

TeaWayfarer

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you 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 Maxim Ulasevich.

I'm 27 and I live in Lipetsk, Russia. Several years ago, my life changed. Strange as it sounds, I saw a movie which inspired me to move in a completely different direction. I changed my lifestyle dramatically, giving up bad habits and turning to healthy living. And a couple of days later, Tea came into my life. It wouldn't be a lie to say that Tea sprang into my life. China, and its traditions and tea, engulfed me. But somehow I realized that my perception of Tea wasn't the one I desired.

By that time I had already started a blog where I described my feelings about different teas. I enjoyed every moment: taking photos of the leaves, describing them, breathing in the aroma and pouring the tea liquor into cups and tasting the incredibly rich flavor. However, I realized that there was something behind the taste, something deeper.

In carrying out research on the Internet, I came across a photo of a girl who had a beautiful floral tea cloth instead of the common tea sink everyone in Russia uses. She also wasn't using a pitcher, nor numerous statuettes—everything was so simple, minimalistic, but deep, beautiful and warming. So I made a decision to write her a message. Her name was Raneta. She started to answer my questions, in a calm and concise way. I learned a lot from her. I was turned upside down (metaphorically, of course). I realized that I'd touched something real, animate, and true. That's how I met the tradition of the Hut.

I was glad to find out that there are many of Wu De's students in Russia, and each of them was eager to share their knowledge with me, helping me make my first steps. It was as if I'd stepped onto a new, beautiful, but demanding path. Some time later, I went to Moscow to meet Ming Hui, and he hospitably served me Sun Moon Lake Elevation in bowls. I will never forget that: the stillness, leaves, water, bowl—magic. That night, I couldn't sleep because of everything Denis had told me about this tradition, the Center, etc. He also gave me a couple pieces of "homework" and I was a diligent student. (I am a teacher of math at a public school, so I know how important it is to do homework!)

Some time passed and the idea of sharing tea with my friends in Lipetsk started steeping in me, so I wrote a note in my blog announcing a tea ceremony and it resonated with others here. I worried, as it was the very first time I'd done something like this. It took me a lot of time to prepare for the ceremony. I thought about what I would say after the ceremony. I even wrote a speech. But when people came and took their places, I meditated a second before starting to brew and I fell into a stream which guided me through the whole ceremony. And so I understood that Tea is always



茶人: Maxim Ulasevich

ready to help each and every one of us. The only thing you needed to do is open your heart to Her. Since then, I have started to serve tea every week. And now we have a small but solid tea community in Lipetsk.

Tea for me is something deeper than just a plant. It is a whole philosophy, a way of life. Each session is precious. And I see Tea working in people's lives. At every session, I try to tell people that sustainable tea is extremely important for us tea lovers. I feel so happy that there are people in my hometown who now share this opinion.

I feel like I'm at the very beginning of a great, interesting and incredibly warm journey. It is truly wonderful that walking this path I've met such outstanding people who are willing to serve with all their heart, and to support and show the way to beginners like me. Right now I am going to put several leaves of white tea into a teapot and serve it to my daughter. May her Way also begin with living tea!