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Korean tea culture

Korejská čajová kultura

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Abstrakt

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Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá korejskou čajovou kulturou v Koreji. V začátku se zaměřuje na definici čajové kultury a historie čajové kultury na Korejském poloostrově. Hlavní oblasti jsou čaj a tradiční čajová ceremonie. Tato práce má za cíl dát čtenářům informace o Korejské čajové kultuře, která není jako jiné Asijské čajové kultura, velmi prostudována.

Abstract

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This bachelor's thesis theme deals with the Korean tea culture in Korea. At the beginning it focuses on the definition of tea culture as well as the history of tea culture on the Korean Peninsula. The main parts are the tea and traditional tea ceremony. This thesis aims to give the readers information about Korean tea culture which has not been properly studied in comparison with other Asian tea cultures.

Nejvíce bych rád poděkoval svému vedoucímu bakalářské práce Mag. Andreas Schirmerovi, Dr. nejen za cenné rady a čas, ale také za trpělivost, kterou se mnou měl.

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Transcription

In this thesis, the transcription used for romanization of Korean alphabet (hangŭl) is the “McCune–Reischauer”. The romanization is written next to the word in Korean language to indicate it and the names are written in Korean language order, first the last and then followed by the given name.

Consonants		Vowels	
Korean	Romanization	Korean	Romanization
ㄱ	k/g	ㅏ	a
ㄴ	n	ㅑ	ya
ㄷ	d/t	ㅓ	o
ㄹ	r/l	ㅕ	yŏ
ㅁ	m	ㅗ	o
ㅂ	b/p	ㅛ	yo
ㅅ	s/t	ㅜ	u
ㅇ	-/ng	ㅠ	yu
ㅈ	ch/j	ㅡ	ŭ
ㅊ	ch'	ㅣ	i
ㅋ	k'	ㅞ	ae
ㅌ	t'	ㅟ	yae
ㅍ	p'	ㅚ	e
ㅎ	h	ㅜ	ye
ㄲ	kk	ㅝ	oe
ㄸ	tt	ㅞ	wi
ㅃ	pp	ㅟ	ŭi
ㅆ	ss	ㅠ	wa
ㅈ	tch	ㅡ	wae
		ㅢ	wŏ
		ㅣ	we

Introduction

East Asian states are known for their rich tea cultures which origins can be traced few thousand years back and Korea, with its tea culture is not an exception. According to the legend, first tea came onto the Korean peninsula 5,000 years ago and from that time Korean people started to drink the tea infusion its effects on human bodies. Firstly, the tea was drunk for its healthy effects on human's body, but with the arrival of religion (Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism) the tea began to play different role in the life people, mainly of Buddhist monks. The leaves and subsequent infusion were used during the Buddhist rituals, such as offerings to Buddha and ancestors. So, the tea has played the role of medium between the world of the living and that of the death. However, there exist many more usage of the tea among the Buddhist monks, because they used it for meditation and relaxation, and also for cleaning their mind.

Korean tea culture and tea ceremonies has not changed throughout the years like many other branches of Korean culture, so they still have their own atmosphere of religiosity and calmness. Nevertheless, the biggest changes can be seen in the drinking of tea among the Korean people. In the last century new non-alcoholic beverage was introduced to Koreans and the consumption of this beverage has overcome tea consumption in Korea, and that is the coffee. This black drink has become a phenomenon among the people, because of its fast preparation and status on the market. But tea still has major spiritual connection with Korean society, that cannot be overcome by any different beverage.

This work can be divided into five chapters that covers the main parts of tea culture. The first chapter is about the tea culture in general with the following second chapter about history of tea culture and tea on the Korean Peninsula. New trends in the Korean tea culture can be found in the third chapter which is also dealing with the theme of "battle" between coffee and tea in Korea. The last but one chapter deals with the tea plant and the location of growing of this plant in Korea. And the final chapter covers the tea ceremony, the role of females in the ceremony and philosophy.

1 State of research

Even though the history and other parts of tea culture are very well known to the majority of Korean people, there are not so many books that covers this theme. As for the books in English language, there are only two books which are written entirely about Korean tea culture and each of them have a different approach on this theme. The majority of books and articles that can be found, predominantly write about Japanese or Chinese tea culture with some hints about the tea culture on the Korean Peninsula. In addition, most of the works are not academic, but are written on personal blogs or in newspapers, so they cannot be taken as fully verifiable sources.

As a beginning tea “connoisseur”, I started my research with my own knowledge about this theme and then I began looking for the limited resources I had. As for the first example of book I began my research with, is the book called *The Korean Way of Tea: An Introductory Guide* by the tea masters Brother Anthony of Taizé and Hong Kyöng-Hi which are known for their knowledge about Korean tea culture. This publication and *The Book of Korean Tea: A Guide to the History, Culture and Philosophy of Korean Tea and the Tea Ceremony* by another respected tea expert Yoo Yang-Sök, gave me the basis for this thesis. Each one of these books have a different approach in the Korean tea culture theme. The Korean way of tea covers more about the preparation and steps of tea ceremony and tea manufacturing. Whereas the second one covers more about history and philosophy of tea and tea ceremony.

The majority of this thesis is based on the books and articles that can be found on the internet, but I also used few websites regarding the Korean tea ceremony and Japanese tea ceremony. Because of the small number of resources in English or any other western language I can speak, I focused mainly on the most important ones.

2 Definition of Tea culture

To define what is the “Korean tea culture”, we have to first define the word “culture”. The word for culture in Korean is 문화 (munhwa) has many meanings, one of the meanings which we can find in the dictionary is the following: “the way of life, especially the general customs and belief, of a particular group of people at a particular time.”¹. However, the best explanation was written by Edward Burnett Taylor², who said that the culture is “the complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1981). In the Korean language, we can refer to the concept of tea culture as 차 문화 (ch’a munhwa), so we can understand it as a subdivision of culture. The first Korean character is 차 (ch’a) which is derived from the Chinese word 茶 (chá), stands for the word tea and counterparts can be understandable in many other countries around the Asia and even in Europe. For example, the Czech word for tea ‘Čaj’ is the derivation from the original Chinese word for tea.

The true meaning of tea culture is not only about tea growing, production or function of tea, but it is mainly about studying of the cultural and social aspects in the process of using the tea leaves in the process of preparation and drinking of the following extract (Wang, 2001). Tea culture envelops all the elements associated with the tea process of making and serving tea (tea leaves, water, fire, tea sets, etc.) together with traditional ceremonies that have been created alongside the process. Drinking tea is not same as drinking of coffee or any other types of beverages, it is It is known that the nation’s set up drinking customs do not change much over time because they are related to people’s customs and principles. On the other hand, cultural customs go through changes as a result of influences from other cultures, in the case of Korea, it is the influence from Japan, China and Western nations. Among other influences, we can find political conditions and social and economic circumstances (Young-Sun, 1997, p.12).

¹ Culture. (n.d.). Retrieved February 21, 2021, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture>

² English anthropologist

Over the years Korea's ancient tea culture which can be traced back to more than 1,000 years ago, has gone through smaller and bigger changes and at one point it even faced extinction due to the growing consumption of western drinks and coffee in modern times. Fortunately, it has survived and could preserve its own character and philosophy. It has some features of tangible which have physical form and intangible cultural assets which on the contrary do not have physical form. On account of its resilience, the culture will continue to grow. Compared to other countries, tea rituals on the Korean Peninsula, as well as in China and Japan, are very developed. We see this development during tea ceremonies as in the Korean Tea Ceremony of tarye (다례, literally "tea ritual"). Tea ceremonies are now being a part of Korean culture and even when coffee became the most consumed beverage compared to tea, it is still seen as something formal (Jung, 1997, p.12).

The mix of material and spiritual aspects which can be seen during this type of ceremony has to be in harmony. The spiritual aspect can be seen not only in the tea ceremony but also had a big impact on every religion on the Korean Peninsula in the form of the religious rites. The Buddhist monks drink tea infusion during the meditation or during the rites to maintain calmness and Taoists saw the potential of tea with their philosophy to be in harmony with nature. The rites differ from tea ceremony since they are dedicated to different things or people. For example, during the rite dedicated to an ancestral or Buddha, people often offered the tea to bring the luck or health to their family members or other people (Park, 1997, p.34).

3 The history of tea culture

3.1 Tea before arriving on the Korean Peninsula

Before the arrival of tea to Korea, the first tea plants were found in China, especially Yunnan province, so it is considered as a place of origin of the tea plants. There can still be found the wild tea trees. Chinese people found that the tea plants can be used as a beverage and that the tea leaves can be prepared in various ways (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p.).

In China, there are two legends that mention the first tea-making. First of the Chinese legends mention that tea leaves and their qualities were firstly discovered by *Shen Nung* (2737–2697 B. C.). This mythological emperor is considered a healer and is known to be the first-person to use raw tea leaves to make a beverage for healing purposes. The legends say that he rested under a tea plant and some leaves fell into his cup with boiled water. These leaves colored his water in the cup with brown and he wanted to pour it away, but he stopped and tried to taste it. He observed that the tea leaves infusion has a good impact on his body and started to drink it regularly. The second legend mentions that the Buddhist monk called Bodhidharma came in the year 520 B.C. to China, to teach Buddhism to people. Once he was silently meditating, but he lost concentration, so he cut his own eyelids and threw them into the garden. As a result, the tea plants started to grow in that place (Thomovi, 2002, p. 15–16).

During the Shang dynasty (1766–1050 B.C.) the leaves of tea were ingested as a medicine for various illnesses and were boiled with other herbs, seeds, and plants that could be found in a forest. That is why even now, China is known for its usage of herbs and other plants in medicine. Tea trees and bushes were also found in Sichuan province at the time of the Zhou Dynasty (1122–256 B.C.). It is supposed that in this province which neighbors Yunnan province people started to brew tea leaves without any additional herbs or plants, so it was used as a stimulating beverage. The 3 big religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism) that later bring tea to Korea, started in the middle of this dynasty and found tea to be a beverage that gives the priests and monks the energy to stay awake during meditations. The Chinese people not only took the tea plant to Korea but also gave the Korean people the utensils which they used to these days (Heiss, 2007, p. 23–24).

3.2 The history of tea in Korea

It is said that tea came to the Korean Peninsula 5,000 years ago. However, as Yoo (2007, p. 44) mentions, it is generally accepted that the arrival of green tea is traced to the Kingdom of Kaya³ from China. One of the legends which is connected to the arrival of tea is recorded in the Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms (삼국 유사, *Samguk yusa*).

One of the legends, tells a story about a princess named Hō Hwang Ok (희 황옥) of Ajodhya, who landed on the shore of Kaya in 48 A.D. in order to marry Kim Su Ro (김수로) the king of Kaya. Historians believe that the princess and her clan stayed in the Chinese province of Sichuan about 2,000 years ago and then they brought those tea plants to Kaya. The Sichuan province is known for its abundance of tea trees, so it is no surprise that the first tea trees on the Korean Peninsula might come from this area (Yoo, 2007, p.44).

3.2.1 The Development of the Tea Culture during the Three Kingdoms era

The Three Kingdoms which occupied the entire Korean Peninsula and also approximately half of Manchuria from 57 B.C. to 936 A.D. were called Baekje (백제), Koguryō (고구려), and Shilla (실라). These Three Kingdoms were competing with each other in strengthening their state power, and in efforts toward territorial expansion, until the country was unified by the Shilla kingdom and then it became unified Shilla. During this period, societies became more organized, and economic conditions improved (Seth, 2011, p. 27). New religions were introduced on the Korean Peninsula (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism). Buddhism became the main religion of people unlike Confucianism or Taoism which found adherents in the ruling class.

Tea drinking has been common by the sixth or seventh centuries, probably it was introduced and fostered by Buddhist monks who were returning from China. King Hūngdōk (ruled 826-836) is reported to have received tea seed from China which he ordered to be planted on Jiri Mountain in 828. The plantation with the plants was cultivated around the Ssanggye temple and the same plantations can be even found at the same spot these days (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p. 89-90).

³ (Seth, p. 27) Small state which was located in the southeast of the Korean Peninsula until it was swallowed up by the northern neighbor Silla kingdom in 562 CE.

3.2.2 Tea during the expansion of Buddhism

Monks of a new Sōn⁴ sect of Buddhism began to appear during the Shilla kingdom in the areas which are known to be mountainous. They settled in the mountains and began to drink tea, because the monks used tea to stay awake while meditating. Moreover, tea became one of the ceremonial offerings to Buddha Maitreya, the Buddha of Future, known as Yukpōpkongyak (육법공약). These six offerings are rice, incense, candles, fruits, flowers, and of course tea. As Yoo mentions, many villages called Tach'on (다촌), were found to produce and supply the mountainous temples with tea (2007, p. 52).

Many insights into the tea culture on the Korean Peninsula were provided by the epitaph which can be found in Ssanggyesa (쌍계사) temple, located on the Mt. Jiri (지리). The epitaph was written by Ch'oe Chiwōn (최치원) and tells us new information about tea drinking practices in the Shilla region (Yoo 2007, p. 53-54).

*When visitors bring tea,
I seldom take time to make it into a fine powder.
I just let it brew in a stone kettle with wooden charcoal.
I don't pretend to know the taste of the tea.
I just let my body feel the treasure of tea.*

Source: Yoo, Yang-Seok, *The Book of Korean Tea*. Seoul: Myung Won Cultural Foundation, 2007.

In this part of the epitaph, we can see, that the Buddhists monks grinded tea to powdered tea known as karu nokch'a (가루녹차) and also many insights into the Korean tea culture of the 7th century.

Philosophy of tea in Buddhism

One sentence, that shows us the connection of Sōn Buddhism is that 'Tea and Sōn Buddhism are one and the same. That means that the physical side of the tea infusion and the spiritual being of Buddhism become one during ceremonies. It is said that the harmony is found once the body is absolutely engaged within tea preparation and when

⁴ Generally known as Zen Buddhism

all steps of tea ceremony are in harmony. Tea drinking of this school of Mahayana Buddhism is traced to a notable Chinese Buddhist monk, called Zhaozhou (赵州, 조주) whose most often quoted saying is ‘Have a cup of tea’ (Yoo, 2007, p. 93-100).

3.3 Koryŏ Dynasty tea culture

During the Koryŏ dynasty period, the culture of tea was at its peak. The royal palace developed a ritual for preparing and drinking tea and for these occasions an office called “tea chamber” (다방, tabang) or tea chamber was established to officiate over tea rites at important national events (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p. 91). The history of the Koryŏ dynasty, written in the 15th century (Koryesa Yechi) describes the grand-scale national events of tea offerings and tea ceremonies during the religious events such as the Buddhist Lantern Festival (연등회, Yŏn Tŭnghoe) and the Buddhist Harvest Festival (팔관회, P’alkwan-hoe) that are to famous even in this days (Yoo, 2007, p.59).

Tea utensils and prominent Koryŏ celadon also became an important part of every tea ceremony with Korean tea such as Nŏwonda (너원다) and Taech’a (대차) or along with Chinese tea called Yongbongda (용봉다). By the 10th century, Korea was developing a special kind of celadon that had distinctive Korean shapes with a clear glaze. This distinctive glaze was the main factor that made celadon from this era elegant and sleek. The kilns in *Chŏllanam-do* province were created as the most important of all the kilns that made celadon on the Korean Peninsula (Yoo, 2007, p. 64).

Tea drinking was considered among scholars and literati as a mind clarifying and nature enjoying moment, so the tea ceremony often led to the composition of poems. The most famous of this kind of poetry are the “Tea Verses” by I Kyu Bo (이규보). The author exchanged these verses with Buddhist monks as well as with his friends and other literati. One of his poems shows the appreciation of tea in which we can see, that the tea was considered as a treasure on earth (Yoo, 2007, p. 65).

*Prized tea leaves, dried and made into sweet tea.
Of all people, I am thinking of the king to bring this treasured tea.
Where on earth could such a treasure have been found?
As I touch it, the aroma fills the air.
In the blazing brazier, I am making my own tea.*

Source: Yoo, Yang-Seok, *The Book of Korean Tea*. Seoul: Myung Won Cultural Foundation, 2007.

The travelers to the Buddhists temples enjoyed taking a break from their travel at various tea-serving places, known as Tawŏn (다원) and Tajŏm (다점). In these places, tea was used as a currency for trading and exchanging goods. For example, the people of Koryŏ were endowed with freshwater from China, so they traded tea for freshwater (Yoo, 2007, p. 64).

3.4 Chosŏn dynasty tea culture

The tea culture of the Koryŏ dynasty continued on to the early Chosŏn dynasty, however, in the middle Chosŏn dynasty (Yoo, 2007, p.67), there was a moderate decline in the culture, because of the arrival of Confucianism on the Korean Peninsula. The number of Buddhist temples and tea fields were reduced with the arrival of the new religion. As a substitute for tea people started to drink herbal drinks, water or rice wine (막걸리, makgŏlli) during ceremonies. Nevertheless, the culture itself continued with the work of those who truly appreciated tea. The biggest difference was in the type of tea they used, as the tea-drinking practices changed from the fine powder tea to the leaf tea, and also the preference for tea utensils shifted from celadon to white ceramic ware (Yoo, 2007, p. 82).

The methods of tea making during ceremonies were written in the Kukcho Orye-ŭi⁵ (국조오례의) and were performed according to five categories – auspicious rites, felicitous rites, guest rites, military rites, and funeral rites. As mentioned in the last chapter, the court offices “tabang” were dedicated officiating over tea supplies and tea ceremonies even during Confucianism (Suk, 1997, p.7).

⁵ Five rituals of the Yi dynasty written in 1474

Tea poetry

During the Chosŏn dynasty, the tea poetry on the Korean Peninsula was blooming and more and more writers tried to write about tea. The most notable person, who was called the saint of Korean tea, is surely the Buddhist monk Ch'o Ŭi (1786-1866). He was nicknamed the saint of Korean tea, because of his dedication to correct tea drinking and the propagation of the proper tea culture. In 1809, he visited *Jŏng Yak-Yong* (정약용), the self-learned tea master, who is also known as “Tasan” (다산). After spending several months with Tasan learning classical Chinese poetry, he started to get into the tea culture (Yi, Mok, et al., 2010, p. 60). In his later life, he used his knowledge to write two comprehensive books about the art of Korean tea and tea preparation. One is called “The Story of the Tea God” (다신전, Tashinjŏn) which represents a philosophy of Korean tea and tea preparation, and the second one is called “*In Praise of Korean Tea*” (동다송, Tongdasong) which on contrary shows a history of Korean tea. Ch'o Ŭi (초의) thoughtfully mirrored the individuality with Buddhism's atmosphere and the beauty of tea in these books (Yoo, 2007, p. 71).



Source: Ch'o Ŭi. ibulgyo. June 23, 2021.

<http://www.ibulgyo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=91112>

Another famous calligrapher and literatis, who was a close friend with Ch'o Ŭi, Kim Chŏng-hŭi (김정희) was also a tea lover. During his exile on the island of Jeju, Ch'o Ŭi visited him more than five times, once staying for as much as six months. They practiced Buddhist meditation together while drinking tea. In one of the letters, that Kim Chŏng-hŭi sent to the Buddhist monk, he requests to send more tea to the island of Jeju (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p. 95).

Philosophy of tea in Confucianism

Confucianism is a school of thought that was developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius in the 6th century B.C. This religion or philosophy highlights propriety among individuals as a way how to achieve the elemental order of society. The tea ceremony expresses the traditional Confucian virtues (the respect to elders, the role of husband and wife etc.) (Yoo, 2007, p. 89).

3.5 Tea culture in modern times

In spite of the efforts of Ch'o Ŭi, the process of tea making remained nearly unknown to Korean society, besides among monks. In 1910, Japan annexed the Korean Peninsula and implemented control over every detail of life. The Japanese language was declared the state language and was forced on young Koreans in schools, the Korean traditions were suppressed and even the Korean tea culture was replaced by the Japanese one (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p. 95). For example, Japanese tea grows under shades which are made from straw, whereas on the Korean Peninsula they grow it under the sky without any shades.

After the 1945 liberation and the Korean war (1950-1953) that caused big poverty left people with no thoughts about tea consumption, so the repairing of the Korean tea culture was a long process which was done by the efforts of few people. The most important person was a monk called Hyodang (효당), real name Ch'oe Pöm-Sul (최범술), who was a head monk at Tasol-sa temple in South Kyöngsang province. Considered as a Ch'o Ŭi of the last century, he wrote the first book about tea in modern South Korea, *Hangug-ŭi Ch'ado* (한국의 차도) which introduced a lot of people to the Korean tea tradition. Among his other activities was the founding of the Korean Association for the Way of Tea as well as the Tea-Zen Association which, unfortunately, did not last to these days (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p.98).

To this day, there are plenty of associations in South Korea which were founded in the last few years. These organizations are often managed by one tea master in one city or province. But because they lack a spiritual connection to the tea, it is not proper tea making that Ch'oe Pöm-Sul wrote about. The popularity of tea has also increased by tea festivals in the main areas, where tea is growing. For example, there is an annual festival which takes place in Hadong⁶ (하동), where people experience the tea culture of this place (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p.99).

Because of the increasing interest in tea in the 1980s Korean potters have started to make tea cups and other sets, as part of a reintroduction of handcrafted stoneware to the Koreans. Besides that “traditional tea houses” Ch'atchip (차집,) were established in big

⁶ County in South Kyöngsang province

cities, where they serve tea and herb infusions with traditional snacks. Usually, they also offer tea and tea utensils which are not often available on the standard market (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p.99).

3.5.1 Tabang

Korean lifestyle which is an important part of the Korean tea culture is usually considered as a form of art and in cooperation with ch'atchip they make the unique Korean tea culture. Drinking of various types of tea needs a special place, where it can be consumed quietly and calmly. This place, where people can enjoy their cup of tea and could have a social life is called *tabang* (다방, „tea room“). Koreans often have used this tea houses to meet with their acquaintance, do a business, read, escape the cold in winter and heat in summer (Boyé Lafayette, 2017).

The area with most tea rooms in South Korea can be found in one of the Söul's neighborhood which is called Insadong (인사동). This place is full of things with cultural value, such as paintings and other antiquities. Since the 1970s, over 30 private tearooms have been opened to and people can enjoy traditional tea, and of course the number is increasing every year. The oldest one is Tawön in the Kyong-in Art museum and another famous are surely Tagyöng Hyangshil and Ttūran which are for nothing other than for tea drinking of their exclusive Korean teas (Park, 1997, p.34).



Source: *Ttūran traditional tea shop*, Tripadvisor. June 23, 2021.
<https://www.tripadvisor.co.kr/ShowUserReviews-g294197-d8144596-r359207600-Tteuran-Seoul.html>

3.5.2 Korean tea from the year 2000

In recent years, Koreans have developed a taste for coffee because of the price of tea and also that coffee-making is quite fast. As for the mid-2000s, yearly tea sales were as high as 200 billion won, so the tea market was seen as promising since tea consumption had grown quicker than coffee consumption. However, in the 2010s, the tea market decreased to 50 billion won (that is shrinkage of about 75 %), while the 400 billion won coffee market increased to 7 trillion won⁷. From the last decade, there was a slight improvement in the tea market with the coming of foreign tea companies which introduce, that tea can also be taken as a ‘fast drink’.

Regions	Production (in tons)		
	2007	2010	2014
South Chōlla	2 354	2 291	1 568
South Kyōngsang	541	648	1 961
Cheju	671	502	270
North Chōlla	298	121	92
Kwangju	16	16	16
South Ch’ungch’ōng	8	8	8
In total	3 888	3 586	3 915

Note. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (2016)

Production of green tea by regions has recently changed significantly. South Chōlla province and Cheju island production show a decline, while South Kyōngsang shows a sharp increase. It is because in South Kyōngsang and on Cheju island, there are tea plantations which are registered as trademarks.

⁷ Hyun-Kyung, K., 2018. *How coffee, not tea, became Koreans' favorite drink*. [online] M.koreatimes.co.kr. Available at: <<http://m.koreatimes.co.kr/pages/article.asp?newsIdx=254502>> [Accessed 24 February 2021].

In recent years, Korean people have started to care more about food and beverage quality. But in 2007, fake news⁸ ran around media in South Korea, that said tea leaves were treated with pesticides and other residues which are bad for people's health. Korean tea farmers said that Korean tea is the most organic in the world. The farmers in Hadong valley disagreed since these farmers do not use any pesticides at all and pick the tea with their hands. The Korean media then apologized, but the damage had been already done to the Korean tea industry.

⁸ STiR Coffee and Tea Industry International 2021. *Tea in Korea Could Hit a Boiling Point*. [online] Available at: <<https://stir-tea-coffee.com/features/tea-in-korea-could-hit-a-boiling-point/>> [Accessed 24 February 2021].

4 New trends in tea culture

Tea is second most consumed beverage in the world and has become drink of leisure and culture. In recent years, there was a growing interest in fine green and powdered tea on the Korean Peninsula. This particular phenomenon was encouraged by Japanese *Matcha* (powdered tea) which started to be popular in Asia, but also in Western countries. Korean people are known to be hard-working people that adopted western culture very well, so tea-drinking evokes calmness and slow life. Korean powdered tea (가루차, *garuch'a*) has always been drunk in Korean tea ceremonies, where people could enjoy nature and also think about the meaning of life, and over the last few years, this tea found its way into every aspect of life. Ice creams, chocolates, and latte made from the powdered tea can be found all around South Korea even in the smallest bakeries, and cafés. Even all kinds of creams, candies, instant noodles, and beers are created every day. South Korea was always known for its green tea production which have been gaining more and more reputation around world. People also should not forget about the black tea production even if it is not so big as the black tea production in China or India (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p.100).

In the past few years, customers in Korea demanded for increased options of tea sold in the cafés or teahouses. The tea bags which are usually found in this kind of facilities do not meet the needs of the customers who often want more quality teas or tea brewed from the loose tea leaves (Bisgaard, 2017). This need helped the small resellers of tea because they usually sell the loose-leaf tea from small plantations. Korean people want tea that is always at hand, so the ready-to-drink tea beverages were put on sale in South Korea. These beverages are presented as a great alternative to coffee, since it also contains caffeine and is considered as an alternative to sweet beverages, that are known to be unhealthful by many Koreans. Another usage of tea leaves came from Taiwan, where the milk teas gained big popularity in 1980s, and in recent years, it has spread throughout the whole world and of course in South Korea. This beverage mainly attracts the younger generation, because it is made fast (Bisgaard, 2017).

In recent year, there has been a big emphasize on the one's health, and the Korean tea is very good supplement for its number of vitamins and other healthy components. The green tea produced in Korea is known for its stress relieving and calming effects. That is why Buddhist monks has been using green tea for centuries. Another advantage of drinking of green tea is its anticancerous properties, such as catechins (Yu, 1997, p.28).

4.1 Coffee and Korean tea culture

The coffee is after tea, the most consumed type of non-alcoholic beverage, when we do not count water. There is no doubt, that in South Korea the trend of coffee-drinking has become a phenomenon, to the degree, that the tea market has shrunk to only 50 billion won per year⁹. The beverage called coffee was introduced to Koreans in the early 20th century by Japanese, who at that time occupied the Korean Peninsula. At first the coffee was called “coffee tea” and were rapidly separated to the extent that they are seen as total opposites. The battle between tea and coffee in the eyes Korean society can be seen as the distinction between old and young and mainly between east and west. newly-opened coffee shops were mostly visited by rich Koreans or Japanese. Coffee consumption started to grow after the Korean war, when American military distributed food boxes which were supposed to give food supplies to poor Korean people affected by the war. Since then Koreans have become the 11th largest coffee drinkers in the world (Kaplan, 2017, p.9).

The start of new millennium was the age of coffee drinking and western coffee chains wanted to take advantage of this growth. But the arrival chains into South Korean was not without any opposition. In the year 1985 first anti-coffee demonstrations organized by workers and students opposing the western coffee-drinking culture took place in Söul. This people wanted to increase the consumption of Korean tea which in their eyes is more Korean than coffee. Also, the start of this millennium was not without any anti-coffee protest, in 2001 the plan of opening a new Western chain of cafés Starbucks in the Insadong neighborhood was revealed (Kaplan, 2017, p.17).

⁹ “Why Is Korea's Shrinking Tea Market Causing Such a Bitter Stir?” South China Morning Post, August 27, 2018. <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/travel-food/article/2161511/caffeine-battles-tea-losing-out-coffee-korea>.

Many Koreans demonstrated against the opening of this chain, since this part of the capital city known to be a place with the traditional tea houses, and it could drive away potential customers from this place. After the Starbucks cafés chain was opened, more cafés have opened in the same area of Insadong, such as the chain The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf and other privately-owned small cafés. The promotion of tea culture has been done by many organizations, but (Kaplan, 2017, p.17).

4.1.1 Coffee and Buddhism

The Buddhist monks are known to use the tea leaves during the tea ceremonies or during the offering to Buddha. But in recent years, there has been a trend of preparing the coffee by monks in contrary with the traditional tea that they have used for more than 1500 years. The usage of coffee has become so popular among the Buddhist that some temples¹⁰ has started to do a coffee temple stay programs, where tourists can experience the methods of preparing of coffee over the charcoal. The increase consumption of coffee has a big impact on economic potential of Buddhist temples, so the monks have been establishing more and more cafés in the monastery areas which sometimes replaced the old traditional tea shop serving the green and other types of teas. According to the Kaplan, 60–70% of monks in Korea drink coffee more often than tea (Kaplan, 2017, p.15).

The coffee brewing and subsequent sharing with visitors, who to the temple is propagate Buddhism and an effort to introduce this religion to the modern society which even with increasing tea production in South Korea, often consume more coffee due to the hard-working and fast culture. The coffee helps the Buddhist monks to keep awake to contrate during long meditations, so that is why they often say, that is same as the tea infusion. And others drink it, since they are made this habit of drinking of the coffee. But it should be pointed out that only one particular type of coffee is becoming associated with the Buddhist community and it is the hand-drip coffee. It is because the coffee infusion is drunk black, since most Buddhist monks do not drink any milk and also drip coffee can be viewed with prestige which most of the temples want to be associated with (Kaplan, 2017, p.17).

¹⁰ primarily in Hyöndöksa temple

Brewing of such coffee usually requires the use of utensils, that are made directly for this use and precision and concentration. Utensils and procedures resemble the traditional making of tea and in both coffee and tea ceremony the host follow some specific rules and prepare the subsequent infusion in silence and solemnness. Also, the steps of making coffee from the grinding of beans, pouring water to distributing the final infusion with the guest has a very high resemblance with the traditional tea ceremony which can be found on the Korean Peninsula (Kaplan, 2017, p.11).

5 Tea

The tea is a vital part of the Korean tea culture, because without tea, there would not be any tea culture. All the types of tea come from the same plant *Camellia sinensis* which resembles a small tree or bush with leaves but still can grow as tall as 17 meters. The tea plant can be found in three variants, Chinese, Assam, and Indonesian. However, there still are subcategories, such as Japanese, Korean etc. The difference between them is in the region, where it has been growing. The Indonesian tea plant does well in mountainous or inhospitable tropical forests. Nevertheless, the quality of tea leaves is small. The Assam tea plant can be up to 17 meters tall, but usually, it is about 10 meters tall. Its leaves are the biggest from any other tea variant, therefore they can grow up to 10 to 20 centimeters. The suitable climate for the Assam plant is an average temperature around 29°C with high moisture and with frequent rainfalls. On tea plantations, tea plants are usually trimmed to the form of the 1-meter tall bush which is the best height for tea picking (Pössl, 2010, p.9–10).

The tea plant variant which is found on the Korean Peninsula is the Chinese tea plant. Depending on the area of growing the Chinese variant can be grown up to the altitude of 3 000 meters and still have the form of the small bush. The length of the leaves can be as much as 20 centimeters, the smallest leaves are on the plants growing in the mountains, whereas the biggest ones grow in the lowlands. However, a bigger leaf does not mean that it has better quality since the smaller leaves in the higher altitude have more time to develop all the key elements, such as taste and fragrance (Pössl. 2010, p.13).

Names of Korean tea

The Korean word for tea is ‘차’ (ch’a) and is originally derived from Chinese language. South Korea from the beginning mainly produce the green tea which is called 녹차 (nokch’a) but it has not been always called like this. The more traditional name for this type of tea is 작설차 (Chaksölch’a, “tongue of a sparrow”), that shows its resemblance with young tea leaf and the tongue of a sparrow. Another traditional green tea is 죽로차 (Chungnoch’a) which is grown in bamboo tree wood is famous for its clear and intensive taste and aroma (Yoo, 1997, p.28).

5.1 Tea growing locations

In South Korea, there are numerous locations, where the tea is grown. In these locations, tea plants are cultivated naturally or with the usage of machines which can affect the final taste. Tea plants which are known as *Camellia Sinensis* in the Latin language, were first brought to Korea from China and the tea-drinking customs were in usage all over the Korean Peninsula. But over the years these customs started to weaken and by the 20th century, tea plants were barely grown and cultivated to the point that they became wild. The first efforts to grow tea in modern times were in the South Jölla province, in Posöng county. The growing of tea has started during Japanese colonization in 1939, when Japanese specialists chose that area for the growing black tea, for that reason they imported tea seeds from India. After newly gained sovereignty in 1945, the tea fields were abandoned and, at the end of the 1950's the new cultivation of tea has started. These days, tea plantations at Posöng have been a significant spot for tourists from all over South Korea with more than 1.5 million visitors. Among other well know plantations which were made by the Japanese, are on the mountainside of *Mudöngsan*¹¹ (무등산). There, the tea was produced by the artist *Hö Paek-nyön* (허백련) until his death in 1977 (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p.20-21).

Hadong county

Nevertheless, the most know place, where the finest tea is cultivated in the Jiri mountain. As it was written in the previous chapter, there is a high number of Buddhist temples that helped to restore the usage of the wild tea that grew around. The temples of Tasol-sa and Ssanggye-sa, both located in the *Hadong county* (하동군, *Hadong-gun*) on the slopes of the mountains, were supplied with the most delicious tea which was picked in the spring season. The venerable Hyodang, who was the head monk at the Tasol-sa temple, is regarded as the reason for the restoration of the Korean tea culture in the modern days. The tea plant plantations can be found in two forms, one from is around the mountain and the second one is in the flatlands around the local villages. Most of the Hadong fields with tea plants are distributed around the mountain from the altitude of 100 to 800 meters and the source of water for the plants is taken from the Hwagae river (GIAHS, 2016, p.9).

¹¹ Mountain located in Mudöngsan National park near the city of Gwangju in the province of South Jölla.

Due to the different latitude of plantations, there are different types of soils which affects the final taste of the tea. The rain water wash away the upper part of the soil to the flatlands, thus the tea from flatlands does not have such a rich flavor as the tea from hills. Local people do not need to put much effort to the maintaining the tea plantations, thanks to the soil rich in minerals. The only method people from Hadong do is the *Kaengsin* (갱신) organizing method which arrange the tea plants to the shape of ovals or arrows. This has to be done, since smaller plants can grow more quality leaves, than the bigger one and it can prevent the evaporation of moisture around the plant (GIAHS, 2016, p.16).

In recent years the Hadong county has become a famous spot for touristic and cultural center for Korean and foreign visitors. In the tea cultural center, visitors can learn about history and industry of tea grown in this area. This facility also helped with the consumption rate of green tea and increased the economy. Not only the center is opened all year around, from the year 1995 also the annual Hadong Wild Tea Culture Festival take place here. The small companies can sell their handmade green tea that financially supports local people and spread of tea culture. But tourism has its downside, too. The number of tourists is increasing annually and their impact on environment can be seen at every turn (GIAHS, 2016, p.34).



Source: *Hadong tea plantation*. knnewstoday. June 23, 2021.

<http://m.knnewstoday.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=11066>

Posŏng county

The tea plantation located in the south tip of the Korean Peninsula is another famous producer of tea with history that can be dated 1600 years ago. Current tea bushes in Posŏng covers more than 800 hectares and produce over 46 per cent of all production of green tea, so it is the biggest tea-producing place in South Korea. Green tea patches have increased from 325 hectares in 1997 to 885 hectares in 2005. That had an impact on the price of tea which increased by 90 per cent since 1990s. The bushes grow can also be found on the mountainous terrain, but the picking of tea leaves is different in many ways. In the Hadong county the tea leaves are handpicked but in the Posŏng county they mainly use the machine picking which is faster. However, the negative side of machine picking is that it often picks the leaves with its stems and low-quality leaves, too (Suh and MacPherson, 2007).

Hadong county is not the only one place in South Korea with an annual tea festival. Since 1985, Posŏng county hosts the tea festival which take place in May during the harvesting season. tourists can come in contact not only with the regional tea culture, but also with Buddhist rituals of tea offering to Buddha and Tea God which are given to guarantee good harvest next year. This is followed by tea leaves picking and demonstration of usage of the tea cups and kettles (Kim, 1997, p.41).

5.2 Korean tea categories

Once the tea leaves are picked from tea plants, tea leaves immediately start to oxidize. The longer tea leaves are kept on the air, the more tea leaves will be oxidized. So, the category can be divided into three tea types with various degree of oxidization. The first one with the biggest degree of oxidization is black tea (홍차, *hongch'a*) which is made from fully-oxidized tea leaves. This type of tea has the biggest amount of caffeine and the color of infusion is amber or dark red color. The second type of tea is Oolong tea (우롱차, *ulongch'a*) which production is relatively small. Oolong tea is partly-oxidized¹² and the taste and color are somewhere between green tea and black tea (Yoo, 2007, p.34)

5.2.1 Korean green tea

Korean green tea is the type of tea which is not oxidized at all and majority of tea Produced in Korea is green tea. The oxidization process is stopped by baking or steaming the picked tea leaves in big iron cauldron. The final taste of Korean green tea has a hint of grass and bamboo with light green and golden color. However, the taste and color of green tea depends on more factors than only on the oxidization, another factor is time when in few days tea leaves can change aroma and taste (Heiss, 2007, p.88).

Korean tea pickers rely on the day *Kok-u* (곡우) from the traditional Korean lunar calendar which is an important day for tea picking, because before and after this day teas have different flavor and color of final infusion. So, tea come under different category, in the time when the tea leaves are picked. The names are *Ujön* (우전), *Sejak* (세작), *Jungjak* (중작) and *Daejak* (대작). But because of climate changes the beginning of the harvest season has moved to late March, so the picker of the tea has to estimate the right time for the picking. When they start later the quality of leaves degrade under the sunlight and the subsequent impact is that the leaves produce more bitter taste (GIAHS, 2016).

Ujön Ch'a

Ujön (우전) tea is the highest grade tea in South Korea and is picked before *Kok-u*. This tea is notable for its taste, because all nutrients that had been stored in the plant during winter are unleashed into the leaves (Yoo, 2007, p. 33). These nutrients also

¹² oxidization is longer than for green tea, but shorter than for black tea.

have significant effect on body, since it has a lot of antioxidants. The temperature recommended for steeping of leaves is around 80°C to 85°C for about 2 to 3 minutes.

Sejak Ch'a

This tea, known as Sejak (세작) is picked in the end of April to May, when the tea leaves are partially opened. This grade of tea is viewed as 'Premium', since it brings out the fresh aroma and taste of tea leaves that were picked up young. The temperature for steeping Sejak is about 70°C, so the temperature is lower in comparison with Ujŏn tea. And the steeping time is about 2 to 3 minutes (GIAHS, 2016, p.16).

Jungjak Ch'a

Tea leaves of Jungjak (중작) are more full grown than Sejak leaves with couple of opened leaves and are picked in the middle of May. The grade is regarded as 'High Quality' and these leaves brings out good taste and aroma. The right temperature for the tea is about 70°C to 80°C with steeping time about 2 to 3 minutes (Yoo, 2007, p. 33).

Daejak Ch'a

The leaves of Daejak (대작) are the most grown of all the tea categories, because it is picked in the last period of the year. The grade of tea leaves is considered as 'Quality' tea Steeping temperature and time are the same with Jungjak tea (GIAHS, 2016, p.16).

Tea from Korea is well known for its color, taste and also aroma, that is different in every season. Korean people appreciate unique color and clearness and durable taste of green tea as a gift from nature. The first thing, that is seen is the color. The true color of tea from Korea changes from tea to tea and the period it was picked. Common colors are light gold to light green. Among others is aroma, the tea has to have slight smell of grass and hint of coconut milk. Tea smell is changing with aging, so newly made teas has different flavor than one or two years old. Final characteristic is the taste which has to be soft and long-lasting. In order to enjoy the different flavors, one must drink the tea slowly (Yoo, 2007, p. 33)

6 Tea ceremony

Korean tea ceremony, called Tarye (다례, “etiquette for tea”), is a preparation and serving of loose green tea or powdered green before the visitors or guests which helps the host and guests to act harmoniously and rationally. During the ceremony, all the people are expected to follow the rules of, that are known for many centuries. When everybody is in harmony through the ceremony, they can find the true meaning of tea. In Korea, there are different types of tea ceremonies which share the common trait of creating a propitious atmosphere and to increase the pleasure of the tea drinking. The types of tea ceremony can be divided into 5 categories (Yoo, 2007, p.139):

- ancestral-rites tea ceremony,
- royal court tea ceremony,
- Buddhist temple tea ceremony
- scholars tea ceremony,
- guest-greeting tea ceremony.



Source: Mai-Linh Doan. *Korean tea ceremony*. Wikipedia. June 23, 2021.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Korean_tea_ceremony_DSC04095.jpg

The ancestral-rites ceremony is to pay a tribute to the spirits and ancestors which are no longer alive. This ceremony is also part of Jesa (제사, traditional rites for ancestors) which is practiced by praying to the right gods for a good harvest and is one of the most important rites. The tea ceremony part was practiced usually four times per year during important holidays (Lee, 2018, p.2).



Source: Ancestral-rites ceremony. blog.daum. June 23, 2021.

<https://blog.daum.net/prajna52/463>

The royal court tea ceremony is organized at the royal court for the court members together with royal occasions. The Buddhist temple tea ceremony is the ceremony which is done at the important occasions or to accomplish enlightenment. The history of this tea ceremony goes to the 6th century, so it means that this is the first type of tea ceremony, that was ever done on the Korean Peninsula. These types of ceremonies are planned to serve for special purposes and on the other hand the scholar's tea ceremony and guest-greeting ceremonies are more typical tea ceremonies (Choi, 1997, p.22).

The history of scholar's tea ceremony can be traced to the Shilla kingdom, when the scholars find that with tea, they can enjoy nature and think about their lives. Throughout this ceremony, the participants drink freshly made green tea, read and compose verses which often consist of some poems about tea. Today's most common Korean tea ceremony is the guest-greeting ceremony which as the name states is for

primarily for guests. This type of ceremony embodies the pleasure of one's company and respect for each other (Yoo, 2007, p.141-142).

The etiquette, which was implemented to the tea ceremony by Confucianism, is part of the ceremony form the very beginning during the welcoming of guests to the final end of saying the farewell. Careful planning should precede the ceremony to make sure that everything is prepared for the preparing and drinking of tea and all the steps are intended to attain peace and harmony among all engaged in a tea ceremony (Choi, 1997, p.23).

6.1 Role of females in tea ceremony

Women play a big role in tea ceremonies from the Chosŏn dynasty, because they often hosted these rituals. During the Chosŏn dynasty, the royal court ceremonies were charged by women called *tamo* (다모, “tea lady”), who were class of servants, that were considered as less than slaves in the mind of Korean society. This class of women prepared the tea ceremonies for the court members and government officials. Their status in the society was not so low in the beginning of the dynasty, but when the dynasty was advancing, the social status of these females started to fall to the point that other people called them *tagi* (다기, “tea prostitute”) or *tabi* (다비, “tea slave”). Outside the cities or in rural regions, the *tamo* women were known primarily as prostitutes and in the late Chosŏn dynasty, even male *tamo* could be found (Nishimura, 2010).

Chosŏn dynasty was known for its blooming of tea culture and tea ceremonies, so almost everybody was doing some type of tea rituals. The yangban class's men, who are known to be a ruling class in this dynasty, had access to tea, but since the male position in the family was bigger, it was quite difficult for women to attend tea ceremony or even drink tea because of the Confucian ethics. Women were also forbidden to recite poetry about tea, not because of this ethic, but because men who enjoyed tea-drinking time wanted to feel graceful with their prostitute courtesans that were skilled in the arts (Nishimura, 2010).

Another females who were in charge of tea ceremony and tea making were *Kisaeng* (기생, “courtesan”). These women who were typically born to low class families, were often taken as concubines or secondary wife by yangban class men. However, because of

their education, they mastered various types of arts to make a male audience amused. Dancing, calligraphy, reading poetry or even making a tea ceremony were not such exceptional crafts and every of them could do it. Through the training they learned about tea ceremony and tea in general and are known to be knowledgeable about tea (Edgin, 2013, p.2).

Today, females make majority of tea masters in South Korea and the most well-known of them is the great tea master Ch'ae Won-Hwa (채원화) who is a headmaster at the Panyaro Insitute for the tea culture¹³ in Söul. She with fellow students teach tea culture to everyone who is interested in this part of Korean culture and continue the work of the Venerable Hyodang. The way she is doing her tea ceremonies is called the Panyaro Sön tea ceremony, which is little bit different compared to the regular tea ceremonies. This ceremony uses the simple and daily steps of making and consuming of tea in the spiritual way (Brother Anthony and Hong, 2011, p. 72).

6.2 The philosophy of Korean tea ceremony

The philosophy of the Korean tea ceremony has been created for a long period of time on Korean Peninsula. The biggest impact on the philosophy had the religions that came to Korea, such as Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Each of them had bigger or smaller impact which people can be sees in the contemporary Korean tea culture. The philosophy is to emphasize all the steps in tea ceremonies to maintain the virtues of 'purity, virtue, harmony and respect' and majority of tea masters and student continue with these teachings (Yoo, 2007, p.102).

The purity can be achieved only when the person's mind is pure and clear. Tea helps to clear one's mind and has the effect of purifying the spirit of people. The purification of people starts with entering the room when they should forget about every narrow mindedness of their lives. The virtue tells that people have to live in modesty to acquire the true taste and aroma of tea (Yoo, 2007, p.102).

The harmony is achieved when a host and guest enjoy a bowl of tea during tea ceremony. Harmony is the foundation of Korean culture and can be seen even in the flag of the Korean Republic and it is believed that our nature is controlled by the harmonious

¹³ Institute founded in 1983 to teach tea culture.

cycle and the proper harmony of ying and yang is expressed in the tea. When the nature is in harmony, the nature then gives the good quality tea leaves to people on earth. And the last virtue of the philosophy of tea ceremony is the respect. The tea ceremony must be done in sincere respect for other people who are present in the room. Only when mind and one's behavior are one, the proper tea ceremony can be made (Yoo, 2007, p. 102).

This philosophy virtues can also be found in another Asian tea cultures, that are the Japanese and Chinese tea ceremony. Tea ceremony on Japan islands is known for its even stricter etiquette, whereas the Chinese drink the tea in more relaxed way. The Korean tea ceremony is somewhere between these two ceremonies, since it does not have such a strict etiquette and steps, but at the same it is not so much relaxed as in the Chinese tea ceremony (Nishimura, 2010, p.24).

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to make a clear summary of the situation regarding the Korean tea culture. The beginning of my work was to approach the meaning of the term tea culture and give the explanation to the readers who do not any preceding knowledge of the issue. This was done by the brief explanation of this terms what is culture, tea culture and what the Korean tea culture contains.

The second part of the thesis deals with the history of tea culture on the Korean Peninsula and its influence on the society. History of Korean tea culture is very long and can be traced few thousand years ago. In the Chosŏn dynasty, tea culture was blooming so much, that new genre of poems created, it was called tea poem. The most famous representative of this branch of literature was definitely Ch'o Ŭi, whose books about tea-making and tea-drinking are still used to these days. In recent years, new trends in tea preparation and tea drinking has appeared which negatively but some of them also positively affected the consumption of the tea, such as coffee.

The main part of this thesis was to examine the two important part of Korean tea culture, and that are the tea and tea ceremony. Even when the consumption of tea compared to coffee has decreased, it is still beverage which define Korean society and will be an integral part of the culture. Tea is prepared and drunk during the Korean tea ceremonies which have roots during the Shilla dynasty, and the steps of the ceremony are still the same as they were more than thousand years ago. An important role during the ceremony surely had females that made the tea for their guest or royalty with specific etiquette. These days, there are more female tea master than ever before, and the number is still increasing.

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