

On Cultural Differences Reflected By Chinese and Western Tea Culture

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ABSTRACT: The type of a culture is always closely related to the region, nationality and country in which it exists. Compared with the Chinese tea culture, western tea culture formed a lot of more obvious differences. Due to the geographical, social and cultural reasons, Chinese and western tea culture show their unique charm. This paper probes into three kinds of difference between Chinese and Western tea culture, aiming at providing useful and enlightenment for the exchange of tea culture and cross-cultural communication in the world

KEY WORDS: Chinese and western; tea culture; difference; reason

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I. INTRODUCTION

As a kind of beverage, tea has existed for a long time in the world. China was the first country to use tea as a drink and also the birthplace of worldwide tea culture. In the modern history of the world, the political, economic and cultural exchanges between Chinese and western countries were a very important historical chapters. In this part, tea culture played a very special role. Although tea culture originated in China, after the great times of navigation, especially after the industrial revolution, the tea culture introduced into Europe was influenced by western culture. The western tea culture was very different from Chinese tea culture. With the development of science and technology and the progress of the times, and the world culture was blending more and more quickly, but due to the differences of humanities history and environmental conditions, the degree of communication and development of tea drinking culture in various parts of the world was different. Tea culture was based on tea and spreads various cultures through this carrier. It was an organic fusion of tea and culture. This contained and embodied the material civilization and spiritual civilization for a certain period of time. In the long historical process of mankind, the development degree of tea culture in various parts of the world was different. Only by further understanding of the differences of Chinese and western tea culture in cross-culture, can we better understand the history of tea culture's development and understand the Chinese and western culture more deeply. Let the cross-culture communication between different cultures go on well and quickly. In order to give readers a better understanding of the essence of Chinese and western tea culture, this paper will introduce the differences of Chinese and western tea culture from the origin, development, characteristics, tea room's differences of Chinese and western tea culture, and explain the reasons of the differences between Chinese and western tea culture from three aspects: geography, society and culture.

II. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN TEA CULTURE

In this part, cultural differences in the Chinese and western tea culture can be divided into three aspects: development, characteristics, tearoom.

2.1 The differences in the development of tea culture

In China, tea was first discovered as a medicine, and spread widely. In the western Zhou Dynasty, tea was used as tribute to King Wu of Zhou. At that time, the industry of artificially planting tea had emerged, which laid the foundation for the widespread cultivation of tea. In the Qin and Han Dynasties, tea culture and Buddhism had a good integration, tea culture and Zen culture echo each other, to a certain degree, and it has accelerated the popularity of tea culture in China. In the process of the spread of tea culture, tea art, tea ceremony, tea customs have emerged, which enriched and developed the connotation of tea culture. At the same time, it also drives the development of china tea set. Japan, North Korea and other countries absorbed the essence of Chinese tea culture, gradually formed a tea culture with their own characteristics. So the influence of Chinese tea culture was constantly expanding. By the time of the Tang Dynasty, the advent of Lu Yu's The Classic of Tea had developed China's tea culture to an unprecedented height. The Classic of Tea explored the art of drinking tea and created the spirit of Chinese tea ceremony. For thousands of years, tea people have made

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countless attempts and explorations on tea culture. Until the appearance of *The Classic of Tea*, people have a systematic understanding and planning of tea culture. So *The Classic of Tea* is a milestone in the development of Chinese tea culture. Song Dynasty is a peak period of tea development, which has played a great role in promoting the development of tea culture. The ruler of the Song Dynasty at that time was a tea-loving person, in which he played an important role and promoted the development of tea culture in the court. He set up a tea office in the court and developed tea as a Chinese valuable specialty to foreign countries. As for the lower-level society, tea culture activities are more abundant, such as giving tea to each other between relatives and neighbors, and they give tea as a sign of love for husband and wife when they engaged.

Since the 16th century, tea culture has spread to the west. Tea was first used as a luxury in western countries. Because the price of tea was expensive, it can only be consumed by the royal aristocracy. With the increase of tea import, tea gradually permeated into ordinary people, became an indispensable part of their lives. Until the beginning of 18th century, the Netherlands, Britain, France and other western countries gradually formed the habit of drinking tea and tea culture. However, tea culture's status in the national culture was not prominent and stable. Later, the influence of tea culture in Britain gradually expanded, and the British formed the habit of afternoon tea. In the British industrial revolution, the influence of tea culture further expanded, and it became a typical "national drink". According to statistics, the British drunk 11.96 billion cups of tea a day, which was a very surprising number, tea gradually became people's lives such a important material food .

2.2 The differences in the characteristics of tea culture

For China, tea is not only a drink, but also a historical culture. Tea originated in China and became one of the seven necessities in Chinese life. The distinction between tea as a luxury and a non-necessity is becoming increasingly blurred. Drinking tea is not only to quench thirst, but also to be given more spiritual connotations by the Chinese. Chinese tea culture is not only a single cultural phenomenon, but also a comprehensive cultural system. On the one hand, it contains the material culture of planting tea, picking tea, making tea and tasting tea. On the other hand, it has penetrated the level of spiritual civilization of literature, art, medicine and so on. Meanwhile, the important position of tea in the development of Chinese history makes it become the brand of the Chinese nation's soul.

The western tea culture is represented by Britain. Although Britain does not produce tea, but the enthusiasm for tea is very strong. The UK mainly drinks black tea, and most of the tea in circulation is Indian and Ceylon tea. English tea is not just a drink, but an afternoon meal, known as afternoon tea, usually accompanied by a snack as a mental adjustment and nutritional supplement for the day. Drinking tea in the UK usually adds milk. It also combines several kinds of tea to brew, and becomes a unique aromatherapy---Earl milk tea. Americans also have their own style of drinking tea compared to the British drinking tea habit. Americans prefer black tea and cold drink tea. They like to put ice cubes in the tea. When the tea is iced, it smells refreshing and tastes cool when drinking. And, in order to cater to their fast-paced life, they also like instant tea without a trace of tea. Although western tea drinking has its own characteristics, but the common denominator lies in its simplicity. Western tea is only used as a drink, and there is not much spiritual heritage. And compared with the brewing technique of Chinese tea, western tea pays more attention to the rich taste of tea soup.

2.3 The differences in tearoom culture

Tearoom was originally used as a public place to receive visitors from all directions in our country, and later opened a private room to cater the psychological needs of the noble. Tearooms set up a story-telling house, and there were also artists who specialize in telling popular historical stories. The development of tearoom in south was appearing a variety of performances, such as Pingtan, Quyi. Tearoom set up a story-telling house to provide a stage for the artists, and also to bring joy to customers. It was said that many of China's long historical novels in tearooms which were the popular literature in China. The tearoom also takes full advantage of its social function. People meet in the tearoom after work, not only to exchange feelings, but also to relieve stress, relax the mood. As a result, Chinese tearoom is an important place of social contract, and drinking tea is one of the most common forms of social contract. Nowadays, the decoration of tearoom is more and more modern precise because of the fusion of Chinese and western literature and art. Although the current decoration is close to the western concept as a norm, it still have a lot of Chinese elements of things. For example, flower bonsai, rockery waterfall, garden sketch, etc.

The western tearooms were born in the bourgeois society of the 18th century, and it was a place for artists, writers and a minority of the social upper class to drink. The interior decoration was very elegant and luxurious, which was in stark contrast to the simple and true-to-life decoration style of China. If Chinese tearoom was a mirror of the living conditions of the grassroots, then the western teahouse was an ivory tower away from people at the bottom of society. And it represented the condescension of western upper class society. However, for the British, they have a unique pub culture similar to the tearoom at present. The British

like to invite some friends to hang out in the pub, casually chat. In the pub, people can narrate the new things around them, or they can make some good friends. It's arguably that pub plays a pivotal social role in Britain. The pub in the British countryside is very distinctive, the decoration here is simple, the environment is elegant, thus giving person a very pleasant feeling. At the same time, there are many beautifully decorated tearooms in the United States, serving a variety of flavors of black tea as well as sandwiches and sweet biscuits. Middle-class women in the United States particularly like the romantic, leisurely feeling of afternoon tea. Not only can Americans find tearooms in big cities, they also open tearooms in remote suburbs, and some veritable tea parties have sprung up.

III. THE REASONS OF THE DIFFERENT TEA CULTURE

Chinese tea culture and western tea culture belong to the relationship of development and inheritance. Tea was originated in China, and flowed to the west, then combined with the local customs and culture formed a unique style of tea culture. We analyze the reasons for the differences between Chinese and western tea culture from three aspects of geography, society and culture.

3.1 The reason of geographical environment

China located in the east of the world, is a big eastern country. Chinese tea travels westward to the European continent and then to the American continent, experiencing historical changes and cultural integration, forming a tea culture with the local characteristic. With China's vast land and abundant resource, and due to the soil and sunlight conditions, the production of tea varieties are different, such as black tea, green tea and so on. Chinese people will taste different kinds of tea according to their geographical location and drinking habits. The United Kingdom is located in the Mediterranean Sea. It is not suitable for the production of tea. The geographical location of the sea and the islands have led British to start plundering at sea very early. After the Industrial Revolution, Britain made great efforts to build ships, recruit maritime staff and understand the geographical location of countries on the world's ocean lines in order to obtain more economic resources for commercial trade. The British innovated the tea plundered from East Asia and Southeast Asia, and added milk and other spices to form the black tea that westerners like. Therefore, western people prefer to drink thick and sweet black tea. The different geographical location between China and the West makes the variety of tea drinking different.

3.2 The reason of social environment

In ancient China, the economic system was a feudal petty farmer economy, and people considered spiritual improvement under the condition of satisfying food and clothing. Under the influence of feudal society, as time goes on, tea gradually developed from a commodity into tea learning, tea ceremony. Finally, it becomes the tea culture. In this stable economy of small farmers, drinking tea is a leisure way of life, and people need to be calm and slow when they taste and feel the aroma of tea. The British tea compared to Chinese quiet style, with practical and industrial characteristics. The most important meal for the British is dinner, and lunch is relatively simple. And because the time between the two meals is very long, there is a form of afternoon tea. Afternoon tea is not only tea, but also cakes, fruits, desserts and so on. The tea culture in the West is about the good looks and the extravagance of the tea set. The tea is so sweet, and set off the ladies' elegant temperament and superior social status of in the party. This practical way of drinking tea reflects the characteristics of social modernization brought about by the industrial revolution. Especially the progress of the industrial revolution, the practicality is to the fullest. Instant tea is the product of the industrial revolution. With the development of technology, the appearance and usage of tea in developed industrial countries, such as Britain and America, have changed with the times. In addition to the differences in form, there are different understandings of tea.

3.3 The reason of cultural environment

The development process of tea in China is integrated with the thoughts of the Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, forming a harmonious spirit of harmony between man and nature. Judging from the integration of the three religions, each one has their own tea faction. Confucianism pays more attention to thought of harmony and moderation, and they have a objective to all things. Taoism seeks the thought of harmony between human and nature and the artistic conception of detach from secular. Buddhism advocates the thought of let it be, and advises people to be open-minded. It can be seen that although the value orientations of different factions are different, their spiritual connotations still have similarities. They require tea drinkers to cultivate self-cultivation. This requirement demonstrates the excellent culture of Chinese tradition, and pays attention to the faint, open-minded and introverted qualities. It can be said that the Chinese tea ceremony reflects a kind of indescribable character, feelings and beauty. The atmosphere of Chinese tea culture is actually a gentleman's etiquette, which embodies the noble sentiment of the gentleman's friendship is as light as water. Tea shows character, reflects the pursuit and yearning of people for the life of truth, goodness and beauty.

For the western tea culture, it is relying on the western modern industrial culture. With the continuous promotion of the industrial revolution, the material production of the whole society is extremely rich, and the tea culture is spread by the nobles. Therefore, in the Western tea culture system, more attention is paid to the enjoyment of the tea drinking process. The overall atmosphere is more luxurious than Chinese tea culture. Especially in Britain, the tea culture is more representative of the aristocratic etiquette and manners, showing the British gentleman demeanor. British tea culture embodies the nobility and elegance of aristocrats and is the symbol of people's social identity. Under the influence of social industrial culture, it increasingly embodies the practicality and modernity. Drinking tea in the United States and is valued for its efficacy and performance, just as a commodity and status symbol.

IV. CONCLUSION

At present, multicultural communication is developing and maturing, and cross-cultural communicative activities have become the normal of society. As the core of their respective cultural systems, Chinese and western tea culture plays an important medium in the whole cultural exchange activities. Through the analysis, it is found that if Chinese tea culture attaches more importance to spiritual connotation, then western tea culture pays more attention to behavioral art, which is in the same spirit as the pragmatism of the Anglo-American countries and the western countries as a whole. Chinese tea culture tends to be a kind of spiritual consciousness, while western tea culture embodies a kind of citizen spirit.

From this we can understand that the difference between Chinese and western tea culture represents different cultural systems and historical environment. Both Chinese tea culture and western tea culture have made great contributions to the world culture. Under the background of the development of globalization at present, by understanding the differences between Chinese and western tea culture, we can see the different cultural personalities between China and the West, and then deepen the understanding and cognition of the Chinese and western cultural systems.

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