

Chai Stories

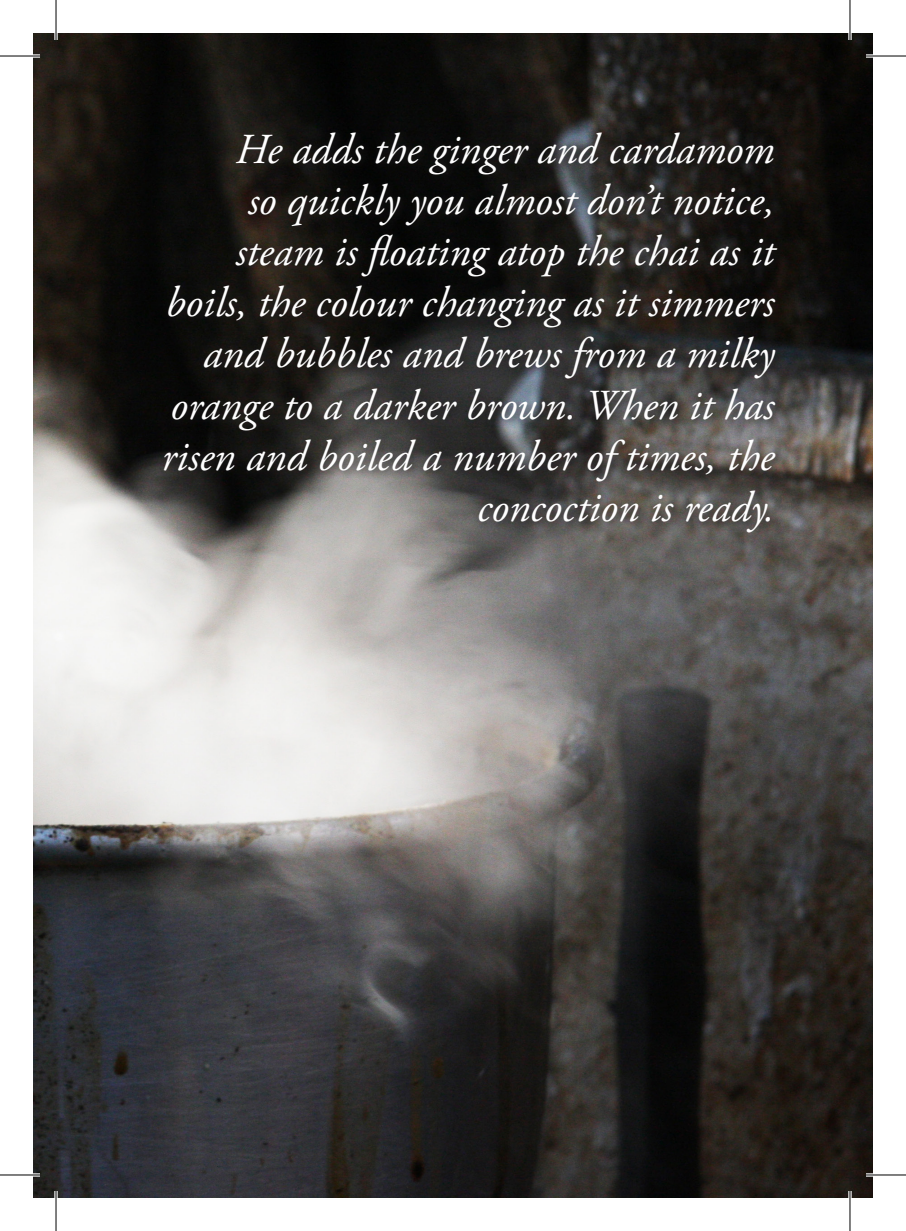
mīra manek



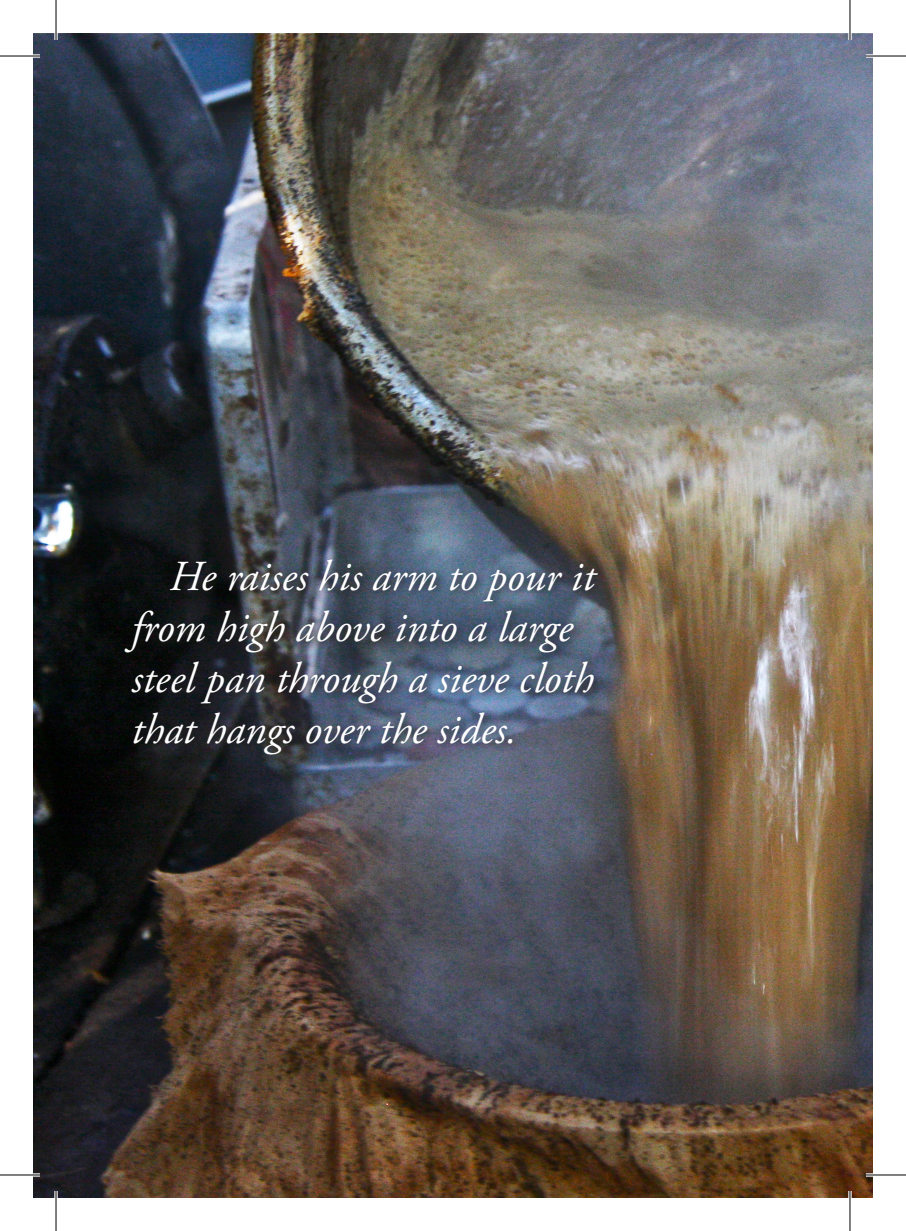


*As with life on the streets of
Mumbai, watching the chaiwala
make chai is wonderfully theatrical.
At first, the way he adeptly boils, sieves
and pours the tea with all those in
between steps, seems like a complex
process, and then watching it again
and again, the process starts to unfurl.*

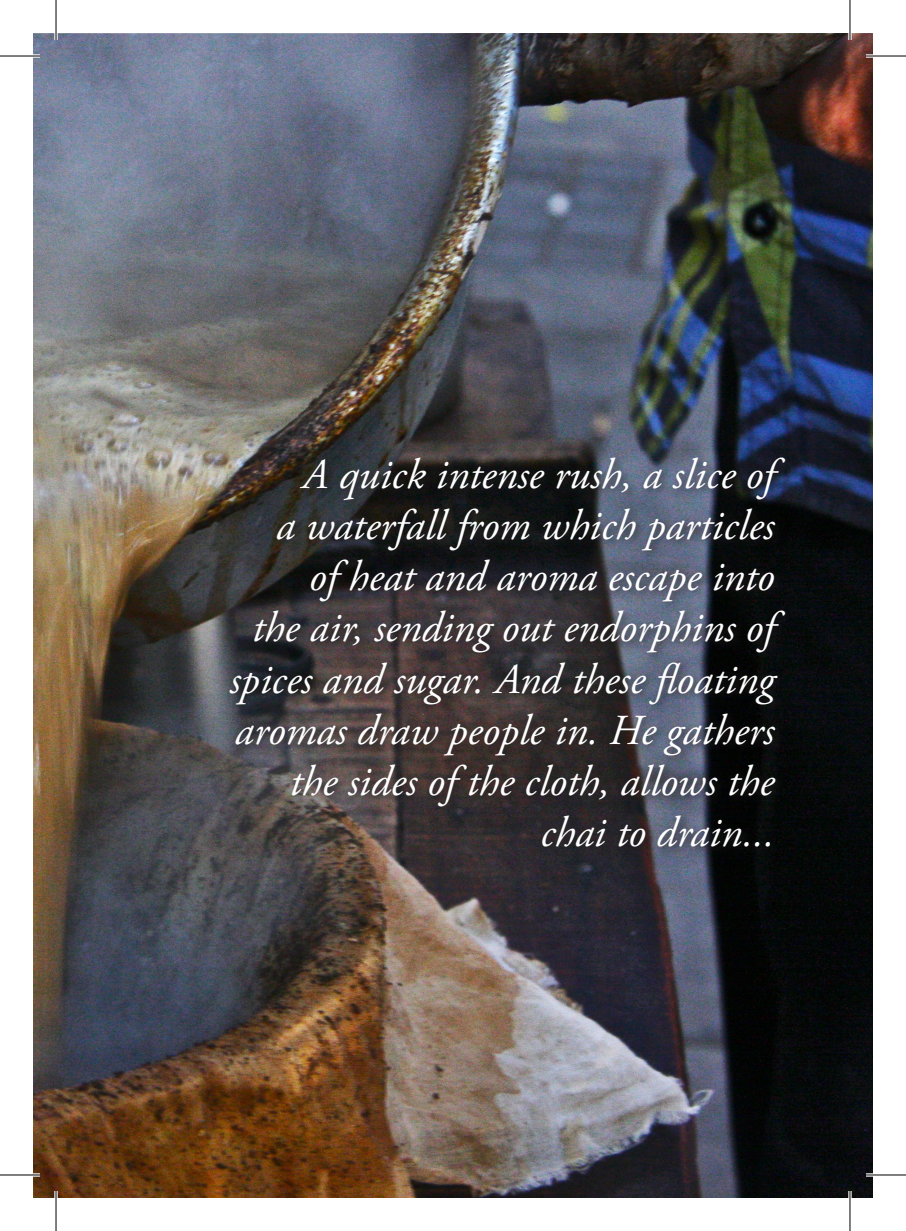




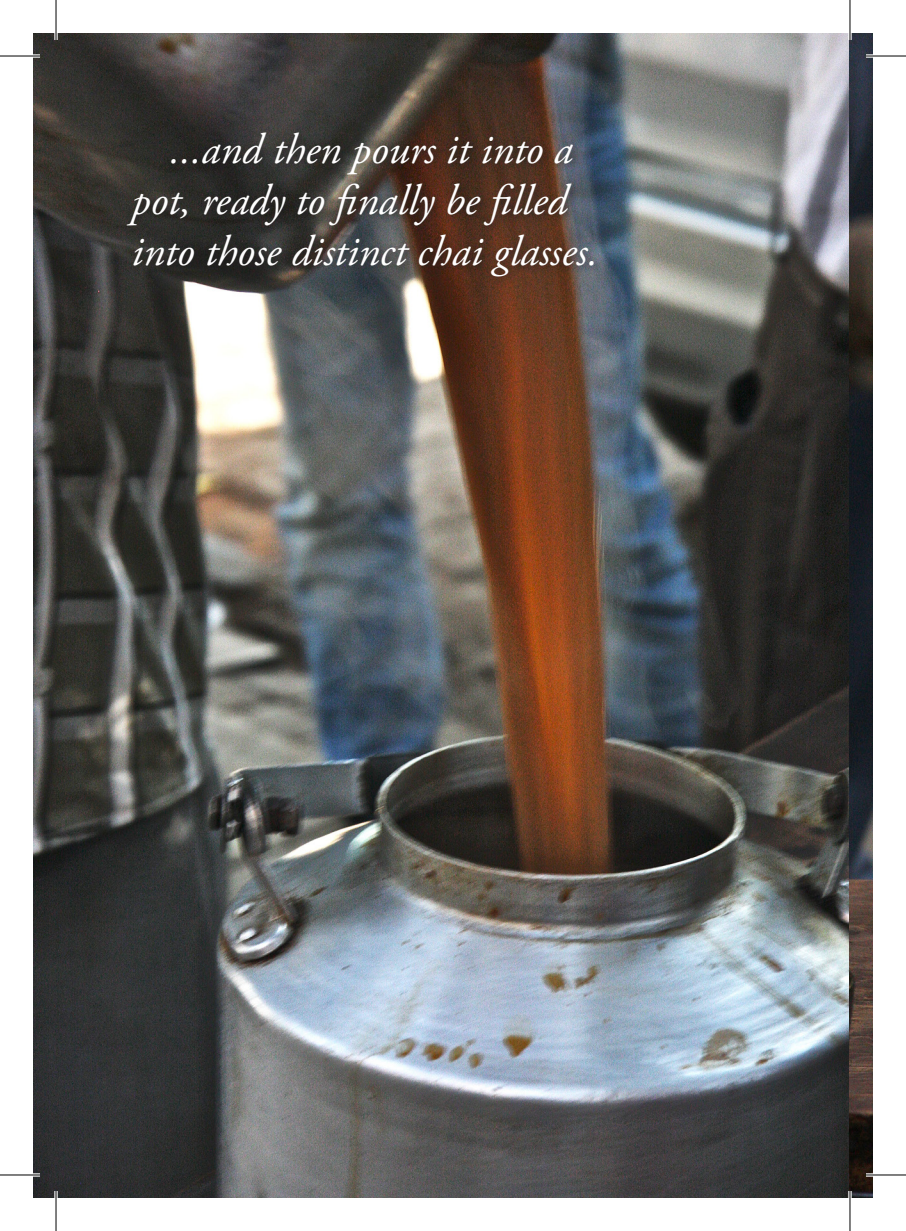
*He adds the ginger and cardamom
so quickly you almost don't notice,
steam is floating atop the chai as it
boils, the colour changing as it simmers
and bubbles and brews from a milky
orange to a darker brown. When it has
risen and boiled a number of times, the
concoction is ready.*



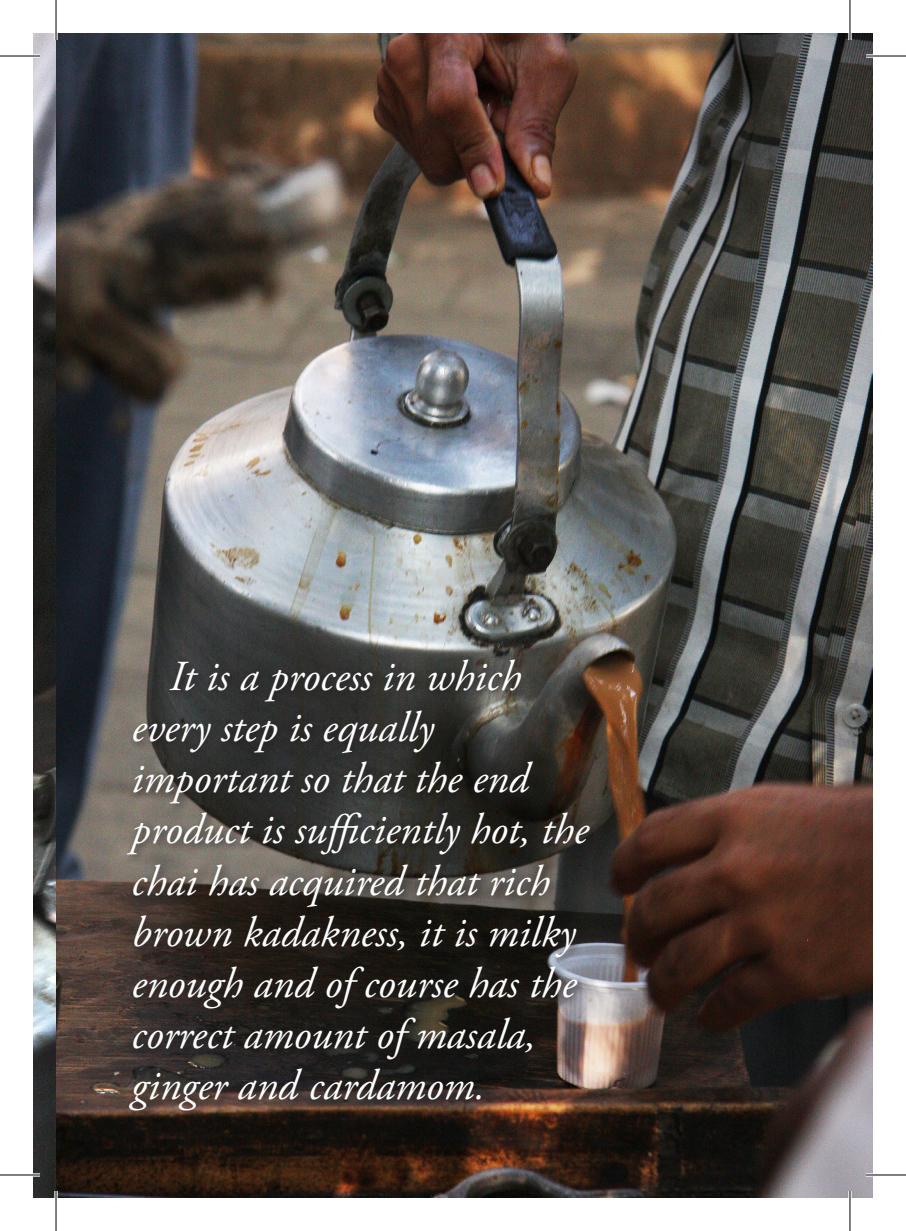
*He raises his arm to pour it
from high above into a large
steel pan through a sieve cloth
that hangs over the sides.*



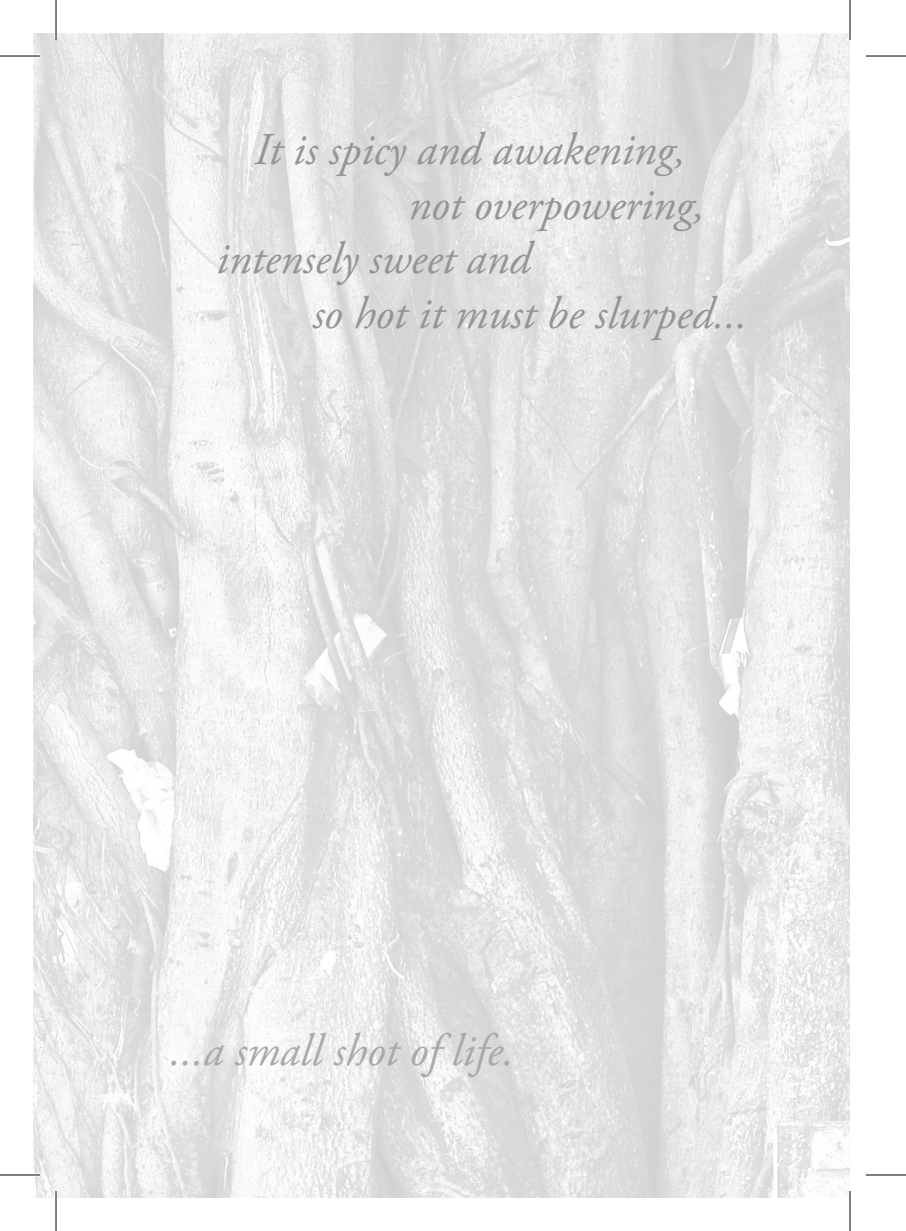
*A quick intense rush, a slice of
a waterfall from which particles
of heat and aroma escape into
the air, sending out endorphins of
spices and sugar. And these floating
aromas draw people in. He gathers
the sides of the cloth, allows the
chai to drain...*



*...and then pours it into a
pot, ready to finally be filled
into those distinct chai glasses.*

A close-up photograph of a person's hands pouring tea. The person is wearing a grey and white striped shirt. They are holding a large, silver, cylindrical metal kettle with a black handle. The kettle has a lid with a silver knob. A stream of thick, brown, milky tea is being poured from the spout of the kettle into a small, white, ribbed plastic cup. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with some foliage and a person in a blue shirt. The lighting is natural, suggesting daylight.

It is a process in which every step is equally important so that the end product is sufficiently hot, the chai has acquired that rich brown kadakness, it is milky enough and of course has the correct amount of masala, ginger and cardamom.



*It is spicy and awakening,
not overpowering,
intensely sweet and
so hot it must be slurped...*

...a small shot of life.



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