

36. DRINKING TEA

This cup of tea in my two hands,
mindfulness held perfectly.
My mind and body dwell
in the very here and now.

WHEREVER you are drinking your tea, whether at work or in a café or at home, it is wonderful to allow enough time to appreciate it. You can hold a cup of tea in your two hands, breathe consciously, and say the above gatha either out loud or to yourself. If the weather is cold, you can feel the warmth of the cup in your hands. Breathe in and recite the first line, breathe out and recite the second. The next inhalation is for the third line, and the next exhalation is for the fourth. Breathing mindfully in this way, we recuperate ourselves and the cup of tea reclaims its highest place. If we are not mindful, it is not tea that we are drinking but our own illusions and afflictions.

When our mind and body have become one and we are awake, we are ourselves and we can encounter the tea. If the tea becomes real, we become real. When we are able to truly meet the tea, at that very moment, we are alive. As we drink the tea, we are well aware that we are drinking the tea. Drinking tea becomes the most important thing in life at that moment. This is the practice of mindfulness.