



THE GLOBAL TEA HUT PROCESS

Article by Shane “Mcphane” Marrs

These are the countries to which Global Tea Hut was lovingly sent out to last month (June) and the list is increasing all the time:

Russia. Spain. England. Estonia. Sweden. Japan. Thailand. Costa Rica. Italy. Norway. South Africa. Holland. Germany. UK. Australia. Czech Republic. New Zealand. Italy. Taiwan. Canada. America. China.

As I sat at the post office I wrote down these countries in my notepad along with their phonetic Chinese counterparts, which helped me to communicate with the postal workers, and when you're mailing envelopes to 22 countries around the globe, the more communication the better. That being said, the language barrier also provides a little quiet time to infuse a little more loving-kindness (metta) into each parcel making its long journey towards you.

When all of the GTH packages are sealed and ready to go, Joyce always drives them to the post office. In the post office, I search for one of three women who often assist us. I say one of three women because she in particular has the process finely tuned, which not only paces things along nicely but much more importantly aids in the energy exchange involved. An energy that can't really be defined, but one that borrows from the splendor of this simple poem:

*Each Package a Prayer,
Each a Warming Hug,
Deep, I Bow to You,
Deep, Eternal Love*

I sit on a small stool, the only foreigner in the post office. The postal lady weighs each package as I hand them to her. She runs the information through her computer, and hands me the receipt, upon which I jot down the name of the recipient before the next envelope is handed over. I write down some of the especially long Russian names in advance in my notepad, for otherwise the package is out of sight before I can finish writing the name on the receipt. One by one then, off they go in the eight directions of the world, as symbolized by the eight “Zhong (中)” characters circling the image of tea (茶) on many Puerh wrappers. And so the process unfolds, with only the occasional break

to refill a paper roll or to shuffle the first hundred envelopes around in an excessively large postal bag (or to pause and shake my wrist after writing one of the lengthier Russian names!).

Some of the locals will stand agape at the sheer volume of GTH envelopes, possibly wondering what on Earth this foreigner is sending to so many individuals. Slowly but surely, each parcel passes over the counter and into the grand system that is the Miao Li postal service! I've made it sound slightly mechanical, but it's a sacred act, and in one sense, the most important job of the Global Tea Hut process. It really is the final stage at which the parcel can directly receive a last infusion of Loving-kindness. From the moment it leaves our hands it needs preservation, safety and skilled navigation, which our final input at the post office can really help orchestrate.

It's a postal celebration lasting about an hour and a half at our current membership. With four new countries already on board this month and with Wu De having completed his workshops in Russia, our community should grow significantly for the month of July, meaning more celebratory time at the post office and more brothers and sisters to share tea with.

GTH at the Tea Sage Hut

Global Tea Hut is one of the most enjoyable activities here at the Tea Sage Hut each month. It brings us all together under one thatched roof for the majority of a day or two (or three!), working side by side, listening to spiritually uplifting music, and hand packaging these parcels to send to all of you. On the surface level, each parcel contains a newsletter, a tea-related gift, and a donated seasonal tea. The tea rests for about one month in the heart space of our main altar, beneath none other than Kuan Yin, of which this particular statue offers 800 years worth of Compassion and Mercy onto the very tea we all share each month. Within each package, there is a lot of energy to be consumed and assimilated. Let the tea guide you. She will convey that energy far more accurately than any written word. And then share that energy with all those whose paths you cross...

On the day of GTH, group meditation at the Tea Sage Hut precedes the actual process, followed by a bountiful breakfast together. When the sacred music begins, it's game on. The addresses are printed, cut and glued onto each envelope along with a green customs form declaring



the contents. Wu De details each brown sachet with the date, the tea description, and the tiny picture of a teapot and cups, which means there's always a cup for you here and also that no matter where we are, we drink together. One of us weighs the tea for packing, while others contribute to wrapping up the gifts if needed. More often than not, guests are visiting the center during this joyful occasion and participate with great appreciation. It's always special to be involved in the process of something that inspires you! Once assembled with newsletter, tea and gift, we seal each envelope and prepare them for the post office. This process alone takes at least one full day, not including any time at the post office.

These parcels contain so much more than just tea, a gift and a newsletter, and if I may, I'd like to quote our beloved Tea Brother Maximushka who so poignantly said in our first Global Tea Hut video, "It's more like receiving the whole package of love and warmth which lives in the center in Taiwan and which lives within the hearts of all those people who create all the Global Tea Hut and all the love which lives within all the people around the world who are members of this Global Tea Hut." Max—such a beautiful being—letting the Truth be spoken through him, reminds us that just by being members of this global tea community, we too contribute to the energy involved in this gift exchange.

There is also a lot of time spent in preparation before any of this can manifest. We're always thinking about what gift to send each month and where to source the tea. (Often times the gift and the tea source us.) Additionally, we of course write the articles for the newsletter, tweak the

newsletter format itself, and take lots of photos weeks in advance. We always have a grand editing party around our main tea table, usually in the evening, and over tea. We all use different colors so that Wu De knows whose editing comments to ignore (i.e., Lindsey's). I'll always remember the evening when Wu De gasped in surprise at how little editing one of Kaiya's articles required, as opposed to the red slew of ink that so often smothers each paragraph. (My articles are otherwise perfect, and require not more than humble praise and slight bows of acknowledgement.) We can get pretty silly at times when editing, as you can see...

Back on topic: it's kind of funny to say Global Tea Hut is our favorite time of the month because it's an ongoing process all month. In fact, none of what goes on at the center would even be possible now were it not for all of your participation in this global process. I can't help but think about everything that goes on at our center and how directly connected it is with your involvement. Remember, the Tea Sage Hut is a physical space of community and meditation, healing and humility, well-being and laughter, connection and cultivation of skill, medicine and tea, and is as much yours who live outside Taiwan, as it is ours who physically live here. All the more reason to make time and take the journey over here to see what you've helped create—Abundance!

