

# TeaWayfarer

*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 share glimpses of such beautiful people and their Tea. This month we would like to introduce Dalal al Sayer.*

**A**s an Arab, Tea is imbued in me. She was always there growing up and savored in many forms: a ruby red brew infused with strings of saffron and a splash of palm water; a tawny concoction of leaves and milk, scented with cloves and cardamom and a menagerie of other spices; dancing tippy toed atop fresh mint leaves; or just plain and unadorned. She was always there, bubbling over charcoal, as we gathered in tents in winter, Her warmth prompting us to pour cup after cup, a vestige of the impeccable Bedouin hospitality. Even in the desert heat She is still there.

She even came to visit me in dreams; indeed my first gustatory dream experience came by way of Tea—the taste still lingering in my mouth long after I awoke. A few years later, and only because stormy weather prohibited outdoor activity, I attended my first tea ceremony in Vietnam. At the bottom of my bowl, there She was: a heart-shaped outline. I felt Her looking back at me as I was looking at Her in wonder. And here it was, something I'd been missing all my life: a sense of reverence and awe for something I had taken for granted.

Still, I was to reconnect years later, after I myself had steeped and matured. And this was a much more grounded, profound and personal experience. In a magical space where the jungle kisses the sea, Tian Wu served me my first bowl of Tea as I know Her now. Mind you, I was really sick, so my olfactory and gustatory senses decided to take a vacation as well. There I was sitting in Heaven, sipping this hot beverage I could not taste nor smell, wondering what it was all about. "Sit," She whispered, "sit still." And still I sat. I did not wonder anymore, but simply allowed the hot liquid to permeate membranes, cells, portals... Here I saw my Self, infinite and boundless; and my heart gave a soft vow to give this Leaf a human experience. She nestled Herself in my Heart.

After I came back from that trip, I excitedly started setting up for Tea Ceremony using Elevation from Sun Moon Lake. As I was boiling the water, my sister's friend asked if she could join me. As you can imagine, a flash of fear set in, and I had to remind myself that it was Tea that had invited her, so that fear turned into glee; I am honored and humbled to serve Her! Since then I have served many bowls to my family and loved ones, and always upon their own request, curious as to



why I love Her so much. They leave transformed and loving tea thereafter.

Since then I have enjoyed many kinds of tea, and always it is like meeting a new friend and getting to know their personality: here is a peach-scented soft sun surfing my tongue and settling in my solar plexus; there is a naked revel and roll on mud and moss. She can be playful or serious. But to be honest, there is more to Tea than just the sensual realm. There is also a subtle world in each bowl. And like most things in this life, it doesn't really matter what I say. Tea is to be experienced, and once experienced, you are exploring an ancient knowledge. My heart's wish is that you know this.

She beckons me. She guides me. She nurtures me much like one tends to a sapling, a sprout or a bud. I am in deep gratitude to Wu De and Tian Wu, the Tea Sage Hut family, and all the Tea sages and lovers that came before them, and will come after them. And what a special time to be at the Hut celebrating 50 issues and all that is to come! If you ever feel compelled, come to Kuwait and share a bowl or a few... I raise one now to all of you. I love you. *Salam.*