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The Empty Cup: Tea, Mythos, and Initiation through Emergent Ritual

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THE EMPTY CUP:
TEA, MYTHOS, AND INITIATION THROUGH EMERGENT RITUAL

By

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Abstract

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In our increasingly fast paced and busy world, the cultural value placed in ritual and ceremony has been lost. Yet, cultures for centuries have known the importance of such initiations to both usher us into and through important passages that mark a new time in our lives by deepening our awareness of our own lives and an understanding of the collective human experience.

This paper documents a two part project, one is the creation of a Gypsy Caravan, explored through the process of Beginner's Mind and Creating Emergently. In the first part of the project, the author as an artist explores being a participant in the emergent creative process as it unfolds. The second part is the design of a modern Tea Ceremony which in its complete form the author named Emergent Ritual in which she becomes the guide of the process for others.

Best described, Emergent Ritual is a way to re-envision the age old components of rites of passages, rituals, mythos and ceremony to best fit with our modern way of life and thinking. Emergent Ritual asks of us a change of mindset through the exploration of Emergent theory and the beginner's mind so as to re-invigorate our appreciation of ritual and to see its immense benefit in our daily lives. The author draws and weaves together elements from Vision quests and wilderness rites of passages, Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, Nature Based Psyche work, Jungian studies, the Japanese Tea Ceremony and her own heritage to create a new ceremony which acknowledges the demands of our modern age and the ancient need for rites of passages for our individual and collective evolution.

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Introduction

This project has changed me as water carves out canyon walls. I am writing this after some of the sandstone has worn away, knowing that the process will continue long after this project is considered completed. Is that not true for all teaching and all art? In teaching, the school year or expedition may begin and end, but the seeds planted in the students or participants will go on long after. It feels the same with creativity and art—the artistic process embodied during a particular endeavor continues to churn within the artist shaping us as if we too are a budding masterpiece in the midst of being created. As Michelangelo aptly said, “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free” (Michelangelo) This project revealed to me the fine line between who is creating and what is being created. Above all, this project taught me to remain ever curious about the unfolding.

My background in education led me to the Creative Pulse as I connected what it meant to be a teacher and an artist and uniquely, to investigate the artistry of teaching. I have delighted in my roles as an educator, whether in the classroom teaching English, working with a multi age alternative classroom, or leading wilderness trips. All contexts offered the opportunity to observe the gem within each student and doing whatever was within my ability to bring it out into the daylight. The focus at the Creative Pulse on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory struck a chord in me as it echoed how I have felt in my years working as a teacher and one on one with people. How does one reach another? How do we discover ours and another’s unique gift to help bring it into the world?

It is such inquiry that drove this project so passionately. For at the heart of my pursuit is the Joseph Campbell quote I found while preparing for a tea ceremony.

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances with our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive. (Power of Myth 3)

In all my moments of creating and teaching alike, what has brought a smile to my face during and at the end of the day is this all pervasive feeling of being totally alive. Yet, what makes such moments happen? How does one arrive at them? From my experience, any plotting I have ever attempted to design such a moment has left either the opposite result or at the least, a sense of flatness with my perfect ideas having stolen the initial vitality. This tells me that aliveness is not something one can approach head on but it must be courted, even wooed. How can I do that both in creating art and in sharing it such as in a tea ceremony ritual?

Before this project, I had witnessed such aliveness and ritual both while working at a month long summer camp and on wilderness expeditions, in which after a period of time, there was a submission into a collective experience which had its own feeling to it. In this immersed place, people changed, discovered new parts of themselves and then as the trip or experience came to end, they grieved the loss of this sacred space and made preparations to return home with the promise of keeping alive what had been born inside them. It is my inquiry into what makes aliveness occur in a group setting, with my experience seeing the power of initiatory experiences, along with a growing study of tea that came together in the project and paper which follows.

My project is divided into two major parts: One is the creation of a traveling tea house and the second part is the creation of a tea ceremony that embodies the components of an initiation ritual accessible for people in their day to day lives. Another way to look at this is the first part of my project is an artist engaged in her own creative process and the second part is both sharing this exploration as well as continuing it with others and seeing how that affected the experience.

While this creative project seems to be about building a tea house and serving tea, it is really a project about weaving the unseen and seen worlds together which, like the modern day mythologists, has been my life long inquiry. What is the marriage of the two worlds? This along with my curiosity of the aliveness and inner connection that occurs when these two worlds meet is the seed of this project. My desire to understand what it is that was happening for the guests I was serving drove my project. After months of investigation, I feel more awe for the ceremony, the tea house, the evolution in my understanding of ritual.

Perhaps not knowing or being open is what makes great art. A tea ceremony guest, a place based school director offered in reflection of what she witnessed that she saw mastery. She said the way the tea ceremony was conducted and what came out of the guests as a result was like she was watching mastery at work. Since I was leading the ceremony, one might think this felt complimentary. Instead, I had to inquire what she had seen as I know I was doing nothing but pouring hot water over leaves grown from a tea plant and herbs and handing them bowls. Where was the mastery she was seeing? What was present in myself and in the space that I was not yet aware of but was felt by others?

While this project did carve away parts of me, it also left something new. It lit a flame inside me, a desire to someday be one of those ritual elders who through years of practice and inner connection has the ability to hold the liminal space for others' deep alchemical transformation. This project inspired me to grow into someone as Moore says, who "can walk between the worlds" (54). Until then, as a result of this investigation I share the possibility of what Suzuki Roshi teaches about in my tattered, xeroxed copy of "Beginner's Mind" that I was given at the Creative Pulse in 2002 and still carry with me. Perhaps all of us possess innately this quality of big mind and the willingness to be present to whatever arises in its dynamic and creative display. I invite you to join me as I share this project as it weaves together in an emergent process many threads which form a beautiful cloth that I can use to serve you tea.

Literature Review

This literature review reflects the two parts of the project. The first is establishing a theoretical framework for the creative process of building the tea caravan or ritual space and the second part is a review of literature examining the basic elements of rituals and initiations. This review culminates in my description and design of what I am calling Emergent Ritual, a rite of passage which is accessible to integrate into our daily modern lives.

When building the tea house, two basic premises were essential to the process: the Zen teaching on “beginner’s mind” and Emergent theory as it relates to creativity, leadership and education. Together, they instilled a ground upon which to build the tea house and the outlook for the way. While one could see the value in approaching the process with either theory as the basis, for the purpose of this investigation, I see the Beginner’s Mind as the vital starting point.

Part 1: Creative Process

Beginner’s Mind

To begin looking at the creative process, we start with an exploration of the beginner’s mind through the first of two koans.

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868-1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring.

The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!"

"Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

The above koan illustrates what is essential about beginner's mind or Shoshin as it is known in Japanese. As it is taught, the beginner's mind is open to many possibilities and the mind already full of ideas or associations is only open to a few possibilities (Suzuki 1) There is a quality of freshness and potentiality which exists in a beginner's mind and it is this quality which suggests the emergence of an alive and dynamic creative process. The teachings on beginner's mind remind us of the inherent openness which serves to enrich the approach to revealing art or ritual space.

Suzuki Roshi, a well-known Zen Master, is known for making the Zen practice of beginner's mind accessible to westerners through his book, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. In it, he poignantly encourages his students to look at the difference between big and small mind.

Big mind experiences everything within itself. Do you understand the difference between the two minds: the mind which includes everything and the mind which is related to something? Actually, they are the same thing, but the understanding is different and your attitude towards your life will be different according to which understanding you have. (18)

From this subtle change of awareness, one can watch the creative process emerge from this vast, non-conceptual place. One of Suzuki Roshi's senior students, Abbess Zenkei Blanche Hartman, elucidates on his explanation.

Beginner's mind is Zen practice in action. It is the mind that is innocent of preconceptions and expectations, judgements and prejudices. Beginner's mind is just present to explore and observe and see "things as-it-is." I think of beginner's mind as the mind that faces life like a small child, full of curiosity and wonder and amazement.

According to Zen, this ability to be fully present and attentive to what is happening with a sense of curiosity and wonder is the result of a focused practice called Zazen. Zazen, or sitting practice, allows one to be free from habitual ideas and instead present with what is happening. This openness is not a landscape that is confused or so wide it is undirected, but it is open to the possibilities in this singular moment thus making an awake quality of mind which lends itself well to perceiving the nuances of complexity and emergence (Fisher). This is a powerful platform from which to create and is illustrated by the quote in the introduction about how Michelangelo allowed the angel to be revealed. Only through such open mindedness could the artist see beyond his own eyes and will.

To illustrate the bridge between the importance of arriving at the creative process as an empty cup and the willingness to be filled, such as in the emergent creative process is a famous koan known as “Not knowing is most intimate”.

Jizô asked Hôgen, “Where are you going, senior monk?”
Hôgen said, “I am on pilgrimage, following the wind.”
Jizô said, “What are you on pilgrimage for?”
Hôgen said, “I don’t know.”
Jizô said, “Not knowing is most intimate.”
Hôgen suddenly attained great enlightenment.

In Zen, enlightenment is defined as intimacy with the ten thousand things. One could say that the impulse to create comes out of a desire to be intimate with the mystery of life. As in the koan above, the creative process is much like going on a pilgrimage while not knowing why or where but following the wind. This seems to be the work of the artist and the ritual leader the same. Beginner’s mind offers a place to

begin and from this Big Mind, one is freed to see the properties of emergence unveiling before their eyes like a great dance. Both in art making and in serving tea, this quality of mind allows us to be most intimate and alive with the moment.

Emergent Theory

Emergent Theory is complex and widespread from understanding the laws of the universe to the creative process to leadership styles. Due to its scientific nature and my lack of background in that area, I studied it from the focus of teaching and art. At its most essential, Emergence is a theory which as one you tube video simplifies it for children as “When dumb things come together to make something smarter” (Kurzgesagt). Another way of saying this is that out of complexity (chaos) comes order. As Crowell describes in Emergent Teaching, “What is interesting is that the larger system, or whole, is always being defined and redefined by the complex interactions, adaptations, and decisions being made” (2). The spaciousness of the beginner’s mind offers the opportunity to be in a position to watch the possibility of the interactions coming unfolding.

Complexity is essential for order and without it we stay either in a perpetual state of chaos which lacks reason or we have a hyper focus on order without room for uncertainty and ultimately, creativity. One of the central points to Emergent Theory is that there is no hierarchal change making agent (Strogatz 13). Change occurs due to each of the interacting parts. As one observes a flock of starlings one can see a dynamic form moving together in what is called a “murmuration” in which seamlessly the birds stay connected in a defense strategy by being highly alert of uncertainty combined with

observation of their neighbors and so are able to move with agility and cohesion.

(NPR, *Barbara J. King*) This is mirrored in schools of fish in the ocean and fireflies flashing in rhythm at night (Strogatz 12) as there is no singular leader but a collective intelligence emerges when gathered together.

Emergence theory offers us an entirely different ground to stand on than hierarchal leadership models in which the supposition is that there is a singular leader guiding the effort. Understanding complexity allows an acceptance of a dynamic universe which cannot be controlled so much as observed and moved with as in a dance rather than in a managed assembly. Crowell, expertly discusses this within the context of what he calls the emergent classroom.

Instead of perceiving the “things” of nature to be self-contained and existing separately unto themselves, emergence describes a world of constant change and interaction, a world in which separation is an illusion. In contrast to the perception that interactive relationships can be predetermined and predefined, emergence invites us to see how all relationships are constantly defining themselves around the particular situation and context as it arises. So the concept of emergence encourages us to rethink some of the most basic assumptions we have used to organize our views of reality(3).

Similarly, Buddhist literature describes emptiness as a world without anything existing inherently or separately. As Elizabeth Mattis Namgyal says eloquently in a talk on the Madhyamaka teachings, “Everything leans” (Namygyal). By this it is inferred that each element of the process plays a unique and definite role in shaping the overall cohesion. In this way, nothing exists singularly but in relation to everything around it. This view of the cosmos in which everything is dependent upon each other, brings inherently a

sense of aliveness as we become more attuned to our dynamic surroundings (Crowell 16).

Emergent Theory as it relates to art, leadership, and education offers a way to delve into engaging the creative process in a different way than we typically live our lives. Rather than the artist or educator thinking of themselves as the sole creator of a “piece of art” as one would when engaging in hierarchal based leadership process (Strogatz 261), emergence and complexity encourage a perception shift for the artist to perceive themselves as one who is collaborating with the already existing and continually arising elements which are visible to the “Big Mind” (Suzuki 18). This lends a spiritual view of the artist as one is able to reveal what is there, as well as one who is able to allow themselves to be a part of the elemental process. Recalling the “Not knowing is most intimate” koan mentioned above, emergent process is possible when the artist is willing to observe and open to following the wind not knowing what might be revealed. As the artist becomes a part of the art, it reminds us as the audience that what we are seeing before us as “art” is not a static entity but a moment captured within a larger framework of time and movement.

With this understanding of the field of perception, beginner’s mind, and the attention to see what is arising, Emergence theory, we are able to begin investigating the elements necessary for an intimate initiatory process, one which is both accessible to modern lives and heeds to ancient alchemical processes which allow for true transformation and initiation.

Part 2: Ritual Theory

A ritual is the enactment of a myth. And, by participating in the ritual, you are participating in the myth. And since myth is a projection of the depth wisdom of the psyche, by participating in a ritual, participating in the myth, you are being, as it were, put in accord with that wisdom, which is the wisdom that is inherent within you anyhow. Your consciousness is being re-minded of the wisdom of your own life. I think ritual is terribly important (Wisdom Campbell).

A significant part of this project focused on how to create a ritual or an initiation process which mirrors larger scale initiation experiences but its simplicity allows it to be accessible to integrate into our daily lives. Thus we can, through practice begin to return to our collective psyche the value of ritual which is essential for re-introducing myth into our daily lives. Currently, our post-industrial world prioritizes the profane or seen world as singularly important. Yet, something in us longs to connect to the sacred as we experience in art, dance, religion, and song. For centuries, cultures have known the importance of such initiations and liminal spaces to usher us into and through important passages in our lives.

Value of Initiation

Above, Campbell explains that a ritual is an enactment of a myth but what is the function of myth and its value in our modern lives, especially in this highly individualized society? It has been said many times by mythologists and psychologist, Carl Jung and his students that myths are collective stories which teach us how to be human. They illustrate how to go forward through our private suffering in a way that we can see our suffering as part of the nature of human existence and not separate from it. Rituals are the enactment of this actuality.

The tribal ceremonies of birth, initiation, marriage, burial, installation, and so forth, serve to translate the individual's life-crises and life-deeds into classic, impersonal forms... The whole society becomes visible to itself as an imperishable living unit. Generations of individuals pass, like the anonymous cells from a large body, but the sustaining, timeless form remains. By an enlargement of vision to embrace this super individual, each discovers himself, enhanced, enriched, supported and magnified. (Hero with a Thousand Faces 331)

Through these ceremonies we are able to connect our individual experience with a collective one. In thus doing, the immensity of the weight of experience is lessened on each one of us singularly, allowing it to be held within a larger, collective understanding. Campbell continues,

Rites of initiation and installation, then teach the lesson of essential oneness of the individual and the group; seasonal festivals open a larger horizon. As the individual is an organ of society so is the tribe or city-so is humanity entire-only a phase of the mighty organism of the cosmos. (Hero 331)

Campbell makes a compelling argument that ritual is vital for understanding ourselves singularly and collectively. Without knowing the larger view, how can we live a life of meaning without becoming obsessed with the details of the day to day which are becoming more and more demanding. As Campbell expresses, it is these initiations which connect us to our unique place within the organism of shared existence.

Currently, we live in a world plagued by depression and mental illness but yet we have a dearth of rituals and elders to help people make the transition from one phase to another. Some theorists feel that these people are not ill but trapped in a liminal or transitional "limbo" without a way to move into across the threshold into

completion(Moore 21). Ritual theorists mark this as a unique and sobering time on the planet with very few elders who hold knowledge of such initiation rites.

Without rituals to mark these times in our lives, we cannot progress to the next phase of development. Bill Plotkin, a nature-based ritual leader and psychologist feels that our society is arrested at the stage of early adolescence without any meaningful ritual to mark the threshold into true adulthood. Adulthood, he defines as a life in which one embodies and shares one's innate gifts for the benefit of others ("Development Wheel", Plotkin). Mythologist, Michael Meade, a contemporary of Plotkin, tells poignant stories of men who return from years in prison without anyone to witness their release and so are destined to repeat the process by returning to incarceration since we are designed as humans to complete all stages of the journey with witnesses. This suggests initiatory processes are collective by nature if even only witnessed by a couple others (Meade). The question arises, how can we integrate this essential human need to be witnessed in transitional times with the paradox of a society that places little value on ritual than our ancestors did but more value on individualistic endeavors?

Stages of Initiation

Three well known and accepted stages constitute an initiatory process. Van Gennep, a folklorist and anthropologist pioneering ritual studies around the turn of the 20th century, identified these stages of initiation as Separation, Initiation (Liminality) and Return(Incorporation) (Moore 82). These stages help to identify what creates a successful process for alchemy and is also confirmed by Joseph Campbell's research of

myths from all over the world. “The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation-initiation-return: which might be named for the nuclear unit of the monomyth” (Hero 23). It appears that across cultures, religions, myths and life processes that these three stages are common vital to undergoing transformation of any kind.

1. Separation

Joseph Campbell illustrated the first stage as “the call to adventure” (Vogler 99). Modern vision quest literature depicts the hero or initiate as leaving the ordinary or profane world. The willingness to leave all that is familiar is significant as the hero will not be coming back the same. Some part of the person will be left behind. It is also clear to the one answering the call that this is true. This “call” hints that there are two different views of space or time, rather than all of time being homogenous or made up of the seen, profane world, as we are more than likely than ever to believe these days. Ritual theorists hold, as our ancestors did, that time is heterogeneous. In addition to the everyday ordinary world, a second world exists. This is the domain of the sacred, an unseen world (Moore 23). At the point of separation, the initiate is made aware of this other world and prepares to leave the known life behind as the call summons.

Moore expresses how submission is intertwined with the notion of separation. The initiate must be willing to submit to the unseen and unknown something calling them. It is this submission which is the welcome door into the threshold to the sacred world. In the Japanese Tea Ceremony, this is expressed by “nijiriguchi”, the entrance to the tea house. The door is small and low enough that it causes everyone to have to bow humbly upon entering by crawling in on their knees no matter what their rank or status in the

ordinary world. The reason for this is that it is said the hero's downfall is hubris, so the journey begins with willingness and humility for what lies ahead (Kane).

2. Liminality

So great is the incompatibility between the sacred and profane worlds that man cannot pass from one to another without going through an intermediate state. (Van Gennep 1)

As Arnold Van Gennep observed, rituals allow us to heighten and deepen our awareness during transitional times in our lives by offering us a vantage point which magnifies the experiences of liminality. He called this intermediate state, liminal space. Liminality comes from the Latin root, "limens", meaning threshold. Liminality is a time and space of disorientation, unfamiliarity and uncertainty (Moore 58). It is also said that this is the time of containment as it takes a certain clarity of boundaries for the vessel to get "hot" enough to create alchemical change. Liminality operates within a different sense of space and time; it is what ancient cultures called sacred space. Its qualifications are a vessel or container with good enough boundaries and a ritual elder to guard the space that a flame begins to develop and can burn the old dress off the initiate. It is here where the initiate begins to die to their old life as the rules of the other world do not apply here. There is a sense of something old and powerful in liminal places. There is a sense that one is connected to all beings who have been in this "underworld" or "archetypal" plane before. Since we have lost our vernacular around liminality, when we become disoriented in a time of transition, all too often people are

diagnosed with a mental illnesses or become medicated to stave off such feelings (Moore 52). Allowing these transitions to be highlighted within ritual in which there is a container for the experience of liminality, we are able to view the experience more objectively and then discover what we need to see or feel and to be able to integrate the change we are seeking to bring into our lives (Hero).

There is a debate among ritual theorists such as Turner and Moore as to whether sacred space is even possible in a post-industrial society without many ritual elders (Moore 139). It is also thought in addition to strong containment for the liminal space a ritual elder is what ensures that someone will make it out of the in between space and back into the ordinary world. Having so few ritual elders alive on the planet creates the question of whether we will have access to the sacred space in the future since one needs a guide, lest one be left in chronic liminality or continue to seek out liminoid experiences, which are highly prevalent today and can only hint at true sacredness. These “rumors of angels”, experiences such as rock concerts, drug experiences and nights in Las Vegas can offer the heightened awareness but can deliver no real alchemical transformation (Moore 49).

In Joseph Campbell’s model, the main part of the journey takes place in this “special world” (Vogler 127). Many adventures happen to the hero in his model so that it is clear they will never be the same again and in order to return will have to face their biggest fear in order to get the elixir they were put on earth to bring to the world.

3. Return/Incorporation

The return allows the initiate to return to the ordinary, profane world with their gift and to integrate what was learned in sacred world. Campbell refers to this as the return with the elixir (Vogler 222). In Campbell's cosmology, the hero has risked everything, including given up his greatest fear. The reward was an elixir that can help the world from which they came. Essentially, this elixir is one's purpose or gold that one came to the sacred world looking for whether consciously or unconsciously. Moore calls this "enactment" as it acknowledges that the initiate is acting in all new ways, with a new skin as they have undergone an ego death of some kind. His description unlike others alludes to the vulnerability of the one who returns new. So the hero or initiate returns to their ordinary world with the boon from the sacred world to let it be lived through them for the benefit of others and the collective organism of humanity.

Commentary:

Before I begin the discussion on the Emergent Ritual process which is a culmination of putting into practice all of the above, I would like to add personal commentary to clarify a couple points already touched upon.

One point that I see repeatedly with the Hero's Journey, Joseph Campbell said it himself. The hero's journey does not integrate the feminine values. It is a male-centric way of attending to the journey as were the heroes of the majority of myths he studied. Campbell said, "Women don't need to make the journey. In the whole mythological tradition, the woman is there. All she has to do is to realize that she's in the place that people are trying to get to" (Campbell 1981). As complimentary as this sounds and as much as it resonates with one part of me as an author, it is impractical in our day and

age when I am both feminine in body and have been trained to be masculine in mind. Also, the reverence for the feminine has been lost in our world of modernization as is evidenced by the state of the earth and is struggling to find its place. Perhaps it is time for a journey which integrates these into a masculine-feminine journey of the heart. In Buddhist cosmology, the heart, which represents the balance of masculine and feminine principles, is the symbol for what it means to be human.

Tea is an expression of the feminine principles long known and revered in eastern cultures and becoming forgotten here in the west. Tea, among other teachers, introduced me to the values of receptivity (receiving the water in the bowl), openness (letting the leaves unfurl), patience (the time it takes for tea to steep properly) and gratitude for the unseen (not needing an explanation as to why things are but feeling it within). What follows is a proposal of a new rite of passage, an outline of a ritual which can be made as elaborate or as simple as necessary or desired. It is a ceremony which marries masculine and feminine principles just as tea is the marriage between heaven and earth. From this union, I feel our human heart can open, thus offering the quality of aliveness and connection to which I refer throughout this paper.

Emergent Ritual

Emergent Ritual is a practice that has emerged through this study both academically and in application. Emergent ritual provides a simple way to create space for the awareness of the myth of our lives which is essential. What I began to see is that without ritual elders or a culture supporting the value of sacred space, the ability to journey between the sacred and profane is getting lost in our collective psyche. My

intention for this ritual and the project as a whole is to offer something that keeps this process, this ancient understanding of heterogenous time, this connection to the sacred and unseen worlds alive and present within our human psyches so that the alchemical potential of what it means to be human stays alive in the degenerate time.

The form that emerged as a result of my study and experience has seven parts, Intention, Purification, Enrichment, Devotion, Sacrifice, Feast, and Dedication. Below is the explanation of how I arrived at these seven parts and a discussion of what is meant by each of the parts of ritual along with a glimpse at how these might be relevant to the creation of a modern rite of passage in our daily lives.

Corresponding to the discussion above, the seven stages of the ritual correspond to the traditional three part rite of passages methodology along with the key stages of Campbell's Hero's Journey and then is connected to the feminine/masculine, elements, and directions to the tea ceremony actions.

It is important to note here that there are two processes being mentioned. One is the "tea ceremony" and another "Emergent Ritual" or "Rite of Passage". In the tea ceremony as outlined in the Methods and Process section of this paper, participants are not made conscious of the seven part ritual. While they are present for the ritual in its entirety, they are more passive than in the rite of passage I am calling, Emergent Ritual. In this instance, it is the tea server who is engaging in the full ritual without any explanation of the parts for the guests. To summarize, in Emergent Ritual, participants are called initiates and are active in each stage of the ritual while in the tea ceremony participants are guests which are passive with the exception of speaking during the 3 Bowls 3 Questions ceremony. This part of the ceremony may or may not be enacted in

an Emergent Ritual, however since the below outline does center around an Emergent Ritual involving tea, the 3 Bowls 3 Questions Ceremony is present in the stage of Devotion.

Not mentioned in this process but listed in parentheses on the diagram are five other categories which are known as the five wisdom families as it is understood within Buddhist cosmology (Rockwell). These five wisdoms, Vajra, Ratna, Padma, Karma, Buddha have been a large part of my personal practice and helped shape the design of the ritual. As I began working with the framework, I saw how well these connected everything and wanted to acknowledge their profound impact on how I see this process. However, due to the scope of this paper, I am not diving into an exploration of them for readers.

It is valuable to highlight the two places in which the initiate is crossing a threshold, Purification and Feasting. Without these right on the cusp on the profane-sacred and sacred-profane respective transitions, there would be no journey at all or there could be a failed initiation. I mention this along with the note about the feminine principles as it is a part of the feminine domain to care for the boundaries and the margins where some might get lost. A mindfulness to this aspect increases the potentiality for a successful journey and most importantly, fully held stages of each part of the process.

Lastly, I want to add that while my process focused on Emergent Ritual based on a modern tea ceremony, Emergent Ritual can be used with any applicable actions filling the roles within each stage. I have begun to experiment with this and have been delighted by the possibilities.

Fig. 1

Stage	Ceremony	Properties	Action
Separation			
<i>Call to Adventure</i>	Intention <i>Aspiration</i>	The Space of Emergence- Everywhere Masculine/Feminine (Buddha)	Invitation Approaching the door Courtyard
<i>Crossing the Threshold</i>	Purification <i>Cleansing, preparing to release old way of being</i>	Water-East- Masculine (Vajra)	<i>Washing Hands, burning Incense, Breathing</i>
Initiation			
<i>Meeting with Allies/Mentor/ Enemies/Goddess</i>	Enrichment <i>Setting stage for the unseen to arrive, hospitality</i>	Earth-South- Feminine (Ratna)	Greeting others, Lighting the candles, <i>Setting the tea table</i>
<i>Belly of the Whale/Innermost Cave</i>	Devotion <i>Asking for help / Connection to larger sense of Self Prayer</i>	Fire-West-Feminine (Padma)	Asking, 3 Bowls of Tea, 3 questions, Receptivity, <i>Ceremony</i>
<i>Facing the Dragon/Supreme Ordeal</i>	Sacrifice <i>Facing one's own death Rebirth</i>	Air-North- Masculine (Karma)	<i>Offering- Physical or Symbolic</i> "What must be left behind? What are you willing to offer for your prayer to be answered?"
<i>The Ultimate Boon</i>	Feasting <i>Receiving the blessings Marrying the Sacred and Profane Celebration</i>	All elements- All directions(Vajra, Ratna, Padma, Karma, Buddha)	Tea snack/Feast Music
Return			
<i>Return with the Elixir</i>	Dedication <i>Willingness to give to gift to world /Benefit others/ Humility/Compassion</i>	Space-Everywhere Masculine- Feminine(Buddha)	Dedicating the benefit to others, Bowing, Praise Walks, <i>Cleaning the Bowls</i>

As my aim is to simplify some of the larger models of rites of passages and vision quests into simple ordinary life actions and specifically a modern tea ceremony accessible to our daily lives, I will explain the model above briefly. What follows is emergent from research, direct experience, personal practice and conversations.

On the left of the diagram are the previously discussed 3 major components for rites of passages, *Separation Initiation, Return* and beneath them are several of the phases of the 17 stage Hero's journey (Hero). I chose what I considered to be the most vital elements of the journey. I then distilled overarching ceremonial themes which I have witnessed into the actions of the tea ceremony.

The seven steps outlined, *Intention, Purification, Enrichment, Devotion, Sacrifice, Feasting and Dedication* are a result of the studies for this project. I have found that they can be utilized in the smallest of rituals or in a larger ceremonies. I have also found that they can be used to guide one's day allowing the day to be like a ceremony itself. Such is the case in Varanasi, India where people greet the day with bells and chanting at the river Ganges at sunrise and end it by throwing all the veents of the day back into the river or Great Mother at night in celebration. We, too, in our modern world can have ceremony be a part of our daily lives in such a way.

Intention

Intention is what guides the process. It is the unique call we each experience to either hold or attend a ceremony. As the tea server, I invite people with an intention. This intention is like a sailboat's course. I first set or listen to the intention of why I am serving tea. It might be a simple call such as to gather together in *communitas* (Moore

44) or it might have a more pointed approach about working with a facet of ourselves. This serves as the **call to adventure** for the guests.

Purification

Purification is the act of crossing the first threshold and recognizing the call has been answered, there is no going back. Whatever is wanting to change is being heard. Purification is a natural impulse to clear away impurities and as we descend into the underworld, we become aware that the layers of falsehood we accept in the ordinary world are useless in the sacred or underworld. To symbolize this, participants can wash their hands or sprinkle water upon their head and forehead. Also, a small fire can be made or a candle lit. This marks the descent into the liminal world where they can release their ideas of themselves and their lives. In the Hero's Journey, this marks the **crossing of the threshold**. I feel this takes a great act of courage so in some groups there is also silence and a somatic reminder to connect with breath and the sensory experience. Purification recognizes and sheds all that it took for the guest to arrive here, schedules, challenges, doubts, and fears. Purification is part of the process which with submission allows us to be made into something new.

Enrichment

This is the lay of the land in the underworld. Corresponding to Hero's Journey, it is the **Meeting with Mentors/ Allies and Enemies/ Meeting with the Goddess/Mother**. This stage offers a sense of the wisdom of the feminine. This is where the tea server "sets the table" for the unseen forces of the liminal world. Since time operates differently here, so are the laws by which we live and act. It is important to

begin the journey acknowledging that there are forces beyond one's own ego and it is wise to invite them in. This can act as a mothering presence welcoming the guests into the unfamiliar and inviting the unseen energies in by an act of hospitality. By now, the feeling of liminal space is quite evident and I have witnessed how naturally silence begins to quiet down the guests as mystery takes the seat at the table it is not permitted to take in our usual lives. In nature based psyche work or Jungian work, one might say this is the domain of soul. The act of enrichment sets the stage for a deeper inner process to take place and allow us to connect to something larger within ourselves.

Devotion

This stage is called devotion and also highlights the feminine wisdom of prayer as a true, deep calling to connect to something both outside of and within ourselves which has the ability to guide us in such times of transition. This is also known as the **Belly of the Whale/Innermost Cave**. In the tea ceremony, it looks like the tea server asking the guests three questions and encouraging them to respond from the heart (Big mind) rather than a social habit (Small mind). This allows us to find ourselves in a new place than how we know ourselves in the ordinary realm. Perhaps from here we hear ourselves in a new way. The poet, Rilke reminds us, "Love the questions themselves," suggesting the aim here is less to answer something so much as ask for help from something larger than ourselves, thus being receptive to a new possibility in our lives or about ourselves. As in the moment in the dark belly of the whale and Innermost Cave, we have to give up our belief that we can do it all and we can begin to rely on something from the other world. In my personal practice, I take this moment to recall my intention that began the ritual and am often seeking guidance, prayer or asking the unseen realm

for help. By engaging in conversation with the unseen or mythological world, we create a relationship which allows our heart to open as we become aware of our own human vulnerability. The more one opens, the deeper the prayer becomes as does the ability to be receptive. This is where we drink tea from in ceremony.

Sacrifice

As in all rites of passages, something within must be given up or released (Nature Plotkin) which symbolizes and accentuates the experience of leaving behind the old ways of being. We cannot continue into the further stages of the journey without relinquishing an element of ourselves which we have outgrown. In myths, this could be what one finds in the innermost cave, a dragon that haunts us, or a monster of sorts; it is known as the **Supreme Ordeal or Meeting the Dragon**. Whatever it is, it represents the face of death. In tea ritual, we honor the greater forces of ourselves and the underworld by offering something. This could be literal such as breaking something at the ceremony or metaphorical by making an offering aloud of something one refuses to continue to live with in their lives such as an obstacle.

This practice began after two separate times a glass spontaneous broke during ceremony. One time, the bottom of the glass literally dropped out for no apparent reason. I viewed it as an offering to the unseen world and also as an acknowledgement that there are always unconscious shadow forces of which we are not aware of in ourselves. Sacrifice to me means both humility, recognizing all that I do not know and commitment to a new way of being in the world.

Feasting

This corresponds with **Seizing the Sword/The Ultimate Boon**. Feasting is the celebration of all of the above. It is a genuine acknowledgment of the challenges we undergo, the gratitude for the preciousness of life, and an understanding of its impermanence as we will soon return to the ordinary world. At its core, Feasting is the place where the unseen and seen worlds meet before separating again into two separate time/space entities. In this way, feasting is a treasure to be enjoyed much as if one was seated at a wedding table. As in purification, this is a threshold experience and so it is important to hold the boundary of it.

Dedication

This stage is both the **Return with the Elixir** and crossing the threshold back into the everyday world, as well as the beginning of the dissolution of the journey. It would be impossible for the hero to return to the everyday world with his sense of self intact as the journey has irrevocably altered this. A boon or gift has been received. This boon came by way of following the call, purification, enrichment, devotion, sacrifice, feasting and now it must be given to others and not kept for self-aggrandizement. The point of the great gift is to benefit humanity as a whole.

In tea ceremony, this is illustrated in a couple different manners, one is bowing silently to each other, recognizing symbolically the myth we are all living within and that when one is willing to engage in the journey it benefits all, including the faces of those around the initiate. In Emergent Ritual, all present are initiates and so there is a collective sense of the adventure, the awareness of the experience and the tenderness of

separating as we return. Dedication is derived from the Buddhist intention of benefiting all beings, which is called “dedicating the merit”. It is the recognition that something positive was generated during the ceremony and by keeping it for ourselves we do not allow it to breathe and have life and benefit others. One could say, “May this (small tea ceremony) benefit each of us as well as all beings.” (Lama Zopa) This encourages guests to leave with a sense of tenderness and an open hearted connection both to the mystery which brought them there in the first place and to all people who desire the same change in their life. Traditionally, it is also said that this allows the rain of blessings to continue if we are willing to give the merit to others.

Through the methods of ancient rites of passages marking important life events to the mythological exploration of the Hero’s Journey to the simple ritual of an everyday tea ceremony, we see many ways to integrate the liminal world into our collective psyche. We see that it is indeed accessible and that in doing so allow ourselves to connect individually and collectively to a much larger scope of what it means to be human. Through the willingness to have a beginner’s mind and allow the creative emergence process we become both audience and art as we begin to witness the possibility of a way of living that incorporates the values of the old world with the reality of our current western lifestyle. All of this possibility lies within a many month pilgrimage, a school year’s curriculum or in our simple morning bowl of tea.

Methods and Process

Part One: Answering the Call

How does one begin a new endeavor when one feels the call? With a carefully laid out plan? By the seat of one's pants? Two images come to mind. One is the image of Annie Liebovitz's portrait of an artist sitting in her studio waiting for the muse to find her and speak to her. Sometimes she waits a long while.



The second one is from a story of a famous poet who can feel a poem barreling after her sometimes causing her to run home from through the fields in desperation to get to pen and paper before it bowls through her like a great storm.

Building the tea house was both.

I know now but did not then that when one is engaged in creativity, there is a layer below the feeling of “what makes something feel right”. Something deeper drives the entire process. As I have asked in tea ceremony, “What is the image below the image?” I am still finding the root image for the tea house but it has occurred to me that it is some kind of image of the old world which is missing in our culture. “Old world” connotes to me a time when the unseen and seen were both recognized as valuable and distinct from each other. There seems to be something in the ancient cultures that recognized myth as able to give perspective on how to live fully as human beings. When

I serve tea, people comment on how natural it looks and it is as if I am filling a role missing in our western psyche of the archetypal tea woman serving tea in between the worlds to strangers and friends alike. Like me, I feel others desire a connection to the deeper part within themselves and each other.

Intention

They say art is born out of necessity and so it was for me. However, in my case, my art was tea and it began out of being lonely after having moved across country to a place in a drought. Feeling disconnected from the earth, myself, and community, I found myself in an herb shop one day and decided to create my own apothecary based on a tea store I loved back East. Drinking tea and making tea blends became a way to connect to myself in a difficult time, like a lifeboat in a moving sea. Fast forward two years, I held a gathering for a group of friends and served rounds of different teas all evening long. I felt a remembrance of some quality in myself of quiet confidence and a sense of joy that had gotten long buried. A month later, I awoke one night and felt the strong calling to build a gypsy caravan. I had once worked at a summer camp that had Gypsy caravans and their sense of aliveness and wonder was strong for all who witnessed them (Fig 2).

This was my first call: a genuine desire to build one of these caravans that I had long loved. After reflection, the more hidden call was a desire to connect with others in a way that both simply and profoundly involved the liminal plane and helping to keep an awareness of sacred space and connection alive in our increasingly profane world. At first, I refused the call to adventure as it sounded impossible. Yet, I kept feeling the call towards it. My partner, David, a skilled builder, heard my idea and loved it agreeing to

build the tea caravan. Not being one to jump on all of my ideas, I recognized he, too, was witnessing something in the call. We agreed to build it emergently, with no plans and to see how it would come together. Having similar views on the creative process, I knew I would be able to explore the beginner's mind and be engaged in the study of emergent process concurrently.

Purification

Step by Step in the dark,
If my foot is not wet
I have found a stone.
-Zen Koan

What I found out immediately is that creating emergently unlike teaching emergently feels completely naked for me. It feels easy to facilitate that for others and hold that space for students but it is a wilder and more raw experience when engaging in it for one's own creativity. For me, there is an inherent vulnerability when the beginner's mind and emergent process dance together. Since purification is a threshold experience, there is an element of submitting rather than doing what one ones wants to do. It seems both are asked of the artist/initiate, the willingness to engage in the journey and the surrender to what is really trying to emerge.

What I can see in hindsight is that this was a time of purification, cleansing away all the old ideas of how this was going to work according to the "me" project. This purification took three different forms. The first few days before I had surrendered to the unseen forces at play, we literally sat on the brand new trailer, staring at each other and the lack of a structure (Fig 4). It was like nothing would come because I was still full of all my visions and ideas. This felt like a demolition party coming to destroy the

dream. However, I noticed that out of this fallow period without great muscling on my part, the path did open and the work begin.

Secondly, what came next was stunning to my sense of rationality. One of the unique parts of building the tea house was that it was done with my partner who in addition being a talented builder is intuitive and creates naturally based on the emergent process. The structures he builds feel well constructed as well as coherent with their surroundings. Our working together and our similarity in this way, heightened the experience for both of us. An example of this in the beginning was how I searched endlessly, spending hours online for the right images for the tea caravan. Finally, I decided on the look I was interested in (Fig 3). We went to the hardware store and when we were about to choose the wood, the boards were not the right type or size for the project. Again, I was frustrated that my vision was not working. If only I had known then about purification, I could have seen the process working in the way a forest fire allows the new growth to emerge. What emerged was a that a week later, I received a call that David was asked to take down a 100 year old barn and that we could use the wood from it for the tea house (Fig 5).

What made the timing work out just like that? How were the boards perfect for our plan? To top it off, the barn came from a piece of land where I had foraged nettle and felt a connection to the landscape. How did this come to be? I cannot to this day answer these questions, but I marvel at what was to become the beginning of many such instances. The more I study emergent process, it feels more like there is an unseen holy order to things. All of this was purifying my idea of how the project was going to go.

This experience was a seed teaching me that welcoming the unknown is essential in the creative process. I did not find this the easiest to do but contemplating the natural order of elements such as the dormancy of winter giving rise to spring and the way a forest fire gives birth to new growth, I had to observe its potential. Finally, some rain came creating a few days pause in the building. It was after this final releasing into the process, that I became open to what was going to unfold. These experiences of purification left me willing to listen to something beyond my own plans and agenda.

Part Two: Building the Caravan

Enrichment

Taking down the barn was a great act of getting the space ready for the unseen forces to enter the scene. Meanwhile, at the caravan building site, the trailer was ready and we began to set the staging for the building process. I made tea and food for us each day during the build and I often set some aside for the unseen forces or “the gods” overlooking the project.

Sometimes those gods were embodied by actual people just curious about what we were building and why. We built the tea house on a farm where there is an “un”intentional community as I heard one resident call it. Every day no less than twenty people would pass by the caravan as it was being built. In the unfinished tea house, slowly people came to sit as they walked by. Recognizing this as part of “setting the table for the unseen”, I did my best to serve each person who wanted tea in the midst of what needed to get done for building each day (Fig. 6).

One morning the tea house hosted a man from Puerto Rico and a woman from Germany at four in the morning before their departing for flights. Steam rising under flashlight, chai and blessings were given for travels. Another lunch time, people gathered and my orange spice tea blend was served. Then a clown and his astrologer girlfriend stopped by for Oolong. I served Tibetan Butter Tea to a group of builder helpers one day. I watched as each person saw their own world in the tea house. I began to call it the mirror. A Persian woman stopped by and saw the old country and in times since, people have told me it looks like a place they loved in India, Ukraine, Morocco, or France. People have begun to speak to me in foreign tongues thinking I was a descendent of whatever country they thought it was from (Fig 7).

At the time, I did not know that what was emerging by way of the call and our sincerity was indeed a sacred space. These gatherers like Joseph Campbell's Allies and Magical Helpers were arriving because they, too, could smell the fragrance of tea and ritual that was being created.

Devotion

“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like” –Lao Tzu

As in the metaphor of the flock of birds or school of fish, there were several components that were a part of the creation. These were coincidences, dreams, community, environmental sources, and lastly preference. There is a joke in this as I am a person with many preferences aesthetically. I have a developed eye from my years in

photography and as I began to experience creative process done emergently, I noticed my preferences had the lowest place in the ranking of the priority. Slowly, my experience and ability to engage in the beginner's mind expanded. The only cost was my sense of my ego and vanity. It still makes me laugh.

At this point, I began to feel something different. I became aware we were following a wind that while I could not see it, I could definitely feel it. That level of trust was new to me and as expressed by the koan felt intimate. From here, there was only one way to go it seemed and that was to be devoted to the creativity of the project however it wanted to go. As a result, something in me began to soften both during the project and in the time since. Perhaps this is what devotion does to us; we give up something we have long been holding onto tightly and something else much more gracious moves in where we let go.

This was manifest in a willingness to follow wherever the scent was coming from, including dreams. I could say the whole project came out of dream but as far as nighttime dreams go, two moments stand out. One time was when it was the day to begin painting and I had yet to choose a color. Beginning with the Expert's Mind, I had gone to the paint store many times looking at colors, comparing hues, etc. I felt blocked and uncertain which direction to go which led to hours searching color combinations online. The night before I was to begin painting, after being exasperated, I decided to ask the dream world for guidance. Upon waking, David said he had seen the color, turquoise in his dream and that became one of the two main colors. Another night revealed a raspberry color as the trim (Fig 8).

The next dream example is significant and meaningful to me as it chose the name for the caravan. I had been hearing a name intuitively but felt it was too esoteric and not “hip” enough for the potential guests to like so kept refusing its call. One night I had a dream in which David was standing in a room with twelve praying hands on the wall, an image that is significant to me, and then he said to me in the dream, “Take Rumi down off the shelf and let him name the teahouse”. When I awoke, I followed the dream’s orders and took my beloved copy of the Essential Rumi from the shelf and sure enough the book fell open to this passage,

Come, come, whoever you are. Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving. It doesn't matter. Ours is not a caravan of despair. come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand times. Come, yet again, come, come.

I had been hearing the name CaravanSerai but had been refusing it. This time I listened and so the tea house, the tea caravan was so named. Devotion has a quality of the disorientation of true liminal space as I could not rely on my usual habitual and logical mind. I kept being asked to rely on something deeper and truer within. The gift of this devotion was a felt sense of rightness of when choices are not choices but unveilings. As in the way of mythos, when mystery or the unknown is given its appropriate place in the process, things open with wonder rather than struggle.

In doing this project, I found that there is a perfect which exists beyond like and dislike. There were several design elements in the tea house that I did not totally like and I came to see that it was irrelevant because what wanted to be created was created. I allowed the angel to emerge from the marble rather than making her appear which was a new experience for me. While my deep seated sense of visual perception attempted

many times to captain the ship, again and again, something else beyond me was calling the shots.

Two examples of this were the color of the wood and the roof. I spent days trying to change the color of the barn wood. When coated with the necessary protective oil based sealant, it became dark. So dark I could not stand it (Fig 9). I did everything I could think of to get the tea house to match my original picture. Then, one day, a couple who walked by exclaimed how beautiful and exquisite it was and how it reminded them of a Japanese art process in which one painstakingly burns each piece of wood. What could I do but laugh? Again, the tea house had taught me to let go.

Lastly, the roof was the final element to come into play. We had measured, called metal roof places, priced out copper roofs, etc. We had done this early on and yet, both of us had waited to order. A metal curved roof is quite expensive. Was that why we were hesitating? I would quietly ask David and he would shake his head signaling to keep waiting and that it would come. I was not sure what would come or for what I was waiting but I listened. One day he was called off site for a job. At the end of the day he returned, with several pieces of beautifully rusted tin roofing all the right length and thus, completing a look that hearkened to another time (Fig 10).

In hindsight, it would make sense that in creating a liminal space or “thin place” as one person called it, I would need to experience what I was hoping for the guests which was to go deeper than the habitual mind and towards the mythic mind that understands life in a much larger context. This process may sound tidy but when engaged in an emergent creative process it felt very much like sitting with difficult

emotions while in a meditation practice. It felt hot and uncomfortable as the desire for the simplicity of clarity felt strong. I understand much better now how much the logical part of my mind wants answers rather than something else, less rational and more soulful wants to ask questions and explore the unknown parts just as much as the known. The beauty of the devotion when creating this way is that every time I look at the caravan I am open to its mystery and what it is beyond my ideas of it.

Finally, there was a moment that stands out in this part of the experience. On one long and exhausted day in blazing July heat, I called out to David in a loud long southern drawl, “You is the Fat and I am the Honey” without premeditating the comment. Later, the irony that he is thin, but eats peanut butter by the jar and I have an Olympic sweet tooth hit me and the nicknames stuck. I also love that fat and honey are indeed essential qualities of being human, which we each represent respectively. To me, fat is the earthy, grounded part of being a human and the honey, the indelible tenderness of being alive on the planet knowing it is impermanent. Sometimes, I dream about offering late night tea ceremonies at Fat and Honey’s Tea House o’ Love. I share this in the paper because I think it represents the soul of the tea caravan. It is beautiful and other worldly externally, but it also has the nourishing mother-bosom kind of southern hospitality at its root and when I serve tea, I serve like that.

Sacrifice

Part of my study for the tea ceremony led me into shadow work as I sought to understand what makes a creation alive. That said, I have come to understand increasingly the value of acknowledging the darker elements that go into the whole. I

find by doing so there is a greater access to the overall energy rather than clinging to just the light part. Often when one is trying to hold on to the light, the shadow makes an appearance uninvited.

This willingness became clear when after a particularly long and frustrating build week, my partner quietly yet dramatically announced that while I was away the following week he was going to destroy the caravan. I remember this moment because in a unique moment of non-reactiveness, I simply asked him how he thought he might do it. I asked if he was he going to drive it off a cliff? No, he responded that a parking lot would do. With all the creativity which we had been pouring into the art process, we had neglected to attend to the shadow of the forces of destruction which are always equally present in moments of creation. However, because of the practice of beginner's mind, it was taken in stride and given the space it needed.

When I returned, we began building again and the quality from then on had more ease and humor almost as if we had both sacrificed something within. I realized that sacrifice plays an important role in creativity. When creativity is present, so is the shadow of destruction. Now, when I am in a creative endeavor, I try to remember to offer something up so that shadow presence can have its own seat at the table rather than having to steal its own place. It seems that cultures have done this collectively for ages as the tribe or group asked for something or were entering a new time.

Balancing the creative process with the forces of destruction ushered us into the completion of the project. There is a certain kind of vulnerability, trust, and self-surrender that carves one like the canyon walls when one engages in creativity in this

way. The process felt alive and full of both dynamism and confusion. What I learned is to allow them both to enter the scene and flow through without holding on to either dramatically. When I could do this with patience, I was always rewarded by a magic that was not made by my own hands and my own egoic mind, but by something far larger and more creative than I have dreamed myself to be.

Part Three: Serving Tea

Feasting: The Celebration of the Seen and Unseen coming together

The final section in Part Two is the party that was thrown as a send-off party. This seven hour period illustrates brilliantly the entire process. David and I were sitting in the living room of his tiny house. I was making departure plans and also, just feeling the immensity of having completed the project from vision to structure. I was thinking an early morning departure before people got up.

However, as we were sitting there in the afternoon heat, we heard a knock at the door and in walks Aileah, the farmer on the land and local party giving queen. She said that she heard the caravan was leaving tomorrow and we should throw a party to celebrate. David and I eyed each other somewhat sheepishly not being the big party throwers she was. I shrugged my shoulders saying I would be happy to serve her tea that night or to some of the folks on the farm. I can be shy at such moments when faced with endeavors as big gatherings. Aileah insisted we throw a big celebration. I commented that it was nearly mid-afternoon and how unlikely it would be anyone could come on such short notice.

Like the muse herself, Aileah was so insistent that I followed gratefully, trusting this as part of the process. I sent texts to a few people, began imagining what I would serve and David got ready to move the tea caravan from its five-month parking spot to the gathering lawn. Meanwhile, getting more in the spirit of possibility, I reached out to a friend who plays Gypsy music. Yes, a real live gypsy (or Balkan) musician. By now it was 3:00 in the afternoon and I texted him asking if he was free that night to come to the tea caravan goodbye party and would he be willing to play some music possibly. He texted back within a couple minutes saying he was free, he would love to come, and he had just asked his band member and they would bring their instruments and be there at 6:30. By now, my jaw dropped. We were going to have a Gypsy Caravan Gathering; this was beyond what I could have imagined.

I made several blends, made savory crepes, made tables out of old barn doors, people made a fire ring, the musicians showed up and set up inside the tea house as a stage and I began brewing large pot after pot large of tea (Fig 11). It was a humble, elegant, and wildly beautiful scene as person after person showed up, more instruments came, more tea was drunk. The owner of the farm said there had never been such a dignified and delightful gathering on her property. And I did nothing, except pour tea. Again, as one following a scent, the tea caravan had taught me again, that even though not knowing may be daunting it is deeply worth it as it unfolds something beyond myself and that something has the fragrance of the mystery of life. I have witnessed how this fragrance goes directly into the tea and into the bodies and hearts of each person present.

Dedication

Serving tea in the tea caravan has taught me that if I could name a tea shop I would name it “The Empty Cup” since after two and a half years of serving tea regularly, I am learning that emptiness (openness) is what I am indeed serving.

The following part of my paper has three sections. The first is my experience as a tea server and my own practice that has evolved as a result of this exploration for the Creative Pulse. The second is a description of setting up the tea caravan for ceremony or gatherings as I often call them. Finally, the third is a description of the tea ceremony as it has been developed so far and highlights of ceremonies and rituals with different populations.

Section 1: My experience learning to serve tea

I would like to begin by describing simply the process of brewing and serving tea as I have discovered as part of my work for The Creative Pulse. I am so grateful for the opportunity to delve into studying what the process of brewing tea means to me. People often ask if I am a Japanese Tea Ceremony student/master as that is the first culture they think of when they hear tea ceremony. I would say one of the greatest gifts of this project is that for the first time in my life I have connected with my roots in the middle east. I have never felt comfortable sharing my Syrian heritage in our country. How I serve tea, especially in the context of this project is very much in the spirit of the embracing the middle eastern tradition, meaning “Everyone come, come, take a break,

let's drink together.” There is ritual in the gathering, the brewing, the serving and the drinking, but the greatest part of the ritual is the arms thrown wide welcoming strangers and friends alike into the “Caravanserai”, which means “traveling abode” and is thus named for the desert travelers in the middle east who would seek refuge within it for the night drinking tea, reading poetry and playing music.

The expression “I chi-go, I chi-e” in Japanese conveys it well saying, “One time, one meeting”. This is an accurate way to convey how precious it is to be served tea and to be together for a short time to do so. In a way, it conveys a much deeper meaning about life, and this was part of the inspiration for the name caravanserai. We are all on this earth together at this particular moment for one night essentially. How will we acknowledge our precious moment together? When one drinks tea, it is preferable not to dwell on the past or dream of the future as the tea is so precious it asks us to be right here with ourselves and each other. It is not always easy to break this habit, but the tea gives us an opportunity to explore this possibility. It reminds me of the richness of this moment where I am (Fig 12).

With this said, I will share my compilation of the steps of brewing and serving tea from choosing the tea for ceremony to cleaning the bowls.

How do I choose the tea?

I listen. As I am learning, tea like teaching and mentoring is all in the listening. Listening to the tea that wants to be drunk, listening to the water boil, and listening to the group gathered to see what is needed.

*I listen for what blend is best for the group. Usually, it comes to me either an herbal tisane or the tea plant, *camellia sinensis*. Sometimes, a particular blend calls out given the season, location or theme. For example, a fall gathering outside might call for a rich cinnamon plum or a spring morning tea gathering might call for Silver Needle, my favorite white tea. I love Silver Needle and Milky Oolong as they can be left in the bowl and the tea drinker can watch it as he or she watches and listens too.*

Sometimes, a tea jumps out at me. Like for the birthday blessing mentioned later in this writing, Flowering Jasmine. So sophisticate, so delicate and the bloom so bright, perfect for a group of coming of age girls.

When you drink tea, how do you know? Sometimes, I listen for what my body needs and sometimes I listen for the tea which is calling me.

b. Preparing the water

Part 1

At this, I am just a beginner. There are many ways to prepare the water. However, you choose to prepare it, it must be prepared with good quality water. I have been told if there is a spring nearby, it is worth going to the spring. At first, this seemed fussy and perhaps elite and maybe it is in some ways. Yet, now I see it is about effort and putting effort in as an act of care for those one is serving.

The tea server gets filled with kindness when he or she is willing to go to the spring or the well. The kindness is out of wanting the tea leaves to be happy, to be celebrated in their finest form. It is an honoring of this plant and consequently, the earth. It is a small act that surely will not change thousands of lives, but those that attend will feel it. It is the kindness of wanting each person to have the absolute best experience they can and to want for them the most delicious bowl of tea. It is kindness for the tea growers and their families who give their lives for this moment. Making the effort for good water is out of kindness for the tea server who will end the day knowing that he or she did their part to make all things come together for the most benefit to all those attended and the gathering itself.

Part 2

Once the water has been poured into the kettle. There are many ways to heat the water. Some people are very particular and can go into detail. For the purpose of this paper and to provide a contrast to what I wrote above so one can see different methods of approaching the process, I will not encourage people to use elaborate methods of water heating such as charcoal or fire. Your stove top at home is sufficient and when possible, a gas stove. Since I do not have a gas stove, I use a portable camping one. Therefore, in this way, I am encouraging intention as well as practicality. One does not need to go out and buy anything fancy. What you have will do. There is a humility to being practical and reasonable and in relation to one's situation.

Part 3

The water begins to heat. Here, for me, is my practice in patience. Tending the kettle is its own focus. Nothing else. One waits for the water to boil. I notice how often I stand feet askew or on tip toes or shift from side to side but I often ask myself can I just stand there calmly and simply. Or if I am sitting, Can I sit and wait. I watch how much patience it takes to do this simple act. Tea masters know what temperature the water is by the size of the bubbles. We use names such as 180 degrees, but students of tea use words such as frog eyes. This speaks to me because it is less conceptual and more in harmony with the elements. It makes me realize it is not my mind that makes

a good cup of tea but my senses. It is listening for the water to begin to roll, it is watching the bubbles, it is in smelling the tea leaves, it is in touching the tea bowls and herbs, it is in finally, quietly tasting the delicious infusion.

Preparing the Vessel

The tea vessel can be any cup or bowl you enjoy. This is the vessel that will receive the tea. I use tea bowls as they ask us to use both hands which is traditionally how tea is drunk. The reason for this I have found, is that with a handle, one can still be half in or distracted while drinking tea. This is fine if you are on the go and such but does not reflect the essence of sitting down to drink tea.

First, start with a clean vessel. From this point, you can pour your tea right into it and enjoy it or you can pour a round of hot water in the tea bowls and pour out that water and then steep the leaves for the first time and then pour the first steep in the bowls and then dump that water, too. This gives the bowls the fragrance of the leaves. In some more ritualized ceremonies, such as the Chinese Tea Ceremony, there are special cups just for smelling the fragrance of the tea before drinking it. I generally wash out the bowls with hot water, to heat them up to be able to best receive the tea. Sometimes, I think of our body as the empty bowl too, how do I care for my body in a way that makes it best to receive the tea?

Brewing the Tea

Beginner's mind. Every steep is different. I am not sure if Tea Masters feel this, but from what I have heard, they do too. While one can know certain parameters that might aid the brewing, such as Green tea brews at 190 degrees, no two harvests are the same. The amount of sun, rain, and weather is different each harvest therefore one can not rest on some idea of what is supposed to happen. The tea server must watch and most importantly feel. Of course, some teas are more particular than others. And some leaves turn bitter immediately if brewed longer than 30 seconds!

What this means is that tea is naturally a mindfulness practice. One can not just stay in their head but must observe and be present for all the different elements which emerge together to create what is known as a proper cup of tea.

Brewing tea is an opportunity to listen and allow both the practical world to unite with the intuitive world of the beginner's mind. In this way, heaven and earth meet just as they do when you drink your bowl of tea bringing them all into you.

Pouring the Tea

This is my favorite part! I imagine that each stage comes more or less naturally to tea students. For me, the serving is a great joy. There is a feeling of love and offering that comes into me when I pour each bowl and silently hand it to each guest. I hand it to them with both hands and gesture for them to receive it and then we briefly

make eye contact which is customary when receiving tea. They hold their bowl between their palms until all are served.

Then I pour my bowl last, put the kettle down on my right, kneel with them and lift up my bowl signifying we will all drink together the first sip.

In that single moment of quiet, when all that can be heard is the sipping and the sounds outside, there is a feeling of union and humanness that touches me deeply each time. It makes me grateful to be alive.

Enjoying the tea

After the first sip together, everyone is invited to enjoy their tea at their own pace. If it is a more formal ceremony and we are doing more rounds of tea, we will begin future rounds in the same way. I invite people to slurp, which is counter to how people typically think it is appropriate to drink tea. Slurping aerates the tea within your mouth. This produces another experience of beginner's mind as most people think of being so proper when it comes to tea!

Whether it is a silent or talking gathering, one can see the relaxation that comes over people. Something about the tea, being served or holding the bowl in both hands, slows people down to some natural pace. It is like watching a bud unfurl. I would describe the quality I witness as a Natural Openness.

Cleaning the Bowls

When I came upon in my studies and my attendance of tea ceremonies the experience of the tea server/master cleaning the bowls at the end of the ceremony in front of the guests, I was at first surprised. It seemed undignified to my western astringent ways. Yet, when I read the commentary as to why it was this way, I was touched. I summarize what I witnessed in the following words.

We clean the bowls at the end of the ceremony to symbolize impermanence. We clean the bowls in front of the guests so they too can witness their own death. As the beautiful manifestation of the tea ceremony will end and fade away, so we will too with these bodies from this life.

Growing up in a culture where I like many have been taught to fear death, I was struck by the honesty of what I witnessed. Somehow paying homage to my own death, as well as the death of the experience, somehow makes it all that much more dear and allows the tenderness that I find is inherent and essential to being human to flow forth from inside me. Now, I too, clean the bowls in front of my guests before they leave.

Making tea for myself and others is one of the richest most reflective practices I have had in my whole life. I feel blessed to have been called to it and its ability to mirror whatever I most need to see about myself in each moment. It is no question to me why it has the lineage and history it does. I understand why when one becomes interested in it, one is called a student of tea. It is this reminder of the beginner's mind which allows

one to begin to possibly someday make a good cup of tea. As one 5th generation tea plantation owner in Taiwan expressed in the movie “The Meaning of Tea”, that in his whole life which is entirely dedicated to tea, he has made a proper cup of tea only two or three times. As I have mentioned before, making and serving tea is a marriage ceremony of the elements which takes skill and love (Fig 13).

Section 2: Exploring the importance of the Space within the Tea House and Creating the Ceremony

Importance of Space

This section will outline how the tea caravan plays a role in the tea ceremony and how the elements work in harmony for the purpose of creating a gathering which allows the qualities of aliveness, connection and liminality to be present.

The tea house arrives at the designated location I have chosen or that has been requested. It feels necessary for the tea house to be set up before the incoming guests can see its undone quality. Essentially, creating a “special world” or liminal space cannot be seen in action, lest participants stay too strongly in their rational mind and not able to submerge into the magical world or the world between the worlds (Fig 14)

Why is this magical world important? I use the term “magical” to indicate the world between the worlds, the two worlds being the everyday, mundane details of life and existence and the unseen, unknown world of limitless possibilities and a larger sense of what life is. When balanced, we have a life in which there is a sense of harmony and living in accordance with the natural laws as our ancestors did. When imbalanced

as our society is, the profane becomes meaningless, reified, and superficial as well as greedy and short sighted action for one's own gain. Conversely, in the unseen or spiritual world, imbalance manifests as flights of fancy, grand declarations, sense of being overly important, dissociation for the reality of practicalities and being ungrounded. When they are each in balance, there are still distinct but connected. Some say this is what drinking tea is all about, marrying heaven and earth. It is the union of the soil, seed, plant, hands and sun, sky, rain, and air.

As mentioned before, the liminal space is important as it is where there is a strong enough container for real transformation to occur. Two visuals for this are both a cocoon which allows the caterpillar to dissolve into a soup of its own imaginal cells and then be reborn into the famed butterfly. Another is one that Zen Master, Thich Naht Hahn teaches his students, "No Mud, No Lotus". From this expression, it would seem that for something truly beautiful to be born there must be a dark place, one of great boundaries which allows the change to take place. It appears from people's responses that the tea house has this potential. I did not know it would be that when we were building it, but sometimes it seems as if we hit a nerve in the collective psyche and people climb in and relax into something forgotten in themselves.

Whatever it is, it is clear again and again that it is not a space about doing or controlling. It has inspired me to learn how to be present so that I am not getting in the way of the bud of someone opening.

Creating the Tea Ceremony-Structure

Knowing that structure and boundaries were essential to ensure the container led me to being curious how to create a tea ceremony that felt empty of ideas and yet with clear boundaries. I thought about studying the Japanese tea ceremony, but felt little connection to the austerity or cultural parts of it. How could I hold ceremony in such a way that offered homage to my heritage, ethnically and acknowledging the skills this life has given me as a teacher, a wilderness guide, and as one most at home in the archetypal understanding of the world. What felt true immediately and like the emergent building process, was a ceremony idea that came to me one day with the name 3 Bowls of Tea and 3 Questions. The idea was very simple: Ask One Question for each Bowl of tea and do it council style, which is a term used in wilderness education settings meant that there would be no cross dialogue. A participant would share what they had to say, each person would witness silently and then the next person would share.

It is radical in a non-immersive setting (immersive being a wilderness trip) because we are so programmed to engage in social conversation as our way of achieving connection. To remove that would be to change the dynamic entirely. If people were coming because they were drawn to connecting with others, they would be asked to connect in a new perhaps unimaginable way. We are habituated, myself included, to receiving a confirmation of affirmation or even disagreement, but what if the confirmation was simply a silent witnessing. It seemed that this matched other rites of passage elements in its simplicity, that witnessing one was enough for the change to take place.

Would people be willing to dive in that deep in a setting which was as brief as only a couple hours long? For whatever reason, they were and are. I am finding that people, guests of all ages take off their shoes (signifying departure and separation of their old life) walk up the steps to the tea caravan, come inside and sit on the floor and are willing to reveal themselves with each question and each bowl of tea. (initiation, entering the world between the world, the underworld,) and then watch me as I wash the bowls (signifying the return) walk out, put on their shoes (the ordinary world) and leave in a feeling of quiet buoyancy. It is remarkable to me and it happens again and again.

As my research continued for this project and I observed the ceremonies more closely, eventually what developed was the seven part ceremony. That said, at times, the only part that is visible to the guests is the three bowls three questions ceremony and I practice the rest silently without any facilitation or explanation as I would offer in the Emergent Ritual process. It depends on the intention of the ceremony whether it is a rite of passage or more a gathering to be centered deeply in ourselves with witnesses.

Some of what people have shared that has touched them most are

- 1.) the spaciousness of the structure, 2) the departure from social norms, 3.) the contrast of the silence and intense focus (both my own and the guests watching the process of the steam rising and the leaves steeping) as I pour each bowl of tea 4). being handed a bowl of tea while being looked at in the eyes, 5.) the very personal moment of feeling the tea enter one's body and 6.) the collective yet individual sharing process and finally, 7) the leaving or the return that creates a sense of completeness of having traveled somewhere within the paradox of having gone nowhere.

Described through the lens of the emergent process, the disparate parts come together for a shared experience creating a new reality only to disperse back into chaos. In a way, it is like a social crescendo and then its wave melting back into the greater sea a little bit changed. This could be one way of expressing a rite of passage as well. One comes together in a group for an individual process, at the end there is nothing outward to show (in some cultures there is) but there is an inward feeling of being changed in some way having crossed a Threshold as Joseph Campbell describes it. From what I can tell, I am a threshold guardian in these moments and it is my great honor to open the door and guard the space for such moments.

Tea Ceremony experience

In this section I describe the general experience of the tea ceremony. Again, what distinguishes the tea ceremony from a rite of passage ritual is in the rite of passage, the participants are active in each of the elements. In a ceremony, the participants are more passive and not aware of all the stages consciously though they are witnessing them. Having described the more in depth ritual in the literature review, I will illustrate the elements of the tea ceremony here in its simplicity.

Participants arrive at designated spot (Fig 15). They take off their shoes before going up the stairs. The ancient Celts said that a “thin place” was a sacred location where heaven and earth meet which was in an unseen place three or four feet above the ground. The most famous of these thin places is Stonehenge. Some have referred to the tea house as having the qualities of a thin place. The guests walk up into the tea house and find a spot to sit. While chairs or benches are available, it is most typical to have

cushions with sheepskins on them and two tea tables centered in the middle of the circle. On the tea tables are a candle, flowers, perhaps another item symbolizing the focus for the ceremony and tea bowls (Fig 16). The tea table can also be called traditionally, the chaxi. I like to have the sound of water boiling over the flame as people come in. I find this allows people who are used to a lot of noise and distraction to focus on and relax into the sound of something. I also appreciate that it is water, a symbol of emotions signifying that it is okay to release the grasp on the masculine rational mind and to ease into our feminine sensibilities of hearth and communion. Once all the guests have arrived, I give brief instructions describing the layout of the ceremony. I offer a moment for guests to breathe or become aware of their surroundings which helps to break down the conceptual mind and brings out a more somatic intelligence as they become aware that they are sitting on something and noting the qualities and texture of their experience.

While this might be natural to eastern cultures or long time meditation practitioners, I find this is not the case with our modern American society and even for those who know the more body centered practices reflect that it is a beneficial reminder as it is easy to forget with structure of our daily lives. Then I get up and this indicates the ceremony has begun and each time the guests seem to know it is time to be silent. My reflection on this is that perhaps we are so starved for meaningful ritual in our world that when one comes along or even the potential of one, something within us stirs and pays attention! Our culture's meaningful rituals have been reduced to The Macy's parade, Santa, the Super Bowl, Easter Bunny, etc. We have a lack of meaning in our traditions that while we may not be conscious of in the rational realm, I think that we

deeply feel the need for them in our understanding of the archetypal realm and do desire such depth in our daily lives.

I remove the big kettle from the flame and turn it off and kneel in front of the guests and slowly pour the hot water into the tea pot with the tea leaves if that is how I am serving. I also serve bowl style which is a traditional serving style known for being how the peasants drank tea as it is considered a humble style to put the tea leaves in the bowl without straining them out. If I am using a tea pot, I pour the water into that and we all wait in silence for it to steep, which could range from one minute to five minutes. Both are great practice in changing how we experience time and being together. Then when the tea is ready, I pour it into each bowl and pass it to the first person who passes it on and so on, with each person making eye contact. At times, I also pour each guests bowl directly at times. I love the silent eye contact which adds to the intimacy of the occasion.

When all the guests have their bowls, we sip the first sip together. Then, the question is asked. I wait to ask until now so the answers can be emergent with the moment not so premeditated. I allow a few moments of reflection and motion to the first person to begin. Sometimes I plan the questions before hand, especially if there is a theme, sometimes and most often, I spend the day or the week preparing the first question and allow the other two to arrive like guests at the tea ceremony. I find that the first question is helpful if it does have an element which connects guests to their body and feeling experience. This sets a tone for the rest of their responses and the collective gestalt of the group experience. It also helps to deepen the experience into sacred space or the world where disbelief is suspended.

One by one each participant answers and I speak last. I rise, put the water on to boil again which allows for the energy to relax again paying homage to the importance of space or that quality of being empty and ready to be filled. Being mindful of this space and of the importance of allowing everything to fall away helps to serve as a reminder of the natural order of life and also to let the bodies process the group energy and return to oneself. And so it continues with two more rounds. If not before, when the tea is steeping this time, I listen for the question that is emerging out of people's responses. Or I ask inside myself, "what is the question wanting to be asked"? Sometimes, I know what to ask immediately. Whichever way, we enjoy the silence together and now with more of a hint of the known (mundane) people seem to allow themselves to relax more deeply into the unknown (sacred). This relaxing is what I feel begins to generate the feeling of aliveness. The relaxing into the not knowing is what begins to open the experience of the initiatory or ceremonial process. Here again, as with the creative part of the building the tea caravan, is the marrying the beginner's mind with the emergent process.

As the third round begins, there is a palpable feeling of willingness to take a bigger leap, to wander a bit farther from the familiar shore and at the same time, the feeling of impermanence knowing this moment will not last forever and that we will indeed return to the ordinary world. Again, this paradox allows for the aliveness to be present when such fullness and such emptiness dance together at the same moment. During this time, I offer a tea snack as a simple way of feasting together. At the end of the third bowl of tea and the third question, I gather the bowls back to me, symbolically the great mother bringing all things into this world and ushering them out. I quietly and

silently wash each bowl and wipe it with a cloth dry. This process allows the integration of the experience or as Joseph Campbell calls it, allows the hero to find the elixir or the boon to be able to return to the ordinary world with this gift.

The gift in this case may be minute as a seed since the passage together is a brief one or it may be a seismic change of seeing the world, either way, it is enough as it represents the possibility of living in a more open, gracious human way in the world. For some, it might simply be the experience of relaxing and feeling one's breath or the warmth of the tea entering the body and this too is plenty. I feel however someone can open to the experience of being receptive is of benefit to them whether it is small or significant. What I appreciate about tea is that it meets people wherever they are at without dissection or doubt. It allows each to flourish in one's own way. My role is simply to set the space, pour the tea, serve the guests, and allow emptiness to be present at the beginning, middle, and end.

The guests walk down the stairs no longer in the in between world, returning to the ordinary world of their lives. The guests put on their shoes and silently get absorbed back into the sea of daily life.

Following how I set up the tea house before the ceremony, I take it apart at the end. This is one of the beauties and efforts of the tea house. It arrives as an empty vessel, gets filled with ritual objects, then aromas, then people and their energy and then gets dissembled into a physically empty space yet full of an unseen richness.

In the spirit of this, I will describe any of the ritual objects I have not yet explained.

Ritual Objects:

Each guest is given a cushion and a sheepskin. I choose sheepskins to represent the earth and animal realm from which we come. People often experience a feeling of being grounded when they sit on a sheepskin as I do. I know a local therapist which uses one for herself when treating clients and offers them to clients when engaging in challenging work.

I chose to have guests sitting on the floor when possible due to my cultural heritage and this is most similar to eastern tradition of being close to the earth, closer to the instinctual rather than in a chair which to me symbolizes being closer to the head or rational realm. I always have blankets available so people can enclose themselves if they are feeling the need for security or warmth whether physical or emotional. There is a rug on the wood floor with a bright print symbolizing the wild emotions we all have and the bright spirit we are born with before we are taught otherwise (Fig. 17).

I have light curtains which move with the breeze reminding the guests of the permeability of the inner and outer worlds. Since in some traditions air represents our mental state, it also offers the reminder that while our thoughts are unseen they guide our actions, which are seen. The bowls are ceramic and ask that the tea drinker uses both hands as in the Japanese tradition as it brings one closer to the leaves and the experience and deepens one's quality of presence by being so involved.

Finally, I use only whole tea leaves as I made a promise to myself that while I do not need to serve the fanciest of teas, it is important that they add to the health of the guest not detract from it with pesticides etc. I do my best to serve teas that I know the origin of the leaves and that it is a place that treats their workers with kindness and

respect. There are other elements which play in which I cannot describe in a paper, such as the steam rising from a bowl and its swirling movements or the street sounds as we sit in the caravan, or the smell of the sea as it gets to be dark and we in our vessel sail off together.

There is something about the tea house that sings of a deeply feminine presence, something that is ancient yet forgotten. And for whatever reason, I am the current steward and it asks of me to develop this in myself as an artist, a teacher and a human.

Section 3: Tea Ceremony stories

I would like to share a few brief moments that have occurred in the ceremony time in the tea house. The tea caravan makes other appearances too such as serving street tea inviting people to come in from the street and share a bowl together or at community gatherings but the focus of this study has been the creation and implementation of a tea ceremony, as well as a more in depth rite of passage encompassing the tea ceremony.

- One tea ceremony was a mix of ages and genders and experiences. I remember most clearly when the question came what do you remember most of your childhood, a young boy responded, “I will remember that my mother trusted me.” Everyone felt the depth of the young boys gratitude.
- A group of women who had known each other for ten years heard the others speak in a way they had never heard before. They explored a depth due to the format that allowed them to hear each other as brand new and created a shared container that they said had long lasting effects.

- A Birthday Party Rites of Passage (Fig 17). I listened for each question as the bowls of tea were served. The last one stood out as it asked of each young woman, “What birthday wish do you have for the birthday girl/young woman that you also wish for yourself.” Tears filled my eyes as the young guests responded with wishes such as “I wish for you and I both to have courage to face the world as we are”, “I wish for us to be as bold as we are inside”, and “I know we go to different schools but I wish for each of us to not be lonely and to make friends we can tell each other about.” It was such a powerful gathering that the girls requested to do it again and now have a quarterly tea gathering group I serve.
- At a short tea ceremony for a group engaged in wilderness ritual in the desert, I played a piece of music to which I served tea and we drank silently. The leader expressed deeply he had never had tea like this before and you could feel instantly how it brought the group together.
- A group of preteen girls in an afterschool group, began their 3 Bowls 3 Questions ceremony with a wander in the snow and then were asked what images they most noticed and then asked to find where in their life that image mirrored. Stories from branches reaching up high for one who felt growth and possibility, to a protected little tree cave as one feels distanced from her brother, to the weighted down with snow tree branch for a girl overwhelmed by homework. Each revealing their inner world to be witnessed by the others.

- Serving at a meditation center for a brainstorming meeting, I served bowl style tea and people commented how they were able to stay in their bodies more as the conversation continued.
- In a three part (3 month) Rite of Passage called the Night Sea Journey, participants began the first ritual in the above world with a simple 3 Bowls 3 Questions Ceremony and making their own teas, in the second, they dove into the underworld and the great discomfort of the voices that have haunted their lives and in the third, they returned with the boon of the night journey telling each other the myths of their lives as they drank tea in three rounds of storytelling.

These are a few of many examples of how tea and its dance of the marriage of heaven and earth is felt in people of all ages and backgrounds. It has the ability to connect one to the depth inside and return one to the home within. Whether in a simple 3 Bowls 3 Questions Ceremony or in the more in depth rite of passage tea ritual both serve to awaken the collective remembrance of ritual as an experience that allows the wisdom within to emerge. When we connect with others here in this space, the sacred is alive and our connections are richer. I found through the exploration of this project that aliveness comes when this wisdom is given the space in ritual and when we are willing to be a part of the mystery that this life is.

Conclusion

Above all through this project, I began to come into my own as an artist, a writer, a facilitator and a collaborator. I trust in time, as I stay a devoted student to what tea and mythos teach me, I hope to be able to serve with the same spirit as the many who have gone before me, who have served just tea and more than tea. Like the leaves, I have been being steeped from the time I began the Creative Pulse program in 2002 to now 2018, sixteen years later.

I imagine the summers of the intensives as a first bowl of tea. One in which I was being warmed by the waters, the hint of opening to possibility, and the flavor barely just beginning to be released.

What I remember most from my time in the two first summers at The Creative Pulse under Randy Bolton's guidance was to listen to the voice within wanting to speak. We invited this voice through acting, African drumming, movement, videography, performance, field study among others. It was the first time I had ever gotten up on stage in front of anyone and in so doing, I made mistakes that impacted my life work since then. For example, I chose to explore spray graffiti as art for much of that time and engaged in spray painting a piece in the theater, which has no ventilation thus nearly unintentionally causing harm to my fellow students. The reprimand I got left an imprint so deep that years later I think mindfully at how what I am doing will affect others in life and in work.

This was true in many cases such as in the award winning international flash mob movement a friend and I began in 2010. We traveled from state to state and organized

online events. I am proud that we always took good care of our participants and no one was ever harmed. Also in this time period, I learned how to explore creativity wildly with hundreds of people gathering for events. I felt the swell of group possibility and I attribute my willingness to go beyond my comfort zone to the wild intentionality of the Creative Pulse program in which I was challenged beyond my previous boundaries.

Like the Hero in Joseph Campbell's exploration of monomyth, I found myself facing the innermost cave again and again within the program. I found myself for one performance dancing in front of everyone on a dark stage alone. This led to the last decade of dancing freely and openly. Like tea leaves which take their own time to steep and unfurl, this program was an essential part of me opening to the creative possibilities which lie within myself and others.

Now, sixteen years later, I find that I am like a second steeping of tea. In traditional cultures, the first steep is often discarded or given to the tea pet (a traditional figure made out of clay on the tea tray). The second steep is the richer one, more flavorful and bolder. I have taken the wisdom from the central teaching of the Creative Pulse of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory and applied it to my everyday life. It has become so intrinsic to how I speak and work with people. Like the theory, there are numerous ways to express oneself and to understand the world around us and so it is with the tea ceremony. Sounds, sights, smells, the natural world, the sacred world, being alone, being together, precision, and language all dance together to form the perfect cup of tea. As I was widened by the program, so am I able to allow those who come to drink tea with me to be as vast as they choose to be. The richness of the second bowl of tea is manifest in my newfound patience as a result from this project, my

willingness to get out of the way for something real to come through, ability to be honest with myself and others in the moment, and to appreciate the gift of receptivity within the creative process.

In this way, I am beginning to understand what Michelangelo expressed. I am fortunate to be a beholder of the beauty of the tea unfurling, the people relaxing and the tea caravan's timelessness reminding everyone within of something they too long ago forgot but by the third steep remember that they do know the words of this ancient inner language and always have.

In this third steeping of the leaves for the third bowl of tea, I find myself relaxed within the creative process, open to allowing it to flow through me, enriched by the success of this effort. Through this project and the many times I have been blessed to serve tea as a result of it, I have seen something new that has that aliveness of which Joseph Campbell speaks. Every time I serve, I feel it at least for a moment. It is the quality of all time stopping and being in all places and right here at the same time. It is being aware that I am breathing, and it feels like being full of love and something natural in the quietest way I could describe. In this third steep I am becoming, I see the vital role of mystery and not knowing. I feel the vitality of being a part of the emergent process and this joy seems to fuel my serving tea (Fig 18).

One of my favorite tea quotes from Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche states,

*Hold the sadness and pain of samsara in your heart
and at the same time the power and vision of the Great Eastern Sun.
Then the warrior can make a proper cup of tea. (Chodron, 102)*

As a result of my studies for this project, particularly the Shadow work and nature based Psyche work with Bill Plotkin, when I make and serve tea, I am able to feel

within both the beauty of being human and the challenge it poses for us all. And so it is with creation comes the dissolution and so the tenderness of that last bowl of tea signifying all the beauty of the ceremony and the knowing it, too, is impermanent.

I would like to also express my gratitude for my partner, David, whose ability to live emergently defies all my odds and my devotion to him and the aliveness between us makes me ever so willing to do so. He offered many conversations that inspired significant parts of the Emergent Ritual as well as introducing me to emergent process as a theory. His willingness to engage with the shadow in life has taught me so much about the nature of a good cup of tea and the marriage within when one allows the natural balance of elements to set the table for the ceremony.

It is in these bowls of tea I have mentioned, the separation from our ordinary way of doing things, to the liminal land of sacred space and of bold richness, to the third unknown and unfolding of the return to the regular profane world, we experience the initiation life has meant in store for each of us uniquely. It is as unique as our taste buds, how we hold the bowl of tea, and how we receive the ritual.

In the quiet moments after the guests return home, when all has been put to rest after the ceremony, I often sit alone aware of the great possibility that I too, like the tea caravan, like the ceramic bowls, like the tea leaves and the momentary guests who came for ritual, I am a part of a much larger emergent process one in which I am a single element of a grand cosmology. One in which we are conspiring together for the great unknown masterpiece, of which we are all a part.

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Appendix

Figure 1. Emergent Ritual Chart

Figure 2. Caravan from Summer Camp

Figure 3. Ideas for Caravan Design

Figure 4. Emergent Waiting

Figure 5. The Barn in Accord

Figure 6. Setting the Table for the Unseen and Guests

Figure 7. Building Process

Figure 8. Turquoise

Figure 9. Dark Wood

Figure 10. Foraged Roof

Figure 11. The Gypsy Caravan Celebration

Figure 12. The Heart of Tea

Figure 13. The Beauty of Tea

Figure 14. Setting up for Guests

Figure 15. Ready to Serve

Figure 16. Tea Ceremony/Ritual Space

Figure 17. Girls' Birthday Rite of Passage

Figure 18. The Author Preparing to Serve on a Mountain and in Caravan Serai

Figure 19. Notes on Emergence, Ritual and Tea

Figure 1. Emergent Ritual Chart

Stage	Ceremony	Properties	Action
Separation			
<i>Call to Adventure</i>	Intention <i>Aspiration</i>	The Space of Emergence- Everywhere Masculine/Feminine (Buddha)	Invitation Approaching the door Courtyard
<i>Crossing the Threshold</i>	Purification <i>Cleansing, preparing to release old way of being</i>	Water-East- Masculine (Vajra)	<i>Washing Hands, burning Incense, Breathing</i>
Initiation			
<i>Meeting with Allies/Mentor/ Enemies/Goddess</i>	Enrichment <i>Setting stage for the unseen to arrive, hospitality</i>	Earth-South- Feminine (Ratna)	Greeting others, Lighting the candles, <i>Setting the tea table</i>
<i>Belly of the Whale/Innermost Cave</i>	Devotion <i>Asking for help / Connection to larger sense of Self Prayer</i>	Fire-West-Feminine (Padma)	Asking, 3 Bowls of Tea, 3 questions, Receptivity, <i>Ceremony</i>
<i>Facing the Dragon/Supreme Ordeal</i>	Sacrifice <i>Facing one's own death Rebirth</i>	Air-North- Masculine (Karma)	<i>Offering- Physical or Symbolic</i> "What must be left behind? What are you willing to offer for your prayer to be answered?"
<i>The Ultimate Boon</i>	Feasting <i>Receiving the blessings Marrying the Sacred and Profane Celebration</i>	All elements- All directions(Vajra, Ratna, Padma, Karma, Buddha)	Tea snack/Feast Music
Return			

<i>Return with the Elixir</i>	Dedication <i>Willingness to give to gift to world /Benefit others/ Humility/Compassion</i>	Space-Everywhere Masculine- Feminine(Buddha)	Dedicating the benefit to others, Bowing, Praise Walks, <i>Cleaning the Bowls</i>
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Figure 2. Caravan from Summer Camp



Figure 3. Ideas for Caravan Design





Figure 4. Emergent Waiting (Purification)



Figure 5. The Barn in Accord



Figure 6. Setting the Table for the Unseen (and guests who come along)



Figure 7. Building Process



Figure 8. Turquoise



Figure 9. Dark Wood



Figure 10. Foraged Roof



Figure 11. The Gypsy Caravan Celebration



Figure 12. The Heart of Tea



Figure 13. The Beauty of Tea



Figure 14. Setting up the Tea Caravan



Figure 15. Ready to Serve



Figure 16. Tea Ceremony / Ritual Space





Figure 17. Girls' Birthday Rite of Passage



Figure 18. The Author preparing to serve tea on a mountain and in Caravanserai



Figure 19. Notes on Emergence, Ritual, and Tea for Project

