

Chinese tea culture



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Chinese Tea Culture Name: Course: Institution: Instructor: Date: Chinese Tea Culture History It is said that China was the first country to cultivate and drink tea. To this day, tea has become the national drink in China.

It serves as a significant part of the Chinese long-standing history and culture. It is reported that tea was first discovered in 2737 BC by the legendary ruler Shennong (Yee, 2012). He was trying to sample several plants and herbs to know their medicinal and consumption uses when he collapsed after eating a poisonous plant. As he lay under a tree resting, water droplets trickled from the tree and into his mouth; this revived him. The tree was a tea plant and news about what had happened quickly spread among all people. Therefore, they started using tea as medicine and soon it became an everyday drink (Chungjiang, 2004). Tea categories Since its discovery, Chinese tea has been categorized into different types of teas depending on the different methods of processing. There is the green tea.

This brand of tea, with the longest history of about 3000 years, has the maximum production in the whole of China. This variety is known for maintaining the unique color of the tealeaves without the need for fermentation when it is being processed. It is mainly grown in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Anhui and Jiangxi. The ‘ dragon-well tea of West Lake’ is one of its major representatives. Some of its examples are Maofeng of Huangshan Mountain and ‘ Longjing tea’ from the region of Zhejiang (Chow, Kramer, 1990). The black tea gets its name from the red color of the tea water.

It is the second largest tea production. It was developed after the green tea and usually has to be fermented before baking. Some of its best brands are

Huhong of Hunan, Suhong of Jiangsu and Qihong of Anhui. There is also the black tea of Yunnan and the black tea of Yixing. Wulong tea, sometimes written as oolong tea, is a variety between the green tea and the black tea. It only requires partial fermentation. It is also known as the 'blue tea'. It is famous for its impacts on health, as it quickly burns body fat making it good for losing weight.

The Japanese call it 'skin-care tea'. It is mainly grown in Taiwan and Fujian. White tea is slightly fermented tea. The Chinese really treasure their white tea.

Its making process mainly consists of withering and drying. It is not used when baking. It is represented by the 'White Peony' and 'Baihao Yinzheng' (Rumpler, 2007).

Yellow tea gets its name from the color yellow, to which the tea turns during the making procedure. It can be classified further into yellow-bud tea, silver bud of Junshan Mountain, yellow bud of Mengding, yellow little tea and yellow large tea. Dark tea comes about when tea is gathered and darkened during the making procedure. It can be drunk directly or suppressed into bricks, as is the example of Pu-Er Tea. The minorities of the Chinese people are the main takers of the dark tea; they are residents of Mongolia and Tibet (Chow, Kramer, 1990).

Compressed tea is hardened into specific shapes, stored and transported to the minority areas of the Chinese country. It is sometimes known as the black tea. It mostly comes in the shape of bricks, cakes and bowls (McCoy, Elin & Walker, 1991). There are regions that call it 'brick tea' due to the

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brick shape. Hubei, Sichuan and Yunnan, are the main producers of this kind of tea. Scented tea is prepared by incorporating tealeaves with fragrant flowers during processing.

Jasmine and magnolia are the most commonly used flowers for this procedure. Residents of northern china are the main consumers of jasmine tea; it is also beginning to be the favorite of many foreigners (Jolliffe, 2007). Tradition Tea has become an integral part of the Chinese exotic, attractive and diverse culture and tradition. In any Chinese home, whenever a guest arrives, he or she is immediately offered a cup of tea; this shows high levels of respect, togetherness and politeness. The guest is then expected to take at least a sip of the tea, failure to which will be considered a sign of rudeness and disrespect to the host. However, not all homes make tea the same way; there are those that brew tea using the ' gong fu' style with slam teapots and cups.

Tea wares should also match surrounding elements like bamboo, plums, pine and snow (Chungjiang, 2004). At home and in restaurants, tea is always served before any meal for the guests to enjoy themselves as they wait for the food. They are also offered tea after they eat to help with their digestion.

It is Chinese tradition to serve either green tea or oolong tea with food, and it is never taken with milk or sugar (Rayfield, 2008). Sometimes after eating seafood, a basin of hot tea and lemon pieces is recommended for washing hands. At the end of a seafood meal, jasmine tea is served for the purposes of getting rid of the fish odor. It is a tradition in China for those working, whether in offices or on farms, to take tea before they begin work in the

morning. This is believed to be for good luck and energy for the day ahead. They also take tea as the day progresses to keep them active and alert for the rest of the day.

Tourists are constantly baffled by the number of teacups they have to take during their stays in china. This is because tea is served everywhere from the planes, factories, museums, restaurants, on trains, etc (Jolliffe, 2007). Tea was also used for engagement in ancient china.

The groom's family presented the bride's family with tea, which was considered the most expensive and precious gift in those days(Chen, 1992). Today, things are a little different, as the young woman is presented with the ' tea gift' or popularly known as ' chai'. On the wedding day, the bride offers a cup of tea to her mother in law, if she accepts; it shows that she has accepted the bride as the daughter in law.

The folding of the napkin is a traditional practice with a symbolic meaning. It is done to drive away any negative ' Qi' energy. Health properties Chinese tea is well known for its health properties. Traditionally, tea was used to relieve headaches and fatigue, get rid of the effects of alcohol, to shake off drowsiness, help in food digestion, and help in the elimination of toxins from the body.

Tea is also used for mind enhancement, production of body fluids, promotion of urination, smoothen bowel movements, relieving diarrhea, improving the immune system, slow down the aging process, prevention of cancer, lower blood cholesterol and blood pressure, prevent tooth decay (Wang, 2005).

More uses and properties of tea are freshening of breath, enhancing

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eliminating functions of the kidney, stimulating the central nervous system, promoting the development of strong and healthy bones, enhancing blood vessel elasticity and strength, killing bacteria in the mouth and intestines, and improving blood flow. In addition, to reduce inflammation caused by arthritis, control insulin secretion, can prevent dry eyes and night blindness, reduce radiation levels and repair damaged DNA, high source of vitamin C that helps with the skin and used in treatments of hepatitis (Chow, Kramer, 1990). Reference Chen Zhong Xian. (1992) tribute Tea(Gong Cha) and Chinese Tea. Amazing Green Tea. Retrieved from <http://www.amazing-green-tea.com/tribute-tea.html>

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