

History and Stories of the Tea

- * Tea is a precious drink to promote health and to prevent against the more disastrous diseases of today: incapacitating diseases, deadly and expensive.

It is of interest to know how much tea does good. And it is important that continuously to be drunk liberally where it is of use and that becomes to be drink where it lost its popularity, namely in Portugal.

It also matters that it can shape an healthy style of life and create well being, give pleasure, help meditate, open ways to charms and joy, and stimulate gatherings.

Because tea overcomes much the precious condition of being good to health.

Atent on this text:

"Sir! Delight yourself with this liquor; that your mouth taste its flavour, that your nose appreciate its odor, that your eyes enjoy the colour. Dedicate it some of your time because stronger you will feel, alive, awake, gracious and wiser."

This text, from the late portuguese XVI century, may appear simply an arcaic praise to the referred liquor, that is tea. But, in truth, it is a publicitary text full of intentions. Tea was then considered above all as a medicinal drink; those who trade it began to feel the necessity to enlarge the market "conquering" all, including obviously the healthy ones, to the charms of the beverage and to the mental benefits occurring from its regular use.

intervalo + 2 espaços * The tea must be originary from the far orient; probably from the southeaste of China.

It is possible that the most ancient knowledge of tea dates from the third milenium b.c., at Shen-Nung period; these informations are developed about the spontaneous plant, its habitat and utility.

The first scholars from whom we received the most ancient knowledge are the Taoistes. These Monks from the clouds, alert inexhaustible walkers by wild hilly, they were interested about the identification and knowledge of plants, mushrooms and lichens.

It is to those explorers that is also due the divulgence of the tea outside the region of origin, already since the VI century b.c.

How? The Taoistes were wanted by nobles, powerfull and idealists that wished to receive spiritual guidance and share for sometime the aschetic life.

When returning from the retreat they would bring tea for spiritual comfort and stimulation of the body and then they gave it away to their social circle.

The Budists, allready spread on all China at the end of the first century, they also surched for the Taoistes on the most far places to initiate with them their spiritual life. Budists learned about the tea, its virtues and delights and spread it by the communities where they made part.

The Budists recognized how much tea is good for the vigor of spirit and understood the importance of attribute to themselves this discovery.

Thus is understandable the famous legend about tea stated around the time when Buda lived, between 566 e 486 b.c.:

“ A rich prince abandons the earthly pleasures and wealth to retreat himself away from the world, surching for the supreme ilumination. And to compensate the lost years he promise never to sleep so that he can have more time to free the spirit of all limitations. In truth, after many years , he fell asleep ; with great deception he awakened, touched by the imense sadness, there he cutted his own eyelashes, so that he never cover his eyes throwing them to the dirt.

Years after he returnes to the place of the unworthy sleep; where the torned eyelashes touched the dirt and blowmed in two big bushes never before seened; he picked up two leaves, really two eyelashes, and received them in his pot of hot water.

Marvelous! When he drinked this coloured and perfumed water he felt vigilant as ever, filled with vigor and more at peace.”

Along the first centuries of ower era, when allready aristocrats and religious people apreciate and venerate the great beverage, the market men spread it on their commerce along the routes; it's so big the success that tea becomes desired by all social classes.

* The most ancient ^{and comprehensible} discription understandable in writting about tea is ^{an} extended entry of an enciclopedia published on 350 b.c.

Along the next century, several writings debate it's utility on medicin , foods and drinks. The tea fame keeps increasing; the ^{knowing} of it's ^{qualities} attracts scholars and conquers heach time more apreciators.

Around 215 b.c. tea enters at the cout of the first emperor Quin; it cannot rise any higher on it's world.

This first emperor establishes his power much above the small kings that owned parts of the actual chinese territory. He is man of thought and a big apreciator of tea; he needs to justifie is taste and give it nobility.

In truth, it is around this time that another legend about the apeating of the fabulous tea is strongly spread.

“One ancient monarc Shen-Nung, more than 2500 years before, used to retreat himself for meditation and rest up on the mountains at east, to enjoy the peace of hiding woods and strange bushes. Then one day , in the afternoon , a smooth brise made fall some leaves on to the pot where Shen-Nung heated water to drink. How wonderfull was the infusion , how surprising were it's good efects”.

* Lu-Yu (703-804 of ower era), wise man that will become imortalized as “God of Tea” publishes one extence treaty about tea, in 780, when the splendor of the Tang dynasty (618-917) arrises to it's top.

The book becomes very important. Without taking the medicinal value to the drink, it opens the way to new hedonist performances and behaviours: it builds the formations

for a "tea culture". It gains numerous and diversified appreciators and encourages new forms of gatherings and it is expanded for Tibete and the rest of China.

the expansion for the

The first tax on the production of tea dates from 793, taking advantage on the big leap of consumption that follows the Lu-Yu publication.

Probably it is not an act of Imperial greed when fortunes are spend with a luxurious court.

The emperor and his ministers are confucionists and deliberadly desire to ruin the taoists, the big farmers; in fact, they are going to destroy many cultures until the early years of the IX century.

The tea will arrive to Japan much later, around 1250, by the action of Eisai, budist monk that has known about tea on the southests of China, and that about it wrote a revised work concerning the general benefits and stimulation to meditation, and in witch he enfasized the choice and preparation of the drink and the behaviours to respect wile drinking.

That work rises the formation for the complicated and tradicional nipotic cerimony of tea.

With the Chinese Song dynasty (960-1279) the ceramic is developed to satisfy the crescent needs of preparing and serving tea.

To drink tea becomes more refined between apreciators, at the same time tea is spread from a land to another, and from region to region. And jumps the social scales.

Since the XIII century tea is really the national drink.

Amongst Chineses, even today, to drink ^{Tea} still is a carefull celebration, poetical and social.

Compared to the Japanese cerimony, it is more free and less codified. But it demands six conditions: good company on a nice sorrounding, pure water and quality leaves, sober and clean service.

* Production and commerce take a lot of people and gain economic value. Chines^e tea arrives to the Tartars; the Turkish pay it very well. Two centuries later arrives in Europe, first, by the hand of the Portugueses (1565?), than from the Dutchmen (1610) and British (only after 1680). However, it is already in the XVII century that tea is spread on Indonesia, there so near of China.

Between mandarin speakers of the aristocracy, military scholars, the court and inhabitants of centre and north of China the bush and the drink have the same designation – chá (with the proper phonetics of ch – tsche- in arcaic portuguese). Passing thus to portuguese, russian, japonese and persian.

In cantonese, language spoken on the ports of south of China, and more comum amongst chineses from the Pacific, tea is designated by tu (~té). This way it passed to numerous languages.

The tea only reaches Índia on the XIX century, after been recognized and domesticated a native variety of *Camelia Sinensis*, says assamic because it is expontaneous on the region of Assam.

This new type of tea, more resistant and transferable, and hibrid variaties created by men, that will populate Ceilan and the oriental Africa, and already on the XX century, the south America, Autralia and Soviet Union.

* This unequal difusion and so diferenciaded on time is due to the fact that the sinensis variety of the *camelia sinensis* adaptes pourly to diferent soils and climats.

After the finding of assamic variaty, was possible to adapte the cultivation of tea to new geographic regions where this type and other hibrids were developed to the needs, and behaved with excellence.

The famous Darjeeling teas that grow on the half hill of the Himalaya, result from the crossing between na hibrid *irravaidensis* and the assamic variaty. However, the final hibrid is not the same for all the "tea gardens", a fact that brings to a strong competition for excelency. But they all win: the Darjeeling are for other teas as champagne is for any other sparckling wine.

Modern variaties, and good regions to cultivation, gave an imense productiv jump and conquered undreds of millions of new apreciators.

The use of tea as always growned, *although* with irregularities. Know that since 1980, it raized 4% to 6% a year, witch is remarkable that happens with the more wanted drink in all the world. It rises more on developing counties, namelly China itself, muzlam countries and oriental Africa

At the end of the XX century by decrescent order, the production was maximum in India(810 mil tons) and second in China(630 Mil tons), Ceilam (280), Indonesia(150) and Turkie (140), total in Asia : 2,5 milions of tons per year.

On the all, Africa produced around 500 thousand tons (Kenya 221, Sudan 168) .

The former Soviet Union, 120 thousand, America, 70 thousand, Oceania, 10 thousand. Europe, some tones in Azores with increasing production.

* The jump of Chinese tea to this other extreme of the ancient world was given by the portugueses. It arrives as benefic beverage, long life elixir, *liquor* capable of giving straight to the body, charpness the inteligence and strongs the will.

Frey Gaspar da Cruz describes the tea around 1560, when the portugueses payed the first visits to China, a time when the chinese medicine atributed the following terapeutic virtues to tea: helps digestion, *empty* discongessions the gallblader, releafs from intestin aches, heals sichness and some headaches, *it* sharpeness inteligence, strongs the will, revives the memory, *diminishes* weariness, fites the sleep and provides long life. It is possible that all these virtues are real. Unprobable are: "clean the blood" (?), "strong the heart" (?), and stimulate the sexual performance.

On those far mid seventeenth century times, the tea is ~~black market trade~~ at high prices. Two or three decades are needed for tea to be recognized as ~~comun~~ market on the Indies fleet, along with spices, ~~poçelain~~ and silk. *smuggled from* *in front*

When the fame of miraculous drink was not enough to conquer new consumers, so many they were, it was needed to find other claims to consume. Without want to pinch it's acceptance as a healthy drink, the tea dealers will evoke the pleasures of it's odor, taste, appesed wellbeing, and social style gathering. The comercial advertisment was aimed to a new drinker. *by now referred*

* Catarina of Bragança, daugther of the portuguese king John the IV, marries with Charles the second in 1662; takes with her many dear things to the english people, as Bombaim, and the usefull practice of tea along the day and of drinking it ~~solemly~~ in the afternoon. *with mity*

To this young princess with ~~hipoglicymea~~ ^{ic} episodes and hipotension, her physician advised a light meal in the midle of the morning, and another on the afternoon and to drink tea all day long until the moment of dinner.

With such cares she kepted well to the point that the adolescent debility was transformed on strong determination. The truth is, that without children and allways catholic, she was associated to the government of her husband, until he died on 1685, and after to the brother inlaw's, James the second, only coming back to Portugal on 1693.

It is in her quarters that "Five O'clock tea" is born, that will be adopted on the British Islands as habit of good taste until it becomes a need.

The Nacional Museum of Glased Tile, in Lisbon, keeps two glased tiles that represent the royal couple, dated from 1662, probably from Delft production.

Meanwhile, since very hearly, 1610, already the Dutchmen, unloaded ~~from their boats~~ every year, the shipment of tea from the boats of V.O.C., they would sale it in their provinces and where their comerce would get.

In France, on 1635, more than one "house of tea" openes; and many will open to do business, be seen and chat.

* "The tea houses" either in China, since the X century, as in Europe, since the XVIII century, and the cerimonies of tea in Japan, China, Corea and all over the Orient, are related with new reasons to wish a drink: they add to the medicinal value the acceptance that it is disarable and licit to have the pleasure of drinking it and, while tasting it to share the delight of company, family, friends, and ocasional companions, and develop the art of talking and of analysing issues of interest. "to drink tea stimulates acutness and dialetic oponense"

Amongst mediterranean and middle orient Muzlams, and betwin ^{el} Europeans, the please for tea conjugates the taste of the drink with socialization stimulated by the slow drinking in group.

However, let us remind it, that the portuguese brought the tea because it does well; because it might be miraculous. *←*

← The Dutchmen sell it as misterious medicin that joins it's efficacy to the advantage of being tastefull.

* We arrive to ower time so worried with the health ,so scarefull of the disease, so suspicious of old age. →

And so beneficiated by the possibilities of investigation.

Why not study that fabulous elixir of long life? In diferent shades, the investigators identify reazons and quantify the proved virtues of tea. ←

In fact, it is proved today that is ^a ~~tastefully~~ ^{years} potion of heath. 1?

A two thounsand and half ^{years} circle closes, iniciated by the monks of the clowds and completed by investigators of antioxidant activity.

Another cicle crosses with this of doing good: →

Iniciated with Lu-Yu, and still with a long way ahead, it is the one of taste, smell, joy and rest with a drink that does so well and that can provide superior pleasure.

For the Chineses, to be delightfull, the tea must present itself bitter as life, strong as love, sweet as death. For Europeans it is enought it comes to the purpose.

The narrow minded spirit of between two wars – what tastes good does bad – it is not apliable to tea nor to it's apreciator.

Frank's tea

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