

Tea Wayfarer

*Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these magazines in order to help you get to know more people in this growing international community. 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. This month we would like to introduce the creative and vibrant **Yvonne Gallegos**:*

This past January, sitting upon the Flower of Life in Tulum, Mexico, is where Tea found me. It was one of the most moving experiences of my life. I was served bowls of tea with such reverence and love that it moved me deeply to my core. I was in awe of this ceremony of serving tea in a way that I had never seen or heard of before. Sure, I had heard of tea, as tea is everywhere—in the markets, in my kitchen cabinet, served to me at a friend's house, etc.

This experience, however, was something completely different. This tea was completely different. What was this ceremony I had just experienced? I marveled at the way I opened up to Her with humility and for the way She listened. For as I looked within those bowls of tea, there it all was: earth, air, water, fire, ether, spirit, oneness... *Life!* It spoke to me in a way that nothing had before. It was like reuniting with a loved one, overwhelmed with such joy and love and so many other emotions. To me, it was clear that She possesses all the wisdom in the world. Within these bowls of tea are absolute truth. There is nowhere to hide, for She is truth. Within these bowls are absolute love, for She is love.

I honestly do not know much about tea, compared to those in the 'tea world'. I am a complete beginner. I cannot have a conversation with you about how great this oolong tea is or how old that puerh is, but that's okay, for I'm in no rush. What I do know is how everything you need to know about life is within Tea and in the ceremony. *Patience* while the water brews. Willingness to listen and witness life as the water slowly opens the tea. A loving heart-space not only for when you reach for the kettle but when you also reach for the bowl—taking into my body and sharing centuries of gratitude for those who nurture and harvest the Leaf and all plants on earth. The mindfulness of preparing the tea table with simplicity that reminds us to de-clutter our minds and life, to keep only what is necessary, for excess distracts. The way to handle objects that serve us over our lives with respect and care. Being 'in love' with those sitting around you. And most importantly being present. Truly present in that moment.

Meeting the Leaf has changed my life. It is such a precious gift to have a reason to sit in silence and reflect on life, on your own or with friends. To put your cell phones away or, even better, turn them off for a while and have a moment in time to connect and share a loving space or conversation with friends or family. Our world is in such a hurry these days that we often lose sight of



what is really important. Sitting with a bowl of tea, I experience beauty in the quietness, and gratitude for the space it gives me to reflect on all the things I have to be grateful for.

I knew from the first bowl of tea in Mexico that it was never a question of 'if' I came to Taiwan; it was really a question of 'when'. It was really important for me to come and learn more about Her—how to handle Her and how to communicate with Her better. To learn the tools that will bring my relationship with Her to a higher level and to share this special experience with others. I have already served tea here at the Hut and it brought me so much joy and love. A love that I've only ever felt for my daughter, as I look at her and she gazes back with the most supreme, pure love you can imagine. Tea is also my daughter. She is everything and nothing.

So here I am, three months after being found by Her, sitting here at the Tea Sage Hut in Taiwan, expressing my complete love and gratitude for Tea and all She has to teach me. Nothing ever felt so right. I'm right where I need to be, present in this moment...

I'm either in Toronto or LA these days, so if you are in the area let's have some tea:

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