

Tea Wayfarer

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 Robekkah Ritchie:

Where to begin... So many aspects of my life come together rather perfectly with Tea. It really is a natural extension of everything I love: Nature, meditation and art. From a young age, spending hours in our garden talking to the plants, being raised by Buddhist parents and staying at the Theravada monastery near our hometown in Canada, along with my love for the creative made meeting Tea in a meditative way a perfect fit.

I was first introduced to living tea from our dear tea brother Shen Su. We were raised in the same village in Canada and Shen's mother was my caretaker from a very young age. Though we attended elementary and high school together, ironically we only became close when we both left our hometown—I went to Germany and Shen went to travel the world. On his travels through tea farms and other exotic places, I would get delightful packages full of tea and we would occasionally meet in person back in our hometown at Christmas.

Being in Taiwan, just sort of... 'happened', really (along with everything that ever 'happens', but that's besides the point). While in Thailand doing fieldwork for my doctorate in Buddhist studies, I had the opportunity to bounce over to Taiwan to visit my dear old friend in 2013 at the renowned and mysterious "Tea Sage Hut". I thought, "Taiwan is practically a neighbor to Thailand. I'll go for Christmas!" Visiting Shen would be the closest I would get to being around family on that side of the globe, and he had told me stories of his new life in Taiwan, the Hut, teaching children, and Tea. However, I was still completely clueless as to what actually went on over there. So I went! Meeting Tea as medicine, as meditation and as a creative expression of myself felt so right in so many ways, and Tea has become an integral part of my life here in Berlin ever since.

The years leading up to my trip to Taiwan, I was wishing/wanting/looking for a way to better share with others the serenity and beauty that my life was overflowing with. Many people I met were rather intimidated or uninterested in sharing silent meditation. I am often so baffled at how my wish to share was answered so incredibly and perfectly with Tea. Being able to offer silence, healing, connection to Mother Earth and all the



other gifts that giving Tea brings is one of the greatest honors I could ever imagine. Tea is open and available for all, with no dogma or interest in the different lines of division we often put between ourselves and others.

Tea has brought new depths to my relationship with myself and my partner, whose life has also been dramatically transformed through this sacred plant. It brings us such incredible joy and deep gratitude to share this gift with others. If you are ever passing through Berlin, there is a hot bowl waiting for you!

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Robekkah's photograph and the runners up of our 2015 Tea Photo Contest are the gift for this month. Her amazing work was chose by several of us anonymously as the best of the year. We look forward to more!