

Global Tea Hut



NEWSLETTER #9, OCTOBER 2012

It has been so remarkable participating in these monthly tea sessions that time has slipped by and two seasons have come and gone. But we haven't lost the joy behind creating these gatherings, serving you and this growing circle of people. We're just as committed to connecting you to astonishing teas and organic farmers, to this living tea tradition and our center in Taiwan, and of course to each other. As much as the first month, we learn about which tea to share with excitement and are thrilled to visit the farmers that wish to donate their tea to you. We are just as joyous about packaging these envelopes, writing these newsletters and selecting gifts for you as we were when this all started for a much smaller group of tea brothers and sisters. And we hope you are as thrilled to receive these packages as we are to send them.

It feels like this gathering has grown in more than size alone, like we have also all grown closer for these shared tea sessions. It seems easy to slip into a casual tone writing for these newsletters, as though chatting with old friends. And indeed, we have been thrilled to have visits from many of you, or at least to receive word that your Eastward-bound trips are in the works.

In this tradition we say that we learn not how to *make* tea, but rather how to *serve* it. This isn't a witicism; serving is in concordance with the true spirit of tea. Tea wants to be shared. It speaks to the soul as a connector, connecting us with Great Nature and with each other. A fine tea is so much better when the jar is opened in the spirit of sharing rather than in the name of enjoyment. Of the hundred best teas we have ever drunk, there have been so few that we could have owned ourselves—they were all shared with us freely and openly, given in the spirit of connection, many too priceless to ever be bought or sold. Long ago, the sages that cloudwalked Chinese mountains had little else to give a passing guest, other than the leaves they had gathered from nearby trees. And sometimes, these simple gifts are the most important. It is, after all, the priceless parts of life that matter most.

It has been amazing to hear that so many of you have figured this out and started sharing these lit-

tle envelopes of tea with others, in the spirit of spreading this tradition and Cha Dao as well. You inspire us. It seems that with each passing month, this center becomes more active—ignited by the energy of your support! There are more guests, emails and queries. We have a new book out, which you'll learn about later on in this issue; and if you haven't yet checked out the videos we are making, you should head to the GTH website (www.globalteahut.org) and have a look. They are getting better each time, as we learn our craft. We know this will also be an important medium in sharing our tradition with this magnificently modern world.

As this Hut grows and we share these teas each month, let the heart be warmed by our community and the small, though poignant, effect it's having on the world. Take the time to share this month's tea in a warm space, as so many of us are experiencing a shift in the weather, in the moon and wind. Perhaps go outside one last time before winter and share this month's tea with someone special. Maybe you'll tell them about the marvelous farmer that produced it, or about how proud he is to be connecting to you all.

It is amazing to imagine that so many travelers in other times can be recalled and remembered in our tea gatherings. Like us, they have gathered to share some warm tea around tables, on cushions or blankets by the falls, on a bridge or even on a boat, as we recently drank our tea...

A weary mountain man came across a hut after weeks of wandering alone. The hint of company enticed his soul in ways even food could not, and he realized how hungry he was for companionship. The smoke from the small hut seemed a ribbon of joy, descending rather than ascending from Heaven. He strolled up confidently, knowing that tea would bind him and his soon-to-be brother. Sure enough, there was little space between the opened door and the first bowl of tea, offered graciously and with a smile—for nothing pleased the old hermit more than a far-off traveler stopping by for some tea. Perhaps the traveler, a stranger no more, would smile at the scroll of calligraphy that was the only decoration in the otherwise sparse hut: "*Through tea make friends!*"