

# THE OOLONG ALCHEMIST AND HIS ELIXIR - PART 3

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Every journey eventually ends; however, reaching this point always allows for a retrospective of what has been done and what has been achieved. In our case, we have understood the basics of Oolong tea and how external aspects such as the Tropic of Cancer and the tea jassid influence its flavor.

Now, the last thing left for us to do on this journey is to get to know the Alchemist of Oolong. As mentioned throughout our voyage, the Alchemist's name is Sean, and his journey in tea, like many others, is curious. Sean did not start in tea per se but in international trade, where he worked for nine years in IT (Information and Communication Technologies), which allowed him to live in Poland for over six years as a company director. However, despite all this success, Sean needed something beyond his profession. This is where he ventured into China and lived there for five years to lay the groundwork for his company, [Trilliant Tea Industry](#).

Sean sees tea as a "pleasure full of challenges," which is quite true, as the tea trade is complex in various aspects of its production, value chain, distribution, and sales, to name a few. One of the first challenges Sean faced in mastering Oolong was earning the respect of generational producers. This is quite common in tea and coffee, where knowledge and practices are passed down to successors, which obviously creates a competitive advantage but also leads to very tight-knit groups.



Obviously, Sean was not a stranger to tea production, but due to his career in international trade and IT, some did not consider him a proper producer. Sean mentions that anyone can sell tea, but being considered a producer is a more complex task. However, this did not impede Sean. He saw Oolong as a passion, not as a business. This love for the art of Oolong has allowed him to understand the "why" of the oolong process, how to evaluate it, how to produce it, and, like any good artist, to follow his work of art from start to finish (i.e., harvest, production, and sale). This means working non-stop for thirty-six to forty-eight hours straight. Despite all this experience, Sean claims to be still learning.

I believe that when a person reaches the point of realizing that they don't know everything about a specific topic, no matter how experienced they are, and admits to being an eternal learner, that's when they truly tap into the source of true knowledge.

The million-dollar question is: what good does it do to tap into this source? The answer is simple: it allows one not to be selfish with knowledge. In fact, one seeks to share this treasure with others. Of course, there is no rule on how to do it; each person shares it as they wish.

In Sean's case, he shares his knowledge through his company, [Trilliant Tea Industry](#), which is dedicated to producing and exporting tea. It has reached countries such as Japan, the United States, and China. But there is still much to share, which is why Sean is part of the [European Specialty Tea Association \(E.S.T.A.\)](#), which is to gradually share the beauty of Taiwanese Oolong with Europe and the world.

But what makes [Trilliant Tea Industry](#) different?

1. They are a globalized tea company, which Sean mentions is uncommon in Taiwan.
2. They do not use intermediaries; the consumer deals directly with the producer.
3. Patience is crucial in Oolong; Sean enjoys and perfects every aspect to achieve the best notes, flavors, and aromas in his final product.

Not everything is rosy. Sean also faces challenges such as high labor costs and the lack of knowledge about Taiwanese Oolong, although not just Oolong but tea in general. Many

believe they know tea and their reference is a tea bag containing the "dust" from the CTC tea production method. Additionally, many of the conditions in which these teas are stored and handled are not appropriate, resulting in a bad tea that creates stigmas such as "tea is ugly," "tea is bitter," "tea is for the sick," etc.

Sean does not focus solely on selling a product but on transmitting his knowledge and love for his homeland, Taiwan. If you ask Sean for advice on starting with Oolong, he can guide you from start to finish, providing tips like:

"There are many ways to enjoy tea, so I prefer to talk about 'how to define a good Oolong tea.' When you open the bag, you should perceive a fresh and lively aroma; that's a sign of a good tea (very important, if the aroma is rigid and strong, it can last a few hours after the bag is unsealed, that's definitely flavored tea).

If you want to know how good or bad a tea is, prepare it using boiling water at 100 °C with the utensils covered (teapot, cups, etc.) for 5 minutes (3 g of tea for 150 cc of water). If your Oolong tea is too astringent, it's 100% not from Taiwan.

As you can see, Sean's advice is impartial. Why? He tells you how to test any tea, including Trilliant Tea Industry ones, but at the same time, this reaffirms his confidence in what he does.

While in the three installments of "The Alchemist of Oolong and His Elixir," I've referred to the reasons for the nickname "Oolong Alchemist," we can confirm this nickname with a golden seal, mentioning that Sean does not have SOPs or Standard Operating Procedures for Oolong oxidation.

Sean claims that in the last ten years, he has not made oolong tea in the same way twice. He is always in control and gives directives to obtain the best possible tea without adding any flavor, highlighting the beauties of Hill Oolong, High Mountain Oolong, and Dong-ding Oolong.

Although tea is quite broad, and we could spend hours talking about it, we must now conclude our journey. To bid farewell to Sean, I asked him to share some of his tea wisdom with me, and he gave me two, which I joyfully share with you.

*Sean's Tea Wisdom #1:* Never sell anything you wouldn't want to buy yourself.

*Sean's Tea Wisdom #2:* Never do anything that jeopardizes your conscience.

As a good alchemist, Sean has understood that tea goes beyond a simple drink. As Master Lu Yu said in "The Classic of Tea: Origins and Rituals," "Tea tempers the spirit and harmonizes the mind, dispels tiredness and relieves fatigue, awakens thought and prevents drowsiness, clears or refreshes the body, and cleanses the perceptive faculties."

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## References

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