



静心学堂丛书

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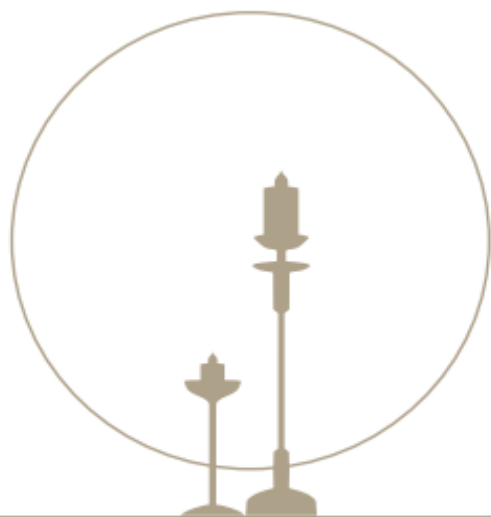
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# 茶与禅的修行

Tea and Chan Practice

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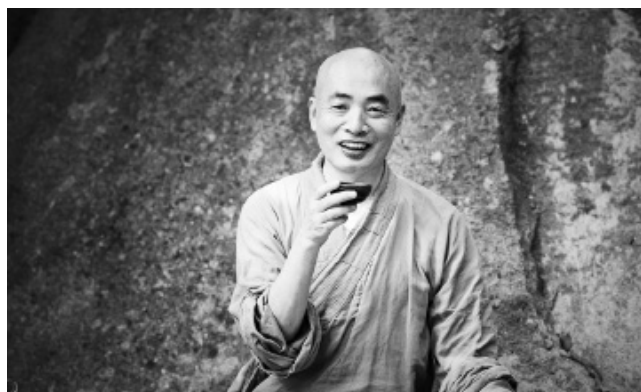
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2021年秋讲于茶人养成营

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前两年，我们在武夷山举办过关于茶的活动，我讲了《以茶静心，修身养性》，对茶专项的重要性，以及茶和禅的关系作了简要说明。这次是茶专项的第一届静修营，应该给大家提供什么样的认识？举办这个专项的目的在哪里？

现在茶的市场很大，茶馆遍布各地，茶道流派纷呈，茶人和相关培训班层出不穷。从物质层面来说，茶的作用主要是解渴，和粮食、蔬果一样，可以满足身体所需。有钱就讲究一点，喝名茶；没钱就简单一点，喝粗茶。其实都可以解渴，也能丰富业余生活。

但茶又不仅仅是物质生活，还承载着传统文化，尤其是禅文化的内涵，可以提升为多样化的精神生活。

在中国历史上，茶和禅宗有着千丝万缕的关系，其后传到日本，形成茶道。近几十年来，随着传统文化的复兴和中日之间的交流，人们开始在古籍中挖掘茶的文化属性，也从邻邦借鉴茶道的精神气质。吃茶去、禅茶一味、侘寂之美等茶道用语日渐普及，与之相关的装修风格和器皿用具也受到追捧。

照搬概念是容易的，仿造形式也不难，但做这些的意义是什么？这就需要了解，概念和形式背后的思想内涵，借助这些形式，究竟要达到什么目的？

茶之所以能成为“道”，关键在于茶本身。再珍贵难得、品质精良的茶，如果不赋予其精神内涵，也不过是稀缺的奢侈品而已。就像当年传到欧洲并风靡一时的茶，虽然深受贵族乃至皇家青睐，使大量白银流入中国，但并没有在西方发展出与道相关的文化。

可见，只有在相应的文化背景下，才能通过茶来载道。当然这个载体也可以是插花、抚琴、书法、绘画等等。相比其他形式，茶的优势有两点：一是本身就属于日常生活，为大众喜闻乐见，身心受用；二是不需要太专业的技能即可入门，配合一定的培训和练

习，就可以发挥我们已有的、与众不同的优势，使茶专项具有可行性。

这个优势就是对禅文化的认识。立足于此，通过禅的智慧开展茶道活动，是把大众导向觉醒的方便。所以我们要从两方面探讨：一是了解茶与禅的关系及重要典故；二是以茶入道，知道如何在茶专项中落实禅的精神，对受众加以引导。



喫茶去

陽輝



# 一、茶与禅的历史典故

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“茶禅一味”是近年广为流传的概念  
但它究竟表达了什么  
未必有多少人说得清楚  
有些只是人云亦云  
或是将“禅”作为品位象征  
为茶叶和茶馆找个卖点  
事实上，只有将禅的智慧带入茶文化中  
把喝茶与参禅相结合  
才谈得上“茶禅一味”

关于茶和禅的关系，可以挖掘的内容很多。在此，我从“吃茶去、茶禅一味、和敬清寂、一期一会、侘寂之美”五点，和大家做一些分享。

## 1. 吃茶去

不少茶室中会挂一幅“吃茶去”或“喫茶去”，二者只是字体有别，都出自赵州禅师的典故。赵州禅师为唐代高僧，号从谿，八十高龄时驻锡赵州观音院，即现在的柏林禅寺。他生前传法弘禅四十年，僧俗共仰，被尊为“赵州古佛”。

《宗门拈古汇集》记载，“赵州问新到：曾到此间

么？曰：曾到。州曰：吃茶去。又问一僧：曾到此间么？曰：不曾到。州曰：吃茶去。院主问：和尚为甚曾到也吃茶去，不曾到也吃茶去？州唤：院主。主应：诺。州曰：吃茶去。”一代宗师，不管对谁都是一句“吃茶去”，听起来是不是很简单？甚至会有人觉得敷衍，为什么这也值得记载，值得传颂千古？

我觉得，其中主要体现了两个内涵。首先，禅并不是什么玄妙奇特的行为，也没有离开当下的生活。古德所说的“行亦禅，坐亦禅，语默动静体安然”“饥来吃饭，困来眠”“搬柴运水，总是禅机”“青青翠竹尽是真如，郁郁黄花无非般若”，都是告诉我们，禅的智慧无所不在。可我们就在生活中，为什么看不到呢？

这就需要领会赵州的深意。禅师的所言所行都以本分事相见，所谓本分事，就是认识心的本来面目。叫你“吃茶去”，目的不单纯是吃茶，而要体会“能吃茶的是谁”？平常人吃茶，赶快品尝这是什么好茶，香不香，甜不甜，都在向外寻求。但禅师的“吃茶去”，是让你反观自照，认识本心。这在禅宗是非



常高明的指点。

其次，以前禅寺的生活很简单，每天就是禅修、干活、吃饭。修行不仅在座上，也在座下。当时百丈禅师提出“一日不作，一日不食”，寺院需要集体劳作时，敲一下钟，大家就去出坡（做事），所以禅师对学人的教导也往往在日用中。不同于教下，是给你讲一部经，通过文字说明修行原理。而禅师是在生活中耳提面命，不拘一格。吃茶作为生活的组成部分，自然也是点拨学人的重要契机。在禅宗名著《景德传灯录》中，关于茶的记载有上百条之多，既有禅师间

的对答，也有对学人的接引。

我们知道，禅宗是由达摩在南北朝时期传入中土，但到了唐朝才开宗立派，盛极一时。而茶道也是在唐朝开始成熟的，在陆羽的《茶经》中，详细阐明了茶的历史、源流、现状、生产及饮茶、茶艺等方面，是茶道成形的标志。陆羽自幼在寺院长大，与不少僧人过从甚密，其自述记载：“结庐於苕溪之滨，闭关对书，不杂非类，名僧高士，谈宴永日。常扁舟往来山寺，随身惟纱巾、藤鞋、短褐犊鼻，往往独行野中，诵佛经，吟古诗。”尤其是遇到同样深谙茶性的诗僧皎然后，更是以茶相和，以禅相知，成为茶道发展史上著名的忘年至交。在这一背景下出现的茶道，从一开始就与佛教有着不解之缘，也使茶有了高于生活的精神性。

从另一方面来说，坐禅容易昏沉，而茶正是提神醒脑之佳品。皎然的“一饮涤昏寐，情思朗爽满天地；再饮清我神，忽如飞雨洒清尘；三饮便得道，何须苦心破烦恼”，正是饮茶助力修行的生动写照。至今，禅堂还保留了饮茶的传统。二者的相遇，可谓恰

逢其时，互为增上。

随着禅宗大兴并建立丛林后，需要有一套共修共住的制度，包括法会流程和行事仪式，这是佛教中国化的重要标志，出现了很多本土化的做法，所谓“马祖兴丛林，百丈立清规”。《清规》中，关于茶的记载多达数百处，并形成了一系列仪轨。比如在佛陀诞辰、成道、涅槃等纪念日中，要“备香花灯烛茶果珍馐”作为供养，并将上香、点茶作为法会流程之一；在住持巡察、受法衣、迎侍尊宿、施主请升座斋僧等僧团生活中，也有吃茶、献茶的环节。由此，可见茶在僧众生活中的重要性，以及人们对茶的重视程度。

到了宋代，因为徽宗好茶，使朝野上下竞相仿效，茶风更甚。徽宗本人有极高的艺术修养和审美眼光，他所撰写的《大观茶论》，将茶文化的发展推至巅峰。寺院茶会也更为成熟，尤其是杭州的径山茶会，影响甚广。径山寺为禅宗道场，建于唐而兴于宋，当年被誉为江南五山十刹之首，有不少日本禅僧来此参访留学。他们学成归国后，不仅带回了禅宗法脉，也带回了径山茶及茶会流程，并逐步发展为日本的茶道。可



以说，日本的茶文化从形式到内涵都深受禅宗影响。

## 2. 茶禅一味

“茶禅一味”也是近年广为流传的概念，但它究竟表达了什么，未必有多少人说得清楚。有些只是人云亦云，或是将“禅”作为品位象征，为茶叶和茶馆找个卖点。事实上，只有将禅的智慧带入茶文化中，把喝茶与参禅相结合，才谈得上“茶禅一味”。如果不

能在茶中赋予禅的内涵，那还是和贪嗔痴一味，与禅是了不相干的。

禅是什么？就是觉醒的心，这也是万物的本质。所以禅是遍及一切的，不仅禅茶可以一味，禅饭、禅行也可以一味，包括穿衣吃饭、搬柴运水、待人接物，都可以与禅一味。青青翠竹、郁郁黄花这些赏心悦目的所缘中有禅，蝼蚁、瓦砾、屎尿这些令人唾弃的事物中同样有禅，所谓“道在蝼蚁，道在瓦砾，道在屎尿”。在在处处，只有缘起显现的不同，本质上是相同的。如果你有禅的智慧，就可以在一切事物中体会禅。

在古代禅师的悟道因缘中可以看到，有的因为瓦片击竹，咣当一声就顿悟本心，“一击忘所知，更不假修持”；还有的因为看到桃花开悟，“灵云昔日悟桃花，十里春风树树斜”。总之，心可以通过各种因缘打开，前提是训练有素，心垢很薄，才能把握住那个石火电光的瞬间。我们在生活中会有这样的经验，走路时突然被人打了后背，一惊之下，大脑完全空白，也是体悟本心的时刻，因为妄想空了。但只是一刹那，



对没有修行的人来说，往往还没看到就失去机会了。

如何拨开迷雾，体认本心？需要在一切时、一切处，绵绵密密地用功。“茶禅一味”，就是让我们在喝茶的当下体悟禅。喝茶有两个指向，一是进入凡夫心，一是回归本心。如果没有智慧，其实多数人都是进入凡夫心，带着贪嗔痴的串习，被色、声、香、味、触、法六尘所转。端起杯子，只看到器皿好不好，精不精；喝下茶汤，只尝到滋味香不香，醇不醇。这样的喝茶，品得再精妙，再深入，只是世间法而已，和借助喝茶去悟禅是完全不同的。

“茶禅一味”的提法，出自宋代著名禅师圆悟克勤。禅师有《碧岩录》传世，其中记载了百则公案，被誉为“禅门第一书”。所谓公案，即禅师如何接引弟子的案例。这些方式往往独辟蹊径，险中求生，是极难懂的。圆悟禅师能对此作出点评和解读，可见其禅学素养之深。此外，禅师还精于茶道，他的“茶禅一味”正是对本心的体悟，蕴含甚深智慧。在他的法嗣中，有径山寺的大慧宗杲，提倡参话头，同样是禅门巨匠，也与茶有着不解之缘。

圆悟禅师手书的“茶禅一味”，由前来中国求学的僧人带回日本，传到名僧一休和尚手中。此后，一休又赠与弟子村田珠光。珠光少年出家，热衷茶事，后随一休和尚参禅，并得其印可。珠光将禅宗思想引入茶道，创立了草庵茶。在此之前，日本茶事主要流行于上层社会。作为一种应酬方式，人们往往攀比排场或名贵茶器，意不在茶。草庵茶一改奢靡之风，回归质朴，并将饮茶与修禅相结合，上升至“道”的高度。珠光还将圆悟禅师的墨迹供在茶室壁龛上，人们进入茶室后先要对此行礼，整肃身心，然后在点茶、喝茶中体会茶禅一味的深意。

村田珠光被称为“日本茶道鼻祖”，他和弟子武野绍鸥及再传弟子千利休，是日本茶道最重要的创立者。尤其是千利休，为茶道集大成者，他所倡导的生活美学，对日本文化有着全方位的影响。



### 3. 和敬清寂

“和敬清寂”的思想，源于村田珠光提出的“谨敬清寂”，千利休在此基础上改动一字，流传至今。这四个字充分体现了日本茶道的精神，也可以说是禅的内涵。

第一是和。包括物与物、人与物、人与人的关系，都要和谐无碍。扩大来说，就是天人合一。这种和是来自内心的平等，在喝茶时，要消除二元对立，空掉对外相的一切执著。本来无一物，才是究竟的和。

第二是敬。对天地万物存一份敬畏之心，观一



花一世界，见一叶一如来。体现在茶道过程中，就是有相应的仪式感，长幼有序，举止得体。可能有人会说：禅不是要突破所有形式吗？为什么要有仪式感？其实这些只是静心的方便而已。因为凡夫是心随境转的，在喧闹杂乱中，身心会随之动荡。而在清肃的环境中，随着庄严的一招一式，心才容易静下来。

第三是清。简单地说，就是清洁。茶室的环境可以朴素，可以简陋，可以狭小，可以老旧，但要一尘不染。当然更重要的，是内心清净。茶道之所以被上升为“道”，就是能通过外在的环境和仪轨，帮助我们净化心灵。所以在参与茶会时，内心要如明镜般清澈，物来影现，物去不留，没有妄念和杂染。

第四是寂。禅宗修行要狂心顿歇，就是寂的体现；三法印的“涅槃寂静”，则是寂的终极成就。体现在环境上，是朴素、安静、以少胜多。比如茶室不能太大，作为草庵茶发源地的“珠光庵”，不过是四贴半榻榻米的狭小空间，陈设也极其简单。在这样的环境中，有利于我们收摄六根，保持专注，向内观照而不是外求。



我不是专研茶道的，对这四个字的解读，主要来自对禅的认识。当然，茶道精神本来就源于禅宗，回到这个原点来看，我想会更直接。从中，我们也可以感受到清凉的禅林气息，仿佛看到禅师们在山中结庐而居，对坐饮茶，超然自在。

#### 4. 一期一会

这是日本茶道提出的概念，从思想渊源来说，是受到佛教无常观的影响，提醒茶人应该以珍惜当下的心态来举办茶会。我们今天参加这个活动，对有些人来说，可能是此生唯一的机会，很珍惜；也有些人觉得，自己还会参加第二次、第三次，似乎这次就没那么重要，没那么特别了。

事实上，不论你参加一次还是很多次，每次都有不同的因缘，都是不可重复的“一期一会”。西方哲学家说，人不能两次踏入同一条河流。为什么？因为水一直在流动变化，逝者如斯，不舍昼夜。从我们自身来说，今天的你是昨天的你吗？明天的你是今天的你吗？现在的你是小时候的你吗？七八十岁的你还是现在的你吗？从出生到老死，细胞不知更换了多少，思想不知改变了多少，从物质元素到心理元素，刹那刹那都在生灭变化中。

丰子恺有篇散文叫《渐》，讲述了生命的无常变化。时间悄悄地把所有人的岁月给偷走了，人不知

不觉地老了，不知不觉地死去了。但因为不知不觉，就觉得好像可以永远活着，可以千秋万代地活下去，才会“生年不满百，常怀千岁忧”。人们总在想东想西，想过去想未来，偏偏把唯一可以把握的现在白白浪费了。

尤其是今天这个时代，不可控的因素那么多。我们能坐在这里，以茶相聚，是多生累劫的福德因缘，要以“一期一会”之心参与学习，参与今后的每一次活动。从泡茶到喝茶，都带着虔诚、敬畏和殷重，安住当下。如果不安住，这段生命就被虚度了，再也没有机会弥补。



## 5. 侘寂之美

侘寂是日本茶道倡导的生活美学，也是一种人生境界，特别针对世人对富贵奢华的追求而提出。简单地说，就是返璞归真，崇尚自然、简单、朴素，甚至是残缺、清贫的美。这种倾向从村田珠光的草庵茶就开始了，其渊源还是来自禅宗。古代禅者生活在水边林下，茅屋草鞋，身无长物。此外，佛教还有惜福的传统，所以寺院很多用品都是代代相传的，历经风霜，自有一种古旧、沉静而富有内涵的美。

近年来，随着侘寂风的传入，不少地方也在仿效





此类效果，让人耳目一新。但也有些设计流于表面，刻意求残求旧，却没有理解这些表象背后的深意。事实上，侘寂不是抄一些材料或摆设就能体现的。为什么这么做，要表达什么精神，什么境界，需要有禅的智慧为支持。我觉得，时代在变化，形式上未必要一成不变，关键是理解个中精神，再以适合当下的方式来表达。我们可以从中得到的借鉴，主要有两点。

首先是节制。现在是物质极大丰富的时代，我们可以轻而易举地拥有很多东西，所以节制格外重要。节制物品的数量，既可以让空间留白，保持疏朗，也

可以减少对资源的消耗，对生态的破坏。更重要的是帮助我们克服贪欲，不受外界诱惑，不为物质所累。

其次是尊重。作为消费者，选择适合长期使用的物品，用心呵护。茶人有养壶的习惯，其实我们也可以用心对待其他物品，珍而重之，让它在你手中变得更好，而不是喜新厌旧，随用随抛。作为设计者，则应该提升审美和心性素养，用好的设计来制作产品，通过再创造，让自己使用的材料得到升华，而不是一味迎合世俗潮流，或是为刺激人们的购买欲做些什么。

本着这两点，我们就可以因地制宜，创造属于自己的侘寂之美，比如少而美，简而美，陈而美，静而美。

以上五个方面，包含茶道的思想源头以及在日本的形成，领会其中的精神内涵，有助于我们做好这个专项。



## 二、茶禪一味的修行

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从茶会来说  
茶就是我们的锚，是安心的所缘  
除了领会茶的精神、境界、生活美学  
还要学会专注地泡一杯茶，喝一杯茶  
把向外追逐的心  
拉回身处的空间，拉回当下的茶席  
拉回手中的茶，最后拉回内心

了解茶文化的背景后，我们还要进一步学习：参加茶会，怎么喝好这杯茶？怎么通过这一专项助力禅的修行？

## 1. 放下，放松

禅修，首先要当心带回当下，既不活在过去，也不活在未来。但现在人往往身心焦躁，即使坐下喝茶，心里还放着很多东西，想着昨天发生了什么，明天还要干什么，难以安住。又或者，把茶会当作吹牛的机会，显摆自己赚了多少钱，事业有多大。带着这样的世俗心喝茶，再好的茶也不过是饮料而已，甚至沦为



道具，连茶本身的滋味都品不出来。只有把身份、事业、地位乃至尘世的一切执著通通放下，才能由这杯茶入道，体会禅茶一味的境界。

为了有助于调心，我们要布置一个令人放松的氛围，也可以到自然山水中。在空旷的环境中，与阳光、微风、树石同在，心更容易松下来，这是与禅相应的前提。同时还要让大家收起手机，这一刻，让红尘不到，只是安静地和茶在一起，和自己在一起，从放下、放松到放空。

## 2. 空和无相

佛教所说的空，并不是什么都没有，而是空掉我们对外在世界和内在情绪的执著。我们为什么不能体认本心？就是被卡在种种执著中。在乎什么，就被什么卡住。只有放下之后，才不会被身心内外的一切障碍，也就是佛教所说的“若能无心于万物，何妨万物常围绕”。所以我们真正要空掉的不是其他，而是自己的种种设定，种种挂碍，种种烦恼。

和空相关的另一个概念是无相。凡夫都是活在有相的世界，被色声香味触法所转。禅修所要体认的空性，是以无相为体。禅宗修行的三大要领，是“无念为宗，无相为体，无住为本”。无念为宗，是让我们体认念头背后的无念心体，就像云彩背后的虚空。我们平时都活在念头中，被云彩遮蔽，只有超越念头，才能回归本心。无相为体，是说本心没有颜色，没有形状，超越一切形相，并不是五光十色、惊天动地的。无住为本，是说本心具有不粘著的特质，不管多少云彩飘动，虚空并不想留住哪片云彩，也不分别这片云





彩好看，那片云彩不好看，所谓“长空不碍白云飞”。

在做茶会时，我们会构建各种相，布置空间、选择器具、设计流程，一招一式都很有仪式感。这就容易流于对相的执著，落入世俗心。是不是就不能讲究这些呢？也是不对的。因为我们做茶会的目的，是以此接引大众，安顿身心，这就需要氛围和仪式感为引导。

关键是把握尺度，既要了解相的意义，同时也看到“凡所有相皆是虚妄”，知道这一切都如梦如幻、本性空寂，而不是陷入对形式的执著。佛教中，叫作“水月道场，梦中佛事”。带着这样的认知高度，才能在营造形式的同时超越形式，摆脱对色声香味触法的执著。

日本茶道得益于禅宗思想，尤其是六祖悟道偈中的“本来无一物”，这也是“和敬清寂”的源头。要达到内外一如的平和、敬畏、清凉、寂静，离不开空和无相的智慧。这关系到我们所做的茶会，是世俗还是出世的，是轮回还是觉醒的。所以我们既要注重形式，但不必过于复杂。就像千利休说的，茶道无非是烧水、点茶而已。因为所有的相都是为体悟无相心体服务的，这才是禅的最高境界，才是和本心相应的。

### 3. 平常心

禅宗讲“平常心是道”。这个平常，并不是我们平时的世俗心。因为凡夫是活在种种设定、种种牵挂、种种贪著、种种追求、种种对立、种种是非中，这些都是无明加工的产品，使人颠倒妄想，流转轮回。只有去除这一切，才是真正的平常心，是清净、赤裸、没有遮蔽的心，是不生不灭、不垢不净、不增不减的本来面目。

怎么回归平常？首先要回归简单的生活，学会



在生活中修行。说到修行，我们很容易想到诵经、打坐，似乎是日常生活之外的另一套系统。事实上，修行就是一种用心，贯穿座上和座下。我们未来的禅修有三个重点。一是以事相为所缘，通过经行、专注呼吸等方式，培养持续、稳定的专注。二是训练觉察，一旦起心动念，能立刻发现心处在什么状态，而不是在不知不觉中虚度。三是把正念带到生活中。禅宗说修行是“饥来吃饭困来眠”，我们都在吃饭睡觉，为什么不是禅？因为我们是带着贪嗔痴而不是正念做这些。所以要培养正念，让生活变成追求真理的禅修，回归本心的禅修。这样的生活才有价值。

茶道的关键也在于此。千利休说：“茶道之秘事，在于打碎了山水、草木、草庵、主客、诸具、法则、规矩的、无一物之念的、无事安心的一片白露地。”虽然我们要借助各种事相来做茶会，但最终是要超越事相，在认真做的同时，心无所住，超然物外。

#### 4. 专注，觉察

禅修有两个要点，一是专注，一是觉察。现代人多半都在散乱中，东想西想，心猿意马，根本管不住自己。这就使得我们很累，却无法休息。专注，就是为心定一个锚，安住于此，不再四处飘荡。

从茶会来说，茶就是我们的锚，是安心的所缘。我们除了领会茶的精神、境界、生活美学，还要学会专注地泡一杯茶，专注地喝一杯茶。本次培训会介绍实操方面的技术，如泡茶七事、营造环境七件事等。但所有这些都是帮助我们摄心，不是为了泡茶而泡茶，也不是为了布置场地而布置场地，而是通过种种手段收摄六根，把向外追逐的心拉回身处的空间，拉回当下的茶席，拉回手中的茶，最后拉回内心。现代人的心太野了，没有相应的善巧，心是难以安顿并专注的。

仅仅专注还不够，进一步还要训练觉察，唤起内心清明的力量。每个人都有本自具足的清净心，这个心永远都在。修行所做的就是认识它，熟悉它，启



用它，所谓“菩提自性，本来清静，但用此心，直了成佛”。

当然，我们现在很难直接体会本心，但从意识层面，体会心清明时产生的觉察力。当心因为专注而静下来，我们就能觉察泡茶、喝茶的整个过程。从注水到出汤，从举杯到闻香，再到喝下茶汤，感受茶的冷暖，以及进入身体的过程，始终保持觉察，但不作评判，没有贪著。

当我们学会专注和觉察，就能摆脱对形式的执著，将喝茶与正念禅修相结合。在做茶会的过程中，既注重茶的品质，注重器具和环境营造，又不陷入执著。茶道之所以在日本备受推崇，就是通过这种方式，把难以触及的禅院修行带给民众，为世间和出世间建立一个连接。让人们可以在茶汤中体会禅味，在尘世中感受清凉。

## 三、结束语

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不论中国的禅茶  
还是日本茶道  
我们都要立足于禅的智慧高度来认识  
这样才能一目了然  
知道每个做法的重点在哪里



不论中国的禅茶，还是日本的茶道，我们都要立足于禅的智慧高度来认识。这样才能一目了然，知道每个做法的重点在哪里。如果只看到形式，不知道它的精神和意义是什么，就可能食古不化，拘泥形式，那就本末倒置了。

以上所说只是大致的框架。这次茶会是一个很好的开端，未来我们会将此形成专项，一方面有教研团队深入研究，比如茶在禅宗修行中的运用和相关仪轨，传入日本后如何形成茶道，并依此建立一整套生活美学，相信还有不少可以借鉴的做法。一方面是在实践中不断调整，把茶会作为静心慢生活的重要组成，总结出一套实操性强且易于复制的模式，服务社会，净化人心。





# TEA AND CHAN PRACTICE

Master Jiqun

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in the Autumn of 2021**

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Two years ago, we held a tea-related event in Wuyi Mountain, where I talked about “Calm the mind with tea, cultivate the body to enhance well-being.” I stressed the importance of a tea-specific initiative and briefly explained the relationship between tea and Chan. This is the first tea-specific retreat camp. What kind of understanding should we provide to everyone? What is the purpose of hosting this specific initiative?

Currently, the tea market is vast, with tea houses spread across various regions, diverse tea ceremony schools emerging, and numerous tea practitioners and related

training classes popping up. On a material level, tea mainly serves to quench thirst, similar to grains, fruits, and vegetables, fulfilling the body's needs. If one has money, they can be more selective and drink premium tea; if not, they might keep it simple and drink basic tea. Ultimately, both can quench thirst and enrich leisure life.

However, tea is not only a part of material life; it also carries traditional culture, especially the essence of Chan culture, elevating it into a diverse spiritual life. Throughout Chinese history, tea and Chan Buddhism have been intricately connected. Later, this connection spread to Japan, forming the tea ceremony. In recent decades, with the revival of traditional culture and exchanges between China and Japan, people have started to delve into the cultural attributes of tea in ancient texts and draw inspiration from the spiritual qualities of the Japanese tea ceremony. Phrases such as “Go Drink Tea,” “Chan and Tea are One Flavor,” and “The Beauty of *Wabi-Sabi* (imperfection)” have become increasingly popular, and related decoration styles and utensils are



also highly sought after.

It's easy to copy concepts and not difficult to imitate forms, but what is its significance? This requires understanding the ideological connotations behind these concepts and forms and knowing what purpose we aim to achieve through them.

The reason why tea can become a “Dao (Way)” lies not in the tea itself. No matter how rare or high-quality the tea is, it is merely a scarce luxury item if it is not imbued with spiritual meaning. For instance, when tea was introduced to Europe and became popular among nobility and royalty, leading to a significant influx of silver currency into China, it did not develop into a culture related to the Way in the West.

Evidently, only within an appropriate cultural context can tea serve as a vehicle for the Way. Of course, this vehicle could also be flower arranging, playing the *guqin* (a plucked seven-string Chinese musical instrument of

the zither family), calligraphy, painting, etc. Compared to other forms, tea has two advantages: first, it is inherently a part of daily life, loved by the public, and beneficial for both body and mind; second, it does not require highly specialized skills to get started. With a certain amount of training and practice, we can leverage our unique advantages, making the tea-specific initiative feasible.

This advantage lies in the understanding of Chan culture. Based on this, conducting tea ceremony activities through Chan wisdom is a convenient way to guide the public toward awakening. Therefore, we need to explore two aspects: first, understanding the relationship between tea and Chan and their important anecdotes; second, using tea as a means to the Way, knowing how to implement the Chan spirit in the tea-specific initiative, and guiding the audience accordingly.

# I

## HISTORICAL ANECDOTES OF TEA AND CHAN

There is much to explore regarding the relationship between tea and Chan. Here, I will share insights from five aspects: “Go Drink Tea,” “Tea and Chan are One Flavor,” “Harmony, Respect, Purity, and Tranquility,” “Once-in-a-Lifetime Encounter,” and “The Beauty of Wabi-Sabi.”

### **1. Go Drink Tea**

Many tea rooms display a calligraphy scroll “Go Drink Tea” or “Go Have Tea,” only differing in character (the former is a simplified character and the latter is a

traditional character), both originating from an anecdote of Chan Master Zhaozhou. Master Zhaozhou, also known as Congshen, was a prominent monk of the Tang Dynasty. In his eighties, he resided at Guanyin Monastery in Zhaozhou, now Bailin Chan Temple. He preached Chan Buddhism for forty years and was revered by both monks and laypeople, earning the title “Ancient Buddha of Zhaozhou.”

According to the *Collection of Ancient Chan Teachings*, the story goes:

Zhaozhou asked a newcomer, “Have you been here before?”

The newcomer replied, “Yes.”

Zhaozhou said, “Go drink tea.”

He then asked another monk the same question, who answered, “No.”

Zhaozhou also said, “Go drink tea.”

The abbot asked, “Master, why do you tell both those who have and haven’t been here before to go drink tea?”

Zhaozhou called out, “Abbot!”

The abbot responded, “Yes?”

Zhaozhou said, “Go drink tea.”

As a great Chan master, regardless of who he was speaking to, Zhaozhou always said, “Go drink tea.” Doesn’t this sound simple? Some might even think it is perfunctory. Why is this worth recording and passing down through the ages?

I believe it reflects two main connotations. Firstly, Chan is not some mysterious or extraordinary action; it is not detached from everyday life. The ancient sages said, “Walking is Chan, sitting is Chan; in speech or silence,

in movement or stillness, the essence is at ease”; “When hungry, eat; when tired, sleep”; “Fetching firewood and carrying water are all opportunities for Chan enlightenment”; “The green bamboo is true nature, the blooming yellow flowers are prajna.” These sayings tell us that Chan wisdom is omnipresent. So why can’t we see it in our daily life?

This requires understanding Zhaozhou’s profound intention. The Chan master’s words and actions are grounded in ordinary affairs. The so-called “ordinary affairs” refer to recognizing the true nature of the mind. When he tells you to “go drink tea,” the purpose is not merely to drink tea but to contemplate “Who is drinking the tea?” Ordinary people drink tea and quickly try to taste what kind of good tea it is, whether fragrant or sweet, always seeking outwardly. However, the Chan master’s “go drink tea” makes you reflect inwardly and recognize your true mind. This is a highly sophisticated guidance in Chan Buddhism.

Secondly, the lifestyle in Chan monasteries used to be very simple, consisting of daily activities like meditation, work, and meals. The practice was not limited to sitting meditation but extended to all activities. Chan Master Baizhang once proposed, “A day without work is a day without food.” When the temple needed communal work, a bell would be struck, and everyone would go out to work. Therefore, the teachings of Chan masters often occurred in daily activities. Unlike other schools of Buddhism that explain the principles of practice through scriptures, Chan masters provided direct guidance in everyday life without adhering to any fixed method. Drinking tea, as part of daily life, naturally became an essential opportunity for instructing disciples. In the *Jingde Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*, there are hundreds of records about tea, including dialogues between Chan masters and instructions to practitioners.

We know that Chan Buddhism was introduced to China by Bodhidharma during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, but it did not establish itself as a distinct school

until it flourished in the Tang Dynasty. Similarly, the tea ceremony began to mature during the Tang Dynasty. In the *Classic of Tea* by Luyu, he elaborated on the history, origin, current state, production, drinking, and tea arts, marking the formal establishment of the tea ceremony. Luyu grew up in a monastery and had close relationships with many monks. He described his life: “I built a hut by the banks of the Tiaoxi River, lived in seclusion with books, avoiding unrelated matters. Renowned monks and scholars would talk and feast all day long. I often traveled to mountain monasteries by boat, carrying only a gauze cap, straw sandals, and a short coat. I frequently wandered alone in the wild, reciting Buddhist scriptures and ancient poems.” Especially after meeting the poet-monk Jiao Ran, who had a deep understanding of tea, they created harmony through tea and understood each other through Chan, becoming famous lifelong friends in the history of the tea ceremony. Given this background, the tea ceremony has been inseparable from Buddhism since its inception, imbuing tea with a spiritual significance beyond daily life.



From another perspective, sitting meditation can easily lead to drowsiness, and tea is an excellent remedy for refreshing the mind. Jiao Ran's poem, "One drink washes away sleepiness, filling the mind with clarity and freshness; a second drink clears the spirit, like a sudden rain washing away dust; a third drink attains the Way, what need is there to laboriously break through vexations?" It vividly portrays how drinking tea aids in practice. To this day, Chan halls retain the tradition of drinking tea. The encounter between tea and Chan was timely, mutually enhancing each other.

As Chan Buddhism flourished and established large monastic centers, a set of communal living and practice regulations was needed, including procedures for Dharma assemblies and ceremonies. This was a significant marker of the Sinicization of Buddhism, leading to many localized practices, encapsulated in the saying, "Mazu established the monastic centers, and Baizhang set the pure rules." The *Pure Rules* contain hundreds of references to tea and have formed a series of rituals. For example, on

commemorative days of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana, offerings include incense, flowers, lamps, candles, tea, fruits, and delicacies, with tea offerings and incense lighting being part of the Dharma assembly process. In the daily life of the monastic community, such as during the abbot's inspections, receiving the Dharma robe, welcoming honored guests, or offering meals to the monks, there are also segments for drinking and offering tea. This illustrates the importance of tea in the lives of the monastic community and the high regard people have for it.

During the Song Dynasty, due to Emperor Huizong's fondness for tea, the practice of drinking tea became widespread, influencing both the court and the common people. Emperor Huizong himself had exceptional artistic skills and aesthetic taste. His work, the *Treatise on Tea*, elevated the development of tea culture to its peak. Tea ceremonies in monasteries also became more sophisticated, especially the tea ceremonies at Jingshan Temple in Hangzhou, which had a significant influence. Jingshan

Temple, a Chan Buddhist monastery built during the Tang Dynasty and flourishing in the Song Dynasty, was renowned as the foremost among the five great mountains and ten major temples in the Jiangnan region. Many Japanese Zen monks came to study there. After returning to Japan, they brought back not only the Chan lineage but also Jingshan tea and the procedures of the tea ceremonies, which gradually evolved into the Japanese tea ceremony. It can be said that Japanese tea culture, both in form and substance, is deeply influenced by Chan Buddhism.

## **2. Tea and Chan are One Flavor**

“Tea and Chan are One Flavor” is a concept that has gained wide popularity in recent years, but not many people can clearly articulate what it truly means. Some merely echo what others say or use “Chan” as a symbol of sophistication to market tea and tea houses. In fact, only by integrating Chan wisdom into tea culture and combining tea drinking with Chan can the practice truly be

considered “Tea and Chan are One Flavor.” If one cannot imbue tea with the essence of Chan, it remains entangled with greed, aversion, and ignorance, unrelated to Chan.

What is Chan? It is the awakened mind, which is also the essence of all things. Therefore, Chan is pervasive, not limited to tea; Chan can be integrated into food, walking, dressing, eating, carrying firewood, fetching water, and interacting with others. Chan can be found in the pleasing aspects of nature, such as the green bamboo and the blooming yellow flowers, as well as in the despised, such as ants, rubble, and excrement. As the saying goes, “The Way is in the ants, in the rubble, in the excrement.” Everywhere, the manifestations differ, but the essence is the same. With the wisdom of Chan, one can experience Chan in all things.

In the stories of ancient Chan masters achieving enlightenment, some were awakened by the sound of a tile hitting bamboo, realizing their true mind in an instant, “With one strike, all knowledge is forgotten, and

no further practice is needed.” Others were enlightened upon seeing peach blossoms, as in the case of Lingyun, who was awakened by the peach blossoms, “Lingyun was enlightened by the peach blossoms, and every tree in the ten-mile spring breeze leaned.” In essence, the mind can open through various causes and conditions, provided it is well-trained, with thin layers of delusion, allowing one to grasp that fleeting moment of insight. In our daily lives, we may have similar experiences, such as being startled by someone suddenly hitting our back while walking, causing the mind to go completely blank. This moment of blankness can also be an experience of the true mind, as all delusive thoughts vanish. However, for those without practice, this moment passes too quickly to grasp.

How can we clear away the fog and realize our true mind? It requires diligent and continuous effort at all times and in all places. “Tea and Chan are One Flavor” means experiencing Chan in the very moment of drinking tea. Drinking tea has two directions: one leads to the ordinary mind, and the other returns to the true mind. Without

wisdom, most people fall into the ordinary mind, entangled in habits of greed, aversion, and ignorance, influenced by the six dusts—sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental objects. When picking up a cup, they only see how good or exquisite the vessel is; when tasting the tea, they only perceive its flavor and aroma, whether it's fragrant or mellow. Such tea drinking, no matter how refined or profound, is merely a worldly practice and fundamentally different from using tea drinking to realize Chan.

The concept of “Tea and Chan are One Flavor” originated from the famous Song Dynasty Chan master Yuanwu Keqin. Master Yuanwu authored the *Blue Cliff Record*, which contains one hundred Chan koans and is regarded as the foremost book in Chan tradition. Koans are cases illustrating how Chan masters guide their disciples. These methods are often unconventional and challenging to understand. Master Yuanwu's ability to comment on and interpret these koans demonstrates his profound understanding of Chan. Additionally, he was skilled in the tea ceremony. His notion of “Tea and Chan are One Flavor”

reflects his realization of the true mind, embodying deep wisdom. Among his Dharma heirs was Dahui Zonggao of Jingshan Temple, a great Chan master who advocated investigating the critical phrase (*bua tou*) and had a strong connection with tea.

The calligraphy of “Tea and Chan are One Flavor” by Master Yuanwu was brought back to Japan by a monk who had come to China to study. It eventually reached the hands of the renowned monk Ikkyu. Ikkyu then passed it on to his disciple Murata Juko. Juko, who became a monk in his youth and was passionate about tea, later studied Chan under Ikkyu and received his approval. Juko introduced Chan principles into the tea ceremony and established the practice of Soan tea ceremony (grass hut tea). Before this, tea activities in Japan were mainly popular among the upper class and often involved competing over extravagant settings or valuable tea utensils, with little focus on the tea itself. The Soan tea ceremony shifted away from luxury, returning to simplicity and integrating tea drinking with Chan practice, elevating it to

the level of the Way. Juko also placed Master Yuanwu's calligraphy in an alcove of the tea room, where people would bow to it upon entering, calming their minds and bodies before experiencing the profound meaning of "Tea and Chan are One Flavor" through the process of preparing and drinking tea.

Murata Juko is regarded as the "Father of the Japanese Tea Ceremony." Juko, along with his disciple Takeno Joo and Joo's disciple Sen no Rikyu, are the most significant founders of the Japanese tea ceremony. Sen no Rikyu, in particular, is considered the great master of the tea ceremony, and his aesthetic philosophy of life has had a comprehensive influence on Japanese culture.

### **3. Harmony, Respect, Purity, Tranquility**

The philosophy of "Harmony, Respect, Purity, and Tranquility" originates from Murata Juko's concept of "Carefulness, Respect, Purity, and Tranquility." Sen no Rikyu modified one character to its current form, which



has been passed down to this day. These four characters fully embody the spirit of the Japanese tea ceremony and can also be said to reflect the essence of Chan.

The first is Harmony. This includes harmonious relationships between objects, between people and objects, and between people themselves. In a broader sense, it denotes the unity of heaven and humanity. This harmony arises from an inner sense of equality. While drinking tea, one should eliminate dualistic oppositions and let go of all attachments to external forms. Realizing there inherently exists nothing is the ultimate form of harmony.

The second is Respect. This involves maintaining a sense of profound respect for all things in the universe, seeing a world in a flower and a buddha in a leaf. In the tea ceremony, this respect is manifested through a sense of ritual, with proper order and decorum among participants. Some may argue that Chan aims to break free from all forms, so why is ritual important? These rituals are merely tools to calm the mind. Since ordinary people are

influenced by their surroundings, a chaotic environment can disturb both body and mind. Conversely, in a serene setting, with solemn and deliberate actions, the mind is more likely to settle.

The third is Purity. Simply put, this means cleanliness. The tea room can be simple, plain, small, or old, but it must be spotless. More importantly, it refers to inner purity. The tea ceremony is elevated to the level of the Way because it uses the external environment and rituals to help purify the mind. Therefore, when participating in a tea ceremony, one should strive for a mind as clear as a bright mirror, reflecting objects without retaining them, free of delusive thoughts and impurities.

The fourth is Tranquility. In Chan practice, the sudden cessation of a frenzied mind is an expression of tranquility; the “Nirvana is Perfect Tranquility” in the Three Dharma Seals represents the ultimate achievement of tranquility. In terms of the environment, this is reflected in simplicity, quietness, and minimalism. For example,

the tea room should not be too large. The “Juko Hermitage,” the birthplace of the grass hut tea ceremony, is merely a small space of four and a half tatami mats with very simple furnishings. Such an environment helps gather our six senses, maintain focus, and encourage introspection rather than outward seeking.

I don’t specialize in researching the tea ceremony, and my interpretation of these four characters mainly comes from my understanding of Chan. Naturally, the spirit of the tea ceremony originally stems from Chan Buddhism. Returning to this fundamental perspective, I believe, offers a more direct insight. From this, we can also sense the cool, refreshing atmosphere of the Chan forest, as if seeing Chan masters living in mountain huts, sitting together and drinking tea, transcending all worldly concerns.

#### **4. Once-in-a-Lifetime Encounter**

The concept of “Once-in-a-Lifetime Encounter,” introduced

in the Japanese tea ceremony, is influenced by the Buddhist view of impermanence. It reminds tea practitioners to cherish the present moment when hosting or participating in a tea ceremony. For some, attending an event today might be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, something to be deeply treasured. Others might think they will have a second or third chance, so much so that this occasion seems less important or special.

In fact, whether you attend once or many times, each occasion is shaped by unique circumstances and is an unrepeatable “Once-in-a-Lifetime Encounter.” A Western philosopher said that one cannot step into the same river twice. Why? Because the water is constantly flowing and changing, just as time flows ceaselessly, day and night. Consider yourself: are you the same person today as you were yesterday? Will you be the same tomorrow as you are today? Are you now the same as you were when you were a child? Will you be the same at seventy or eighty as you are now? From birth to old age and death, countless cells have been replaced, and countless thoughts have

changed, with both physical and mental elements continuously arising and ceasing in every moment.

Feng Zikai wrote an essay titled *Gradual Change*, discussing the impermanence of life. Time quietly steals away everyone's years, making people age and die without realizing it. This unconsciousness leads to the illusion of living forever, fostering the mindset of "not living a hundred years, yet always carrying the worry of a thousand." People often dwell on the past or the future, wasting the only moment they can truly grasp—the present.

Especially in today's world, with so many uncontrollable factors, the fact that we can sit together and gather over tea is a result of accumulated merits and favorable circumstances over many lifetimes. We should participate in learning and in every future event with the mindset of "Once-in-a-Lifetime Encounter." From brewing tea to drinking it, we should do so with sincerity, reverence, and seriousness, fully present in the moment. If we do not stay present, this segment of life will be squandered,

and there will be no chance to make up for it.

## **5. The Beauty of Wabi-Sabi**

Wabi-sabi is a life aesthetic advocated by the Japanese tea ceremony and represents a certain state of being. It was proposed as a counter to the pursuit of wealth and luxury. Simply put, it means returning to simplicity and embracing naturalness, simplicity, austerity, and even the beauty of imperfection and poverty. This inclination began with Murata Juko's grass hut tea and has its roots in Chan Buddhism. Ancient Chan practitioners lived by the water and in the forests, with thatched cottages and straw sandals, owning very few possessions. Additionally, Buddhism has a tradition of cherishing blessings, so many items in temples are passed down through generations, weathered by time, possessing a quiet, ancient, and rich beauty.

In recent years, with the spread of the wabi-sabi trend, many places have emulated this aesthetic, offering a

refreshing change. However, some designs remain superficial, deliberately seeking to appear old and worn without understanding the deeper meaning behind these appearances. In fact, wabi-sabi cannot be embodied merely by copying some materials or arrangements. Understanding why this is done, what spirit it expresses, and what state it represents requires the wisdom of Chan. I believe that as times change, the form does not need to remain constant. The key is to understand the underlying spirit and then express it in a way that suits the present moment. The main lessons we can draw from this are two of the following:

The first is moderation. In an era of abundant material wealth, we can easily acquire many things, making moderation all the more important. Moderation in the quantity of items allows for spaciousness and clarity, reducing resource consumption and ecological damage. More importantly, it helps us overcome greed, resist external temptations, and avoid being burdened by material possessions.

The second is respect. As consumers, we should choose items suitable for long-term use and care for them meticulously. Tea practitioners have the habit of nurturing their teapots; similarly, we can treat other items with the same mindset, cherishing and enhancing them rather than discarding them on a whim. As designers, we should elevate our aesthetic and moral standards, creating products through good design and recreation that elevate the materials we use, rather than merely catering to popular trends or stimulating consumer desire.

By adhering to these two principles, we can create our own wabi-sabi beauty appropriate to our context: beauty in minimalism, beauty in simplicity, beauty in antiquity, and beauty in tranquility.

The above five aspects encompass the philosophical origins of the tea ceremony and its development in Japan. Understanding their spiritual essence will help us excel in this specific initiative.



## II

### THE PRACTICE OF TEA AND CHAN AS ONE FLAVOR

After understanding the background of tea culture, we need to further explore: How do we fully appreciate a cup of tea at a tea ceremony? How can this specific initiative support our Chan practice?

#### 1. Let Go and Relax

In Chan practice, the first step is to bring the mind back to the present moment, neither dwelling in the past nor living in the future. However, people today often feel restless and anxious. Even when sitting down to drink

tea, their minds are preoccupied with various thoughts, pondering what happened yesterday or worrying about what needs to be done tomorrow, making it difficult to be present. Some might even see a tea ceremony as an opportunity to boast about their wealth or career achievements. Drinking tea with such a worldly mindset reduces even the finest tea to just a beverage or a mere prop, making it impossible to savor its true flavor. Only by letting go of all attachments to identity, career, status, and worldly concerns, can one truly enter the Path through tea and experience the unity of Chan and tea.

To help calm the mind, we should create a relaxing atmosphere, possibly by arranging the ceremony in a natural setting among mountains and rivers. In such open environments, amidst sunlight, gentle breezes, trees, and rocks, the mind can relax more easily. This is a prerequisite for aligning with Chan. Additionally, it is important to ask everyone to put away their mobile phones. In that moment, let the distractions of the mundane world fade away, allowing oneself to be quietly present with the tea

and with oneself. Such is the process of letting go, relaxing, and emptying the mind.

## **2. Emptiness and Formlessness**

In Buddhism, “emptiness” does not mean that nothing exists. Rather, it refers to emptying our attachments to the external world and internal emotions. Why can’t we realize our true nature? Because we are stuck in various attachments. Whatever we care about, we become stuck on. Only by letting go can we avoid being obstructed by anything, both inside and outside. This is what Buddhism means by “If you can remain unattached to all things, what does it matter if you are always surrounded by them?” Thus, what we truly need to empty are nothing but our own preconceptions, attachments, and troubles.

Another concept related to emptiness is formlessness. Ordinary people live in a world of forms, influenced by sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts. The emptiness that Chan practice aims to realize is based on

formlessness. The three main principles of Chan practice are: “No-Thought as the Principle, No-Form as the Essence, No-Abidance as the Basis.” “No-Thought as the Principle” means recognizing the mind’s essence behind thoughts, like the sky behind clouds. We usually live in our thoughts, obscured by clouds, and only by transcending thoughts can we return to our true nature. “No-Form as the Essence” means that the true nature of the mind has no color or shape, transcending all forms. It is not dazzling or earth-shattering. “No-Abidance as the Basis” means that the mind has a quality of non-attachment. No matter how many clouds drift by, the sky does not try to hold onto any cloud, nor does it discriminate between beautiful and unattractive clouds, as in the saying, “The vast sky does not hinder the white clouds from flying.”

In conducting a tea ceremony, we create various forms, arrange spaces, choose utensils, and design processes, each movement imbued with a sense of ritual. This can easily lead to attachment to forms and a worldly mindset.

Does this mean we shouldn't pay attention to these details? No, that is not the case. Our purpose in holding a tea ceremony is to guide people, to settle their bodies and minds, which requires atmosphere and a sense of ritual.

The key is to grasp the proper measure. We must understand the significance of forms while recognizing that "all forms are illusory," knowing that everything is like a dream, an illusion, inherently empty and tranquil, without falling into attachment to forms. In Buddhism, this is called "a moonlit ashram, a dream-like Buddhist ceremony." With this understanding, we can create forms while transcending them, freeing ourselves from attachment to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts.

The Japanese tea ceremony benefits from Chan philosophy, especially the enlightenment verse of the Sixth Patriarch, "Inherently, there exists nothing." This is also the source of "Harmony, Respect, Purity, and Tranquility." To achieve peacefulness, reverence, coolness, and stillness, both inside and out, we need the wisdom of emptiness

and formlessness. This determines whether our tea ceremonies are worldly or transcendental, whether they lead to samsara or awakening. Therefore, we should pay attention to form, but not overly complicate it. As Sen no Rikyu said, the tea ceremony is simply about boiling water and making tea. All forms serve to realize the formless mind essence, which is the highest realm of Chan and aligns with our true nature.

### **3. The Ordinary Mind**

Chan Buddhism teaches that “the ordinary mind is the Way.” This “ordinary” does not refer to our usual worldly mind. Ordinary people live in a world filled with various preconceptions, attachments, desires, pursuits, conflicts, rights and wrongs—all products of ignorance that lead to delusions and the cycle of samsara. Only by removing all these can we attain the true ordinary mind, which is pure, bare, and unobstructed. This is the original face that neither arises nor ceases, neither taints nor purifies, neither increases nor decreases.

How do we return to this ordinary state? First, we need to return to a simple life and learn to practice within our daily activities. When we think of practice, we often imagine chanting sutras or meditating, as if it is a separate system from our everyday life. In reality, practice is a way of being mindful, encompassing both seated meditation and daily activities. Our future Chan practice will focus on three key points. First, we use tangible actions as our focus. Through walking meditation, focused breathing, and other methods, we cultivate continuous and stable concentration. Second, we train in awareness. As soon as thoughts and emotions arise, we can immediately recognize the state of our mind, rather than letting it pass unnoticed. Third, we bring mindfulness into daily life. Chan Buddhism teaches that practice is “eating when hungry and sleeping when tired.” We all eat and sleep, so why isn’t this Chan? Because we do these things with greed, aversion, and ignorance, rather than mindfulness. Therefore, we need to cultivate mindfulness, turning our lives into a Chan practice of seeking truth and returning to our true nature. Such a life is truly valuable.

The essence of the tea ceremony lies in this as well. Sen no Rikyu said, “The secret of the Way of Tea lies in breaking free from the thoughts of mountains and water, grass and trees, the tea hut, host and guest, various utensils, laws, and rules, to achieve a state of mind of having nothing and peaceful contentment, like a field of pure white dew.” Although we use various activities to conduct a tea ceremony, the ultimate goal is to transcend these forms. While diligently engaging in the practice, the mind remains unattached and transcends the material world.

#### **4. Concentration and Awareness**

Chan practice emphasizes two key points: concentration and awareness. Modern people often live in a state of distraction, with their minds jumping from one thought to another, unable to control themselves. This leaves us exhausted yet unable to rest. Concentration means anchoring the mind, keeping it settled and no longer drifting aimlessly.



In the context of a tea ceremony, tea itself is our anchor, the object on which we settle our minds. Beyond understanding the spirit, realm, and aesthetics of tea, we must learn to brew a cup of tea with full concentration and to drink it with full concentration. This training session will introduce practical techniques, such as the seven steps of brewing tea and the seven aspects of creating an ambiance. However, all these are meant to help us gather our minds. We do not brew tea for the sake of brewing tea, nor do we arrange the space for the sake of arranging the space. Rather, through these various methods, we gather the six senses, bringing the outward-chasing mind back to the present space, back to the current tea ceremony, back to the tea in hand, and ultimately back to the inner self. The minds of modern people are too wild; without appropriate skillful means, it is difficult for the mind to settle and focus.

But focus alone is not enough. We must further train awareness, awakening the clarity within. Everyone has an inherently pure mind, a mind that is always present. The

purpose of practice is to recognize, familiarize with, and activate this mind. As the saying goes, “The self-nature of Bodhi is originally clear and pure. Simply use that mind, and you will straightaway accomplish Buddhahood.”

Of course, it is challenging to directly experience the true mind for the time being, but we can start by experiencing the awareness that arises when the mind is clear. When the mind settles through concentration, we can observe the entire process of brewing and drinking tea. From pouring water to steeping the tea, from raising the cup to smelling the aroma, and then drinking the tea, feeling its temperature, and sensing it entering the body, we maintain awareness throughout but without judgment or attachment.

When we learn to focus and be mindful, we can let go of our attachment to forms and integrate tea drinking with mindful Chan practice. In conducting a tea ceremony, we pay attention to the quality of the tea, the utensils, and the ambiance, yet we do not become attached to them. The tea ceremony is highly esteemed in Japan because

it brings the otherwise elusive practice of Zen monastic life to the public, creating a bridge between the worldly and the transcendental. It allows people to experience the essence of Chan in a cup of tea and to feel tranquility amidst daily life.

# III

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Whether it is Chinese Chan tea or the Japanese tea ceremony, we must approach them with the wisdom of Chan. Only then can we clearly grasp the essence of each practice. If we focus solely on the form without understanding its spirit and meaning, we risk becoming rigid and fixated on the surface, which is like putting the cart before the horse.

What has been discussed above is merely a general framework. This tea ceremony serves as an excellent starting point. In the future, we will develop this into a specialized project. On one hand, a research team will delve

deeply into topics such as the application of tea in Chan practice, related rituals, and how it evolved into the tea ceremony after being introduced to Japan, forming a comprehensive aesthetic of life. We believe there are many practices we can learn from. On the other hand, we will continuously adjust our practice, making tea ceremonies an important part of a mindful and slow-paced life. Our goal is to develop a practical and easily replicable model that serves society and purifies people's minds.

## 国际静心协会、静心学堂简介

国际静心协会（简称 MPI）是 2021 年成立于瑞士苏黎世的非盈利组织，旨在向全球传播佛法智慧和禅意生活。

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Mindful Peace International (MPI), established in 2021 in Zurich, Switzerland, is a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading Buddhist wisdom and promoting a Chan-inspired life globally.

The Mindful Peace Academy serves as the core public welfare brand under Mindful Peace International. We are dedicated to passing on education about life awakening and offering modern individuals ways towards physical and mental well-being, thereby helping them ground themselves and discover their life's mission. The curriculum we promote at the Mindful Peace Academy has been authenticated through forty years of study and practice by Master Jiqun, an eminent elder of Han Buddhism. It represents an exploration of contemporary Buddhist education, encompassing teachings on the Chan-inspired Life, the Wisdom for Living, and the Path to Awakening. Moreover, we are committed to creating Chan-inspired spaces and fostering mutually enriching environments worldwide to safeguard the public's learning journey.

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