



Tea-Tasting Culture Symbols in Contemporary China: Times and Spirit

Fang Hu¹, Pitiwat Somthai² and Panu Suaysuwan³

Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Burapha University, Thailand

¹E-mail: 83403176@qq.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0050-9275>

²E-mail: pitiwat@buu.ac.th, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0654-2773>

³E-mail: panu@go.buu.ac.th, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7508-5208>

Received 16/04/2024

Revised 12/07/2024

Accepted 12/08/2024

Abstract

Background and Aim: The tea-tasting culture evolved from the long-established tea culture in China. Tea was first used as a source of food before its medical properties were discovered and it is being recognized as a beverage nowadays. It was not until Lu Yu, the Tea King in the Tang Dynasty, wrote the Bible of Tea (《茶经》) that the method of soup drinking was abandoned to make tea a truly pure beverage. After that tea drinking activities began to be called “tea-tasting”. As a product of the spiritual civilization of human society, tea-tasting culture is influenced by the spiritual temperament of each era during its development from rise, growth, and prosperity to eventual decline. It is still alive in contemporary society, shifting from a culture with literati attributes in the old era to a contemporary popular one. However, in real life, the public’s understanding of tea-tasting culture generally remains at the taste of tea soup, lacking an awareness of the inheritance of tea-tasting culture. Therefore, the objective as well as the importance of this study is to explore the era and spiritual symbols of tea-tasting culture so that it can be well inherited in the contemporary era.

Materials and Methods: This study employs fieldwork, interviews, and creative research methods. Through fieldwork, it delves into the Jingdezhen China Ceramics Museum, Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, and Taoxichuan Ceramic Art Avenue, conducting onsite investigations to explore the development of tea-tasting culture. Interviews are conducted with experts in tea-tasting culture, inheritors of Jingdezhen's intangible cultural heritage of handmade porcelain, and art design specialists, aiming to understand perceptions and historical evolution of tea-tasting culture. The creative research method fosters innovative thinking, establishing a “three stories” model to examine the cultural significance and contemporary symbolism of tea tasting. This multifaceted approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of tea-tasting culture's intricacies and its impact on society.

Results: Through research results were as follows: (1) The knowledge system of tea-tasting culture which could help to understand the historical development of Chinese tea-tasting culture was obtained. (2) The “three stories” research model on times and spiritual symbols of tea-tasting culture was figured out. (3) The value of tea-tasting culture in the contemporary context was acquired to express symbols of the current era and spirit.

Conclusion: As a cultural form, tea-tasting culture enabled tea to rise from the field of food culture to the philosophical field with a spiritual value. This study adopts fieldwork, interviews, and creative research methods to create a “three stories” model of tea-tasting culture for research, aiming to explore how it was inherited in its historical evolution under the macro background of China's tea-tasting culture, and how it continues to develop its times and spiritual symbols nowadays. Research on how the tea ceremony spirit shifted to the Mingdao spirit can provide theoretical support for further research on the inheritance and development of tea-tasting culture.

Keywords: Tea-tasting culture; Times and spiritual symbols; Tea ceremony; Mingdao; “Three stories” model

Introduction

Tea-tasting is known as a part of daily life in Chinese society. Evolving from the long-established tea culture in China, it has gradually acquired a unique spiritual connotation more than the act of drinking tea itself. Tea originated in China and has a history of more than 10,000 years since it was discovered and utilized by ancient people. The properties of tea have evolved from being first used as food by humans, and later discovered to have medicinal properties, to being recognized as a beverage nowadays. As early as in the Three Kingdoms periods, people in Jing and Shu Areas (Sichuan and Hubei provinces) began drinking tea. It can be verified that tea was introduced to the Central Plains in the early years of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1100 BC). Drinking tea at that time is both for “edible” and “medicinal” use. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, “soup drinking” became the main way. By the Western Han Dynasty, tea began to be recognized as a beverage, which laid the foundation for the occurrence of tea-tasting culture. In the Tang Dynasty, Lu Yu of the Tang Dynasty, who was hailed as the “Tea King” by later generations, wrote the The Bible of Tea (《茶经》). He abandoned the method of soup drinking and made tea a truly pure beverage. And it was actually after that tea-drinking activities began to be called “tea-tasting”. As a product of the



spiritual civilization of human society, tea-tasting culture is influenced by the spiritual temperament of each era. The literati in the Tang Dynasty loved, pursued, and promoted tea drinking when the tea-tasting culture came into being. In the middle of the Tang Dynasty, the literati began to pursue aesthetic taste in tea drinking, which became mature at that time and reached its peak later in the Song Dynasty. The tea books of the Song Dynasty summarized the requirements for the color, aroma, and taste of tea tasting, indicating that the activity had become a universal and conscious artistic practice in daily life. However, the turbulent socio-political situation in the late Ming Dynasty (1700 AD) could no longer provide a gentle and comfortable tea-tasting environment. At the same time, the tightening domestic economy resulted in a decreased supply of tea, which was regarded as one of the main products of foreign trade due to its specialty. These two reasons combined with other social factors have eventually led to the gradual decline of the tea-tasting culture. What it still retained in the Qing Dynasty and even today, for most people, may only be appraising the quality of tea leaves itself. It can be said that the tea-tasting culture has transformed from an ancient culture with literati attributes to a popular one today.

There are three features of tea-tasting in modern life. First, most tea consumers focus on "tea" rather than "tasting". Nowadays, when people drink tea, what exactly do they drink? One scene is that they swallow the tea whole to quench their thirst, and another scene is that they are more particular about the type or the taste of the tea they are going to drink or are willing to share their feelings while drinking. However, even the latter only cares about the taste of the tea leaves itself. Second, there are two extremes in the paradigm of tea-tasting spaces in real life: one is to imitate the elegant style and layout of ancient tea-tasting spaces, which is suitable for a niche group of people who live relatively affluent lives but caviar to the general; the other is the appearance of tea beverage brands which still focus on the pursuit of taste rather than the spread of tea-tasting culture. Third, Difficulties in the inheritance and development of tea-tasting culture. Why is it so difficult to promote a tea-tasting culture? One of the reasons is that the public lacks a basic understanding of tea-tasting culture. They do not know its roots and have to trace its origins; the second reason is that it remains an obstacle to translating traditional culture into a contemporary one that can satisfy the spiritual pursuits of people in the context of modern life. Therefore, the purpose of this study can be divided into three sub-purposes based on the historical development of tea-tasting culture. First, promotion of the traditional tea-tasting culture, especially the feasibility of its social functions being utilized by modern people; second, exploration of its spiritual function to fully meet people's spiritual needs and daily emotional communication; third, imagination, experiment and practice of the contemporary attributes of tea-tasting culture. At present, the public retains a superficial understanding of tea-tasting culture and a shallow study of relevant topics. The essence of tea-tasting culture is to connect with people and a behavioral expression of Chinese people's lifestyle. Therefore, exploring the contemporary attributes of tea-tasting culture, its increasingly new spiritual connotation, and what the times and spirit mean in the contemporary context to enable the tea-tasting culture to be well inherited in modern society, is where the importance of this paper lies (Xu, 2022).

Objectives

1. To study the historical evolution and development of China's tea-tasting culture---the traditional tea-tasting culture can be well inherited in the transition from tradition to modernity and its social functions can be utilized by modern people.
2. To analyze the cultural symbols of tea-tasting in terms of times and spirit, and manifest the cultural value of tea-tasting in the contemporary context. In terms of spiritual functions, tea-tasting can fully meet people's spiritual needs and daily emotional communication.
3. To promote the contemporary research of tea-tasting culture.

Scope of Research

This study is based on the macro background of Chinese tea culture. Tea culture was endowed with a spiritual connotation of tasting in the Tang Dynasty, contributing to the birth of a tea-tasting culture, which has experienced four stages: rise, growth, prosperity, and decline, forming its history which is of great use in its contemporary study. From the perspective of the times and spiritual symbols, this study explores the spiritual connotation of Chinese people's lifestyle and the cultural value of contemporary tea-tasting, to better promote the inheritance and development of tea-tasting culture in its transition from tea ceremony to Mingdao.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is illustrated in Figure 1.

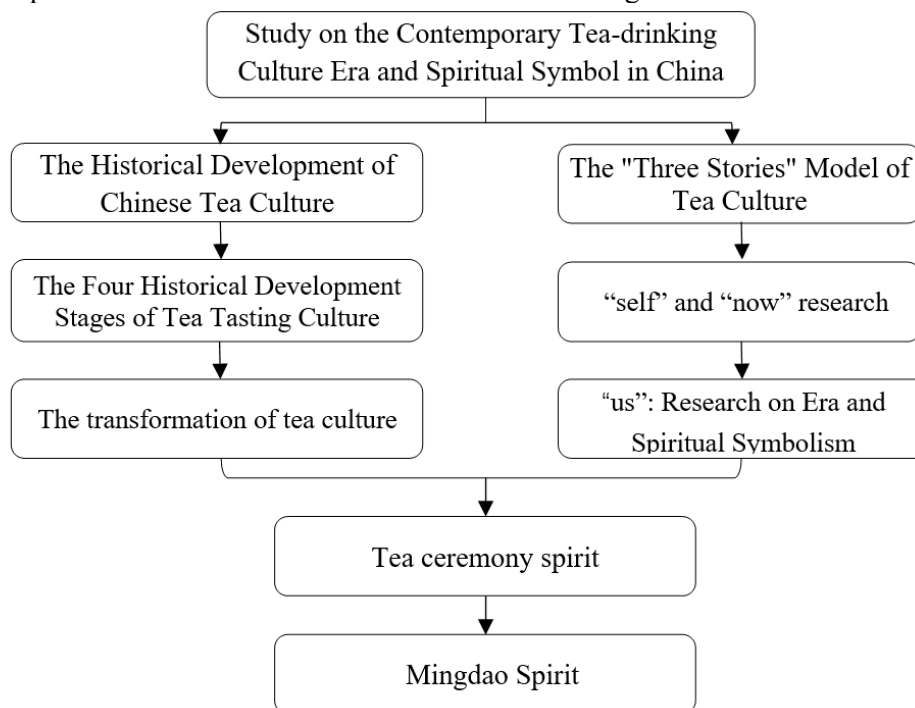


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Note: Constructed by the author

Methodology

1. Fieldwork method- The fieldwork method, also called field investigation or on-site research, is a kind of research method that goes deep into the real situation of the research object, obtains first-hand data through participant observation, and understands and explains the research object through qualitative data analysis. In this study, field surveys are conducted at Jingdezhen China Ceramics Museum, Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, and Taoxichuan Ceramic Art Avenue to investigate the development of tea-tasting culture and other related materials.

2. Interview method- The interview method is a commonly used research method, usually used to collect data and gain an in-depth understanding of the respondents' opinions, attitudes, experiences, and observed phenomena. In this study, through in-depth interviews with experts on tea-tasting culture, inheritors of Jingdezhen's intangible cultural heritage of handmade porcelain techniques, and experts in the field of Art Design, the public's knowledge, and understanding of the historical development of tea-tasting culture in China was sorted out to obtain some materials about the tea-tasting culture which has a profound impact on the masses. At the same time, this study discusses how to transform from the traditional tea-tasting cultural spirit to a contemporary one and obtain first-hand information on the symbols of times and spirit of tea-tasting culture in the contemporary context.

3. Creative research method-Creative research method is a research method used to cultivate creative thinking ability. Creative thinking is a comprehensive expression of multiple kinds of thinking ways, a thinking activity that reorganizes existing knowledge and experience proposes new solutions, and gets new thinking results. In this study, a creative research method was adopted to create a new thinking pattern research model of the times and spiritual the "three stories" research model of tea-tasting culture.

Results

Tea-tasting culture is one of the cultural types that was born in China and has had a crucial impact on the world. In terms of its historical development, it has experienced the four stages of rise, growth,

prosperity, and decline, and it is still alive in contemporary society, completing a major transition from a culture with literati attributes in the old era to a contemporary popular one. From the perspective of cultural inheritance, the tea ceremony, which reflects the times and spiritual symbols of traditional tea culture, still exists in the spiritual core of today's tea-tasting culture. However, its spirit is reflected in different ways with the changing of times. This is why the concept of Mingdao is put forward in this study. The spirit of Mingdao, which is in line with the modern spiritual symbol of tea-tasting culture, is a contemporary interpretation and iteration of the traditional tea ceremony spirit.

1. The historical development of China's tea-tasting culture

The tea-tasting culture formally formed and flourished in the Tang Dynasty, an inclusive, open, and diverse dynasty, where various systems, ideas, and concepts were born. French sinologist Jacques Gernet believed that in the Tang Dynasty, "certain new things emerged and would profoundly change the Chinese society." The tea-tasting culture was exactly one such new cultural type (Song, 2022).

1.1 The rise of tea-tasting culture

The tea-tasting culture came into being when the literati in the Tang Dynasty loved, pursued, and promoted tea drinking. In the Tang Dynasty, Lu Yu spent his whole life writing *The Bible of Tea*, which comprehensively explicated tea and tea culture from ten aspects: origin, sets, making, utensils, brewing, drinking, events, production, outline, and pictures. Since then, tea has been widely popularized by all walks of life, ranging from aristocratic families to small peasant families. It has quickly become a necessity in people's daily lives. Although there are many records of tea drinking by ordinary people in the ancient books of the past dynasties, it is still the pioneers of tea drinking among literati and poets like Sima Xiangru and Wang Bao who truly organized and developed the behavior of tea drinking into a spiritual culture. In the middle of the Tang Dynasty, the literati began to pursue aesthetic taste in tea drinking, which became mature at that time. There is a poem in the Song Dynasty that says, "Since Lu Yu was born in the world, the world has learned about spring tea." *The Bible of Tea* is also known as the "Encyclopedia of Tea" (Figure 2), the publication of which undoubtedly marked the real birth of tea-tasting culture. It is also the oldest and most complete tea science masterpiece in China. In the thousands of years of history after the Tang Dynasty, the tea-tasting culture entered thousands of households, stepping into a period of prosperity.

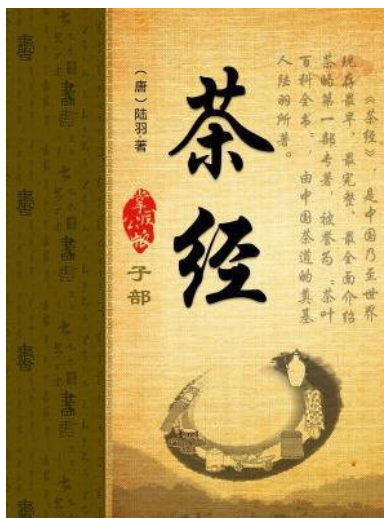


Figure 2 The Bible of Tea
Note: Author, 2023

1.2 The growth of tea-tasting culture

After the Tang Dynasty, the tea-tasting culture began to flourish in the Song Dynasty and the activity became a conscious artistic practice. The tea books of the Song Dynasty generally put forward the requirements for the color, aroma, and taste of the tea, making tea-tasting a common practice in daily life. For instance, the tea-making technology and brewing skills of the Song Dynasty were inherited and innovated from those of the Tang Dynasty. Whether it is the development of the production technology of

crumby-cake tea or the tribute tea, they are all manifestations of the prosperity of the tea-tasting culture in the Song Dynasty (Figure 3). The etiquette contained in tribute tea was accepted by the public, thus enriching the connotation of tea-tasting culture in the Song Dynasty. In addition, tea divisions and tea competitions were also features of the tea-tasting culture of the dynasty. Competitions were adopted to appraise the quality of tea leaves and performances were used to demonstrate tea-pouring skills, which have far-reaching influence to this day.



Figure 3 Tea banquet in the Song Dynasty

Note: By Xiaohongshu Media, 2023 (<http://xhslink.com/Na71Dz>)

1.3 The prosperity of tea-tasting culture

In the Ming Dynasty, tea-tasting culture ushered in a period of comprehensive development after a series of political reforms. Chinese folk tea-making skills became increasingly mature in this period. In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, a tea-tasting cultural development pattern based on fried green tea gradually formed (Figure 4), tea leaf types also began to diversify, breaking the monopoly of a certain type of tea leaves in the market at that time. The exquisite tea art combined with exquisite tea-tasting utensils fully manifests the artistic connotation of Chinese tea-tasting culture.



Figure 4 "Tea Brewing Picture" by Ding Yunpeng of the Ming Dynasty

Note: By Xiaohongshu Media, 2021 (<http://xhslink.com/KhD4Dz>)

1.4 The Decline of tea-tasting culture

The turbulent socio-political situation in the late Ming Dynasty (1700 AD) could no longer provide a gentle and comfortable tea-tasting environment. At the same time, the tightening domestic economy resulted in a decreased supply of tea, which was regarded as one of the main products of foreign trade due to its specialty. These two reasons combined with other social factors have eventually led to the gradual decline of the tea-tasting culture. What it still retained in the Qing Dynasty and even today, for most people, may only be appraising the quality of tea leaves itself. The period witnessed the decline of tea-tasting culture, however, it was also a crucial period to transform from an ancient culture with literati attributes to a secular and popular one today.

2. The "Three Stories" Model of Tea-tasting Culture

Marshall Ganz, Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Organizing and Civil Society at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, proposed a model of "three stories", which are widely used by public figures or spokespersons on how to tell stories well in public. In Marshall Ganz's model, he believes that narratives must tell three stories well, namely the story of self, the story of us, and the story of now (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Marshall Ganz's "three stories" model

Note: By Fan Ling, 2022 (https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/513979620?utm_psn=1731121096814874624)

Inspired by Marshall Ganz's model, this study constructs a new method: the "three stories" model of tea-tasting culture, and proposes new connotations to the three original concepts: self, now, and us. Based on the three stories of Pro. Marshall, this study retained expressions of the three stories, but added new connotations to the three concepts to develop the "three stories" model of tea-tasting culture, namely: self refers to "times"; now refers to "spirit"; us refers to "symbol". These three concepts self, now, and us still run through the entire research process (Figure 6).

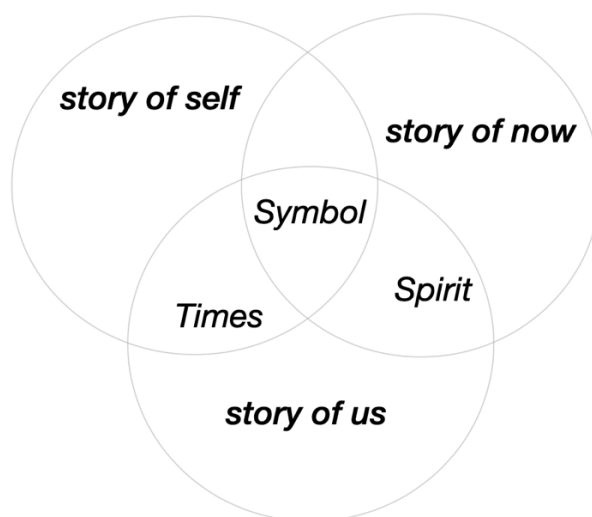


Figure 6 “Three stories” model of tea-tasting culture
Note: Author, 2023

3. Contemporary tea-tasting cultural symbols of times and spirit-Mingdao

3.1 Expression form of tea-tasting culture: tea art

Chinese people regard tea tasting as an art of life, of which tea art is a quite distinctive form of expression and a cultural phenomenon formed during the process. Tea art first originated and became popular in China, and a complete system of it had been formed as early as the Tang Dynasty in China. Tea art can not only well reflect the lifestyle of Chinese people which brings about a humanistic and artistic way of tasting tea, but also convey rich aesthetic ideas to people. With the continuous development of the tea-tasting culture, the content and form of tea art in China have also been significantly innovated (Li, 2017).

3.2 Spiritual symbol of traditional tea-tasting culture-tea ceremony

The word “tea ceremony” comes from the Zen monks of Chinese Buddhism, more specifically from Zen poetry: “One drink to clear away sleepiness, another drink to refresh my mind, and three drinks to achieve enlightenment.” This poem embodies the spirit of drinking tea. There is one drink, two drinks, and three drinks in the poem, which express the multiple realms of tea drinking. One drink clears away sleepiness, just like clearing the clouds and seeing the sun; the second drink clears the mind like the rain and dew nourishing and refreshing one’s mind; the third drink achieves enlightenment, meaning a gain of the true meaning of “tea ceremony”. These three drinks are the true fusion of tea and Zen, also called Tea&Zen culture (茶禅文化) (Shi, 2021), which has influenced later generations’ state of mind to understand the “three drinks” when drinking tea. Therefore, as the spiritual connotation of tea-tasting culture, “tea ceremony” first symbolizes the characteristics of the pursuit of spiritual “harmony, tranquility, pleasure, and truth” in Eastern culture. “Harmony” is the core of Chinese philosophy; “tranquility” is the foundation of Chinese tea ceremony practice, bringing clarity to reach the state of perfection; “pleasure” refers to enjoyment required in the spirit of the tea ceremony; “truth” is the ultimate pursuit of Chinese tea ceremony, which means to build the authentic personality, the true, good and beautiful soul through practicing tea ceremony, and the true meaning of life. The culture of tea-tasting followed a trajectory from “drinking” to “tasting” because it contains such a spiritual connotation (Ni, 2017) (Figure 7).



Figure 7 Tasting tea, feeling the spiritual connotation of "harmony, tranquility, pleasure, and truth" of the tea ceremony.
Note: Author, 2023

3.3 Analysis of the cultural value of tea-tasting in the contemporary context: new concept-Mingdao

This part is an analysis of the development and current situation of the tea ceremony spirit. In China, since the publication of *The Bible of Tea* by Lu Yu (733-804) in the 8th century, tea drinking which used to be a pure substance has become a part of Chinese spiritual culture. Literati since the Tang and Song dynasties have not only integrated the art of tea-tasting into poems and songs, composing many masterpieces but also published countless tea books to promote the art of tea-tasting, arousing widespread public attention to relevant knowledge. They regarded the tea-tasting as a lifestyle. This is the reason why the spirit of the traditional Chinese "tea ceremony" was able to be inherited. Today after 13 centuries since the publication of Lu Yu's book, contemporary lifestyles have undergone earth-shaking changes. The cultural spirit of tea-tasting that represents the spirit of traditional tea ceremony is not suitable in a new context. Since the founding of new China, the popularization rate of public education has risen year by year, which provides a cultural foundation for the tea-tasting culture to be widely understood. The growth of the social economy has enabled modern Chinese to consume and enjoy tea-tasting. Therefore, tea-tasting, a culture monopolized by the scholar-bureaucrats (literati) class who occupied the educational resources and were able to spend on literary articles in the past, is provided a context to spread and take root among the masses in modern society. From the 8th century to the 21st century, with the rapid progress of human society and the fundamental improvement of social productivity, the culture of tea-tasting, as a long-standing cultural tradition of ancient civilizations, should radiate entirely new vitality today.

From the perspective of cultural inheritance, the spirit of the tea ceremony still exists in the spiritual core of today's tea-tasting culture. However, its spirit is reflected in different ways with the changing of times, which the author calls the "Mingdao spirit". Through interviews with experts on tea-tasting culture, inheritors of Jingdezhen's intangible cultural heritage of handmade porcelain techniques, and experts in the field of Art Design, it becomes clear that in the minds of modern people, the traditional tea ceremony spirit of "tranquility, pleasure, harmony, and truth" still exists, but has been transformed into a symbol of the times and spirit in the contemporary context-"introspection, healing, integration, and selfhood". As a result, the spirit of the traditional tea ceremony has transformed into the Mingdao spirit with a new spiritual core characterized by the times.

However, how to transform from "tranquility, pleasure, harmony, and truth" to "introspection, healing, integration, and selfhood"? And what's the internal connection between the traditional and contemporary tea-tasting culture? Through interviews, the answers can be summarized as follows: (1) Evolution from traditional "tranquility" to contemporary "introspection"-people who tend to be impetuous in today's society need an environment where they can stay alone, keep calm, constantly observe themselves, and



realize self-awareness. And tranquility is the premise of all these; (2) transformation from the traditional "pleasure" to the contemporary "healing"-in today's society, people have to first achieve emotional relief, abandon disturbance from the outside world, achieve reconciliation with themselves to become psychologically healthy. (3) shift from the traditional "harmony" to the contemporary "integration"-the aroma of tea and the ritual of brewing tea can help people calm down and relax. People and tea integrate. One's breath blends in the tea soup while the soup flows in his body; (4) sublimation from the traditional "truth" to the contemporary "self-hood"-finding the existence of the true self through the mutual influence of the body and the tea, and thinking about "who I am", "where I come from", "where I am going". In short, the spirit of Mingdao, which is in line with the modern spiritual symbol of tea-tasting culture, is a contemporary interpretation and iteration of the traditional tea ceremony spirit

Discussion

Through analysis, this study found in the development of tea-tasting culture that tea drinking has become a part of Chinese spiritual culture from being a pure substance since the publication of Lu Yu's Bible of Tea in the Tang Dynasty. In the long history, ancient Chinese literati regarded tea-tasting culture as a way of life, hence the inheritance of the spirit of the traditional Chinese "tea ceremony". The long river of time has entered the 21st century today, spanning a distance of 13 centuries. Contemporary lifestyles have undergone earth-shaking changes. Tea drinking culture has also transformed from ancient literati culture to popular culture, which means the tea ceremony spirit used to express the traditional times and spiritual symbols can no longer interpret the contemporary spirit. In this study, it is proposed that the Mingdao spirit reflects the contemporary times and spiritual symbol of tea-tasting culture and is a contemporary interpretation and iteration of the traditional tea ceremony spirit. In today's context, the public's understanding of tea-tasting culture is still shallow, and relevant topics haven't been thoroughly studied. Tea-tasting culture is a behavioral manifestation of Chinese people's lifestyle. What this paper discusses is how to explore the contemporary nature and everlastingly new spiritual connotation of tea-tasting culture, as well as the times and spiritual symbols in the contemporary context to have the culture well inherited in contemporary times. The results of this study could provide valuable theoretical reference for the contemporary research and inheritance of tea-tasting culture.

This research provides a thorough overview of the evolution of tea-tasting culture throughout history, highlighting its importance and enhancing its meaning and spirit. It draws attention to the relationship between the material and spiritual facets of tea culture by charting the progression from tea art to tea ceremony. The tea ceremony embodies the internal, spiritual function, while tea art, as a social activity, represents the external, communal dimension. The shift from "drinking" to "tasting," and then from tea art to tea ceremony, shows how the traditional spiritual values that underpin tea-tasting culture are becoming more and more understood (Chen, 2018).

Furthermore, this study's development of the "three stories" model offers a fresh framework for researching tea-tasting culture. This model presents a comprehensive tool for analyzing the relevance of tea-tasting culture in modern times by integrating self-lifestyle research and now-spiritual value research. The methodology of the model makes it easier to comprehend how tea culture can be used as a lens to examine more general societal values and spiritual symbols. In doing so, it contributes to the current conversation about cultural inheritance and offers a useful source for upcoming studies on the relevance of traditional practices in the modern era (Liu & Ma, 2020).

The everlasting significance of the traditional tea ceremony spirit, modified for contemporary settings, is revealed by analyzing the historical periods and spiritual symbols within the tea-tasting culture. The study presents the idea of the Mingdao spirit, which is a modern interpretation of traditional values that reflects the dynamic character of cultural heritage. This spirit provides a useful theoretical framework for comprehending the evolution of tea-tasting culture, encapsulating both the continuity and transformation of its core values. The research's understanding of the modern expressions of traditional tea culture offers a framework for maintaining its core values while adjusting to the times, guaranteeing its continued relevance for upcoming generations (Wang, 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the investigation and analysis, the following conclusions have been obtained:

1. This study summarizes the historical development, reflects the overall significance of the inheritance, enriches the spirit and connotation, and lays a solid theoretical foundation for the research and



development of tea-tasting culture. The development of tea-tasting culture from tea art to tea ceremony is the connection between form and spirit. Tea art embodies the social connection and the tea ceremony manifests the spiritual function. From "drinking" to "tasting", and from tea art to tea ceremony, it fully expounds the traditional spiritual connotation of tea-tasting culture.

2. Through the construction of the "three stories" model of tea-tasting culture, this study elaborates on self-lifestyle research and now-spiritual value research in the context of tea-tasting culture, providing a beneficial research tool for subsequent research on us-times and spiritual symbols.

3. This study examines the times and spiritual symbols of tea-tasting culture. From the perspective of cultural inheritance, the spirit of tea ceremony which reflects the times and spiritual symbol of traditional tea culture, still exists in the spiritual core of today's tea-tasting culture. However, its spirit is reflected in different ways with the changing of times. The Mingdao spirit proposed in this study reflects the contemporary times and spiritual symbol of tea-tasting culture, is a contemporary interpretation and iteration of the traditional tea ceremony spirit, and provides a valuable theoretical reference for the contemporary research and inheritance of tea-tasting culture.

Recommendation

1. Consider interdisciplinary cooperation with tea-tasting cultural research experts, inheritors of Jingdezhen's intangible cultural heritage of handmade porcelain techniques, and experts in the field of Art Design to further explore the roots and cultural value of the history of China's tea-tasting culture.

2. Examine the "three stories" model of tea-tasting culture. Self refers to the times, now refers to the spirit, and us refers to the symbol, and fully understand the internal connection between the three factors.

3. Conduct in-depth research on the similarities and differences between the traditional and contemporary attributes of the times and spiritual symbols of tea-tasting culture to promote the theoretical construction of contemporary research on the tea-tasting culture.

4. based on existing research, design and create an immersive space for a tea-tasting cultural experience. This space can contain stories as well as creations of Mingdao—times and spiritual symbols that happened in the long history of Chinese tea-tasting culture, making it accessible for more people to get involved and experience more deeply. If the spirit of the tea ceremony is the spiritual residence of ancient literati and officials, then Mingdao is the spiritual and cultural integration place of the public in modern society. In this space, people as the main body, form the smallest field of Mingdao together with tea and utensils. Through this research, the tea-tasting culture can be better understood by the public and inherited continuously.

References

- Chen, J. (2018). The evolution of tea culture: From tea art to tea ceremony. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22(3), 45-67.
- Li, X. (2017). Analysis of the aesthetic significance of Chinese tea art. *Fujian Tea Industry*, 3, 93-94.
- Liu, Y., & Ma, Z. (2020). The three stories model: A new framework for understanding tea-tasting culture. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Research*, 15(2), 112-129.
- Ni, W. (2017). The relationship between tea culture and Chinese culture. *History and Culture*, 4, 343-344.
- Ren Yarui. (2022). Research and Practice of the Media Function of Emotional Experience in Installation Art. *Art View*, 79-81.
- Shi Y.M., 2021, Opportunities and Challenges of Chinese Tea and the Tea Culture Towards a Wider World. *Agricultural Archaeology*, 2, 79-83
- Song, S. (2022). The formation, development, and influence of Chinese tea culture. *People's Forum*, 19, 96-99
- Wang, L. (2019). Mingdao spirit and its contemporary significance in tea-tasting culture. *Journal of Traditional Culture*, 31(4), 89-102.
- Xu, J. (2022). Development history of tea culture in China. *Fujian Tea Industry*. 2, 256-258.

