

# 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 Kevin Hartwell.

In 2008, in an old-growth forest on the remote mid-coast of British Columbia, Canada, I was working as a fish technician for a forestry company when I had an awakening to follow a path in the healing arts. My supervisor asked that I help hang “falling boundary” ribbons around 1000-year-old cedar trees. While standing next to one of the giant cedars, a sudden realization went straight to the core of my Being and I knew I needed to do two things with my life: *to help and to heal*.

A short while later, through a Native American sweat lodge ceremony, I was introduced to a lifelong friend, *reiki* teacher and shaman, along with a 180-degree change in employment—working with the handicapped. Next came my introduction to Lao Tzu’s water tradition of energy arts and tea soon followed. However, I had no idea that people had been using tea to support meditation and other cultivation arts like Taiji and Qigong for thousands of years; I just knew I liked it.

Over several years I’ve learned Daoist meditation methods, which have been beneficial and very practical. But even so, I have never felt personally that I was able to embody the deeper aspects and techniques that are known to “thin the veil,” as it were. Saying that, I’ve never had a live meditation teacher to transmit those teachings to me, which may not be essential, but is no doubt ideal. Furthermore, hearing/reading about people’s experiences with different plant medicines was inspiring, but I lacked my own personal connection to any of them. At first, the very idea of a plant as a teacher just didn’t feel right—until Tea, of course.

About a year ago, I came across our Global Tea Hut brother Po Rosenberg’s interview in a Daoist magazine and what I read resonated very deeply. This summer, I found myself on the road to the Oregon coast to visit him. My experience there left me feeling like I had just drunk tea for the first time. It opened me up in so many ways, probably most profoundly to the fact that tea heals on all levels.

Whenever I drink tea on the go, at work or in the car or casually or while writing this, of course, it is good. It has a way of doing what it does for me in the moment. But I’ve noticed a stark contrast when I sit with the intention of connecting with Tea or make offerings to Tea Herself, and welcome Her healing wisdom into my mind, body, and spirit. She works much more deeply when I show up with the right intention. Getting up at 5am to meditate is not only easier with tea but I look forward to it! Using good clean tea in self-cultivation, especially while out in Nature, is my passion.

Another realization for me is how tea “drops you into the Dao” while drinking it. And afterwards, Her wisdom



茶人: Kevin Hartwell

is still with you. Since drinking tea this way regularly, I’ve noticed a shift that I can confidently accredit to tea, causing an overall, consistent, lasting and fundamental change in my awareness and my feeling of being connected with everything.

Tea truly does bring people together. I’ve recently began serving tea in my house weekly and found not only that I have met new friends, but that the connections I’ve made are more meaningful and with a substance and depth that I find rare in casual interactions. By sharing tea and teaching Qigong with my community here in Kimberley, BC and eventually doing so in natural settings as well, I will be assisting in bringing people closer to their nature. I hope to thereby fulfill my mission “to help and to heal.”

I am so grateful to all my teachers and friends past, present and future, to the Global Tea Hut community for sharing so much tea wisdom and fellowship with me throughout my tea journey, and, of course, to Tea for all the changes She brought to my life. If you find yourself in British Columbia let’s share some tea! I am always happy to meet tea lovers.