

Take a Moment for Yourself this Holiday Season

lifestyles/
Food

By Danielle Beaudette

Holidays can be stressful. We work hard to find the perfect gift, the proper greeting card, the best recipe for our holiday dinner. Stress can bring on so many emotions that we've all experienced. On a trip to China with the U.S. Tea Association members, I had a wonderful experience that I'd like to share with you.

I was part of a U.S. Tea Delegation traveling through China for almost two weeks. On my last day there, I had the most amazing experience. I had asked my interpreter, Song Ran (Max) to take me to a wholesale tea store so I could make some last minute purchases before I left the country. He agreed to take me, but to my surprise, when he arrived with a taxi, his mother was with him. She wanted me to taste some teas from her favorite store. The store looked like many I'd seen on the trip. The owner greeted us and guided us to a back room where a tea tray and all the Gongfu tea utensils were perfectly arranged on the tray. The owner, Mr. Hong Zhi, began to talk about his tea estate and his workers and how much he appreciated them. We talked about China teas and the different varieties of tea. Then he mentioned a tea poem that I'd never heard of, the seven cups of tea, written in the Tang Dynasty by Mr. Lu Tong, 1700 years ago. For the next two hours he recited each verse

from the poem and described his experience of drinking tea. In his words, with a loose translation from my interpreter...

"The first cup – the throat and mouth get moist.

The second cup – can drive you to loveliness and depression away.

The third cup – can move the essential oils through your system so the third cup drives away the bad but keeps all the good so you can think 5000 times more clearly.

The fourth cup – can make you sweat in your hands, head, and arms. All bad things are removed in the sweat.

The fifth cup can inspire your heart and give you wisdom and inspiration, so artists and poets need tea for inspiration.

The sixth cup makes your whole body light, muscles and bones. You are going to fly.

The seventh cup, Mr. Hong Zhi recited "Mr. Lu Tong asked his apprentice (Yu Chuan Zi) "Where is the Peng Lai Island" – the place where all gods live. I would like to go there by the wind."

Mr. Hong Zhi mentioned that, "Your body can get drunk on good tea." He continued to show me the Chinese rituals on preparing the perfect pot of tea. It is hard to explain all I experienced, but if you read this poem



slowly, you may understand the importance of taking a moment for yourself with a fine cup of loose tea. Here is a link to a blog with a translation of this poem which is very similar to what Mr. Hong Zhi recited. <http://teadrunk.org/topic/13/song-of-seven-cups-by-lu-tong/>

It is so important to take time for ourselves, even during these stressful times of political unrest. We've been inundated with political advertising over the past two years. When in China, I had the wonderful opportunity to sit with Mr. Huang, Chairman of the Tea Board of China, and I'd commented about him being seated with all the "political" people. He made a comment about something that I will long remember..."I never mix tea with politics, and it never should be. I'm just a person, same as you and everyone else at the table. Tea should never become about "the important person," but about who the person is. I'm no different and neither is anyone else." This season, take a moment for you and brew a cup of loose tea and savor the moment.

For more information about Danielle read her bio on page 16 or call 603-249-9111. For more Tea Party ideas, information and her full list of tea offerings, scones flavors & clotted cream visit her website at www.TheCozyTeaCart.com. 🍵