

# Global Tea Hut



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The old, worn bowl covers his face for a moment as he drinks the last of the steaming draught—drinks it in deeply, beyond the body. He sets it down with two hands, gently and with great reverence as he was once taught. The old bowl has been more than just a friend; it has come to be a talisman of peace. It shows up at the in-between moments, when his work is done and there is time to sit and be. But today is different, and he knows it the moment he adds more water. He watches the old leaves dance in twirls around the bowl and imagines the orbits this tea has made, and is making: from years of earth and sun, moon and stars to tree and life. And even now, he looks into the slowing leaves and sees all the others out there. He can feel them sharing the same tea. He can feel the community building through this shared love of the Leaf...

Outside of time, there is this month-long tea session. We meet together here and share some tea, sipping our respective bowls on all sides of the globe. And it's hard to believe that we've been meeting here half a year already! As the circle grows, so does the magic and inspiration.

It's often all too easy to write off the ordinary moments of our lives, and forget the simple gifts. We want to say "just" to so many things: "just" a meeting or "just" another meal or bowl of tea. But, in the end, our life is almost exclusively made up of all these discarded "justs". Rather than dismissing the ordinary, we must learn to celebrate it. There is great power in the simplest things, as even a single atom can power a city. We hope that this tea hut is such a place, where we can meet and celebrate a simple bowl of leaves and water together.

In ancient China, there were forest monks who wandered the mountains above the clouds. People sought out their huts for the solitude and peace of Nature and for a bit of wisdom and guidance from the sages who dwelt there. And often when they'd come, the old master would serve them tea, having nothing else to give. We are very much carrying this tradition on, only the hut has grown so much larger. The world is connecting in marvelous ways, through technology, travel and increased information. Tea understands this

and is also seeking new ways to connect with people. This hut is another new way that this connection is being awakened.

Find yourself some good mountain spring water, toss these leaves in a bowl and join us in this hut. Invite over some friends or loved ones, or maybe they'll join us from afar. Celebrate the ordinariness of it all. There's just this packet of tea, scribbled writing on the outside, a shoddy black and white newsletter, you and I. It's just a packet of some papers and a bit of leaves. But the tea inside was donated to you; it's connecting you to an organic farm that's probably on the other side of the globe. The farmer was thrilled to give it to you, hoping to spread the changes he's a part of, and proud that his tea is bringing joy to a brother or sister as far away as you are. And this gift and newsletter were also donated with great honor and love. Your money, too, is connecting you to a living tea tradition, funding our free center, school, publications and roadside huts. The other members of this hut around the world would love to meet you and share some tea. You could probably stay in most of their homes, if you happened to find yourself nearby. They are wondering about you as you sit and drink your tea, just as you think fondly of them. All of this in a simple packet of tea!

It's amazing that so many connections arise out of the steam of this one steeping of magical tea—connections to our center in Taiwan and all the people that are coming to visit and/or stay, connections to tea farmers and connections to others through this growing tea gathering. And this is as it should be: Nature is gathering us in. The Leaf is showing us the vibrant earth we grew out of, and within it we find a reflection of our life and soul, our joys and sorrows. It is a medicine that cures the disconnection—from Nature, each other and from ourselves. And there's much more healing power in sharing it with others.

He slowly picks up the bowl again, as the sentiments and words inside of him vanish with the curls of steam. He holds it for a while, feeling the warmth in his hands. There's nothing to say about the bowl of leaves anymore...