

Original Paper

The Differences and Integration between Tea Culture and Coffee Culture

Shichao Wang^{1*}

¹ School of Foreign Languages, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, Guizhou, China

* Shichao Wang, School of Foreign Languages, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, Guizhou, China

Received: July 3, 2022

Accepted: July 14, 2022

Online Published: July 22, 2022

doi:10.22158/sll.v6n3p22

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sll.v6n3p22>

Abstract

Tea took its source at China and has played an important role in people's life from ancient times to the present; Coffee originated in the west and its importance is comparable to that of tea to the Chinese people. They are regarded as outstanding representatives of Chinese and Western cultures. The contact between the two cultures reflects their differences and connotations. This paper makes a comparison between tea culture and coffee culture from the aspects of the origin, development, differences and culture connotations. So as to understand the cultural conflicts between Chinese and Western cultures and the trend of mutual integration of Chinese and Western cultures under the trend of globalization.

Keywords

tea, coffee, differences, cultural integration

1. Introduction

The taste of tea is delicate and elegant, which makes people feel relaxed; the taste of coffee is mellow and spicy, which makes people have endless aftertaste. Behind these two tastes, it is not only the difference of types or forms, but also the difference of cultural carriers. Therefore, the comparison of two kinds of symbolic drinks originated from different cultural regions can directly reflect the culture they represent, and make a profound study of them can reveal the different cultural concepts and values between China and the West. But even in different cultural backgrounds, tea culture and coffee culture also began to gradually exchange and integrate due to the increasingly frequent cultural exchanges between China and the West.

2. The Origin and Development of Tea and Coffee

Tea and coffee all have a long history. Their origins are full of mythological color and endowed with mysterious cultural images. In the history of the development of Chinese and Western cultures, tea and coffee gradually spread to the whole world from their respective birthplaces as the center, from top to bottom, from near to far, based on the different cultural characteristics and modes of communication between China and the West. This part will give a detailed introduction to them from the origin and development.

2.1 *The Origin and Development of Tea*

The original tea, tea plants, tea drinking methods and processing technology of all countries in the world are directly or indirectly introduced from China. China is the birthplace of world tea culture. It is said that Shennong discovered tea in the process of tasting a hundred herbs. One day, after he tasted the grass, he was slightly poisoned, and his whole body was weak, so he lay on the ground. Suddenly, a leaf fell on his face, and he habitually put it into his mouth to chew. As a result, he suddenly felt refreshed and recovered his strength. This is the leaf of the tea tree, tea. So he called on the people to plant tea trees widely. As early as 350 BC, tea and tea trees were recorded in *Erya*—the first dictionary in China. In the Tang Dynasty, tea was widely drunk by the whole people, and tea culture was flourished. There were teahouses and tea parties, and guests were welcome to drink tea. At that time, the world's first monograph on tea culture, *The Classics of Tea*, came into being. At the end of Song Dynasty and the beginning of Ming Dynasty, tea culture developed to its peak, and tribute tea and gift tea were popular at that time. In the Qing Dynasty, tea culture became more in-depth. The traditional opera, Chinese folk art forms and other performances appeared in teahouses. Tea accounted for a large proportion in foreign trade during the Qing Dynasty. Drinking tea is more popular after the founding of new China, and tea culture has been enriched and developed in various activities. Today, tea culture has become an important part of Chinese life.

2.2 *The Origin and Development of Coffee*

The word “coffee” comes from the Greek word “Kaweh” and means passion and power, which is the reason that modern westerners like drinking coffee. There are many legends about the origin of coffee, and the most credible one is the story of the shepherd. Kaldi, a shepherd on the Ethiopian plateau in the sixth century B.C., discovered that when sheep ate the fruit of a wild shrub, they would make a lot of noise. After he tasted it curiously, he felt excited. This kind of fruit is coffee beans. In the 16th century, coffee was brought into Europe from Africa by businessmen, especially when Turkish ambassadors brought coffee to France, which pushed the development of coffee culture to a peak by French. By the middle of the 17th century, coffee was popular among the European royal families and was welcomed by the nobles. Later, coffee is no longer the exclusive drink of nobles, but gradually entered the lives of ordinary people with the frequent trade and economic development. People use this drink to refresh themselves and keep themselves awake. In the 20th century, with the colonial expansion of Britain,

coffee was planted in a large area in South America, which made the spread of coffee faster and the number of cafe increased rapidly in Europe during this period. The development footprint of coffee also symbolizes the migration of the whole western culture. It blends with the western culture and affects the development of the West.

3. The Differences between Tea Culture and Coffee Culture

After thousands of years of development, tea and coffee have many differences in cultural connotation, drinking environment, internal personality and ways of thinking represented by them.

3.1 The Cultural Connotation Differences

Chinese tea culture originates from Chinese culture with a long history. It is broad and profound, and contains history, aesthetics, philosophy and so on. It is a peculiar cultural landscape in people's life. Whether tea producing areas or non-tea-producing areas, the creation activities and inheritance of tea culture are enduring. Chinese people like to drink tea, like its fresh and mild flavor. People who want to taste the fragrance of tea and appreciate its charm need to calm down to experience. The reason why tea can be selected and developed into a cultural phenomenon is that its pure, natural and simple character is consistent with Chinese traditional cultural values. In Chinese tea culture, tea ceremony is the core and soul. Confucianism emphasizes the golden mean of the Confucian school, benevolence and harmony, and hope people to use tea to maintain honesty; Taoism advocates nature, purity and seek quietness with tea; Buddhism emphasizes meditation and enlightenment, and uses tea to understand the principles of Zen. Chinese tea ceremony is the quintessence of oriental culture and humanistic spirit, and it is also the precious wealth inherited from 5000 years old Chinese civilization.

Compared with the implicit, elegant oriental tea culture, the western coffee culture does not stress the complicated process. Generally speaking, it is full of passion, romance and freedom. For westerners, coffee is not only a drink, but also reflects the cultural connotation and characteristics of different countries. Such as: Italy's enthusiasm and innovation, Frances romantic gentleness and politeness, Germany's strict self-discipline, the United States' freedom and so on. Westerners like novelty and adventure. If they lose interest in current things, they will make other choices immediately. Therefore, coffee is closely connected with the western culture, as well as an important part of it. Furthermore, coffee culture has become the unique cultural charm of various western nationalities.

3.2 The Differences of Drinking Environment

Under the influence of tea culture, tea drinking has become the daily life habit of the people. For Chinese people, the environment for tea drinking is not fixed. Sometimes, they taste tea together at home when treating relatives and friends, sometimes they go to the tea house in their spare time to drink tea, and sometimes they drink a cup of tea at home alone while reading a good book in a leisurely and comfortable day. It can be seen that the purpose of Chinese drinking tea is mainly to pursue the comfort and purification of the soul. The requirements for the environment are not too high. It is

enough to make the mind calm.

Westerners have a strong sense of dependence on cafes, and drinking coffee has become a fixed matter in the daily life of most people. In large and small cities, there are always different kinds of cafes all over the streets. When people have a interest at any time, they will step into it and drink a cup of coffee. They can not only drink mellow coffee, but also refresh themselves. Cafe serves a main place for westerners to relax themselves. Their flourishing and prosperity symbolize westerners' positive and optimistic attitude towards life, and also means the improvement of the quality of people's material life.

3.3 The Differences between Conservation and Innovation

The traditional life style of Chinese people and the life concept of paying attention to clan and blood relationship make people form a relatively conservative personality and ignore the importance of developing culture. Tea culture reflects the conservative introversion of traditional Chinese culture. From the process of mutual introduction between tea and coffee we can see that western countries accepted tea earlier, while China began to accept coffee in the last century at a relatively slow pace. The evolution of tea taste, processing method and marketing strategy in China has also experienced a long process, but it seems that the change is not obvious for thousands of years. This can also be seen from the fact that coffee has not changed much in terms of its name and taste since it entered China. Chinese tend to respect the customs of their ancestors. This concept gradually infiltrated into the tea culture, so conservative introversion has become a representative feature of tea culture.

Western countries are more affected by geography. While seeking survival, people also cultivate their spirit of exploration and innovation, and integrate this spirit into their own culture to form a unique cultural style. Western countries are much faster than China in accepting new things, so they are not satisfied with the status quo, keep moving forward, and promote the continuous development of things. In the process of mutual penetration of tea and coffee, the differences in the development between China and the West are also obvious. For example, the West has been constantly innovating in coffee taste, types and sales methods to meet the taste needs of the public. And they can continuously develop and innovate in coffee planting and production technology. Another example is that in a relatively short period of time, Westerners have developed bagged tea which is easy to carry and brew, instant tea which can save time, hot tea which breaks the tradition, and ice tea which can relieve summer heat. Although China is still a big country of tea drinking, western countries use their own advantages to develop new ways of tea drinking. It is hoped that while maintaining its own tea culture, Chinese should strive to explore and innovate, develop new forms of tea culture, and better introduce Chinese tea to the world.

3.4 The Differences of the Way of Thinking

Ji Xianlin said that the difference between eastern and western cultures lies in the different ways of thinking. Different cultures breed different ways of thinking, which will affect the shaping and development of culture. Due to the difference of the way of thinking, there must be differences in the

angle of people's thinking and the result of understanding things. The birth and development of tea culture and coffee culture reflect the completely different thinking spirit between China and the West. Tea and coffee are both from bitter to sweet in terms of taste, which means they are astringent when drinking in the mouth, but its sweetness lingers in after swallowing. However, the bitter and sour taste of coffee is rarely associated with the meaning of life. For example, Italians explore coffee as a kind of art and study the possibility of various tastes and shapes of coffee. A variety of coffee reflects the human imagination and creativity. Drinking coffee is a kind of enjoyment, the sense of ritual and its bearing significance is not important, the relaxed pleasure and satisfaction that it brings to people is the most important. For example, during the Cold War, when the Americans launched the Apollo Moon-landing Project, a terrible accident happened. At that time, when the ground commander comforted the three astronauts whose lives were uncertain, he said, "Come on! Sweet-smelling hot coffee is waiting for you". Coffee represents a comfortable and happy life in the western context.

Compared with coffee, Chinese ancients endowed tea drinking with rich connotation and significance by using this kind of relevant thinking. The ancient Chinese believed that sweetness is the reward for bitterness. And only by experiencing bitterness of struggle can they enjoy the sweetness of success. They compared the intuitive experience of tea drinking to the true meaning of life struggle. In his book *The Importance of Living*, Lin Yutang mentioned that tea is a good friend of the Chinese people and a source of pleasure in suffering. The long-boiled teapot has something in common with the suffering life. Only after experiencing the fickleness of human nature and the vicissitudes of the world can people realize the essence of life.

In a word, behind the tea culture is a kind of related understanding thinking. Chinese tea ceremony emphasizes the unity of man and nature. Tea making goes beyond its natural attribute and becomes an important medium carrying the traditional Chinese moral ideal and spiritual realm. The Western coffee culture embodies a kind of linear thinking. Coffee, as an objective material, is scientifically and rationally understood, explored and consumed.

4. The Integration and Influence of Tea Culture and Coffee Culture

4.1 The Integration of Tea Culture and Coffee Culture

In recent years, cross-cultural communication between China and the West has become more and more frequent, and has achieved better results. With different heritage and spirit, tea culture and coffee culture have also been closely combined. The most significant is that tea and coffee, as a bridge of cross-cultural communication, have appeared in the daily life of China and the West.

In China, especially in university campuses and urban office buildings, you can often smell the aroma of coffee. It is not difficult to judge that coffee is capturing the hearts of the young generation and becoming a favorite drink for young people. A variety of cafes emerge in an endless stream, including Starbucks of the United States, Tim Hortons of Canada and other international famous brands. The

younger generation in China has a higher acceptance to coffee, and generally can adapt to the feeling and taste of coffee. While drinking coffee, they can also have an in-depth exploration of western culture. In the West, the teahouses on the street emerge as the times require. When Westerners enter the teahouses and drink tea with elegant tea ceremony. It seems that the troubles of the world are forgotten, and there is only endless purity left. In this process, Westerners can deeply experience Chinese culture and further shorten the distance between Chinese and Western cultures. Whether in China or the West, the decoration of various teahouses and cafes highlights the localization and provides corresponding local services. This is also the integration of tea culture and coffee culture.

4.2 The Influence of the Integration of Tea Culture and Coffee Culture

The two drink cultures are constantly infiltrating and integrating with each other. By drinking coffee, Chinese people absorb the enthusiastic and romantic adventure spirit of Westerners. While maintaining their own good quality, the Chinese people can move forward boldly to the future. By drinking tea, Westerners learn the gentle and modest temperament from traditional Chinese culture and find peace of mind in the restless society. Sometimes we drink coffee but with a tea drinking attitude. The integration of tea culture and coffee culture helps Chinese and Westerners understand and learn from each other and is of great benefit to promoting the process of globalization.

5. Conclusion

We are deeply impressed by the strong culture contained in tea and the infinite charm contained in coffee. There are great differences between tea culture and coffee culture in cultural connotation, drinking environment, internal personality and ways of thinking, which are important manifestations of Chinese and Western culture. Chinese people pay attention to tranquility, purity and self-cultivation when drinking tea. While Westerners pursue enthusiasm, boldness and convenience when drinking tea. When people of two cultures meet, if they don't understand each other's culture, they may inevitably be impolite, ill prepared, and cause unnecessary misunderstandings. Chinese people can better understand the spirit of ancient Chinese civilization through their understanding of tea culture. And they can also understand the Western pursuit of freedom and enthusiasm by learning coffee culture, improve the cultural exchanges between China and the West, avoid unnecessary troubles, and make the exchanges more harmonious, so as to make cross-cultural communication smooth and effective. Knowing more about two different cultures can effectively avoid such misunderstanding. Through cross-cultural communication, Chinese people can understand Westerners' strong pursuit of passion and freedom, and Westerners can understand the profound connotation of Chinese traditional culture and the spirit of the ancient civilization of the Chinese nation. They can learn from each other's cultural advantages, and make communication more harmonious and cross-cultural communication more effective under the trend of globalization.

References

- Bai, X. (2012). Comparison between Chinese and Western cultures: Coffee Culture and Tea Culture in Britain and America. *Journal of Shanxi Agricultural University*, 2, 203-205.
- Chen, Y. T. (2016). A Comparative Study of Chinese and English Cultural Values in Coffee and Tea culture. *Tea in Fujian*, 4, 260-261.
- Ding, S. (1996). On the Differences between Chinese and Western ways of thinking. *Academic Journal of Zhongzhou*, 4, 159-161.
- Joseph, N. (1978). *Science and Civilization in China*. Science Press.
- Lin, Y. T. (2010). *The Importance of Living*. Nanjing: Jiangsu Literature and Art Publishing House.
- Niu, Y. Q. (2019). The Difference between Chinese and Western Cultures: Tea and Coffee and Their Role in Interpersonal Communication. *Chinese and Foreign Entrepreneurs*, 1, 157-158.
- Thorn, J. (1997). *The Coffee Companion*. London: Quintet Publishing Ltd.
- Uri, K. (2017). From the Tea to the Coffee Ceremony: Modernizing Buddhist Material Culture in Contemporary Korea. *Material Religion*.
- Wang, X. L. (2012). The Difference and Integration of Chinese and Western Cultures from Tea and Coffee. *Journal of Xi'an University of Arts and Sciences*, 2, 74-77.
- Xu, G. (2007). A Brief Talk on Zen and Chinese Tea Culture. *Journal of Guangxi University for Nationalities*, 2, 28-29.
- Yuan, H. J. (2018). Viewing the Differences between Chinese and Western Cultures from the Social Functions of Tea and Coffee. *Youth Litterateur*, 8, 195.
- Yuan, L. (2017). A Comparison of Chinese and Western ways of Thinking—Taking Tea and Coffee as Examples. *Journal of Beijing University of Science and Technology*, 1, 48-55.
- Zeng, Z. (1994). Discussion on the Internal Differences between Chinese and Western Philosophy and Their Logical Basis. *Journal of Peking University*, 3, 22-25.
- Zhen, H. J. (2019). A Study on the Cultural Differences between Tea and Coffee. *Tea in Fujian*, 7, 279-280.
- Zhou, Z. R. (2007). *Tea and People and Language*. Shanghai: Joint Publishing.