

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these newsletters. We hope that this helps us all get to know each other better. 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 show you some glimpses of such beautiful people and their tea. This month we thought you should meet the person behind Wu De's recent trip to Ukraine, and a dedicated tea spirit, Sato.

At some time, my “tea way” began, but whether I chose it at some significant moment I don't know. My grandmother told me when I was a child that her father, my great-grandfather had a teahouse in a village not far from Kostroma, in Russia, and he used to have a heavy red beard. Maybe I have inherited his love for tea love as well as his hair. Who knows? Tea was in my life since childhood as a drink, as food, as medicine: I had it with my granny's pies or my mother's sandwiches and when I used to catch a cold I was given tea with raspberry to drink. Every nation has its own tea traditions...

I remember one tea experience that happened in my youth. At the age of 16, I watched a TV program about Japanese tea tradition. I wanted to try whisking tea powder myself. As there was almost no green tea in our country at that time I took some black tea and ground it in coffee grinder. I recollect the incredibly bitter taste of the tea. But I was over the moon that I managed to make something new and had a look at a familiar drink from a different perspective...

A deeper dip into Tea began five years ago. I remember there was a meeting due to the arrival of an acquaintance who lived and worked in London at that time. He brought some Chinese Oolong tea (Tie Guan Yin) he'd bought there. It felt special then...After we parted, I was caught up in tea magic and I felt it for three days. For no reason at all the aroma of the tea came back in my mind: either I smelled it in the air or suddenly the flavor of the tea appeared in my mouth. I was fascinated...

Then there were three year's quest for excellence: of more high-quality tea, the best water and nicer teaware; a search for knowledge of growing and preparation methods. I was often a scientist: I used scales for measuring a precise quantity of tea leaves depending on the teaware, and a thermometer for the right water temperature. At times, this led to a scrupulosity that touched upon pride and snobbery. This also happened...

A love for Tea then brought me to China and I found myself in Guangzhou. This trip was one more key turning point on the way. The communication was almost always without words—I do not know Chinese and hardly speak English. But with tea and the help of tea people I had a new understanding. I saw that tea is not in degrees or grams. I found the joy in sharing it.

Before our flight back home we visited the Tea Museum in Hong Kong. I bought one of the issues of “The Art of Tea” magazine in the teashop there – the magazine that in future served as one more landmark on the Way. For the first time I read the articles of Wu De (using a dictionary) and got myself familiar with this fresh approach and attitude—with the tradition of the Hut. Then there were some books of Wu De's, an acquaintance with some Russian tea brothers, one of whom invited me to visit the workshops in Moscow this summer.

The very first sip of living tea amazed and touched me with its lightness and simplicity. And at the same time it had an inexpressible depth that purified me, dissolving all that was collected from knowledge, theories and various practical training. Then, this autumn, we had the joy of hosting Wu De here in the Ukraine and held several successful events. My deep gratitude to Wu De and all the other tea masters!

Should any of you find yourself in Ukraine, please contact me and we'll share some tea!

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