

A RUSSIAN TEA WEDDING

An Interview with Katya & Denis

This growing community often blows our hearts wide open. It is the reason we feel so inspired to publish these magazines, build centers and host tea ceremonies: tea family! Connection between hearts is going to heal this world, one bowl at a time... Katya & Denis are tea family to us all, and so let's share in the occasion and be distant witnesses at their beautiful tea wedding!

茶道

One of the things we love the most about Global Tea Hut is the growing community, and all the beautiful family we've made through tea. As time passes, this aspect of being here, sharing tea with all of you, starts to grow. New branches sprout every week, and we hear about new and amazing ways that members are connecting to each other. More than just reading a magazine or learning about tea, we are also sharing tea with hundreds of tea brothers and sisters around the world! And that adds a dimension to the teas we drink here—they're somehow deeper and... well, *more* than they would be otherwise.

In the last few months, we've heard about Global Tea Hut members drinking their tea of the month together at the same time, which means organizing to meet different people in different time zones. Last month, people in Russia, the United Kingdom and Estonia shared one such session. We're also hearing more and more about members from one place visiting other members: people from Holland going to Estonia to stay with brothers or sisters there, Russians going to Spain, etc. We

imagine this continuing in so many beautiful ways!

We very much want to foster community here, and way beyond just promoting our tea tradition. It doesn't matter if you practice tea in our tradition or not, we're family—in our love for tea, Mother Earth and each other! If any of you have any ideas about how we can further the connection we all have to each other through these envelopes, we'd love to hear about them!

In the spirit of this growing bond between us all, we would like to share with you the exciting news that our brother and sister, Denis Mikhailov and Katya Kucherenko were recently married. They met through tea and their mutual love of the Leaf also fostered their relationship over time. They are also big supporters of this tradition and Global Tea Hut in Moscow, where they currently reside. Both have attended several of Wu De's lectures and workshops.

Katya and Denis met on a big Buddhist tour across Russia. They actually met in a Chinese restaurant in a small town called Blagoveshensk, which is close to the Russian/Chinese border. After the

dinner, there was a party for the Buddhists on the tour and Denis invited Katya to share some puerh with him. It was the first time she'd ever tried such tea, and she loved it from the first sip. Then, in 2010, Katya moved from her birthplace in Siberia, Komsomolsk-na-Amure, to Moscow to live with Denis (her hometown is actually closer to Taiwan than to the capital of Russia).

Wu De, this tradition and all the brothers and sisters here have played a large role in their relationship. They attended workshops and afterwards founded the "Tea Hut Moscow" which meets weekly to share tea, organizes events, etc. "Through these gatherings we have built a strong community and made life-long friends with some of the best and brightest souls in Moscow—let alone all the wonderful people we've met in Estonia and Ukraine, where we traveled last year to help serve at Wu De's events there," They said. "We wholeheartedly welcome any Global Tea Hut members to visit and stay with us and share tea and hugs!"

There is a tradition in Russia that the bridegroom comes to the bride's parent's house to take her

to the wedding. Since Katya's family home is so far away, she stayed in their apartment and Denis went and stayed the night at his mother's apartment. On the twentieth of

*A thousand, thousand blessings
for this growing community!*

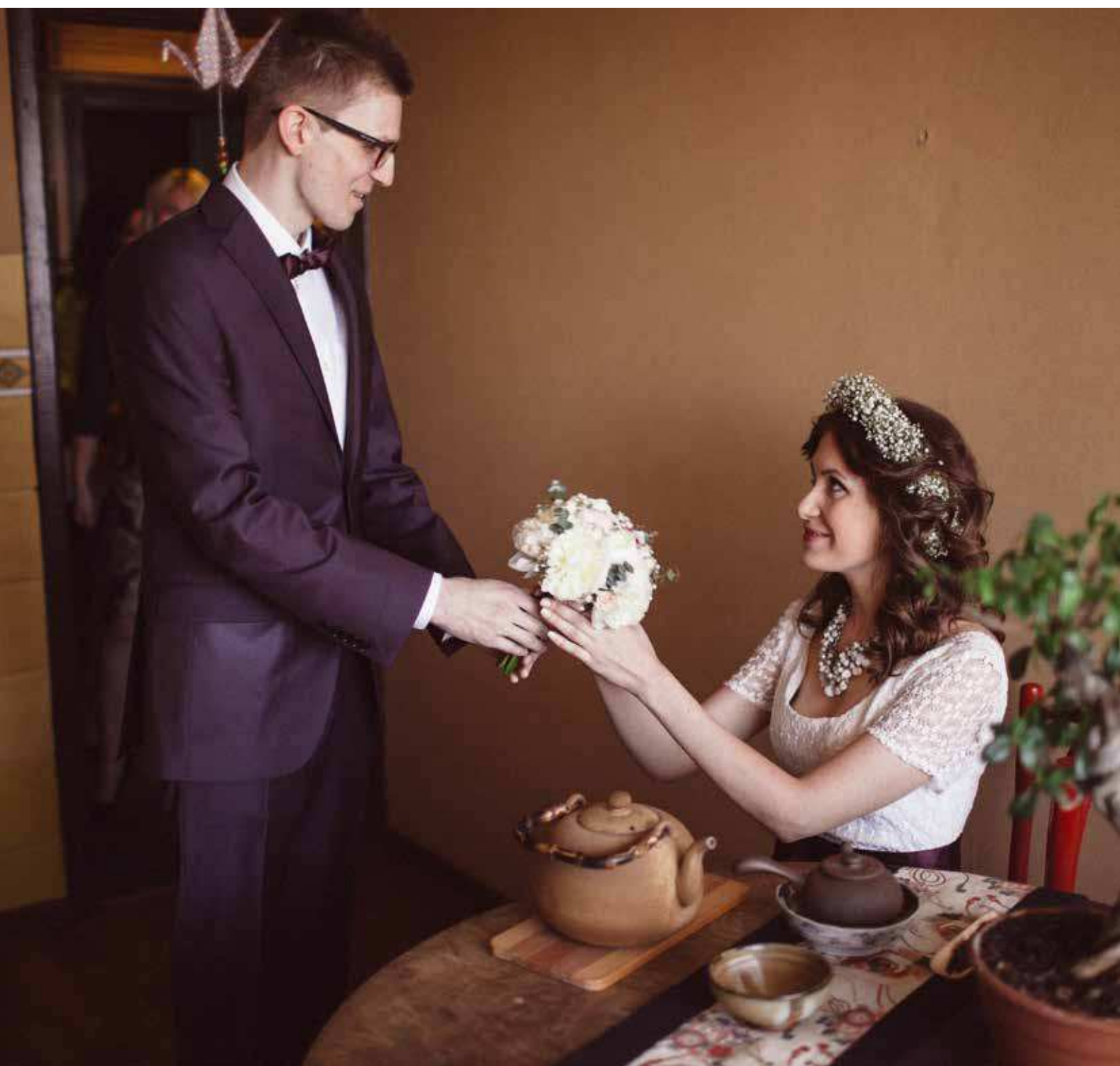
*Great tea, peace and happiness
in the bowl we meet in.*

*There's room for all the devas,
bodhisattvas and Buddhas
in this small thatched Hut!*

—Wu De

June, he came back to take her to the wedding. She remembered that Wu De had said that in Chinese culture the bride brews tea for the groom, and that acceptance of the tea is an acceptance of her into him. The bride is therefore supposed to brew it with all her heart inside. Katya decided that she would make tea for Denis when he arrived. The two had an impromptu wedding tea ceremony, as their families looked on lovingly.

Now, we can also look on lovingly, as their extended family—their Global Tea Hut family! Katya and Denis were excited to share these pictures with you, with the hopes that you all would see how much they care about you, and how much drinking these teas together with you each month has changed their lives and their relationship to each other. “You were all invited to our wedding!” Katya said happily.





In Chinese wedding ceremonies, the bride puts her heart into the tea and the groom accepts her into his spirit and home when he accepts the tea.



