

*We plan to introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you each month in these newsletters. We hope that this helps us all get to know each other better. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and tea are becoming, as the tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of the tea fuels some great work in this world, and we are so honored to show you some glimpses of such beautiful people and their tea. Tien Wu, née Baelyn Elspeth, is our Los Angeles ambassador of this tea tradition, and an incredible woman with a deep connection to Mother Earth and the Sacred Feminine. She took precepts in this tradition earlier this year, and received the name Tien Wu ("Heavenly Dance").*

Tien first met Wu De at Temple Tea in Los Angeles. Taylor is a dear sister-friend and Tien had been going to their tea sessions. Then, they hosted Wu De and she got connected to the tradition through these wonderful bowls of tea. "In that bowl, there I was and everything was in it: Presence, spirit, love, beauty, truth, sadness, strength, kindness, compassion, joy, warmth, life, death, space, movement, and stillness. The spirit of Nature itself manifested through this Leaf, awakened by hot water, and served up by this tea monk to nourish me." What a beautiful memory!

Tea is for her a gateway into meditation: "Every morning, I hear the Leaf calling me to wake up and sit with Her. Every morning I find space, stillness, and magic. Every morning She is completely different, yet so familiar. As time goes on like this, I find myself carving out more and more time every day to sit in peace and silence, meditating with this plant."

"The simplest side is the simplicity of tea; of tea not having any dogmatic, linear nature. This is true for myself and for serving others. When I drink tea, there is nothing I have to wrap my head around. I can just drink tea. That opens up the unknown and the emptiness of the universe. And when you can open yourself to receive tea, there's a space of receiving and being in your true nature in the Daoist sense. In serving tea to others, I can give that to others without any expectations, unlike those you'd have with meditation or chanting. There's no, 'Whoa! I'm not ready for that!' Tea is so gentle. She meets anybody where they're ready to be. When I started drinking tea, I was ready for a meditation practice and ready to go deeper, so She met me there. She took my hand and led me to rest in the roots. But if you want to experience tea as something delicious and stay in a more linear, mental state about it, you can do that, too. Part of the beauty of tea is that it has such a sensory surface experience. When I started meditating with tea, any hesitation to meditate ceased and I would just go, 'Oh, I just really want to drink that tea! It's so good!' Then, I'd find myself in a really deep meditative channel. There's really something to this..."

Tien is our ambassador in LA, arranging and organizing events, hosting tea gatherings and always plays a pivotal role in Wu De's visits there. We couldn't imagine this Hut without her, and our lives would definitely be poorer as well. As of now, she is very committed to awakening harmony through tea and this tradition. With other Teawayfarers there is more to describe, other accomplishments, and she is also rich and deep, having acted, sung and worked in a tremendous array of other fields as well. But she's primarily a tea goddess, and we're honored to have her...

