Origin and development of Chinese tea culture.

Dexian Dong¹, Yongming Zhou²

¹. Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan 430070, China
². Spec. Prod. Dept. of Jiayu Agri. Bureau, Shayang Road 80, Jiayu, Hubei 437200, China

Summary
In this essay we argue that Chinese tea culture possibly originate from the totem and incantation activities in New Stone Age. In that time tea was used as oblation and drug. As time goes on, tea was eaten as boiled tea soup. Amid Qin and Han Dynasty tea was treasured as a thing which can conduct human being to become the fairy. The Primitive type of Chinese tea rite appeared in West Jin Dynasty. During Tang Dynasty, due to the great extension of Buddhism, lots of eulogies of literati, and the release of “Tea Classic” written by Yu Lu, the tea rite of grinding and boiling well developed. Down to Song Dynasty, the fashion of Tea Competition greatly promoted the development of the tea rite of grinding, brewing and stirring. Even pictures and words of foam appeared in the tea bowls. In Yuan and Ming Dynasty, tea rite sharply changed with the thriving of purple sand teapot and no grinding of tea. Down to Qing Dynasty, tea rite simplified gradually and became a practical brewing method.

Keywords: Origin; Development; Chinese Tea Culture

Origin of Chinese Tea Culture
There’s a famous sentence in Shennong Herb Classics: “Shennong tastes hundreds of herbs, meets 72 toxins everyday, counteracts them by tea.” Shennong is a legend of New Stone Age. This indicated that tea had been found in New Stone Age and was used as an antidote. There are very popular totems and incantation activities in New Stone Age. It’s very possible that tea serve as the oblations when these activities happens because tea is a magic medicine and can counteract many toxins. The primitive ideologies such as religion, art, aesthetics will naturally show out during these activities. The tea selected as oblation could be the excellent of quality. If this is correct, The origin of Chinese tea culture should be the totem and incantation activities in New Stone Age.

Initial Development of Chinese Tea Culture
As time goes on, the primitive totem dancing and music appeared, then broke as poem. Music, dancing, myth. On the selection of tea as oblation our ancients would pursue the beautiful color, fresh, exquisite. In East Zhou Dynasty, with Confucius borning, Confucianism began to affect Chinese tea culture from then on and became the dominant spirit of Chinese tea culture. In that time usage of tea had developed into eating as boiled tea soup. Amid Qin and Han Dynasty, both “Chuhan” romanticism and Confucianism influenced Chinese tea culture. Tea was treasured as a thing, which can conduct human being to become the fairy.

Down to West Jin Dynasty, The spirit of tea culture harmonizes with the elegance and Puritanism advocated by peerage, literati and divine, so they liked to eat tea. “Tea Ballad”Written by Yu Du recorded: “picking up fresh tea in early Fall, washing it in the water, putting in the ceramic made in “Dongou”, fetching the water of Mingjiang River, boiling the tea by means of “Gongliu”. This “Picking washing, putting in, fetching boiling” just is the primitive type of Chinese tea rite. Especially the “boiling the tea by means of Gongliu” indicated that boiling should be done by some rules just like “Gongliu”.

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Extension of Chinese tea culture

During Tang Dynasty, due to the great extension of Buddhism, lots of eulogies of literati, and the release of “Tea Classic” written by Yu Lu, the tea rite of grinding and boiling well developed.

The Buddhism, derived from India, spread into China in East Han Dynasty, Over Jin and Sui to Tang Dynasty it well developed. Tea is the essential stuff of the Buddhists because they need it for keeping awake when they sit at one place and didn’t think for long time. As the Buddhists wander, sermonize, grind, and boil anywhere, the populaces follow suit. The tea rite of grinding and boiling was well spread out and tea production was well promoted, The contents of tea culture were well added.

Because they loved to drink tea, literati in Tang Dynasty wrote many poems, lyrics, hymns to appreciate it. For instance, Tong Lu wrote in his famous “seven bowls tea poem”: “Drink first bowl, throat soak, thirsty gone, Drink second bowl, melancholy gone, energy up. Drink Third bowl, words spout, five thousand books done. Drink fourth bowl, a little sweat. All the regrets of life exude out by pore. Drink fifth bowl, the muscle and bone lighten. Drink sixth bowl, ready to be fairy. If drink seventh bowl, fly up to heaven”.

There are at least 500 poems in Tang Dynasty. These poems are the very important parts of Chinese tea culture. They definitely promoted tea consumption and tea culture development.

“Tea Classic” written by Yu Lu in Tang Dynasty is a great tea book of China. It have about 7000 words and record tea origin, tea tools, tea processing, tea ceramic, tea boiling, tea rite, tea folklore, tea distribution. It very positively conducted tea production and consumption.

Tea product was shaped as cake by pressing and steaming in Tang Dynasty. Tea rite sequenced like this: roasting, grinding, sifting, boiling, allotting, sometimes seasoning with ginger and onion.

In Song Dynasty Tea Competition was very popular. Even the emperor preferred to do this. The fashion of Tea Competition greatly promoted the development of tea rite of grinding, brewing and stirring. This tea rite sequenced as follows: roasting, grinding, sifting, boiling, brewing, stirring. The whitest and most durable of foam is the champion. Some people can make pictures and words with the foam or steal TI when brewing and stirring.

In Song Dynasty the poems of literati was much more than Tang Dynasty. However, The dominant religion, which affected Chinese tea culture had changed as Confucianism instead of Buddhism of Tang Dynasty.

The Turning of Chinese Tea Culture

In Yuan and Ming Dynasty, The art and aesthetic turned from romanticism to realism and naturalism. Tea product was detachable instead of cake. All kinds of tea appeared one after another. Tea didn’t grind any longer. The purple sand tea pot popularized instead of tea bowl. Tea rite sharply changed with the dominant brewing and is similar to that of the Southeast Chinese nowadays.

Down to Qing Dynasty, as tea rite became more and more popular, and as art and aesthetic submitted in the field of ideology, tea rite simplified gradually and became a practical brewing methods just like that of nowadays.