

Teawayfarer

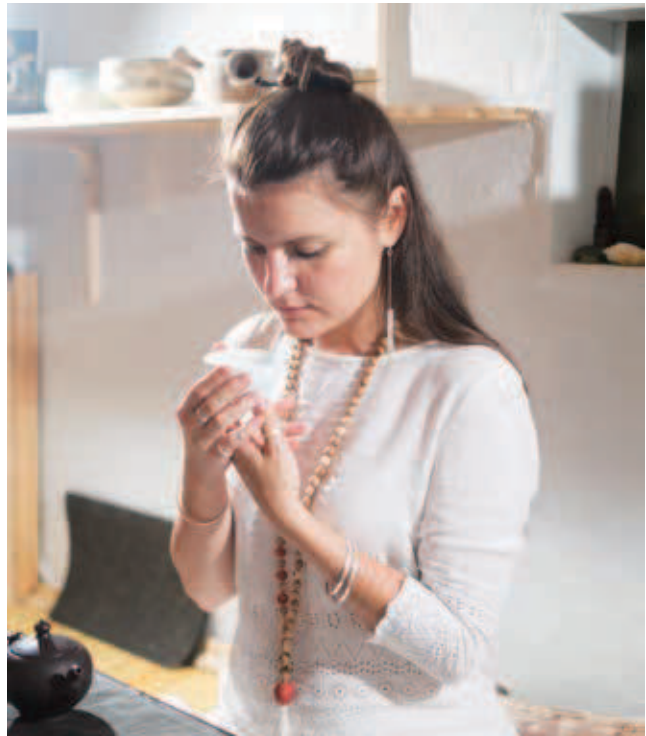
Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these issues in order to help you get to know more people in this growing international community. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and Tea are becoming as the Tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of 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 Raneta Kulakova.

Tea found me more than ten years ago in Siberia. There I lived in a small city located along the Great Tea Road. For those of you who do not know, this was a historic caravan route by which tea was traded from China to Europe between the 17th and 19th centuries. The region is steeped in tea history and the seeds of her influence were all around me. In fact, I grew up participating in a tea club. I remember even in the very beginning being fascinated by the beautiful and diverse shapes of leaves, the mysterious Chinese names and silent attention that appeared when someone started brewing tea. While tea was always present at these gatherings, often She was only one actor on the stage. People talked, watched movies or enjoyed music while they drank tea. Here I met Tea in her form as the “Great Connector,” bringing together human hearts and minds and helping them to open towards each other.

After I moved cities, I began to drink tea alone for a long period of time. I was like a hermit in a cave. Here I met tea in a different form. Slowly and gently she would change my state of mind. She showed me her ability to clear my mind and heart to the deepest roots, unlocking the bottomless wellspring inside. She taught me to rest in the nature of my mind and listen to the space between drops, between breaths.

I would sometimes leave my cave and venture outside to meet other tea lovers. That was how I met Wu De. We first met in Siberia. Then, a year or two later, as he boiled tea in the attic of cute hostel in the center of Moscow, his words brought tears to my eyes. His message and relationship to tea, Nature and the Earth resonated so strongly inside of me, I knew that this was the beginning of a new period of my life. There I met my tea family. And that tea session changed everything in a gentle but complete way.

Around this time, I made a tea runner, or *chabu*, as a gift for a friend and was very surprised that all of my other tea friends started asking for similar things! That is how “Care for Teaware” started. It was a project dedicated to consciously creating the small details required for a life of tea, including protection for teaware! Teapots and bowls are our instruments; without them we could not do what we love—serve tea! We all have beautiful teaware we love, and want to take care of the things we love. We want future tea lovers to be able to use our teaware and pass these instruments on so that they can continue to play long after we have gone. I wanted to help make convenient and beautiful bags for teapots, cups, bowls, tetsubins and other tea instruments so Chajin all over the world



could share and protect their teaware. I make things from a sincere desire to protect priceless Yixing teapots, antique cups, bowls and all teaware. Care and reverence is fundamental to both Cha Dao and life. The more we honor what we have, the longer it serves us and the more we can serve with it! If we care for our teaware, we can use it for many years and drink countless cups of fine tea with friends. Later, we can pass our treasures on to the future generation of tea lovers. Our care then extends beyond our lifetime. Anyone with an old teapot knows they only have it because someone else kept it safe. We have this same honor and responsibility.

Since our first meeting, tea has become a primary part of my life. Drinking her alone and serving her to people helped me change my life. It has brought awareness, equanimity and love into each thought that passes through my mind. She is always here, patiently waiting for you to come and sit with her. She is generous and giving, teaching us to work for others and share the treasures we find on our way. She is healing. She connects us to ourselves, to others and to Nature. So if you want to change your life, take a bowl and add some leaves and hot water...

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