



# TEA DRINKING WOMAN

-Tien Wu

*Tea and the feminine is a profound topic, indeed. There is more to say than words can express. Tien starts the issue off, opening the door for all the woman who are to speak in this issue. We have tried to offer a variety of voices, from the spiritual to the intellectual. Tien has a lot of experience serving tea to women's circles, and therefore is the perfect herald to start us off on our exploration of Tea, Yin energy, woman...*

**I**t is 6 a.m. and the first meditation is about to start... An immediate sense of tranquility holds the space as each sister finds a comfortable place to sit for this morning's tea. Here is a space for nourishment, cleansing, and grounding. A quiet space to slowly wake up together, shifting any discomforts, and opening our hearts, as well as a place to sit and be gently held in a warm embrace—a place to remember...

I recall a very distinct moment three years ago, at the first Spirit Weavers gathering when I tasted tears of joy steeped into the Leaf due to being surrounded by so many women who were so awake. I had been asked by a dear sister of mine to serve Tea at that first gathering, where seventy women came together to commune with Earth and each other. All weekend, the Leaf bowed in humble reverence and gave all. She had to give in service to us,

grounding us and creating more space for our remembering and awakening. Each morning, I rose to serve, and one by one women piled into my tent to sit for the silent ritual of tea. With no questions asked, bowls were filled and emptied as the sun rose and hearts opened.

Since I began sharing tea, most of the ceremonies I've served in happen to be all female. In these ceremonies there is a graceful and gentle ease to the way the Tea flows, an almost immediate dive into the vast emptiness of silence. I've observed that in general, women tend to ask fewer questions and rest more readily in the space of receptivity, allowing the medicine to penetrate straight to the heart. There is a trust and surrender that happens in this space of 'Woman'. It is as though "She" (Tea) can feel this availability (I guess I can call it that) as well. Don't get me wrong, She loves you men too (as we all do), but there is

something about Her spirit that is free in a different way when held in sacred space by the Feminine; a letting down of Her hair, so to speak.

Wu De has expressed many times over that the nature of this tree's spirit is feminine (Yin), and as I have continued serving countless ceremonies, I have seen and felt the endless reflections and metaphors regarding this insight. There is this awakening occurring all over the world surrounding the feminine; I have witnessed that as this awakening occurs, the Leaf is there alongside it, continuing to spread and take root, facilitating and medicating our species. She is helping us, both men and women to understand the softening that is the true grace that the Divine feminine provides. When we hold Her in reverence (Leaf and Woman) She dances into our bowls, grounding us to the Earth and lifting us to the Heavens. Giving us more space to *be* and to







remember our connection to the soil, the plants, and to this Earth, which is our Mother, the creator of life and so inherently, also feminine.

The Leaf holds us and nurtures us like any good woman would. She is gentle and yet can also be fiercely strong. With each steeping She opens, giving all She has to give. She helps us to empty and dive deeper into the mystery... encouraging us to become more comfortable with the unknown, sitting in the present moment. She accepts each and every one of us for who we are, where we are, but also doesn't hesitate to give a nudge toward the edge saying... "If

you leap, I will hold your hand." She forgives us compassionately when we forget, embraces us lovingly once again, and only asks that we make space for Her to be acknowledged and witnessed.

The simplicity inherent in the practice of bowl tea provides that space for her witnessing. Communing in this way and sharing this plant medicine with 'no mind' feels so feminine. Of course in the vast world of Tea the mind also has its place and the asking of questions is extremely important—Man has sat, questioned, and listened which has paved the way for this beautiful

bowl, holding steaming hot water and spinning leaves to rest in my hands. This bowl, being a mirror of the sacred vessel, carries life and nourishment akin to the womb, and as it is raised to my lips, a softening occurs. My body is nourished with warmth and comfort, which allows me to soften my thoughts and travel that short yet long eighteen-inch journey into my heart space. The tea flows, patiently clearing and cleansing obstructions. I have watched how She safely allows one to explore their emotions, unlocking uncried tears or bubbles of laughter. When I first started sitting with Her in this



*Serving at Spirit Weaver Gathering*



way, I cried a lot. It was as if She was so gently washing me clean, and with every tear cried more space was created inside me to remember the essence of my spirit and femininity. Every day She continues to serve me, so in turn I serve Her and a symbiotic balance is struck. Together we remember our indigenous soul and the place from which we both sprouted, for as She has taught me, I, too, am a sprout!

For now, I will finish by saying that writing this article has been extremely challenging to write. As I sit looking for words that express Tea and the feminine, they do not

seem to suffice. It feels absurd to try and capture the depth of Her and I fear that by trying to do so the whole point is missed. How does one truly explain tea? How does one truly explain the feminine? How does one explain Nature? These are the mysteries of life and words fail to encompass the magic. These mysteries are meant to be felt, experienced, not discussed. And yet, we have here in this issue a wonderful gathering of articles by different women around the world doing their best to capture the wisdom gathered in tea ceremony. As Wu De reminded me, words are

fingers pointing to the moon, not the moon itself. I am a dedicated student of the Leaf so I will continue to point the way with tea, but I am also a cultivator and awakener of the feminine, so naturally I point the way by being a woman as well. Luckily, tea and woman are one in the same in me... Let's share a bowl together and I will meet you on the moon. In the meantime, we'll point and bask in the brilliance these different women highlight in these pages...

