



# A Discussion on the Path of Reconstruction of Collective Memory of Contemporary Tea Culture by the Chineseification of Marxism

Jiangyan Wang

Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, Shanghai, China

liquornana@163.com

**Abstract.** As a glittering cultural symbol of Chinese civilization, the relationship between traditional Chinese tea culture and Marxism has been discussed and studied with different emphases by scholars in different eras. Against the backdrop of the significant changes in history, the discussion on how to properly and regularly explore the relationship between Marxism and tea culture has gone beyond the cultural issue itself and is worth further exploration in terms of the new direction of Chinese civilization and the future movement and path of China's development. This paper will look at the historical flow of tea culture under the influence of Marxism and the urgency of reshaping a new civilization and laying the foundations for the future from the perspective of the collective memory of Chinese tea.

**Keywords:** Collective memory, Tea culture, Chinese Marxism, Civilizational reconstruction

## 1 Introduction

"The nature of the nation is that each individual will have many things in common, and at the same time, each individual has forgotten many things .....[1]" "Collective memory" occupies a part of what the nation embraces, and the material objects and symbols it contains are intertwined to form something shared by the group attached to and imposed on this material reality[2]. Throughout the past five thousand years, the collective memory of the Chinese nation has been activated, shaped, and passed on with the evolution of history in the constant forgetting. One of the most typical symbols of memory is tea.

If we look at the breadth of tea alone, it is just a natural habitat, a cup of tea roasted by the tea master's hands with excellent color and flavor, a drink that can quench the thirst and nourish the health of the body. However, beyond the material properties, what is more worth exploring is tea's civilization and beliefs. To explore tea from the perspective of "collective memory," we can find its role in people's life memory is diverse. There are tea customs and rituals: firewood, rice, oil, salt, soy, vinegar, tea, music, chess, calligraphy, painting, poetry, wine, and tea. Following the historical

lineage, the collective memory of the tea had symbolized the literati "to the pure and clean" of the "white and lovely"[3], had indicated the imperial power and wealth, but also symbolized the spirit of resistance to oppression.

The long history of tea culture has brought about a rich history. Still, it has left the Chinese nation without a sense of collective memory integration, a unified Taoist tradition that can be called tea. As the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, we do not consider the different levels of tea as a whole, or rather, we lack a clear collective memory of tea. Using collective memory to define tea, the frame's content is often unclear and lacks practical choice and exploration.

In the process of remodeling or reconstructing the memory of tea, some truths in the collective memory need to be bridged, and some realities need to be turned back to, and the need for such remodeling is urgent. In human development, the essence of traditional Chinese culture represented by tea has always been the spiritual power and pillar to maintain the unity and development of all ethnic groups and consolidate the unity and stability of the country. All Chinese children's expertise must be supported by a clear collective memory, which is the source of power to inspire all Chinese children to continue to forge ahead and build the Chinese dream with one heart. In a sense, our collective memory choice will determine "where are we going?" We should learn how to construct the collective memory of tea, the need for which type of tea memory resources integration, and choose what kind of value orientation. All these need to stand at the height of the typical spiritual home of the Chinese nation to consider.

This also led to the first exploration of Marxism and the remodeling of the collective memory of tea, the question of the unity of Marxism and Chinese tea culture. In a nutshell, the relevance of Marxism and Chinese tea culture is the Marxism-led opposition and harmony, and to achieve a scientific grasp of this relationship of resistance and unity, a scientific methodology is required. In this process, metaphysical thinking, eclecticism, and other subjective idealism and disturbances must be strictly vigilant and always stay awake. Often, when studying this subject, scholars are prone to fall into such quagmires as metaphysics and eclecticism, even though, subjectively, scholars have admonished themselves with every word of caution.

For example, there are some confusing views based on five thousand years of agricultural civilization based on the Chinese tea culture and the birth of the Western capitalist society of Marxist ideology; there are fundamental differences, and can not seek common ground to put aside the differences, and is unrelated to the two things. Marxism is not a good guide for reshaping the collective memory of civilization and the direction of future development. This view denies the unity between the two cultures based on the differences in the socio-historical backgrounds from which they emerged.

What follows the traditional Chinese tea culture is that the main principle of Chinese dialectics has a profound inner unity with dialectical materialism and materialistic dialectics. Although the development of the agricultural era had different social claims and exceptional forms of change, its inner logic of operation and the basic principles of scientific socialism also have a profound internal unity. Therefore, at the root of reshaping the collective memory of tea culture, it is not contrary to Chinese Marxism but mutually beneficial.

At the same time, another issue worth exploring is how the reinvention of tea's collective memory will be creatively transformed in the current process of Marxist Chineseisation. Let's first look at home and abroad to see the level of collective memory, the discussion of tea, and the direction of borrowing under the guidance of Marxism.

## 2 Current status of research

### 2.1 Domestic research

Throughout modern China, the collective memory of tea culture has yet to be explored on a large scale, and there have been relevant discussions in niche areas. Still, the degree of reference could be higher. Tea has been used as a living material since ancient times when "Shennong tasted all kinds of herbs," since then, it has been derived from various attributes such as rituals. The "Classics on Tea" written by Lu Yu during the Tang Dynasty is an "encyclopedia" about tea, which can also be regarded as a typical attempt to construct a collective memory, indicating that at that time, there were already some people systematically analyzing and summing up tea and society, especially tea and culture. Among them, the "Classics on Tea," for the first time its title, will be passed down through the generations of "Thea sinensis" "tea" and many other names united into a "tea! The word "tea".

And to the later generations (primarily referring to the late Tang Dynasty to China's modern era before the feudal ruling dynasties, and the Song Dynasty, Ming, and Qing Dynasties for the prevalence of), people have been trying to modify the search. Simply from the tea-drinking method, the Tang fried, Song point, and Ming brewing and the tea-drinking changes brought about by the innovation of tea utensils and humanistic aesthetics development is also a self-contained system with the imprint of the times. This shows that the people of this period still hoped to form or shape a collective memory or a precise abstract tea positioning. That is to say, at this time, we will shape the tea into a clear collective memory is still a chance.

Since the end of the Qing Dynasty, China has entered the modern era, and the collective memory related to tea has gradually collapsed due to historical reasons on its way to becoming more straightforward and transparent. Humiliating modern history so that the Chinese people at that time did not have time to focus on the collective memory of the construction of the search up and down, but also led to the country in the late "overkill," to a large extent, a lot of their cultural essence together with the dregs of the discarded. And whether this includes the abandonment of traditional culture or whether the tea still needs to complete the construction of collective memory is also abandoned. However, despite the turbulent times, some remarkable ideas about the shaping of tea's collective memory have emerged and injected fresh blood into the reshaping of collective memory.

"As one of the landmark events in China's modern history, the epoch-making significance of the May Fourth Movement is reflected in the fact that it is "a great ideological enlightenment and new cultural movement that spread new ideas, new cultures

and new knowledge"[4]. Behind the May Fourth Movement's seemingly wholesale opposition to tradition, it did not advocate a complete severance of the nation from Chinese culture. Still, while renouncing it, it opened up a dialogue between Marxism and traditional culture, including tea. The collective memory about tea in this period could be more transparent. Still, the worldview and methodology of Marxism established the national subjective consciousness and historical subjective consciousness for the creative transformation of tea culture, which tells us that the collective memory about the traditional culture's rationale is to serve the survival and development of the nation.

This provides two fundamental ideas for the discourse that follows in this piece: firstly, in exhausting the history and reshaping the collective memory of Chinese tea, it is necessary to carefully sift and combine the contents, sifting out those parts that are not suitable for modernization, those elements that do not match with the scientific concept of development; secondly, it is necessary to change the way of thinking, to use an outsider's perspective and Western theories to try to construct a collective memory of Chinese people about tea, perhaps see more truly. Just as Chinese culture and philosophy need foreign sinologists to study them, Western philosophy also needs Chinese scholars to examine them. This is a need for dialogue between Chinese and Western philosophy, a need for cultural exchange, and a need for future world philosophy.

The aftermath of the founding of New China was a prosperous building scene, but missing from it was an attempt to reshape the collective memory of tea. This may be linked to the early years of the founding of the country and the policy of opposing feudal culture. Until the reform and opening up, tea was associated with a physical and material supply as a commodity and marketability. Up to this point, tea has never clearly come to the status of a cultural icon.

Throughout modern China, it did not set off in a wide range of tea culture collective memory of the discussion; niche areas have been related to the discourse, but the degree of reference is not high. But the precise point is that it was creatively transformed into Chinese Marxism in guiding the Chinese Communist Party and hundreds of millions of people to the significant national innovation, as small as the return of the collective memory of the Chinese tea culture, play an essential and far-reaching connotation.

But the background of the historical changes, how to achieve the future of the creative combination and transformation is worth thinking about, here first held down the table. Let's first look at the tea culture in Japan and the United Kingdom, how to combine their national characteristics and national beliefs to build a unique tea "collective memory" and some of these successful cases and experiences as a reference blueprint.

## **2.2 Overseas research**

### **Japanese Tea Ceremony**

Tea culture was originated in China and can be traced back to Shennong's tasting of all kinds of herbs, and afterwards Lu Yu, a Tang dynasty man, was honored as the Sage of Tea after he wrote the Classics on Tea. Through the inheritance and dissemination of successive generations of tea people, the three cultures of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism have been integrated into the tea culture. This makes the tea culture not

only the inheritance of the classics but also the change with the times; there is the perseverance of the tea culture, but also the exchange and mutual feeding across the borders. Thousands of years of history has given tea culture a strong oriental colour, and it goes without saying that the biggest beneficiary of the spread of Chinese tea culture is Japan.

Tea was brought to Japan by the envoys of the Sui and Tang dynasties with the spread of Buddhism to the East, and after thousands of years of localized development, it has transcended the realm of a simple beverage. Simple tea has been pushed to its limits, and the present-day Japanese tea ceremony system has evolved. A solidified world of tea is the tea ceremony, which has become part of the collective memory of the Japanese people. What should be unimaginable is now known without thought[5].

While the tea ceremony is also a discovery, it is even more of a creation based on the accumulation of practice over time. The mastermind of the Japanese tea ceremony was Chirikyū, who established the ambiguity and vagueness pioneered by his predecessors into a complete system (based on Wabi-Sabi), building the bones of the Japanese collective memory of tea.

Compared with the blossoming of Chinese tea culture of the exact origin, the Japanese tea ceremony has its paranoid aesthetic tendency. It has become the foundation of Japan's collective memory of tea over a hundred years of perseverance. In the collective memory of the Japanese people, the link of "tea and spirituality" seems to be the central vein that connects the history, and the analysis and research on it may bring some positive thoughts for the Chinese people to reshape the collective memory of tea.

Leaving aside the tea first, the Japanese collective memory of the most numerous is perhaps its attention to the "fine details", appreciating the aesthetic sense of the very small and delicate: ancient Japanese cherry blossom viewing and the Chinese see the lush different, glimpsed a small piece of cherry blossoms on the M-shaped gap, the pronunciation of the cherry blossom "SAKURA" (meaning "cracked look"). In the early days, when "grand" tea was introduced to Japan, it was also famous for a while, and there were aristocratic products such as the "Golden Tea Room" as a representative.

However, after being refined and refined, it was still led by Japan's unique "barrenness", and the size of the tea room kept shrinking. The aesthetics continued to merge into the general's simplicity and the details' enjoyment. The Japanese tea people, represented by Chirikyū, are not so much the creators and masterminds of the Japanese Tea Ceremony as they are the faithful disciples of Japanese aesthetics (miniaturization vectors). A typical Japanese tea room is usually decorated with a scroll of wall paintings, a small cluster of flower arrangements, and a tea bowl. The tiny portions of "kaiseki cuisine" inspired by tea drinking are still revered as elegant and beautiful food, even after the ultimate goal of tea has been lost.

### **Britain and the Culture of Afternoon Tea.**

"When the clock strikes four, everything in the world stops for tea" (English folk song). Tea is a magical leaf from the mysterious East, while "afternoon tea" seems to be a British style rooted in the aristocratic soil of the Sunset Empire. Tracing back the

collective memory of tea in Britain may empower the Chinese people to reshape the collective memory of tea from another dimension.

The earliest records of tea in Europe are from travelers' journals, and the English, welcoming the arrival of tea in 1650, described it this way: "This Chinese beverage is wonderful and is highly approved by physicians. It is called (Tcha) in China, and Tay, or Tee, in other countries"[6]. In 1662, Princess Catherine of Portugal, addicted to tea, married far away from England with several boxes of Chinese black tea. Once tea was spread, it quickly became popular in the British royal court; the reason for this is that, in addition to the subtle and irresistible taste of tea and its amazing "medicine" properties, tea is also expensive and scarce, which matches the needs of the aristocratic culture of the British monarchy, which has a strict class division.

Tea gardens (or tea courts) became the fashionable choice for social occasions for the aristocracy, and the formal English afternoon tea, which originated in the 19th century during the time of Queen Victoria (1837~1901), also became one of the orders of life for the British high society. Although the aristocrats gradually lost their economic and political dominance after the Industrial Revolution, their "ideological superiority and cultural esteem were preserved, and their luxurious tea drinking style became a role model for the emerging industrial bourgeoisie and the middle class to follow. .... The British public had a particular recognition and admiration for the aristocracy. The aristocracy had a specific mention and aspiration. It formed a particular identity with the character and culture of the aristocracy, which remained the core of the life of the whole society and a model of respect"[7].

### 3 Conclusion

Japan's collective memory of tea was guided by a supreme national aesthetic guideline before a collective memory of Japanese tea culture existed. Or rather, the Japanese tea ceremony, Japan's collective memory of tea, is an ideological branch under the Japanese standard. Defined by the British aristocracy, the core of tea culture has been generally recognized and even respected by the British public. In the process of the decline in the price of tea and tea, the audience continues to sink. The luxury of tea and the sense of ceremony have been well preserved and continue to be carried forward. The collective memory of tea in Britain is the cult of aristocracy and the maintenance of daily life.

As for China, the first thing we must clarify is that Chinese tea culture, as one of the outstanding traditional cultures, has always been embraced by the Chineseisation of Marxism with open arms, absorbed hungrily, and transformed naturally. The history of the development of Chinese Marxism is the history of drawing on, fascinating, and transforming Chinese civilization, including traditional tea culture.

We need to take a dialectical view of the relationship between the Chineseisation of Marxism and traditional Chinese tea culture and affirm the identity of their roots. At the same time, in the challenging and creative future, while reconstructing conventional Chinese tea culture, we should make it clear that the transformation of Chinese society cannot be achieved without the leadership of Marxism and that the ultimate victory of

Marxism requires the foundation of traditional Chinese tea culture. For this reason, it is particularly urgent to construct a collective memory of tea culture under the guidance of Chinese Marxism.

## References

1. Dewey. *Democracy and Education* [M]. Translated by Wang Chengxu. Beijing: People's Education Press, 2001:5.
2. Kang Lifang. Cultivating Political Identity with Historical Memory - A New Perspective on Ideological and Political Education for College Students [J]. *Hubei Social Science*, 2016(5):176-181.
3. Lu Yu, translated in 2011. *Cha Jing: el clásicodelté*. Madrid: Ediciones LibreríaArgentina.
4. Xi Jinping's speech at the conference commemorating the 100th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement", *People's Daily*, 1 May 2019, version 2.
5. Harahira Akasegawa. *Chirikyu's Speechless Avant-Garde* [M]. Translated by Zheng Minchin. Beijing: life-reading-Xinzhi Sanlian Bookstore, 2016: 4.
6. Tenshin Okakura. Translated by Tanizumi. *The Book of Tea* [M]. Beijing: Nova Publishing House.2017: 9.
7. Liang Yuan. The Value Orientation of British Culture from Tea Culture[J]. *Journal of Xiangnan College*,2010,31(6):66-68.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

