

Chinese tea ceremony



Tea in China is one of «seven things needful daily» as firewood, rice, oil, salt, soy sauce and vinegar. The Chinese tea culture differs from European, British and Japanese as a way of cooking and drinking, and occasions for tea. Tea in China is drunk both at daily situations and during official events and rituals. Chinese tea is not only a beverage. Tea is an important part of traditional Chinese medicine and traditional Chinese food.



Dishes for Chinese tea ceremony and other subtleties of Chinese tea

Room for the tea ceremony should be maximum empty. There are bare walls and floor lined with bamboo ideally.



Cha Ban is a special Chinese tea table for tea ceremony. Cha Ban required for the right location of tea dishes and for the comfort water draining during tea ceremony. That is why the Chinese tea table has a second bottom where water drained.



Cha Khe is a special vessel to the acquaintance with the tea before tea ceremony. Cha Khe filled tea and let around of guests. Each guest should inhale smell of tea leaves and breathe out warm air to them. This process meaning is «waking up» tea flavour.



For the traditional tea ceremony usually used an Yixing (исинская) clay teapot or gaiwan. Yixing clay teapots have an oily shine and porous structure. That is why the yixing teapots cool slowly and allow tea «to breathe». Gaiwan is an porcelain alternative to clay teapot. As a rule the porcelain is from Jingdezhen. Sometimes gaiwan used as a cup.



Chakhai translated as «sea of tea». Sometimes it called an cup of justice. Chakhai used as an intermediate vessel, which used for tea infusion. Sediment of tea remains in the chakhai and then guests drink pure Chinese tea. Moreover, chakhai used to alignment of tea. Tea from chakhai have a pure and an equal colour in each cup.



Chinese Tea set includes a narrow long porcelain glass which called Van Syan Bay and a porcelain bowl which called Ping Ming Bay. At first Tea poured in Van Syan Bay, which symbolize heaven. Then the glass covered with Ping Ming Bay which symbolize earth. After this tea set turned upside down. The sacral sense of this process is «tea as a gift sent from the heaven to earth».



Cha Tsui is a general name of tea tools of the traditional Chinese tea ceremony. The tools kept in a wooden jug usually.

Includes:

- Cha Chi – wooden spoon for the tea leaves.
- Tszya tszy – wooden tongs for the hot cups.
- Cha Tszan – needle for cleaning spout.
- Cha Syan Lo – funnel for rolling tea to the teapot.
- Cha Lyuy – percolator for filtering infusion.



Leading of ceremony should know all of steps of ceremony and understand their sacral sense. Moreover the tea ceremony obliges him to participate in mutual conversation and to direct it to peaceful and positive course.



Special circumstances in which tea is prepared and consumed

As a sign of respect in Chinese society, the younger generation always shows their respect to the older generation by offering a cup of tea. Inviting their elders to go to restaurants and having some tea is a traditional activity on holidays. In the past, people of lower rank served tea to higher-ranking people. Today, as Chinese society becomes more liberal, sometimes parents may pour a cup of tea for their children, or a boss may even pour tea for subordinates at restaurants. However, the lower-ranking person should not expect the higher-ranking person to serve him or her tea in formal occasions.



For a family gathering

When sons and daughters leave home because of work or get married, they may have few times to visit their parents, and parents may seldom meet their grandchildren as well. Therefore, going to restaurants and drinking tea becomes an important activity for family gatherings. Every Sunday, Chinese restaurants are crowded, especially when people celebrate festivals. This phenomenon reflects Chinese family values.



To apologize

In Chinese culture, people make serious apologies to others by pouring tea for them. For example, children serving tea to their parents is a sign of regret and submission.



To express thanks to your elders on one's wedding day

In the traditional Chinese marriage ceremony, both the bride and groom kneel in front of their parents and serve them tea. That is the most devout way to express their gratitude. In front of their parents, it is a practice for the married couple to say, "Thank you for bringing us up. Now we are getting married. We owe it all to you." The parents will usually drink a small portion of the tea and then give them a red envelope, which symbolizes good luck. Another variant is that the bride serve tea to the groom's parents, symbolizing that she is to become a part of the latter's family.



To connect large families on wedding days

The tea ceremony during a wedding also serves as a means for both parties to meet with each other. As Chinese families can be rather extended, and there may be one or two hundred people, it is entirely possible during a courtship to not have been introduced to someone. As such, during the tea ceremony, the couple would serve tea to all family members and call them by their official title. Drinking the tea symbolized acceptance into the family, while refusing to drink symbolized opposition to the wedding and was quite unheard of since it would result in a loss of "face".

