

Wu De is fond of saying that with the medicine of one plant, it is possible to tap into the medicines of all plants. I wholeheartedly believe this to be true. I've also found that my interactions with various medicinal plants has fueled my dialogue with Tea and that, conversely, my interactions with tea have helped me to more deeply understand the medicine in other plants.

This time last year I was traveling through India to research tea consumption and production. Most of my time in India was devoted to professional and spiritual work, but in celebration of my 30th birthday that February, I decided to take a break and go to the beach. On my birthday, shortly after raising my tea bowl toward the sky from the lush patio of my Kerala guest house, I received a wonderful gift in the form of an email from Wu De.

The email introduced Global Tea Hut: "a session of tea drinkers all over the world raising bowls and cups to the soul of Nature". Now, a year later, I still vividly remember feeling immense joy and gratitude in response to that email.

At that time, I had visited the Tea Sage Hut for only a few weeks. In all my years of drinking tea, working with tea and interacting with tea people, I had never found anything quite like Tea Sage Hut. There is no other tea community like this one. There is no other place with the shared abundance of tea and teaware to be found here. And, as far as I know, there is no path to directly and powerfully experiencing the present mo-

ment through tea that is as accessible yet deep as the path found in this tradition. Within my short visit to Tea Sage Hut, I already knew that I would return to live and serve as a student of the Leaf here.

But, like Kaiya and Shane, I'm lucky—it is *kismet* for us to stay here! For many, there are obligations which keep you bound to places far away from here. What of you? Why should students in Taiwan be the few to gain so much from this tradition on a regular, ongoing basis?

Before I received the announcement about Global Tea Hut, I had begun to mull this over and I had no answers... but it seemed that my tea brothers in Taiwan had given the matter more attention! I was elated to receive an email outlining a plan for the very thing I had wondered about: how people around the world could have direct involvement with Tea Sage Hut, even when they are far away.

This February, I turned 31, Global Tea Hut turned one, and I found that I am exponentially more grateful for Global Tea Hut than I was a year ago. Here's why:

It's alive!

Global Tea Hut is much more than just an idea now. It's a real community made up of real people around the world (plus Kaiya—we're still not sure he's a real human). I've had the delight of meeting some of you here in Taiwan, and knowing you personally as my tea brothers and sisters makes preparing and mail-





ing out your envelopes each month even more of a joy. (With great gratitude, I thank each of you for being you, for loving tea and, where applicable, for visiting us!)

It's getting bigger!

Seeing the membership of Global Tea Hut rise in the six months since I returned to Taiwan has been absolutely beautiful. Amongst the new members are some of my friends and family back in America (whom I am thrilled to introduce to this tea tradition), a few of my professional colleagues (who can use this tea medicine towards enormous change in the world), new visitors to Tea Sage Hut (who can continue to grow in this tradition from afar) and, most importantly, YOUR friends and family.

More and more of you have shared the benefits you receive from GTH with those you love, and that is a sharing that ripples outward, impacting more and more people as time passes. There are a lot more people subscribing to GTH than there are people putting GTH together; and combined you have a much greater reach than we do. You know where this medicine is needed and you are sharing it there... and over there... and way, way over there... all around the world. (With

genuine and lasting recognition and awareness, I thank you for doing what we cannot do alone!)

It's far greater than the sum of its parts.

OK, so this last reason isn't catchy and we've been over it before, but it's important, so I'm gonna ask you to indulge me on this one a bit as I reiterate what's happening before moving on to what's about to happen.

People who are making organic tea (people who genuinely care about what they are doing and how they impact the earth, their families and the people who drink their tea) are getting to share their tea with people all around the globe. People who love tea are getting to drink teas they might not otherwise have the opportunity to drink, and to learn about tea in ways they might not otherwise be able to learn about it. People around the world are being connected in direct and indirect ways through the shared experience of connecting to (and through) tea. In the process, Tea Sage Hut's many endeavors (including sharing tea at public events, hosting visitors from around the world and promoting sustainable tea) are being fully supported.

(With wholehearted appreciation, I thank everyone involved for playing their part, whether you're a

Birthdays

20 tea producer sharing tea that you made by hand with tea lovers around the world, a subscriber sharing tea that you steeped for friends where you live, a reader emailing an article that illuminates others through the newsletter, or a supporter mailing a donation that allows us to do what we do.)

All of this is phenomenal on its own, but there's one more thing that I find to be downright mind-blowing, and for which I am filled with hope rather than gratitude. Through the reach of Global Tea Hut, we've been able to spread our tea tradition ever farther and wider, and to move forward with an even bigger vision for tea as a medium for facilitating connection, transmitting peace and wisdom and encouraging spiritual growth. A mere year after GTH was born, our new tea center, Light Meets Life, is on the cusp of becoming a reality. We have the land (Or it has us). We have the

plan. And through all of you, we have the cumulative resources to make Light Meets Life not just a tea center, but *the world's most magnificent tea center!* Yes. Really. Let that notion steep a bit the next time you sit down to a GTH tea.

(With a vision of awe-inspiring abundance for all students of the Leaf, no matter where we are, I send out a surge of hope for the new center, that it will be an even higher and more beautiful iteration of the community that has been built through GTH, and that it will unite us not just in our love of the Leaf, but in our love of each other, our higher selves and Nature.)



