

COMMUNITEA GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP

Andrew Taylor

A tradition only lives and breathes in the flesh and blood of those who are living it. We embody these teachings or they wither and die, becoming a tomb. Making family through Tea isn't just a part of what we do, it is everything! As this communithea grows, spreading to more than thirty countries, we need to celebrate how Tea has brought us all together around this table!

Our tea community here at Tea Sage Hut is the most important aspect of our tradition. We are a group of people working towards a greener and happier world while cultivating a greater connection to Nature, self and others through the use of the Leaf. No matter what separates us in our preferences toward a certain kind of tea or teaware, brewing vessel, or method of preparation, we are all interconnected through Her and the way in which we approach Her binds us together. But what does that mean exactly, a “tea community”? A community can be described as a social construct where the interactions and behavior of the members are oriented through their shared values, beliefs and interests. Therefore, we all share a common thread in our reverence

and respect to Tea and Nature while relating to Her in our individual ways. The community is backed by a deeply rooted tradition linked back to ancient sages and tea masters. Most importantly, we are all inclusive and stay outside the concept of “us” versus “them”, so please come sit for a bowl as no applications nor prerequisites are needed!

Since we’ve had quite a large increase in our membership since last year, I’d like to explain a bit more about Global Tea Hut and the importance of our worldwide community. First and foremost, as a not-for-profit organization, GTH operates because of the good graces of numerous people donating time, money, resources and expertise to bring you this magazine, tea and gift every month. Here at GTH head-

quarters in Miaoli, Taiwan, we are only a core of five people, so without these folks, and you, our members, we would not be able to sustain the ongoing operation of this organization! Our community is a group of Tea lovers from all walks of life and cultures, promoting and cultivating the awakening of self and others through the spirit of Tea. We are part of a Tea tradition that connects us to tea masters and teachers of years long past. And we work within the vision that it will be carried on for generations to come. One of the three guiding principles is that our tradition is a community of people; unique individuals who desire to create a Tea family that bonds us closer together with love and support along our own personal journeys through life.



Our community spans the whole globe and grows larger by the day. Los Angeles, Moscow and Tallinn are a few of our biggest hub communities, with established tea families that host gatherings every week. Many of our guests that come to the center were introduced to Tea through these events held by our worldwide brothers and sisters.

This tradition and community has resonated with so many people because our approach to Tea is one of respect for Nature and recognition of Tea as plant medicine and a vehicle for self-cultivation. No matter what community you want to connect with, Tea will always have a place. We do not see community as a matter of “inner” and “outer”, and in this way we can facilitate a connection to everyone, regardless

of how different our ideas or views of the world may be. In this way, we can relate to all circles and break down the walls that separate us.

A Circle of Energy

What makes Global Tea Hut a special community is right here in these pages and within these walls where I sit. To have this magazine communicate via the center, where we share Tea wisdom and knowledge—a beautiful tea center that anyone can visit for free—be completely supported through the donations of everybody who participates is a truly unique circle of energy. We write about the tea wisdom cultivated in the space you help sustain

and visit, inspiring you to send more support...

I've gotten to know the names of many members over time by preparing GTH each month, and it's always a special occasion when one of those household names comes to life in the flesh with a visit to the Tea Sage Hut. A real treasure of living here at the center is getting to know the guests and being able to serve them during their stay. We share our stories of how we came to meet Tea and how we found the Hut. We share about our lives, the paths we have traveled on and what we are celebrating and struggling with in the present. Some guests arrive without much of an intimate relationship to Tea, but have been called to Her for reasons unclear at the time. Many of them fall in love

immediately and continue to make Tea a sacred part of their day. This connection and transformation represents not only an individual's willingness to receive, but also the potency of a Living Tea and the effect of steeping it in intention, reverence and stillness.

Some guests have been longtime members, dating back to the inception of Global Tea Hut, and have just recently visited the center for the first time. I had a realization when one of the original GTH members visited last year: that her support over these past years was partially responsible for the creation of this center, thereby allowing myself and hundreds of others the opportunity to live and learn in this space. And now all of you follow in that chain, supporting the future guests and residents to come! Another longtime member of our community, a dear brother and important figure behind the scenes of GTH, visited the center for the first time ever during this past Christmas. After a few days of allowing the center experience to settle in, he exclaimed out in a dumbfounded and celebratory manner to no one in particular, "This is a real tea center!" Yes, indeed, but one whose existence would not be actualized without the support and love from him and every one of you reading this right now!

Service-oriented

With our attention focused on serving the guests visiting here at the Tea Sage Hut and preparing for the monthly GTH, we must take time to reflect on the people who came before us, before Wu De, those in our elder generation who have been such an integral part of helping us function and thrive. Some of the more special days are when we get the opportunity to visit with our older Taiwanese tea family of farmers, tea makers, artists and shop owners. These great people support

the community in so many ways: from donating tea and teaware, hosting us at their farm, to helping organize trips to China. They see us not as cute foreigners who have an interest in Tea, but as the younger generation to carry on the knowledge and spirit of Tea that they have cultivated over so many years. They see in us the same passion for Tea as they themselves have towards farming, roasting, pottery or research and education. This elder generation may not be able to connect with us on the level of our daily lifestyle at the center, but they certainly want to support us in contributing to the awareness of Living Tea and the true Taiwanese culture of Tea.

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As Wu De has written about, farmers' eyes light up upon hearing that their tea will be sent to people in over thirty countries. And their incredible generosity and willingness to give are a personal reminder that Tea (and everything for that matter!) is not about gathering and collecting, but giving and sharing. Often, when Wu De speaks about the tradition and our future center, Light Meets Life, he does so with a deep passion for creating something that will outlive us and be passed on to future generations. As the tradition continues to evolve and transform in minute ways, the wisdom, spirit and teachings imbued from Wu De's teachers, mentors and Tea family will be forever ingrained.

There is a special connection within the members of this community. Strangers meet here in Miaoli as if in reunion from lives past, to later reconvene for bowls of tea on Skype. We are volunteer agents of the Leaf, facilitating Her destined meeting with the uninitiated. You and I have brothers and sisters all over the globe, waiting for our visit with a kettle on the fire and an open heart! And whether separated by a tea table or by time zones and vast oceans, we are all sharing the same bowl, steeped from the purist heart and Spirit...



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