



Mica:

I began my relationship with tea purely out of necessity due to medical reasons. After being diagnosed with two unrelated late-stage primary breast cancers in 2009 and 2011 respectively, and after undergoing intense chemotherapy treatment for each and radiation therapy for the first, in addition to having several surgeries (some of which involved severe surgical mishaps), the second cancer metastasized to my left lung and the lymph nodes above my heart, becoming “terminal.” According to my oncologist, the tumor in my lung appeared to

be pressing against my heart, which seemed to explain the intense chest pain I was having at the time. To exacerbate the situation, I had also been diagnosed with several significant medical conditions caused by chemotherapy toxicity and radiation toxicity: cardiomyopathy, two types of brain dysfunctions, lung damage, autonomic neuropathy and peripheral neuropathy to name a few. I could feel my body crying out in not so subtle ways, telling me I needed a change; Western medicine wasn’t doing me any favors. It was obviously harming my body in more ways than

it was helping, leaving my spirit fragmented along the way.

I began to intuitively reassess everything about my life and lifestyle. I realized I was the only person truly responsible for the condition of my life experience on Mother Earth. One of the first changes I made was to consciously take foods into my body that would nourish and heal, and in the process I eliminated foods that had no significant value or purpose to my regeneration. I also began drinking green and white teas I bought from the shelves of my local health food store.

I had read many articles suggesting tea, particularly green and white teas, may have anti-cancerous properties, in addition to other health benefits, due to their high levels of polyphenols, especially the catechin epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), which is a potent antioxidant. While most studies regarding the efficacy of tea in relation to cancer prevention are inconclusive, something told me to pursue tea further.

Within a couple of months of faithfully drinking my green and white teas on a daily basis while leaning against my kitchen counter, I stumbled across, of all things, a loving Instagram post about Global Tea Hut. I enthusiastically logged onto the Internet to check out the Global Tea Hut website and found myself drawn to the content within. It was evident that a love of tea and community were woven together in a very beautiful way in this Hut. It seemed to me that becoming a member of this global tea family would greatly enhance my tea experience! I immediately subscribed and shortly thereafter received my first Global Tea Hut envelope delivered to my front doorstep. The tea inside was Sun Moon Lake red tea. I opened the package of tea and inhaled deeply. Wow! The fragrance was extremely pleasing. Now *this* was real tea! I hastily prepared my first bowl of loose leaf tea, not really knowing how or what I was doing. But somehow I knew this was okay (we are all novices in the beginning). I sat in silence with this first bowl of Tea. And with my first sip or two, I felt a shift. I was surprised at how quickly I felt connected to this entity. It was as if this Tea and I regarded each other as though we were long lost friends. I readily opened my heart to the healing love I found reflected in the bowl before me, grateful for the gift of connection. In this first meeting, this Tea, this medicine of the Leaf, became my teacher. Once consumed, She

knew me instantly and completely. She knew of all my trials and pain, and She knew of my joy and love as well.

Now, with each session, I can feel the calming feminine presence of Tea grounding me, guiding me, and healing me with the wisdom of a hundred lifetimes, while She teaches me to heal myself. We spend long moments together meditating, healing and simply being. I can feel her gently flowing through my veins, detoxifying as she goes. And I feel her energy moving through me connecting me to Earth and Spirit, and I am filled with gratitude.

And with my first sip or two, I felt a shift. I was surprised at how quickly I felt connected to this entity. It was as if this Tea and I regarded each other as though we were long lost friends. I readily opened my heart to the healing love I found reflected in the bowl before me, grateful for the gift of connection. In this first meeting, this Tea, this medicine of the Leaf, became my teacher.

Since falling in love with my first bowl of Tea, I've been fortunate to be served tea by Tien Wu at retreats in Tulum, Mexico, another on Orcas Island, Washington and at the Spirit Weavers Gathering this year in Mendocino, California. This sharing of tea and space with others in such a beautiful, graceful ceremony has only drawn me in even further and deeper. And again, I am grateful for all of these healing connections. While my journey with Tea has just begun, I can't help but feel She and I have been great friends for lifetimes and have traveled through space and time together. I'm grateful for this *re*connection and look forward to all She has in store for me...

I'd like to say that as of this writing, it has been nineteen months since I made the choice to discontinue the chemotherapy infusions I was told I needed to "fight" the metastatic cancer and sustain my life. My last CT scan (September 2015) indicated the cancer is no longer visible via scan. My oncologist said she has never had a patient walk away from treatment and have the same results I've had. She advised me that while the type of metastatic breast cancer I was diagnosed with cannot be said to be in remission, it *could* be called "NED", or "No Evidence of Disease." Regardless of the correct medical terminology, I'm happy with the space I'm in. I'm certain the changes I've made in my life and the holistic treatments I've embraced have helped heal my body. And Tea has shown me the way—the way to heal from the inside out. Oh, and I now drink all teas, not just green and white teas. My favorite teas smell like a damp forest floor after a heavy rain.



*My vessel gratefully welcomes the tea and hot water.
All three embrace with love and the deepest respect.
The aroma is intoxicating.
Into my cup I gently pour,
Each drop echoing the memory of the Leaf.
The taste is divine and soothing,
And I feel a thousand warm rains anointing my body with every sip.
Inward I go.*

—Mica

Tien Wu with old trees in Sun Moon Lake.

