ever since I began participating in the tea meetings (starting from the third session), each time I have different experiences. Today was the first time that I truly understood what is meant by '*To enter the Tao through tea.*' Tea is my guide in returning to the Universe—making me feel as if a tiny droplet of water is returned to the vast ocean. Finally, I have come to realize the fountainhead source where I came from.

I also realized that, in fact each one of us on the earth are simply acting out our own individual role. Each and every one of us is a natural born actor. Each individual has a mission to accomplish. Actually we are all equal—there is no distinction between superior and inferior."

(Xie, overwhelmed with bliss, spoke slowly and continuously, sharing her heartfelt experience; everyone in the room was in complete silence.)

◎Our tea meeting is about sharing. Through sharing one can have so much more, but in truth, that which God has given us far surpasses anything we could have ever hoped for. This afternoon, I suddenly felt an inspiration—I



went and prepared a trophy. It was as if I could sense that today (the thirty-fifth tea session) someone would suddenly achieve the realm of the *Cha-Dao*—to truly realize, through tea-tasting, the spirit of *Tao* of Tea that we've been talking about. And it was as I expected. Therefore, I now present this award to Miss Xie.

The prize was a jar of *Elixir of Immortality*. Took hold with both hands, Miss Xie's face was pouring forth a clear and radiant smile. Before she could open her mouth to express her gratitude, what was a mute and motionless tearoom suddenly erupted with warm and enthusiastic applause—rushed towards the recipient. A warm current, a sense of exhilaration, swept through the hearts of everyone present.



(LEFT: To be awarded a gift of the *Elixir of Immortality*, there must surely be a good reason.)

(RIGHT: The first time someone achieved a real breakthrough and was awarded a trophy—the *Elixir of Immortality*.)

V. The Way of Finding Good Teas

We are looking for tea, not tripe.

To find tea, first we must find the right person, for after all we buy tea from a person—not simply buy tea from the trees themselves.

To find and buy tea from someone who knows how to find tea is the most efficient way for conserving time, effort, and money.

To buy tea from one who knows tea, and allowing him to be your quality controller, and your firewall, prevents you from buying bad tea, bogus tea, even overly expensive tea.

It is preferable to buy overly expensive tea, rather than bad tea. If you happen to buy a tea that is overpriced, you may have lost a little money, whereas you can take pleasure from tasting it. However, if you buy bad tea you can't taste it, give it away, nor throw it away. You become upset when you look at it and resent when you thought of it.

No matter how much of an expert or how astute a person is, to go in search of good tea is always tiring. No matter how much effort one takes, this is still the *method of accomplishing*.

In searching for good tea, one must first realize that while a person is looking for tea, tea is also looking for him. To let the tea find you might then be seen as the better option, and in fact is the ideal way. Once a desire stirs in one's heart, without endeavoring one would get it—all very naturally and appropriately. This is what is referred to as the *method of non-action*.

Why is it that a tea would look for someone? Because tea is itself a high level salient being—it has awareness and consciousness. A good tea's vibrational frequency is even more subtle than that of an ordinary person. Because of the theory that *like attracts alike and sound and Qi seeking each other*, it follows that fine tea will not go off in search of just anyone!

The civilization within determines the affinity a person has with tea. All things are subject to the laws of cause and effect. Those who have a highly developed *inner civilization*—regardless of their gender, age, social economic status, or religions—the level of their consciousness would not be low, and they also have a subtler vibrational frequency. They will naturally have the affinity to meet with or to taste good teas.

Inner civilization is up to each individual to foster and develop—to seek and pray for inwards. What you pray for inside will get it from outside.

What you sowed will bear the fruit in time. All problems are created by one's own self, and all solutions can likewise be found from one's own.

If you have already found the tea, or the tea has already found you, then what should be the next step?

Hang-Jia has two golden maxims you may take for consideration,

Be an emperor, not a custodian.

Share, for only by sharing can you possess even more.

Are these two lines really true? There is no need for explanation for a wise guy as you are—just do it.



If you think you are not smart enough, then why not give it a try—because *to practice is the sole criterion to examine the truth*. You will then get a right answer when the time is ripe.

Or perhaps, you will get two correct answers!



▲ Through sharing one can possess even more—a plate full of *Mou Dai Jin* (末代緊).





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Chapter 3

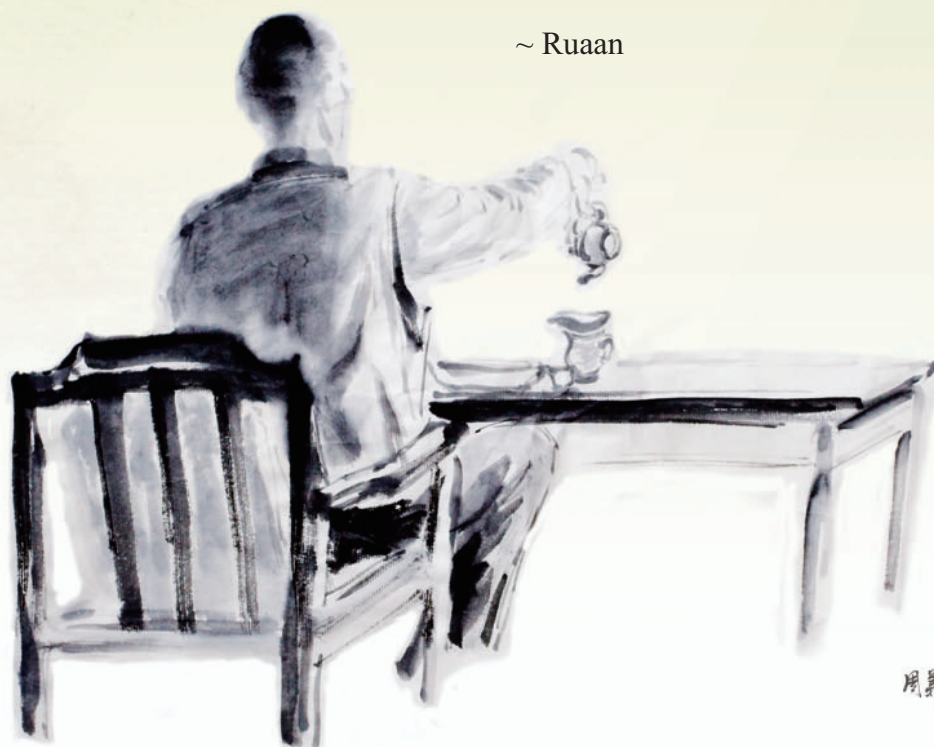
Verse of Tea Steeping

*Let me make a pot of good tea
To wash away the dust and toil of the day
During the day I was following the waves and drifting with the currents
At home, I want to return to myself*

*Let me make a pot of good tea
It is my true soul mate
It knows my heart completely
Its flavor answers me before I speak
It helps me listen closely to myself*

*Always during the night and in the early morning
I feel like making a pot of good tea
When I want to explore the secrets of the Universe
It always obliges me—
Sending you off to wander the realms of Light
Wishing you to hear the Currents of the Inner Voice
Oh, how it sacrifices itself
To accomplish you*

~ Ruaan



Tea Tasting— Connection with the Universal Energy

I. Turning the Energy Switch

We drink tea for its tea *Qi*. Tea *Qi* is a type of energy, and through its assistance we can very quickly open the energy switch within the body, thereby connecting with the Universal energy (the *Qi* that permeates the Universe 浩然之氣). Via this energy, we may purify, uplift, and merge ourselves with nature and the Universe, becoming one with the Universe. This is the shared goal of all those who are seeking *Cha-Dao*.

For us, only to be able to connect with the energy of the Universe is truly the *Cha-Dao*.

Searching for tea, buying tea, steeping tea, tasting tea, all of these are done with this purpose.

(i) The Universe, the Human Body and the Arena of Energy

The Earth upon which we live is a very minute portion of the greater energy field of the Universe; likewise each of us is a tiny portion of the energy field of the Earth.

The Universe is vast, boundless, and full of unsolved mysteries. We do know, however, that the Universe we live in is made up of matter, and that matter is a form of energy. From the point of view of modern science, $E=MC^2$ —*energy does not vanish; material and energy can be interchanged*. Matter is a form of energy that exists in the form of waves—it is the condensation of energy.

There are numerous types of energy in the Universe. The particles exist in different sizes and masses. Energy has no form, but it has the potential of existing in the form of *quantum waves*. In other words, energy is a kind of formless electrical current?, but under the guidance of *will*? it has the potential to take on any form.

Everywhere within the material Universe, there is inherent energy, from large scale such as planets, mountains, and rivers to minuscule forms as small as flying creatures, aquatic animals and plants. Of all natural and man-made objects, none are beyond the scope of energy. One may say that throughout the universe there is an abundance of energy. It is simply a question of how to connect, convert, or to release the energy within to get to use it.

The human body itself is an energy field, an aura field, or an



electromagnetic field. A living organism at all times has an aura field around its entire body, and at every moment is radiating different levels of vibrational frequency—emitting lights or shields of various combinations of colors. Researchers call it a magnetic field or aura field.

According to the perspective of modern *Energy Medicine*, “*Energy is the common medium of the body, mind, and soul. Its wavelength, vibrational frequency, and the fluctuation pattern, make up the shared lexicon; just as the rise and fall of melodies and beats constitute the lexicon of music.*” The human body can emit (release) energy (set of frequencies) outwards through the energy centers (at least seven) of the body. The body can also absorb or exchange with the external or the Universal energy through these energy centers.



◀ Taking tea



(ii) The Tea Qi and Material Waves

Matter is a type of energy that exists in the form of vibration (frequency). Each object has a different material wave—the subtler the material wave, the stronger the energy of the object. Tea is a material that contains energy within—each has its own material wave.

The strength of energy contained in a fine tea is strong. Its vibrational frequency is subtle, and the material wave is quite different. An expert will know whether the vibrational frequency is coarse or fine simply by drawing his hand near the tea leaves (even when the object is still, it is giving off material wave), or holds it up and smells the tea *Qi*. The most skilled expert, by a simple glance can know by heart whether a tea is high or low in quality, because he can sense the degree of subtlety of its material wave.

Good tea is of fine quality and pure. After being aged and purified for some time, what is left is even the essence. Originally it is a solid object, but after being steeped at a high temperature, it pours out as a liquid. The fragrance that then spills out all over as a vapor. The fragrance enters directly into the blood circulating system via the respiratory system. The tea liquid also enters the bloodstream through the digestive system, whereas the *Qi* circulates and moves throughout the Meridians of the body—reaching up to the head and down to the four limbs.

They can stabilize, balance, and activate neural transmission system of the body—helping to fortify the immune system.

When tea evolves to a certain level, it itself becomes a type of energy, especially those aged more than one hundred years—the energy and subtlety has already evolved to having the same force of vibration of the high level planets. Teas aged more than one hundred and twenty years are very difficult to describe using any earthly language.

After drinking a good tea, germs have no chance of getting close to us when we have very strong *Qi*, because our energy is stronger. Good tea can even be left in a cup for ten days without deteriorating. All harmful bacteria cannot easily survive within it. When the energy is stronger, all bacteria, hazardous fungus cannot easily survive inside. Hence fine tea can be preserved for a long time. That's why after drinking tea, toxins cannot easily penetrate the body and disease can be healed. When one just catches cold, the virus will be driven off upon drinking tea.

According to scientific analysis, a tea leaf contains in it at least two hundred chemicals or more. However, what we emphasize is the energy (vitality) of the tea. This is far more important than the nutrients present. If a fruit or vegetable is kept in the refrigerator, its composition does not change, however its level of vitality is damaged—its energy is depleted, and the benefits of eating it are greatly reduced.

An energy field surrounds our bodies, but due to the effects of mental stress, we become affected by large amounts of the force of Yin (negative energy), which in turn saps us of energy, and therefore starts weakening us. Actually, if a tea drinker is able to remain relaxed, then the tea *Qi* will not dissipate—because energy will not vanish. All the bad bacteria, including cancer cells, is impossible to disperse within the body. It is our own negative thoughts and minds, which make us be affected by the force of Yin.

The force of positivity (positive energy) is the force that is closer to Yang. It helps to relax the body, making one feel light and refreshed. When drinking tea, one very naturally relaxes, which allows all force of Yin being expelled. Whilst relaxing, one's frequency becomes finer and his face becomes brighter—that is because the force of Yang is stronger. It will pull one up to a higher level, and one sees the Lights and hears the Sounds from within.

The so-called *Cha-Dao* is to enter into this state of consciousness. Later, when we leave this world, we can follow this force of vibration back to the fountainhead—therefore it can be called *Cha-Dao*.

What is meant by *energy does not vanish*? When we brew tea, a positive mind enters into the tea plate and tea ware—we infuses with it positive energy. After a certain period of time, any tea made with the tea plate and tea ware will



surely be very pleasant to drink, because the tea plate and the tea ware have already absorbed lots of positive energy.

If we are in a place where the energy field is ill, our entire bodies will feel uncomfortable. This is because the place all day long is home to talk of misdeeds—inside there is more force of Yin. Therefore one will feel uncomfortable throughout the entire body after entrance.

Therefore, energy can cure all diseases. It can change the fate of human beings. We must, therefore keep our bodies at the status of high level of energy at all times, so that negative parts could be reversed into a left-spiraling wave—that is the energy wave of the Universe. The energy of the Universe is in a counterclockwise spiraling wave; the force of Yin is a clockwise turning wave. It is this clockwise turning wave that makes one sick.

Therefore, drinking good tea gives one protection against the invasion of all toxins. If one drinks tea regularly it will also keep one in good health. If one is having diarrhea owing to careless food intake, as soon as one drinks a high level tea immediately it will stop. The higher the level of the tea, the greater will be its strength—sleeping time decreases, still feeling alert and energetic even with only four or five hours of sleep. Because one could fill up energy while relaxing, there is no need to sleep so long at night.

Of course, elevating our spirituality is the most important goal for tasting tea. In the end, everyone finds his or her way back to the spiritual homeland.

All things in the Universe are of material waves—they are all connected originally. It is because we are not truly settled down that we separate them apart and think they are different. Actually, the coarse or fine frequency of the bodily material wave is associated with our mind. The more one's heart is settled down, the subtler the material wave will be. Just as with tea, the older the tea, the subtler its material wave, and the higher level it attains.

High or low level of spirituality is a matter of adjusting one's own vibration frequency.

(iii) Feeling the Tea's Molecules and the Fineness of Its Energy

Only when one's own bodily and spiritual density is very subtle, can one sensitively feel the subtle density of the Universal energy, and merge and become one with it. It has a lot to do with one's own self if one cannot sense the subtlety of the molecules and energy within the tea—because each person has a different body type, and the degree of purity of his or her own spirit is different.

If one desires to know the subtlety of a tea's *Qi*, at present, one has to rely upon his or her own *evidence by heart*. When one is receptive to the *Qi* of the Universe, and the whole body becomes acutely sensitive, then very naturally one

will know.

One cup of tea down the gullet, a person's life, habits, and all things that dwell deep within the inner realm will be transparent. Your frequency will reveal it—that is a kind of frequency, a thing that is very natural. Therefore, it is not one's outward appearance, but the good or evil thoughts dwell within their very deep layer, that a person whose spiritual practice has attained a certain level will be able to sense it.



◀ Teapot of Standing Lion
—Ming Dynasty

(iv) How Does One Connect With the Energy of the Universe

The human body is an energy field—it is constantly either radiating into or absorbing from the *energy field of the Universe*. All living beings are like this. The energy of the Universe is very fine. Only when the force of vibration of a body's energy field (frequency group) is tuned to be subtle, can one then easily connect with the energy of the Universe. Good teas and old teas are the perfect media for adjusting, transporting, and converting in the middle.

This is the key point in tasting tea for *Cha-Dao*—rather than pursuing the color, fragrance or flavor of a tea and the joy of the body and mind.

When our bodies emit a frequency that is the same with the Universal energy or in harmonic vibration frequency, we could induce a *resonance* of vibration or *coherent consonance*. In this we gain the energy of the Universe. Through the assistance of good teas or old teas, we can very quickly relax, become detached, discharge impurities, and expel negative energy. In tuning up the subtlety of our vibrational frequency, we come to connect with the subtler and finer energy in the Universe—to come to vibrate in consonance and synchronize with it—to keep purifying and elevating our spirituality.

The energy of the Universe is none other than a type of light—a force of vibration that is subtler. When the mind truly calms down, one can connect. It is only when one is relaxed can one be connected—it is already being connected when the mind is calmed.



II. Improving the Quality of the Tea liquor

Tasting tea is inseparable from the tea liquor. One should therefore, to the best of one's ability and as much as circumstances allow, work to improve the quality of the tea liquid, thus obtaining good energy.

(i) The Eight Vital Points Concerning to the Tea liquor

A good tea liquor has a fragrance that is pure and nature. The liquor color should be clear and gorgeous. The flavor should be refreshing—pure and thick. The tea leaves should be bright and supple, containing much positive energy. It will greatly benefit all the ears, eyes, mouth, and nose—bodily and spiritually.

Tea, tea utensils, water, flame, time, space, skill, and the individual are the eight principal factors that determine whether a liquor will be of a high or low quality. These are collectively referred to as the *eight vital points of tea liquid*. If one can fully control these eight factors, it is then not impossible to brew a tea drink that is perfect or even above.

A good tea liquid is not determined by any single factor or even a set of factors, but is the total sum of all these factors that either deteriorates or enhances the outcome. Just as when we hear a piece of music, the sound our ears hear is not merely determined by the performers and the musical instruments, but by a whole host of factors within the listening environment as they interact with each other.

In steeping tea, there are at least eight important factors that are involved. The way each of these factors is controlled will contribute to the outcome of the tea soup. Therefore, if one wants to steep out the full inner beauty and the highest potential of a good tea, the tea steeper should possess a good overall understanding of these *eight vital points of tea soup*, and try to master them step by step.

These eight vital factors had already been recognized by people previously,

▼ The beauty of a tea drink



and have been scrutinized in depth. However, it is very rare that any one person is able to realize all of them deeply, to wield them and to progress with time. Here we offer some new inventions or new concepts which either were not mentioned or not explained clearly before.

(ii) Silver Tea-ware and a Set of Tea Tasting Cups

The tea wares that have the most influence on the liquor are the teapot, water kettle, pitcher, and teacups. All of these come into direct contact with the water or the liquor, therefore the material it is made of is of the utmost importance—because material determines the overall effect.

Different materials will give off different material waves. Its effect is reciprocal to the squared distance, which will have significant effects on the water, tea soup, as well as foods.

Gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, glass, bamboo, wood, earthenware, porcelain and stainless steel are all materials commonly used for tea ware. Any use of paints, stains, electroplating and the like, the materials and characteristic are all different. These will all directly affect the water and liquor. A tea lover should know how to choose his tea ware carefully, and to be good at wielding them.

The ancients already knew that for tea ware, gold and silver are the best. However, being expensive metals, they were not widely used. Nowadays technology is well developed, and most people are able to afford to have tea wares made of expensive metals. Therefore, silver tea ware should be more common in addition to earthenware and porcelain. The price of silver, although higher than copper, iron, and stainless steel, is still only about one-twentieth the price of gold. There are also many advantages to using silver tea ware.

The ancients never did reveal clearly what was so good about silver utensils. In the year 2005, a Taiwanese manufacturer produced the *Cha-Dao Energy Pot*. It is based on the two main *iron laws* of Jian—the *iron law of silver objects* and the *iron law of silver pot*. It makes use of exceedingly pure silver (above .995 percent). As far as function is concerned, it presses to the limits of what is possible to be gained from using silver utensils. When using the *Cha-Dao Energy Pot*, microelements come into effect. Negative silver ions emit continuously, and the tea liquid becomes clear, sweet, and delicate. The fragrance becomes pure and is embellished. Astringency decreases and the rhythm are long lasting and charged with vitality. The tea it steeps is delicious and can be steeped for a very long time. It has all the advantages of enhancing, as well as economic—being able to be preserved as an heirloom, so it is a boon for tea lovers.

A *tea-tasting cup set* consists of a smelling cup and sipping cup. The *smelling cup* is used specifically for appreciating the tea's fragrance. It must have an appropriate shape, thickness and depth—only then can it retain heat, catch the



fragrance, and display it properly. A good tea exhibits a wide variety of flavors, some of them earthly, others divine. Smelling a good fragrance can make one laugh or make one drunk—it is truly a great enjoyment. If one tastes good tea without smelling its fragrance, it is tantamount to wasting half of the tea. A fine smelling cup is therefore a must. It is also essential that the *smelling cup*'s shape and volume be in proper proportion to the *sipping cup*.

It is preferable for the inside of the sipping cup to be white. Ideally, the inside of the cup should be shaped like a semi-sphere. The thickness of the cup walls should be appropriate (could be different according to the seasons). The mouth of the cup should spread outward—it is not suitable that they be erect upwards. One should also choose well the source of the clay, and the heat of the kiln that is used to fire off impurities. One must also be concerned with the use of a natural mineral glazing material. The cup walls should be flat, smooth and delicate without any craters. As for the exterior of the cup, any drawing or calligraphy is left up to free creation, however these should only be considered after the previous criteria have been met.

A *tea-sipping cup set* is a new invention that has appeared in Taiwan within the last twenty years. Owing to the turns of history, the modern Chinese *tea art* prospers in Taiwan; there has in recent years been a great resurgence in the culture of tea tasting on both sides of the straits. Today, a new *Cha-Dao* has emerged out of Taiwan, one that finds its origins in the great traditional tea culture of China, but at the same time offers its own innovations, new spirit, and new aspects—all the while reflecting the Taiwanese's passion and love for the Chinese traditions.

(iii) Appreciating Water and Testing Pot for Water



The tea drink is made up of ninety-nine percent water—water is the body of the tea liquor. The ancients said, “*If the water is not pure, the essence of a tea cannot be revealed.*” When steeping tea, a ten-point tea paired with eight-point water, yields only an eight-point tea liquor.

Mountain springs, glacial water, water from the middle of a river, fragrant

spring water, and the like cannot be obtained all the time. It is only necessary to have water of good quality for steeping teas in daily life.

In modern times, tap water is common. Therefore all that one need do is buy the proper water filtration equipment, and thus secure a supply of good water. If one knows how to further handle their water—for example by using a silver energy pot. Letting the water flow over minerals or jewels, letting it listen to good music, receiving good vibrations and frequencies, etc. Then the quality of the tea water will be further improved. In this way, one is able to prepare good water at home.

Research done by Masura Emoto of Japan has shown that good water is simply water with finery molecules (water of clustered micro-molecules). Once frozen and photographed, such water displays beautiful hexagonal shaped crystal formations. It is even suggested that water is able to store, carry, and convey messages; and water can listen to music, and even responds to written words. A person's consciousness could also affect water. Therefore, *water is the mirror of the soul*. Experiments have shown that the energy created by love, gratitude, prayers, and blessings can all be fused into water—to improving and uplifting ordinary water.

The Earth has life; plants have both life and consciousness. Water also has consciousness—it knows what is good and what is bad.

The Earth's water originally comes from outer space. For billions of years the cosmos brought earth water without end, and within it came organic matter. Water is the mother of life. It is also the mother of tea liquids.

Lao-tzu said, "*Water is almost the Tao itself*"—this is because the quality of water is submissive; it does not strive or compete. *Full of wisdom, it advances by retreating*. Without discrimination, it *commands* all beneath Heaven by its soft power. It is the benefactor of all living beings and inanimate objects, continuously giving of itself with affection. Water is the closest object to *Tao*. To know what this really means, even though the Earth right now has not yet faced the difficulty of lack of water, one should be reverent and respect towards water.

In one of Ban-Qiao's poems, "*The celebrated scholars can always judge*



▲ Water tasting cups. The water in each cup is of different colors.



water. Since old times, monks of high attainments have loved to duel with tea.” A tea lover must also love water. To appreciate tea, one must first learn to appreciate and critique water. Whether natural water, tap water, or other type of water, as long as one knows the method, one can always test, sample, and distinguish the water prior to drink in the long run, and to be used for tea steeping. There is no need to always be dependent, and there may not have time to wait for technological test outcomes.

1. Judging the quality of the water

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Cup set | Use 2-3 identical white ceramic cups (such as tasting cups) or glass cups, comparing them under the same conditions and at the same time. |
| Observe the color | Due to the ingredients in the water, the muddiness (level of being crystalline and transparent) and hue (the colors that are reflected) in water will be slightly different. |
| Tasting and drinking | <p>Pour water into the cups, then after fifteen seconds, taste and compare.</p> <p>First drink some water to rinse the mouth, close the eyes and settle the heart, then drink from the cups one at a time.</p> <p>Whether in small or large mouthfuls, each sip should remain in the mouth for a few seconds. Allow the water to roll on the tip of the tongue, flow off the surface of the tongue and across the sides of the cheeks, and finally swallowing it through the throat. The water’s relative softness or hardness, sweetness or bitterness, smoothness or astringency, coarseness or fineness of the molecules, as well as the presence of abnormal impure flavors and whether or not it has energy can all be roughly tested.</p> |

As long as one can settle the heart and mind, any time is suitable for critiquing water, though the best times would be right after washing in the early morning hours, or after bathing in the evening.

Tasting water makes use of far more than just the mouth and the tongue. One must also taste with his heart.

2. Water judging criteria**Level of cleanliness**

It should be clear and bright, translucent but not absolutely see through. There should be minute quantities of minerals in the water—if there are nothing at all, then it becomes pure water, which may not necessarily be good to the taste, nor does it meet all the needs of the body.

Level of natural sweetness The sweetness of water should be natural; moreover the level of sweetness should be pronounced. It is better to be with a higher level of energy.

Delicacy

Upon entering the mouth, one will feel the coarseness or fineness of the water molecules similar to the quality of sound from an audio system. Water with a more delicate mouth-feel is superior. When testing water, very slowly fill the cup (tasting cup). By observing the fullness of water as it swells of the cup, one can gauge the level of surface tension. Generally speaking, the water molecules with greater molecular intensity are denser and more intricate.

Level of refreshment

This not necessarily means the high or low temperature of the water. Basically this is the feeling of coolness that one feels in the body after drinking it down. Good water wakes up the brain, clears the eyes, and makes one feel as if they have entered the cool and refreshing zone. In the summer, while fetching mountain spring water, some water feels as cold as ice to the touch, and produces much condensation on the container used to carry it, as with a glass bottle not long taken out of the fridge. Generally, this means that the spring flows rather deep, through thicker layers of the earth and as such its temperature is lower. The earth, which makes it more pure as well, has naturally filtered this water—it contains more trace of minerals, and



therefore is more delicious to drink.

Level of vitality

In other words the quality of being alive. Living water from the fountainhead is fresh and vital. If kept for a long time, water becomes old—loses oxygen—and its level of vitality drops. Lacking the essence of vitality which is not ideal either to drink on its own or steeped into tea, will be all unsatisfactory.

Force of vibration

That is energy. Good water has energy and upon drinking it, one will feel the body grow hot as it is being re-supplied with vital *Qi*. The water from Beijing's Xiang Shan for example, is rich in potency, and upon drinking it the palms will sweat. This probably has to do with the magnetic field and the *Qi* at the location of the spring.

Penetrating force

Good water has a great strength in penetrating force (permeability). The penetrating force of water has to do with the size of its molecules, the shape, density, and arrangement, the ingredients of the quantities of minerals, levels of oxygen, and the influence of the earth's magnetic field. Water that has great penetrating force, draws out many more elements into the tea soup, expands the fragrance, and enhances the endurance of the tea leaves. The fragrance of good water seeps into the cracks of one's teeth, and one feels moved inside. Such good water is truly hard to come by. The force of vibration and penetration is associated with delicacy as well.

Fragrant or not

The ancients, when speaking of springs, already knew that they must be *clear*, *sweet*, *crystal-clear*, and *alive*. Gao Lian (高濂) of the Ming Dynasty said that the rarest of springs is the *fragrant spring*. Its water is naturally fragrant; when held in both hands you can smell its fragrance, and upon entering the mouth it is again fragrant and

sweet. It is said that in Hu Bei Province there is *fragrant soil* at *Shen Nong Gia*. The soil has five colors, each type giving off its own unique fragrance. This must surely be sacred ground to have a fragrant spring.

Good water is clean, sweet, fine, and refreshing. It is rich in vitality, and with subtle vibrational frequency and strong force of penetration, and it even has a pleasing natural fragrance. One might suggest that good people and saints will also possess these qualities.

3. Water testing pot

Through this water testing method, one can discern if a pot is suitable for brewing tea, or alternately, which of two pots is better. Whether in a teapot, water kettle, pitcher, or teacup, fill the vessel with the same water one uses for making tea. Three minutes later, remove the water then drink it side by side with the water from the original supply. If the water tested tastes less pleasant, then it means the brewing vessel has made the water poorer.

When testing two pots or two containers, fill each with water from the same source, then after three minutes pour out the water and compare the two. The superior pot will be the one whose water tastes more satisfying. In testing more than two pots at one time, the process remains the same.

If the composition of the two vessels is different, then the material vibration will be different—the effect on physical changes and chemical reactions will naturally be different.

Using this simple method, one can very quickly and without cost knowing the relative superiority or inferiority of tea vessels made from different materials or even the superior ones made of the same material. An example of this is the *Cha-Dao energy pot*, which is far superior to many of the other silver pots we have tested. The water that passes through the energy pot results in tea that is purer, sweeter, rounder, more embellished, and is less astringent with a long-lasting rhythm. It also becomes deeper, broader, natural, clear and noble, and there is energy with it.

As for the rock mineral pots that have appeared in recent years, the difference in the mixture of materials used in their construction varies widely from one manufacturer to the next, and as such their quality varies widely. One can also test them using this simple method.

As for iron pots, the great poet Su Dong Po said long ago, “*Copper reeks, iron is astringent, and neither is fit for spring water.*” Speaking in modern language, if one boils water in copper or iron pots, then copper and iron ions will



be released into the water. These minerals will react with the tea and produce phenol through oxidization, and generate hydrogen peroxide, which results in the green tea itself becoming an oxidization agent, producing live free radicals that will affect one's health.

It is said that “*man is the highest of all creatures*”, “*All Creation may be attaining in oneself*”. In light of this, tea-lovers should work to develop their inner potential, enhance their sensitivity, trust in their own judgment, and learn through exchanging views with others on the same path.



▲ Teapots used at Hang-Jia

(iv) Hidden Fire and the Flame

“*It is said that cooking of tea is in the cooking of the water,*” and “*Living water requires living fire to cook it.*” Here, *living fire* means natural fire that has actual flames, specifically a charcoal burning fire—it is explicit fire.

A good fire is stable, evenly distributed, and has force of penetration. Its heat is easy to adjust, is safe, and emits no unpleasant odors. A charcoal burning fire meets these requirements and, if one's situation accommodates it, one could still enjoy the pleasure of living spring water cooked on a living flame.

Most of us however live in a world where mountain springs and old wells have long been replaced by tap water, and visible flames have given way to hidden fire resulting from electricity generated by wind, water, thermal, and nuclear reactors. Now, for most of us to cook tea using coals or pine branches has come to be something of an extravagance.

The most common heating sources in homes these days are electricity and gas. Gas is a natural fire and has a potent enough flame, but it smells, creates carbon monoxide, and is not ideal to be used indoors for a long time.

Boiling water with electric power is convenient, clean, economical, and is a good way in compromise. Still one must be aware of the following points:

1. Use of an electric oven or microwave oven should be avoided. The electromagnetic waves or microwaves emitted by the products currently on the market all have too high a level of radiation, and their prolonged usage is harmful to the human body. Practical experiences of the body reveal this. However, some research reports still inform you that these are harmless.
2. Electric stoves emit less radiation in electromagnetic waves, some could be as low as 0.1mG or less, and using them over prolonged period is much safer. Furthermore, electric stoves do not restrict the type of water kettle that can be used. Silver, mineral-sand, earthenware, and glass pots can all be used.
3. Electric products create a magnetic wave that spins clockwise. Using a **magnet radiation reverter** can reverse this. Alternately, one might change the direction of the power outlet and then test the spin direction of the magnetism using an *energy rod*. One can test the results of the water often boiled, and judge the results for himself.

Water treatment methods and heating processes will continue to be developed and improved upon. In order to keep up with the time, one can make use of whatever technologies are available, deciding for himself which methods are most suited to his needs.



When boiling water, one must be critical about the flame. The ancients had discussed a lot about this. Here we only outline a few points:

1. When boiling water, one should use a large flame, cooking the water quickly.
Slow burning fires and prolonged boiling times will cause the water to de-oxygenate, and with this the level of vitality in the tea liquid will suffer. If one uses water from pressurized kettles or from water machines that heat water and keep it warm over a long period of time, their tea liquor will similarly have a mature, over-cooked taste to it.
2. Almost all teas require boiling water to fully steep them out. When boiling water, one must pay attention to the flame. The ancients have laid down the following stages of boiling water: (1) Baby soup is where the water that has just started to boil (Crab-eye sized bubbles are born. At this time the soup is tender and its steeping strength is weak.) The next level of boiling is that of strong soup. (At this stage, fish-eye sized bubbles are born, and waves appear on the surface of the water in anticipation of a rolling boil.) The final stage is the rolling boil, where this rollicking water becomes soundless. When the soup is over-cooked, it is called *old soap*.



Old soap has been over boiled and its flavor has been changed. When used to steep tea, it lacks all signs of vitality. One should be flexible and adjust to the practical situation when steeping tea.

3. From one generation to the next, tea manufacturing methods, tea utensils, ways in tasting, and pursuing goals all keeps on changing. The specific criteria regarding the soup and boiling times are not always the same. Even today the art of tea is evolving all the time. As such, it is not possible to expect to be practiced in all the same way.

When steeping tea, one must consider the variety of the tea, how it is made, the thickness of the leaves, the degree of fermentation, year, the conditions of storage, and the tea ware that will be used to steep it. One can determine at what temperature the water should be cooked at, and to what extent it should be boiled. Basically, if the result is good then the method was correct.

4. *“Cold water, slow-steeped tea will emit the fragrant slowly.”* But this method can only be used with green teas, or teas that have a low level of fermentation.

One must also keep in mind that:

First, cold tea can easily harm the stomach, causing phlegm, so one should consider the season, temperature, body type, and the current state of the body before deciding whether or not to drink cold-steeped tea. It is also not recommended to drink cold teas in the long term.

Second, truly high-level teas are not suitable to be steeped in cold water, because cold steeping will not fully release the tea's high level of fragrance, exotic fragrance, and magnificent fragrance. That would be a pity.

5. Even within the family of green tea, some green teas must be flushed with one hundred degree boiling water. For example, *Guan Yin Wang* (觀音王) has thick tea leaves. The texture is dense and fine, and is very tightly knotted. There are also the *Red* and *White Eagles*, the sacred teas of Tibet that grow wild at very high altitudes. If these are not steeped with boiling water, their full fragrances will not be revealed.

Even with teas that require a low temperature steeping, the water can first be brought to a high temperature and then made to cool down quickly using various methods.

Overall, all things in this world have guiding principles, but there are no laws that are carved in stone. As long as one understands the basic principles and can make necessary adjustments to settle down separately, the one that could yield a good result is the right one. There is no need to cling dogmatically to any fixed method.

The truly key point is, whether old or new, pretty or ugly, exalted or commonplace, whatever tea leaf, tea jar, tea pot, boiling water or tea liquor that one has to work with, all must have *positive energy*. This is so that when one uses it or drinks from it, it will enhance and not deplete the energy from the body.

How then can one tell if a cup of water or an item of tea ware carries with it positive not negative energy? There is a simple and effective method through which one can test this. This method is called the *O Ring Test* method. When using the *O Ring Test* method, one can also combine it with the method of *testing pot for water*. To test a utensil (such as silver pot) oneself to see whether the energy is positive or negative, to test for the strength, and to decide on which level it is.

As long as most people know the methods of appreciating water, testing pot for water, and the *O Ring Test*, they are equipped with the ability to differentiate between good or bad a given item is. By that time, fake and inferior products on the market will significantly decrease, and items will then be made of better and better quality. Positive competition in pursuit of beauty is the positive driving force for advancements of the whole society.



▲ Zhu Ni pot, Qian Long Era

(v) The Host, Tea Guests, and Number of Participants

Of the buying, steeping, and tasting of tea, the main character and the one that is movable, is the personnel involved. The most important component of the *eight vital points of tea soup* is *individuals*.

The influence that the participants have over the tea liquor can be described in two aspects:

First, the affinities the hosts have with teas vary from person to person. The tea leaves they buy and collect, the tea articles they use, their skill in steeping tea (including the ability to gauge tea amounts, water temperature, flames, boiling and steeping times, and many other special techniques), the atmosphere they create at the tea table, and the way they control the process in the session, are unique to each individual. All of these factors



will influence the liquor.

Under the same conditions, the same tea prepared by different people will be very different.

It is the one who is holding the pot in steeping tea. However, the vibrational frequency emitted by different people is different. One's inherited abilities, dietary habits, and the level of consciousness he or she is at when preparing tea, will all affect the fineness and the strength of the emitted frequency. From the way one holding the pot, inserting the tea leaves, pouring the water, to the way of pouring the tea, the gesture one has with the extended arm all is acting like a *lightning rod*. The mouth of a pot is also a protruding tip, and likewise acts as a *lightning rod*. Therefore, the tea-steeper's own frequency will inject directly into the teapot or pitcher, and affect the tea liquid. So the tea host's level of spiritual cultivation will become an important factor to the outcome of the tea drink. That's the reason why the tea liquid of the same tea leaves steeped by different people will reveal the personal style, character, mood, and the mind.

Second, the number of participants

While there is only one who is steeping tea, the number of tea tasters could be more than one. As the number of people varies, the level of difficulty in steeping tea, the amusement, and the atmosphere will also be different.

The ancients tell us that: *"To sip tea alone is detached. To have a guest is better than alone. When there are three or four people together it is called amusement. When there are five or six people it is called polite company, and when seven or eight people it is called charity."* (On Tea by Tu Long, Ming Dynasty) Good tea should be shared. However, one should also cultivate a good habit by regularly steeping and drinking tea alone. In the serene night or in early morning, to steep tea and to sip alone can find the essence. While alone, one can quietly interact with the spirit of the tea. Treat this as a kind of self-cultivation homework. At such times, the quality of the liquor is completely self-determined. In the silent dialogue with tea, one will be purified and elevated, and gain new realizations consistently.

When two or more people taste tea together, the performance of the tea liquor will be affected by the frequency of the tea guests. When there are many people and it is noisy; when their levels are not the same; when they are gossiping; when they are fond of arguing; the frequency will be in disorder and coarse. The quality of the liquor is immediately lowered. Conversely, with like-minded, like-spirited people who share the same goal, talking joyfully and positively; become silent and at ease when tasting tea; tea friends all concerned with the *Tao*; and good companions for approaching the *Tao* together, under such conditions, the way the tea

performs will surely be a pleasant surprise. The tea host should understand the tea guests, and the tea guests should likewise try to act in harmony with the tea host—both indulge in the joys of tea tasting and accomplish each other.

Therefore, the more people present and the more heterogeneous, the greater will be the difficulty in steeping out a good tea, and the more the attainment of skills of the steeper is tested. Large scale tea banquets have been common place since ancient times. However one such as the *Cha-Dao Journey to Wu Yi Mountain*, where one man makes tea for more than seventy people for *tea tasting*, and yet the quality of the liquor remains unblemished and even more than perfect, was never heard of before.

III. The Mysteries of Five Elements Tea (五行茶)

If you want to very quickly connect with the energy of the Universe, to conserve good tea, and to fully utilize the potential of its energy, then you must not fail to understand the *Five Elements Tea*.

(i) Mixing Teas—The other half of Cha-Dao

That the *spiritual tea meetings* could be carried off successfully is not merely a matter of having good tea and knowing how to steep it. To steep a full one hundred-point tea liquid, it is at best fifty percent of the Cha-Dao, another fifty percent based on being able to make all the cells in the bodies of each tea taster relax totally and vibrate harmoniously. This is the most difficult aspect within the Cha-Dao and the most technical part.

Teas have their own characters in much the same way as people have different body type—some may be treated slowly, some may need to be taken care of immediately, all are different. Depending on individual needs, the practical situations, and the process of the tea session, the tea steeper must be able to steep or to mix certain combinations of the teas to suit the specific needs at the time.

An ideal tea host must not only be able to steep tea, he must also be able to understand the body types of each of the tea guests and individual needs. It is up to him to regulate the atmosphere of the tea meeting, using the tea to adjust the frequency of the session to enter into peace and tranquility. At the end of the tea meeting he must further be able to mix a pot of tea liquor that will ignite or induce the stored up energy within each of the tea guests' bodies, to elevate every spirit to find his or her way back to the spiritual homeland.

To be able to mix such tea needs to be under certain circumstances, and there is philosophy behind it. It should be the *Five Elements Teas*.



(ii) A Brief Introduction to Five Elements Tea

Based on Yin-Yang and the *Five Elements* theory, *Five Elements Tea* makes use of two to five good teas (mainly *Puerh*, more than five are exceptional) to generate different varieties of formulas, in order to display the energy of the five elements present within each tea. The varieties of the *Five Elements Teas* are truly miraculous. One can truly experience from the teas the philosophy of the Yin-Yang and the *Five Elements* the Chinese speak about.

The theory and practice of both of the Yin-Yang and the *Five Elements* are rather delicate and complicated. They are concepts that present another way of looking at the world that has its own systematic logic. However, all one needs to know for the purpose of making a *Five Elements Tea* is a basic understanding of the principles and evolution of the complement of the Yin and Yang and the compositions of the *Five Elements*,

“One Yin and one Yang is the so-called Tao. Yin on its own will not give birth to life, nor will Yang alone to grow. When things progress into extremes they will surely turn around on themselves. In this way, extreme Yang gives birth to Yin, and extreme Yin gives birth to Yang. Yang is rigid and hard, while Yin is soft and gentle. Softness will invariably overcome hardness. The compositions of the Five Elements can be classified as inherent or formed a posterior. There is a difference between the order that was formed and the present order. The Five Elements also complement and counteract with each other, which is different from composition and evolution.”

The basic theory behind Yin and Yang and the *Five Elements* is not difficult to understand. What is difficult is applying this knowledge accurately to the identification of the elemental characters of each of the teas, and mixing them to make a Five Elements Tea. A fine tea should achieve a proper balance between the elements. Only then is it perfect and complete.

Each tea has its own character. It is revealed both in the tea itself or the *Qi* and flavor of the tea drink. The character of a tea can be classified as Yin and Yang. Yang teas are hard, vital and vigorous, uplifting, drying and hot. Yin teas are soft, steady, calm, settled, and cool. This is easy to differentiate. When the tea liquid hits the mouth, one can more or less know whether a tea is Yin or Yang.

How to determine which of the *Five Elements* are contained within a particular tea?

This is hard to explain. One can only taste the tea and determine based on the feeling of the body. For instance, if one steeps two pots of tea in succession, the first carrying the attribute of wood, and the second fire, after comparing them the outline becomes more obvious. How is it that a tea can be deemed to possess an

element such as wood or fire? This cannot be described. It is a feeling that comes from within—because the element of wood inside the body will come out to have a dialogue with the wood that is in the tea.

However, one might take as reference the following three methods in identification:

1. In sensing the features of the tea *Qi* circulating within the body. The element of wood rises straight up and expands. The fire element is a blazing dry heat. The earth element gathers in the center of the body and carries with it certain weightiness. The metal element is hard, solid, sharp, and heavy, while the water element is damp and flows downward.
2. The tea *Qi* with the different Five Elemental attributes will circulate along the Meridians system to *channel tropism*, and finally return to the five internal organs. The *Qi* of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water will return to the liver, heart, stomach, lungs, and kidneys respectively. This *is in keeping with the principles of Chinese medicine that certain herbs or foods carry with them certain properties that are beneficial to various organs and Meridians within the body.*
3. Similarly, a tea drink containing different attributes of the elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water will also display the various tastes associated with them, which are sour, bitter, sweet, spicy hot (pungent), and salty, respectively. A focused and keen sense of smell may be needed to detect them.



Below are a few examples of teas that very clearly display the attributes of either Yin and Yang or the Five Elements:

Teas that are very potent in Yang: *Wan Hong Ji* (萬鴻記), *Tong Qing* (同慶), *Jing Chang* (敬昌), *Song Tie* (宋鐵), *Da Huang Yin* (大黃印), as well as the four main *Rock teas*.

Teas that have very pronounced softness in Yin: *Hong Zhi* (紅芝), *Shuang Hua* (雙花, Twin Flowers), *Song Pin*, *Galaxy No. 3* and *Ocean of Love No. 2*.

There are also more neutral teas that are milder and elegant. Examples of such teas are *Tong Chang Hao* (同昌號), and *Guan Nan Gong* (廣南貢). Or teas that have a cool quality with them, such as *Zhu Tong Xiang Hao* (竹筒香毫).

Wood Element Teas: *Red Label Song Pin*, *Sen Xiang Da Tuo* (蔘香大沱,



Ginseng Fragrance Large Wad Tea).

Fire Element Tea: *Wan Hong Ji*, *Bai Zhen Jin Lian* (白針金蓮, White Needle Golden Lotus) in wooden box.

Earth Element Tea: *Fu Chang Hao* (福昌號), *Huang Zhi* (黃芝) round teacake.

Metal Element Tea: *Lung Tier* (藍鐵), *Mo Dai Jin* (末代緊)

Water Element Tea: *Huang Yin Yuan Cha* (黃印圓茶), *Hong Zhi* (紅芝).

Actually a tea that is purely of one element is extremely rare. Most teas will have a predominating element, but will exhibit other attributes as well. Teas that are purely Yin or purely Yang are very rare. Just like there is a gender difference between men and women. However, it is common to see men possessing a few feminine qualities, and women a few masculine qualities. The attributes of the *Five Elements* of a tea is likewise. Most teas possess with them two or more attributes of the *Five Elements*. It is only a matter of differences in the proportions.

How is it that the attributes of Yin-Yang and the *Five Elements* contained in the teas? We speculate that it probably has to do with the type of tea tree, the environment in which it grew (latitude, sea level, direction of the mountain slope if any, type of soil, essence of the earth, and humidity), how it was handled, the course of its storage, etc. During the process of storage, the fragrance will change, the character of the tea will transform, and the *Qi* will grow in strength. Yang teas are hard, fierce and powerful, whereas Yin teas are gentler yet long lasting. For example, *Fu Chang* old teacake (福昌老餅), the attributes of the *Five Elements* is water, with a bit of metal. Its character is transformed from extreme Yin to extreme Yang, at first soft followed by hardness.

Teas of different ages and elemental attributes have different types of *Qi*, each with their own unique energy characteristics. When one knows how to mix and match them, incredibly large amounts of energy can be ignited and exploded, which is the precise goal of the host when steeping tea.

If a *Five Element Tea* is appropriately matched to an individual's body type and specific needs, then after tasting it, it will harmonize with the body and produce a tremendous amount of energy. How then can one perceive the elemental nature of a person's body? It can be known from their material waves.

There are often a great many people at a tea meeting, and so whether aimed at a specific individual's needs or simply addressing the general needs of the group, the mixing of a proper *Five Element Tea* requires a high level of skill. Only a *Five Element Tea* that is properly balanced in Yin-Yang, and achieves harmony between the *Five Elements*, will be suitable for a wide range of people of different body types.

The hundred sessions of Tea Meetings almost exclusively used *Five Elements Tea* as the last steep. These teas were much loved by the tea friends with lots of curiosity. Because none of these combinations of teas had ever been heard of or seen before, each brewing came as a wonderful surprise to everyone.

With a good Five Elements Tea, after tasting it, one will feel breathing not with the nose, but with the body—the *Qi* enters through the skin. It's like there is a protecting shield covering the body, which is the effect of protection. Within a couple of days, the bad and evil *Qi* from outside cannot break through. But one must to taste slowly to let the *Qi* passes through the Meridians, and to experience the consciousness states within. With just the eyes closed, the whole energy becomes one, and the energy could last for a few days.

Over the one hundred sessions, there were totally eighty-three Five Elements teas being steeped—each time was different. We have numbered them for identification. The following we first present one example of the classics:



(iii) A Classic Example of Mixing Tea

Five Elements Tea No. 82: *Song Tie* 1940's + *Jing Chang* 1940's + *Galaxy No. 3* + *The Ocean of Love No. 2*

☆ The energy just keeps on coming. The Meridians it feels like being non-stop massaged, continuously rising upwards.
Right away the face started to glow—the entire body feels as if it has been dissolved.

The fragrance is very special. It keeps pushing upwards. The brain empties. There's no feeling at all. It is most enjoyable.

The energy is very strong. It is real that Tea can make one drunk; *Tea can*



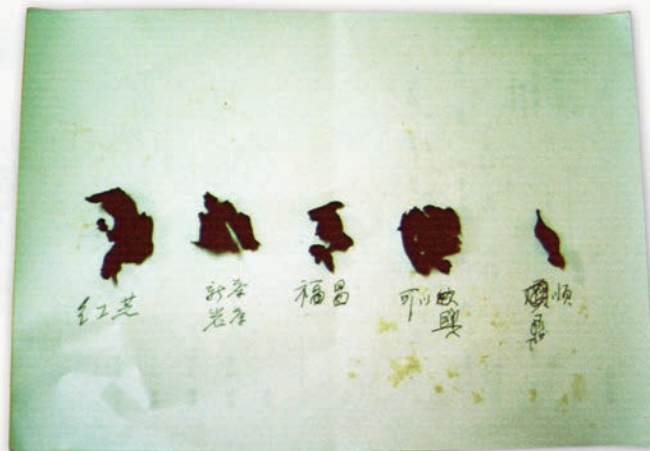
yield goodness; and through tea one can enter dreams.

- ◎ This tea is a perfect mixture—from mediocre teas (*Song Tie* and *Jing Chang*) to high class (*Galaxy No. 3* and *Ocean of Love No. 2*). Therefore, the force of it kept on pushing upwards so that the more you drank of it the better it got.

The fragrance of *Jing Chang* is mediocre. Together with *Song Tier* (could be replace by *Lung Tier* 藍鐵, the tea character is the same) and *Galaxy*, they form a triangular relationship, which has an effect of complement with each other. *Jing Chang* and *Song Tier* belong to the category of hard Yang, whereas *Galaxy No. 3* and *Ocean of Love No. 2* belong to that of soft Yin. When these two are combined the feeling in the mouth is lush and potent, and there is enough subtlety—very easily the energy switch can be turned on. This solidness in the tea liquid generates the power to absorb the energy outside. Therefore, it could keep uplifting.

It enabled us to go first from the conscious level into the subconscious level, and then into the transcendental consciousness level. Most astonishing! Once the seven energy gates are opened up, very quickly energy can be absorbed. Just like a rocket blasting off, redundant sections are being cast off stage by stage as it pushes higher and higher into the stratosphere.

This tea steeps out very thinly yet it has had such a powerful effect. It makes the body glow, and flushes out any bad *Qi*, leading to peace of mind to all who drink it. The energy's endurance is truly amazing, it draws in the energy of the Universe and very quickly one feels charged with life. It has the power to convert negative thoughts into positive. It is a classic example of tea mixing.



▲ The tea sample record of the Five Elements Tea No. 11.

IV. Three Main Themes of the Five Elements Tea

Due to the wealth of information on the *Five Elements Tea*, what follows is simply an introduction to the three main themes of the *Five Elements Tea*. And we illustrate with examples.

(i) Fission

It is obtained by combining two or more types of *Puerh* tea together. Making use of different attributes in the *Five Elements* and characteristics, a fission effect is generated when steeping, and potent energy is created. The higher the level of the teas mixed and matched together, the stronger the resulting energy will be.

The three examples of *Five Elements Tea* listed below differ in terms of levels, though they all belong to the effect of fission:

1. *Five Elements Tea* No. 66: 8582 teacake + *Rainbow*

One can readily feel why this mixing is called *fission*. The energy runs hither and thither within; the entire body feels warm. Some people have reported feeling an imbalance between upper and lower halves of the body, as if they were being torn apart.

After steeping, the fragrance and rhyme is similar to *Hong Yin*. However, the tea drink is not that thick and as smooth. Amongst the dual energies merged in the tea, there is a slight effect of fission.

2. *Five Elements Tea* No. 67: 1940s *Song Tier* + 1950s *Jing Chang*

Immediately upon smelling it, the *Qi* rushes to the *Crown Chakra*. The tea liquid is gentle, smooth flowing, sweet, and pure. The body turns from hot to cool, with very obvious sensations of numbness and a feeling of weakness. All this is very pleasant and comfortable. As one's consciousness is sent softly spinning, it is very easy to get into sleep, relaxation or enter a Trance.

With the mind wide open, one wants to laugh or cry. It feels as if you are on an elevator.

3. *Five Elements Tea* No. 68: loose-leaf *Universe Tea* + loose-leaf *Tong Qing* (同慶) + *Reappearance of the Grace*

☆ A. Luo, "The tea liquid is gentle, smooth, and making turns. It's quite beautiful. After drinking just one mouthful, the tea *Qi* rushed straight up to the brain and then fanned out completely. After finishing three sips, this ceaseless spreading continued until I found I could no longer find any sensations anywhere. It was as if my bodily frame had disappeared entirely."



- B. Gao, "One cup, Trance. Very quickly I was pulled up. Two cups and there's a very subtle soundless sound—very enjoyable and spiritual. I don't know how to describe it."
 - C. Chen, "There is an endless display of fireworks within, exploding like a nuclear bomb. Wave after wave of light assaulted me. I felt as if I was approaching the sun's sphere, and could feel its light and heat. The final two cups and I felt there was a force of gentle Yin moving across the entire body—feeling like getting up and practicing martial art."
 - D. Zhu, "Very peaceful! When I attained a higher realm I couldn't describe it."
 - E. Lin, "Without noticing it I entered a serene and tranquil Universal space."
 - F. Zhang, "The tea *Qi* moved exceedingly fast. I belched again and again. I smiled unwittingly and felt numbness on the tip of the tongue. My mind was empty, extremely joyful and intoxicated."
 - G. Xie, "I forgot the qualities of the tea. I feel utterly open, clear, and peaceful. Now when I drink tea, I feel that tea is ambrosia, the sweetness of life. It seems I cannot enter Trance like everyone else. All I feel is a very clear and lucid calm. I am coming to realize that tea is a form of energy. It is light. It is love. I can understand why everyone gains so much inspiration from drinking tea, and why he or she loves this energy so."
 - H. Ye, "Today's *Five Element Tea*, from the very beginning, made me laugh (I bent over the table when laughing). As the *Qi* rose up, the cells laughed, and the entire body felt very comfortable. With the final two cups, the entire body started to tingle, swelled with heat, and I felt as if I were levitating. While drinking the second *Five Elements Tea* (No. 67), I fell into sleep very deeply. While drinking the third one (No. 68), I didn't notice the flavor of the tea. I just felt being pulled very swiftly upwards. I felt as if constantly spiraling aloft. I felt as if I were set upon a lotus flower seat, with no desire to come down."
- ©With these three pots of *Five Element Tea*, the entire process is focused mainly on fission. Based on each individual's experiences, one could tell their body types.



(ii) Fusion

Five Elements Tea No. 49: *Wan Hong Zhi* (萬鴻記)+ *Bai Ji Gwan* (白雞冠)
2003 + *Rainbow* + *Galaxy* + loose-leaf *Tong Qing*

- ☆ 1. Luo, “The *Qi* is very strong; it penetrates very, very deep. The *Crown Chakra* twitches constantly – very easily to drop asleep.”
- 2. Pan, “Just the first cup and already I cannot fight it. I cannot do anything but close my eyes. At first the brain felt very drowsy, and then very clear. I felt the pores on the right side of my body opening up while on the left side of my body foul *Qi* was being expunged. With the second cup, I felt a slight chill, but still very pleasant. After the fourth cup, suddenly all was illuminated.”
- 3. Lin, “It contains everything! All the elements that make up the body are contained in this tea including the entire internal organ system. One could feel the source of Universal energy through the vibration of the tea.”
- ◎ (In the middle of critiquing the tea) Suddenly the sky rained with a heavy down pour! Yet another miracle! It’s amazing how in the space of one minute, emotion can move between such extremes. This steep of this tea is such a fearsome brew; it has enabled us to break through barriers on the path to a new logic.
- 4. Yu, “The stronger the force of Yang, the stronger must be the force of Yin. This tea is so brimming with inner potency as to be over flowing. It is quite comfortable. In the beginning it was not so very harmonious, but that simply goes to show how order can exist amid chaos. As the turbulence subsided, gradually I entered a beautiful realm. The *Qi* felt sunken and stable; solid and substantial.”



5. Zhang, "One cup and the hands started to go numb. Two cups, Front and Back middle channels unblocked and the back felt hot. The entire body felt satiated. Three cups and I can't drink anymore. I feel like I'm about to overflow. This *Qi* is super strong. The entire body is fully saturated with it."
6. Ye, "Cup one, I feel suddenly full. Cup two, I feel as if my heart has shrunk. The *Qi* rushed upwards and little baby is slipping outside. I know I want to get out. It seems I had experienced what death feels like."
7. Xie, "The heart beat furiously; the entire body fell limp. After this all felt very calm. This has given me the seeming experience of in *dialogue with God*. I thought to myself, '*That's strange, what is so special about this tea today?*' Suddenly from within, the answer came, '*All is of one. Whether Yin or Yang, male or female, Five Elements or the four seasons, all are one. It is simply a changing of the appearance. In truth, essence never changes.*' Upon my second experience, it was as if I could communicate directly with my own master. Why is it that a master is so important? It's because she can initiate you into this dialogue with the Universe. Now when I think of my master or when I want to communicate with her, she is the star light, and I myself am also the star light." My whole body swells with heat, glows radiantly, and the heart beats very fast, as if it may not be up to the task. Every time we drink a *Five Elements Tea* something always occurs to me that I had never imagined or anticipated, and my body is left exhausted from the experience."

© This is all very natural. Upon settling down, one connects with the power of the Universe and the light of the Universe. After one comes out of it, suddenly one is pulled back down. The vibrational frequency of the body suddenly becomes coarse. The body has difficulty adjusting to the changes in the magnetic fields, so has an unpleasant feeling. Such was the case for Ye just a moment ago.

Having connected with the light of the universe, we also become a part of that light. If one were to take a picture now this would show up. Having made the connection, everyone starts to glow. If one were to take a photo under such circumstances one could get a picture with radiant human bodies.

This tea is very strange. After drinking it, it becomes very easy to understand that all creatures are one. Therefore immediately it began to rain heavily. When we are relaxed and without any impure thought and

connected with the frequency of the Universe, then every thought that flashes through the mind will become reality, for the power of the Universe is manifest in it. In drinking tea our consciousness grows ever higher and higher. Already we have gone so far beyond the normal worldly logic.

During a torrential downpour is the time when the sky and the earth connected. One can enjoy the feeling of the sky and the earth united. It is also the most opportune time for sitting in meditation and recharging your batteries. This opportunity must be taken advantage of especially when one is deep in the mountains.

While meditating, your frequency becomes ever subtler, and it becomes very natural to enter the channel of the Universe. When you meet with such *Qi*-field—the time when the force of vibration is connected with the Heaven, you will laugh the whole night through. That this downpour has come is just too marvelous! Too perfect!

That five hard Yang teas could combine to create such a tea that fuses so harmoniously and peacefully is itself a miracle.

Tea mixtures based upon the principal of Fusion are suitable to be drunk by a wide variety of body types.

If we get the chance we should try to make a *Five Elements Tea* that is a mixture of five different Yin energy teas. The power of Yin is always more potent, it is possible to yield an even more powerful Yang energy. When objects reach their zenith they will surely reverse their course. It is possible that this will happen. My intuition tells me so.





(iii) Balance and Equilibrium

Generally, when two or more teas are mixed together, the resulting energy will lean a little either to the side of Yin or Yang. However, for a tea to be perfect it should be balanced and in harmony between Yin and Yang. Only such teas are close to the state of dissolving—the high level state teas. The saints are balanced in Yin and Yang, and the Universe is also balanced in Yin and Yang. Only when this balance is achieved, can it be called perfect. Only when man and the tea can achieve balance between Yin and Yang, can tea-tasting approach the realm of *Tea and the Tao are of one*.

Below are two examples.

(I) *Five Elements Tea* that achieves Yin and Yang equilibrium.

Five Elements Tea No. 3: pre 1920s *Wan Hong Zhi* + 1930s *Shuang Hua*
A combination of two Puers, one is extremely Yang while the other is extremely Yin.

☆The tea *Qi* raises up to the *Crown Chakra* and down to the *pubic region*. The five kinds of *Qi* return to their origins in wave after endless wave. There are five different fragrances, each steep producing a different one. From metal to wood, each of the five elements takes their turn. I cannot pinpoint the exact fragrance. The tea *Qi* is very strong. At first it was all fiery trees and silver flowers, a maelstrom.

After this, I felt cool and refreshed inside, and then I entered Samadhi. The tea *Qi* circulated within the body, and I experienced five levels of sensations: (i) Yin led off, its circulation felt very intense; (ii) Then it spread in all directions; (iii) The forces of the *Five Elements* were each called into play; (iv) The five different forces fused; (v) Finally the five forces achieved equilibrium.

◎Even though this pot of tea consists of only two kinds of tea, within it the force of each of the Five Elements was contained. However, it has not yet achieved much of a balance. Fire was over abundant, and the proportion of wood should be lowered a little bit. In drinking this tea, the force of each one of the five elements is summoned. Within the body, these different energies collide with each other, creating a very powerful force, and very quickly one is suffused with the power of the Universe. Within, there is violent shaking, when it is instantaneously exploded completely, one is immediately connected with the energy of the Universe.

Wood induces fire, igniting a power no less than tenfold what it was to begin with. Afterwards, there is profound calm. Certainly there is no difficulty in breaking through and unblocking the Front and Back middle

channels. In the end, it is the force of Mother Nature; no longer is it the power of the tea.

After drinking this, it is best not to drink *Puerh* for the next two days. Instead, just drink green teas. You will feel a bit intoxicated, lethargic; the energy within your body will be explored.

Due to the *Qi* of this tea being too strong, too fortifying, at the end we also steeped a pot of the *Sacred Tea of Chomolongma* to help everyone in understanding what exactly it was we just drank. After tasting the *Sacred Tea*, some supplementary comments were offered.

The fragrances of each of the five cups seem completely different. They were not swallowed, but rather absorbed. The entire body is relaxed and stress free, and one enters a cool and soothing zone. The frequency of the body became increasingly fine, until it was completely transformed. Extreme hardness can be neutralized by absolute softness. Water, for example, at the same time possesses the qualities of absolute softness and absolute hardness. This *Sacred tea* has taken the power of the *Five Elements* and completely brought them to their original states, creating a perfect balance. The whole body feels only harmony, happiness, and peace.



(II) A *Five Elements Tea* that attains absolute equilibrium.

Five Elements Tea No. 62: 1930's *Mo Dai Jin* (末代緊)+ 1920s *Liu An* (六安)
This was again a tea mixture of extreme Yin and extreme Yang; a true balance, a complete equilibrium, a matchless mixture. No matter a person's body type, anyone could enter Trance with this tea. It is a truly



high level tea. The extreme bitterness and happiness, the extreme Yin and Yang are essentially the same. When they are unified to a balance, They can generate extremely powerful force.

- ☆ 1. Chen, “A mouthful of sweet fragrance, serene and auspicious. There isn’t really any realm of consciousness to it. I had fallen asleep.”
- 2. Pan, “A perfect mixing. The tea liquid feels like medicine, it is slightly astringent, but the feeling in the mouth is very good.

It is a very stable, settled down fragrance, which is also very clean and peaceful. The fragrance lasts even up to the seventeenth or eighteenth steep. The tea *Qi* is very strong, and when my hand first held the cup, I felt a bit shocked. The moment I drank the tea, with no time to even think—Pow! - Instantly I was pulled up. The only feeling I had was from the head up; there is no need for the body to have feeling.”

- 3. Gao, “Hardly had the first cup gone down, and already I was swept away. I entered Trance, drifting in and out. All was very peaceful and quiet.”
- 4. (Now it’s Xies turn to speak)

“Um, uh, er, my body is still spinning. This cup is very astonishing.

With the previous pot of *Galaxy* No. 3, I was on the verge of entering Trance. Upon entering Trance, a voice spoke to me and said that for me this was the beginning of a whole new stage, and that in the beginning of this stage I was not to think of things in terms of mortal logic.

Suddenly, I felt the passage of the two previous stages, now wondering what method I should use to think in this new stage. Perhaps I could think in the way of *God* or *Sacred Spirit*. I should think in the angle, the language, and the act accordingly. The true wealth of the Holy Spirit is my only true wealth.

When drinking *Five Elements Tea*, the combined energy of pure Yin and pure Yang is simply unremarkable. The pure Yang energy immediately starts to make the body swell, but it is unlike any previous known swelling. It is as if the Holy Spirit is taking hold of you, and allowing you to witness the vastness of its power. It is like floating in the vast Universe. At first you may feel afraid, but as soon as this feeling arises, a voice says to you that there is nothing to fear because “He” is with you. The energy is so vast as to defy description. It is only in looking down that I have come to understand what was meant by *not trying to think with mortal logic*.

Another experience is that of *being at the right moment*, which means to extricate yourself from past knowledge or memories, to let go of trepidation and dread of future, it is the right moment that is so incredible. You cannot perceive your own body. It's as if the Universe is speaking directly to me, instructing and guiding me from within.

After slowly returning from that colossal power that dwells within the hands and feet are ice cold, the body is trembling. The two hands have no strength, and are likewise very cold. The body is swaying and spinning at the same time; it's very funny. I left wanting something hot to drink. This experience caused me to re-examine myself. There is no need to worry about the future. One must put down all of these, but simply live in the now. When consciousness is truly centered in the present moment, then you will know. Just do as your intuition tells you and there is no need to know what the mission is for the future. Just live on the moment!" (Xie repeatedly pats her head with her hand)

©This tea was truly made just for you. But the climax of the *Five-elements Tea* is not yet revealed. The deeper levels are all beyond what human language can express. At this point everyone thought that the tea meeting had come to an end, whereas in fact it was just beginning. Everyone is now beginning to scrutinize his or her own acts.





V. Extraordinary Five Elements Teas

Below are two examples of the most extraordinary *Five Elements Teas*. One has already been experimented before, while the other we are looking forward to the experiment.

(i) A Once in a Century Five Elements Tea—Teas summing up one thousand years old

Five Elements Tea No. 73:

1920 *Song Pin* + 1910 *Ben Ji* (本記) + 1920 *Qun Ji* (羣記) + 1920 *Shuang Shi Tong Qing* (雙獅同慶) + 1900 *Chen Yun Gui* (陳雲貴) + 1930 *Shuang Hua* (雙花) + 1920 *Wan Hong Ji* (萬鴻記) + 1920 *Tong Xing Gong* (同興貢) + 1900 *Fu Yuan Chang* (福元昌) + 1910 *Ji Chang Hao* (吉昌號) + 1920 *Tong Xing* (同興) + 1910 *Pu Qing* (普慶) + 1930 *Mo Dai Jin* (末代緊)

This pot of *Five Elements Tea* should be the first time in the history that is without precedent. The cause for this steep was that when *Hang-Jia* was putting his storehouse in order, so that the old teacakes can be taken out and photographed for record keeping sake. There were totally twenty-five different varieties of teas. During the process of arranging and photographing, it was inevitable that some loose scraps and pieces of teas fell out. These shakings were then combined into one steeping. Of these teas, there were thirteen of them with slightly larger amount with their names listed above.

The ages of these thirteen different old teas add up to approximately one thousand years, hence jokingly the name—*the thousand year-old tea*. Below, we have selected some of the key points of the tea critique, by way of testimony for historical record.

- ☆ 1. Ruaan, “The feeling of the first cup was as if the old teas are having a summit, each one speaking for the interests of their respective integrity and their own interest. The voices of one or two nations’ delegates are louder and more forceful than the others with more significant fragrance.

With the second cup, begins an appeal for the creation of a common community, emphasizing the importance of cooperation. All the teas speak in concert that unity is power.

With the third cup, it is as if an organization like the *European Union* is formed, and all delegates are striving towards the creation of an EU constitution.

With the fourth cup, they sing together *Kumbaya* (We are of one family).

Wow! It's so powerful!!" (All the guests laughed.)

2. Lin, "The liquor color is a blackish brown, with the fragrance of jujube or Chinese date. There is a thick, rich, sweet fragrance of camphor, the elegance of the orchid cassia fragrance, and the *Song Pin* fragrance. Aromatic, sweet, elegant, and refined, every cup is bewitching. The fragrance lingers in the mouth making one gasp and sigh in praise and gratitude.

Even though it represents a mix of more than ten kinds of tea, with each tea producing a different flavor, still the borders defining each of them remain clearly defined and harmonious. The overriding feeling is one of a coalition of tea fragrances. One feels that the entire body is giving off the tea fragrance. The energy is so powerful as to be astonishing. After drinking it, one feels full of vitality, very alert, and the entire body is utterly relaxed. The mind feels very simple, absent of any impure thoughts. After drinking the tea, it is as if the very cells of the body are now happy and smiling."

3. Chen, "Upon smelling the fragrance, one feels limp and numb. For the first two cups, it was like hundreds of exotic teas competing with each other. The visions appeared to be resplendent and extremely complicated. Yet they were entangled with other, and formed an intricate net at the same time that I was unable to break through. After the third cup, the woven net melted away and the light shone through like a rocket blasting off at full throttle, surging upwards by imperceptible strides. The energy is exceedingly strong and even a little unsettling. I need some time to adjust and adapt."





4. Pan, “The tea *Qi* is sunken, steady, and self-composed. It is very much like a medicinal tonic.

It has many types of aromas—wild camphor, orchid, and the *Song Pin* fragrance, etc.

The liquor color is brilliant and reflective, glittering and translucent. It is full of tension.”

5. Ho, “My body doesn’t generally sweat easily. Even when exercising, I do not often sweat. But just now, immediately after I drinking this tea, my entire body began to feel so very hot, followed by that feeling of brewing sweat, and then I started to sweat profusely. This steep of tea has a power that is truly massive.”
6. Li, “As soon as I held the sniffing cup in my hand, the rich fragrance gave me the feeling of happiness and joy. Very quickly this feeling evaporated, turning to the sorrow of *hundreds and thousands of years all contained within an instance*. Yet this sorrow did not last long. The mind again changed to that of peaceful tranquility, like an old monk sitting in meditative Trance. I started to recite silently a poem by Jiang Jie: ‘*As a young man I listened to the rhythm of rain on the upper floor of a performing girls’ house, gazing at the red glow of the candle reflected on the mosquito mesh while I dozed. As a man in my prime years, I listened to the rain fall as I traveled on a ferry boat in the river. The clouds hung low above the wide river. The broken calls of wild geese wafted on the western breeze. Today, I listened to the rain from under a monk’s thatched roof; the hairs on my temples have turned to gray—sorrow, joy, separation, and reunion all turn out to be emotionless. Let me listen to the raindrops before the doorsteps, and await the coming of the dawn.*’ At this moment, this poem sums up perfectly how I felt within my heart. Also, as the famous poem by Dong Po goes: ‘*Looking back where I came from with sorrow and desolation; upon returning, there is neither wind, nor rain, nor sunshine.*’ After remaining in a state of tranquility for a while, I deliberately roused the thoughts. All the while I was feeling as if floating like one of the celestial nymphs of the Dun Huang Mural in a flying posture, floating and soaring amidst the white clouds in the blue sky. Drinking this pot of tea, I passed through so many states between joy and sorrow, transforming from silent stillness to a spirit soaring across the Heavens. Such were the four states of the mind in drinking this tea.”

7. Xe, “This steep of tea is the greatest possible reward given to me upon returning from the trip to China. During the trip, I discovered so many secrets about life. Realizations passed in front of me like so many thin veils before the eyes, each layer lifting back one after the other. Some of them I am not able to share at this time, they being secrets between the Universe and me... This has been the cleansing of my innermost being. It really is not possible to share it all in detail with everyone.”
8. One tea friend offered a poem on the spot,

*“The painstaking arrangement of the Universal energy
This is yet another trap
People that pursue it
Are again pulled back by name and reputation
Temptation is always irresistible
When the soul is evolved to a certain height
Even water tastes of nectar
Or without drinking at all, one is content as well
All affinities rise and fall whereas the inner self remains the same”,
~ Zheng Yan Qiu*

When even water is like nectar, it is true contentment. Name and fame is not to be hankered for. One must know when it is time to stop playing at that game. This is a poet’s wholehearted advice.





(ii) In Anticipation of an Unprecedented Experiment

The previous examples are just for illustrations. In fact, there is still great room for experimentation of the *Five Elements Tea*.

For the average tea lovers, the teas used to mix the *Five Elements Teas* of these *Tea Tasting Meetings* are all too high shelf. That we ourselves were able to make use such teas was entirely due to some special destiny of the *Tea Meetings*, which is also by the necessity of completing this book.

It is not necessary to use such high shelf teas to mix a *Five Elements Tea*. As long as one understands the basic principles, and has a few good friends to lend their support in the experiment, then even low or the middle level teas can produce an exceptional *Five Elements Tea* that is more worthwhile than each tea separately. There are many varieties of tea in China, many names and many brands. Within the scope of *Five Elements Tea* theory, there remains a lot of territory to be explored and created.

The Tea Society is expecting to have chance to experiment another steeping of the *Five Elements Tea in a Century*.

A tea with a single attribute and a pure fragrance is most difficult to find. To find a pure, mono-element tea that is aged over eighty years is even more difficult. However, to acquire five different aged teas, each of them pure of fragrance and perfectly representative of the Five Elements—wood, fire, earth, metal, and water, is the most difficult upon the difficulties. Mountains have different characteristics as male and female (牝牡 *Ping Mu*). They are further classified according to their five elemental attributes (geomancers also name as *five stars*). Plants grown in different mountains acquire a different *Qi* and unique characteristics. This all happens according to the law of nature. Specific good tea grows on a specific tea mountain, absorbing the essence of both the sun and the moon, gathering the spiritual *Qi* of the mountains and rivers. Such a tea, after being preserved for a long time, can then become a special aged tea that purely expresses one of the five elemental attributes individually.

We already know that when mixing a *Five Elements Tea*, the energy created by *fusion* is greater than *fission*, just like the power of a hydrogen bomb is greater than that of an atomic bomb. So, if one is able to acquire five teas, each one aged more than eighty years, and possessing the pure, unalloyed character and fragrance of either one of the wood, fire, earth, metal, or water element. Then mixing and allowing the *Five Elements* they represent to induce, and to ignite in circulation the thermal fusion. With this, there is no telling how frightful the energy it creates will be—how shocking, cleansing, and uplifting the result will be for the taster's body, mind, and spirit.

If one considers that this steeping of *Five Elements Tea in a Century* represents a *Thermal Fusion of the Five Elements and Spiritual Essence of all the Mountains and Rivers of the Territories of China*—how beautiful and ingenious, how glorious and magnificent that would be.

VI. The Secrets to Steeping Tea

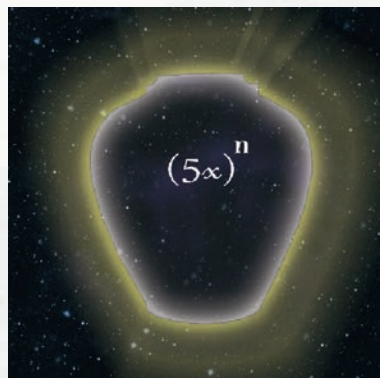
There are skills in steeping tea and each brewer brings to the process his own experience and understanding. The most important is following opinions into action.

Steeping tea requires actual practice, lead by those who are more experienced in *Cha-Dao*, and to observing and listening to them steeping teas on site. One must also spend a great deal of time with hands on practice, accepting criticism and comparing and reviewing his methods with humility, while at the same time not resisting the urge to be creative and to experiment. This is the fastest way to improve. To be able to steep out good tea is to be on the right track.

There are varieties of teas, and their grades are different. Tea liquor made from different types or different grades of teas will naturally be different. The responsibility of the host is to steep out a good tea drink—to steep fine tea to the limit, or even beyond the limitations of what one normally expects.

The steeped tea liquid is not only determined by the tea, tea pot, water, temperature and steeping skills, it is also dependent on the host's spiritual level.

When steeping tea, the level of consciousness the tea steeper entered will greatly determine the quality of the liquor. If the steeper is able to reach either the subconscious or transcendental consciousness levels, he is channeling the force of the Universal energy into the tea session. At such a time, to steep out a hundred-point or even a two hundred-point liquor is not impossible. This has not only been





realized in theory, but in practical experience as well.

Once equipped with the overall concepts of the *Eight Vital Points of Tea liquid*, the only secret that remains to steeping tea is that of having a completely empty mind, thinking of absolutely nothing, without thought or desire, just follow one's intuition, flushing the tea leaves like floating clouds and flowing water—naturally pouring forth the love. Only when consciousness becomes empty, without thought and simple minded, and when the consciousness is pure and spiritual, does it become easy to connect with and draw in the high class energy of the Universe.

Steeping tea in the manner of the *Cha-Dao* is a natural love sharing. It is not simply that *I steep good tea to treat you*, for that there is still distinctions between one's own self and the others, and one still has the thought of giving. When steeping tea, one should be without self, for only then can there be no attachment, no thought and no doing. Only at such a time will one be able to connect with the high class of the Universal energy and to inject it into the tea drink. Therefore, every little cup of tea conveys the love from God, and every little cup of tea liquor displays the spirit of the tea steeper.





Chapter 4

山色有无中
綠水

Steeping Teas in the mountains by the river

To Attain Tao or not, just in one cup of tea



Cha-Dao— It's so Miraculous to Enter Tao through Tea

Only when one's energy level is sufficiently high after tasting tea, does one begin to have good experiences. With many rare and exotic teas, their energy is also very special and highly ranked. After tasting them, unique and highly profound experiences will often follow.

A fine tea helps one to enter the Tao, not to say exotic teas with wondrous fragrances. During the course of the tea meetings, we sampled many ultra high shelf teas, and of those there was no shortage of exotic teas with wonderful fragrances. In this book, we have selected seven of them. These are: (1) *Guan Yin Wang* (觀音王), (2) *Mother Tree White Cockscomb* (母株白雞冠), (3) *Mother Tree Great Scarlet Robe* (母株大紅袍), (4) *Blue/Red Label Song Pin*, (5) *Qing Mo Tuan Cha* (清末團茶, tea wads from the end of the Qing dynasty), (6) Tea Saint (茶聖) 1820s *Puerh*, and (7) the fossil tea, *Golden Melon Sacrificial Offering* (金瓜貢). In drinking these seven teas, members sipped with great concentration, and their experiences were ever deeper. Their accounts were made very seriously, and are significant both in terms of quantity and quality. With everyone feeling very grateful, they wanted to leave some kind of historical records as testimonies, which might be shared with the world and the future generations. Due to the length of many of the articles, and for fear of disrupting the fluency of the book in reading, these articles are summarized in Appendix IV. The reader is invited to refer to them for further insights as a must.

Only after having tasted a great many fine teas with rich and deeper experiences, and having ever entered the higher realms of spiritual levels, we are finally able to summarize them to draw conclusions. And to paint a more complete picture of what exactly this new *Cha-Dao* is.

Appreciating tea in terms of the *Cha-Dao* is a process of purification, uplifting, and going back to one's true self. The entire process cannot be completed in one single step; it has levels, progressions, and stages of development. The following is the crystallization of the tea tasting experiences of the one hundred sessions of the *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings*. It is structured with levels of progress, and it contains personal experiences and spiritual consciousness. The large majority of it has never been documented in any tea book either from China or worldwide.



Photograph: Jian Ming Xian

I. Progress and Stages

The table below and the descriptions are only rough illustrations. It cannot be counted as complete, while they may be useful for reference and research.

(i) The Different Levels of Tea Tasting

Flavor and smell by mouth and nose		
Conscious level (β waves)	Eyes, ears, nose, tongue / senses, instincts, desires.	
Bodily sensations		
Conscious level (β waves)	Bodily sensations / feelings, logic, and reasoning	
Sub-conscious level (α waves)	Heart/ memory, intellect	
Spiritual realm		
Sub-conscious level (α waves)	Spiritual/emotions, potentials	
Transcendental conscious level (θ waves \rightarrow δ waves)		
Spiritual/beyond rationality, logic, intelligence, and language		
Level 1 (shallow level)	Creativity	Inner vision, imagination
Level 2 (middle level)	Intuition	Wisdom, bliss
Level 3 (deep level)	Spirituality	Transcend space and time, Oneness, merging into the Universe,... omniscience, Universal spirit

To Enter the Tao through Tea



Good tea stimulates one's body, mind, and spirit. According to a person's sensitivity, his or her body, mind, and spirit will also react differently. Generally speaking, reactions going slowly from shallow to deep; consciousness progresses upwards from crude and dull to intricate and refined. Only those on the level of a great master or above can pass through all of them in an instant.

In the beginning of tea tasting, one pays attention to the fragrance and the tea liquid. These are reactions to the level of flavor and smell by mouth and nose. When the energy of the tea drink starts to take affect, and the tea *Qi* begins to circulate, one experiences changes both within the body and without. This belongs to the reactions on the level of bodily sensations. After expelling impurities and purging bad *Qi* as well as negative energy, a good tea will help one to achieve equilibrium of the body and mind. Such tea has the ability to touch one's spirit, enabling one to enter a state of stillness or Trance, and some inner experiences appear. This belongs to the reactions on the level of spiritual realm. Each of the three levels' reactions is rich in content. For details please see the text later in this section.

The level of a tea taster's reactions goes from the superficial to the profound, and the consciousness level starts from crude to subtle. The spiritual consciousness begins with the (explicit) consciousness, moving forward into sub-consciousness, then ultimately into the transcendental consciousness.

While drinking tea, one uses the ears, eyes, mouth (tongue), nose, and viscera for identification and appreciation. These are bodily sense organs and instincts that require the brain for analysis purposes. They belong to the level of (explicit) consciousness level. When performing these functions, the brain operates on Beta waves (frequency between 13-30 Hz cycles per second, with a wave pattern that jumps up and down irregularly). The erratic nature of the waves reflects that one's spirit is at fluctuating and uneasy state. As one gradually relaxes and calms down, the mind is focused with clear conscious, and brain activity shifts to Alpha waves (8-13 Hz cps with slow and regular wave patterns). When one enters the subconscious level, one's intellectual and emotional powers increase, assisting to elaborate ones inner potential.

After tasting tea and becoming still, it is like being in meditation. If one can persist in this to the point of *deep meditation* and *ultimate deep meditation*, then



one enters the level of transcendental consciousness. The brain waves change to Theta waves (4-8 Hz cps. These waves are slow and rhythmic; one is half asleep and half awake) and Delta waves (0.5-4Hz c, which is made up of a single calm and slow line, the state of being sound asleep). Supernatural powers, spontaneous inspiration, and manifesting reality all become possible. Many of the most profound tea tasting experiences occur upon entering this stage.

The spiritual level of transcendental consciousness can be further divided into three levels. The first is the shallow level where the consciousness enters the delicate layer of transcendental consciousness. This is a plane beyond reason and logic, which displays creativity. The second is a deeper level where consciousness escapes from *the prison of the senses*, making use of its ultra senses and awareness. At this time, one's wisdom discloses and is filled with inner bliss. The third is the utmost deep level. The spirit attains one further step to the absolute serenity and bliss. One feels as if he trespasses time and space in an instant. All creatures are one, and one is merged into the Universe. Beyond this is the infinite spiritual world of the Universe, which is difficult to be described in words.

The deeper into spiritual consciousness one goes, the higher and more transcendent are the experience realms. Few people have ever achieved them, and it is more difficult to explain in words.

Based on all records of writings on tea, it appears that the tea tasting experiences of tea lovers since ancient times had never gone beyond the shallow stage of transcendental consciousness.

(ii) Progress in Cha-Dao

Tea tasting in *Cha-Dao* emphasizes on tea *Qi* (energy, frequency)—with good teas as a medium, recruiting the tea's inner potency in order to help elevating the tea taster's consciousness level. Good tea is hard to come by. As far as we know, only teas aged approximately over fifty years allow one to reach the subconscious level, and only teas aged more than seventy or eighty years can possibly attain the transcendental consciousness divide.

For example, upon tasting 1930s *Tong Xing*, there is still mental awareness. It is at the subconscious level. One will automatically meditate, and sees the light within. *Hundred Year Wu Long*, on the other hand, could reach the first stage of transcendental consciousness—merging into the Universe. *Return to the Nascent Truth* is capable of reaching the second level of transcendental consciousness, while *the Ocean of Love* reaches the highest stage of transcendental consciousness, wherein even the soul is being cleansed.

Merely tasting good tea does not mean that there will be the *Cha-Dao*, nor is it the case that one cannot achieve the *Tao* if one does not drink tea. It's only that

tea is a highly ranked being. Charged with the potency of good tea, it becomes very easy to approach the *Tao*, very easy to enter the higher levels of consciousness, and to be one with *Tao*.

When one can connect with the universal energy and enter into the spiritual levels of subconscious, seeing the inner light and hearing the currents from within, only then can it be said to have entered the *Cha-Dao*. Having entered the *Cha-Dao*, there are still three stages of development:

Level 1 *Qi of tea*

One can very clearly feel the *body move* and *Qi flow* that is affected by the tea *Qi*. After tasting tea, one would enjoy meditation to roam into the spiritual world, and emphasis more the aspects of spiritual realm. This level is still relatively shallow; most people who ever have passed belong to this level. Through good tea, one can connect with the universal energy, harnessing the *Qi* of the tea to unblock energy channels of the body. The speed of progress will be much faster. Before achieving the stages of the *Cha-Dao*, the Tea Meetings paid attention specifically or just emphasizing the part of tea quality (color, fragrance, flavor, form, nourishment etc).

However, upon gaining the new realms of *Cha-Dao*, tea tasting thereafter became focused upon the real inner experiences. One begins to communicate with the inner currents, which guides us to return to the fountainhead of life. Just as Lao Tzu said, “*The Tao that can be expressed in words, is not the true Tao; that which can be named, is not the true name.*”

Level 2 *The realm of the Light*

The second level is a deep level, wherein one is in deep Samadhi, consciousness is still very clear, though often one cannot feel the existence of the body. As one delves even deeper in Samadhi, one enters a realm that is very clear and bright, full of awareness.

When connected to the higher realm, one feels as if merged with a plane of light. When the eyes are open, all one sees before them are sheets of bright light. When one closes their eyes, it is as bright as ever. At this time, one will suddenly realize the truth contained in, “*Upon seeing a mountain it is still just a mountain.*” Although the same phase of “*Seeing the mountain as it is; and seeing the river as it is*”, the realm is quite different from what ordinary people sees. “*To climb up to the pole of a hundred foot high bamboo, and move one step higher,*” is fallen back to the ground.

Although the same on the ground, the *Return to Nascent Truth*



has acclaimed the level of light and dust are the same, and no difference between a sage and an ordinary people. The level is quite different. From this, one can realize “*Tao is just simple mindedness.*” This concept of the “*simple mind*” is not the same as what is commonly understood as being simple minded. It is said that “*walking sitting, and lying down all are Zen*”, however this type of “*walking sitting and lying down*” is not to be confused with the ordinary versions of these activities. Things are not what they appear. It needs to be experienced to be understood.

Level 3 *The cool and soothing zone*

Just one whiff and one is pulled into the cool and soothing zone. This is the higher level within the *Cha-Dao*, and since ancient times only very few people have attained this level. Straight onto the zone, it is a state of extreme bliss and happiness. It is the realm of the absolute. This is the stage after which many great masters of the past thirsted.

The tea names of the Hang-Jia Twelve Level Teas represent the level of the spiritual realms a tea taster has attained. Starting from *Romance*, moving through *Happiness*, *Joy*, *Rainbow*, *True Love*, *Nectar*, *Enlightenment*, *Galaxy*, *Universe*, *Truth*, *Virtue*, and *Beauty*, *Reappearance of the Grace*, until *Return to the Nascent Truth*, and finally move one more stage further to the *Ocean of Love*. This is a pass of returning to the origin of life, it is also a pass of love.

The one hundred sessions of Tea Meetings and after the one hundred sessions:

The hundred-session Tea Meetings comprised of three stages, wherein each of the core members underwent a profound spiritual journey in search of the *Cha-Dao*. The new meaning of *Cha-Dao* became fully realized and experienced. By the final stage of the tea meetings, we were able to communicate with one another not with words and brains, but with the spirits. When we were able to communicate in spirits, the *Cha-Dao* thus entered into a higher level, and the tea meetings moved forward to one stage higher.

After the one hundred sessions of Tea Meeting, we entered into a new phase. The number of *tea excursions* increased and the society members were willing to travel all over the world to share with the *Cha-Dao*.

(iii) The Spiritual realms of Lu Tong's poem of *Seven Bowls*

Good tea purifies ones body, heart, and soul. Lu Tong's (盧仝) eminent *Poem of Seven Bowls* (*Writing Thanks to Remonstrance Meng for sending New Teas*) deals specifically with the transitions of body sensations, mind, and spiritual

perspectives that occur while tasting tea.

“First bowl moistens lips and throat. Second bowl breaks the loneliness and boredom.” Quenching thirst, moistening the palate, and getting rid of boredom, all belong to the level of bodily sensations.

“Third bowl searches withered bowels. A release, five thousand scrolls could not express. Fourth bowl lightly sweats, a lifetime of injustice seeps out of the pores.”

From the second to the third bowl of tea, the poet undergoes a subtle change in his heart. He exhaustedly searches for inspirations, trying to describe all of his feelings inside in words, for fear of not being able to express them completely. He thus exaggeratedly states that it would take no less than five thousand volumes to even attempt to describe them. Between the fourth and the fifth bowl, the tea liquid is hot and the tea *Qi* is flowing, he sweats lightly, and it seems that he has gone back to trying to describe the physical sensations. However, the *Qi* has dispersed throughout the body, the pores are all open. All the worry and sorrow of the mundane world and all the resentments of a lifetime evaporates as if dispersed into smokes and clouds. Trying to express such a feeling in words is already somewhat redundant. This is the transition point of uplifting from a mental perspective to spiritual perspective.

“Fifth bowl muscle and bones are clear.” As the tea *Qi* enters the bones, all of the pores are open, toxins are dispersed. From the surface level of muscles and flesh to the inner crags of sinew and bone, all feels soothed and refreshed. Our body and mind are associated. If tissue and bone become clear then so too will the mind and breath. It is as if he was given a new body.

“Sixth bowl one is in communion with celestial beings.” There are some images appear in the brain—seeing some scenes or contacting with the celestial beings.

“Seventh bowl I can take no more, there is only the cool breeze flowing from beneath the arms. Where is the Peng Lai Mountain? I, Yu Chuan Zhe, want to fly with the wind back to my homeland.” With the sixth bowl he connects with the energy of the Universe, and by the seventh bowl his consciousness has already been wandering off. The *Qi* is strong, filling and satisfying. Just one bowl more, and the only sensation he is left with is feeling the cool wind emanating from beneath the armpits. He feels as if he is flying away like one of the celestial beings. The poet admires the Tao, and within his subconscious he thirsts to fly with this gentle breeze back to mount Peng Lai—the home of the gods.

The Poem of Seven Bowls is a famous poem that has been recited for more than one thousand years. The tea names of the *Hang-Jia Twelve Levels Tea* represent the spiritual realms the tea tasters could possibly attain while tasting tea,



which can be compared with the realms described in the *Poem of Seven Bowls*. *Romance*, *Happiness*, and *Joy* all are teas that facilitate relaxation, purification, and delight of the body and mind. With *Rainbow* inner visions begin to appear and spiritual consciousness soars. *True Love* surfaces one's heart. *Nectar* is nourishing, making one feel refreshed deep through to the bones. One feels as if flying away like a celestial beings. Upon the sixth bowl being able to commune with celestial beings, this should be at the level of *Enlightenment*. Seven bowls and the spirit roams, soaring upon the cool breeze on its return journey to the celestial mountain of Peng Lai. This is roaming at the level of *Galaxy*.

Higher still than *Galaxy*, there is *Universe*. And beyond the *Universe*, there is *Truth*, *Virtue* and *Beauty*—the tenth grade. Teas such as 1920's *Huang Jin Tan* (黃錦堂) are smooth, sweet, and beautiful, makes one feel soothed and carefree. In tasting it one feels as if being transported to another space-time dimension, the body is semi-translucent. The level eleven tea, *Reappearance of the Grace*, has a very subtle and fine vibrational frequency. It is already beyond any material aspect. The light and currents are extremely soft, gentle and subtle. The experience of it is like a dream or an illusion that can neither be grasped nor obtained. As for the highest level, *Return to the Nascent Truth*, such as 1900's *Chen Yun Gui* (陳雲貴), *Wan Hong Ji* (萬鴻記) and *Hong Zhi* (紅芝). their fragrances are of sandalwood, agalloch eaglewood, and ganoderma—exotic fragrances transported directly from the Heaven. Simply by smelling them, one almost goes straight into Samadhi. From the moment one tasting such teas, time stands still and one forgets where it is they are sitting. One feels utterly nothingness; however, at the same time senses very clearly the true self that has always been there—neither being created nor annihilated, neither clean nor defiled. The twists and turns of the entire tea tasting process start from being stunned at the beauty, moved by the feeling, to delve within for the self nature, to completeness and satisfaction, ending up in the realm of ultimate virtue. It possesses both the characteristics of *Truth*, *Virtue*, and *Beauty* and *Reappearance of the Grace*, and ultimately returns to one's true self—hence the name *Return to the Nascent Truth*.

Compared to these, roaming in *Galaxy*, feeling amongst the vast outer space is still at the medium level—still not too high. Beyond the twelve levels is the ever higher *Ocean of Love*.

Teas on the level of *Ocean of Love* (of those having been numbered there are four) have already attained the level of dissolution. The feeling in the mouth starts from being to none-being. Immediately upon hitting the tongue, it simply melts away. It has a flavor that has no flavor. The feeling is as if being submerged in the boundless love of the Universe. The slumbering soul within suddenly awakens and unites with all beings. At this time, one is at a state of transcendental consciousness. This can only be sensed, it cannot be expressed by words. After

tasting, it is as if one has been given a whole new body. One feels utterly cleansed deep within, and kindles anew the passion and joy for life. One would feel the urge to hug everyone they meet, even all beings on this planet. This has completely fulfilled the true meaning of *Ocean of Love*. The true spirit of *Cha-Dao* has already been fully expressed without words, and there is no need to advocate it specifically.



▲ Wu Ji Ru writing calligraphy with a rag in place of a brush

II. The Mouth and the Nose—Flavor and Smell

(i) Form, Color, and Fragrance

Tea has *color*, *fragrance*, *flavor*, *form*, *taste*, and *Qi*. Of these, *Qi* is the most important followed by *fragrance* and *flavor*. The *Qi* of a tea also manifests in its *fragrance* and *flavor*.

Form refers to the tea leaves when dry and the shape of the unfolded leaves after steeping. From but a single leaf, an expert can know the type of tea, the grade of the tea, the level of care taken when picking, the methods of processing and the conditions of its storage.

A good tea will surely have a good liquor color. The most previous teas will have a liquid that is clear, fresh, and pretty. A tea that is good or bad will normally be reflected in the color of the brew. An expert can know a good tea from a mere glance without much bias. The best we can describe of a tea is only approximate, it is very difficult to say very precisely. It is because this would require an application



of optics. There are lots of variables that would affect the color of a tea brew. The vocabulary to describe the color and sheen are limited, and they are not associated with our main goals.

Flavor and *taste* are nouns. But *flavor* is the savor, and *taste* is the mouth feel. Slippery, spongy, sweet, dry, astringent, chewy, and vibrant all are characteristics of mouth feel. There are many kinds of flavor, but all of them are *natural* (the natural character)—pristine, tender, fresh and refreshing are the qualities most highly valued.

Flavor also extends to the quality of the tea rhythm, together they are called *rhythmic flavor*. Rhythm is fine and reclusive, so it is sometimes referred to *echoing rhythm*. Only a good liquor will exhibit a *rhythm*. The rhythm that is round, moist, full, embellishing, smooth, thick, runs deep within and long lasting are most precious. A special tea will surely have a distinctive charming rhythm, which causes one to linger and forget to leave, with a flavor that is everlasting. For example, the high grade *rock teas* have with them *rock rhythm*. The highest grade of *Tie Guan Yin* (鐵觀音) has the rhythm of *Yin rhythm* or *Quan rhythm*. Old *Puerh* has a mature *aged rhythm*, which is particular about *nectar-like*, *pristine*, *potent in Qi*, and *dissolving*. All fine teas, be they fresh or old teacakes, the most highly ranked will have a dissolving taste upon entering the mouth.

To taste a tea one must first examine the shape of the tea leaves and observe the color, followed by smelling the tea liquid's fragrance and finally appreciating the rhythm and flavor. Examine the shape, observe the color, smell the fragrance, distinguish the flavor, and appreciate the rhythm all belong to the activities of eye visions, smelling, and tasting—all are sensual feelings. The sensual feelings will be affected by subjective and objective conditions. Of course they are subjective, which will not be all the same. However, it is also rare to be completely distinct.

(ii) The Fragrance of Puerh Tea

Sniffing the aroma of *Puerh* tea is practiced only in recent years, and at present is practiced by only very few people. Most people do not know that *Puerh* tea has fragrance at all, let alone that it is delightfully aromatic. This is because it is very rare to have the good fortune to be able to taste fine and aged *Puerh*.

One special characteristic of the fragrance of *Puerh* tea is that it has an *aged fragrance*. This is but one approximate description. After sampling a wide variety of *Puerh* teas, one will come to realize that the range of its fragrances is very rich—variegated and with layers—far beyond what is generally thought. Other than the *Puerh* fragrances of freshness and sweetness, additional ones could appear as well. Examples are

Flower fragrances—include ones such as jasmine, rose, osmanthus, orchid, lily, night-blooming cereus, and lotus, etc.

Fruit fragrances—include longan fruit, jujube, apple, plum, green plum, dark plum, red bean, bean, green bean, lyehee, pumpkin and winter melon, etc.

Wood fragrances—include camphor, Chinese fir tree, sandalwood, agalloch eaglewood, and ganoderma lucidum LingZhi fungus, etc.

Bamboo leaf fragrances—include bamboo, lotus, bamboo tube, bamboo leaf, and mint leaf, etc.

In addition, there are fragrances of **ginseng, honey, milk, glutinous rice, rouge powder, grass jelly, earth, special herbal medicine, and musk**, etc.

Occasionally tea fragrances mix, for example flower-honey fragrance, honey-orchid fragrance, orchid-osmanthus fragrance. Sometimes there is one dominant fragrance that carries with it other subordinate fragrances, such as *orchid fragrance out of the branches of an old palm tree*.

Aged teas will transform towards *sweet, pristine, Qi, and dissolving*. The subtlety of the fragrance and the force of vibration will change over time. The subtler the stronger its energy will be, the higher will be its spirituality. With a truly high level tea you must smell its fragrance, for it is infused with truth, virtue, and beauty. *Song Pin* is the ultimate example with an all-enchanting fragrance. However, the higher up the shelf, the subtler the fragrances become. A tea that has been aged more than one hundred and twenty years cannot be properly described in any earthly language, because its fragrance is no longer of this world. Ordinary people may not necessarily notice the fragrance. Only those whose spirituality has attained a certain level will love it.

(iii) What One Must Know When Smelling Tea

- (1) When tasting tea, one must not fail to smell its fragrance. By not smelling the tea, one is simply wasting half of its prowess. What makes tea so precious is its tea *Qi* (energy). With a high temperature steeping, the fragrance will spill out in all directions. At this time, one should take the advantage to inhale and absorb it, allowing the energy retained by the vapor to enter the body through the circulatory and transmission systems. Otherwise it will be a great pity to be wasted. With a good tea liquid, simply by smelling it without taste, one can enter Trance. Even further, with some top-quality old teas, one will be able to enter trance by simply opening the canister and taking a whiff. Without having to steep, one is also in Trance by smelling the fragrance.
- (2) Using a specialized *sniffing cup* to smell the fragrance will yield a better result for the aroma. Smelling a porcelain cup lid, or sniffing the freshly



emptied teapot, is also a good method. If one gets the chance to use a *Cha-Dao energy ring* while sniffing tea, he or she will come to know wondrous tea fragrance further.

- (3) Sniff the three different fragrances—it is very rare that a tea has one single pure fragrance. Most often there will be a wide range of scents. The frequencies of different fragrances are unique, and thus the rate at which they are released will vary. The best of the *Tie Guan Yin* teas, *Guan Yin Wong* (觀音王), will exhibit wholly different fragrances in each of the first ten steeps. Generally speaking, the better the tea, the more diverse its fragrance. Each change to the fragrance is clearly marked, and the fragrance is progressing in stages. One should try to appreciate each of the fragrances as it is displayed within each steeping. One can sniff the fragrances as the temperature of the vapors goes from hot to warm to cold. Some teas only release their full fragrance after the cup temperature has dropped down to warm, while others leave their fragrance at the bottom of the cup—a cold and stunning beauty fragrance. One must seize the precise moment when it shows up.
- (4) The fragrance of old tea continues to change—tea is alive. Teas that ferment after being made, such as *Puerh*, will continue to progress and change over time. Just as the practice of austerities changes men, the finer fragrances of a tea are slowly nurtured to show up over the course of many years. For example, a tea that originally had the fragrance of camphor possibly will change to orchid, sandalwood or even ganoderma. Its fragrance will continue to evolve and become ever finer, ever more elevated, and ever more spiritual.
- (5) Fragrances can be high grade or low grade, clear or turbid, strong or weak, long lasting or short in duration. Naturally, those that are pure, clear, and high, with a strong and long-lasting fragrance are considered superior. The changes in fragrance could be plotted like a curve, starting from thin, weak and low, changing to thick, high, and strong, and then once again reverting to insipid and long lasting. A super high shelf tea registers a fragrance that is clear, elegant, thin and lingering. Its aroma starts out radiant and wondrous, ultimately returning to the ordinary. But its vibrational frequency is subtler, and more powerful with more penetrating force.

(iv) The Secret to Smelling the Fragrance

A different person has his or her own skills and learning experiences in smelling tea fragrances. Here we present another one—the *Cha-Dao* smelling secret.

There are many different kinds of tea fragrance. The fragrance of a *Five Elements Tea* with a mixture of several kinds of teas is even more complicated. The secret to smelling fragrance using the *Cha-Dao* method is in relying not upon your intellect, but to trust in your intuition:

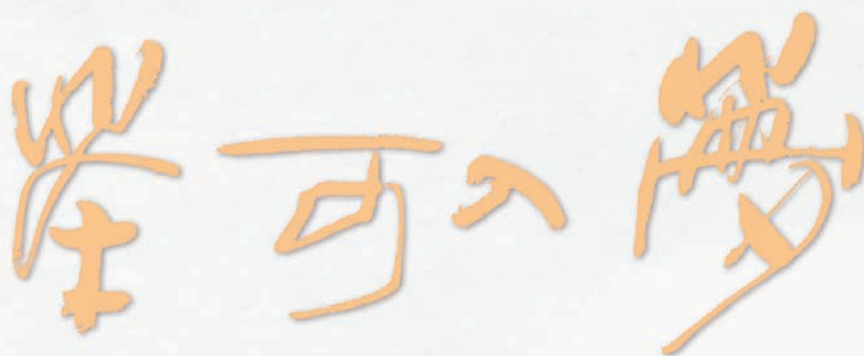
Before smelling the fragrance, first put down all the random thoughts. Take a deep breath, close your eyes, and then lift the sniffing cup. Bringing it up to the nose, wave the cup past the nose in a quick horizontal pass, just to get a flash of the fragrance. In this way each of the aromas of the tea will come out individually. The subtlety of tea Qi moves very fast. Different kinds of tea Qi will be displayed at various paces. Trusting in your intuition is essential. If you calculate with your brain, you'll never get it right. The Cha-Dao we are mentioning is the spiritual approach to tasting tea, wherein it is the inner self that is truly brewing tea. Logic reasoning and debate will only confuse things.

Intuition is a magic power bestowed by God to humanity. The more one relaxes and frees from intellect, the more in touch he or she is with the Cha-Dao. Relying upon intellect to make assessments is not the Cha-Dao. This is the basic message that has been conveyed consistently.

(v) The Sacred and Marvelous Fragrance

It is said in Liu Bing Zhong's poem, "Before the tongue has received the true flavor, the nose has perceived the sacred and wondrous fragrance." That a fragrance may be called *sacred*, it must truly be no ordinary fragrance. What is called a *wondrous* fragrance means the spiritual energy as it is ever changing and may not be measured. The teas from original mother trees, some top ranked famous teas, a truly high shelf old *Puerh* or a high-ranking *Five Elements Tea*, will have a most unique and special fragrance. Such a fragrance will surpass the ranks of the fragrances of orchid or sandalwood, which is ever changing and unpredictable. Each fragrance possesses its own unique characteristics that cannot be confused and be duplicated. In fact it is impossible to express them clearly in words.

The common characteristics include elusive, exotic, wondrous, profound and rich in spirituality—as if being there and as if not. Their vibrational frequencies





are so very subtle or micro-subtle, that they stir even the soul. These fragrances feel like they are not of this world, but more like *pure fragrance* descended from Heaven. Language is unfit to adequately describe them, and the best we can do is to say that they are *the fragrances of the higher planets, from the Magnificent Fragrant Sky, similar to the Ninth Grade Lotus Fragrance, to the exotic fragrances of the Buddhist Kingdom*. Therefore, those who have the chance to taste such teas and appreciate such fragrances truly have enough blessed reward.

Since ancient times, it has often been said that *through calligraphy one can enter the realm of the divine*. They did not know that through a tea's fragrance one could also *approach the divine*. If one could smell the fragrance that *approaches the divine* while tasting tea, then *approaching the Tao* through tea should be a quite natural and easy task.

III. Physical Sensations

When we taste tea, we are after the tea *Qi* of the tea. The tea *Qi* enters into the body through the mouth and nostrils, initiates and arouses a wide range of bodily sensations. But approximately these experiences will not beyond the range which is stated as follows.

(i) Chilly, Hot, Sour, Numb, Swell, Aching, Tingling, Itchy, Dizzy, and Full

After the liquor enters the mouth, particularly for beginners, one may experience a combination of the following: *chilly, hot, sour, numb, swelling, aching, tingling, itchy, dizzy, and satiated*. These are all the effects of tea *Qi* on the body. Let it happen naturally, it will disappear naturally as well.

Hot, numb, sour, and swelling are very common feelings of *Qi*. Heat and cold sometimes alternate, and, in rare cases, one side of the body may even feel a chill while the other half feels hot. *If there are no Qi blockages, then there will be no ache. If there is aching then there is a blockage*. If a Meridian is blocked, the circulation of the tea *Qi* will be obstructed. As the *Qi* rushes to clear the blockage, one will feel sour or aching. As the *Qi* circulates, collides with, and expunges bad energy, one will feel swelling, aching, tingling, and itchy; especially the fingertips which are the most sensitive.

All of the above are normal phenomena. Just keep on tasting teas, once you are through everything will be fine.

When it is hot, one will feel the *Qi* swell and the face becomes reddish. Often one will experience tingling and numbness in the middle of the palms and swelling of the hands, occasionally there is numbness on the scalp. One tea friend is often seen to have his fingers and palms turn completely red and soft while tasting good

teas, which are called *Reddish Cotton Palms*. It will even occur that when the two palms are folded together, the fingers on one hand are longer and the other ones shorter (by approximately one centimeter).

When the *Qi* rushes to the brain, the head feels heavy and slightly dizzy, and one feels sleepy as if being drunk. The entire body is filled with *Qi* and the mind is clear and the breath is steady. It is like being relaxed and at ease while sitting on a deck chair. The *Qi* is satiated and one does not feel like eating.



▲ Hands just like reddish cotton palms.

(ii) Expelling Bad *Qi*, Perspiration and Dripping Sweat

The energy of good tea is very strong, the force of vibration is subtle, and after tasting it one may have the sensations of purging bad air, banishing negative *Qi*, and of recharging one's energy.

After bad *Qi* and negative *Qi* is expelled, the body then recharges energy. After tasting tea, everyone becomes much more youthful.

Because the energy of the tea is strong, one's body becomes heated, the pores open and quite naturally one perspires.

Sometimes, one will feel cool inside, the entire body sweating like running water, and yet one does not feel hot. At times, it is hot inside, while the skin remains very cool. After tasting good teas over a long period of time, the body is cleansed within. At this time, the sweat one emits will be fragrant.

Good tea purifies the body, mind, and soul, expels turbid *Qi* and washes out bad qualities. The body and mind will feel very joyful.

Each person's body type is different, it could be cold or hot, weak or strong, the attribute(s) of the Five Elements within and without is also different. The same steep of tea drunk by different people may produce great differences in sensations and reactions. When the difference is great, one may feel the body is burning like a furnace, while another's hands are as cold as ice.



▲ Not merely perspiring, but sweat dripping off the fingertips.

(iii) Accelerated Heart Beat, Shortness of Breath and Feelings of Suffocation

When the tea *Qi* takes effect, the heart rate and pulse quicken, and the face can either flush red or blanch white.

As one's lung capacity expands to takes in more oxygen, sometimes one will feel as if being on a mountaintop where there is lack of oxygen.

When the tea *Qi* is overpowering, ones heart beat accelerates or if one is forcibly roused from Samadhi, this may cause one slightly gasps or the body to tremble slightly.

(iv) Physical Movements and *Qi* Circulations

When the *Qi* takes effect, a variety of physical movements may appear. Externally, there is often the visible rocking of the body (including swaying and shaking) and fluctuating. Phenomena that occur internally include: tremors, trembling, spinning, pulsing, and rhythmic movements. The latter movements are inside and latent. Both types of activity can occur for the same individual after the same cup of tea.

After the tea fragrance enters the nostrils, and the tea liquid enters the stomach, the energy begins to take effect, and one can feel the tea *Qi* start to circulate within the body. It may circulate along a fixed path or it may parade freely without a certain path. The tea *Qi* can be rough or smooth, the movement may be uplifting or sinking, the scale may be large or small; and the level may be deep or shallow. The strength of the *Qi* may be hard or soft, strong or weak, quick or slow,

and the stabilities are different as well.

If the food one eats is not pure, then the body can only have crude force. When the force of vibration of the tea collides with that of a body, only then the body fluctuates and shakes. It is therefore very important to only eat a pure diet. Only being a vegetarian will the body being in peace. The frequency of the body becomes subtle, the energy of the Universe will then be easy to come through. As the body becomes purified, swaying and jolting will naturally diminish or disappear.

The body movements and the *Qi* circulations often occur in a mixture. Here we offer a relatively unusual example of this. While tasting the *Five Elements Tea No. 5*, one tea friend drank a single cup and then placed his hands on the thighs with palms facing upwards. He immediately felt the *Qi* begin to move:

1. The *Qi* is all over the entire body.
2. The *Qi* that had gathered in the lower *pubic region* began spiraling up the centerline of the body and up to the *Crown Chakra*.
3. The body began to sway back and forth rhythmically, while the *Qi* continued to swirl up the centerline.
4. The rocking backward and forward ceased, and then he began to sway to the left and to the right.
5. These movements ceased, and he then began to droop downwards. This lasted for a short while.
6. The *Qi* started to swell throughout the entire body, then quickly ceased. He then opened his eyes naturally.
7. After awoke, he felt a cool spot on the back of the neck, and found that when he pressed it with his hand it produced a sound.
8. When swaying, his mind was peaceful. He simply let it happen naturally, without any worry or fear.

(v) Testimonials about Tea *Qi* excerpts

1. When the energy of the tea *Qi* is strong, as soon as the tea enters the mouth it begins to regulate the circulation within the body, pushing through the whole body. The chest feels hot and the mind is empty. Very quickly one becomes purified—leading one to enter Trance quickly. At the time, one feels there is only the fluctuation of life, and it is connected with the vibration of the Universe.
2. It is a very lucid slumber. The body sways in tune with the subtle rhythm of the Universe, spinning to the cadence of celestial music, all the while



the spirit remains very clear. It is a great liberating feeling.

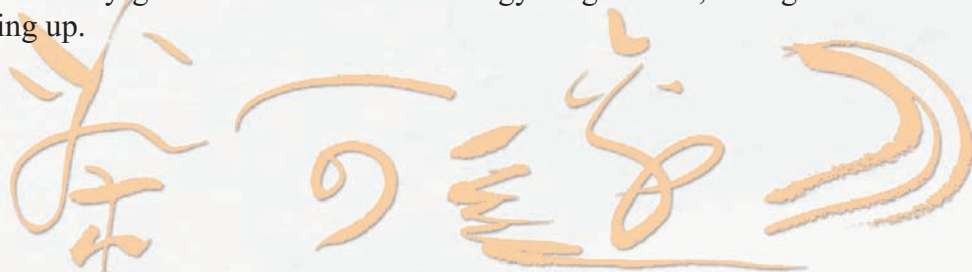
3. Immediately after tasting, the body feels as if it is spinning continuously. The mind is empty—not much thought but the feeling of spinning, and the spinning is very pleasant. I suddenly realized that this must be the rotation of the planets and the Universe. When the body is in a state of heightened tranquility, the individual body can also feel the pull of the great nature's magnetic field. This is of the same principle the small gear on a bicycle being turned and pulled by the larger one.
4. The *Qi* rushes straight to the *pubic region*, gathers there, sinks down to the feet then rises up in a rush straight to the top. It then drops down again, going forward then gushing out into the fingertips. The breath becomes rapid and the upper body feels hot. The *Qi* rushes throughout the body without gathering in any one area. The ears feel hot and I smell the fragrance of beans. The *Qi* rushes straight down. My back and neck feel cool. The *Qi* moves back and forth horizontally across the body. The entire body radiates heat. The *Qi* swirls and circulates in the body and then settles down. Breaths are long and drawn out. I feel buoyant, like a small boat upon the water. The entire body feels balanced. The *Qi* is full and, when exhaling, the lower abdomen draws in air for a long time. Breathing is very smooth.
5. The *Qi* gathers in the *sombre entrance to the Way*, then rushes up to the *Crown Chakra*, then walks the skin, flesh, bones and the Meridians. The furthest tips of the arms and legs are all filled with *Qi*, and there is a pulsing in the *lao gung xue* (the center of the palm). The *Qi* feels dense, thick and continuous. All the pores of the body are clear and unobstructed. I can see light and visions, but it passes quickly by.
6. Simply closing my eyes and smelling the fragrance, immediately I was intoxicated. The tea *Qi* rushed straight to the crown of the head. It is not so much like a thin string, but rather like a thick slice of ribbon. Even before tasting, my fingertips were already flushed with *Qi*, and the palms felt as if they were grasping a balloon. Slowly I reached out and took the cup. After the first cup, my entire body was full of *Qi*. The body felt warm and hot, the pores of my skin all opened up. My arms felt cool and refreshed yet they shunned the breeze that came in through the window. My body and face sweated, beneath my tongue was like a bubbling spring, my tongue clicked, making *tsk-tsk* sounds, and my lips and tongue puckered naturally. This went on for a long time. During that time there were some changes. The sound varied in its pitch with large and small, high and low, while the movement on the palate alternated between slow and fast. It seemed quite rhythmic; it's very interesting and amusing.

Actually, with this tea even one cup is enough. I was already in Samadhi. However, since our host had already poured out the second cup, and this being the *Hundred-year Song Pin*, there was no way for me not to drink it. At that time most of the tea friends were immersed in Trance, sitting with untouched cups with tea in front of them.

7. The tea *Qi* is so vast as to be like the ocean that is so containing. There are so many things within it. As soon as I closed my eyes, very quickly all became very comfortable, very bright and very natural—very quick, there is no need for counting sheep 1, 2, 3.
8. The *Qi* is very strong. After belching a few times, it rushed upwards like a nuclear bomb. The Meridians of Front and Back middle Channel became fully opened, and the mind was empty. The entire body felt as if floating on air as I glided into Samadhi. It is intoxicating, rapturous, and enjoyable. I have completely lost my self!
9. The tea *Qi* is very strong, like the stampede of ten thousand horses. It then calm down very quickly. A calm that is too quiet... as if there were nothing at all.

The sound of no sound became all-engrossing. This was all very pleasant and for a long time I stayed in that realm.

When drinking good tea one can connect with the energy of the Universe. This energy is mighty, and through its assistance one can very easily unblock the *Qi* channels of the entire body. The speed will be much faster. The energy of the Universe emits a bright glow, and wherever this light goes the magnetic field immediately changes, becomes purified. If one makes use of this power to cleave through the sick or injured areas of the body, the speed will be the fastest. Likewise, if one uses the energy of the Universe to pierce through the Meridians and the nodes of the body, the speed will also be the fastest. A good tea can help one to connect with this power and wield it instantaneously. This is why tea tasting has the fastest speed in purification and elevation. This is also the reason why anyone who practices a martial art, (Chinese) medicine, or spiritual practitioners, immediately gets in touch with the energy of good tea, will go after it without giving up.



Below, background calligraphy of tea can summon the moon



IV. Spiritual Reactions

The energy of a good tea not only stimulates reactions from the senses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, it also touches and uplifts a person's heart (thoughts, emotions, mind, will) and spirit (spiritual consciousness, soul). Some reactions are visible on the surface, others submerged and within, not all are visible. Even if the one who experienced these wishes to speak of them, he or she is not necessarily able to find the right words.

A truly good tea can stir the soul and elevates the level of spiritual consciousness, allowing them to be sublimed. Therefore, tasting tea in the *Cha-Dao* is no longer the bodily I that is tasting the tea. Ultimately, it is the inner self, the true master who is tasting and steeping the tea.

(i) Tranquility, Joy and dissolving

Simply sniffing the *Qi* of a good tea makes one relaxed, joyful, and smiling. Tasting tea is all about relaxing. A good tea makes one relaxed—not only the mouth is relaxed, but the body, the heart, and the soul are all relaxed. At all times relaxing, at all times opening, all experience of the *Tao* is thus *relaxing*.

Relaxing leads the body and heart to calm down. The more ones' heart calms down, the more subtle the force of vibration and the more one will be more peaceful. One feels all the body and heart are cleansed—receiving the blessing of the power of Love—this is joyful, dissolving and full of grace.

In the end, through tasting tea ,one will become like a child—returning to the true nascence.

(ii) Images

The character of a tea can be classified as Yin and Yang. The tea *Qi* has different varieties. A number of teas have a beautiful and fragrant brew and upon tasting it the soul will be touched, sparking the taster's imagination or making some connections. In the mind of the tasters, sometimes certain simple images will bubble up to the surface, or even make them completely submerged in the realm of being one with the Universe.

Take for example, “*A fine tea has always seemed like a beauty.*” In comparing tea to a beautiful woman, different tea has its own special character, which will inspire one to have different images. *Bi Luo Chun* (碧蘿春) is delicate and feminine, like a young girl not yet fully grown. *Lu Tie* (綠鐵) is unrivaled in its lucid beauty, like a celestial fairy untainted by the mundane world. *Shi Feng Lung Jing* (獅峰龍井) is clear, graceful, and unearthly, just like Xi Shi washing cloth by the rivers. *Da Hong Pao* (大紅袍) overflows with the fragrances of numerous flowers, combined with the rhythm of the rocky crags on which it grows. Its

majestic *Qi* is overpowering, likened to the celestial beauty and heavenly fragrance of the peony flower. It carries with it the awe-inspiring poise of the great Mother by whose command all beneath Heaven is bound. Drinking the *Ocean of Love* is much like a *mother's Love*, the feeling is one of being embraced by an unlimited love and forbearance. It is a feeling like the caress of a loving hand.

Tian Xin Hao (天信號) is bitter, stern, and austere. It has the high moral bearing of a true gentleman or a recluse. *Tie Lo Han* (鐵羅漢) grows on rocky cliffs. It has a tea *Qi* that is fierce and masculine. After tasting it, one feels that its name is most appropriate. Tasting *Chen Yun Gui* (陳雲貴) feels as if you are engaged in conversation with a gentle, unrestrained, and warming one hundred year old wise sage, while out under the warm sun on a clear winter's day.

Guan Yin Wang (觀音王) is fresh, supple and with the vitality of Spring. It is like a garden filled with a hundreds flowers in bloom. However, the Autumn teas have had to endure the extreme Summer heat. Therefore, it has a bit flavor with maturity in the Autumn. Just like the golden beams of sunlight in the afternoon of Autumn—joyful, bright and clean, mixed with a little bit sorrow for the passing away of Summer memories.

On the other hand, tasting *Song Pin* feels as if flying in an airplane, ten thousand miles up in the sky. Outside the window all is placid, clear, bright and clean, with all the clouds and mists below you.

(iii) Sleeping, Dreaming, and Entering into Samadhi

Upon settling down while tasting tea, it becomes easy to enter sleep, to fall into dreams, or become entranced. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the three.

Most people are only aware that drinking tea will stimulate and perk up the mind; as a result it is uneasy to fall asleep after drinking tea. Actually, after tasting good teas or old teas, one becomes relaxed and very readily enter a state much like sleep but not sleeping. With a good tea, by the third cup, as soon as one closes their eyes, they have already entered a Trance state.

Without being in meditation, one is already in sleep. Actually it's being in Samadhi, with the body appearing to be asleep.

From within this half asleep state one can still hear other tea friends talking, but it feels as if one's body has dissolved and disappeared.

When one enters deep in Samadhi, even after the tea meetings has ended and all the tea friends have left the table or even gone home, still one sits there motionlessly. When one enters Samadhi even more deeply, one can realize what it means of stillness in a flowing river—time and space simply doesn't exist, and just in a moment many hours have passed as if within a blink.



▼ Group photo after the Tea Meeting, one person is still in Samadhi.



(iv) Laughing and Crying

In tea tasting, when the heart is moved, then very naturally one will laugh or cry. Generally, there is more laughter than tears. The manner in which emotion is expressed, its depth and intensity will vary widely from person to person. Whether one wants to laugh or cry actually are the same. Both are simply a natural outpouring of emotions that one need not try to suppress. Letting them out one will be purified and elevated.

With a good tea, one need not even drink it—just one whiff and there is laughter.

After the liquor enters the mouth, the tea *Qi* is accumulated and strengthened, the entire body relaxes. It becomes as if every cell of the body is laughing heartily.

The fifty-eighth tea meeting was a very special one. It could even be called the *Laughing Meeting*. Throughout the tea meeting everyone laughed from the beginning to the very end, in particular after tasting 1920's *Huang Jin Tang* (黃錦堂). The peels of laughter echoed long and continuously without cease. There were many unexpected twists. Following are the records from that tea meeting:

The squat building of the *Hang-Jia Art-of-Tea House* is very close to the

provincial highway. From the window comes the endless noise of cars-trucks rumble past and scooters constantly zip by. While indoors there is playing light ambient music, one can hear the occasional sounds of pouring liquor, raising and setting cups, inhaling, exhaling, and the sounds of a belch. But the tea friends remain oblivious to all this, each one is searching after his or her own tea path. The chamber remains still and silent.

At this time, teacher Yeh who is not usually talkative, suddenly explodes into laughter—ha ha ha, HA-HA-HA, HAHA-HAHA, HAHA. She laughs uncontrollably without being able to stop. She probably had been holding it in for quite a while already, but in the end was unable to suppress it. Once exploded, the situation was out of control, her laughter continuing unabated, with extraordinary volume given her size and stature. No one had ever before heard her make such a sound, her voice reverberating strong and significantly. It must have been something very, very funny that could cause her to laugh so wildly and uncontrollably. Thus she remained, unable to escape the grasp of this most funny episode.

Such abrupt, unusual, losing the manner and not knowing the reason long-lasting laughter did not scare the tea friends of the table. Most sat still and unaffected. Some continued sitting in Trance with their eyes closed. Some merely glimpsed with their eyes and then closed them again. And a few also joined with a HAHA of their own. With a HAHA here, and a HAHA there, the laughing started gaining in force, spreading rapidly like a contagious disease.

Everyone was by now laughing loudly, each one laughing at his own volume and pitch, but what was it that everyone laughing about? No one really knew for sure. What was so funny? Were they laughing for a reason or simply laughing because everyone else was, and because it looked like so much fun? Or were they simply laughing at this most bizarre tea meeting, and all the odd people in it? No one stopped to ask the reason why, they simply laughed happily, heartily, and without any unease. The laughter continued without cessation for a long time.

As the tea friends were all sitting round the same table, the laughter came at once from all directions, drifting upwards. Various laughter swirled around the table for a long time and gathered together above the center. The laughter formed a chorus of "*laughter sonata*". Such a happy, positive vibrational frequency must surely have shot straight through the roof of the building to the top of the clouds, and dispatched to the Universe. HAHA, HAHAHA, HAHAHAHA. Ah, Surely God must also have found it funny, and joined as a partner in our laughter.



That there may be crying or laughing after tasting tea, has already been noted as nothing new. It is only that this time it happened on such a scale and struck with such intensity that makes it noteworthy. However, the tea friends, all like well-experienced soldiers in the battle fields, were not disturbed and were sitting rigidly at their posts. As this was going on, Yeh tried to cover her face and mouth, only again to erupt into laughter. Following that, she bent over the table and laughed uncontrollably once more. After laughing like this for quite a while, not wanting to disturb the others, she modestly scurried over to another table and continued laughing wildly. In between uncontrollable seizure-like gasps of laughter she said, “*It’s really very funny.*” Though what it was that was so funny she could not say. She laughed so hard that she could hardly grasp enough breath to speak. Finally, Yeh said that she would feel badly if she didn’t tell everyone what it was she found so funny so, between gasps and laughter, she pieced together the following explanation,

“A cup of 1920s Huang Jin Tang went down the belly. Even before I could identify the flavor of the tea, instantly I was pulled up. What was even more incredible was that there was a sequel to this magical act of the first cup. This continued where the first part left off, unfolding into an ever more unbelievable and wondrous realm (see the upcoming section on spirit wandering). As I looked down, I saw a group of people tasting tea—I then looked up and saw a beautiful rainbow descending from the Heaven. I was astonished to find that I could climb upwards via the rainbow, ascending it in a moment. What I saw at this time was yet again another realm unfolding. As I roamed, occasionally I would come upon a group of people tasting tea, and I would pause surreptitiously nearby to observe them. I then heard a voice that asked, “*What is Tao?*” The host then answered: “*The Tao that can be expressed in words is not the true Tao. The Tao that can be named is not the real name. The Tao cannot be spoken. The Tao cannot be expressed in words. The Tao is the way of Nature. Being natural is the Tao.*” Dejavu! That’s exactly what our tea society president says! So I took a closer look at the host, his facial expressions, and the rhythm of his aura, his movements, tone, and voice. All of these were identical to our president’s. It just seemed so wonderfully ludicrous, really just so hilarious that I couldn’t contain it, and all of a sudden I just burst into laughter. What’s more, I couldn’t stop no matter how hard I tried. These kinds of experiences have slowly brought me to believe in the possibility of the soul coming out of the body. I also believe that a person’s soul never dies. It is never born nor can it ever be dead. There is no start nor is there an end. Heaven and Earth are but a thought apart. ”

By smelling and tasting a good tea, one very easily begins to laugh. Shed

a few tears, or sobbing, on the other hand, is relatively difficult. Generally, a fine tea makes one feel a sense of benediction through the power of Love. With this, the riddles and knots within one's heart become undone, and emotion is released or purged. One may even catch a glimpse of a past life; only after the furthest depths of one's soul are stirred and swept clear, does this occur. When it does, such experience is often very personal and private, with the person involved rarely wishing to speak of the experience openly. At these times, the tea friends are not willing to question any further, nor will they speak it out even feeling the same way.

The emotions of laughing and crying may appear separately, or they may appear along side each other, or occur in short succession on the same person. In the course of the fifty-ninth Tea Meeting, just such a case occurred. From the tea meeting records:

We first drank *Guan Yin Wang* followed by a 1900's *Chen Yun Gui*. The two in combination were just too much, too extravagant, the tea *Qi* just too strong. Only one or two cups down, and already things started to unravel. When Zhu started laughing no one thought anything of it at first, because people at the tea meetings are always either laughing or crying. It would seem laughter was the main theme of the tea meetings. This time however it was different. Zhu laughed and then cried, cried then laughed, laughed then cried once again. Each time the laughing and crying were different in volume, and whether laughing or crying, all was done with her eyes closed. The expression of her face changed dramatically following each bout. From laughing to crying or from crying to laughing, the average time in between lasted less than thirty seconds. There were ten separate outbursts of such changes in between laughing and crying (records observed on site). The variations are wild, rapid, and most unexpected. An Oscar winning actor couldn't have performed this well. All of this is really very difficult to describe. We can only write down the progress of the changes in between laughing and crying as follows:

laugh→cry→laugh→cry→laugh→cry and laugh→crying out loud→laugh→loud laugh→loud laugh.

Although this seems very odd, nevertheless these are the facts. After writing it down and then reading it over, it makes more sense than it did at the time. It all ended with a great burst of laughter. The crying and laughing were unrestrained, kept changing all the time that is unpredictably. As the number of bouts increased, their duration lengthened. This disturbed no one however, each one being fixed in the search for his own road. The newly arrived tea guests were as equally calm and



composed; everyone taking it in a peaceful manner.

Where in history has there been a tea meeting like this?

(v) Scenes, Sound and Light

When one becomes settled in tasting tea, connects with the power of the Universe, and hear the Sound from within, this is entering the Tao through tea and returning to the fountainhead. In reconnecting with the *Tao*, one discovers the most primeval power. Within those ever-so-calm moments, one can clearly see his or her own true nature. Through the natural wisdom possessed by the true self, one re-awakens to the greatness that exists within oneself.

When enter the spiritual realms while tasting tea, within the stillness one will hear the Sounds or Currents, sees lights and visions (some are blurs, while others are clear images). The contents of the visions are different. They are associated with ones past life experiences, the living background of the present life, and the current level of spiritual practice.

Of the sights and sounds that one bears witness to, many are private and personal. Some belongs to the *inner experience that must not be voiced*. For this reason, the person involved often is not willing to speak of, or will reveal only parts of it. Listed below are a few recorded experiences of some of the tea friends (names withheld):

1. I heard the sound of a bamboo flute, a long chanting, and all before my eyes was a pale mist.

In a flash, I saw a bright white light, illuminating all with the light of self nature (☉ this otherwise can only be achieved after countless lifetimes of spiritual practice). I relaxed myself, not thinking anything. I felt as if the force of Universal energy pierced through all of the cells of my body—*from within the light, countless trillions of Buddhas were manifested*.

All of the objects before my eyes became animated. Even the woods before me turned into living beings. I saw a large temple, the entrance of the temple, and a bamboo hedge. I relaxed and entered into Samadhi.

2. It was like seeing a glimmer of light in a vast ocean. The energy concentrated and became a kind of light. I really saw it. People of the past often spoke of the spiritual light that illuminates one from within and illuminating others. This was something I had never ever experienced before.
3. Suddenly, I saw a person from ancient times, wearing a government official hat and with a long beard. I saw also *Guan Yin Bodhisattva*.

I felt the urge to sleep, and after entering the state of asleep I awoke again. In the end, I saw a very large image of my own self appear before me. More and more I could see myself, and *Guan Yin* was also my own self. I saw and entered within the Buddha nature of my own self—my own true self.

4. While tasting this *Blue-label Song Pin*, my eyes shut automatically. Suddenly I realized that I had entered into another space-time dimension. I felt above my head a very bright and intense white light of energy shielding down upon me. This white light of energy then was transformed into a golden beam of energy light. I could feel the presence not only upon me, but could also sense all of the objects around me, wherever this light fell. I then saw the sacred Tai Chi symbol before me, made of purple and white light, rotating counterclockwise (it also appears like a Time tunnel). After becoming completely awoken again, all of the cells within and without my body felt as if born anew, without any burden. It felt so peaceful and light.
5. My body felt as if submerged in an ocean of *Qi*. Suddenly, the area of my head appears to have a switch, with a *Pa* sound the top of my head instantly became clear and bright, just like the last time. However, when I opened my eyes, the brightness in the room seemed nowhere near as bright as that which I had just experienced with my eyes closed. It was most peculiar. I do not know where I was moments ago. (© Had the lights been turned off at this time, the room would still have been brightly illuminated.)
6. I saw the South Pole Immortal Sage standing there with his cane, in the dark night there was a small blue lamp and a wisp of flame. I saw a transparent green hued human silhouette in the distance, white mist on the bank of a lake, the wooden rack behind the statue of *Sakyamuni Buddha* in a temple, and a crowd of people in a square. There was a sunbeam like shaft of golden light—a beautiful scene.

While tasting the *Song Pin*, white colored swells of *Qi* swirled up. I saw the Quan Yin Bodhisattva ascend and meld into a cloud of white smoke. The *Qi* moved—it became a world of white fog and mist. I took another sip to steady myself, and then saw the Jade Emperor of Heaven walk by me. As I awakened some more, the *Qi* was spiraling all over my body.
7. As the second cup went down to my belly, all I could feel was the pure *Qi* of the Earth rushing straight through the gate of the brain. The *Crown Chakra* was wide open and my soul jumped up to escape from its cage. At this moment, I felt myself floating amidst surreal realms. As I glanced



down, I saw a group of people tasting tea. To my astonishment these people were none other than the members of our *Cha-Dao Research Society*. Just as I was puzzling over whether I was alive or dead, in Heaven or still in the mortal sphere, I was suddenly awakened.

I then saw a group of children steeping tea. They were about seven or eight years old; all were rather plump, short, and adorable. Their movements were absolutely hilarious.

8. The tea *Qi* pierced straight through my entire body, and I began to sweat profusely. My *Crown Chakra* was forced open, just like a star exploding, or a volcano erupting. Suddenly, before my eyes, appeared the beautiful scene of a shower of meteors, silver tree, and blossoming flowers. It was most incredible. It was fabulously inconceivable. (This surely cannot have been a dream!).
9. Someone saw the queen and fairies of the flowers coming out to dance and to soar.

Someone saw a dragon lumbering along, like it was from a black ink calligraphy painting.

There was another who saw a golden dragon, and heard that dragon's roars. A very powerful wave of *Qi* burst from the crown of my head, and rocketed straight through the tops of the clouds. My entire being was carried away with it, up into the Heaven. There I saw an auspicious pair—a rainbow colored dragon and phoenix soaring. Then very quickly, all turned clear and cool.

The content of these inner visions is either real or illusionary; however all of these experiences are authentic. When one tastes tea, and ventures deep within, only then can one hear the inner Sounds or Currents, and see lights or visions. Those who have attained a high consciousness level, without closing their eyes they could hear the Sounds and see the visions. The Sounds and the Light could purify our bodies and lives.

(vi) Glimpses—Pieces of the Past and the Future

While tasting tea, each person's frequency is transforming, depending on his or her affinity in the past. When the frequency is transformed, the face changes as well.

When tasting tea and being relaxed, it is possible for one to sense and retrieve the experiences of a past life. These roles that he or she once played in the past life, the important incidents and people will flash across the mirror of the mind in brief snatches.

Though it sounds incredible, within the stillness while tasting tea, one can have glimpses of the karmic affinities of the Tea Meetings and some members of the meetings, and can even gain glimpses of future events of the *Cha-Dao Research Society*.

Usually only the person directly involved knows exactly what an image fragment represents. The experiences range in scale from shock, awe and repentance to joy, jubilation and grand epiphany. Tears of gratitude often flow out of these experiences and when they do the tea friends simply pass a tissue or offer a silent blessing. Unless one volunteers to share for an emotional outburst, no one will otherwise inquire.

(vii) Spirit Roaming

Each spirit roaming is a voyage of the soul. It feels as if you are somewhere between dreaming and being in Samadhi. Upon returning from this dream and awakening out of the Samadhi, one doesn't always want to speak of it, or may only be willing to share parts of the roaming experience. Below we offer some more that may be of interest to the reader,

“The 1900's *Chen Yun Gui* (陳雲貴) was most unexpected. From just the first whiff of the first cup, a hauntingly ethereal and unique fragrance drew me into a Universal flower garden. The entire garden was full of flower buds waiting to bloom. As if by a signal, every bud began competing with each other to burst forth into blossom. It was teeming over with vitality. The scent caused me to be so overwhelmed with joy.

Possibly it was due to the fact that I was holding a baby at my bosom and I wasn't settled down in mind, every cell of my body taking advantage of the chance to jump around. Such a vivid and bubbling feeling, having no peaceful mind, is something I've never experienced after tasting tea. Then, as I was wondering what was happening, I suddenly fell into a kingdom of animals. Here, various beautiful animals, all wondrous and fantastic, coexisted peacefully. There was no quarrel or strife, no weak being the prey of the strong. Everything was simply peaceful and harmonious. A pair of phoenixes was swirling and dancing above in the air. A delightful cord of music drifted to my ears. It was very euphonious, which must be what is meant by the *sound of Heaven*. In this state, somewhere between dream and illusion, I walked into a palace. As I looked up, it was a glittering royal court. Hundreds of court officials were coming and going, speaking joyfully and animatedly as they went about their business. It seemed as if they all were preparing for a great banquet. By chance, I caught a glimpse of the Jade Emperor as he was gazing upon a very thick book. I then



noticed the cover with two bold words written upon it—*Cha-Dao*. Just as I was about to investigate further, I was suddenly pulled away by the cry of the baby. Not wanting to disturb the others, I had no choice but to carry her away from the table.

Before critiquing the tea, we first watched Miss Zheng performing a dance. I was so moved that it gripped my heart—it appears to me that the dance she just performed was just the scenes I had seen and felt moments ago. This could not possibly be a coincidence. I believe it should be another form of soul match. It was truly incredible. ”

V. From Being to Non Being—Nothingness

All creation was born from nothingness, and to the nothingness creation will be returned. Nothingness simply means formless, phase-less, thought-less, self-less, it does not mean absolutely nothing. Inherently there dwells invisible energy. Nothingness is just the return of the power, illusionary and spiritual, yet within it everything is housed.

When one first begins tasting tea, the organic senses are perhaps not yet sensitive enough; although one may try hard to discern the quality of a tea, one may not be able to do so clearly. After one has tasted more and higher level teas, through prolonged exposure, one's knowledge grows and power of perception broaden. One's senses of smell and taste, as well as one's bodily sensations become increasingly sensitive. The higher the level of the tea, the more subtle and delicate it is. In order to discern high level teas, one must delve deeply into the subtle and fine differences. Therefore the tea taster will become naturally ever more serene and concentrated. Only in this way is he able to capture the subtleties. As one settles ever deeper and concentrates on grasping this, till at the end there is nothing to catch—feel nothing, no senses at all, being emptied, and forgotten as well.

The subtle vibrational frequency of good teas and the intensive strength of energy that is positive, helps the tea taster purify the body and spirit, and elevates the state of consciousness. At a certain point, the act of tasting tea transcends all intellectual levels. One no longer feels the presence of his or her body and enters the spiritual realms, wherein such things as tea character, tea fragrance, and tea *Qi* are already forgotten, and have no feelings as well.

When there is no feeling, all is nothingness—no distinction between others and one's own self, and no distance between the sky and the earth. Yet being born from nothingness, and when we sense it, we will feel again that all creatures are of One, and I am the Universe.

When one reaches a higher state while tasting tea, there are no longer sensations of the body. One drinks tea and enters directly into the cool and soothing zone. In the depths of Samadhi, one discovers that there is nothing. One feels oneself to be very common. At that time, we will feel that we are the Universe, and the Universe is us. The concept of duality disappears. One enters a state of absolute serenity where all is nothingness. There is no concept at all. At the same time the wisdom opens quickly. Things that one normally doesn't understand suddenly are enlightened; any questions that may bubble up in the mind come to be answered automatically. All of these phenomena are states that occur within the deeper levels of Samadhi. They are difficult to be expressed in words. We could only describe part of these.

The above key points often appeared overlapped in the experience reports. It is very difficult to single out separately. Therefore we try to put the articles with similar contents together, and state them in separate associated subsections as follows.

(i) From Senses to Non-senses

A good tea has fine *color, fragrance, flavor, shape, taste and Qi*. One examines the shape, observes the color, smells the fragrance, discerns the flavor, appreciates the rhythm and feels the *Qi circulating or moving* within the body. It is most interesting, and also it reflects one's sensitivity. Tea experts and the naturally gifted ones can generally discern the first five items in every detail. However, these are not the ultimate goals—they can only be experienced and amused, better not to being too obsessed and lingered upon for too long. This also applies to those who are highly sensitive towards the *Qi* of tea. Because *eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and color, sound, fragrance, flavor, touch* are requisites of the body and the mind, it is still operating on the conscious level. As such no matter how sensitive our senses may be, the level will not be high.

Even when one can sense the *Qi* acutely, still one is partially upon the conscious level. Better to bypass the conscious level to enter the subconscious level and the transcendental consciousness level. The latter two don't need to rely on the intellect or surpass the intellect. Paying too close attention to the sensations is being submerged in them and being tied-up, which will greatly inhibit progressing into higher spiritual realms.

Therefore, after tasting tea for a long time, one senses at first this feeling and that feeling; in the end there is no feeling at all. The highest state in tasting tea is that of no feeling. As soon as one smells the tea, one feels cool and refreshed. Not having any physical sensation and experience is the best experience.



(ii) Straight on to the Cool and Soothing Zone—All is Nothingness

With truly high level tea, just a sip and immediately one enters a cool and refreshing zone. There is no feeling at all. At the time it is very quiet, and consciousness continuously expands to the Universe. The Universe could also shrink—oneself being the Universe, and the Universe being oneself. Therefore, if one could understand the self, then one can understand the Universe. Language cannot describe it—only being able to describe partially.

When one reaches the high stages of tea tasting, one feels their own body changed. One passes through the lives of the past, present and the future, and enters into an extremely cool and refreshing state full with spiritual bliss. Nothing is there—all is nothingness.

(iii) The Wisdom Enlightened quickly; All Answers Come Naturally

Teas are products of the earth, which are one with the earth. Tasting tea can help us to enter the state of self-less. There is no self and as a result there is no fear. Things that one cannot understand through reading come to be realized now. When one approaches the deeper states, the truth that one recognizes will be different. The wisdom is enlightened quickly. Things one could not previously understand may pop up naturally.

When we taste tea up to a certain stage, our frequencies will be changed. No longer is it a wave of straight line, instead it becomes jumping around. The speed is faster, and it leaves no trace and is undetectable. Once the body is elevated to a certain level, it is entirely different. Wherever the mind goes, one is already there. All things are created by the mind.

Good tea helps the taster to enter heightened states of awareness. At such time, consciousness becomes like a UFO. The way it moves is no longer in straight lines, but in jumps. When one connects with the higher realms, it is as if time stands still. Therefore it is called eternal. At that moment, one feels great peace inside, feels that all objects are of one, and that through one's own body, they can come to know all the objects of the Universe.

The more one has learned, the less easy for one to develop one's own wisdom. Wisdom is a type of feeling. When one harnesses this inner power, it is a force that is most powerful. Being relaxed and at ease is the moment when the force of the most powerful is activating. At that time the intensity of one's sensitivity becomes more and more increased. When this energy is sufficiently high, whatever you may have is the answer; whatever you think will be realized. Any question that you want to answer, the answer comes out naturally. No need to learn anything.

After tasting a good tea and being relaxed—without any intellectual activity,

allowing all latent material being released—if the mind can calm down, then any thought will become reality.

(iv) Absolute Serenity and Return to the Source

In everyday life we are in a society and world that is based on duality. However, when one tastes tea and enters into higher stages of consciousness, one may realize the *absolute* tranquility and freshness.

The last two teas steeped at the fifty-sixth session were 1930's *Lung Ma Tong Qing* (龍馬同慶) and *Five Elements Tea No. 55*. The tea *Qi* was intense and powerful, allowing one to easily enter the deeper levels of stability and tranquility, to attain the feeling of body, mind and spirit being united. Xie reports,

“While tasting *Lung Ma* I felt great peace and serenity, the temperature of my hands kept falling, my body turned to cool and refreshed. I could very clearly feel a cool, crisp breeze constantly and gently brushing over the surface of my hands and body. Therefore while tasting the *Five Elements Tea*, I was looking to get heated up again. Surprisingly, immediately upon drinking the first cup, I could feel within my body a great spinning and whirling—rotating to the left—like a spinning top. After a while, the *Qi* was jumping up and down within, like an electrocardiogram, but still it felt very comfortable and warm. Naturally I began to wonder what is happening today. What does this mean? What tea is this? Everything was fine up until I asked, but as soon as I did it was as if God Himself answered me, saying, ‘*This is the sensation of the Earth and the Universe constantly rotating. When one enters absolute serenity, it is possible for one to feel that one is also rotating in kind.*’

Later, my body suddenly began to swell, expanding until it vanished. It seemed as if my body was becoming a part of the earth and the Universe, and merging with them. I couldn't feel myself breathing, though I was aware that my body was tilting at an angle. It seemed as if there was a buoyant force that was holding me up, propping me up as I lay upon the earth, and yet unable to fall. It was very pleasant, like the feeling from childhood when my mother would carry me on her back or hold me in her arms. I was able to completely relax, lean back and enjoy that most heart warming and comforting feeling. It was a very, very mystic experience. It cannot be described in words. It was as if the Creator had taken me on a journey to experience the relationship between Human beings, the Earth and the Universe. All of this was most unexpected. Having tasting tea up to now, suddenly it felt as if I was going back to the beginning. All the *Qi* flow has completely vanished, I don't know if it has run off or assimilated with the body. I feel reborn, as if I have been given a new body and life



has returned to its starting point. This is a birth unlike any other, it is very fresh, free from any burden. ”

- ◎ “Without the beginning and without the end, this is the true nature of Life. It has been purified. ”

Xie, “Within the stillness, I suddenly became enlightened. I realized with a jolt that during the meditation, where one feels complete nothingness is actually returning to the Source—returning to the place where the *Creator* and *I* are One. We are the manifestation of light (energy) and as such if we want to go back to the Source of Light, all we need to do is revert once more to our original forms, then we will be able to go back. Therefore, while in Samadhi I constantly felt a large wave of energy come over me, immobilizing and fixing me. When I wanted to come back, I needed to get out slowly. Now I completely understand what is meant to *enter Samadhi*. It is none other than a return to the primal true self to merge as one. I have also come to realize that actually we go back often, not that we go back when we die.”

(v) A Message of Love

In the depths of meditation, each tea friend has his or her own experiences, each receives different messages. Some bubble up naturally, while others come with questions and answers. All of them make one feel incredible. Xie’s experience in tea tasting has been rather short; however she is unusually gifted, calm and concentrated. As the Tea Meetings were drawing to the end, the experiences she reported were ever deeper. Her on-site reactions often moved all those present. She completely trusts in herself, and listens to the inner voice in all that she does. In whatever situation she faces, she says, “*First settle down myself, then inquire within, respecting and abiding by the opinion and advice from the light within. In this you will see with your own eyes all the miracles created by yourself. This process is precisely the process I have experienced since the beginning of tasting tea up to now. Each time it leads me to different and ever deeper levels of self-discovery.* ”

One time after tasting a *Five Elements Tea*, Xie closed her eyes, and felt herself inquiring the Creator, “Why we were returning to taste this tea to experience all these?”

“It is most odd! There indeed I got the answer:

Shen Nong (神農, The Divine Farmer) tasted hundreds of herbs and used tea to detoxicate. By the Tang Dynasty, tea was already known to be a gift to us from Heaven—an elixir to cure countless ailments. As it progressed, people also come to realize that tea is a method for uplifting our spiritual

consciousness. From the Tang Dynasty to the Sung Dynasty, even the tea Tao of Japan, they had been advocating these, though most people still fail to truly understand and realize it. Now, we have formed this *Cha-Dao Tea Tasting Meetings* to write down the experiences in tea tasting, whether it is in the physical or the spiritual aspects. The primary goal appears to be the Creator wants us to convey these messages:

1. When the Creator created all living beings, these lives themselves have the inherent ability to heal. Therefore, if one drinks tea regularly there is no need to see a doctor. It will activate the cells of the body to adjust the body itself. So there is absolutely no need to doubt the life that God has sewn within you. What is given upon you is sufficient. There is absolutely no need to see a doctor, to undergo surgery or to take medicines.
2. This is the way of living proscribed to us for uplifting our spiritual consciousness. Materials are very important, the body is very important. The spirit and the soul are also very important. Only when body and soul are in balance can one be back to his or her origin. Over the time, from what we have seen in various sci-fi films, countless scientists over the centuries have studied and probed the nature and formation of both the planets and the Universe. Actually from the perspectives of physical materials, no matter how modern technologies have been developed, still they cannot uncover the origin of Life. However, through tea that enables us to achieve absolute tranquility, we are back to the origin of our lives. The physical world and spiritual world are but two sides of the same coin. The distance between them can be covered just within a single blink or a single breath. In the past, I always thought that it was only when one sat in meditation to the deepest realm of consciousness, that one could approach the spiritual world. That it appears to be very far away. Today however I have found that the material world and the spiritual world are in fact much more like the palm and the back of the hand—two sides of the same body. If one knows the way, then even with eyes wide open one can see the coexistence of the spiritual world. It has often been said that ‘*Eternity is no more than a single blink.*’ It seems eternity can not easily be reached or be touched. Actually, the spiritual world is the eternal world. Furthermore, it has existed all the time. It is always by our side like a shadow that never abandons its owner. ”

Another experience record:

“Just now a thought popped up. It wanted to ask: *What is Cha-Dao?*
There was indeed a response to the question! The consciousness of the Universe (*God, Jehovah, Allah and Buddha*) then responded:



Ever since the existence of humanity, so too has been the existence of tea. At the time the consciousness of the Universe created all objects, already it bestowed the mechanism that all objects are mutually affected and in balance. Therefore, human beings on Earth are not only subject to the effects of the Earth's own objects' energy ecosystem transformation, they are also influenced by the energy ecosystem changes of the entire Universe and the planets of the Galaxy. When the life of an individual cannot afford the changes of the whole Universal environment, then the body, mind, and soul of the individual will become unbalanced and feel uncomfortable. They will even be returned to the original form of the life. The purpose for plants existing on Earth is not merely for us to learn, but is also to assist humans to complete the learning lessons. Therefore, the consciousness of the Universe created humans, and it also created all objects that surround us in this world. These objects have the ability to cure and heal the imbalances of body, mind, and of spirit. Tea is one kind among the plants.

Not only can tea assist Man in healing and purifying the imbalance of body, mind, and spirit, it can even help in uplifting the vibrational frequency. Allowing enlightened people to more quickly realize answers to questions such as: *Who am I? Why am I an human beings? As well as what is the purpose and mission for descending to Earth?* The consciousness of the Universe is the Creator, and as such is perfectly capable of self-healing and balancing. As spiritual sparks from the consciousness of the Universal Consciousness, all are inherently equipped with the ability to heal and balance.

As I sensed this, I suddenly realized that ever since the existing of the Universal consciousness, so too has our individual consciousness existed. And ever since the existing of humanity, tea and the *Cha-Dao* have also existed. The *Cha-Dao* is not subject to changes in time and space, as well as the humanity energy form. Because it is much like the goal and the reason, that the Universal consciousness lets the unique and the most primeval living pattern of matriarchal society (that is the Musuo 麼些) to be existing all the time.

Next, I began to notice that my individual consciousness was slowly melting within the consciousness of the Universe. Throughout this, I was constantly receiving very clear message transmitted from the Universal consciousness, *I love you*.

Continuing on, it was as if all the cells of my body were receiving this message of love. Therefore, the feeling of the body, mind and spirit melted together is very different from what we used to say is the feeling of body, mind and spirit merged into one. What followed was even more

extraordinary. My two hands could not help but to cover my face and, after a moment passed, my hands and face felt as if they had melted together. I couldn't open my eyes even if I tried, nor could I want to put my hands down. My entire body felt at once flushed with a huge wave of powerful energy, and at the same time tremendously weak and limp.

Finally it came to me, each time resounding more clearly than the last.

1. The essence of the Universal consciousness is Love. Love is light, is energy and is *Qi*; it is the vibrational frequency, and is the message.

Therefore, the essence of individual consciousness of each one of us certainly is also Love, is also light, energy, *Qi*, vibrational frequency and the message as well.

2. The life manifestation of each and every individual consciousness— be it positive or negative, high or low, good or bad, righteous or wicked, beautiful or ugly, either form of solid, liquid, gas, or ionic—is helping us the human beings to realize that all forms of energy life of the Universal objects are none other than the manifestation of Love.

VI. The Essence of Cha-Dao — Love

Cha-Dao means *entering Tao through tea*. As long as it is able to entering Tao, it is already in Tao, and is *Tao* itself.

Tao can be born and it can be returned as well. Tao creates one, which in turn gives birth to all objects. The whole Universe contains everything that is magnificent. The small Universe is like a speck of dust that is non-significant. It is the force of generating and the result. All things, no matter how different they may be, ultimately return to One. All things return to the nascent truth, to innocence like that of an infant, to the state of no name. Such is the effect of return and the pray.

Return to where? return means to the fountain source; that is return to God. All emanates from Him and all ultimately returns to Him. What then is God? He cannot be confined by words, though He can be intimately approached, embraced and felt while on this path of return—like the Love of the whole Universe. God is just like a vast *Ocean of Love*, and we are all originally bubbles in the *Ocean of Love*.

God is the *True Love* in your heart. The loving heart is the Almighty—the God head. Love is the force; Love is the action; Love is the process and is also the result. Love is everything.

Life is light, is love and is energy. Each one of us is also the *Manifestation*



of Love.

Love is the highest power of the Universe. It is the potency of the Source, and is also the self true nature that we own.

Expand your love! The greater the capacities of love in your hearts, the more the power of the Divine bestows upon you.

It has been said, *“Love is a lamp, which shines on others while also warms its self. He who holds Love on the path shall be in Love all his life.”*

Tea originates from God’s creation. It exists for the purpose of purifying and elevating humanity to return to God.

Tea is an *Avatar of Love*. The true spirit, the essence of *Cha-Dao* is simply, **Love**.

(i) The Fountainhead is the Ocean of Love

Tea is one of the ten great gifts bestowed upon human beings by God. It represents God’s Love and waiting, waiting for the day when Man will come to truly realize, to know to cherish, and make good use of it.

The stocks of mother tree teas, such as *Da Hong Pao* (大紅袍) or *Bai Ji Guan* (白雞冠), are all transplanted from high-level realms. Such teas carry with them a kind of blessing power—that is the levorotary energy. Its energy or force of vibration is very subtle. Upon tasting it, it will uplift us automatically, to pull us up to the spiritual layer immediately. Therefore it is very easy for us to get into Samadhi, to let us find no worry after tasting it.

Tea is among one of the ten gifts descended from Heaven to human beings to purify their magnetic fields. Not only can it purify the material aspects, it can also purify one’s heart and soul.

A Beautiful Legend,

There was once a child of light, who came to a beautiful planet, this planet is called Earth. This child of light became lost in play and forgot his way back home. A guide heard his calls for help, and appeared before him, promising to bring him home. The guide dispatched messengers to deliver the boy mystical water. As soon as the child drank this magical water, he immediately remembered the way home. That mystical water was called Tea.



▲ Little tea friend approaching Spring No. 88 of Inner Mongolia, and sitting down alone.

(ii) All in One

The Earth was once a planet separated out from a bigger one. Each individual was separated out from that head source. It is the same when they go back to the fountainhead. Those that were separated out will become one with the source. Only the fountainhead is the power of creation.

The ultimate goal of *Cha-Dao* is to go back to the Source, returning to the spiritual homeland.

The meaning of *Cha-Dao* is to enter the *Tao* through tea, to propagate the *Tao* through tea. The practice of *Cha-Dao* should integrate into the spirit; integrate into Nature—*Tao dwells in Nature*.

When we truly calm down, we will see ourselves manifested in all natural objects and all animals, because we are all "One", and are made of the same material. Since we are of one body, we will not hurt others. Any violence against others is violence against us ourselves.

After one tastes tea and calms down entering ever deeper within, into the state of nothingness, he or she then returns back to the absolutely true self—becomes one with the Universe. The nothingness is the ultimate true self.

The *Tao* is the force of creation, and it is the spring of inspiration. When a session of the Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings was in progress, not only was there spontaneous creation of poetry, song and music or performance, there was also extemporaneous performance of dance. Every time Zheng attends a meeting, she will almost invariably treat us with a dance. Most notable was her *Dance of the*



Soul.

When Zheng dances the *Buddha seated in a blossoming flower*:

Xie describes “Just like a flower that has attained the realm of forgetting the self, non-self. When Zheng dances, from her every movement performed so slowly, harmoniously and stretched naturally, one can see that she has no concern for how others see her, nor is she influenced in any way by the gaze or the rumblings of the audience. As far as dance is concerned, this is *Body, mind and spirit united as one* or *Being one with Heaven*. It is a dancer’s highest display. Every time I watch her dance, even I myself could feel the peace, serenity, and joy of *Body, mind, and spirit united as one* or *Being one with the Heaven*. Zheng has fully expressed the state of *entering Tao through Tea* through dance. Today she danced like a flower, displaying herself completely with joy and at ease. Actually it was a concrete action of propagating *Love*.”

Tasting tea is very elegant. Through tea tasting one may come to know all things in this world.

While tasting tea, the finer the molecular density of the body, the quicker the vibrational frequency. And it is easier to become one with the Universe. Therefore, one does not sense the distance in time and space. Within a single thought, it is possible to enter into the immense and spacious world of the spirit. Consciousness can transcend any time and space. It is free to travel as one wishes.

After exiting Trance and hearing the tea friends critiquing the tea, you will often feel that everyone else’s experience is also yours. From this you may know clearly the body, mind and spiritual level of each of the members.

In the state of *being in one*, one can experience that I am Him, I am everyone. I am the flowers, birds, grasses, trees, birds, animals, worms, bugs, and fishes. I am the whole Mother Nature. I am the whole Universe.

That Zhuang Zi observed fish and knew the joys of being a fish was because he used the *intuition*, the *spirit listening* that he was able to attain *Being "One"*. In this way he was able to feel what the fish felt as if it were his own feeling.

(iii) Gratitude and Sharing

Of the billions of different life forms, that one was born a human to be able to live beneath the sky and on Earth is surely something to be grateful for. *Man is the foremost among all creatures; everyone contains the Buddha Nature; and humans are created in God’s image*”. Therefore each person should be grateful. They are born into this world empty handed and, whilst living are thoroughly dependent upon Heaven and Earth, parents, society, teachers and friends for education, love and protection, to enjoy and consume everything. One certainly should be grateful.

Tea is one of God's ten blessing gifts upon Man. We should be grateful for it. Good tea is hard to come by. That we can meet with good tea and taste it, we should be grateful. That we can recognize that tea is a healthy beverage, a messenger of peace, a celestial panacea and nurturing for entering the *Tao*—one should be grateful. That one can enter the true *Cha-Dao*, walk the path of Love, and has the opportunity to share the blessing from God, one should be even more grateful.

One who is grateful is surely happy, and one who knows gratitude surely thinks of repaying the kindness shown to them. In sharing happiness with others, we expand our love, and the more we give to others the more we are happier.

By sharing happiness with others, by leading others towards Heaven, certainly we attain the Heaven ourselves—not only when we are alive, but we will certainly go to Heaven when we leave this world.

To have participated in the *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings* was indeed a big fortune and fate—it was all by the mercy of God. The Tea Meetings lasted one hundred sessions. We tasted five hundred varieties of teas and the teas are steeped by such a master, who also leads the members to experience deeply the true *Cha-Dao*, to purify the body and mind, to elevate the spirit amid eating, drinking, and playing. What are the virtues and good deeds that we own to deserve the fortune to enjoy such a blessed reward?!

The *Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings* were about sharing, for it is through sharing that one can possess even more. The phrase *Only by sharing, can one possess more* is at first little more than a pet phrase used by *Hang-Jia*, though now it has come to be a new experience of all the tea friends. The tea stock of *Hang-Jia* is full more than ever, and the tea members are gathering ever more in numbers.

The force of vibration of the Earth has entered a new epic that has never been preceded in history. The frequency of the entire world is elevated in a large scale. However before we rise up to meet this force of vibration, no matter how abundant the materials we possess or how high our social status, we could never be truly happy - they can only make our spirits feel emptier. Only by contributing our talents to this world, can we find true happiness.

Only by expanding as much love as we can, sharing unconditionally, and contributing our talents to this world, can we gain a truly happy life. If everything we do we do only for ourselves and count on self interest, then our heart and soul will become ever more withered and dry. It is impossible to elevate our spiritual level in that way.

Each member of the *Cha-Dao Research Society* has been able to go forth creating their own lives. Because once the force of vibration is elevated to a certain



level, every one of us has the power of creation. When we emit positive thoughts, then here (Hang-Jia) becomes just like Heaven.

Having been born in this age is a great blessing reward, though our time on Earth is not long. We must take advantage of every opportunity to expand our spirit quicker.

Please pray at the end as the last tea pours out with gratitude and willingness of devotion for further great goals to be realized. If at the moment there is no worthwhile goal to pray for, then perhaps simply sing together *The Song of Cha-Dao*, the final two lines of which are: *To create Heaven on earth together; world peace is not a dream.*

When we come to understand how to purify ourselves through tasting tea, to share with others, and to illuminate the world, then tasting tea is the greatest contribution we offer to the world.

(iv) Enlightenment and Practicing—To Create Heaven on Earth together

As soon as we flip the energy switch, connecting with the higher-level power, as soon as that door opens, then we are *enlightened*.

To taste tea every day, to train to settle the mind, to prolong for enlightenment, this is the process of *nurturing enlightenment*.

Sharing love and benefiting this world is the process of *proof of enlightenment*.

Having passed through the hundred sessions of spiritual tea meetings and compiled the book *Cha-Dao* together, is still at the first stage in our innovated *Cha-Dao*. In its second phase, the *Cha-Dao Research Society* was to go out and share with the world, to continue participating in the process that will allow each of us to prove the enlightenment.

Each time the members went out to share, they came back with a different look on their faces—their faces just keep glowing. We have been working hard for a long time. In the end we realized one thing—there simply is no need to struggle. That's the only secret we know. The secret could only be realized through *Xing* (行 practicing); it could only be realized through sharing unconditionally.

There is something that is very hard to be expressed in words. When you see someone else releasing out emotions from very deep within, you come to realize more in depth the emotions from appearance to something very deep. The moment the emotion is released when tasting tea, one has already been in the truth of the eternal world. Only then can one realize that so that's how it is. In just a flash, one could unlock a power that could not have been mustered in eight or even ten years of spiritual practice. It truly is miraculous. In fact, to have nothing unforetold

happen for the tea expedition is a miracle by itself.

In the end, this is what tasting tea is like. Perhaps in the beginning, a lot of people may not be able to understand this. When the spiritual level is elevated, it becomes clear to everyone.

Changing yourself is the best way to change the world. When more and more people realize that they are themselves the *Manifestation of Love*, they have thus been in the process of lighting the *light, burning, and illuminating*. World peace will no longer be a dream in this way. Together we can create Heaven on earth. There is no need to wait till the next life.

We are all "行家". In Chinese there are two ways to pronounce the characters for "行家". When we speak at the material level of tea, talking about the art of tea, we are *Hang-Jia* (行家, expert in tea). When speaking of the spiritual levels of tea and of practicing the *Cha-Dao*, we are *Xing-Jia* (行家, expert in practicing). By the final stages of the tea session, we should all become *Xing-Jia*.

We expect that all new *practitioners* will become new *Xing-Jia*.

VII. Xing-Jia (行家) and Cherishing Teas (惜茶)

Tea is a very exalted substance. Tea is the embodiment of Love. For those who truly know tea, they first were enamored with it, and later developed into respecting tea. A person who respects tea will finally come to *cherishing tea*. What we refer to here as *cherishing tea* represents a new realization.

Story 1:

Among the tea collectors, our society's president is well known for his fondness for collecting old teas, as well as for being a straightforward, decisive and generous man.

Once after finishing critiquing a tea in a tea meeting, our president mentioned that lately someone planed selling off some extremely old and exquisite teas. The price was expensive. Unfortunately, our president had just brought in a large supply of fine tea and, as cash flow was a bit of a problem, he was unable to purchase this batch. Such a pity he said, the pain of the lost opportunity spilling over into his every expression and gesture.

The sincere and earnest look on his face revealed his lofty ambition to snare all the old teas in the world. One tea friend was so moved he blurted out:

Our president truly loves tea!

As everyone sat, quietly approving of the wholehearted remark, the hostess



(president's wife) suddenly opened her mouth and corrected:

He does not love tea! He cherishes tea.

This was a stunning remark. No one made further comments. They simply sat pondering it in silence.

Story 2:

Every day our president treats his guests with fine teas, making no distinction between strangers or close friends. Because of this he has earned the title of *Squandering without restraint*.

Every time *Hang-Jia* gets in a new supply of tea, he routinely steeps it to all his guests. This year's *Shi Feng Lung Jin* (獅峰龍井) was extremely clear, fresh and extraordinary. Its secluded fragrance rushed straight up the nose—very subtle and superior—it was truly an extraordinary item. There was no one who didn't like it after having tasted it.

The second time our president was about to flush the *Shi Feng* for us, everyone was excited with lots of joy. Our president said:

“Everyone loves this *Lung Jin*. Someone requested that I sell him a few catties, but I did not agree. Good tea such as this is in very short supply, and once I sold it there wouldn't be any more for me to drink. I might as well hang on to it so we can enjoy it together, that way I can see all the joyful smiles everyone shows off after tasting it. Only in this way is the tea valuable to me. If I sold it to him, only a few people would get to taste and enjoy it, but if I keep it here, then I can treat many more people to tasting it. All of them will become happy, giving off the most brilliant smiles. This is the tea's greatest value. The smiles on their faces you can see at the time, and later those smiles remembered, you will feel very worthwhile.”

This speech touched everyone's heart. So wonderful! To have such a wise president and friend with so much love to share is truly very nice. Ruaan could not contain himself and offered the following line of praise:

“Therefore, in the future when our president passes away, he will just laugh loudly—HA! HA! HA! He will take nothing with him, but with smiles all over the vast space!”

Everyone laughed loudly at this comment. The entire table was full of mirth like in spring. The president also smiled wholeheartedly. He smiled with great joy.

Story 3:

After entering the stage of *Cha-Dao Meetings* of the tea sessions, our president began leading a few of the society members to China to steep tea and make affiliations with people of the mainland, with each trip lasting about one week. On the morning of March 9, 2005, Sister Ding of Beijing suddenly remembered Sister Ma, called her up and described to her the magic of the *Cha-Dao* she just experienced, adding that the president was still in Canton, but would be returning to Taiwan the following day. As Sister Ma listened, she felt a sudden surge of inspiration, and thought she might have a magic fortune. She rushed straight to the airport and flew directly to Canton from Beijing.

As she arrived at a society member's house that afternoon, the tea session was still in progress. After some inquiry, it was revealed that Sister Ma had been suffering for a long time from a severe nervous condition. Her body had been in a bad conditions—her stomach felt full and swollen, she had no desire for either food or drink and she often had terrible fits of hiccoughing. It was not easy for her to settle down and sit for meditation. As she tried, within the space of a few minutes, she already began to hiccough and belch incessantly. It seemed the situation was growing worse by the day and it was indeed very painful for her.

Although everyone present was but newly acquainted, the warming, tranquil, and peaceful atmosphere allowed Sister Ma to quickly relax and feel at ease. She later said she could feel “*President Ho's tender, attentive, confident, sincere and abundant love transmitted through each cup of the warm tea amber.*”

After drinking the tea, Sister Ma endlessly belched and hiccoughed. Normally belching and expunging toxins after drinking tea is a common phenomenon, but to see it expressed in such frequency and endurance is exceptionally rare. Before and after the dinner, varieties of teas have been steeped—beginning with younger teas and gradually moving into the old ones. Sister Ma's hiccoughing started out aggressively, later turning mild. After tasting the second pot and hiccoughing a few times in short succession, she was able to sit in meditation for extended periods, however the hiccoughing was still continuing without cessation. Even when she drank only plain water the result was the same.

Having to return to Taiwan the next day with not much time left, our president steeped out a pot of hundred year old tea. With this she seemed to improve a bit, but still could not suppress it, and the hiccoughing could not yet to be stopped. Finally, with no choice but to resort to fierce medicine, our president took from his bag a sachet of one hundred and eighty year



old *Ocean of Love No. 3*. Such a precious and rare tea was steeped for the first-time to meet the *merit owner* who had never before tasted aged tea.

Sister Ma described later,

“The liquor was smooth and faint. It had none of the bitterness or astringency of the previous teas. After drinking down a few cups, to my great surprise the hiccupping stopped! It was a truly fine tea *Qi* that was full of potency in penetration. My being cured of the hiccough was the result of Meridians being unblocked by the high energy of the tea *Qi*. It is so unbelievable! I laughed, President Ho laughed, and the tea friends present all laughed with understanding as well. Everyone was happy for me, and heartily praised the magic of this one hundred and eighty year old *Ocean of Love*. Ah! This tea truly has the power to save lives!”

Later our president recalled,

“Usually with the one hundred plus year old teas, I don’t carry them out of the door. But that trip, for some unknown reason, I suddenly had the urge to bring one, and so I packed one steeping of *Ocean of Love No. 3*. As it turns out it was for her!

It was also due to me being touched by her sincerity. When one acts with quick decision, then one can receive the greatest rewards. With an intensive thirst, one can receive the greatest benediction.”

Xing-Jia (行家) Cherishes Tea (惜茶)

Cherishing tea is something very different from *addicted to tea* or *enamored with tea* as what is usually understood.

Tea as a *hobby* places emphasis solely on the satisfaction of the tongue and the belly. A tea enthusiast loves to drink tea because of regional customs, lifestyles, and the needs of the body. They cannot live without tea, but they do not necessarily understand tea.

Love resides within the heart. A tea lover understands the beauty and virtue of a truly fine tea. Such a person understands that fine tea is precious and difficult to come by and therefore buys tea regardless of expense, attentively caring for the storage. Occasionally they share tea with others. But they steep only when the time is right, steep only occasionally and in small amounts. Furthermore, they store tea for the long term, and leave them for the enjoyment of their descendants.

Those who *cherish* tea share their love of tea with others as being of one. They use their tea only for the benefits. They steep tea with little concern at the

cost, but to the most benefits the tea could bring to others.

Good tea carries with it truth, virtue and beauty. It has the ability to purify the body, mind and soul. Fine tea is a disease-curing celestial elixir, as well as nurturing for entering the *Tao*. Good tea exists solely for the purposes of fellowship in the world; it is an avatar of *True Love*. Those who *cherish* tea are full of love and when the situation calls for it. As long as it can benefit someone else, alleviate discomfort or uplift spiritual awareness, then no matter how expensive the tea, even on the first meeting, they will brew it up very naturally.

Those who *cherish* tea truly understand tea. Therefore they truly appreciate it. They cherish it not because of the rarity and expense, but cherish its benefits and want to make the most use out of it. They use it when it is necessary to use without feeling lament. They will not spare to use it, but will spare not to use it. They will not allow the tea's lifetime attainment wasted after satiated meals with alcohols and gossips. On the other hand, they will wait for the appropriate moment and the need for the right person, so that the tea may have the most effect—to achieve the glorious goal in a single movement. Such is the revelation of the Love and the display of the spirituality.

One time, towards the end of a tea session, our president made a rather stunning statement:

“Perhaps all of you envy me that I have so many good teas. In truth, all these teas have absolutely no meaning to me. Tea as far as I am concerned is but a tool. It is God who wants to convey the message of love through this tool. And so to this end I must carry good tea to different places of the world and steep it out. Even then I have to beg others to taste it...”

The Joyful Tea Tasting Meetings has held one hundred sessions. It is a spiritual journey in pursuit of the *Cha-Dao*. Under the guidance of President Ho, members not only were fortunate enough to taste more than five hundred different fragrant and fine teas, they also came to realize and enter the true *Cha-Dao*.

The essence of the *Cha-Dao*, the spirit of the *Cha-Dao* can be summed up by a single word—*Love*. It is *True Love*, the grand love. Throughout the one hundred sessions our president led by example and out of duty, sharing not only his fine teas and the *Cha-Dao*, but also his selfish-less love with no regret.

To enter the *Tao through Tea—Cha-Dao* is indeed an avenue of Love and Light.



Photograph: Jian Ming Xian



Tea Flows from Silver Pot

I shall walk and leave my footprints in the remotest corners of the world

Pour out my silver kettle from East to West

Because I have come from the deepest corner of the Galaxy

Since long ago how many such gatherings have there been by destiny

In answer to that primeval call

This I write down

A new era of Romance

But wait

It has already been connected

Even the dry desert appears the spring of sweet nectar

The stars gaze down; all the humans and celestials are looking at attentively

Just awaiting for

This

This pot to spill

~ Ruaan

Photograph/ Jian Ming Xian (the desert) ; Deng Yun (President Ho)

EXTERNAL COMPONENT

外篇



