

III. The heart of the tea life... the reality of the tea life

We have looked at the history of Korean tea life so far. And among them, we have paid attention to the unity of tea and the spirit of patriotism, the unity of tea and Zen, and the unity of tea and Silhak, and the so-called unity of tea, Zen, and the beauty of Goryeo porcelain and the beauty of Joseon porcelain. We also sought to reach a point where Korean arts and Silhak approach each other and become one. Now, let's look at the specific content and form of actual tea life. We may call it 'the mind for tea practice.' The meaning of the term 'mind for tea' refers to the attitude of the person who does tea and the way to take care of the tea. Looking at this specifically, it can be divided into the following two types.

In other words, one is a matter related to the tea utensils (茶具), water, and fire, as well as the taste and beauty of the tea, which are the most important, and the other is related to the issue of the pangju (烹主), who serves the tea, and the heart of the guest, paenggak (烹客) who receives the tea.

Now, let's look at it in detail, starting with the tea utensils.

1. Tea implements

If tea is used in a broad sense, all the various tools used in the tea life would fall into the category of tea implements. However, here, we will narrow down the scope to a small extent and mention only a few items within a narrow scope, such as tea containers (vessels for storing tea) and tea bells.

• Tea cups (茶鍾)

The tea cup is naturally different from the tea pot used to make matcha (powdered tea) and the tea cups used to drink loose leaf tea. Even in the case of loose leaf tea, it naturally varies depending on the case, such as when it is an extremely fine grain, when it is a Japanese tea for daily use, and when it is an intermediate product, such as a famous tea that is used commercially to attract customers.

Also, apart from the case of use, when viewed in the light, there are tea cups with various colors, such as white, black, and blue, and there are also small ones that are not as large as the large medium-sized ones or lily pads. Looking at the way the cups are fired, some are made with hard glazes, while others are made with solid bodies such as earthenware and earthen pots.

In any case, it is good if the color of the teacup is white, because when the brewed tea is poured into the cup, the light on the teacup gives a person an ecstatic feeling.

In other words, under the special conditions of preference and taste, such as tea, the color that comes up there is the first thing that impresses us. Thus, the line of tea flows from color to scent, and from scent to taste again. Color, scent, and taste can be said to be the key to distinguishing between good and bad. Therefore, in appreciating this light, above all else, it must be a vessel that receives the light well, and the light of the vessel that receives the light is white most clearly, so white tea is said to be the best.

To add to this, when it comes to the color of tea in tea cups, the best is green, the next is yellow, the next is red, and the color that resembles soy sauce is considered the worst.

• Tea table (茶盤)

A tea table is a tray that holds the tea cups. In this case, the tray is preferably wooden and painted, but even without painting, it is made of wood such as chestnut or oak

that has been buried in the ground for a long time and is in the process of being converted into coal under the influence of geothermal heat. It makes the best tea table because it can achieve the luster found in coal. The quality of tea tables made with patterns of prickly pear tree, jujube tree, quince tree, etc. is high, and the next best product is one made of elaborate bamboo, which can be polished, and the next best product is one made with paint that can fill the holes made of bamboo. I would say it makes an impression.

- Tea spoon (茶匙)

The use of tea spoons is naturally different for powdered tea and loose-leaf tea.

In the case of powdered tea (抹茶), a bamboo stick is appropriately bent to scoop out the tea powder, while in the case of leaf tea, a spoon made of metal, flower or jujube tree, etc. is used.

- Kettle (藥湯鑪)

The kettle commonly refers to the container for boiling water. These tea kettles are either pots made of clay, or kettles made of brass, copper kettles, silver kettles, gold kettles, etc., depending on the type of material they are made of.

However, for practical purposes, earthenware jars, iron kettles, and copper kettles are good. But iron or copper kettles are prone to rust, so special care must be taken when using them to prevent rust. Kettles made of porcelain or brass kettles that do not rust easily are the most practical, while silver kettles are considered extravagant. In any case, the sound of water boiling in a tea kettle is the clearest and most elegant, and it is better to use it for the purpose of boiling water while making a clean sound.

- Tea caldron (茶鼎)

A caldron is used when a lot of water is needed when there are many people, and especially when a tea ceremony is performed even with a small number of people. The one made of stone is called a seokjeong, and the one made of metal is called an iron pot.

Anyway, in the case of a pot, there is a lid, and a good pine wind and rain blows out from inside the pot, and when the water in the pot boils, it reaches soft ripeness, but like in the case of a kettle, it does not ripen or mature. A scoop is needed to draw boiling water from the caldron, and it is customary to pour the same amount of water back into the caldron after removing water.

When pouring water, you need a water bottle that has been prepared separately, and it is common to pour the water that was in this water bottle or to scoop up water from a small water container neatly with a scoop and pour it in.

- Tea towel (茶巾)

Chasugeon (茶巾) is also called chageon (茶巾) and chahaengju. As a dishcloth, cloth made of hemp is suitable, and the color white is best. Linen is good because it dries easily and absorbs moisture well, and its white color is good because it looks clean and matches the clear tone of the tea drinking.

Therefore, this tea towel is suitable for its purpose as long as it is clean and neat, and it can cleanly wipe tea bowls, tea trays, tea pots, etc.

- Tea caddy

A tea caddy is a vessel that contains and stores prescribed tea. The tea container must be made of metal, and among metals, it must be made of silver or lead, and must have a cover necessary to seal it. In addition, you can also use elaborate porcelain jars as tea containers.

The tea caddy must be made to prevent the tea's characteristic rich aroma from being released to the outside.

This is because the function of the tea container is to protect the tea and at the same time block moisture from outside air. Proper tea must be well dried. Only when it is dried in the best way can the true green color of tea, which is the true color of the tea, be preserved.

The Way of Tea comes from having three things: Jeong (精), Jo (操), and Gyeol (潔). In other words, when making tea, there must first be purity, the tea must be kept dry, and cleanliness must be followed when serving tea. Only when these three things are met can you say that you have entered into the Way of Tea.

From this point of view, it can be said that the tea caddy that preserves and protects the tea is very important. In addition, the tea caddy needs to have a beautiful appearance that attracts admiration.

- Tea tray (茶卓)

Chatak tea tray is also called dae (垓). Chatak refers to placing or serving tea bowls.

This is made of plate-shaped lacquerware or made of silk wood. It is sufficient as long as it is not as large as a tea table and can hold one tea bowl and serve it in front of guests. Therefore, if it is too flashy or cumbersome, there is a risk of tarnishing the serene atmosphere of the ceremony.

- Incense burner

An incense burner is a container for incense. There are different kinds of incense, powdered garuhang 抹香, stick pyeonhyang 偏香, and circular hwanhyang 丸香, and the incense burner may vary depending on each case.

However, simple ones made of goblet are often better. As the scent of incense rising from the incense burner and the true scent of tea come together, the tea person is immersed in the dharma of ecstasy.

2. Fire

So far, we have looked at tea by dividing it into about 10 items. Now let's take a look at the fire that boils tea using these tea implements as tools.

Charcoal is commonly used as fuel for boiling tea, and among charcoals, white charcoal is considered the best. This is because the unique light scent of white charcoal matches the tone of tea and is convenient for regulating heat. However, since the place where we usually drink tea is in the room of a house, white charcoal is used to generate heat depending on the temperature of the room. This is also because it is suitable.

So naturally, when using this white charcoal fire, the charcoal basket and its containers, such as the brazier, stove, and tongs, become a big problem.

The reason why the brazier is problematic here is because of the arrangement of the equipment in the tea room, as the panju (烹主), and the seats of the guests are centered around it.

In this way, the brazier that holds the fire is placed in the basic position in the tea room, so when talking about the tea room, admirable tea masters such as Wandang (阮堂) even refer to it as 'Juknojisil (竹爐之室).' bamboo stove room

And in lighting a fire in this brazier, since what fuels the fire is charcoal, ash that can contain the charcoal is needed. When a charcoal fire is made in the ashes, water is put in an iron kettle and placed on the fire to boil. This requires a trivet to support it. The inside and outside of the brazier and the trivet must be kept very clean, and no ashes should be placed anywhere on the vessels (tea kettle or tea pot) placed on top of it.

When boiling water, there are times when high heat is needed, and there are also times when the fire power needs to be reduced to a small extent.

In this respect, seeing the flame is called fire, and the courage of the fire is something that cannot be left out in the tea ceremony.

In other words, the mind that produces tea, the mind that legislates, and the mind that makes peace are strict forms that are internally interconnected. It is the attitude of a tea person to be courageous so that even the smallest forms do not flow into mere formalities, and to allow that courage to be directly connected to Zen.

This is how admirable tea masters who have gone through this stage express it.

In a quiet place
I drank half of the tea.
The scent was the same as at first

At the right time
The water flows naturally
Flowers bloom alone
(靜坐處 茶半香初 妙用時 水流花開)

As you know, this is a Zen phrase used by tea master Wandang. It is better to appreciate the high level of this pioneer in its original text. This is because translating it would be like turning silk inside out. Truly, the heart for tea practice must advance to this point.

3. The source of water

Water is more important than anything else in tea. Just as we start drinking a liquid called breast milk from the moment we are born, water is of course fundamental as an important material that comes from our survival habits.

In this way, drinking water as a habitual instinctive desire has reached the apogee of the doctrinal philosophy.

When tea people speak, water is called the body of tea. First, the water quality is referred to by tea people as 'pure water quality.' Water itself has hard water quality and soft water quality, and there is also water quality with chemical properties such as sulfur and carbon, and base water quality. There are parts that can be divided into acidic and non-acidic areas, and there are also streams, streams, and rivers.

Even in the same river, there is water close to the riverside, water on the surface of the river, and so-called deep water 2 or 3 feet below the water surface. If you examine them closely, there are many differences.

Also, even in the case of the same water, it can be seen that the taste of water falling in a waterfall and water flowing down a flat surface are different.

Then, draw water from a flat surface, put it in a container or something, and place it somewhere out of the sun for about 8 to 10 hours. Cover the top of the container with something like a hemp cloth to allow some air to pass through. Put the same water in another container and leave it uncovered. The taste of the water is very different from that of the water that is left in the water or that is placed on a board such as a wooden board so that no air can pass through.

Among these, the one that tea makers consider as best is Pumcheon (品泉), which is made by leaving it in a pot for about 10 hours, pouring it, and covering it with hemp to reduce airflow.

This requires that the vitality of the water is not damaged and that sediment-like substances in the substance itself are well settled, so people who enjoy tea preserve water in this way.

In other words, whether we drink tea or cold water, this kind of water is the best for our hygiene. We must know that moving water, such as water falling from a waterfall, is not very good for us.

Put the water in this way in a tea pot (tea pot, stone pot, earthenware pot, iron pot, organic pot) or a cauldron and place it quietly and stably on a trivet with a charcoal fire in it, in a position where it can receive an appropriate amount of heat without being touched by ash or charcoal. Then, after a certain period of time, you will hear the sound of the water in the cauldron boiling due to the heat emitted from the charcoal fire.

This sound of boiling water is something that tea lovers find very refreshing and elegant, and it is also called Songpung (松風) and Hoewoo (檜雨). If translated back into Korean, it would mean that it sounds like something very melodic, such as ‘the sound of the wind passing by pine branches in a pine forest.’

In fact, the sound of water boiling in a good cauldron with the right amount of firepower is very quiet and clear, and it can be said to be a state of hearing the various musical thunders of the heavens within our mind itself. Regarding this, Jeong Po-eun (鄭圃隱) said, “What I like to hear is the sound of tea water boiling in a stone pot.. (愛聽石鼎松風聲).”

With this sound, the water in the cauldron boils and bubbles form. The bubbles also boil while rotating like a single thread, or boil like multiple threads. Also, some of the foam resembles the foam produced by crabs, some resemble the foam of shrimp eyes, and others form balls-shaped beads in succession, like fish eyes.

Tea people call this tangbyeon (湯辨), the foaming is called inner byeon (內辨), and the sound heard outside is called outer byeon (外辨).

When the energy of water completely exceeds that of raw water, it is said to be ripe. At this point, it is called initial sound, pre-sound, true sound, and brittle sound. It makes a sound similar to ‘驟聲’, and this is also called ‘maengtang (萌湯)’ because it is said to be less boiled water like plain water.

Haengdang means immature, and here it refers to less boiled water, not completely boiled water.

In this way, further boiling of the boiled water is called kyeolsuk (結熟), but even this kyeol-suk does not deviate from plain water. From this place, it is placed on a stand made of bamboo, and after 2 to 3 minutes, it reaches a point where no sound is heard. This case is called Gyeongsuk (經熟). In Korean, this means ‘it was very boiled and steamed well.’

One thing to note here is that if the lid of the cauldron is opened or closed, the energy of boiling water rises, and the steam is held in one, two, three or four bundles like a string, making it difficult to distinguish.

And the case where the energy of boiling water has reached the most appropriate level is called ripening. This refers to the time when the convection action of the boiling water itself has disappeared. The word ‘gyeongsuk’ means “the boiled water was well steamed” or “the water was boiled until it was cooked.”

The ripened water is poured into a tea pot, which is a bit like a small Hansagi kettle. The inside of the chaho must be cleanly washed. Put an appropriate amount of prescribed tea into the cleanly washed chaho, and then pour the boiled sweet water into the chaho after steaming well.

In this way, after about 2 to 3 minutes, a flavorful divine energy called tea emerges from the sweet water that becomes the tea body, and spreads throughout the water. This is called tea spirit.

This tea body and tea spirit are well warmed and seasoned well. This seasoned tea is what surprises our taste buds, refreshes us, and brings us into samadhi. Therefore, it can be said that the reason why tea leads to Zen is also here.

Lee Nang-san, a scholar in the late Joseon Dynasty, drank this kind of tea and left a tea poem.

At the first scent of tea, the old Buddha smiled slightly.
After the bell rings, the green mountains listen silently.
(香初老佛微微笑鍾後青山默默聽]

Tea connoisseurs describe the healthy spirit of ripened water and the well-flavored tea spirit as ‘mysterious.’

This health and godliness is very difficult when it is just right, and it can only be achieved through skillful tea-making, so we call it ‘seasoned’ or ‘seasoned’ tea.

Well-seasoned tea like this has a greenish color, a pleasant aroma, and a sweet taste.

Therefore, people who always talk about tea pay a lot of attention to color, aroma, and taste. This is a standard for observing not only tea but all foods.

So far, we have briefly looked at various aspects of ‘Chado Yongsim’. This time, for the last time, we will reexamine it through Cha Seong (茶聖 Tea Saint)’s 『茶神傳』 Chasincheon.

This ‘Chasinjeon’ records the mysterious events (detailed procedures and tips, etc.) of tea life, and its contents include Picking tea (採茶), Drying tea (造茶), Evaluating tea (辨茶), Storing tea (藏茶), Managing the fire (火候), Evaluating the boiling of water (湯辨), Old leaves and young buds (湯用老嫩), Infusing tea (泡法), Putting in the tea (投茶), Drinking tea (飲茶), Color (色), Taste (味), Losing taste by contamination (點染失真), Tea that has deteriorated must not be used (茶變不可用), Grades of spring water (品泉), Well water is not appropriate for tea (井水不宜茶), Tea utensils (茶具), Tea cups (茶盞), the wiping cloth (拭盞布), Rules governing tea (茶衛). It is divided into 20 sections.

First, ‘Picking tea’ talks about the timing of tea collecting, and ‘Drying tea’ explains the subtle aspects of making tea. Again, ‘evaluating tea’ talks about the appropriateness of care in making it (泡之得宜) - care in storage and brewing (藏之得法) and infusing.

‘Storing tea’ refers to how to store tea, and ‘Managing the fire’ refers to the methods of watching the fire burn.

In ‘Evaluating the boiling water’, the boiling water used for tea is broadly classified into three types: the Appearance (形辨), the Sound (聲辨), and the Steam (氣辨). The appearance (形) is Inner evaluation (內辨), Sound (聲) is External evaluation, and Steam is called Rapid evaluation (捷辨). Again, things like crabs’ eyes (蟹眼), prawns’ eyed (蝦眼),

fish eye (魚眼), and the Strings of beads (連珠) are all aspects of Not yet ready (萌湯), which means that the moisture has not completely faded and it is not yet ready (純熟). Initial sounds, (初聲), rumbling sounds(轉聲), vibrating sounds(振聲), and galloping sounds(驟聲) all showing that the water is still not ready, all belong to this category.

When the point of no sound (無聲) is reached, this is called conclusively ready. (結熟), but when the steam rises in threads, one or two threads, three or four threads, and they become so chaotic, tangled in confusion (氤氳), it is not ready but when it finally reaches the point of rising straight up (直沖貫), it is said to be fully ready (經熟), and so explaining how to evaluate the boiling water.

Next, 'About old leaves and young buds' (湯用老嫩) is about the tea manufacturing method. What is said here is that the ancient people's tea manufacturing method necessarily involved grinding the tea in a tea mortar (茶磨) and then passing it through a sieve so that the dust blows away in the wind, it is so fine (細末) and once the powder has become fine enough, it is made into cakes with dragon designs. Freshly drawn water must be used for making it, not old water. To this fresh water tea is added. It is said that the spirit of tea resides (硬浮) in such freshly drawn water.

Moving on to Infusing tea (泡法), after confirming that the water is fully ready, first pour a small amount of water into the teapot (壺中) and swirl it to remove the chill. Then, add the tea leaves and brew (注酌) properly. When making, adjust the quantities without losing the measure. If there is too much tea, the taste will be bitter and the aroma will be dull, and if there is too much water, the color will be light and the taste will be low and the seasoning will not be right. Also, the tea pot and cauldron must be thoroughly washed in cold water, otherwise the aroma of the tea will be lost. Also, if the water is boiling, the tea spirit is said to be unsound.

'Putting in the tea' (投茶) means pouring in the tea in moderation according to the order, without overdoing it. Putting the tea in first and pouring the water after is called 'Hatu Putting beneath' (下投), and adding the tea after half of the water and then pouring the in the rest of the water is 'Jungtu (中投)' (putting in the middle), pouring in the water first and then adding the tea is called Sangtu (上投) 'putting above'. The technique varies depending on the season. It is said that Jungtu is best in the spring and fall, Sangtu in the summer, and Hatu in the winter.

'Drinking the tea' (飲茶) is a description of the state of drinking tea. When drinking tea, it is considered best when there are few guests. If there are a lot of guests, the place will be noisy and cluttered, so there will be distractions. Drinking alone is called 'divine' 神, drinking with two guests is called 'excellent' 勝, drinking with three or four guests is called 'elegant' 趣, five or six is called 'normal' 泛, and six or seven is called 'charitable' 施.

Sometimes, having two guests means using the bright moon as a candle and friend, and using white clouds as seats and pillows, the white clouds and bright moon being the only two guests.

Judging from the way Cho-ui wrote "With no other guests but a white cloud and the bright moon, I am raised to a place far higher than any immortal," we can guess how much of a mysterious sense of dharma he felt while living in tea.

The next book explains the colors of tea. In addition, it is said that Yellow, black, red or dark twilight colors do not belong to good tea.

'Mi' is the taste of tea. When it comes to tea taste, sweet tea is considered upper and bitter tea is considered lower. Tea itself is a true fragrance, a true color, and a true taste, and

once it is exposed to something else, it immediately loses its true nature. This is called ‘losing tea’s true nature by contamination’.

‘Tea that has deteriorated must not be used’ means that discolored tea cannot be used. Properly roasted leaves are always the best, but if it is not stored properly, it turns green, and then changes back to yellow-black-white. It is said that drinking tea modified in this way not only cools the stomach, but also weakens the energy, leading to illness.

Grades of spring water (品泉) refers to the quality of spring water. Tea is the god of water, and water is the body of tea, so its divine energy cannot be revealed except through water, and its body cannot be revealed except through pure tea.

The spring water flowing down is clear and light, and the spring water at the bottom (水下) is clear and heavy. The spring water in the stone (石中) is clear and sweet, the spring water in the sand (砂中) is clear and cool 清冽, and the spring water in the soil is pure (淡白). Also, the water flowing from yellow stone (黃石) is called beautiful (佳), and it is said that water flowing from blue stone (青石) should not be used, and that flowing water should be stabilized before use.

It is also said that the water in a shady place is better than the water in a sunny place, that the true water source is tasteless, and that the true water is odorless.

Next, it is said that well water is not appropriate for tea (井水不宜茶)’. Here, referring to Lu Yu (陸羽)’s ‘Book of Tea’ 茶經, it is said that mountain water is the best, river water is the lowest, and well water is the lowest. In spring or the rainy season, when there are no mountains or springs nearby, rainwater is collected and used. Rainwater has a sweet taste and is considered water that nourishes all things. Although water from snow (雪水) is clear, the sensuality (性感) is medium-toned (里陰) and it cannot be used much because it enters the stomach and causes coldness.

When storing water, place the container in the shade, pour water over it, cover it with a silk cloth, and let it receive the energy of the stars. Then the spirit will not go away, and the divine energy will always remain and it can be preserved. Otherwise, if you cover the water jar with wood or stones, seal it with paper or bamboo skin, or expose it to sunlight, the spiritual energy of the water will be dispersed to the outside and the energy will be blocked inward, making the water’s spirit energy useless. Therefore, when drinking tea, water storage should be considered the most important.

When it comes to tea utensils, extravagant things should be avoided as much as possible. Teacups as white as snow are best, colored ones such as blue weaken the color of the tea, so they are not as good as white. As a good dishcloth for wiping the teacups thin hemp is best.

Lastly, in ‘the rules governing tea (茶衛)’, it says that when tea is being dried, it should be done carefully (精選); when tea is being stored (藏茶), it should be kept dry; when tea is being brewed (泡), it should be done cleanly. These, Chou says, are fundamental.