

# Tea culture tourism in Southeast Asia : A comparative study of Mae Salong in Thailand and Thai Nguyen in Vietnam

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บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)

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การท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้: การศึกษาเปรียบเทียบแม่ฮ่องสอนในประเทศไทย  
ไทยและถียงเวียงในประเทศเวียดนาม

น.ส.เหียนหลิง ก้าว

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต  
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By                                      Miss Yanling Guo  
Field of Study                      Southeast Asian Studies  
Thesis Advisor                      Associate Professor MONTIRA RATO, Ph.D.

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การศึกษาชิ้นนี้พยายามสำรวจพัฒนาการของการปลูกและการผลิตชา และการท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาที่แม่สลอง  
ของประเทศไทยและถายงเวียนของประเทศเวียดนาม รวมถึงวิเคราะห์ทรัพยากรของการท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาและรูปแบบการ  
ท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาในพื้นที่สองแห่งนี้จะเปรียบเทียบความเหมือนและความแตกต่าง งานวิจัยใช้ทฤษฎีการท่องเที่ยว  
ทางวัฒนธรรมมาวิเคราะห์รูปแบบการท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาและแนวโน้มในอนาคตของการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมของ  
สถานที่ท่องเที่ยวสองแห่งนี้ นอกจากการวิจัยเอกสารแล้ว การลงพื้นที่ภาคสนามและการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกยังช่วยให้เห็นถึง  
มุมมองของผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียต่อการท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาในพื้นที่สองแห่งนี้ด้วย

ข้อค้นพบจากการศึกษาวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่าการปลูกชาที่แม่สลองเริ่มต้นจากชาวบ้านกักมันตั้งในภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย  
ที่เดิมทีปลูกชาเพื่อบริโภคในชีวิตประจำวัน จากนั้นค่อยๆ พัฒนาเป็นพืชเศรษฐกิจแทนที่ฝิ่นและช่วยลดการพึ่งพิงของ  
หน้าดิน ซึ่งได้รับการส่งเสริมจากโครงการในพระราชดำริและองค์กรจากประเทศไต้หวัน ในปัจจุบัน ชาได้รับการคัดเลือกให้  
เป็นหนึ่งในสินค้าโอท็อปตามโครงการหนึ่งตำบลหนึ่งผลิตภัณฑ์ และกำหนดให้เป็นทรัพยากรด้านการท่องเที่ยวเพื่อดึงดูดความ  
สนใจของนักท่องเที่ยว การท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาในแม่สลองนั้นจัดขึ้นร่วมกับกิจกรรมท่องเที่ยวอื่นๆ และนักท่องเที่ยวมักชื่น  
ชมการเที่ยวชมไร่ชาและดื่มชาอุ่นมากกว่ากิจกรรมท่องเที่ยวประเภทอื่นๆ

ถายงเวียนซึ่งตั้งอยู่ในภาคเหนือของประเทศเวียดนามมีประวัติยาวนานเกี่ยวกับชาเขียว และการปลูกในพื้นที่ขนาดใหญ่  
ใหญ่ได้ขยายตัวขึ้นหลังจากการเข้ามาของรัฐบาลคอมมิวนิสต์ฝรั่งเศส และการปลูกชาได้รับการรื้อฟื้นขึ้นอีกครั้งในยุคของการ  
ปฏิรูปเศรษฐกิจ หรือที่เรียกกันว่า โด่ยเหมีย ในช่วงสองปีมานี้ การท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาของถายงเวียนได้รับความสนใจจาก  
นักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติ และรูปแบบการท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมชาที่เน้นประสบการณ์และความรู้เกี่ยวกับการปลูกชา โดยสรุป  
การท่องเที่ยวเชิงชาของแม่สลองและถายงเวียนมีความแตกต่างกันในเรื่องการรูปแบบการจัดการท่องเที่ยวซึ่งเป็นผลมาจาก  
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This study attempts to explore the development of tea planting and producing, and tea culture tourism in Mae Salong in Thailand and Thai Nguyen in Vietnam. The findings reveal that tea planting in Mae Salong is derived from KMT villagers in northern Thailand who initially planted tea for livelihood, later developed as a cash crop for substituting opium and reducing soil erosion under the cooperation between the Royal Project and Taiwanese organizations. Nowadays, tea in Mae Salong is selected as “OTOP” and marketed as tourism resources to attract tourists. The tea culture tours in Mae Salong are usually organized with other tourism activities and tourists prefer sightseeing and consuming oolong tea, although Mae Salong is able to offer other tea-related activities.

Thai Nguyen, situated in North Vietnam, has a long history of green tea but started large-scale plantation after French colonization and revived during Doi Moi reform. The tea culture destinations in Thai Nguyen have been mostly visited by foreign tourists during these two years and the tour packages mainly provide tea producing experience and knowledge for tourists. In sum, the tea culture tourism of Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen have different characteristics as the result of different historical development and market strategies.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- KMT: Kuomingtang Army
- FCRA: Free China Relief Association
- VACRS: Vocational Administration Commission for Retired Servicemen
- CITC: Committee of International Technical Cooperation
- ICDF: International Cooperation and Development Fund
- NGOs: Non-governmental Organizations
- CBT: Community-based Tourism
- CBET: Community-based Ecotourism
- OTOP: One Tambon One Product
- USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
- DRV: Democratic Republic of Vietnam
- Comecon: Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
- CECI: Center for International Studies and Cooperation
- NOMAFSI: Northern Mountainous Agriculture and Forestry Science Institute
- VINATEA: Vietnam National Tea Corporation
- NGOs: Nongovernmental Organizations
- PGI: Protected Geographical Indication
- MOTS: Minority of Tourism and Sports



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

Tourism is a long established economic activity in Southeast Asia, dating back to the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Hitchcock, 2009, p. 8). As an economic support, this industry has contributed to considerable job opportunities and gross domestic products in an impressive way since it was activated twenty years ago. Southeast Asia, nowadays, is ambitiously expected to strengthen tourist demands in the following high-speed developing information society.

In a time where people, goods and information move so rapidly along with technology, the interactions between the local, national, regional and global arenas have given the incentives to globalization (Ho, 2001, p. 1). The population mobility is of great importance in the global context and much of the mobility is on account of tourism. Hence, tourism is significantly described in the literature on globalization partly because it is grounded in the global history, culture, economy and politics (Annette Pritchard, 2001, p. 168; Ho, 2001, p. 1). In short, tourism is one of the crucial representatives of globalization — which in turn stimulates the advent of tourism; at the same time tourism enhances the connections of the whole globe.

As part of the Asian Miracle, Southeast Asia is transmuted from —a geographical expression” into a model of development, succeeding in constructing the linkages between regions, countries, cities and people, which are —involved in the spread of tourism across the globe” (Fryer, 1970, p. 1; Ho, 2001, p. 4). Teo, Chang and Ho (2001, p. 4) emphasize that governments in Southeast Asia have recognized that tourism can be strategically utilized to satisfy the demands of economic development. However, the previous management of tourism resources has started to be stagnated in a time where society transforms as well as the demands of tourists improve quickly. The



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former flourishing monotone leisure-oriented or entertainment-oriented tourism has begun to fade away; therefore, Southeast Asian countries have to find the way out to transform tourism activities into richer and more meaningful ones in order to cater to the taste of today's tourists.

Laliberte states that today's travelers want to learn, discover and undergo unique experiences and they are looking for something interactive owing to the fact that they want to know how other people live, go behind the scenes and visit places that tourists do not usually see (as cited in Smith, 2015 p. 221). They tend to take part in the multilateral tourism that consists of not only visiting views, shopping, relaxing, but also enjoying cultural activities in the concerts, galleries or exhibitions. As stated by Melaine Smith (2015 p. 40), many tourists nowadays can no longer be easily categorized into the "mass tourist" (beach and clubbing) type and the "cultural" (sightseeing and arts event) type". To some extent, the average tourist has regarded experiences as an important element in terms of tourism activities in recent years. This result comes out of the growth of the so-called "experience economy" which is hailed as the new economic era by Pine and Gilmore in the late 1990s when people seek unique experiences, multi-entertainment and aesthetic adventures (Fiore, Niehm, Oh, Jeong, & Hausafus, 2007, p. 1; Smith, 2015 p. 212).

Visitors, in the present time, are inclined to gain novel experiences within educational and creative activities. In fact, this kind of tendency can be considered as the stimulus of popularity of cultural tourism today. When participating in cultural tourism activities, tourists tend to avoid their routine, live in another environment and experience other people's lives. In this sense, culture encompasses not merely the high culture but also the lifestyles related to daily life and traditions. Ho (2001, p. 6) points out that culture can be represented in multiple levels and forms that are attractive for those who are not familiar with the experience. In the matter of culture and tourism, Richards (2003, p. 3) identifies "Cultural attractions have become particularly important

in this modern form of tourism,’ and Urry goes a step further suggesting ‘tourism is culture’ (as cited in Razaq Raj, 2013, p. 3).

There is no doubt that culture tourism has been viewed as a growing sector of tourism industry culture, thus, it is not surprising that in recent years the cultural heritage sector has gained much political attention owing to its economic potential (David Leslie, 2016, p. X II ; Lord, 2002, p. 1). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), cultural tourism has been seen for a few years as one of the most important and fastest growing segments of global tourism (Gartner & Lime, 2000, p. 187). According to Sigana and Leslie (2016, p. 5), Southeast Asian countries have put stress on the cultural segment of the tourism industry by marketing traditional religious practices, handicrafts and cultural performances. Since cultural tourism gradually became popular in Southeast Asia, the governments and tourism developers in these countries have exerted efforts in manipulating their abundant exotic cultures as tourism resources.

When mentioning tea culture, people in general think of Chinese or Japanese tea culture, British tea culture, and even Sri Lankan tea culture because these countries make up quite a large deal of the tea production and consumption in the world. Moreover, they have mature experience in using and marketing tea and tea culture within their long history of planting and producing tea.

It is worth noting that Southeast Asian countries is the next potential tea-producing region under the influence of those countries. Southeast Asia possesses a relatively intriguing history which reflects the transformation of society and the mobility of people in this region. Hence, the historical background of tea planting in Southeast Asia is impressive and attractive for some special-interested cultural tourists. Koththagoda and Dissanayake (2016, p. 58) state that tea has its own identity of history, tradition and culture, which attracts tourists and strengthens up their motivation to get involve with tea

tourism. For example, the way of drinking tea and tea sets are created to beautify the tea drinking process which can be an attractive point for tea cultural tourists. Furthermore, tea also incorporates into our daily life because it is widely viewed as a healthy drink which also responds to the demands of health for modern people. Accordingly, tea has potential to welcome more lovers in the future due to its healthy function, and tea culture has been recognized as an appealing tourism resource.

In Southeast Asia, tea trees are mainly planted in northern Thailand, mountainous areas of Vietnam, West Java in Indonesia, Northern Myanmar and Northern Laos. Each of the above mentioned countries bears a distinctive tea planting and producing history as well as tea tradition that is attractive for cultural visitors. With the attention on developing cultural tourism, tea culture tourism has drawn the interest of local communities, governments, and tourists in Southeast Asia because it is able to provide special and diverting cultural experiences for those who not only seek it for relaxation but also knowledge-achieving activities in modern society. Within Southeast Asia, Thailand and Vietnam are the countries where tea culture tourism is in the beginning stages, whereas in Indonesia it has already developed. Myanmar and Laos hardly have the emergence of tea culture tourism. Compared to Myanmar and Laos, the tea products and packaging styles of Thailand and Vietnam suit more to domestic and international consumers' tastes owing to their relatively mature tea industry. In Thailand, Mae Salong is the most typical —and the biggest — tea producing base with the interesting Kuomintang and Royal project history; in Vietnam, Thai Nguyen has become the biggest high-quality green tea producing center because of a long tea history, French involvement and governmental attention. Although Vietnam has other tea production places, Thai Nguyen is the most popular for its premium quality of green tea. In addition, most tea factories in other places of Vietnam mainly produce tea leaves into Oolong tea products for export due to foreign investment; but Thai

Nguyen keeps producing traditional green tea for domestic consumption. These are the reasons that this study pays special attention to Thai Nguyen tea. In short, each of these two places has its own distinctiveness on the aspects of history and management of tour activities to attract tourists' attention. Therefore, Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen are chosen as case studies to analyze the growth and development of tea culture tourism and examine the specific tea culture tour activities in Southeast Asia.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

- 1) How is tea culture integrated into tourism in Mae Salong in Thailand and Thai Nguyen in Vietnam?
- 2) What are the differences of tea culture tourism between Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen?
- 3) Who are the main tourists in both places? And what do they consume from tea culture tourism?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

- 1) To study the historical background of tea planting and the making of tea culture tourism in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen
- 2) To study the patterns and activities of tea culture tourism presented in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen.
- 3) To examine tourism consumption and tourist behaviors in each place.

### **1.4 Hypothesis**

Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen are growing destinations for tea culture tourism in Southeast Asia. The history of tea production in Thai Nguyen is much longer than tea planting in Mae Salong. The origin of tea production in Mae Salong started in the 1980s under the cooperation of the Thailand Royal Project Foundation and the Republic of China's Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen. This project received technical assistance from tea experts from Taiwan to develop tea as a cash crop. In addition, the Kuomintang remnants moving from Yunnan province had the tradition of

drinking tea. Based on these factors, the tea industry has thrived in this community. Originally, the tea planting in Northern Vietnam was influenced by ancient Yunnan and can be traced back to the Song dynasty (960 - 1279 CE) according to historical records. Before the French colonization, Thai Nguyen already had nascent tea plantations. Later, the French brought modern technology contributing to mass production of tea in Thai Nguyen.

The arrangement of tea tourism and tourist groups in both places is also different. The visiting of tea activities in Mae Salong depends on tea enthusiasts' spontaneous interests; while Thai Nguyen offers well-arranged itineraries to attract tea tourists. The tour packages to Mae Salong are usually along with visiting the hill tribes and there are no fixed patterns for specific tea tours in the area, but tea enthusiasts will initiate taking part in activities they are interested in, like tasting and buying tea in tea shops and walking in the tea gardens. Hence, the visitors are mainly Chinese and Thai. In Thai Nguyen, tour agencies provide settled one-day or two-day tour packages including visits to tea plantations, tea villages, tea producing households and tea culture museums — Westerners are Thai Nguyen's major tea culture tourists.

Tea culture tourism in Southeast Asia has its uniqueness of different tea historical backgrounds and bears abundant attractions for people who are interested in tea. However, despite the emerging cultural tourism and national policy, the tea culture tourism in Southeast Asia is still at the initial stage and has a lot of room to develop.

## **1.5 Literature Review**

### **1.5.1 Cultural Tourism**

Cultural tourism cannot be explained without defining the term culture, which has always been problematic as it has both global and local significance, and it can be “deeply historic or highly contemporary” (Smith, 2015 p. 1). Culture can be expressed as tangible or intangible; as political or historical; or as high art or daily routines. When people think about culture, it is easy to jump

into the trap of stereotypes where culture is always in accordance with dedicated art and handicraft. However, according to Raymond Williams, culture is not just about the aesthetic judgments of a selected minority who have been educated to appreciate certain cultural activities; it is also about the lives and habits of ordinary people (as cited in Smith, 2015 p. 2). Daily routines of other people have become attractive activities for travelers nowadays because this “otherness” is easy to approach. Culture bears different connotations in different disciplines; while tourism designers and managers view culture as a resource for entertaining visitors. Culture is applied by stakeholders in the tourism industry—for example, the cultural sector creates attractions for the tourists, at the same time tourism supplies extra audiences for cultural events and activities (Razaq Raj, 2013, p. 28; Smith, 2015 p. 1).

The study of cultural tourism includes various ranges of academic disciplines that have drawn the attention of a broad scope of multidisciplinary academics. However, there is no certain definition of this term. One of the general definitions has been offered by the World Tourism Organization, which focuses on the travel motivations of tourists: “Cultural tourism includes movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and other cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art or pilgrimages” (Richards, 2003, p. 7). As stated by Raj, Griffin, and Morpeth (2013, p. 27), cultural tourism is considered one such endogenous approach to development, as tourists are keen to visit areas of unspoiled natural beauty and authentic cultural heritage. Williams (2001, p. 368) goes a little further stating how cultural tourism is about visiting historic sites or taking part in historic activities where tourists are able to learn about the past, experience a series of recreational activities, and enjoy the natural and cultural environment of an area.

According to Richards, cultural tourism—based on high and popular

culture — not merely focuses on consumption of the cultural products of the past but contemporary culture or the ‘way of life’ of a people or region (2005, p. 236; as cited in Smith, 2015 p. 16). In other words, cultural tourism encompasses both heritage tourism (like the traditional handicrafts and relics) and arts tourism (like the contemporary cultural production). Stebbins lays stress on the experimental element that cultural tourism is a type of special interest tourism based on the search for and participation in novel and profound cultural experiences, whether “aesthetic, intellectual, emotional or psychological” (as cited in Razaq Raj, 2013, p. 75). Similarly, McKercher and Du Cros define cultural tourism as an experimental and aspirational activity where interaction with culture can be unique and impressive, and tourists are educated as well as entertained in a large series of activities or experiences (2002, p. 4; Smith, 2015, p. 16). Moreover, Smith’s study (2015 p. 17) also emphasizes that visitors gain new experiences of an “educational, creative, and entertaining nature” through actively interactive engagement with heritage, arts and the culture of local communities. In short, the above mentioned scholars consider cultural tourism as the tourists’ activities where outsiders seek difference through experiencing the local culture in terms of historical, cultural, recreational achievements. Through examining these definitions of cultural tourism, it is beneficial to shed light on this term and cultural tourism themed on tea.

### 1.5.2 Tea culture tourism

Jolliffe (2007, p. 3) states that tea is closely connected with the “ancient and modern history of the world trade and travel” as well as regarded as the special theme or resource for tourism. Tea and tourism have woven together in a reciprocal interaction, whereby both the touristic experiences and tea culture are beneficial for each other in the present tourism market that seeks to achieve a unique experience as well as in accordance with the governmental focus on promoting culture through the tourism industry. Jolliffe’s book *Tea and*



*tourism: Tourists, traditions and transformations* is the first substantive volume to focus on tea tourism and illustrate the relationship between tea and tourism. Furthermore, it also provides an analysis on the transformations of tea and tea cultures as a result of tourism industry, then notes the contemporary state of tea-themed tourism. Jolliffe indicates a working definition of tea culture tourism as ‘tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions and consumption of tea’ that clearly presents that tea culture tourism is related to experiencing the many aspects of tea, from its history, growth, production, processing, and blending to consumption (Jolliffe, 2007, p. 10; 2003, p. 128). In particular, experiencing the history of tea comprises visiting the historic sites and locations as well as attending exhibitions or visiting museums to appreciate tea-related artifacts which show the transformation and development of tea cultures and tradition. For the growth and production of tea, it is included strolling around and picking tea leaves in the tea garden, visiting tea factories, and tasting tea drinks in tea shops. The consumption experience will be influenced by many factors, especially the host-guest relationships, the marketing of tea products, and the presentation of the way of drinking tea (Jolliffe, 2007, p. 4). In addition, tea culture tourism provides leisure-oriented activities, where for example tourists choose to live in tea-themed hotels located adjacent to, and within, tea plantations. McKercher and du Cros (2002, p. 104) comment that there are “augmented resources” for tea tourism, using the basic resource components then “assembling and packaging them for tourism consumption,” such as the tea events (such as tea parties, tea dances, and tea festivals) and tea cuisine explained by Jolliffe (2007, p. 12).

As it is found in the global perspective, tea-related tourism is “much more popular in China” (K. C. Koththagoda, 2016, p. 61). Apart from western scholars, a myriad of Chinese academic resources contributed to the study on tea culture tourism as well. Many researchers strategically focus on the development of tea tourism in certain famous tea producing areas (M.-L. Z. e.

al, 2012; X.-D. Wang, 2009; N. Yang, 2007; S.-S. Yu, 2014). On the national aspect, there are some studies conducted to investigate the situation of tea culture tourism resources and representations of tea culture tourism in the whole of China (S.-G. Z. e. al, 2015; Lu, 2018; Xia, 2014). In the case study of Zhong (2012), the author has given a definition of tea culture tourism as a combination of sightseeing, experiencing and consuming, based on the local historical background of tea planting, picturesque environment and distinctive local tradition. According to Lu (2018, p. 126), tea culture tourism is the manipulation and exploitation of natural environment including tea gardens and tea trees, combined with marketing tea culture in the aspects of production and drinking. In short, Chinese academic materials mainly focus on studying tourism resources of tea culture and exploitation with no attempt to study from the aspect of stakeholders of tea culture tourism.

### **1.5.3 Tea culture tourism in Thailand and Vietnam**

There are few studies paying attention to the tea culture tourism in Southeast Asia partly due the fact that this industry is still at a premature stage. As an Oolong tea center in Thailand, Mae Salong has achieved a lot of attention in terms of tourism websites and travel guides but is short in academic resources from journals and books. In the study of critical review of processing, chemical composition, health effects and risks of Oolong tea (Kwan-Wai Ng, 2018, p. 2958), it briefly mentions that Mae Salong is one of the important Oolong tea producing centers in Asia with an annual production of approximately two-hundred tons. Nevertheless, Hsu's master degree thesis (2016) and journal (2017) are important documents that offer a specific analysis on the development of the tea industry in Mae Salong. Additionally, there are three articles mentioning tea planting and tea processing in Mae Salong and the historical transformation from opium to tea (An, 2018a, 2018b ; Jenne, 2017).

Similarly, Thai Nguyen —as a well-known green tea center in Vietnam—is

also confronted with the lack of academic resources combining tea industry and tourism there. Most scholarships in English contribute to the technological development of tea industry, productivity of tea and organic tea farming in Thai Nguyen. A good deal of online tea introduction websites, tea producer websites, travel bloggers and tour websites provide information on tea history, tea culture and tea tours in Thai Nguyen, but there is no exact material illustrating the development of tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen. For instance, Geoff Hopkins (2018) addresses the history of planting and producing tea of Vietnam and the popular tea in Thai Nguyen. A Vietnamese tea producer website (Pookhao, Bushell, Hawkins, & Staiff, 2018) describes the way of drinking tea in Vietnam. Moreover, there is a tourism website ("The Art of Vietnamese Tea Drinking," 2018) stating that tea drinking in Vietnam bears the social meaning of connecting people together. Other useful internet sources include a travelogue recording the experience of tea tours in Thai Nguyen (Norah & Norah, 2014) and a tea producer website (K. Yang, 2017) introducing the best quality green tea in Thai Nguyen.

In this way, the research on tea culture tourism in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen requires further study to better understand the development of tea industry, tea culture, and patterns of tea culture tourism in these two places. Likewise, from the perspective of stakeholders, it will give a clearer picture of specific activities and packages of tea culture tourism in both places.

### **1.6 Research Methodology**

This study applies qualitative analysis as the main method, using documentary research to analyze the tea history and tea culture in Thailand and Vietnam. In addition, observation, participation and interviews will be conducted in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen in order to add information for the development of tea industry and achieve stakeholders' views on tea culture tourism in these two places.

### **1.6.1 Documentary Research**

The information from books, journals, online materials, guidebooks and brochures are applied in terms of tea culture, tea history, cultural tourism and tea culture tourism.

### **1.6.2 Fieldtrip**

Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen are selected as the destinations for a field trip. Both of them are the typical tea producing places within their countries and have their own distinctiveness.

#### **1.6.2.1 Observation and Participation**

Observation and participation will be conducted to find out how the tea culture elements are manipulated as the tools to attract tourists in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen. Through observing and taking part in tea-related activities, it is beneficial to analyze the patterns and activities of local tea culture tourism.

#### **1.6.2.2 Interview**

In-depth interview will be arranged to obtain more information about tea culture tourism. The study will present interviews with tourists, tourism agencies or local tourism suppliers, and local officials in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen. In the case of tourists in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen, the study will aim at understanding the reasons for which they are interested in tea culture tourism there, and what they achieve from this cultural tourism. In the case of tourism agencies or local tourism suppliers of Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen, it will examine the strategies used to exploit and manage resources of tea culture tourism. Finally, in the case of the local officials of Mae Salong, the goal is to understand the original intention of developing tea culture tourism and perception on the future tea tourism industry.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

First, the review on cultural tourism studies and the relationship between



culture and tourism shows how the tea culture is integrated into the tourism industry. The theory ‘Cultural Tourism’ is the most significant concept that backs up the analysis through the whole thesis. The key definition of this term is already listed in the literature review, therefore, it will not be described in detail in this part.

Second, the ‘Tourism Imaginary’ concept will serve as a support to explain the application of online materials to analyze the construction and situation of tea culture tourism. Imaginary tourism can be seen as an expectation and knowledge for tourists on their dream destinations. According to Salazar (2011, p. 4), imaginaries, by their very nature, remain intangible, and therefore the only way to study them is by focusing on the multiple conduits through which they pass and become visible in the form of images and discourses. These conduits can be provided by a series of visual and textual content of online materials, blogs, travelogues, guidebooks and tourism brochures. It can be concluded that materials available for the potential tourists have been labeled ‘tourism imaginaries’ and they ‘produce a sense of reality’ for visitors, because these materials are always the co-product of local people, mediators and tourists, and these different stake-holding groups are simultaneously intermediaries and consumers (Andrews, 2017, p. 32; Salazar, 2011, p. 12; 2013, p. 6).

In this study, the tea culture tourism imaginaries are provided by materials in different languages from official websites, local tea producers’ websites, tea tour agencies’ websites, travelogues and so on. In other words, the study can achieve a general understanding of the construction, patterns and activities of tea culture tourism through these online resources.

## **1.8 Significance**

1.8.1 This study will provide a useful reference of tea culture and patterns of tea culture tourism in Southeast Asia through the case studies of Mae Salong in Thailand and Thai Nguyen in Vietnam.

1.8.2 The result from this study will provide useful information for policy makers to develop tea culture tourism at local and national levels.

## Chapter 2

### The Development of Tea Culture Tourism

Tea is like water or air, something that many take for granted because it has become part of daily life. Five hundred years ago over half of the world population was drinking tea as their main alternative to water (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 32). However, many people are not conversant with what exactly tea is and its long history. According to Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger (2015, p. 10), the word ‘tea’ in English denotes at least five separate significations: the shrub, the leaf from that shrub, the dried commodity produced from that leaf, the infusion of that commodity, and the event for partaking infusion. Specifically, the preparation of turning the commodity into the infusion as a hot drink is characteristics of the complex and diversified cultural attitudes. By the last denotation, Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger (2015, p. 12) point out that tea has always been regarded as a form of social interaction, and the way of drinking tea is repeatedly reimagined and reshaped in art and literature. In other words, tea is consumed distinctively in terms of processing, serving and drinking in different social backgrounds and hence those differences contribute to shape their unique representations of tea culture.

Tea is widely believed to be able to refresh the spirit, reduce tiredness, ward off illness, and boost energy —spread and applied quickly in the early time, it becomes a daily beverage for people and an important element for social contact. In this way, as Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger explain (2015, p. 27), tea acquires a helping value —as a medicine ascribed far-reaching properties; as an ubiquitous feature of daily diet; then as a focus for social, religious, and political rituals”.

From the national perspective, tea is an indispensable part of national culture and even thrives as the cultural symbol for some countries. As a special and significant cultural theme, tea culture deserves increasing attention and



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research on various fields in terms of biology, environment, tourism, and economy. Until today, tea still occupies an important position in people's minds after thousands of years of exploitation due to the fact that it has a medical function and social meaning. Therefore, when people seek to achieve leisure, entertainment and knowledge, tea culture tourism —as a new item — brings tea and tea culture again before people's eyes from a tourism perspective. The following sections study what kind of tea culture achieves much attention around the world and what kind of tourism is the tea culture tourism that attracts growing numbers of tourists to participate in it.

In order to define tea culture, it is unavoidable to understand its definition. Raymond Williams (1983, p. 87) claims culture as —one of the two or three most complicated words” because it can be defined in various meanings. A Chinese Scholar Chu Cheng-Fang (2015, p. 37) identifies culture as the general term of the tangible and intangible wealth created by humans in the process of social and historical practices. According to this definition, tea culture can be explained as the tangible and intangible wealth created along the development process of tea, including tea history, tea customs, process techniques of tea, tea cultural relics, tea ceremonies, tea etiquette, tea literature and so on and so forth; or in Liu Qin-Jin's words, tea culture has been created by the group of people using tea as the —carrier to express cultural forms such as ideas, beliefs, emotions, love and hate, during the process of use of tea as food, gifts, drinks and sacrificial offerings” (as cited in J. Li, 2015, p. 17)

By manipulating their unique tea cultures, some renowned tea-drinking countries achieve benefits from tea culture tours that drive them further to propagate their precious and prosperous tea culture. In general, tea culture tourism is an array of traveling activities themed on tea and tea culture. In this case, tea is applied as a tourism resource in order to satisfy people's needs for sightseeing, tasting, shopping, accommodating, and learning; accordingly, tea culture tours can be presented in different ways such as sightseeing tours,



‘experiencing culture’ tours, and recreational tours or the combination of all three. However, the detailed definition and explanation of tea culture tourism requires specific analysis of its development in some tea-drinking countries together with the examination of their tea history. It is beneficial to analyze the characteristics of their tea culture tourism by research on their one and only tea history and tea culture. As time goes by, tea culture in different countries develops in different trajectories. Hence, tracing tea history of different countries is akin to presenting a chronological record of the development of tea culture. The final sections of this chapter are introduced through uncovering tea history in different countries. The ensuing pages firstly intend to analyze the emergence of tea in four famous tea-drinking countries which are China, Japan, Great Britain and Indonesia, then focus on examining specific tea culture tour packages in these countries in order to generalize and summarize the definition of tea culture tourism. In mentioning the famous tea-drinking countries China, Japan and Great Britain are worthy of laurel; while Indonesia is also considered in this study because it has become the ascending tea-producing country as the seventh tea producer in the world and it has also achieved success on managing tea culture tourism for several years.

## 2.1 Chinese Tea Culture and Tea Culture Tourism

### 2.1.1 The Emergence of Chinese Tea Culture

—The effect of tea is cooling, and as a beverage it is most suitable. It is especially fitting for persons of self-restraint and inner worth.”

- Lu Yu<sup>1</sup>

Before tea could spread over the whole world, it constructed a strong local power in its birthplace. Over the course of centuries, it had established its influence across East Asia —above all in its native China and neighboring Japan. Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger (2015, p. 14) emphasize that tea, in East

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<sup>1</sup> Lu Yu is the author of *The Classic of Tea* which is the oldest guide to tea from ancient China (8<sup>th</sup> century). This quote is taken from this famous book.

Asia, afforded a privileged significance within religious and political rituals, and granted a pervasive power to facilitate temperate sociability. Through history, tea, as a part of life, has merged widely and deeply into society and people's daily lives for more than one-thousand years.

Li Jie's findings (2015, p. 2) confirm that tea originated from —agricultural civilization,” and has developed with —crucially cultural and spiritual characteristics in Chinese culture”. The first retrospective claim for the discovery of tea comes from a Chinese man named Shen Nong, the so-called —Divine Farmer”, who is reputed to have tried decoctions and infusions of more than three thousand plants in the third millennium BC —and in this way also discovered tea; later in the fourth century BC and maybe even earlier, the tribal people in south-western China started trading tea leaves to others living on the edge of their forested mountains, then tea was sold to the temples and monasteries (Griffiths, 2011, p. 45; Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 44). The use of tea in China in the earlier times is closely intertwined with religion due to the fact that the Taoism and Buddhism practitioners were particularly attracted by tea which could help —meditation by increasing mental concentration and staying off sleep” (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 44; Tong, 2012, p. 101).

Later as Blofeld illustrates (1997, p. 2), tea was widely known in the Three Kingdom Epoch (AD 386 - 589) —the habit of tea drinking spread rapidly in the South but more slowly in the North. The book *Guang Ya* written by Zhang Yi in the Three Kingdom Period, first records tea as a beverage but not a medicine. Then before and during the Tang dynasty, only people from high status were able to drink tea on a regular basis; thus the art of tea came into being with —painting, calligraphy, poetic composition, lute-playing, the material arts, landscape gardening and other scholarly pastimes” (Blofeld, 1997, p. 2; J. Li, 2015, p. 3). During the Tang dynasty, tea soon spread widely across most of

the provinces which can be proven by Lu Yu<sup>2</sup>'s *The Classic of Tea* (written in the eighth century). In the following Song dynasty (960 - 1279), the habit of drinking tea began to spread to all classes which explains why teahouses began to spring up all over the country; the latter Yuan government ignored the tea production but the Ming government (1368 - 1644) rejuvenated the past prosperity of tea and established a very important institution called —Horsand Tea Bureau” which played a vital role in the national economy (Blofeld, 1997, pp. 23, 24). The latter Qing dynasty (1644 - 1911) continued the Song-Ming tea traditions.

Teahouses, as an important component of Chinese tea culture, are tightly intertwined with Chinese daily lives; therefore, it is impossible to avoid teahouses when talking about the Chinese tea culture. As Blofeld argues in his book *The Chinese Art of Tea* (1997, p. 56), teahouses play a significant role in every aspect of Chinese social lives, like —queaching thirst and hunger, relaxing, talking business and making deals while tasting tea, seeing friends, spouting poetry, listening to storytellers, getting warm in winter and cooling down in summer”.

Due to the broad area covered by China, different regions bear different characteristics of tea culture. Hence, to get close to the detailed tea culture development, this study tries to focus on the tea history and tea culture tourism of Szechuan Province<sup>3</sup> where tea products and tea gardens are recognized as some of the most famous ones in China.

Chang Qu's *Chronicle of Huangyang*<sup>4</sup>, records King Wu of Zhou Dynasty (-1043 BC) conquered the ancient state of Shu (present Szechuan area), and since then tea was served as a tribute to the court of Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 - 1043 BC). This is the first record about tea in ancient China which

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<sup>2</sup> This book is the first publication on tea reflecting the tea tradition and culture under the social and economic prosperity in Tang Dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> Szechuan Province is located at the Southwest China which abounds with mountains.

<sup>4</sup> An ancient text, written in West Zhou Dynasty, records specially the area history, geography, and important historic characters in ancient southwest China.

reveals that Szechuan is the birthplace of tea. *Ri Zhi Lu* written by the Chinese philologist and geographer Gu Yanwu<sup>5</sup>, mentions that the tradition of drinking tea starts from the Qin (221-206 BC) people who occupied the Shu area which also proves that tea originated from Szechuan area. However, the first transcript of tea as a commodity comes from Wang Bao's *Tong Yue*<sup>6</sup> which illustrates —preparing the tea utensils and buying tea in Wu Yang (a place in Szechuan)”. It shows that tea in Szechuan had been served as a commodity in Western Han dynasty (206 BC - 9 AD).

In Szechuan area, tea was also widely applied by the practitioners of Taosim. According to a legend, somewhere around 53BC (during the Han dynasty) a young man named Wu Li-Zhen<sup>7</sup> planted seven tea trees near a natural spring on Mengding Mountain that is now believed to have a sweet scent and the ability to run eternally. The ascendants of the seven tea bushes were planted and processed as a tea product called Sweet Dew because of its special flavor. Accordingly, Wu Li-Zhen was given the title of Master of Sweet Dew by emperor Xiaozong of the Song Dynasty when the Sweet Dew served as a tribute tea. Until today, as introduced in Mary Heiss and Robert Heiss's book (2007, p. 30), some historical relics are still on the top of Mengding Mountain, like the imperial tea garden, spring well, stone room of Sweet Dew tea and temples tucked throughout the valleys of the Mountain where visitors can stroll around, appreciate the historical architecture and enjoy the natural scenery.

Later in the Tsin dynasty (266 - 316 AD), a poem written by the poet Zhang Zai expresses the popularity of teahouses in Szechuan and how Szechuan tea was so well-known that was sold to many places through land or water routes. Then arose to the most prosperous Tang dynasty, the Szechuan tea also

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<sup>5</sup> Gu Yanwu, 1613-1682, was a Chinese philologist and geographer who lived in the Ming and Qing period.

<sup>6</sup> A book, written in Western Han Dynasty (206 BC–9 AD), records the personal experience of the author in Szechuan.

<sup>7</sup> Wu Li-Zhen was a Taoism Master who hosted Taosim temples on the top of Mengding Mountain.

embraced its golden period because of the climbing economy and the tea was traded with the Tibetan —which improved the development of Tea Horse Road. During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), some places in Szechuan, such as Mingshan<sup>8</sup>, had a specialized government agency to manage and supervise the tea-horse trade (Kelly, 2018). During that period, the development of large-scale commerce between the Chinese dynasty and Tibet and the development of the caravan road for the tea and horse trade had burgeoned; whereas the most glorious period for the tea and horse trade between Yunnan, Szechuan and Tibet was under the Ming dynasty (1369-1644) because of establishment of the office of Chakesi. Yang Fuquan (2004) explains the Ming court constructed Chakesi to manage the tea trade as a means of maintaining some political control over the Tibetan leaders. Owing to its geographic location, Szechuan has evolved into a significant junction of the Tea and Horse Road since the Tang dynasty.

There is an old saying, —Eastor west, teahouses of Szechuan are the best”. This claim demonstrates that the teahouse culture of Szechuan acts as the epitome of its tea culture. Li Jie (2015, p. 22) concludes that teahouses have emerged rapidly with the popularity of drinking tea among the common people, then the citizens’ drinking tradition of tea has become a new feature of tea culture. It is during the Song dynasty that teahouse culture spread and the need for tea was no longer only physical —such as quenching people’s thirst — but also began to satisfy social demands such as meeting with friends, watching performances and entertainment. Fu Chongqu’s (1873 - 1918) *Introduction on Chengdu* disclosed the social panorama of teahouses in Chengdu (capital city of Szechuan province) in the late Qing dynasty. This book states that Chengdu had five-hundred and sixteen alleys but four-hundred and fifty-four teahouses meaning almost every alley had a teahouse —which in turn shows teahouses are deeply integrated into Szechuan people’s lives.

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<sup>8</sup> Mount Mengding is located in Mingshan County of Szechuan Province.

### 2.1.2 The Tea Culture Tourism in Szechuan Province

As a valuable and distinctive culture in Szechuan province, it has been popular to take advantage of tea culture as a tourism resource to attract travelers to visit the Szechuan province in these years. In order to attain the specific operation of tea culture tourism in Szechuan province, it is necessary to select one itinerary of a tea culture tour package with rich tea-related activities in Szechuan to establish its characteristics. This tea culture tour package is arranged by Splendid China Tours<sup>9</sup> and is concluded in Table 1 below. Generally, the destinations of the tea tours are usually Chengdu City, Ya'an City, Emei Mountain, Mengding Mountain, and Qingcheng Mountain, which bear the time-honored tea culture in Szechuan province. The first day of the tour often starts from the capital Chengdu where there are various teahouses and tea restaurants making it easy for tourists to visit and experience. The ensuing tourist's activities set off from Chengdu City to its surrounding area where tourists are able to achieve the experience of visiting tea plantations and temples in Mount. Emei, Mount Mengding and Mount Qingcheng, as well as obtaining knowledge of tea history, making and drinking tea at the tea museum, tea factories and tea shops.

Table 1. An Itinerary of Tea Culture Tour in Szechuan Province

Day 1 – Chengdu City	He Ming Cha She (Singing Crane Teahouse) <sup>9</sup> 1. Enjoying the Sichuan style Tea Ceremony. 2. Drinking local tea	Local Tea Town: Shopping tea products as souvenirs
Day 2 – Mount. Emei and Ya'an City	Mount. Emei: 1. Walking along trails in tea gardens 2. Learning the knowledge of Bambo leaf green tea 3. Learning the local tea history and Szechuan tea culture 4. Drinking Bamboo leaf green tea	Ya'an City: Visiting World Tea Culture Museum with of exhibits on the ancient Tea and Horse Caravan Route

<sup>9</sup> This tea tour package is taken from –Sichuan - The Untold Story of Tea.” Splendid China Tours. Web. December 2018. Retrieved from <http://splendidchinatours.com/China-Theme-Tours/China-Tea-Tours/168-807-Sichuan-The-untold-Story-of-Tea.html>.

Day 3 – Ya'an City	A 470-year-old Ya'an Tea Factory: 1. Appreciating Sichuan's Tibetan Dark Tea 2. Learning the process of making and sampling the Dark Tea	A Black Clay Pottery Workshop: 1. Learning how to make a pot 2. Learning how to use the teapot brewing different types of teas.
Day 4 – Mount. Mengding	Mount. Mengding: 1. Trekking around tea plantations 2. Picking tea leaves 3. Learn the traditional techniques of processing the tea leaves 4. Visiting Emperor's tea gardens 5. Visiting Buddhist temples	
Day 5 – Mount. Qingcheng	Mount. Qing Cheng: 1. Visiting Taoist temples 2. Drinking Taoist Temple tea 3. Tasting Taoist vegetarian lunch 4. Visiting tea gardens	

The above arrangement is the typical and comprehensive itinerary of tea culture tourism in Szechuan province. From it, we can observe that the tour is tightly knitted with tea culture of Szechuan province in terms of three main aspects: teahouse culture, tea horse road and religion. It is the culture that provides fertile soil for tea tourism, like for example, the tourists experience traditional teahouse culture at a Chengdu City's teahouse—the assembly point for leisure, relaxing, chatting, meetings, as well as being the court of civilians in the old times. In addition, tourists appreciate the traditional tea ceremony which was the worship and literati's etiquette in ancient China. Moreover, the history of tea horse road and religion enrich the knowledge of tourists. In this way, tourists can experience the value of life and acquire extensive historical and cultural knowledge from the tea culture tourism. Furthermore, tourists achieve an opportunity to get close to the nature and relieve their stress of living in the city through strolling the tea mountains, walking between tea bushes, or sightseeing picturesque tea gardens. Apart from the intangible aspects of tea culture in Szechuan province, the tangible aspects cover numerous representations, like picking, drinking, processing, and buying tea and tea products and utensils. Accordingly, tea culture tourism is a diversified tour pattern that combines history, environment, and tea production together.

## 2.2 Japanese Tea culture and Tea Culture Tourism

### 2.2.1 The Emergence of Japanese Tea Culture

—Tea is nought but this:

First you heat the water,

Then you make the tea.

Then you drink it properly.

That is all you need to know.”

- Sen Rikyu<sup>10</sup>

The Japanese tea culture lays emphasis on purity and simplicity. The quote cited from Chanoyu<sup>11</sup> master Rikyu expresses the worries against the corruptive and overindulgent practices of tea ceremony. Tea was probably introduced into Japan in about 593AD. The import of the leaves and plants climbed during the eighth and ninth centuries, which was seen as one of the strongest waves of Chinese influence over Japan (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 52). As mentioned in the above Chinese tea culture, the physiological effects of tea help adherents of religions calm down and maintain sobriety. Similarly, the close relationship between tea and religion also mixes well in Japanese society. In the twelfth century, a number of monks went to study Zen in China and brought back the practice of drinking powered green tea; meanwhile Zen and other variants of reformed Buddhism spread in Japan and most of the monks practiced demanding forms of —withdrawal and meditation.” (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 53; Saltoon, 2008, p. 28). Therefore, tea functions as an assistant for contemplation and as a tool to spread Zen for Japanese monks. However, about two hundred years later, it was being drunk for completely different reasons. During that time, tea was soon incorporated into an elaborate tea ceremony accompanied by lavish banquets, with

<sup>10</sup> Sen Rikyu is considered as a Japanese tea master with profound influence of Chanoyu. This quote is taken from *Tea Life, Tea Mind* written by Soshitsu Sen X V .

<sup>11</sup> Chanoyu or Chado refers to Japanese tea ceremony.



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ostentatious displays of wealth and possessions, and thereupon it influenced much of Japanese cultural life (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 54; Sen XV, 1979, p. 11).

Nevertheless, at the end of the fifteenth century, a Zen priest Murata Shuko (1422 - 1502) started to shift the usual redundant manner of drinking tea. Sen X V (1979, p. 12) indicates that Shuko preferred to serve tea in a small room with a minimum number of utensils of domestic origin in contrast to the spacious room and elegant Chinese utensils generally used at that time. For him, serving tea was more than a ritual of refined elegance and his insistence led a trend of simplified tea ceremony in the following years.

The transformation occurred not merely among the devotees of Zen but the merchant class. Different from the solemnity of the Shogun<sup>12</sup>'s court, the serving of tea by merchants had a much lighter and more vivid air because many of the merchant tea masters were deeply involved in Zen. One of the foremost masters to pop up was Takeno Jo-o (1502 - 1555), who started to come up with a totally new concept of modest tea practice fashion called Wabi tea which combines the aesthetics of Zen<sup>13</sup>. The Way of Tea that we know today is originated from Sen Rikyu (1522 - 1591) whose organization and blending of styles of Tea along with philosophy and history evolved into the following four principles: harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility (Sen X V, 1979, pp. 9, 13). Every detail of four main principles connote the profound philosophy of Zen and the four principles of the Way of Tea. In Kakuzo Okakura's *The Book of Tea* (2016, p. 31), he remarks that the four principles and Zen practices also integrate into the daily lives of Japanese:

Tea with Japanese became more than an idealization of the way of drinking; it is a religion of the art of life. The beverage evolved to be an excuse for the worship of purity and refinement, and the ceremony was an improvised drama whose plot was woven into

<sup>12</sup> Shogun was the military dictator of Japan during the period of 1185 to 1868.

<sup>13</sup> Wabi is a style of tea practice in a small rustic hut with utensils of a quiet and humble character (Sen X V, 1979, p. 12).



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the tea, the flowers and the paintings.

However, the influence of tea is not merely on —religion, painting, ceramics and literature but spread throughout all classes of culture” (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 62). That is to say, the Way of Tea exists not only in the application of polite society, but also in the arrangement of all our daily details, like Japanese way of serving food and dress. Tea has entered the life of Japanese people and its ceremony has given emphasis on natural love of simplicity and the beauty of humility. In short, the Japanese Way of Tea or tea ceremony represents the Japanese tea culture and the Chanoyu (Chado or tea ceremony) in Japan is closely related to Zen. The tea in Japan does not focus on tea itself and its taste, but on the process of drinking tea which mirrors the teachings of Zen.

### **2.2.2 The Tea Culture Tourism in Japan**

Since the tea was brought to Japan by monks in the twelfth century, tea in Japan has merged into Japanese lives and developed as a time-honored tradition of Japan. Due to its historical background, tea culture in Japan is quite mature and the tea culture tourism has already formed its sophisticated and settled shapes. In the following pages, the study selects a prestigious and historical tea center in Japan to analyze the tea culture tourism arranged there.

Shizuoka Prefecture in Japan is famous for the production of high-quality Japanese green tea and volume of production itself. Sugawara (2013, p. 495) points out that approximately 45 percent of Japan’s tea is produced in this place. The emergence of planting tea in Shizuoka is said to have started from Song dynasty when a monk named Shoichi Kokushi planted green tea seeds obtained through a journey to China near his hometown in today’s Shizuoka Prefecture. Following the end of the Edo period<sup>14</sup> in the second half of the nineteenth century, a former retainer of the Japanese shogun, recognized the

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<sup>14</sup> Edo period refers to the period between 1603 to 1868, which is characteristic for economic growth.

potential of green tea trade and began cultivating tea in Makinohara<sup>15</sup>. This was the beginning of tea as a cash crop in Shizuoka in which its climate, water quality and proximity to major ports, has solidified its status as a major region for green tea production (Shi, 2010).

Millions of tea bushes grow in the shadow of the iconic Mount Fuji in Shizuoka Prefecture; therefore, the tea culture tour here usually starts with the scenery viewing on Mount Fuji. Taking a particular tea trip<sup>16</sup> in Shizuoka as an example, an itinerary of tea culture tourism is detailed in Table 2 to achieve a clearer picture:

Table 2. An Itinerary of Tea Culture Tourism in Shizuoka Prefecture

Day 1 – Mount. Fuji	O-Cha Center: Achieving local tea knowledge	Tea gardens and factories in the slopes of the mountain: 1. Visiting tea gardens 2. Learning steaming, rolling, and drying process of tea 3. Tasting freshly finished tea made by tourists themselves
Day 2 – Shizuoka city	Tea Auction House: Witnessing the process of price negotiation and sampling fresh tea leaves between seller and buyer	Tea Street: 1. Tasting different types of Shizuoka tea 2. Consuming tea products and hand-made tea wares
Day 3 – Makinohara city	The World Tea Museum: 1. Attending the exhibitions of tea products and tea wares 2. Visiting Japanese tea rooms 3. Learning the history of Chinese tea ceremony and transformation of it in Japan	

According to Table 2, it can be observed that tea cultural activities are mainly arranged in Mount Fuji, Shizuoka City and Makinohara City which are characteristic of long tea history. Scenery viewing and knowledge achieving are the main topics for this itinerary, for instance, visiting tea gardens on the

<sup>15</sup> A city in Shizuoka prefecture.

<sup>16</sup> “Experience Green Tea in Shizuoka.” Shizuoka Prefecture. Web. December 2018. Retrieved from [http://www.pref.shizuoka.jp/a\\_foreign/english/tea/index.html](http://www.pref.shizuoka.jp/a_foreign/english/tea/index.html).

mountain as well as learning tea history and tea steaming, rolling, and drying skills from the museum and factory. Most importantly, it provides the experience of visiting tea auction house which is different from other tea culture tour packages.

Apart from Shizuoka, Kyoto is also an old city for tea drinking and tea ceremonies in Japan, therefore tea cultural tourists are also taken to visit the old Japanese Garden in Kyoto. In Kyoto's itinerary<sup>17</sup>, tourists' activities consist of strolling around the garden with the Japanese landscaping techniques, visiting the traditional old tea houses, appreciating the formal Japanese tea ceremony, learning the intricacies of hosting a guest in a traditional tea house, and visiting a bamboo workshop which produces tools specific to the tea ceremony. Compared to Shizuoka, Kyoto's tea culture tourism pays more attention to the dedicated Japanese tea ceremony and tourists have the opportunity to experience the Japanese way of drinking tea.

Additionally, there is a small city named Uji in Kyoto prefecture providing tourists with strong tea culture atmosphere. The tea culture tour package<sup>18</sup> in Uji is different in terms of the interaction of Zen and tea. Tourists' activities comprise visiting the local Zen temple and appreciating a special tea demonstration which shows various tea and brewing methods. It is obvious that Uji applies its Zen and tea culture as the tourism resources for attracting tea cultural tourists.

From the above detailed description of tea tour examples in Japan, it can be concluded that Japanese tea culture, tea ceremony and Zen are incorporated into tourism in terms of tea gardens, tea rooms, tea museums, temples, tea streets, tea restaurants, tea factories, and tea utensils workshops. During the tea tour in Japan, tourists can relax in the tea fields and tea garden; drink Japanese tea in the tea factory and tea restaurants; partake in picking, making and

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<sup>17</sup> The tea culture tour package is taken from "Japanese Tea Tour 2018." Little Tree Tea. Web. December 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.littletreetea.com/tours/japan-tea-tour-2018/>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

brewing tea in tea field and tea factory; buy special tea and tea wares at the tea factory and tea streets; learn tea history at the tea museum; appreciate tea ceremony and the aesthetic arrangement in the tea garden; meditate and calm down in the Zen temple. In short, Japanese tea culture tour is actually a combination of visiting, tasting, learning, shopping, entertaining and experiencing activities.

## 2.3 British Tea culture and Tea Culture Tourism

### 2.3.1 The Emergence of British Tea Culture

—Tea is one of the mainstays of the civilization of this country!”

- George Orwell<sup>19</sup>

Tea first made itself known in Great Britain in the mid-seventeenth century. Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger (2015, p. 31) advocate the view that the taste for the exotic hot drink grew —among those who could find it and afford it — in competition with the customary alcoholic drinks, including domestic beer, cider and mead, and imported wine. Nonetheless, there was little language describing the flavor of it and the directions on how to consume tea in that period. In this way, the British drinkers created the oxidized leaves of the tea, later called black tea, in the seventeenth century. The earliest reference to tea in an English text is from a chapter ‘Of the land of Japan’ in *John Huighen van Linschoten: His Discourse of Voyages in to the East and West Indies (1598)*, and it notes that tea in Great Britain was initially imported from Japan (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 22).

However, tea consumption increased slowly at an early time in Great Britain, largely because of “the cost” (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2003, p. 69). In fact, from the seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, tea remained as an expensive commodity drink limited to urban elites. However, throughout the whole eighteenth century, the demand for tea and the number of its regular

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<sup>19</sup> This quote originated from George Orwell’s famous 1946 essay “A Nice Cup of Tea”.

drinkers grew significantly in the country —and later tea was no longer an exotic and distinctive imported good in Britain. According to Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger (2015, p. 73), it became increasingly available in grocers' shops, as well as 'Indian' warehouses, China shops, coffeehouses, pleasure gardens and a host of diverse retail spaces and more accessible to women and men of the middling stations.

In the nineteenth century, tea became closely associated with the British way of life, transcending social class and cultural background, and commentators began to identify the British as 'a tea-drinking nation' (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 221). It was not until 1839 that the tea from Assam found its way to the London markets and hence more social classes had the opportunity to consume tea in Britain. However, Britain's huge desire for this Asian leaf brought forward its international adoption from its colonies, therefrom tea became one of the world's most popular beverages and developed as a typical symbol of British Identity.

From the seventeenth century, tea in Great Britain has created a series of scripts which define the meaning of tea in appropriate activities and social performances. Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger (2015, p. 78) state that poets, satirists, essayists and painters are the main contributors to constructing the image of tea in the domain of art and literature in the early time; while their work —glorified tea by consolidating its association with elite culture, and further reimagining it as a prestigious product'. In this way, the tea in British culture shifted to be a medium to offer an opportunity for urban people, especially women, to share their stories and exchange information. Tea, in this situation, is a means of sociability — not merely a beverage to quench thirst and ward off fatigue. Moreover, tea was given a social duty in domestic life of upper and middle class in the early eighteenth century. In Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger's book (2015, p. 141), it describes that tea was commonly served in the morning as part of —the ritual of social visiting in households of upper

class,” and was offered to the assembled family members and their guests as their morning repast, ‘ between eight and ten o’clock, in a private family of the middle station.

The way of serving tea and drinking tea are highly associated with social etiquette in Britain. The polite event of drinking tea is embedded with a wider circle of social and cultural ideas. Craciun and Terrall (2019, p. 36) points out that the quotidian sociable activity of tea drinking was meaningful in the polite culture of eighteenth-century Britain. During that time, the tea party, as a social event, sprung up and spread among British society. A tea party was not simply an event in which the beverage was consumed; rather, drinking tea became part of an elaborate performance in the sociable context. The historian Marcia Pointon (1997, p. 28) concludes –Tea drinking is a paradigmatic case of a cultural phenomenon in which economics and performativity are inextricably bound up with representation and self-presentation”.

Later in the period of Victoria’s reign, tea functioned as a powerful symbol of national identity and a shared taste that united people in Great Britain. In the nineteenth century, the tea-table, was reimagined as —æsecure and conciliatory space for relaxed communication between men and women, adults and children for middle class” and tea was no longer merely engrained within the national identity but became —more and more of a family meal” (Ellis et al., 2015, pp. 227, 245; Palmer, 1984, p. 101). At the end of the nineteenth century, tea was a fundamental component of what it meant to be British, and British way of drinking tea had been recognized globally.

In the twentieth century, tea deepened its penetration into British people’s daily lives and developed various representatives in order to attract new customers. The tea-shop or tea garden, as a new way of consuming tea, offer the prepared hot drink and light meals for customers. Firstly, they serve as a food supplier and then they offer a relaxing and public place which women of the middle station prefer. In this way, the sociable space of the tea-shop or tea

garden in the early twentieth century was as creative and novel as the coffee-shop in the late seventeenth century. However, unlike coffee shops which only allowed males to enter, tea shops or tea gardens welcome every member of the whole British family. As Ellis, Coulton, and Mauger (2015, p. 255) propose, tea endows these places with —an important set of cultural assumptions —polite, leisured, ordinary, convivial and, most important, a female-friendly sociability”.

### 2.3.2 The Tea Culture Tourism in Britain

In general, the British tea culture tourism focuses on two aspects: discovering and tasting. Discovering means to trace the historical background of tea in Britain and experience the real sense of history in the alleyways of great antiquity; while tasting is easy to understand that tourists can drink the authentic British tea and tea sweets in famous and historic tea gardens, tea shops or tea estates.

In a specific way, tourists, in London, will be guided to walk through the antiquated streets and alleys of quaint tea shops or tea rooms to learn how tea has been popular in Britain from past to present. For example, Twinings, the oldest British tea shop, offers the world-class British tea for people all over the world and bears a charming in-house museum where tourists can learn the tea history. Alan Macfarlane and Iris Macfarlane (2003, p. 82) comment that Twinings, unlike a coffee shop, was frequented by both sexes and provided a friendly atmosphere where whole families could entertain themselves and meet friends.

Additionally, it’s difficult to seek tea history in the UK without taking some time to explore another typical British pursuit of pleasure: the tea garden. For example, Kensington Palace, a Palace home to royals for over three-hundred years is, now, the most popular tea garden for tourists to visit. Tourists can enjoy the garden scenery, listen to stories of past and present Princesses introduced by guides, and enjoy the traditional afternoon tea inside the garden.



In short, the garden trip provides tourists with an experience of British afternoon tea culture and sociable atmosphere.

In addition to the tea capital — London — the Tregothnan garden, in Cornwall, houses the UK's first ever tea plantation where the tea bush was first introduced in 1999 to achieve great success. The Tregothnan garden manipulates its tea fields as a destination for tea lovers and tea enthusiasts where tourists are not merely able to visit tea fields and relax in the nature but also achieve a series of knowledge of tea cultivation and skills of blending and drinking tea. The tour in Tregothnan starts with an introduction to Britain's tea history and the knowledge of cultivating, pruning and harvesting tea bushes when tourists stroll in the tea plantation. Moreover, this trip offers tourists with service of creating their own blending of tea and enjoying cream tea. This tour is inclined to achieve education and knowledge of tea, not only in the aspect of culture, but also the skills which does good to attain higher quality of life; thus this specific tea tour is more appealing to tea connoisseurs and those with a passion and knowledge about the heritage of tea.

As the similar trajectory of management of tea culture tour in China and Japan, the tea culture tour in Britain encompasses intangible knowledge learning, hands-on experiencing achieving, scenery viewing as well as tangible tea products tasting and consuming. It is a combination between British tea resources and tourism resources through marketing natural tea fields, tea production and tea culture to attract tourists. In short, the tea culture tourism in Britain markets the historic tea garden, British black tea production process, British afternoon tea and sociable culture as tourists' activities. People can sightsee tea plantations, experience plucking and blending of British black tea, learning British tea history and skills of tasting and making tea, reducing pressure after drinking afternoon tea, and buying specific tea products in the British tea culture tour.

## 2.4 The Tea History and Tea Culture Tourism in Indonesia

### 2.4.1 The Emergence of Tea cultivation in Indonesia

Apart from the time-honored and widely known tea-drinking countries mentioned above, the plantation, production and activities associated with tea in Southeast Asia have achieved burgeoning attention for some years. Indonesia, as one of the largest tea producers in the world, starts to gain considerable reputation due to the popularity of its tea products. At the same time, its tea tourism has also developed and generally, the tea culture tourism in Indonesia is mainly expressed in terms of ecotourism or scenery tourism. The majority of tea fields and tea estates in Indonesia is located in west Java, a center of national tea production, owing to beneficial geography of high altitude.

The tea planting history in Indonesia is attributed to Dutch Colonization. In 1596, the Dutch established a trading post at Banten in Java and began importing tea from China by 1606 for the onward shipments to Holland (Griffiths, 2011, p. 16). Lato (2015) states that tea was first introduced in 1686 by Dr. Andreas Cleyer as an ornamental plant, and initially used in the Tijgersgracht compound of Batavia. Later in 1728, the Dutch colonial government brought large amounts of tea seeds to grow in Java but ended in failure. In 1826, they bought tea seeds from Japan and planted this batch in Indonesia's Botanic Gardens at Bogor and Garut in the following year in the south-east highlands of western Java ("Tea Culture in Indonesia"). Then in 1828, Jacobson started up the first tea plantation that later brought commercial benefits to the Dutch colonial government and led to its policy of *Kultuurstelsel*<sup>20</sup>, in which tea became a cash crop that people were obligated to grow in Java (Kustanti & Widiyanti, 2007, p. 8). When the Dutch introduced the *Kultuurstelsel* in 1830, the government had the local people plant tea on their hired land and bought it from them. The booming commodity then

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<sup>20</sup> A cultivation system, launched by the Dutch government in the nineteenth century, was applied for its Dutch East Indies colony (now in Indonesia).

encouraged the government to run its own plantation for almost thirty years. Lato (2015) mentions that local Javanese, under this situation, started drinking tea made from second class leaves as their morning rite. Until 1878, the introduction of tea varieties from Assam and the improvement of processing methods enhanced the development of tea production in Indonesia. During the 1870s, fresh tea leaves were usually sold to tea factories of tea estates for processing; meanwhile tea estates began distributing tea shrubs to small holdings in their vicinity that laid the basis for tea cultivation by smallholders in western Java ("Tea Culture inIndonesia, ").

Kustanti and Widiyanti (2007, p. 17) note that Indonesia, after its independence, took over tea estates from the Dutch and turned them into state-owned companies; whereas these companies still use the same technologies and machinery left by the Dutch. By the late nineteenth century, the governmental control of tea industry stimulated Indonesia's tea trade despite experiencing interruption during the Second World War ("Tea Culture in Indonesia").

Kustanti and Widiyanti (2007, p. 14) hold the view that Indonesia, unlike Japan, England, and the US —who import tea for further processing into downstream products to create added value to their tea — still relies on the export of bulk tea, which is the upstream product. In Indonesia, tea is the —fourth largest contributor to foreign exchange revenue, following rubber, coffee, and palm oil" (as cited in Ardiansyah, 1990, p. 1). In this way, tea is of great importance in Indonesia and the further marketing of tea resources is beneficial to economic development.

Although tea was an imported plant, it has been very popular in Indonesia for several years and even produced their own ways of serving and drinking tea. However, there is no one coherent tea culture followed throughout the country; rather each region has its own customs and preferences of the way of drinking tea in the Indonesian archipelago ("Tea Culture in Indonesia"). In short, people in Indonesia do not have the uniform rules to drink tea therefore



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attracting tea lovers to explore Indonesia's diversified tea cultures as an adventure. Apart from trauma, colonization brings Indonesia with another new and distinctive mixture of culture at present. The Dutch style heritages, such as buildings and factories, have developed as destinations for tourists, especially for the Dutch people who intend to trace their colonial history in Indonesia. Furthermore, it is also appealing for other tourists to see the ambivalence and harmony between rustic Indonesian tea fields and the neighboring European-style constructions.

#### **2.4.2 The Tea Culture Tourism in Bandung**

There are more than thirty state-owned tea plantations in West Java and a handful of them are developing the growing tourism market. Bandung, the capital of West Java province, owns the majority of tea plantations in Indonesia, such as the famous Wanili, Malabar, and Gunung Mas tea plantations.

It was not until the late 1980s that these tea estates began attracting tourists, attributed to a collaborative initiative by the Indonesian government, state-owned plantations and travel bureaus. Thanks to the cooperation, tea plantations have been turned into hiking trails and hilly paths for mountain cyclists, tea factories offer educational and tasting tours and the former colonial homes reshape as lodges for travelers. In Bandung, tourists can achieve the knowledge of colonial history, partake in ecological adventures or participate in leisurely “te walks” around the estate (“Indonesian Highland Tea,” 2011).

In Wanili tea estate, tea culture tourists can visit “Walini Tea Gallery,” a combination of cafe, factory, and information center, to buy various tea products as well as learning tea processing in Indonesia by watching the video. Moreover, an old tea factory in Wanili which was constructed during Dutch colonial period becomes the destination for tourists to trace back colonized background by learning the history of old tea processing machines.

Malabar tea estate, in the south of Bandung, bears colonial architectur and



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a hot spring; hence tourists can take part in leisure-oriented activities, learning colonial history, and picking tea leaves in this place.

Gunung Mas tea estate, in the north of Bandung, is located at a high altitude where it provides adventure sports and outdoor activities for tourists. They can trek and ride mountain bikes along the sloping and winding paths of the plantation and even paraglide over Puncak's rolling green hills while enjoying a scenery of tea hills.

The natural scenery of tea estates in Bandung deserves considerable attention from visitors all over the world. Many domestic tourists travel here to escape the noisy city routine life by taking part in various outdoor activities, such as picnics, trekking, mountain biking, tea plucking, and sightseeing; while most foreign tourists, especially from the Netherlands, come here to preserve the memory of their ancestors. In addition, every tea factory of the tea estate allows tourists to pick, observe their way of producing and packaging tea products, and taste the estate's teas.

To sum up, the tea culture tourism in Indonesia is featured with two activities: learning the colonial history and participating in outdoor activities in tea estates. The tea culture tourism in Indonesia covers various related activities like walking through tea shrubs, trekking, cycling and plucking tea leaves in tea plantations, visiting colonial-period tea factories, tasting distinctive tea from different tea estates, and added activities like enjoying hot springs surrounded by tea fields, enjoying accommodation in colonial-period lodges within tea gardens, and having a picnic in tea gardens. Similarly, the tea culture tour package also combines sightseeing, knowledge learning, shopping, partaking, and entertaining activities together.

## **2.5 Tea Culture Tourism**

Tea culture tourism is a new form of culture tourism, increasingly popular around the world in recent years. It was created due to the fact that people in modern society eager for ecological, cultural and historic, leisure-oriented

tourism; hence tea culture tourism has been designed to satisfy the above diversified tourists' demands. After analyzing the specific examples of tea culture tourism in China, Japan, Britain and Indonesia, it can be concluded that the tea culture tourism in different countries manifests in similar tourists' activities that market tea culture resources as tourism products. In conclusion, the tea culture resources, generally, contain three directions: ecological, tea production as well as tea culture, and history —the classifications in the table below are identified according to these three directions. They are natural scenery places, culture and history learning places, and historical sites. Folk customs like tea ceremony, are selected as an independent classification because they are an important part of tea culture and different cultural backgrounds have different tea ceremonies. Furthermore, festivals are added as the augmented recourses according to Jolliffe's (2017, p.12) explanation on tea culture tourism that includes tea events such as tea parties, tea dances and tea festivals.

Table 3. Typology of Tea Culture Tourism Supply

Tea Culture Tourism Resource Classification	Specific Expressions in Different Countries	Tourism functions
Sightseeing	1.Tea mountains: Mount Fuji (Japan), Mount Mengding, Mount Qingcheng (China) 2.Tea Fields in every country	Sightseeing, Entertaining

History and knowledge learning places	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tea estates/Tea garden: Tregothnan (Britain), Wanili, Malabar, Gunung Mas (Indonesia)</li> <li>2. Tea factory in every country</li> <li>3. Temple: Taoist temple in Mount. Qingcheng (China), Zen temple in Uji (Japan)</li> <li>4. Tea Museum: World tea culture museum (Ya'an, China), The world tea museum (Makinohara, Japan)</li> <li>5. Tea center: O-cha center (Japan)</li> <li>6. Tea utensil factory: Black clay pottery workshop (China); Bamboo workshop (Japan)</li> <li>7. Tea shop/Tea retainer/Tea house: Twinings (Britain), Singing Crane teahouse (China)</li> <li>8. Tea lodge: colonial buildings in Indonesia</li> </ol>	Visiting, Shopping, Learning Participating, Knowledge
Tourism Products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tea products: British black tea; Sweet Dew tea of Mount. Mengding; Bamboo leaf tea of Mount. Qingcheng</li> <li>2. Tea sweets: British afternoon tea, Wagashi (Japan)</li> <li>3. Tea utensils: Chinese, Japanese and British ceramics</li> </ol>	Shopping, Tasting
Folk Customs	Tea Ceremony: Chanoyu (Japan), Chinese the way of drinking teas	Knowledge Learning
Festivals	Tea festival	Tasting, Shopping, Knowledge Learning
Historical sites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ancient tea production sites: Imperial tea garden on Mount Mengding</li> <li>2. Ancient tea equipage sites</li> <li>3. Ancient Tea trade sites: Tea and horse road</li> </ol>	Visiting, Knowledge Learning

From the table above, it can be summarized that tea culture tour



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destinations were identified as exhibiting characteristics of tea-related history; traditions; ceremonies; cultivation and production; manufacturing; services; festivals and events; and retailing (Lee Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009, p. 332). According to the characteristics of tea culture tourism resources, tea culture tourism can be categorized into three variations: ecotourism or scenery tourism which focuses on sightseeing and relaxing; farm or rural tourism which pays attention on partaking in tea processing; and cultural or heritage tourism which is centered on knowledge learning. That is to say, tea culture tourism has various forms and can be arranged differently according to tourists' demands.

In conclusion, tea culture tourism is a manifold tourism, themed on tea; based on natural environment; focused on tea production; supported by historic background; and containing folk customs and culture. Jolliffe (2007, p. 145) gives a similar definition that tea tourism is —tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions and consumption of tea.” In other words, tea culture tourism is a mixture of sightseeing, learning, first-hand experience achieving, shopping, relaxing activities, making time-honored tea culture and tea ceremony art as attractions, aimed at enhancing knowledge, self-cultivating, reducing pressure, enjoying scenery and tasting tea products, in order to satisfy multi-level spiritual and material demands of tourists today. The following two chapters about tea culture tourism in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen will be analyzed based on the modes of tea culture tourism concluded from the above mentioned tea culture tourism in four countries.



## Chapter 3

### Tea Culture Tourism in Mae Salong

Hill tribe people settled earlier in northern Thailand with their habits of planting and drinking tea; while systematic and massive tea production started after another group of migration. They are ethnic Yunnanese and also identified as Kuomintang army and their descendants. As is located in northern Thailand, Mae Salong, is also coterminous with Burma. In the North, the mountain ranges with peaks rising to an average of more than five-thousand feet run parallel in a north-south direction separated by fertile riverine basins (CIA, 1971, p. 2). Due to its suitable altitude, topography and climate, the ethnic Yunnanese group there chose tea as one of the cash crops to earn their living. Meanwhile, their tradition and knowledge of tea cultivation and tea processing techniques contribute to developing Mae Salong as one of the famous tea fields in Thailand.

#### 3.1 The Development of Tea Planting in Mae Salong

##### 3.1.1 Before the Arrival of Kuomintang Army

Located at a point of triangle position, northern Thailand is adjacent to Yunnan of China and northern Myanmar. Such a location has no wonder to answer the questions of fluctuated population mobility and integration of different cultures. Anderson (1986, p. 38) remarks that the groups of people living scattered in the hills are culturally and racially different from the numerically and politically dominant lowland Thai —because most of them are minorities migrated from farther north like the Yunnan area within the past few hundreds years and have maintained and continued much of their distinctive cultures until today. Cohen (1989, p. 34) adds the information that Karen, Hmong (Meo), Mien (Yao), Lahu, Lisu, and Akha are the six largest tribes in this mountainous area. Among them, some Karen are old inhabitants of the area since as early as the eighth century AD, but the second wave of Karen migrated



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from Burma to Thailand around the middle of the eighteenth century; while Hmong, Mien, Lahu, Lisu and Akha entered Thailand later from the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century (CIA, 1971, p. 4; Schliesinger, 2000, p. 16).

Back to Yunnan, people in this place have traditionally planted tea and drank tea for thousands of years according to records in *The Chronicles of Huayang*<sup>21</sup> (written in 348-354 AD) which describes that the mountains in the Southwest area had tea plants and people there produced tea. A thousand years later, Pu'er Tea Notes<sup>22</sup> (Written in 1826 AD) illustrates that Sipsongpanna and Simao (on top of Sipsongpanna) areas have the tradition of planting and consuming big leave tea. It seems that tea is rooted in these local tribes' lives and they used to make tea as their food and also as medicine (Fang, 2012; Sun, 2010; H. Wang, 2018).

With the mobility of population; culture, religion, and languages have spread from Yunnan to northern Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. For example, Akha in Sipsongpanna share similar culture with Akha in Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam (Inta, 2008, p. 510). The highlanders still remain consuming tea as beverage and medicine when they migrated to northern Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Sutthi (1989, p. 123) indicates that tea is the only beverage for highlanders and it is also used for medicinal treatment. For Akha people, tea is the —second crop of importance” for their daily life (Banks, 2011, p. 85). However, the tea leaves they used to drink are not *camellia sinensis* var. *sinensis*<sup>23</sup> which are usually what people drink today in the package like the green tea or oolong tea, but the *camellia sinensis* var. *assamica* or big leave tea or wild tea. LeBar (1967, p. 107) remarks that big tea leave trees are wildly distributed in mountainous areas of Yunnan, Myanmar,

<sup>21</sup> The Chronicles of Huayang or Huayang Guo Zhi record the history, geography, and folks in ancient southwest China of Jing dynasty.

<sup>22</sup> Written by Ruan Fu.

<sup>23</sup> *Camellia sinensis* is the botanic name of tea. There are two varieties of *camellia sinensis*: var. *sinensis* and var. *assamica*.

Thailand and Laos and used by hill tribes in the past. In other words, the tradition of consuming tea of the highlanders proves that the topography and weather of northern Thailand provides suitable environment for tea trees.

### **3.1.2 Changes in Northern Thailand**

The tranquility and remoteness of these mountain dwelling people were broken by the arrival of another group of Yunnanese people in the 1950s. They are the remnants of the Kuomintang Army who migrated to northern Myanmar due to the communist takeover in China. At that time, the vast majority of the KMT supporters fled to the island of Taiwan, a smaller part fled to the Southeast Asian mountainous regions, here especially in the Shan States of northeast Burma and the northern Kachin State (Husa, 2017a, p. 51). Temporarily settled in a tristate border region, they—approximately twelve-thousand soldiers — manipulated the lack of clear state sovereignty with active support from the Nationalists (Kuomintang Army) in Taiwan and staged several excursions into China as part of the Nationalists’ “Recovering the Mainland” campaign (Panomtaranichagul & Huang, 2007, p. 124). However, Chang (2001, p. 1089) states that the newly independent Burma was worried with the existence of the KMT because it was a menace to its national security. Under the pressure of Myanmar and the United Nations, the main troops retreated to Taiwan respectively in 1953, 1954 and 1961, but the remnant thousands of soldiers moved to —and settled in — the northern mountainous area of Thailand with later negotiations with the Thai government by offering military assistance against communist forces in northeastern Thailand in the 1970s and 1980s (Panomtaranichagul & Huang, 2007, p. 124). Chang (2001, p. 1094) points out the success, conquering communists not only enabled them to get legal status for the troops, but also assisted the resettlement of a great number of Yunnanese refugees.

With the arrival of the Kuomintang army, the people living at the border achieved more international attention in terms of land use and opium issues.

Their slash-and-burn agricultural methods caused “environmental degradation and damage to the national water supply” (Cohen, 1989, p. 35). At the same time, highlanders were the main producers of opium on the borderlands of the golden triangle and then drugs were transported by the Kuomintang Army. During the 1950s to 1970s, the Golden Triangle offered major production of opium because Southwestern China, Iran and Turkey suppressed the narcotic production. At the same time, the remnants of KMT and Thai counterinsurgency policies were sponsored by the US Central Intelligence Agency which incentivized the export of opium in the area (Crooker, 1988, p. 253). The engagement of KMT army in opium production and transportation with insurgencies between unstable borders pushed the Golden Triangle to the global stage.

With the national and international focus, the Thai authorities initiated several projects to solve these above mentioned problems with international assistance. According to Cohen (1989, p. 35), programs were put into effect to change their swiddening agricultural techniques by “introducing market crops as substitutes for opium, controlling their movement over international borders, settling them in permanent villages, and regulating their status as citizens of the Thai State”. Sutthi (1989, p. 128) emphasizes that, in 1960, a major development program was announced in northern Thailand to stop swiddening agricultural techniques, reducing opium growing, replacing opium with other cash crops and promoting permanent agriculture and settlement. Husa (2017a, p. 58) states that the Hmong and the Akha, in particular, were to be resettled to lowlands because opium thrives only above a certain altitude —these minorities were also to be taught alternative farming methods and alternative crops. Since 1965, the Tribal Research Center<sup>24</sup> exerted efforts to improve their living conditions, including “the introduction of upland rice and vegetables (for

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<sup>24</sup> The Tribal Research Center/Institute (TRI) was inaugurated in 1965 and dissolved by the Thai government Bureaucratic Reform Act in 2002 (Buadaeng 2006: 359). It was built to solve hill tribe problems.

example, cabbage, ginger, tomato and potato)” to replace shifting agriculture and —resettle the hill tribes to lowland areas” (Panomtaranichagul & Huang, 2007, p. 125).

### **3.1.3 The Main Solution – Royal Project and its Cooperation**

#### **3.1.3.1 Why Royal Project?**

In addition to Thai governmental projects, at the beginning of the 1960s, Thailand’s royal family began developing an interest in the hard situation of the hill tribes; especially, King Rama IX learned from the Hmong that peach can be the economic basis for a village when he visited Doi Pui in 1968 (Husa, 2017a, pp. 59, 60). In other words, peaches were considered as another profitable cash crop to substitute opium for livelihood for Hmong people. Unfortunately, the initial trial of fruit trees near Doi Pui ended with failure, so King Rama IX created the Royal Project and appointed Prince C.M. Bhisatej Rajani as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the project to develop agricultural replacement, which was financed by the Royal Coffer and International Donations (Hsieh, 2001, p. 5). Later in a speech held in 1970, King Rama IX announced his decision to choose other crops which are high-priced and in great demand to substitute opium in the northern mountainous area (as cited in Husa, 2017a, p. 60). Under King Rama IX’s convening, several representatives from different places worldwide offered their assistance to introduce different plants and animals to northern Thailand. Among them, Taiwan sent groups of agricultural experts to join in King Rama IX’s projects. In addition, the people who had retreated to Taiwan intended to help develop the economy for the remnants in northern Thailand, owing to the responsibility for KMT army and worry about opium from an international angle.

#### **3.1.3.2 Taiwan’s strategic assistance on agriculture in northern Thailand**

Before the Royal Project, Taiwan, in fact, had already offered agricultural aid for KMT villages in northern Thailand as early as the 1950s owing to its political purpose. According to Hung and Hsu (2017, p. 10), twenty ton tea



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seeds ,in 1952 —and a tea processing machine — were carried by military aircraft as the resource of soldier’s pay and provision to Mae Salong where the fifth regiments of the 93rd division of Kuomintang army stationed. Accordingly, it can be inferred that tea has been considered as a means of livelihood for the KMT soldiers and their family members from then on. However, that batch of tea seeds were not oolong tea no.12 or no.17 which are popular in Mae Salong today according to the interview with Mrs. Y<sup>25</sup>, an operator of one of biggest tea businesses in Mae Salong (February 2, 2019). Unluckily, the first trial failed because of the lack of agricultural techniques and knowledge, and therefore the Yunnanese had to use a handful of live tea leaves mixed with the local wild tea leaves to produce a tea product sold to lowland Thai-Chinese for livelihood (Po-Yi Hung, 2017).

Then after the first evacuation undertaken in 1953-1954, the Free China Relief Association (FCRA), a semi-official organization that works closely with the Nationalist party in Taiwan, started to deliver small amounts of relief to Yunnanese refugees in Northern Thailand (Chang, 2001, p. 1099). Mae Salong, where the fifth regiment of KMT army settled, undoubtedly achieved major assistance from Taiwan. The FCRA played an important role in cooperating with Royal Project and developing KMT villages later in the 1980s and 1990s. From the 1950s to the 1970s, Taiwan kept providing patronage to KMT villages because of political tactics. However, in the 1970s, the issue of settlement of the left 93rd division of KMT army was controversial. By chance, King Rama IX called for assistance internationally at that time and Taiwan was capable of providing effective agricultural support. In this way, the two sides had cooperated in a hill tribes project since the 1970s. This project, helped hill tribes to substitute opium with cash crops on the one hand; on the other, it offered an opportunity to solve the settlement of the 93rd division of KMT army in northern highland. With the suggestion of representatives from Taiwan

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<sup>25</sup> Mrs. Y is the shop owner of 101 tea company which is one of the biggest tea business in Mae Salong.

during this period, King Rama IX finally took the advice that the 93rd division helped fight the Hmong communist army to achieve permission to stay in northern Thailand.

### **3.1.3.3 Cooperation between Royal Project and Taiwan's organizations**

The cooperation started in 1970 when King Rama IX created the Royal Project and then achieved assistance from the Vocational Administration Commission for Retired Servicemen (VACRS). Hsieh (2001, p. 5) states that King Rama IX, in 1970, received Ambassador Chang-Huan Shen from Taiwan in Angkhang, and made a request for assistance to improve the livelihoods of inhabitants in the northern highland; the same year, Mr. Sung Ching-Yung, director of the Fu-Shou-San Farm<sup>26</sup> in Lishan (a place in Taiwan), was dispatched to the northern highlands to conduct a feasibility study about growing temperate fruits on the hills. The Fu-Shou-San Farm was arranged successfully in Taiwan, with every kind of temperate-zone fruit tree grown by the retired servicemen at an altitude of 1,600 meters in the highlands in Taiwan; accordingly, this success attracted the attention of Prince C.M. Bhisatej Rajani to visit Fu-Shou-San Farm in 1972 who then decided to introduce fruit trees and techniques from Taiwan (Hsieh, 2001, p. 5; Po-Yi Hung, 2017, p. 14). After a period of fieldwork, Mr. Sung developed temperate-zone fruit trees and vegetables in Angkhang; meanwhile King Rama IX supported funds for carrying out the Royal Development Project for the North in 1973 (Hsieh, 2001, p. 5). In addition, several fruit experts were dispatched from the Fu-Shou-San Farm of the VACRS to Chiang Mai in 1973, to plant numerous seedlings of Temperate Zone fruit tree, including persimmons, plums, pears and vegetables in Angkhang Farm. In order to develop Royal Development Project, VACRS proposed a ROC-supported four-year project entitled "Temperate Zone Fruit Cultured in northern Thailand" which was of great success in the later

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<sup>26</sup> The Fu-Shou-San farm is under the administration of the Vocational Administration Commission for Retired Servicemen (VACRS), an organization established to help the KMT's retired servicemen settle in the highlands and earn their livings (Hsieh 2001:5).

seven years until it was terminated in 1980 when the program was immediately taken over by the Committee of International Technical Cooperation (CITC) (Hsieh, 2001, p. 6). Not merely the Angkhang farm in Chiangmai, the VACRS also set demonstration farms in Mae Salong in 1967 when King Rama IX granted five-hundred Rai field for developing agriculture over there and hence the experts from Fu-Shou-San Farm also went uphill to teach villagers cultivate fruit trees. From the 1970s to the 1980s, VACRS was the main partner for the joint project between Taiwan and Thailand. Within the project, temperate-zone fruits and vegetables were the main introduced crops to be cultivated in demonstration farms and distributed to highlanders. Tea did not receive any attention during this period, which makes one wonder in what occasion was tea introduced to northern Thailand?

The turning point —and the bloom of Mae Salong tea development —came with the successful defeat of the Hmong communists in 1970. King Rama IX granted the general of the fifth regiment Tuan Xi-Wen and his army a large area of the highland for settlement. How to use the land was crucial for them, so they had to come up with a solution at that time and general Tuan invited the director of VACRS Mr. Zhao Ju-Yu and general Li Xian-Geng to negotiate with this issue. This plan for developing agriculture on the granted land was not involved in, but achieved assistance partly from the hill tribes project initiated by King Rama IX (X. G. Li, 1988, p. 112). Qiu and Liu (2012, p. 10) illustrate how they decided tea was the best choice to plant on the highlands; therefore, general Tuan requested tea seeds through the Free China Relief Association<sup>27</sup> (FCRA). Li (1988, p. 112) mentions those fifty-thousand tea seeds were first transported to general Kriangsak Chamanan, then transferred to KMT villages in the northern highland. However, the introduced tea seeds were also not the present-day famous oolong tea types but the Assam tea (wild tea) and Qing-

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<sup>27</sup> FCRA is a semi-official organization that offers assistance to Chinese refugees.



Qing tea<sup>28</sup> (Qiu & Liu, 2012, p. 10). The large-scale tea planting in KMT villages seems to have nothing to do with the joint project initiated by King Rama IX in the 1970s, whereas the success was practically intertwined with the agricultural expertise from demonstration farms under the royal project. Apart from the transfer of tea seeds, general Tuan, in 1978, created the Mae Salong cooperative for helping villagers plant tea by offering tea plants and planting skills, providing low-interest loans, and collecting local specialties to sell in the lowland (K. Yang, 2017). In the following years, the cooperative took relative responsibility to introduce tea plants for Mae Salong.

Later, after the second half of the 1970s, the diplomatic relationship between Thailand and Taiwan changed because Thailand established new ties with PRC China. As Thailand retained diplomatic relations with China, the needed support from Taiwan for the Yunnanese refugees and other ethnic minorities from Yunnan and Burma remained crucial (Siriphon & Yamthap, 2019, p. 27). Then the governmental aid from Taiwan had to shift from another unofficial way. In 1981, Mae Salong held the funeral for general Tuan Xi-Wen and hence FCRA dispatched its team leader and consultant to express their condolences. When they came back to Taiwan, they suggested to recover assistance for KMT villages in northern Thailand; meanwhile the Thai government planned to establish and normalize communication with Taiwan in non-political matters through NGOs such as the FCRA and focused more on social services and volunteer work (Siriphon & Yamthap, 2019, p. 27). Therefore, later in 1982, FCRA established an aid group in order to provide aid programs to the KMT villages in terms of agriculture, education, medical care, and handicraft projects (Shi, 2010, p. 257; Siriphon & Yamthap, 2019, p. 27). Mr. Gong Chen-Ye was appointed as group leader who was the main contributor for later planting oolong tea in the northern highland. Apart from agriculture, the aid group also targeted at building factories to upgrade the

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<sup>28</sup> Qing-Qing tea or Chin-hsin-Dapang tea is kind of *camellia sinensis* var. *sinensis* which is cultivated in Taiwan. It can be used to produce oolong tea and oriental beauty products.

traditional agriculture (Shi, 2010, p. 257). From 1983 to 2005, tea production in northern highland was the most successful industry due to the fact that FCRA dispatched several researchers and even the leader of the Tea Research and Extension Station to teach tea plantation management, tea production techniques, and pest control until 2005 when the aid group of FCRA stopped the support (G. R. Chen & Wu, 2012, p. 3).

FCRA not only brought the expertise to Northern Thailand but also introduced the valuable oolong tea cultivars. In the 1980s, the cost of production of tea in Taiwan grew sharply because of labor costs and increase for beverage demand; hence a number of tea farmers and businessmen started to seek overseas tea plantations (Song, 2015, p. 11). By noticing such a change, Mr. Gong Chen-Ye took four-hundred and fifty no.12 tea plants from the Tea Research and Extension Station when he took flight back to Thailand (Po-Yi Hung, 2017, p. 19). The no.12 was a precious cultivar for Taiwan at that time because it was just bred in 1982; hence Mr. Gong Chen-Ye made efforts to take it out of Taiwan. Later this batch of tea plants was transferred to a demonstration farm which was established under joint project between King Rama IX and VACRS in the 1970s. Then the agricultural specialists bred this four-hundred and fifty tea plants to two-thousand plants by cuttage method and those tea plants were distributed to the KMT villages (Hung and Hsu 2017: 20). Through breeding, those tea plants were more suitable for environment in northern Thailand. Although cuttage skill is able to maintain the maximum taste and quality of the mother plant, the bred plants will still vary slightly through the breeding process. Then from the late 1980s to 1990s, the tea cultivars of Chin-hsin oolong, no.13, no.5<sup>29</sup>, and four seasons tea<sup>30</sup> in northern Thailand were taken gradually by unofficial means from Taiwan. Table 4 below briefly illustrates the introduced tea cultivars from Taiwan, their breeding time,

<sup>29</sup> No.5 oolong tea was bred and named in 1973.

<sup>30</sup> Four seasons tea is a natural hybridization discovered by Taiwanese tea farmer Zhang Wen-Hui nearly forty years ago and it was popular in Taiwan in 1980s.

time of introduction and their introducers.

Table 4. The Tea Cultivars Introduced in Northern Thailand.

Name of cultivar	Breeding time	The time of introduction	Introducer
Qing-Qing tea/ Chin-hsin-Dapang	The early 20 <sup>th</sup> century	1970s	General Tuan and later Taiwanese tea businessmen
Oolong No. 12	1982	1980s	Mr. Chen-Ye Gong and other Taiwanese tea businessmen
Chin-hsin Oolong/ Ruan-zhi Oolong/ no. 17	1983	Late 1980s to 1990s	Taiwanese tea businessmen
Oolong No. 13/ Cui-yu	1982	Late 1980s to 1990s	Taiwanese tea businessmen
Oolong No. 5	1973	Late 1980s to 1990s	Taiwanese tea businessmen
Four Seasons Oolong	1970s	Late 1980s to 1990s	Taiwanese tea businessmen

According to Hung and Hsu (2017, p. 20), Chin-hsin or Ruan-zhi oolong revived in Taiwan in 1975 but newly bred in 1983 by the Tea Research and Extension Station. No.13 or Cui-yu oolong tea or Green Jade was cultivated at the same time as no.12 by breeding and selection methods (Y. R. Chen, 1995, p. 3). Accordingly, no.12, no.13, and no.17 tea cultivars were of great value at that period. Except for the formal channel of the FCRA, it is also rumored that oolong tea cultivars were brought by some Taiwanese tea businessmen who sold it to farmers in northern Thailand. However, the breeding process locally and tea bushes were cultivated scatteredly in mountainous areas, especially the mass-cultivation of no.12 and no.15 (Qiu & Liu, 2012, p. 10). No.5 and four seasons oolong tea make up a small proportion because the prices and quality of these two types of tea are no match for no.12 and no.15 oolong tea. In 1990s, the FCRA continued to introduce oolong tea plants from Taiwan to northern Thailand and sent tea experts to instruct villagers in managing tea plantations and tea factories. Except oolong tea, Qing-Qing tea and Assam tea were also

transferred to northern Thailand during this period by FCRA. The production and promotion of oolong tea of FCRA attracted more tea businessmen in Taiwan in the 1990s to collect oolong tea leaves to—in turn—sell them in Taiwan owing to the high price of oolong tea leaves and labor cost there.

Transfer is just a start of the success of tea planting in northern Thailand, then breeding process and management were conducted by demonstration farms under the support of joint projects. The joint project between King Rama IX and the FCRA was about to finish in 1996; while in 1995, Taiwan president Lee Tung-Hui visited King Rama IX in Thailand and then the Prince C.M. Bhisatej Rajani, Chairman of the Royal Project drafted a three-year Joint Research program for highland development with the Committee of International Technical Cooperation<sup>31</sup> (CITC) (Hsieh, 2001, p. 13; Ruan, 2004, p. 1). Tea production and processing are the most important programs of the newly released cooperation; hence ICDF sent specialists to transfer Taiwan's experience in tea production and manufacturing to demonstration farms in northern Thailand (Hsieh, 2001, p. 13). Although the joint project did not include KMT villages superficially, those villages also attained the technological assistance from the expertise and course training organized by the project.

Production is the next step after transfer and cultivation. The production of oolong tea in Mae Salong partly gave credit to the Taiwanese oolong tea businessmen. Before transporting oolong tea leaves, they had to process tea leaves to be easy to save; hence they brought machines from Taiwan and sold them to villagers in payment of tea leaves. The tea industry had sharply expanded in the 1990s through the considerable acquisition of tea leaves and input of technology and machines. In 2000, Mae Salong owned Chin-hisn twenty hectares of oolong plantation, thirty hectares of no.12 and bred more

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<sup>31</sup> CITC was an organization which spearheaded Taiwan's foreign technical cooperation work, assisting partner nations with their agricultural development. It was incorporated into the International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF) in 1996.

than one million tea plants (Ruan, 2004, p. 3). For the last step of selling, Mae Salong primarily sold oolong tea leaves to Taiwan in the 1990s as a result of the high demands of the Taiwanese market; whereas the target market has mainly shifted to be domestic since the twenty-first century.

After nearly a forty-year history of planting tea, the hills in Mae Salong are carpeted with tea plantations and tea has become the symbol of the place. The prosperity of tea industry has overwhelmed temperate zone fruits and vegetables in Mae Salong. Due to the expansion of the tea industry, the former tea farmers transformed to tea shoppers and their export market added Europe, Russia, America and China. During the quick transformation period, the hill tribes also played an important role in the tea industry. Tea, again, becomes a part of their daily life in a new way and they are like a crucial step in the systematic production chain of tea industry in northern Thailand by opening terraces, planting and plucking tea. The tea factories, nowadays, in Mae Salong are well equipped with processing and packaging machines. According to the interview with Mr. C<sup>32</sup>, Mae Salong already has more than two hundred tea factories and shops of different scales, among them three tea firms are the biggest and most popular (February 1, 2019.) It is hard to imagine that such a small village owns the mature industrial chain of planting, producing, packaging and selling, and it is no wonder that oolong tea has become a piece of business card in Mae Salong.

In fact, tea in Mae Salong plays different roles in different periods. At first, it functions as the substitute to replace the opium and then —as a high-value cash crop — it improves the life standard of villagers. Today, as a carrier of culture, it attracts thousands of tourists who come to seek peace of mind, are enthusiastic about tea or are curious about the KMT village history. Mae Salong shows people the large-scale planting of oolong tea, the primary application of processing skills of oolong tea and, finally, the massive

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<sup>32</sup> Mr. C is one of the tea shop owners of Yan-Hui tea shop along the main street.

production of oolong tea products under the influence of assistance and patronage from Taiwan and export for oolong tea to the huge market there. With the shift of target market, Mae Salong changes its tactics of producing and packaging tea products in order to cater to domestic taste; in other words, Mae Salong tries to shape the image of Thai oolong tea. The adaption process mainly reflects in three aspects: the adjustment of tea flavor, the design of packages and the diversity of tea products. In terms of tea flavor, they produce scented tea products with rice, jasmine and rose flavor. According to the interview with Mr. C, Mrs. Z, and Mr. A<sup>33</sup>, Thai tourists prefer to buy tea with aromas and light bitterness (February 1, 2019.) In terms of packaging, they change the traditionally packaging tea bag to separate tea leaves into small bags which is easy for the customer to infuse —some even package the oolong tea like the Lipton disposable small tea bag. In terms of diversity, they develop oolong milk tea, oolong milk tea candy, bitter gourd tea and chrysanthemum tea to satisfy customers' demands.

In conclusion, the tea industry in Mae Salong continues to develop smoothly and the oolong tea products become popular domestically and internationally. The fame of oolong tea practically contributes to attracting tourists, and tourism has become the backbone industry to earn their livings among villagers in Mae Salong. In this way, people in Mae Salong organize activities relative to tea for the purpose of appealing more and more tourists. Then how does the tea culture tourism in Mae Salong take shape? The detailed background of tea culture tourism will be explained in the next section.

### **3.2 The Formation of Tea Culture Tourism in Mae Salong**

Tourism has grown rapidly, in recent decades, in a region characterized by forested mountains and a cultural landscape featuring —colorful” ethnic groups from Burma, China and Laos (Forsyth, 1995, p. 879). In Thailand, the main

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<sup>33</sup> Mrs. Z is the shop owner of Zhi-Long tea shop, and Mr. A is the shop owner of A-Yin tea shop on the main street.

destinations are not merely the cultural tourism in the capital and the entertainment-oriented tourism in “SSS areas” (sun, sea, and sex) in the South, but also in the mountainous northern region including the provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Mae Hong Son (Husa, 2017b; Trupp, 2014). In northern Thailand, ethnic tourism or hill tribe tourism contributes to the primary tourism revenue. At first, tourists came to trek between mountain villages and see the so-called “hill tribes”. Advertising, until today, presents the “tribes” as “primitive and remote,” because many highlanders still wear traditional costumes and live in barren villages without basic infrastructure (as cited in Forsyth, 1995, p. 882).

### **3.2.1 The Stimulus for Ethnic Tourism in Northern Thailand in 1970s**

#### **3.2.1.1 *Shifting Cultivation of Highlanders***

With origins in Tibet, Burma, and southern China, many of these minority ethnic groups —like Ahka, Karen, Lahu, Lisu — migrated to Northern Thailand during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (as cited in Rubuliak, 2006, p. 72). Slash-and-burn agriculture by these groups has been blamed for deforestation, soil erosion, and damage to watershed areas during the 1970s. From the 1970s onwards, environmental concerns (such as fighting deforestation) began to dominate the agenda of Thai government agencies (Duangjai, Schmidt-Vogt, & Shrestha, 2015, p. 179). In response to this issue, Thai authorities have encouraged hill tribes to adopt soil-conservation measures and alternative sources of income to agriculture (Forsyth, 1995, p. 882). In this light, tourism was applied to be one of the means to solve the troubling environmental issue. Tourism offers an alternative source of income to agriculture, and such non-agricultural trade flows have been claimed to reduce agricultural pressure on the environment (Forsyth, 1995, pp. 877-878). By selling handicrafts and offering accommodation, hill tribes reduce their frequency on agricultural activities.

In northern Thailand, Chiang Rai is the most northern province in and has

been, to an extent, seriously influenced by mobility of shifting cultivars in recent decades. In this way, Chiang Rai was also major growing area for tourism under government policies.

### **3.2.1.2 Removing Opium**

Environmental policies in northern Thailand have also aimed at replacing opium. As mentioned in the previous segment, the Thai government resolved to clear opium plantations through substitution of cash crops —tourism was also considered as an effective solution to get rid of opium. Because of the forbidding of growing opium and shifting cultivation, the highlanders gradually lost the basis of their economy (Cohen, 2016, p. 239). Tourism in these hill tribes' villages provides earnings for them through offering food and accommodation for trekkers as part of a home stay service (Satarat, 2010, p. 16). According to Srisantisuk (2015, p. 97), trekking in northern Thailand has been used as a vehicle for promoting tourism to the region and as an alternative to traditional practices prohibited by the central government —such as opium poppy cultivation and slash-and-burn agriculture. Trekking in the northern mountains was the most popular tour program at that time for western backpackers.

As a result of the national anti-drug policy, touristic activities started to be organized in the northern provinces like Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Song; and the former road built for transporting opium increased the opportunity to trade agricultural goods and introduce tourists.

### **3.2.1.3 Backpackers' Destination**

In discussing trekking tours, it is crucial to mention backpackers are the main group who contributes to this fashion in Thailand. The first international tourists to Thailand's mountainous areas in the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, were adventurers, backpackers, and young alternative tourists who discovered the hill tribes and the surrounding trekking trails through word of mouth and later through unconventional travel guides and agencies;



accordingly, hill tribe villages became popular centers of backpacker trekking tours by the mid-1970s, and some villages close to Chiang Mai became popular excursion destinations for foreign, and later domestic tourists (Trupp, 2014, p. 350; Cohen, 2016, p. 239). With this increase of tourists in the 1970s, a low cost tourism establishment arose first in Chiang Mai and then to a lesser degree in Chiang Rai (as cited in Trupp, 2014, p. 350). This low-cost trend brought with it the search for —authentic” experiences and real life far from civilization, at first managed by independent local guides and later by small agencies in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. In the late 1970s, the hill tribe tours achieved a large number of tourists and were noticed by the tourist sector in the government. Those hill tribes in northern Thailand represent the exotic and unspoiled lifestyle that caters to the tourists who are expected to fulfill their desire for authenticity and seek imagined primitive rural life.

In conclusion, the external incentive of backpackers and internal governmental policies make up the crucial reasons for the emergence of the tourism industry in northern Thailand in the 1970s.

### **3.2.2 The Development of Ecotourism and Community-Based Tourism in Northern Thailand from the 1980s to 1990s**

#### ***3.2.2.1 International trend of sustainable tourism***

Ecotourism, sustainable tourism, green travel and various other sustainable alternatives are generally credited as arriving on the international stage in the late 1980s alongside the concept of sustainable development (Rubuliak, 2006, p. 40). Since ecotourism was first promoted at the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, many countries have used this new concept as an instrument to raise income, conserve natural resources and preserve indigenous culture, in response to the adverse impacts of mass tourism (Satarat, 2010, p. 16). Based on the sustainable development idea, ecotourism<sup>34</sup> is regarded as one of the alternative strategies used among the highland minority groups, NGOs and

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<sup>34</sup> The principles of ecotourism are increasingly identified with those of sustainable tourism in natural or rural areas (Chuamuangphan, 2009, p. 28).

government in northern Thailand.

### **3.2.2.2 Thailand's government policy**

During 1980s Thailand shifted from being primarily an exporter of agricultural goods to manufacturing and tourism (as cited in Rubuliak, 2006, p. 70). In other words, tourism evolved into the cornerstone for the country's economy. To improve the economy, various campaigns were initiated to increase the numbers and expenditures of tourists; for example, the "Visit Thailand Year" was launched in 1987 (Satarat, 2010, p. 107). Particularly, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) launched "Visit Chiang Rai Years" campaign from 1990 to 1992 and an international airport at Chiang Rai was completed in mid-1992. Under the governmental support, Chiang Rai, as the center for developing ethnic tourism into ecotourism, was ready to welcome a number of tourists who were inclined to natural conservation.

As an alternative to ecotourism, community-based tourism (CBT) or community-based ecotourism (CBET) in Thailand was also heavily promoted by the TAT's Amazing Thailand Campaign during 1998-1999, which aimed at preserving tourism areas to attract quality tourists to visit the country and to stay longer (Satarat, 2010, p. 16). The CBET concepts focus on the local community, in terms of their share of benefits and their participation in decision-making in ecotourism planning and management (Chuamuangphan, 2009, p. 113).

In addition, the National Ecotourism Policy was prepared from 1995 to 1998 and was approved and declared by the Cabinet in 1998 (Chuamuangphan, 2009, p. 112). With the official advocating of ecotourism, a number of local NGOs operating in Northern Thailand have adopted CBT projects as part of their broader development and sustainable natural resource management strategies in order to take advantage of a growing market composed of ecotourists who were seeking an alternative and educative encounter with highland minority communities (Rubuliak, 2006, p. 81). Additionally, national

and international tourism agencies started to include trekking tours or short one-day-trips to the villages of ethnic minority people into their offers in the 1980s and 1990s (Husa, 2017b, p. 4). In all, CBET then reshaped the trekking and ethnic tourism landscapes of Northern Thailand in 1990s.

### ***3.2.2.3 Economic prosperity of Thai people***

The number of Thai tourists in northern Thailand grew considerably owing to the Thai economic boom in the 1980s. Most domestic tourists are urban upper- and middle-class, traveling north to visit natural, religious, and historic attractions (as cited in Trupp, 2014, p. 369). Apart from Thailand's prosperity, the combination of cool air and cheap land in the mountains facilitated domestic tourism and construction of second homes in northern Thailand (Forsyth, 1995, p. 882). In the 1980s and 1990s, domestic tourists were overwhelming with foreign tourists in the classic ethnic tourism provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Mae Hong Son (as cited in Trupp, 2014, p. 369). Nevertheless, according to Leepreecha, domestic tourists tend to focus on Sanuk (fun) rather than authenticity and they do not pay much attention to exploring the real life of ethnic groups but are satisfied with just a surface level encounter (2005, p. 10).

In conclusion, tourism has expanded rapidly in northern Thailand from the 1970s to 1990s, particularly after Visit Thailand Year 1987<sup>35</sup> (Forsyth, 1995, p. 882). The period from the 1980s to 1990s was the hay-day of hill tribe trekking during which the topic was also most intensely investigated (as cited in Cohen, 2016, p. 240). From the 1970s to 1990s, tourism in northern Thailand underwent a steady growth from the emergence of trekking in the mountains, the start of hill tribe tourism, to the community-based ecotourism. The government began to not only achieve benefits from hill tribe tourism, but also pay attention to the demand of local highlanders and environmental

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<sup>35</sup> The Visit Thailand Year 1987 is a promotional campaign for developing mass tourism and rural tourism in Thailand.

conservation.

### **3.2.2.4 CBT developed in Mae Salong**

As mentioned above, the sustainable tourism was popular in Thailand in the 1990s and the hill tribe tourism, as a kind of ecotourism, achieved numerous attention as well as a couple of national, regional, and private sectors further exploited community-based tourism in mountainous minority's villages. Mae Salong, is practically a multicultural melting pot which consists of not merely the Yunnanese but also several groups of minorities. In this way, the Akha people, dwelled in Mae Salong, also attracted the attention of CBT projects and the tourism in Mae Salong developed to an extent because of CBT popularization. Natural Focus<sup>36</sup>, a nonprofit foundation, developed ecotours with five hill tribes' villages (two Akha, Lahu, Lish and Mien) in the Doi Mae Salong area (Zeppel, 2006, p. 235). Additionally, Population and Community Development Association (PDA)<sup>37</sup> started the CBT project at an Akha's village Ban Lorcha because of the tourists' demand for visiting the village. PDA, then in cooperation with the Pacific-Asia Travel Association (PATA), launched the CBT project to give villagers more control over tourism activities, such as the project at Ban Lorcha is owned by the village bank established by PDA in the mid-1990s ("Thai Nguyen Tea Festival features world's best tea," 2015).

### **3.2.3 "OTOP Village Tourism" Project Stimulating Tea Culture Tourism in the 2000s**

#### **3.2.3.1 From CBT to OTOP**

Followed by the National Ecotourism Action Plan 2002-2006 launched in 2001, various organizations and individuals seemed to become involved in ecotourism activities in northern Thailand because the policy provided an underlying concept of ecotourism in the Thai context and guidelines (Satarat,

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<sup>36</sup> The nonprofit foundation (the natural focus) promoted community-based tourism based in Chiang Rai. The natural Focus is set up by the Hill Area and Community Development Foundation.

<sup>37</sup> PDA is a development agency which lays on a wide range of guided tours, like offering one or multi-day jungle treks to non-touristy areas, usually including elephant riding and a longtail-boat trip (The Rough Guide to Thailand 2018).

2010, p. 16). From then on, distinct sectors engaged in exploitation of CBT in northern Thailand but sometimes they ignored the demands and involvement of local minorities. Even the different state agencies often compete with each other in taking advantage of ethnic people (Leepreecha, 2005, p. 7). Therefore, the adaption of CBT was required to provide more opportunities of local community self-reliance and developing their economy.

In order to attain better development and popularization of CBT, Thailand consequently came out with —One Tambon (subdistrict) One Product (OTOP)” project in the 2000s, by selecting local special products then promoting them and finally developing those products’ village tourism. This government project was a stimulant for CBT initiation and has benefited CBT operations. It was initiated by the Community Development Department (CDD), Ministry of Interior in 2001 and is a well-known marker of locally made products throughout Thailand (Pookhao et al., 2018, p. 68). This project is on the same page with SEP (The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy) and aims to strengthen the local economy and community, promote local wisdom and human development, and encourage local creativity (Claymone & Wareentil, 2012, p. 22).

Designed by then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra during his 2001-2006 Thai Rak Thai (Thai loves Thai) government, OTOP was inspired by an earlier Japanese One Village One Product (OVOP) scheme (Srisantisuk, 2015, p. 17). The project specifically emphasized on transforming local resources into high quality products with distinguishable and marketable features that could win national and international recognition for local communities (Srisantisuk, 2015, p. 102). Then each sub-district selects one superior product branded as a starred OTOP product, with a platform for local promotion and marketing, but also for the national stage and international export (Srisantisuk, 2015, pp. 17, 103).

### **3.2.3.2 The implement of OTOP village tourism**

As OTOP has been successful in focusing on traditional local products, the MOTS (Ministry of Tourism and Sports) extended the success of OTOP by launching —“OTOP Tourism Village” in each region of Thailand (Satarat, 2010, p. 111). The ministry initiated this campaign to support local tourism in order to improve local communities’ economy by attracting tourists to visit and consume. In the other words, villages will become a tourist attraction with unique products that travelers can take home as a souvenir (“Thai Nguyen to hold tea festival,” 2015). According to Satara, the selected villages not merely own distinct OTOP products recognized by both domestic and international visitors, but also have easy access to popular tourist destinations as well as an attractive environment, residential friendliness and interesting history (2010, p. 111).

### **3.2.3.3 Mae Salong as one of OTOP village tourism destination**

In January 2004, Doi Mae Salong was announced as —one of the first eight OTOP Tourism Villages, along with Ban Thawai in Chiang Mai, Bang Chao Cha in Ang Thong, Ban Dan Kwian in Nakhon Ratchasima, Ban Ko Kret in Nonthaburi, Ban Khiriwong in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Ban Don Kaidee in Samut Sakhon and Ban Aranyik in Ayutthaya” (Satarat, 2010, p. 111). Mae Salong was selected as one of the first 8 OTOP tourism villages primarily owing to its high-quality and popular oolong tea. In addition, Mae Salong, as a cultural melange, keeps its own distinct appearance of different lifestyles of Yunnanese and ethnic minorities.

In terms of natural scenery and destinations, Mae Salong is also known for its enchanting scenery and tranquil atmosphere. Located at a hilltop, the two main roads approaching to Mae Salong are both twisting upward along with natural scenery and seemingly endless tea plantations at a high altitude. This small village owns colorful tourist’s destinations including various tea plantations, Chinese Martyrs’ Memorial Museum, general Tuan’s tomb, Prathat Santikhiri, morning market, and Ban Lorcha, which satisfy different tourist’s



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interests.

In terms of infrastructure, Mae Salong is well equipped with basic infrastructure for transportation, food, and accommodation where tourists can easily stay to explore its unique culture. The two main roads approaching Mae Salong are well constructed to reduce the transportation difficulties. It is also convenient for tourists to arrive at Mae Salong, because they can have many choices, such as renting taxis, cars and taking trucks (songthaew). Visitors travel around Mae Salong usually by walking and riding motorbikes. Mae Salong provides various kinds of dishes and tourists can find Yunnanese, Thai and Western food in the restaurants along the main street. There are also various tea shops along the main street where visitors can simply walk in, taste tea and buy tea and some special local agricultural products. According to the village head, nowadays the small village already offers around seventy different choices of accommodation varying from cheap guesthouses to luxury resorts (February 2, 2019). It is observed that more and more hotels are under construction, despite having a considerable number of hotels already. Those advantages attract large number of tourists which has driven the 7-11 convenience store chain to open a branch on the main street.

In terms of history, the complicated history of the 93rd regiment and the transformation from refugees to Thai citizens are presented in the Chinese Martyrs' Memorial Museum as well as promoted by various tourism websites and guidebooks.

In short, the potential of Mae Salong as a tourist's destination explains the reasons why it was designated as an OTOP tourism village supported by the government. Although Mae Salong has diversified tourism resources, tea — especially oolong tea — brings it national and international reputation. Then the activities related to oolong tea in Mae Salong accordingly attract a group of tourists to visit and participate in various activities. In the view of the government, oolong tea in Mae Salong apparently is capable of creating more

value by appealing more domestic tourists. In this way, the Thai government paid much attention to promoting oolong tea by holding a tea festival every year from December to February.

#### **3.2.3.4 Tea and Cherry Blossom Festival in Mae Salong**

The winter season from November to February is the peak of tourism every year in Mae Salong. During this period, domestic tourists account for a large proportion owing to the celebration of Tea and Cherry Blossom Festival and the cold weather. The scenery is extremely picturesque in winter season when the cherry trees are in full bloom and Thai tourists intend to experience the different climate from lowland Thailand to enjoy the cold breeze. In addition, the tea fair held in the festival offers various tea products for tourists as well as creates a lively atmosphere for consuming.

In fact, at first there was just the Tea Festival several years ago — organized by villagers — and held for the first time in 1995 according to the village head of Mae Salong (February 2, 2019.) Until now, Mae Salong has already held the Tea Festival in twenty-three occasions and has gradually achieved government support. The OTOP village tourism campaign has granted one million Thai Baht to the village to hold the Tea and Cherry Blossom Festival every year. The festival nowadays is organized by the Mae Salong Nok Tambon Administration Organization in association with Mae Fa Luang District ("Photo Gallery: My Trip to Chiang Rai," 2015). Under government management and promotion, the festival adds more activities in a six day period including tea product fair, cherry blossom viewing, and cultural performances of the local ethnic groups (Yunnanese, Lisu, Akha, Mien, Lahu, Lua and Thai yai (Shan people), as well as exhibitions and sales of the community's agricultural products and a beauty or singing competition. The government promotion of the annual festival brings Mae Salong to the front of more and more domestic tourists and that is beneficial for the visitors to learn more about the oolong tea and to attract tourists to join in activities connected



with it.

### 3.2.4 Assistance from Taiwan to construct sightseeing tourism in Mae Salong

Apart from the above mentioned government campaigns, FCRA played an important role in helping Mae Salong develop tourism in addition to agricultural assistance. At the start of the 1980s, Taiwan officially planned to help Mae Salong transform as a sightseeing area owing to the tough living situation of veterans (D. X. Yang, 2010, p. 99). Since then, they decided to send fifty-thousand US dollars to construct restaurants and hotels at the top of Mae Salong and veterans raised money; thus, the veterans could share profits according to their contributions. Sakura restaurant and hotel, now affiliated to Mae Salong resort, as the symbolic construction in Mae Salong (see in Pic. 1.), was built during this period. It can be regarded as the start of the accommodation industry in Mae Salong which directly inspired villagers to open home-stays and build guesthouses and hotels. Later from 1987 to 1991, FCRA's plan transformed from agriculture and education to develop villages into distinctive agricultural zones and tourism destinations. Mae Salong, as the key target, has gained experience of sightseeing agriculture in Taiwan and then developed tea-themed tourism with the reference of Taiwan.



Figure 1. Mae Salong Resort Sign. 2012. <https://bbs.qyer.com/thread-751671-17.html> (accessed April 3, 2019).

In all, Thailand's government arrangement and assistance from Taiwan are the core contributors in creating tea industry and developing tea culture tourism. It is the starting point of the hill tribe tourism and promotion of

ecotourism that incentivized the government to market distinctive agriculture products to improve local people's economy and further evolved into developing tourism in northern Thailand. Those series of projects made Mae Salong grow under such social background in which the tea products later became the primary attraction for tourists and the government regarded it as a potential destination for ecotourism. Accordingly, the Thai government has promoted Mae Salong's oolong tea, Tea Festival and various OTOP exhibitions that have appealed a number of domestic tourists to consume tea. In fact, the government plays a role of marketing and promoting through the formation of tea culture tourism; meanwhile the efforts of villagers and assistance from the Royal Project and Taiwan play the role of constructing the tea industry as the tourism resources to attract tourists in Mae Salong. In addition, a number of tea enthusiasts or tourists have written and posted appealing travel reviews and travelogues after their trip in Mae Salong. Metaphorically, the villagers and people who came to develop the tea industry and plantations construct the roughcast house, then the local government, OTOP project and tourists decorate and beautify it into a striking and captivating house. Nowadays, the high crop yields of tea industry and high-volume tourism are considered as the top two sources for income in Mae Salong.

### **3.3 The Representation of Tea Culture Tourism in Mae Salong**

The popular trips of Mae Salong serviced in tour agencies in Chiang Rai are included into one-day tour packages which means that a trip of Mae Salong is just a part of the packages. It can be observed that most of these packages are marketed with the description of “mountain view” and “night seeing”. Usually, those one-day tour packages consist of several destinations based on Chiang Rai like Doi Mae Salong, Doi Tung, Mae Sai border, Golden Triangle, Golden Triangle Opium Museum, Chiang Saen, White Temple, Black House, and Long Neck Village. Doi Mae Salong is randomly combined with two or three or four

of those destinations in a one-day tour. The tea-related activities in Mae Salong primarily cover viewing mountain and tea plantations as well as tasting tea products.

Owing to the busy itinerary, the trip to Mae Salong only accounts for a half or one-third or a quarter of the whole day so that tea-related activities that tourists are able to take part in highly depend on the available time in Mae Salong. Among them two-destination tour packages apparently provide more activities in Mae Salong including tasting tea, visiting tea factory and plantation, visiting the local market along the main street with several tea shops, visiting viewpoints and enjoying local foods. According to interviews with staff of local tour agencies (like Japa Tour, ND Ideas Tour, Laila group Chiangrai Tour and Bamboo tour) (February 1, 2019) and check information of online booking tours (like Asian Discovery<sup>38</sup>, Viator<sup>39</sup>, Veltra City Discovery<sup>40</sup>, and My Chiangmai Tour<sup>41</sup>), the Mae Salong tour booking fee usually varies from 56 to 249 US dollars per person and the price fluctuation is based on the numbers of tourists. The total tour package fee consists of well-arranged itinerary and tour guide and some even include lunch. In addition, those interviewees told that the Mae Salong tour packages are almost booked by Western and Chinese tourists because domestic tourists prefer to rent a private car or drive their own car to Mae Salong. The driver of a private car can function as a local tour guide in this case. According to interviews with local staff of hotels, restaurant and tea shops in Mae Salong (Mrs. Yang, Mrs. X, Mr.

<sup>38</sup> –Doi Mae Salong, Tribal Village & Mae Sai Full Day Chiang Rai.” Asia Discovery. Web. 4<sup>th</sup> Mar. 2019. Retrieved from [https://www.asia-discovery.com/travel/chiangrai/daytour/doi-mae-salong-tribal-village.htm?gclid=CjwKCAjwhbHIBRAMEiwAoDA340QnCCCuq7I0msHBNwWNv8btjOyIoAnahC3rhIq7qiUsC97HI3KXlxoCCCsQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.asia-discovery.com/travel/chiangrai/daytour/doi-mae-salong-tribal-village.htm?gclid=CjwKCAjwhbHIBRAMEiwAoDA340QnCCCuq7I0msHBNwWNv8btjOyIoAnahC3rhIq7qiUsC97HI3KXlxoCCCsQAvD_BwE).

<sup>39</sup> –Mae Sai and Mae Salong Day Trip from Chiang Rai.” Viator. Web. 4<sup>th</sup> Mar. 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.viator.com/tours/Chiang-Rai/Mae-Sai-and-Mae-Salong-Tour-from-Chiang-Rai/d5268-8084P80>.

<sup>40</sup> –Full Day Tour of Doi Mae Salong, Mae Sai and Golden Triangle with Personal Guide.” Veltra city discovery. Web. 4<sup>th</sup> Mar. 2019. Retrieved from [https://www.veltra.com/en/asia/thailand/chiang\\_mai/a/138179](https://www.veltra.com/en/asia/thailand/chiang_mai/a/138179).

<sup>41</sup> –Doi Mae Salong : \_Have a sightseeing. Taste a cup of fresh tea.” My Chiangmai Tour. Web. 4<sup>th</sup> mar. 2019. Retrieved from [https://mychiangmaitour.com/doi\\_mae\\_salong/](https://mychiangmaitour.com/doi_mae_salong/).

H, Mrs. Y, and Mrs. Z<sup>42</sup>), domestic tourists used to travel in Mae Salong in a day with a rented car or van except during the winter season when domestic tourists tend to live in Mae Salong for the cold weather (February 2, 3 2019.) They used to visit 101 tea plantations and Wang Put Tan tea plantations as well as walking along the main street of Mae Salong to taste and buy tea products but they seem to be not interested in learning the traditional way of brewing, drinking, picking and making tea according to interviewees' illustration (February 2, 3 2019). However, domestic tourists were interested in traditions from twenty years ago when the tea shops on the main street were just built according to Mr. C (February 3, 2019). The simplified process of brewing tea presented in the tea shops to save time and tea is one of the reasons; another reason is that people today prefer the outcome rather to the process which costs them more time. With language barriers and unfamiliar transportation, foreign tourists are inclined to book tours from the tour agency. The tea-related activities they take part in depend on their tour guide's arrangement and their interests. However, in all, whether domestic or foreign, tourists can actively discover and participate in tea cultural activities in accordance with their interest on tea and tea culture. Tourists who participate in tea-related activities in Mae Salong are almost individual tourists because tea culture tourism is special-interested with a niche market. Combined with travel reviews<sup>43</sup> on TripAdvisor and travelogues<sup>44</sup>, whether domestic or international tourists views tea plantations, tea products, food and mountainous view as their tourism imaginaries or feelings for them to travel in Mae Salong; while international

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<sup>42</sup> Mrs. Yang is the staff of My Place Hotel. Mrs. X is the staff of Ama Mae Salong Hotel. Mr. H is the shop owner of Mae Salong Mr. Ho's Guest House. Mrs. C is one of the shop owners of Yan-Hui Tea Shop. Mrs. Z is the shop owner of Zhi-long Tea Shop.

<sup>43</sup> Travel reviews in Mae Salong are themed with "Tea Plantation —and —Doi Mae Salong" on the Tripadvisor websites, accessed from [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g2557661-d2557667-Reviews-Tea\\_Plantations-Mae\\_Salong\\_Chiang\\_Rai\\_Province.htm](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g2557661-d2557667-Reviews-Tea_Plantations-Mae_Salong_Chiang_Rai_Province.htm) and [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g2557661-d2557667-Reviews-Tea\\_Plantations-Mae\\_Salong\\_Chiang\\_Rai\\_Province.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g2557661-d2557667-Reviews-Tea_Plantations-Mae_Salong_Chiang_Rai_Province.html).

<sup>44</sup> Travelogues used as references are written by Mark Wiens (accessed from <https://migrationology.com/day-trip-mae-salong-chiang-rai-guide/>) and Helen Suk (accessed from <https://notwithoutmypassport.com/day-trip-mae-salong/>).

tourists pay more attention to local history and Chinese feeling, domestic tourists prefer scenery and weather.

The specified tea cultural elements are listed in Table 5 and the primary classifications are respectively knowledge achieving, sightseeing, first-hand experience, tourism products, tea related architecture and infrastructure and tea festival. Specifically, knowledge achieving activities consist of history of planting tea, knowledge of planting, harvesting and processing tea, and the correct way of drinking tea. Tourists who plan to deepen their understanding on tea production are able to learn the above mentioned history and knowledge through communicating with shop owners of tea shops and their tour guides. Viewing tea plantations and sakura blossom are the main sightseeing activities in Mae Salong and most tourists tend to visit 101 tea plantation, Wang Put Tan tea plantation and Mae Salong Villa's tea plantation. If tourists walk in any tea shops in Mae Salong, the shop owners are all enthusiastic about inviting tourists to taste their tea products. Tourists can also borrow tea baskets and hats in 101 tea plantation to experience picking tea leaves (see in Pic. 2). It can be observed that 101 tea plantation is the major provider where tourists can pluck tea leaves. In terms of tea products, Mae Salong is well-known for its oolong tea but it also offers other choices of green tea and floral scented tea. For tea specialty dishes, tourists can enjoy tea leaf salad in Yunnanese restaurants in Mae Salong (see in Pic 3). In terms of tea related architecture and infrastructure, Wang Put Tan tea plantation offers teapot-shaped statues to visit and take photos and Mae Salong flower hill resort and 101 Tea Green View hotel provide refreshing and picturesque closer views of tea plantations. The time for holding tea and Sakura festival are the most lively activities in Mae Salong to receive tourists from different places who are seeking scenery viewing and tea product shopping.



Figure 2. Going to pick tea leaves in 101 tea plantation. 101 Tea Green View.

<https://www.facebook.com/101teagreenview/photos/a.359653457808408/646996055740812/?type=3> (accessed 5 March 2019).



Figure 3. Tea Leaf Salad. Mark Wiens. 2015. <https://migrationology.com/day-trip-mae-salong-chiang-rai-guide/> (accessed 5 March 2019).

Table 5. Classification of Tea Culture Elements of Tea Culture Tour in Mae Salong

Classification	Name of the cultural elements	Place
Knowledge Achieving	The history of planting tea in Mae Salong	Any tea shops
	The knowledge of planting, harvesting and processing tea	Any tea shops
	The way of drinking tea	Any tea shops
Sightseeing	Tea plantations	101 tea plantation, Wang Put Tan tea plantation, and Mae Salong Villa's tea plantation
	Sakura blossom	along with hills
First-hand Experience	Picking tea leaves	101 tea plantation
	Tasting tea	Any tea shops
Tourism Products	Tea products	Any tea shops
	Tea specialty dishes	Yunnanese restaurants
Tea Related Architecture and Infrastructure	Hotels with view of tea plantation	Mae Salong flower hill resort, 101 Tea Green View hotel and so on
	Teapot -shaped statues	Wang Put Tan tea plantation

Festivals	Annual Tea and Sakura Blossom Festival	Venue of festival in Mae Salong
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According to the description of table 5, it is obvious that those tea cultural items can be experienced and taken part in among tea tour destinations in Mae Salong including different tea shops, tea plantations and tea plantation view hotels.

### 3.3.1 Tea Shops along the Main Street

There is only one main street going through the commercialized part of this village, equipped with various small and big tea shops, Yunnanese and Thai restaurants, coffee shops, as well as guesthouse, hotels and resorts. Among them distinct tea shops are the foremost attraction for tourists to walk in and select their ideal souvenirs. The part of main street near the landmark of Mae Salong (see in Pic. 4) is regarded as tea market (see in Pic. 5) because it is the highest concentration of tea shops. Along this short distance, there are almost twenty tea shops. The tea shop owners are hospitable to welcome tourists to walk in and taste tea when they see the passing travelers. According to interview with Mr. C and Mrs. Z, this tea market began twenty years ago in the 1990s (February 3, 2019.) Initially, there was only a handful of tea shops but gradually it evolved into a street of tea shops during the twenty years. Those small-scale or large-scale tea shops serve consumers with several different tea products and local specialty dried fruit and flowers, including oolong tea no.12, no.17, Dong-ding oolong<sup>45</sup>, Oriental Beauty<sup>46</sup>, four seasons tea, green tea, scented tea, dried plum, dried mango, dried cherry, dried ginger, chrysanthemum, and rose tea. Each tea shop has their distinct packages of tea products with different tea packaging plastic bag and labels with the shop's

<sup>45</sup> Dong-ding means "Frozen Summit," which is the name of a mountain in Taiwan on which the original Dong-ding oolong tea are grown. It is a kind of low oxidized but high roasted tea.

<sup>46</sup> Oriental Beauty is a kind of oolong tea with natural fruity aroma and sweet taste owing to the bites of green leafhopper. The sweet taste is a byproduct of tea plant's natural defense. This kind of tea is traditionally grown in Hsinchu county, Taiwan.

name, telephone number, name of tea and address. Some tea shops have both, their own tea plantation and tea factory but some need to process tea in another tea factory. That is to say, different packages of the same kind of tea may have the equal quality because they may be produced by the same factory. However, the tea products sold at the tea market are cheaper with numerous choices, so consumers who just want to experience oolong tea or other kinds of tea and do not have high demands on tea quality are able to get the best price on their tea products.



Figure 4. Landmark of Mae Salong (taken by the author of this thesis, May 2018).



Figure 5. The Street of Tea Market at the Main street of Mae Salong (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).

### 3.3.2 101 Tea Plantation

According to Tea Research and Extension Station's report, 101 tea plantation was constructed by a Taiwanese businessman Mr. Rui-Ming Lu twenty-five years ago and the tea plantation had expanded to eighty hectares by 2012 (Qiu & Liu, 2012, p. 11). 101 tea company not only focuses on producing and selling tea in the domestic and international markets but also participates in the tourism industry. It has already grown into an all-around tea culture tourism destination combining sightseeing, shopping, knowledge learning and experiencing together. It can be observed that 101 tea plantation and its tea



shops can be considered as the most successful destination for tea culture tours in Mae Salong. In terms of location, its tea plantations are situated at two sides of the main road 1130 so that it is convenient for tourists to approach, pluck tea leaves and take photos of the well-organized and picturesque tea plantation. A wider road inside 101 tea plantation has a row of Akha vendors selling their ethnic souvenirs (see Pic. 6). 101 tea shop and factory are located opposite to the Akha vendors and the tea shop owns a large area divided into several sectors. Each sector has tea table, chairs, tea products, tea sets and staff to serve tourists with brewing tea and tasting tea (see Pic. 7). The tea shop also shows the posters of tea making process on the wall and tourists can listen the explanation of the process if they are interested in (see in Pic. 8). Additionally, it also presents the images that Princess Sirindhorn visited its tea plantation and that attracts many domestic tourists to visit the same place where the Princess went (see in Pic. 9). In terms of shopping, 101 tea company sells a lot of tea products and created, in particular, some tea products which cater to the young generation, such as oolong milk tea, oolong tea candy and disposable bag of oolong tea (see in Pic. 10, 11). Aside from the traditional large size tea bag of oolong tea, 101 tea company also offers small size tea bag for carrying easily (see in Pic. 12). At the end of tea shop, there is also a bubble oolong milk tea shop serving several types iced oolong tea drinks (see in Pic. 12). Accordingly, 101 tea company has relatively mature experience in developing tea culture tourism owing to its well-arranged sightseeing tea plantation and various touristic souvenirs. At the same time it consciously adjusts to target consumers and transforms traditional oolong tea to modern oolong products in order to serve domestic preference.



Figure 6. 101 Tea Plantation and Akha Vendors (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).



Figure 7. 101 Tea Shop and Internal View of Tea Shop (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).



Figure 8. Various Kinds of Tea Products in 101 Tea Shop (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).



Figure 9. The Poster of Tea Making Process (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).



Figure 10. The Image of Princess Sirindhorn Visiting 101 Tea Plantation (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).

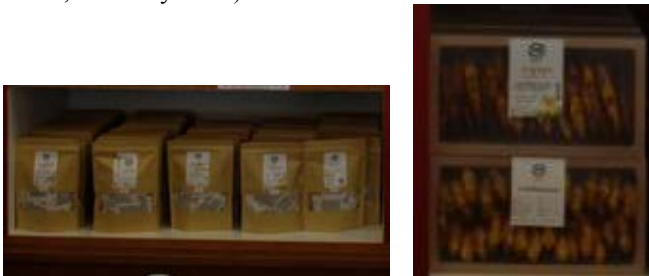


Figure 11. Disposable bag of oolong tea and small bag of oolong tea (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).

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Figure 12. Oolong Milk Tea, Oolong Tea Candy, and Oolong Bubble Milk Tea (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).

### 3.3.3 Wang Put Tan Tea Plantation

Wang Put Tan tea plantation was created by Mr. Pi-Rong Wu and it already owned thirty hectares of tea plantation in 2012 (Qiu & Liu, 2012, p. 12). Similarly, Wang Put Tan also develops tea production and tourism industry. The Wang Put Tan tea shop is on the side of main road 1130 with Chinese style appearance (see in Pic. 13). As one of the biggest tea businesses, Wang Put Tan also provides different high-quality tea products wrapped with Chinese style packages (see in Pic 14). The entire decoration in the tea shop also keeps Chinese style with obvious Chinese style furnishing and Chinese words. That is to say, Wang Put Tan strikes out a path for purely traditional Chinese package which is unique in Mae Salong. Although Wang Put Tan tries to show uniqueness in terms of packaging, it also adapts to domestic people's taste in terms of products themselves, such as the different kinds of flowering tea, tea candy and Matcha powder (see in Pic 15).

Wang Put Tan tea plantation is the only one to built teapot statues to attract tourists. However, this did not turn into reality according to interview with Mr. W, the son of Mr. Wu Pi-rong (23 May 2018). The initial project for building teapot statues was to construct a tea tour destination similar to 101 tea plantation, but the inconvenient road to the tea plantation hindered the arrival of tourists. In this way, the Wang Put Tan tea plantation is not as popular as 101 tea plantation, but the extremely large size of teapot statues also appeals some tourists to take photos (see in Pic. 16.).



Figure 13. The Chinese Style Appearance of Wang Put Tan Tea Shop (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).



Figure 14. The Chinese Style Packages of Tea Products. Wang Put Tan Tea. <https://www.facebook.com/wangputtan/photos/a.490638481033759/2067801673317424/?type=3> and <https://www.facebook.com/wangputtan/photos/a.490638481033759/1239400149490918/?type=3> (Accessed 10 March 2019).



Figure 15. Tea Candy, Matcha Powder and Flowering tea. Wang Put Tan Tea. <https://www.facebook.com/wangputtan/photos/a.490638481033759/2108090815955176/?type=3>, <https://www.facebook.com/wangputtan/photos/a.490638481033759/1423272587770339/?type=3> and <https://www.facebook.com/wangputtan/photos/a.490638481033759/2160903147340609/?type=3> (accessed 10 March 2019).



Figure 16. The Teapot Statues and Chinese Style building in Wang Put Tan Tea Plantation (taken by the author of this thesis, May 2018).

In fact, there are more tea plantations in Mae Salong but only 101 and Wang Put Tan tea plantations are regarded as viewpoints because of the better arrangement and infrastructure of those two establishments (see in Pic 17). Apart from that, the tea plantation and factory of Mae Salong Villa<sup>47</sup> can offer visiting services for its customers if they have an interest in tea production.



Figure 17. The Image of Viewpoints in Mae Salong (Wang Put Tan and 101 tea plantations are labeled) (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).

### 3.3.4 Tea Plantation View Hotels

Owing to mountains carpeted with tea plants, a number of hotels in Mae Salong are capable of viewing tea plantations on the slope of mountains from afar. Nevertheless, Mae Salong constructed some hotels inside the tea plantations and in turn those hotels are popular among tourists as a result of

<sup>47</sup> Mae Salong Villa and Emerald Tea Company are both created by Li Tai-zeng and Li Tai-fu brothers. Their tea factory achieved the European organic certification and their products are sold with higher price to France, Germany and other countries (Qiu and Liu, 2012, p.11). The Mae Salong Villa is one the luxurious hotels in Mae Salong.

getting a closer view to tea plantations. In other words, the close distance to tea plantation transforms into a tourist trap. The most famous tea plantation view hotels are Mae Salong flower hill resort and 101 Tea Green View hotel. Mae Salong flower hill resort is a luxurious hotel surrounded by the finest flower garden and well-arranged tea garden, so it is an ideal place for tourists to enjoy idyllic scenery and relax themselves (see in Pic. 18). 101 Tea Green View hotel, located at the vicinity of 101 tea plantation, is a family business of 101 tea company, so it is able to provide tourists with the service that 101 tea plantation offers as an accommodation.



Figure 18. Mae Salong Flower Hill Resort (taken by the author of this thesis, February 2019).

The 101 Tea Green View hotel was built in 2018 by a family member of the shop owner of 101 tea company. This hotel takes advantage of its great location and surroundings as attractions. For example, it is situated in the vicinity of 101 tea plantation, shop and factory available for tourists to visit —nothing is more relaxing and refreshing than the landscape outside one's window (see in Pic. 19). The tea-view hotels can be considered as an appealing point in the tea culture tour package, but the present Mae Salong tour packages lack this arrangement because of the short itinerary. So the majority of customers are domestic travelers who rent vehicles and drive to Mae Salong by themselves and manage their own tea culture tour itinerary.



Figure 19. The Tea Plantation View of 101 Green Tea View Hotel. 101 Green Tea View. <https://www.101teagreenview.com/chiangrai-resort-gallery?lightbox=dataItem-jppdouo> (accessed 12 March 2019).

In short, different tea themes are illustrated one by one herein above and in fact the tea culture tourism in Mae Salong is constituted by those tea-related activities. Generally, tea culture tourism in Mae Salong is a multi-layered tourism form focusing on acquiring tea planting history, tea planting, harvesting, making knowledge and the way of drinking tea; at the same time tourists are able to participate in tea plantation visiting, tea plucking, tea drinking and tea specialty dishes eating activities. In addition, the local Tea and Sakura festival attracts numerous domestic tourists each winter season. That is to say, tea culture tourism in Mae Salong is highly inclined to season and apparently, tourists are more than doubled—even tripled—in winter. Tea culture tourism, by nature, is seasonal which considerably affects the village. Other than domestic tourists, western tourists make up the majority who take part in tea culture activities and they are likelier to participate in tea-related knowledge learning activities than domestic tourists. Tea culture tourism is one of the most popular tourist themes in Mae Salong, but Mae Salong does not lack of other types of activities. In this way, tourists, sometimes, travel to Mae Salong in order to take part in more than tea culture tourism. In short, tea culture tourism is the most dazzling—but not the only—tourist activity in Mae Salong.

## Chapter 4

### Tea Culture Tourism in Thai Nguyen

Thai Nguyen, located at northern midlands between Hanoi and the northern mountains, is regarded as the most important green tea region and most time-honored tea center in Vietnam. Green tea in Vietnam is not the major export goods but a significant domestic consumer product. So Thai Nguyen is well known in terms of producing classic green tea products of high prices for domestic demands, although it is not the largest province in terms of tea-growing area and production volume (as cited in Tran, 2008, p. 7). This area is suitable for planting tea owing to its tropical climate, altitude (about 600 meters above sea level) and alluvial soil (CCE, 2007, p. 13). The generous gift from nature endows Thai Nguyen with advantageous environment for planting tea and in return Thai Nguyen, becomes popular because of tea planting.

The history of planting and producing tea in Thai Nguyen can be divided mainly into four periods owing to the transformation of society. That is to say, it starts from its emergence, interruption, restoration, and prosperity from the 1880s to today. Thai Nguyen, currently, is promoting popularity of green tea and developing its tourism industry under the support of government and local tea businesses; meanwhile tea culture tourism, centered on Thai Nguyen green tea, starts to gain attention from tea lovers around the world.

#### 4.1 The History of Planting Tea in Thai Nguyen

##### 4.1.1 The Emergence of Planting Tea in Vietnam

To trace back the history of tea in Thai Nguyen, it is necessary to amplify limitation to the whole nation. In fact, Vietnam's involvement in tea cultivation can be dated back a thousand years (V. D. Nguyen & Lantican, 2011, p. 208). According to a tea introduction column from a Vietnamese tea producer website, the ancient Han scripts mentioned the tea growing and harvesting of the ancient Vietnamese people ("Tea Tree in Ancient Books," 2015). In



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addition, from a Vietnamese poetry website, *An Nam Chi Luoc*<sup>48</sup> records "May, the eighth year of Khai Bao (Vietnamese era name), paying tribute to Song Dynasty with the gold, silk, horns, elephant ivory and aromatic tea (Q. D. Nguyen, 2009)." It shows that tea production has had certain output and served as precious goods at that time.

In addition, analyzing references of the beverage in poetry and folk songs can uncover some of the history of tea culture. During the period of the Tran Dynasty (thirteenth to early fifteenth century), tea was regarded as it had philosophical value for the Vietnamese. In a poem dedicated to King Tran Anh Tong (1276 - 1320), written by Chu Van An, a Vietnamese scholar, mentions tea was assumed as a source of spiritual purity (Dai, 2009). During that period, tea drinking was considered to help refresh and polish the drinkers' minds which gave it a high status in the ancient Vietnamese life. The higher education of scholars and poets allowed them to record tea in texts; whereas tea in most ordinary people's lives could not be presented today from academic resources. However, some traditions and habits inherited from generation to generation can illuminate that tea was consumed widely by the peasant population as a part of social engagement in its simplest form (Wenner, 2011, p. 13).

Originally, the tea plant in northern Vietnam was the variety of *Camellia sinensis* var. *Pubilimba Chang*<sup>49</sup> originated from the primitive tea plant in ancient Yunnan and Guangxi (F. Yu & Chen, 2016, p. J1). Later, the Vietnamese, before the French invasion, cultivated two other varieties: tea (*Camellia sinensis* var. *Sinensis*) plantations in the Red River delta and forest tea trees (*Camellia sinensis* var. *Assamica* or wild tea) in the northern mountainous region. Tea plantations in the Red River Delta are mainly located in Ha Dong (now part of Hanoi) and hill areas in Nghe An, Thai Nguyen and

<sup>48</sup> It is a Vietnamese history book written in Chinese prose written by Lê Tắc when he was exiled in China in the first half of the fourteenth century.

<sup>49</sup> *Camellia sinensis* var. *Pubilimba Chang* is one of the varieties of *Camellia sinensis*. There are four recognized *Camellia sinensis* varieties: *C. sinensis* var. *sinensis*, *C. sinensis* var. *assamica*, *C. sinensis* var. *Publilimba Chang* and *C. sinensis* var. *dehungensis*.

other provinces. Accordingly, the habit of growing and drinking tea is rooted in the northern mountainous and midland people. However, it was not until the French colonial period that the tea yield in Vietnam increased dramatically.

#### **4.1.2 Post French Involvement in Vietnam**

The large-scale tea production did not begin in Vietnam until the French began taking interest in Vietnamese agriculture for colonial purposes. From the French perspective, Vietnam became a source of raw materials and an investment opportunity (Edwards & Phan, 2014, p. 13). Therefore, French colonizers adopted some specific colonial measures in order to facilitate capitalist growth, like the conversion of tax payments forms to cash, and the concession of indigenous land to colonial settlers for the development of major cash crops. Tea was, therefore, an accepted mean for paying taxes demanded by the colonial government and this shift prompted large-scale cultivation of tea in Vietnam.

Throughout the whole nineteenth century, the French began purchasing Vietnamese tea and surveying suitable areas for tea production. In 1882, French explorers surveyed tea production and trade from the North to the South between the Da River and the Mekong River (Van, 2017). In 1890, Duke Paul Cheffanjon managed a large tea farm for export to Europe in Phu Tho province which became the birthplace of the tea industry in Vietnam; later, the French continued to produce tea in the following decades by establishing tea research centers and expanding their production to other areas of the country ((CCE), 2007, p. 23; Ngoc, 2012, p. 242; Wenner, 2011, p. 14). Moreover, Dasgupta (2007, p. 19) states that in 1918, the Union of Vietnam Tea Farming industry was later constructed to develop large-scale commercialization of tea.

From mid nineteenth century to the 1940s, Vietnam, with French state-of-the-art equipment, started to develop large French tea plantations to produce processed black tea and green tea for export. Common people, at the same time, started to produce green tea at home and engage in small tea businesses.

Green tea has been cultivated and processed in Thai Nguyen province for a hundred years and the tea products are recognized for their superior quality (Dang, 2014 p. 107). Thai Nguyen tea goes down in history as one of the most famous teas in Indochina attributed to two important contributors: Dr. Nguyen Dinh Tuan and Mr. Doi Nam (see in Pic. 20., 21.).



Figure 20. Dr. Nguyen Dinh Tuan



Figure 21. Mr. Doi Nam (taken by the author of the thesis from Tea Cultural Space in Tan Cuong, December 2018)

Dr. Nguyen Dinh Tuan (1867-1941) was the provincial judge of Thai Nguyen province who proposed to the French colonial government and King Bao Dai to establish a new administrative unit called Tan Cuong<sup>50</sup>. Mr. Doi Nam (born in 1883) was sent by the French colonial government to Tan Cuong to reclaim new land and gather people from different places to established tea farming villages<sup>51</sup>.

The history of Tan Cuong tea plants and tea villages started around the

<sup>50</sup> Quoted from the introduction board in Tea Cultural Space in Tan Cuong. Tan Cuong is one of the communes in Thai Nguyen and regarded as the most popular tea village in Thai Nguyen.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted from the introduction board in Tea Cultural Space in Tan Cuong.

early twentieth century. At that time, Tan Cuong was a wild and barren area with people living a hard life. When being a provincial judge, Dr. Nguyen Dinh Tuan worked with Tan Cuong people to expand the tea planting area. Under his instruction, Mr. Doi Nam helped the people build tea-producing facilities, taught people to grow tea, and opened agencies to sell tea in Thai Nguyen and some other provinces. The tea cultivar which Mr. Doi Nam brought back was Trung Du (var. *sinensis* f. *Macrophylla*, the big leaf Yunnan sub-variety) and then it was planted extensively in Thai Nguyen Province (Hopkins, 2018). Trung Du tea is considered as an older and native variety in Thai Nguyen today with its reputation as the most famous local specialty tea. Later in the first half of the twentieth century, Thai Nguyen tea catered to the French officials, elites and foreign merchants' taste, and the brand Tan Cuong tea has been popular locally and internationally from then on.

#### 4.1.3 After Control of North Vietnam Government (from 1950s to 1970s)

Throughout decades of French involvement, the tea industry in Vietnam has been constructed from nothing to having several tea plantations and research centers. However, from 1945 to 1954, the production of tea was almost impossible to conduct on account of —the DRV's guerrilla-warfare tactics” and —the end of Second World War even did not improve Vietnam's agricultural situation” (Cain, 2017, p. 73).

However, later in the 1950s, tea industry started to reconstruct and make progress in spite of the economic instability caused by the conflict between north and south governments. Edwards and Phan (2014, p. 13) points out that a socialist Democratic Republic of Vietnam, in the North, sought to transform economic relations and introduced economic reforms based on the Soviet/Chinese model. Shabad (1958, p. 38) concludes that, like that of China, North Vietnam's economy is structurally complex, including five sectors of ownership and operation: state-owned, cooperative, small-private, large-private, and joint state-private enterprises. No matter which form of ownership

is under the central control, by using the collective power to improve the development of agriculture and industry. Additionally, the North government implemented “population redistribution to establish new economic zones by bringing Kinh people from densely populated lowland areas to uplands” (Huong, 2014, p. 26). Therefore, Vietnamese production of agriculture and industry began to soar in the following decades, fueled by the abundant labor and under highly-concentrated policy and enthusiasm of farmers.

At that time, tea was considered a plant of high economic value, important for economic development in the northern midlands and mountainous areas. Many state-run tea plantations were founded, such as the Song Cau and Quan Chu plantations in Thai Nguyen Province (Ngoc, 2012, p. 243). Additionally, tea-growing cooperatives were also constructed and tea growers became members of cooperatives or workers of state farms (AsiaDHRRA and ASEAN Foundation, 2008, p. 62). Most picked tea leaves were sold to the state farms for processing (see in Pic. 22.), and then sold to VINATEA<sup>52</sup> for export. Ngoc (2012, p. 245) mentions that the green tea growing areas, at that time, were often of small scale and scattered, mostly at a household level with the traditional green tea production equipment and technology, using heat to dry the fresh tea leaves which produced the classic green tea.



Figure 22. Tea farmers were reporting and selling their dried teas to state farm staff (taken by the author of the thesis from tea cultural space in Tan Cuong, December 2018)

During the mid 1950s, Soviet tea processing technology and machinery

<sup>52</sup> The acronym for Vietnam National Tea Corporation. It focuses on tea export and import in Vietnam.

were used in Vietnam for processing and exporting Vietnamese tea to Soviet Union. The USSR helped the North government's tea industry in terms of building tea factories, financial support and agricultural specialist's training (CCE, 2007, p. 23; Vo, 1990, p. 41). Therefore, the main tea products of Vietnam, at that time, were green tea and black tea which were exported to countries of the former Soviet Union, China and Eastern Europe. Thai Nguyen, during that time, mainly focused on producing green tea with the traditional methods. The tea cultivar mostly planted in Thai Nguyen was Trung Du tea which was suitable for producing green tea; whereas large black tea production took place in south Vietnam.

#### **4.1.4 After Doi Moi Reform**

Under the centrally planned command system, the comprehensive industrial policy did little to promote efficiency after the war time and the collapse of Comecon international trading system (Perkins & Vu, 1958, pp. 7, 8). Therefore, the country was in an urgent need for making a rapid transition to a market-oriented system, to cope with inflation and the sluggish state owned industries. In addition, the cooperative policy also brought negative influence on individuals, like discouraging people's interest and motivation for production. In the 1980s, the government started to implement a reform from central planning to a market driven economy and a land reform by distributing state land to the private households. This allowed households and small farm-owners to have their own tea plantations and the initial priority was given to agricultural reform by giving better farm-level prices to stimulate farmers to expand cultivation (Doutriaux, Geisler, & Shively, 2008, p. 535).

Specifically, tea farmer families are considered as autonomous units and granted the long-term right to use land after 1986, so many households have good development and large scale in tea production and business. The old type cooperatives shifted to the new types with the support of the local authority,

mass organization, and NGOs —particularly CECI<sup>53</sup>; accordingly, various forms appeared in tea production, such as processing households, private companies, tea processing and export joint venture companies, assemblers, and wholesale traders (AsiaDHRRA and ASEAN Foundation, 2008, p. 62).

From the twentieth century, tea farming and processing in Thai Nguyen are mainly organized in smallholder models despite a number of investments from large multi-national companies. Hopkins (2018) emphasizes that the large multinationals are involved in black tea production; while green tea production remains dominated by the smallholders/farmers who either produce their own tea or sell fresh leaf to nearby factories in Thai Nguyen. Thai Nguyen tea, actually, is sold in both domestic and foreign markets —from which the domestic market share for green tea is seventy percent to eighty percent. The poor quality Thai Nguyen tea is often used for export as black tea at very low cost, and therefore Thai Nguyen tea brand in the international market is not highly considered compared to the domestic market ("Introduction of Thai Nguyen Tea," 2016).

Tea is really a plant for poverty reduction and rich making in Thai Nguyen. The tea growing and processing industry has been of socio-economic significance to this province. Davis and Quynh (2010, p. 3) highlight that a Department of Agriculture and Rural Development assessment for the period 2006-2010 determined that Thai Nguyen tea development is the most effective strategy for sustainable tea production. Therefore, the Thai Nguyen government thinks highly of the tea industry as a strategy to improve local rural economies.

With the expectation on future development, the current priority is given to developing tea with higher output and improve resistance to environment and pests. As a result, farmers have been encouraged to replace existing low productivity stock with a range of approved higher yielding cultivars (Hopkins,

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<sup>53</sup> The acronym for Centre for International Studies and Cooperation. CECI began operating in Vietnam in 1991 for further integrating local communities into the market and increasing their agricultural revenues.

2018) (see in Pic. 23, 24).



Figure 23. The farmer asserted new land and planted tea



Figure 24. Farmers cut down Trung Du tea trees of forty to fifty years (taken by the author of the thesis in La Bang, December 2018).

Hopkins (2018) gives the typical example that the traditional Vietnamese Trung Du tea has been cut down and replaced with some imported and newly bred tea cultivars from other countries due to their higher yields and easier maintenance. Currently, the main acclimatized tea cultivars in the case of La Bang commune<sup>54</sup> are now DT1 and Phuc Van Tien (see Pic. 25).



Figure 25. DT 1 Trung Du Phuc Van Tien  
(The tea leaves of Trung Du are wider than other two. taken by author of the thesis in La Bang Commune, December 2018)

<sup>54</sup> La Bang is one of the communes in Thai Nguyen, where the local community mainly grows tea for livelihood.



DT1<sup>55</sup> was imported from Sri Lanka in 1977. In Sri Lanka, it was known to produce high quality black tea (Punyasiri et al., 2017, p. 508); whereas after its introduction, it was applied for producing green tea in Thai Nguyen. Phuc Van Tien, released in 2018 in Vietnam, was imported from China in 2000 (Ngoc, 2012, p. 254). It was used to produce white tea<sup>56</sup> in China; while it was still used to produce green tea in Thai Nguyen in accordance with domestic demands. It is obvious that tea cultivar is processed and produced according to social demands, so DT1 and Phuc Van Tien were localized to produce green tea when it was imported in Thai Nguyen. In other words, localization always happens whether techniques or products transfer.

Except for growth of tea yields, Thai Nguyen government also takes actions to bring Thai Nguyen tea to the front and preserve the tea culture. The most important action is to hold a tea culture festival which not merely propagates tea products and tea culture but also develops the tourism. It is biennially held in November with four main activities, including Tea cultural Festival, Miss-Tea contest and a series of interesting activities ("Tea Festival Thai Nguyen, Vietnam,"). This festival attracts the participation of many domestic tea companies and international tea delegations ("Thai Nguyen to hold tea festival," 2015). For visitors, this festival gives them a chance to learn about the art of tea-drinking, taste signature teas and enjoy folk dances and music ("Thai Nguyen Tea Festival features world's best tea," 2015).

With the celebration of the first tea festival in 2011, the government also announced the completion of the tea cultural space in Tan Cuong (see Pic. 26.). This tea museum aims at presenting the history of tea planting in Thai Nguyen, the honors Thai Nguyen tea achieved, and the ancient tea wares and tea processing appliances, in order to preserve and promote tea culture.

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<sup>55</sup> DT1 is an estate selection from Drayton estate in Sri Lanka (Ranatunga, 2017, p. 3), but an introduction in Vietnam. It was categorized as high black tea quality accessions in Sri Lanka (Kottawa-Arachchi, Gunasekare, Ranatunga, Punyasiri, & Jayasinghe, 2013, p. 313).

<sup>56</sup> White tea is kind of light fermented tea, compared to green tea as non-fermented tea and black tea as full fermented tea.



Figure 26. Tea Cultural Space (taken by author of the thesis, December 2018)

In short, Thai Nguyen tea, in the 2010s, has already achieved reputation and recognition of high quality green tea nationwide —and even internationally — under the support from the government and the efforts of the local people. This thriving situation lays the foundation for attracting people to taste tea and consume tea in Thai Nguyen.

## 4.2 The Development of Tea Culture Tourism in Thai Nguyen

### 4.2.1 The Development of Tourism in Vietnam

Vietnam owns rich tourism resources, offering appealing landscapes with mountains or beaches as well as historical relics. It is Doi Moi reform that drives Vietnam to develop its tourism industry from the 1980s onwards. However, opening up the economy was not easy in the beginning as Vietnam was short of capital, experience, infrastructure and techniques —and isolated because of an American embargo (Hall & Page, 2016, p. 167). Accordingly, tourism was seen as a quick way to obtain foreign exchange and to steer clear of the embargo in Vietnam.

According to the Tourism Master Plan released in 1994, the northern region is identified as one of the major zones for the development of tourism (Henderson, 2000, p. 273). Hall and Page (2016, p. 168) state that the Northern Zone centers on Hanoi, featured weekend tourism especially around Ha Long Bay. Based on Hanoi, Sa Pa tours have been another choice for people who do not want to take part in the leisure-oriented activities. With the twenty-year-old development of tourism, tourism industry in Vietnam is moving from non-

existent to mature — gradually — and the country would appear to be about to enter a new phase to use its more creative and attractive tourism resources.

Located in the northern zone, Thai Nguyen province, in the early period, was not considered as a tourist's destination. Nevertheless, with the fame of classic green tea, Thai Nguyen has attracted several domestic and international tourists. Some of them travel to Thai Nguyen for consuming tea and some for sightseeing. This kind of early drive for traveling incentivizes tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen. Such potential has been noticed by the Thai Nguyen government that promotes it by holding tea festivals and building the tea museum as mentioned above.

#### 4.2.2 The Formation of Tea Culture Tourism in Thai Nguyen

The tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen is at the embryonic stage of tourism development. Actually, the selling tea culture tour package has been formed for two years. In this way, this tour is kind of special-interest, or frankly, rarely known by people.

Along the street of downtown of Hanoi City, there are a myriad of tour agencies on the two sides with posters in front of their shops which advertise the tour based on Hanoi including Hanoi City, Halong Bay, Sapa and Ninh Binh as well as tours in other southward cities like Hue, Hoi An, Da Nang so on (see examples in Pic. 27).



Figure 27. Tourists' destination information shown by travel agencies in downtown Hanoi City. (Travel or Ticket Agent Booking Office. 2009. <https://c8.alamy.com/comp/F45R08/travel-agency-and-tour-bookings-money-exchange-office-in-hanoi-old-F45R08.jpg>/<http://kangaroo-hostel.hanoi-hotels.org/en/>. accessed April 26, 2019).

However almost none of them show the advertisement of Thai Nguyen tea tour. According to an interview with the staff (Mr. A and Mr. B) in tour agencies (December 12, 2018,) they do not arrange the Thai Nguyen tea tour and almost nobody inquiries the tea tour packages in Thai Nguyen. However, if tourists would like to travel there, they are able to arrange a private car for taking tourists to their destination with high cost. Additionally to communicating with the local tour agencies in person, travelers can also search tourism information online to book their favorite tour packages. After typing the key words Thai Nguyen tea tour, some tea tour reviews and three tour agencies which are able to provide this service can be found. They are Red Lotus Travel<sup>57</sup>, Footprint Travel<sup>58</sup> and Indochina Explore Tours<sup>59</sup>. For the tea culture tour packages, all of them have a similar itinerary, including strolling around tea plantations, picking tea leaves, learning tea processing, tasting tea, learning tea etiquette, and visiting tea cultural space. Among them, Red Lotus Travel agency provides the most complete tour itineraries and offers two choices of tea culture tour packages. Based on this, the researcher took part in the tour package of this agency as a participant, to observe the formation of tea culture tour in Thai Nguyen; therefore, the following formation of tea culture tourism is in the case of this agency as a reference for general information of the tea culture tourism situation in Thai Nguyen.

According to Mr. Thiep of Red Lotus Travel agency, the tea culture tour packages are completed by the cooperation of two sides. One is the agency itself who designs the tea culture tour packages and guides tourist to Thai Nguyen from Hanoi; the other one is the local tea tour guide in Thai Nguyen who is knowledgeable about tea cultivars, the way of drinking tea, and tea history. According to interview with Mr.

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<sup>57</sup> –Motorbike Tour to Thai Nguyen 1 day.” Web. January 2019. Retrieved from <http://redlotustravel.com/motorbike-tour-to-thai-nguyen-tea-plantation.html> / Thai Nguyen Tour 2 day 1 night. <http://redlotustravel.com/thai-nguyen-tour-2-days-1-night.html>

<sup>58</sup> –Tea Affair by Bike 1 Day.” Web. January 2019. Retrieved from <https://footprint.vn/travel-styles/cycling/tea-affair-by-bike-1-day>

<sup>59</sup> –Thai Nguyen Overall Impression of Tea and Bike Tour.” Web. January 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.indochinaexploretours.com/day-trip-vacation-activity/thai-nguyen-overall-impression-tea-bike-tour/>.

Thiep (December 13, 2018) he came up with the idea of arranging tea culture tours two years ago (around 2016). At that time, the village tour was becoming popular like the Bat Trang ceramic village tour and bonsai village tour, so he wanted like to exploit more tour resources in this direction. In addition, he uses Thai Nguyen tea products as the present for his customers at that time, so he had a preliminary idea about arranging tours on tea and Thai Nguyen. The turning point occurred half a year later when the local tea tour guide went to seek cooperation with the agency and soon they reached an agreement. On the one side, the manager demands a tea specialist; on the other side, the local tea tour guide lacks a platform to publicize their idea of tea culture tour. According to the local tea tour guide Ms. Le (December 14, 2018,) she started to organize Thai Nguyen tea culture tours one and a half year ago. She is the local to Thai Nguyen and was born in a tea farming family, so she grew up with abundant tea knowledge. Additionally, she got inspiration from her foreign friends' suggestion that she could arrange tea culture tours to attract tourists, so she started to plan the tea culture tour and opened an office for managing it in Thai Nguyen. From her words, she obtains the tea culture tourists by friends' recommendation and most of the tourists are westerners and some from Singapore and Hongkong, or China. As for Mr. Thiep, he said he cannot make sure the nationality of tea tourists because tourists did not need to show their passport to book the tour and it takes almost one month to have one tourist book the tea culture tour.

Owing to the price of the tea culture tour, the researcher could not join each tour package of the three agencies. In this way, the achieved information is limited. However, based on the example of Red Lotus Travel, it can be inferred that the tea culture tourism has taken place during the past two years and it already has settled an itinerary to arrange this tour. Most importantly, a local tea tour guide who specializes in tea knowledge is the cornerstone of the whole tea culture trip. The Thai Nguyen tea culture tours are still not well-known domestically and internationally. Generally, those who are interested in green tea and tea culture in Thai Nguyen would take part in tea culture tourism and most of them are westerners according to the information from the tea tour review online and information of the tea culture tour guide. In all, development of the tourism industry, fame of classic green tea and personal interests are the dominating factors to motivate tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen.



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### 4.3 The Presentation of Tea Culture Tourism in Thai Nguyen

After examining the formation of tea culture tourism, it is necessary to analyze the specific presentation of tea culture tourism and the combination of tea culture and tourism in Thai Nguyen.

On account of its audience's scope, tea culture tours in Thai Nguyen are operated privately. As a result, the cost for tea culture tourism is a little expensive but the tourists receive better service. Therefore, except for tea lovers and enthusiasts, people hardly pay for it. After collecting tourists' impression from online travel reviews<sup>60</sup>, travelogues<sup>61</sup>, and travel videos<sup>62</sup>, tourists who participate in Thai Nguyen tea culture tour packages have positive comments on this trip, such as the recommendation by tourists for tea enthusiasts and tea culture lovers. From the trip, they mention that the scenery of tea plantation, authentic experience and the tea knowledge they learnt are the most attractive points and impressions for them.

At present, there are two main tea culture tour packages in Thai Nguyen as shown in the table 6. Thai Nguyen tea culture tour mainly consists of two types of itineraries: one-day bike or motorbike tour (64 – 100 US dollars per person) and two-day-one-night tour (170 – 200 US dollars per person).

Table 6. The Types of Thai Nguyen Tea Culture Tour Packages

Types of tour packages	Price (US Dollars/person)	Activities

<sup>60</sup> Travel reviews consists of Hong Anh's "Things to see/do in Thai Nguyen Tea Plantation" and reviews from Tripadvisor themed on "Tea Tour (Hanoi)" (accessed from <https://www.tripadvisor.co.za/ShowUserReviews-g293924-d15527439-r677998982-TeaTour-Hanoi.html#REVIEWS>).

<sup>61</sup> Jessica Norah's travelogue "Thai Nguyen: A Visit to Vietnam's Tea Region with Footprint Travel" (accessed from <https://independenttravelcats.com/thai-nguyen-visit-vietnams-tea-region-footprint-travel/>).

<sup>62</sup> The travel video is made in Tan Cuong by Truyen hinh Thai Nguyen TNTV, accessed from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PONOfMxULow>.

One-day bike/motorbike tour	64 - 100*	<p>1. Tan Cuong tea tour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Riding motorbike/ bike around tea village</li> <li>B. Picking tea leaves</li> <li>C. Learning tea processing</li> <li>D. Tasting tea drinks</li> <li>E. Having lunch in local household</li> <li>F. Learning tea etiquette</li> <li>G. Visiting tea cultural space</li> </ul> <p>2. La Bang tea tour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Riding motorbike/ bike around tea village</li> <li>B. Picking tea leaves</li> <li>C. Learning tea processing</li> <li>D. Tasting tea drinks</li> <li>E. Learning tea etiquette</li> <li>F. Trekking to Kem Creek</li> <li>G. Having lunch in local household</li> </ul>
Two day one night	170 - 200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Sightseeing tea explanations and hills in La Bang</li> <li>B. Picking tea leaves</li> <li>C. Visiting tea processing household workshop</li> <li>D. Having lunch in local household</li> <li>E. Trekking to Kem creek</li> <li>F. Living in local homestay in La Bang</li> <li>G. Visiting local tea market in La Bang</li> <li>H. Visiting tea plantations in Tan Cuong</li> <li>I. Learning making tea</li> <li>J. Having specialty lunch cooked with tea leaves</li> <li>K. Visiting tea cultural space</li> <li>L. Boat Trip on Nui Coc lake</li> </ul>

(According to the group size, the price fluctuates so it is not exact. The price per person will be cheaper if the group size is bigger.)

The price fluctuation depends on the tourist's group size. Tan Cuong and La Bang communes are the primary tourist's destinations. Based on these two places, the tea-related activities are mainly visiting tea plantations, local tea markets and tea museum, picking tea leaves, tasting tea drinks and tea dishes and learning the tea making process and tea etiquette. In addition, tour packages also provide other services to diversify the traveling activities; for instance boat trips on Nui Coc Lake (see Pic. 28.), trekking to Kem Creek (see Pic. 29.), and enjoying sturgeon (see Pic. 30.)



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Figure 28. Nui Coc lake



Figure 29. Kem stream

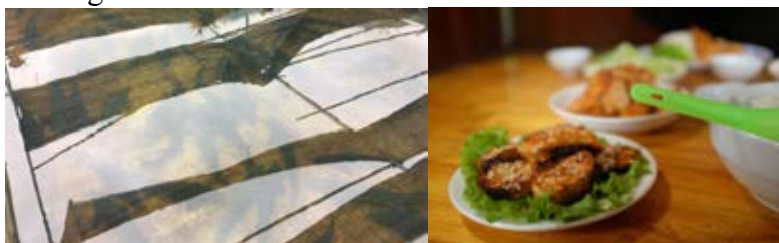


Figure 30. Sturgeon (taken by author of the thesis, December 2018)

The second type of tea tour package will be further analyzed as an example because the itinerary is more mature and complete. It is important to illuminate how the tea culture elements are represented through the whole trip and what kinds of tea knowledge and culture can be achieved from this trip.

According to tea culture, it refers to the tangible wealth and intangible wealth created along the development of tea (J. Li, 2015, p. 15), including tea history, tea ceremonies, tea etiquette, tea customs, processing techniques of tea, tea cultural relics, tea related architectures, tea products, tea literature and so on. In accordance with the itinerary of Thai Nguyen two-day-one-night tea tour, the table below can classify different tea culture elements into the following groups (see Table 7).

Table 7. Classification of Tea Culture Elements of Tea Culture Tour in Thai Nguyen

Classification	Name of tea culture elements	Place
Knowledge achieving	The history of planting tea in Thai Nguyen	La Bang and Tan Cuong



	The knowledge of planting tea and harvesting tea		La Bang
	The skills of making tea		La Bang and Tan Cuong
	The way of drinking tea		Tan Cuong
	The knowledge of identifying tea quality		La Bang
	The story of Nui Coc lake		Tan Cuong
	The explanation of tea cultural space		Tan Cuong
Sightseeing	Tea plantations and tea hills		La Bang and Tan Cuong
	Kem Creek		La Bang
	Nui Coc lake		Tan Cuong
First-hand Experience	Picking tea leaves		La Bang and Tan Cuong
	Making tea		Tan Cuong
	Tasting tea		La Bang and Tan Cuong
Tourism products	Different kinds of tea products	Classic green tea	Tan Cuong
		Flower tea	
		Match powder	
	Tea specialty dishes		Tan Cuong
	Green Tea Peanut candy (side food for drinking tea)		Tan Cuong
	Sturgeon (specialty lunch)		La Bang
Tea related Architecture and infrastructure	Tea cultural space		Tan Cuong
	Local tea markets		La Bang
	An Duong Tra center (combination of making tea, selling tea and cooking tea specialty dish)		Tan Cuong
	Local tea household workshops		La Bang
	Homestay near tea hills		La Bang
Historic sites	Ancient tea trees (around 100 years old)		Tan Cuong
	Ancient tea wares		Tan Cuong
Festivals	Biennial Tea Culture Festival		Tan Cuong

There are seven classifications or groups: knowledge achieving, sightseeing, first-hand experience, tourism products, tea related architecture and infrastructure, historic sites and festivals. For the first group, tourists can take part in history, knowledge of

planting tea and harvesting tea, the correct way of drinking tea, knowledge of identifying tea quality, and story of Nui Coc lake. When it come to knowledge, tourists can sightsee tea plantations, Kem Creek and Nui Coc Lake for relaxing purposes. The demands for authenticity or first-hand experience are important for the tea culture tour package which consists of picking, making and tasting tea. In terms of tourism products, Thai Nguyen classic green tea is the most attractive point with other scented tea and tea specialty dishes. Tea related architecture and infrastructure are the main appealing destinations for tourists to participate in activities like tea cultural space, local tea markets and tea household workshops, An Duong Tra center and homestay. The next cultural element, historic sites, reflect the time-honored tea history in Thai Nguyen, such as the ancient wild tea trees and ancient tea wares in tea cultural space. Finally, the biennial tea culture festival is the most important festival held in Thai Nguyen for tourists to learn about tea culture and tea products.

In short, these diversified tea culture elements provide a unique and authentic resource for tourism in the context of Thai Nguyen as a tea-producing center. Many activities reflect typical interests and predilection represented as part of tourism related to tea at the tea producing locations and tea museum. In addition to tea-related activities, it is obvious that there are activities that have nothing to do with tea. They are Nui Coc Lake, Kem creek and sturgeon which are applied and incorporated into the tea culture tour package for enriching the whole trip and making it more appealing. That is to say, the tea cultural activities in Thai Nguyen are still not colorful enough to satisfy tourists' demands, so extra activities are incorporated into the tour package. According to Table 6, each activity is not entirely separated but cross-linked together through the whole tea culture tour and it is obvious that tea culture tour package organizes each activity based on the tea related architecture and infrastructure, especially tea plantations, tea household workshops, An Duong Tra center, and tea cultural space.

#### **4.3.1 Tea Plantation**

Plantations, located in La Bang and Tan Cuong, where tea is grown in lines, provides an idyllic view for tourists (see Pic. 31). While strolling around the tea plantations, tourists are able to achieve knowledge of tea cultivars and identifying methods. Tourists can also pick tea leaves with enthusiastic local tea farmers and



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communicate with them under the help of tour guides to know how much tea leave they collect per day and when do they pick tea leaves. In the tea plantations, the tea culture tour combines sightseeing and education together.



Figure 31. Tea plantations in La Bang and Tan Cuong (taken by author of the thesis, December 2018)

#### 4.3.2 Tea Households Workshops

Workshops, situated in close proximity to tea plantations, are an important part of tea culture tourism. Almost each household has basic machines to process tea, but the techniques and the machines of making tea are very traditional and simple. That answers to the reason for which they produce the very classic green tea which caters to Vietnamese taste. From the researcher's fieldwork information we can establish tourists are able to visit workshops and learn the process of making tea. They can even take part in rubbing the tea leaves with their hands. In the workshop, the tea culture tourism is represented by the combination of education and first-hand experiencing.

#### 4.3.3 An Duong Tra Center

Different from La Bang, Tan Cuong has bigger-sized tea workshops or even tea factories which contribute to build their own brands. An Duong Tra is one of a typical tea brands in Tan Cuong. After weighing words to describe this place, "Center" is chosen because this place not merely includes tea processing but also tea picking, tea tasting and shopping as well as creative dishes made of tea. According to the interview with Mr. Nguyen (December 14, 2018), he built this "center" one year before by adding a ship-shaped parterre<sup>63</sup> in which he transplanted the ancient tea trees of around one-hundred years in age (see in Pic. 32), a small pond, small bridges over the pond, pavilions for having lunch and drinking tea. He tried to build a garden-

<sup>63</sup> The ship-shaped parterre, symbolizes that the ship will carry his hope of publicizing Tan Cuong tea to go far away in the future.

like landscape to offer tourists and his customers a more comfortable environment to enjoy tea.



Figure 32. The lower ancient tea and taller ancient tea (more than 5 meters high) (the lower one had been pruned) (Photo taken by author of the thesis, December 2018)

In this place, tourists can have tea-related experiences from picking to eating. Especially, they offer tourists to make tea by using the oldest type of machine, so tourists can learn the ancient way of processing tea (see Pic. 33). It is no wonder that the whole process costs a lot of manpower. After that, tourists can taste the tea made by themselves and then have the tea specialty dishes (see Pic. 34, 35). After lunch, Mr. Nguyen will invite tourists to the pavilion and he will serve different tea to tourists by showing the way of drinking tea. Tourists can taste the signature classic green tea made by Trung du tea, scented tea as well as learn the correct way of brewing tea. On top of that, tourists can also consume the high-quality Tan Cuong tea as souvenirs. In conclusion, this place provides tourists with multi-type tea culture tour activities of knowledge learning, participating, shopping, and food tasting which can be concluded as a mature manifestation of tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen.



Figure 33. Picking tea leaves and the machine for making tea (taken by author of the thesis, December 2018)



Figure 34. Fried chicken with tea leaves and Tofu fried with matcha powder (taken by author of the thesis, December 2018)



Figure 35. Steamed fish filled with tea leaves, fried beef with broccoli and tea, and tea-decorated sticky rice (taken by author of the thesis, December 2018)

#### 4.3.4 Tea Cultural Space

The tea cultural space —opened in the first tea festival — is a museum constructed by the government to preserve Thai Nguyen tea culture. The museum records the history of planting in Thai Nguyen, shows the development of tea processing machines, exhibits the famous Thai Nguyen tea brands and their products, preserves different types of tea sets and sells the specialty green tea peanut candy. According to researcher's fieldwork, tourists can achieve tea planting and producing history in Thai Nguyen here. After visiting, tourists can also consume the green tea peanut candy as a side snack with drinking tea. In short, tea cultural space offers two functions for tourists: knowledge learning and shopping.

To analyze tourist's destinations above, it is beneficial to explain the reason why tea culture tourism is potential in tourism industry. From the tourists' perspective, tea culture tourism satisfied their demands for history heritage, multicomponent cultural traits, authenticity, and health. From the tourism industry's perspective, tea culture tourism meets the requirement of sightseeing, visiting, appreciating, tasting and learning for exploiting tourism resources. From the tea culture's perspective, tea culture tourism preserves tea culture through the platform of tourism to propagate tea culture in Thai Nguyen. From local residents' perspective, tea culture tourism develops local economy that tea farmers and tea producers transfer to tourism operators. In short, tea culture tourism is a multilevel tourism form combining scenery with sightseeing, learning and cultivating, hands-on experiencing, as well as enjoying tea products and dishes.

#### **4.4 Tea Culture Tourism: from Tea Culture to Tourism Resources**

After listing the tea cultural elements specifically in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen, it is significant to analyze the marketing process of tea culture into tourism resources through cultural tourism and tourism imaginary concepts. At first, the plurality of elements of culture are those used by marketers in promotional materials to reach consumers (as cited in Eaglen, 2009, p. 4). In the case of tea culture tourism, main marketers or players are tea businessmen, government, tour agencies and tourists. The promotional materials consist of guide books, online travel reviews, introductions of tour packages, online tea shops, news, official promotion of Tea festival and exhibitions of tea products in these two destinations. Those promotional materials practically are the only conduits to concretize the expectation and knowledge for tourists on their dream destinations. In tourism terms, those available visual materials are molded as tourism imaginary and no matter what kind of tourism—imaginary consciously or unconsciously—provide tea culture tourism information for potential tourists and visitors.

From those promotional materials, how are tea cultural elements transformed to attractive points for tourists, or why those elements are appealing to tourists? In fact, from the purpose of cultural tourism, learning and experiencing or knowledge and authenticity are the motivators for tourists to achieve knowledge as well as participate in cultural events and visit historical sites. Based on this, tea culture tourists are drawn



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into tea culture tourism owing to their inclination to learn tea-related knowledge and experience authenticity.

#### 4.4.1 Tea-related Knowledge

In fact, tea culture is marketed and sold as a cultural product to consumers in the case of tea culture tourism. The ownership of the acquired product is prevalently related to the gaining of knowledge rather than possession of the product directly transferred from suppliers to consumers, or in other words, its consumption of cultural products is related to acquisition of knowledge within a cognitive interpretation of individual sensorial experiences (Pratiwi, Aromi, & Candra, 2017, p. 300). That is to say, the selling of tea cultural product is partly attained through the knowledge learning process or the process of consuming cultural products is proportionate to the process of acquiring knowledge.

In the process of creating tourism imaginary, marketers keep satisfying tourist's desire for gaining a totally different lifestyle and experience. For example, the players —from their travel reviews — present their experience of acquiring extra tea cultural knowledge during their traveling which is completely different from their daily routines. This description motivates the potential tourist's expectation on tea culture destinations in terms of achieving unfamiliar and distinctive knowledge.

By concluding the tea-related knowledge marketed as tourism imaginary, the learning activities available to tea cultural tourists are the history of planting tea, tea planting, harvesting, and processing knowledge, identifying tea quality skills as well as tea drinking rituals. From planting to drinking, tea contains profound cultural knowledge and each stage is able to extend to professional skills. In terms of Mae Salong, travel guides and tea shops offer tourists the opportunity to learn about the history of planting tea in the context of the golden triangle, the season for harvesting tea, the skills for making oolong tea, and Chinese manner of infusing and drinking tea. In terms of Thai Nguyen, tea cultural tourists have available to the long history of planting tea from ancient time, colonized period, and war time to Doi Moi reform period, the skills for plucking tea and making green tea, as well as tea drinking rituals through travel guides, local tea workshops, tea markets, tea cultural spaces and tea centers.

However, the absorbing knowledge process is not participated by every tea



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cultural tourist. It depends on the educational background and interest of the tourists, just as Eaglen illustrates that the consumers of culture should also have the cultural capital, or knowledge, in order to appreciate the product and participate in the consumption (2009, p. 4). Therefore, tea-related knowledge is more attractive to those who have background knowledge of—or show strong interest on tea culture. Then it is not a surprise that there is so far a niche space for tea culture tourism in these two places and there are few domestic tea cultural tourists in Thai Nguyen because tea is a part of Vietnamese routine. But for Mae Salong, the oolong tea culture is adventitious and strange for domestic tourists, so it has a strong appeal to its domestic consumers.

#### 4.4.2 Authenticity

According to Cahyadi, the concept of authenticity has played a prominent role in understanding tourist motivation (2016, p. 2). Authenticity in cultural tourism is an unavoidable concept owing to the fact that cultural tourists “want to encounter a sense of realness, genuineness, uniqueness, and novelty of the cultural product” (Cahyadi, 2016, p. 4; T. H. H. Nguyen & Cheung, 2015, p. 3), or in MacCannell’s argument, touristic consciousness is incentivized by the desire for authentic experiences (as cited in Cohen, 1988, p. 372). In this regard, authenticity is currently applied as one of the significant selling points in cultural tourism terms.

It is precisely because cultural tourists seek an authentic experience and marketers present destination’s daily practices in promotional materials to stimulate tourists’ tourism imaginary that if they experience these practices themselves they can achieve authenticity. In the case of tea culture tourism, plucking tea leaves, making tea products and tasting tea drinks are marketed as ways to experience authenticity in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen.

In Mae Salong, tea cultural tourists can experience picking and tasting tea but the making tea experience is unavailable because processing oolong tea is operated by large tea machines; while they can learn the process by visiting tea factories in Mae Salong. The authenticity of picking and tasting tea are appealing to those who have an interest on oolong tea and desire for achieving hands-on pleasure which is usually showed on social media through images.

In Thai Nguyen, tea cultural tourists can have an all-around authentic experience from plucking, making, to tasting tea. It is because the green tea making process is



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much easier and has a long history, so tea cultural tourists can make green tea by the simpler old method. These authenticities showed in promotional materials have strong appeal to those who intend to learn about green tea culture and experience a pristine and natural lifestyle.

#### ***4.4.2.1 Tea festival: A successful attempt to develop tea culture tourism***

According to Raj, festivals are organized by using the historical and cultural themes to develop the annual events to attract visitors and they create a cultural image in the host communities (2003, p. 3). That is to say, festivals have an important role in contributing to cultural and economic development and as such have major impact on the development of cultural tourism to the host communities (I. Blešić, Pivac, Đorđević Stamenković & Janić vić 2014, p. 384).

Themed on tea, Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen hold tea festivals annually and biennially to attract numerous tourists and build their tea cultural image. The Tea Festival is an important expression of local community's tea production activity or in other words it provides an opportunity for villagers to develop and popularize tea culture. Because of tea festivals, the number of tourists traveling to Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen, indeed, grows sharply during the festival period. For example, the tea festival period in Mae Salong is the peak season for tourists every year. In Thai Nguyen's case, tea festivals, to an extent, expand the popularity of Thai Nguyen green tea to draw the attention of potential tourists.

By organizing several captivating campaigns, the tea festival in these two places appeals large numbers of tourists to visit, then tea culture is marketed at the festival to be sold to consumers, especially tea products. In terms of Mae Salong, the tea festival not only applies tea but also Sakura and multi-ethnic society as selling points which are intriguing for enormous domestic tourists; whereas "Chim Cha (Tasting Tea)" is emphasized as the main theme each year. Through the tea festival, tea fairs are organized to exhibit various tea shops' tea products and invite tourists to taste tea. Furthermore, tea festival is possible to stimulate tourists to learn more about oolong tea culture by visiting local tea plantations, experiencing picking tea and learning the oolong tea making process. In terms of Thai Nguyen, tea festivals consist of a series of activities centered on tea—for example visiting tea villages, exhibiting tea products, conferences for improving tea quality, Miss. Tea contests, photo exhibitions



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of tea, and tea tourism promotion. Tea culture is output by colorful tea-themed activities at festivals to visitors that are beneficial to increase their interests on Thai Nguyen green tea.

#### **4.4.2.2 Tea products as Souvenirs**

Hume states that the destination is consumed by the tourist who, in turn, invests in the souvenir with his or her narrative for the purpose of recording the experience of that site and/or culture (2013, p. 12). From the perspective of culture's holders, souvenirs remind tourists of the experience of interaction with the culture (Pratiwi et al., 2017, p. 305). It means that souvenirs initially produced to be sold to visitors, may eventually become –authentic” products of a region (Cohen, 1988, p. 379). With the added meaning of authenticity, it is not difficult to explain the reason why tourists are enthusiastic about consuming souvenirs.

In tea culture tourism terms, diversified tea products are the major souvenirs for consumers and they even become the reason for tourists to visit Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen. In Mae Salong, oolong tea is marketed as the main souvenir to be promoted nationally and internationally and in turn oolong tea brings back abundant tourists because of it and the oolong tea culture under the surface. In Thai Nguyen, the classic green tea is selected as a selling point for consumers since it is able to remind them of their authentic experience during tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen, and in turn the popularity of Thai Nguyen green tea brings back abundant tourist's sources as well as national and global attention.

Apart from being featured as cultural tourism, tea culture tourism also shows characteristics of scenery tourism because of its picturesque view of tea plantations and surrounding mountain landscape, as well as food tourism owing to the taste of different tea products and tea specialty dishes. In order words, tea culture tourism is capable of satisfying cultural tourists' demands in modern society and enhancing development and tea culture for host communities.



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## Chapter 5

### A Comparative Analysis of Tea Culture Tourism between Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen

According to the analysis of tea cultural elements in the last two chapters, it can be concluded that the two tea culture tour destinations focus on their own basic tea culture resources, generally including tea plantations, tea planting knowledge, tea plucking, tea making and knowledge, tea products, tea drinking and the way of drinking tea. However, between these two destinations, they apply their tea cultural elements in a different way and both have their unique attracting points.

#### 5.1 The difference between tea culture tour activities

Generally, the classifications of tea-related activities in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen are quite similar. However, each of them have their main focus on tea-related activities. Table 8 below demonstrates a clearer picture of the differences on their focus on tourist's activities.

Table 8. The Comparison between tea-related activities in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen

Classification	Tea-related activities in Mae Salong	Tea-related activities in Thai Nguyen
Knowledge Achieving	The tea history and knowledge of planting and processing are not provided by tour guide but can be achieved by tourists who are interested in.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The history of planting tea</li> <li>2. The knowledge of planting and harvesting tea</li> <li>3. The skills of making tea</li> <li>4. The knowledge of identifying tea quality</li> <li>5. The explanation of tea cultural space</li> </ol>
Sightseeing	101 Tea plantations Wangputan Tea Plantation	Tea plantations and tea hills in the rural area
First-hand Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Picking tea leaves</li> <li>2. Tasting tea</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Picking tea leaves</li> <li>2. Making tea</li> <li>3. Tasting tea</li> </ol>
Tourism Products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oolong tea products</li> <li>2. Other tea products</li> <li>3. Tea specialty dishes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Green tea products</li> <li>2. Tea specialty dishes</li> <li>3. Green tea peanut candy</li> </ol>
Tea-related Architecture and Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hotels with view of tea plantation</li> <li>2. Teapot-shaped statues</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tea cultural space</li> <li>2. Local tea markets</li> <li>3. An Duong Tra center</li> <li>4. Tea household workshops</li> <li>5. Homestay near tea hills</li> </ol>



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Tea Festival	Tea culture and Sakura festival	Tea culture festival in Tan Cuong
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From this table, it is obvious that Thai Nguyen has more tea-related architecture and infrastructure to arrange more activities about learning the tea history and knowledge of planting, harvesting and making tea in Thai Nguyen. Compared to Thai Nguyen, Mae Salong has famous tea plantations and hotels with view to the tea plantation for tourists to enjoy and relax. Therefore, it can be concluded that Mae Salong's tea culture tour package pays more attention to "tourism" itself; while Thai Nguyen lays more emphasis on "tea culture".

History is one of the most important factors for this difference. The reason why Thai Nguyen has more tea-related architectures and infrastructures is that the history of tea planting in northern Vietnam can be traced back as early as the Song dynasty; therefore, northern Vietnam has profound tea traditions and culture that contribute to the tea history, tea wares and tea processing machines in a tea cultural space. Compared to Thai Nguyen, Mae Salong has just started to plant tea since the 1960s and the key point for planting tea is that it has functioned as cash crop to improve local people's life standard. In this way, the tea culture and tradition in Mae Salong is not strong or even not to be emphasized.

Nevertheless, the value of tea history and tradition is highly emphasized by the local and central governments; hence they offer assistance to promote "tea culture" and "tea history" of Thai Nguyen by holding tea cultural festivals and constructing a tea museum. Under governmental promotion, Thai Nguyen's tea culture and history are marketed as the most attractive tourism resources. Compared to Mae Salong, the Thai government made a lot of effort on developing the tourism industry in this place but not on preserving the culture in this place. Tourism is one the most important sectors developing the economy in Thailand and hence the Thai government pays more attention to developing tourism resources. Mae Salong is introduced as the tourist attraction by the TAT Thailand due to its scenery, different culture and tea. The "OTOP" project selects Mae Salong as one of the tourism Villages to help market and promote tourism and tea products there. Therefore, the scenery of tea plantation and tea products are the most shining points for tourists because the government highlights the importance of developing tourism to generate benefits and

commercialize the local tourism resources.

However, the tourism industry in Vietnam has just been activated after Doi Moi reform; thus, tourism resources in Vietnam have not been overly marketed not to mention Thai Nguyen in which tourism is not the backbone for the economy. Hence, the tourism infrastructures in Thai Nguyen are not as well-equipped as Mae Salong to offer leisure-oriented activities for tourists, such as the well-arranged tea plantation and hotel with tea plantation view. Furthermore, tourists' activities in Thai Nguyen are still not overly commercialized but keep providing an authentic experience for tourists. While in Mae Salong, the tourism infrastructures are constructed well enough to offer tourists with leisure and entertainment services. Meanwhile, the local tourism service providers lay more emphasis on providing more diverse tea products as well as more comfortable resorts and hotels in order to achieve more benefits. In this way, scenery viewing and tea product consuming are marketed as the stronger tourists' activities in the tea culture tour package of Mae Salong.

## **5.2 The different tourist group**

Tea culture tourists in these two places are both not the mainstream tourists for each country due the fact that tea culture tourism is special-interest. It also answers why most of them are individual tourists. In Thai Nguyen, the tea culture tourists are those who have an interest on tea and tea culture plus the fact that Thai Nguyen tea is not internationally famous; accordingly, the tea culture tourists are limited and most of them are foreigners. While for Mae Salong, it not only attracts tea lovers but also those who intend to sightsee; thus, the amount of tea culture tourists is larger than in Thai Nguyen. Moreover, Tea culture is also a relatively new culture for Thai people and the scenery is worth sightseeing; therefore, the tourists can be Thai or foreigners. With the author's observation, Thai tourists make up a larger proportion for tourist's market in Mae Salong because they are largely influenced by the promotion of scenery and the implementation of "OTOP" project.

## **5.3 The Marketing Focus of Tea Culture Tour Package**

Although Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen both have relatively mature tea culture tour packages with similar activities, their tour packages have their distinctive features as a result of historical and economic reasons.



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### 5.3.1 Historical and cultural knowledge

Thai Nguyen is endowed with profound historical holdings owing to its time-honored green tea culture and governmental emphasis on tea culture preservation, especially the construction of tea culture museum. Therefore, Thai Nguyen tea culture tour package is obviously inclined to historical and cultural knowledge-acquiring activities themed on green tea. In this sense, the long history and deep culture are marketed as primary cultural products to attract tourists. During this trip, tea cultural tourists can achieve knowledge about the long history of tea planting from ancient times, colonial period, war time to Doi Moi reform period. In addition, it also includes the skills for plucking tea and making green tea, as well as the way of drinking tea introduced by travel guides, local tea workshops, tea markets, tea cultural spaces and tea centers. Among them tea cultural space manages the most significant activities like appreciating ancient tea-wares, learning tea planting history of Tan Cuong as the famous high-quality green tea base, and learning tea producing machines of different periods. The Thai Nguyen tea tour, has strong influence on tourists to achieve knowledge through the historical and cultural environment. However, for Mae Salong, its tea culture tour package lacks attention to historical elements because of the short history of planting tea of around sixty years and lack of official promotion of history. In this case, tourists can only achieve historical and cultural knowledge through personal communication with local tea shops or travel guides.

### 5.3.2 Authenticity

Compared to Mae Salong, Thai Nguyen also lays more emphasis on providing an authentic experience for tourists. In Thai Nguyen, tea cultural tourists can have an all-around authentic experience from plucking, making, to tasting tea. The plucking activity is important in the arrangement of Thai Nguyen tea culture tour package because it aims at letting tourists experience daily life of local tea farmers. It is because the traditional green tea making process is much easier, so tea cultural tourists can make green tea by themselves by using the old tea making pot. The availability of plucking tea and making tea provides tourists genuine and novel experience as well as hands-on pleasure.

While in Mae Salong, it is unavailable for tourists to make tea by themselves because oolong tea making process is operated by the large tea machines, but tourists

can learn the process by visiting tea factories in Mae Salong. The Mae Salong tea culture tour also does not highlight tea-plucking activities and it seems that only the 101 tea plantation offers this service for tourists who are interested in it.

### 5.3.3 Scenery views and tea products

For Mae Salong, the picturesque scenery of tea plantation and various oolong tea products are the major selling points in the tea culture tour package. The most famous 101 tea plantation is the unavoidable view point whether for tour packages of tour agencies or private itinerary because it is easy to approach and well arranged with good scenery. The long time capital accumulation stimulated the 101 tea company from a small tea shop to a large business, that explains its capacity to manage a variety of services such as the tea plantation and the view point. In addition, the high-end hotels or resorts with view of the plantation are attractive for those who desire some relaxing and mind cleansing time.

Deep inside the rural area, the tea plantation in Thai Nguyen is formed naturally and the local farmers have no consciousness to beautify the plantation because tourism is not the core industry in Thai Nguyen. But the natural beauty of tea hills is also an attractive point for tourists —though it is dwarfed by the tea history and hands-on experience.

Oolong tea products are another highly marketed cultural element in the case of Mae Salong tea culture tour packages. The oolong tea processing skills and packaging are mature in Mae Salong because it started early with its export for the Taiwanese oolong tea market. Therefore, Mae Salong is capable of producing high-quality oolong tea and catering to domestic taste by adapting tea flavor and package style. At the end of the 1990s, Mae Salong had already turned to focus on domestic market and reshaped Thai oolong tea imaginary. This shift achieved success by attracting more and more domestic tourists, so oolong tea products are manipulated as unique souvenirs in the tour package. In the case of Thai Nguyen, the green tea is not that popular among the potential tea culture tourists because it is consumed domestically and the tea culture tourists are almost foreigners.

In conclusion, in terms of marketing focus, Thai Nguyen mainly applies its long history and cultural knowledge as the attractive points for tea culture tourists; whereas, for Mae Salong, the idyllic scenery, relaxing environment and oolong tea



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products are the important selling products.

#### **5.4 Packaging, labeling and tea product advertising**

Packaging is the last step for processing a product and it takes the responsibility of improving products' marketing and selling. It drives consumers' attention and then transformed the attention into interest. In fact, every good packaging can be considered as an advertisement which aims at grabbing viewers' attention to purchase the product—and the packaging itself is sometimes the reason for consumers to buy the product. Therefore, the packaging of tea products is crucial and sometimes closely connected with the possibility of a high sales volume. Labeling is the most important element of packaging and marketers use labeling to help viewers differentiate the product from the rest in the market. Generally, labeling is a tool of communication which tells the product features (Khan, Rehman, Sultan, & Rashid, 2016, p. 14). For food packaging, labeling provides details about the name, ingredients, net quantity, instruction for use, minimum durability, the name and address of food business operator and place of provenance (–Food Labeling Requirements,”). In terms of name, it includes three types: legal name, customary name and descriptive name (–Food Labeling Requirements,”). The descriptive name is widely applied in food products and it is beneficial to beautify a product to add to its visual appeal. In this sense, the labeling, directly or indirectly, plays a role of selling products or in other words, it functions as an advertisement.

When packaging tea products, labeling allows the introduction of the tea's name, instructions to drink, origin, and tea business operator. The tea's name indeed decides whether consumers will buy or not. First, the name indicates the types of tea like green tea, yellow tea, oolong tea or black tea. Then, the tea product's name usually consists of the origins of place to show that the tea is original and classic with high quality because it originates from the famous tea planting places.

##### **5.4.1 Tan Cuong and High-quality**

In the case of Thai Nguyen, the green tea products are usually labeled with the place name Tan Cuong. As introduced in the last chapter, Tan Cuong is one of the communes in Thai Nguyen where almost all local people grow tea for livelihood. The wonderful natural environment and long history of planting tea gives Tan Cuong the



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possibility to produce high quality green tea products. Over time, Tan Cuong green tea products were gradually recognized and loved by domestic tea lovers. Moreover, the reputation achieved governmental attention and then has been promoted more widely. Accordingly, Tan Cuong has evolved into a name of good quality and it has created an image of green tea products that is associated —in the consumer’s mind — with high quality. In this light, Tan Cuong is not purely a place name but a label of good quality or reputation for tea.

Therefore, a number of green tea products produced in Thai Nguyen but not exactly in Tan Cuong are packaged with Tan Cuong label to attract the audience’s attention to increase the sale volume and even raise the product’s price to get more benefits. Frankly speaking, it is an advertising method to add more value to the green tea products themselves in terms of marketing. In terms of sociology, Tan Cuong reflects the social development where this place changed from a barren area into today’s well-known tea center recognized by Vietnamese people. It also discloses the Vietnamese higher demands for quality of green tea which reflect the development of their living standards.

#### **5.4.2 High Mountain or Alpine**

In the case of Mae Salong, the description like High Mountain or alpine is usually labeled on the oolong tea product’s packages. The High Mountain or Alpine oolong tea refers to the oolong tea plant grown at elevations of more than eight-hundred (someone says 1,000) meters above sea level. The process of making and drinking as well as promotion of High Mountain Oolong Tea has been developed to perfection in Taiwan. As mentioned in the historical development of tea plantation in Mae Salong, it was highly affected by Taiwan oolong tea industry in terms of tea varieties, processing skills and packaging style, so the pursuit of High Mountain oolong tea continues in Mae Salong. The reasons why High Mountain oolong tea receives public favor are in its quality and flavor.

First, the lower temperature resulted from high altitude makes tea grow slowly to have more opportunity to lessen polyphenols and catechins which cause bitterness of tea. Then the higher humidity and rainfall increase the total nitrogen and amino of fresh tea leaves to keep the tenderness and flavor (Y. J. Li, Pang, & Si, 2006). Moreover, the high altitude means that daylight is shorter and there is large

temperature difference between day and night (Learn What are High Mountain Teas,” 2016). This kind of environment is not suitable for pests, so the High Mountain tea has higher quality. In short, the High Mountain oolong tea has more amino, total nitrogen, chlorophyll, and other Micronutrients as well as aromatic substance, so the steeped tea is juicy and rich filled with bold floral aromas and flavors.

Accordingly, in the view of tea connoisseurs, High Mountain oolong tea has much higher quality than tea grown at lower altitudes. With huge demands for High Mountain oolong tea, it transformed into a symbol of good quality and flavor and it has been heavily used on the labeling of oolong tea products to represent the tea product’s quality.

Doi Mae Salong is at an elevation of 1,134 meters (Geography and Climate of Santikhri,”) above sea level, where it has good natural conditions for producing High Mountain oolong tea products. The resulting tea products are packaged with a label of High Mountain or Alpine in order to describe the real geography of the oolong tea plant and especially catch tourists and tea enthusiasts’ eyes.

In all, the packaging techniques contribute to the advertising of tea products in these two tea producing places by emphasizing the product’s quality and appeal to consumers. The labeling “Tan Cuong” mirrors the developing history of this tea place due to the fact that Tan Cuong was established during the French colonial period and developed as a famous tea brand within around a hundred years; while “High Mountain” reflects the transfer to a tea drinking concept where today’s consumers have higher demands for tea quality.

### **5.5 The external effects from Taiwan**

As mentioned in the history of tea planting in Mae Salong, Taiwan tea businessmen played an important role in constructing the systematical production of oolong tea in the region. In the 1980s, they sought for overseas oolong tea planting areas because of increasing internal market and low production of medium-and-low-price oolong tea. Under such situation, Mae Salong was visited by a number of Taiwanese tea businessmen with tea seeds, machines, and skills to construct a relatively mature environment for producing oolong tea—and Mae Salong indirectly developed because of large-scale entry of capital and machines during this period. In other words, Mae Salong turned to be oolong tea producers due to the large effects



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from Taiwan.

At the same time, Vietnam also suffered the shock of Taiwan's oolong tea industry. From 1980s, tea businessmen and experts gradually arrived in Vietnam to operate oolong tea plantations. Some places with immature tea industry —or even without tea industry — have seen plantations and factories been built in them by Taiwanese tea businesses. In 1993, the first experimental tea plantation of Taiwanese tea was constructed in Lam Dong province (Liu Y. X., 2018), then the Vietnamese oolong tea industry achieved development at the end of the 1990s. Until today, the oolong tea plantations and factories are mostly distributed in the Lam Dong province.

During the periods in which Taiwanese oolong tea industry purchases large amounts of oolong tea in Vietnam, the foundation of the green tea industry has not been significantly shaken in Thai Nguyen owing to the following three main factors. First, Thai Nguyen has a long history of green tea tradition and cultural environment shaped by the Chinese green tea culture. This way, the green tea production and culture has built a degree of robustness in northern Vietnam which is hard to change by the influence of oolong tea from Taiwan. Furthermore, the green tea production system in Thai Nguyen was constructed during the French Colonial period in the early decades of the twentieth century, so it has accumulated constant domestic consumers during the past one-hundred years. Therefore, it is difficult to transform the target market of green tea production in Thai Nguyen. Most importantly, Thai Nguyen Tea has already constructed its reputation among the whole country with higher selling price and the government also recognized the importance of preserving its green tea culture, so the area continues to expand its production and improve its quality because it is unnecessary to quit green tea production to produce oolong tea.

In all, the roaring Taiwanese oolong tea industry at the end of last century reshaped tea industrial landscape in some Southeast Asian countries, especially in Thailand and Vietnam. Owing to the historical, political and economic reasons, Mae Salong has laid much emphasis on constructing oolong tea industry to improve the living standards of the KMT villagers and satisfy growing Taiwanese oolong tea market. Vietnam, until today, is still the biggest tea export for Taiwanese tea industry and has many Taiwanese oolong tea companies built plantations, but Thai Nguyen still keeps its traditional green tea production due to historical and economic factors.



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## 5.6 Localization

As mentioned above, Mae Salong has become an oolong tea production base as the result of the influence of Taiwanese oolong tea market. In this case, the oolong tea products are consistent with demands from Taiwanese market, especially the typical Dongding oolong tea of which both, name and taste of the oolong tea products are palatable to Taiwanese taste. Dongding oolong tea or “Frozen Peak” oolong tea is originated from Dongding Mountain in Lugu township, Nantou County. This place is an ideal habitat for growing tea that has more nutrients and rich flavor. The uniqueness of Dongding oolong tea is in the final processing step, which is the slow roasting of the tea leaves over charcoal, setting the oxidation level at twenty-five to thirty-five percent (Kimbel, 2016). Over time, Dongding oolong tea became popular for its distinctive flavor owing to the slow roasting process. Due to its popularity, Mae Salong—as one of the overseas oolong tea bases—also introduced Dongding oolong tea techniques to produce oolong tea with same flavor and packaged it with “Dongding” labeling to attract Taiwanese consumers. Then those “Dongding” oolong tea products were transported back to Taiwan or sold at Mae Salong even though the leaves were not really grown in Dongding Mountain. Thus it can be seen that oolong tea production in Mae Salong indeed followed in Taiwan’s footsteps from late 1980s to 1990s.

However, from the late 1990s, Mae Salong started its transformation owing to two main reasons. First, the Taiwanese tea businessmen began to offer lower price for purchasing oolong tea products in Mae Salong, so the local tea providers could not achieve many benefits and then reduced trades between the two sides. Moreover, the thriving tourism industry in Mae Salong brought new target markets. During that time, the economic development of Thailand stimulated a number of middle-class Thai people to travel northward for different cultural experiences and cool climate. At the same time, the community based tourism and “OTOP” were also implemented in Mae Salong to encourage local communities to engage in the tourism industry. Therefore, the crowds of domestic tourists flowed into Mae Salong and Mae Salong began to shift its target on account of economic and politic stimulators.

In fact, the transformation process is the representation of localization. At that time, Mae Salong’s tea industry was trying to be localized and adapting itself for

domestic consumption. Tea and tourism have become the main revenue for this village, and tea turned to be a unique tourism resource for tourism there. The process of localization is obvious in four aspects: the adjustment of oolong tea flavor, the diversity of tea products, the up-to-date packaging of tea products and the shaped image of Thai oolong tea.

In terms of the adjustment of oolong tea flavor, Mae Salong tried to weaken the influence from Taiwanese oolong tea markets, like reducing the production of Dongding oolong and oriental beauty products preferred by Taiwanese tea lovers. Conversely, Mae Salong expanded the production of light-taste oolong tea products which are more popular among domestic consumers. The scented oolong tea which combines the fragrance and light tea taste, like rice oolong tea, Osmanthus oolong tea, are the best-sellers in the tea shop except the original Ruanzhi oolong and Jinxuan oolong tea.

In terms of diversity of oolong tea products, Mae Salong has created more tea products and derivatives for satisfying consumers' increasing demands. Apart from oolong tea products, Mae Salong adds more kinds of tea, like green tea, floral tea<sup>64</sup>, black oolong tea<sup>65</sup>, and Jiaogulan tea<sup>66</sup> onto its shelves. Moreover, it applied oolong tea to produce some derivatives, such as Matcha powder, oolong tea candy, oolong milk tea and oolong tea enzyme, to catch the young tourists' attentions. Considering the young Thai people making up a large proportion of tourists, Mae Salong sought to make good use of tea resources in order to revive this traditional drink and drive young consumers' interests on its new forms.

In terms of packaging of tea products, Mae Salong sought to package tea products more attractively and conveniently. According to the historical background, some teashops in Mae Salong applied Chinese cultural elements into packaging style to appeal tourists. Specifically, their packages are in red color with Chinese-style decorative patterns and descriptions in Chinese. Generally speaking, those Chinese-style oolong tea products are packaged delicately and exquisitely as the souvenirs suitable for tourists to give friends as presents. It can be seen that Mae Salong

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<sup>64</sup> Floral tea is made of dried flowers, like rose tea and chrysanthemum tea.

<sup>65</sup> Black oolong tea is a kind of tea fermented between oolong tea and black tea.

<sup>66</sup> Jiaogulan tea is made of *Gynostemma pentaphyllum*. It is believed to be healthy for our body.

manipulates its cultural and historical characteristics to skillfully attract domestic tourists or in other words satisfy tourists' desire for exotic culture. In addition, Mae Salong also borrowed from small teabag<sup>67</sup> to package its tea products. Traditionally, the oolong tea is packaged in a medium size bag and tea drinkers take moderate amount of tea from it; while tourists, nowadays, can use the teabag to save their time as well as the tea-drinking green hands will not be worried about the steeped amount of tea. Apart from the porous teabag, Mae Salong also adds small-size oolong tea bag in a tea box to its products' category to provide convenience for potential tea drinkers. In short, Mae Salong has adjusted the traditional and monotonous packaging style to be more suited for its target consumers' favor.

In fact, Mae Salong was labeled with Taiwan oolong tea in the past; whereas, from the end of the 1990s, it had started to shape its image of Thai oolong tea. It is unavoidable to mention the contribution of "OTOP" and the annual tea festival for Mae Salong tea's success. Tea was selected as the most representative product in Mae Salong during the implement of "OTOP" campaign. Through this campaign, Mae Salong oolong tea spurred public notice and was recognized by Thai tea drinkers by the promotion of media and exhibitions. What's more, the tea festival has drawn a large number of domestic tourists every year to Mae Salong to taste and consume tea products. Then the Mae Salong tea has built brand awareness among those domestic tea drinkers and the fame has spread out to the future consumers. Actually, the publicly recognized process of Mae Salong oolong tea mirrors its transformation and localization.

Unlike Mae Salong, northern Vietnam has green tea tradition since ancient times and Thai Nguyen owns longer history of planting, producing and drinking green tea. Back to modern time, Thai Nguyen still keeps its insistency of green tea production and avoids the influence from Taiwan oolong tea market. In marketing terms, Thai Nguyen does not change its target consumers from domestic tea lovers to others. In this way, Thai Nguyen does not have huge changes on green tea production from its emergence to today. It seems that brand awareness of green tea built by Thai Nguyen is what it comes naturally through the time-honored history and it can be concluded

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<sup>67</sup> Teabag is generally considered as the small and porous bag filled with tea to steep conveniently in hot water.



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that the adaptation in Thai Nguyen develops gradually through a long period of time, so it is not as sharp and eruptive as shown in the case of Mae Salong.

## **5.7 Tourism Infrastructure**

The tourism infrastructure is the foundation for developing the tourism industry for a destination. Comparing tourism infrastructure in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen, reveals the challenges they face and the future efforts they will pay attention to.

### **5.7.1 Language barrier**

As an international language, English has become considerably necessary for employees working in tourism to communicate with tourists to fulfill their requirements. In this regard, English is of great importance for tourism practitioners in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen. In Mae Salong, most tourism service providers are able to communicate in English owing to the fact that Mae Salong has been a tourism destination for nearly forty years and the descendants of villagers have had the opportunity to study in Bangkok or abroad because of the economic development. While in Thai Nguyen, the tourist service providers are nearly unable to speak English, so that impedes tourists to communicate with them efficiently and learn deeper about the tea culture there. The communication difficulty reduces tourists' interaction with local culture, or in other words, authentic experience of tourists. The lack of communication indeed makes tourists lose motivation on tea culture and further it is not beneficial to develop tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen.

### **5.7.2 Transport limitation**

The inconvenient transportation remains one of the challenges of tea culture tourism development at Thai Nguyen and Mae Salong, but it is harder to get to Thai Nguyen. From Hanoi to Thai Nguyen, tourists have no choice but to take the bus or rent a car to approach the destination. By bus, it requires tourists to communicate with the local Vietnamese who may not speak English so it may cause some trouble. In addition, tourism in Thai Nguyen is still developing so it is difficult for tourists to find another vehicle heading to their destination like the tea villages after a bus trip. By car, tourists need to pay high fees because there are a few cars offering this service and tourists may confront with the situation that the driver is not familiar with the tea villages in Thai Nguyen. So the scarce choice of transportation, to an extent, wipes off

tourist's interest in traveling to Thai Nguyen by themselves. Therefore, the best plan for them is still booking the tea culture tour from the online tour agencies.

For Mae Salong, the better method to arrive is still renting a private car or van for tourists but the rental fee is quite expensive; another method which requires more time and energy is taking bus or van to Mae Chan then transferring to truck (Songthaew) once in Mae Chan and again at the halfway point to Mae Salong. What is better than Thai Nguyen is that the view point locations in Mae Salong are not far from each other, so tourists can walk or take motorcycles to their destinations. In short, the inconvenient transportation indeed hinders potential tourists from traveling there and returning to visit again in the future.

### **5.7.3 Absence of necessary tourist infrastructure**

The maximization of the potential of tea culture tourism is precluded by absence of necessary tourist infrastructure in Thai Nguyen. Some of the tea cultural sites are far from the urban area where most of the infrastructure like roads are in bad state making the destination hardly accessible, especially in the rainy season. The uncomfortable and prolonged journey easily diminishes tourists' satisfaction. The traditional tea workshops and tea hills in Thai Nguyen are deep inside the rural area where restaurants and accommodation are difficult to be found. Based on the author's field trip in La Bang commune, there is only a homestay in its tea village with simple decoration; while in Tan Cuong, there are a few accommodations because it is in the vicinity of Nui Coc Lake scenic spot. Those inadequate tourist infrastructures directly exert negative effects on the amount of tourists to Thai Nguyen.

As a famous tourism destination, Mae Salong has complete necessary tourist infrastructure such as roads, accommodation or restaurants. The main road along Mae Salong has been recently rebuilt with blacktop, so the road is more flat and easy to drive. Although Mae Salong already has several guesthouses, hotels and resorts, some more hotels are still under construction to welcome more tourists. Due to a complicated historic background, Mae Salong owns different kinds of restaurants like Yunnanese and Thai. It also has coffee shops and bakery shops to satisfy demands of international tourists. In all, Mae Salong has more potential on attracting and



accommodating more tourists, but Thai Nguyen still has a long way to go on building the basic and necessary tourist infrastructures.

#### **5.7.4 Lack of local capacity**

Although Thai Nguyen has several tourism products, they lack the necessary entrepreneurship, managing and marketing skills to exploit tourism resources. Thai Nguyen lacks tourist service talents to plan travel routes of tea culture tourism and market tea culture tourism products, so the monotonous and immature tour packages designed by tour agencies may possibly lose their attraction in the future. Moreover, it can be found that the way of drinking tea demonstrated by the operator did not show the true characteristics of Vietnamese customs in the field trip of a tea center of Tan Cuong commune. It shows that the local tourism practitioners lack consciousness and capacity to market tea culture as the touristic attraction. The low capacity of participation in tea culture tourism for local people is also negative to create their cultural image and popularize tea culture tourism. In turn, tea culture tourism has minimal socioeconomic benefits to the local communities.

Compared to Thai Nguyen, Mae Salong has more capacity to exploit and develop tea culture tourism under the assistance from community based tourism projects and “OTOP”. It seems that the local Mae Salong people are more capable of applying its advantages to display in front of tourists because many Mae Salong people achieved the opportunity to study and work in Taiwan and even other countries<sup>68</sup>, so they attained experience of different packaging types of tea products and building hotels with tea plantation view to attract tourists.

#### **5.7.5 Lack of promotion**

The insufficient publicity makes it hard for tourists to shape a comprehensive understanding of tourism products and have interest in them—which in return affects the amount of tourists. Effective marketing and promotion of tourism products is imperative for tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen and Mae Salong. It is difficult to attain promotional materials for tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen except tea culture

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<sup>68</sup> The Taiwanese government has taken the responsibility to take care of the left soldiers and help them economically since the KMT armies moved to northern Thailand in the 1960s and settled in the 1980s, and therefore the Taiwanese government offered an opportunity for descendants of soldiers to study and even live in Taiwan.

tour package webpages, news for Thai Nguyen tea festival and a handful of online travel reviews. The tourism department and tourism agencies do not pay much attention on tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen due to the deficiency of official promotion of it on the tourism campaigns in northern Vietnam as well as lack of widespread marketing on tour guides and posters. Therefore, Thai Nguyen tea culture tourism is at the insufficient stage of promotion as a result of those absences.

The situation is much better in Mae Salong because Mae Salong, itself, has already built a reputation as a tourist's destination as a result of cool climate, natural scenery, hill tribes as well as the oolong tea. In this way, for Mae Salong is easier to popularize tea culture tourism and combine it with other tourism resources to attract more tourists. Owing to English capacity and more convenient transport, Mae Salong owns more online traveling reviews and introductions on travel guides. The governmental emphasis contributes to more official promotion for tea culture tourism, such as the tea festival and national "OTOP" exhibitions.

In conclusion, it is interesting to compare tea culture tourism in these two places because they have their uniqueness of marketing focus on tea culture tour packages, tea packaging and labeling styles, and tea products themselves. By comparison, this study demonstrates the different outcomes of tea production in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen as a result of different market demands pushed by the Taiwanese oolong tea market or the stable domestic market for green tea in Vietnam —as well as the distinctive history of planting and producing tea in these two places. Additionally, the comparison of tourism infrastructure shows the room for development in these two destinations in the terms of language, transport, necessary tourist infrastructure, local capacity and promotion. For Thai Nguyen, its tea culture tour package is themed on green tea culture and is distinctive in the aspects of knowledge and history learning as well as authenticity. However, the tea tour package still needs to be completed and the tourism infrastructure needs to be improved. For Mae Salong, the tea culture tourism package, centered on oolong tea, is characteristic of viewing picturesque tea plantations and consuming various oolong tea products, so the tea-related activities seems superficially and it needs to pay more attention on promoting the tea planting history and the pertinent knowledge.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Through the analysis of tea culture tourism in Thai Nguyen and Mae Salong, this thesis has shown how tea culture is formed along the historical development and how it is marketed as an attractive point for tourists through cultural tourism and tourism imaginary theories. In chapters three and four, the emergence of tea and tea culture in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen is presented. In Mae Salong, tea planting and producing started from the movement of KMT armies then developed under the cooperation between external assistance of Taiwan and domestic implement of the Royal Project. Thai Nguyen began its tea production since the French engagement in the late nineteenth century and the industry has revived and expanded during Doi Moi reform after the collapse in wartime. These two chapters analyze the tea cultural elements in detail in these two destinations and explain why those elements are appealing through searching what demands they satisfy and what feelings they give for tourists from the angle of cultural tourism. In short, knowledge-learning, scenery-viewing, and authenticity are the main stimulators for tourists to participate in tea culture tour packages, thereby displaying the potentials of tea culture tourism after the future promotion of tea culture in Southeast Asia.

By comparing the two types of tour packages in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen, the discussion in chapter five sheds light on the distinctiveness of these two destinations in terms of comparing their detailed tea-related activities, tourist groups, marketing focus, packaging and labeling styles, external influences from Taiwan oolong tea market, localization and tourism infrastructure. The differences represent the characteristics of two types of tour packages in these two places and also show the different focus of attractive points and the different future improvements for these two destinations.

The thesis applies documentary research to construct the chronology of the history of tea culture and tea culture tourism; and combines it with field trips to collect information on current tea culture tour packages. According to the characteristics of two packages, they have different target tourists and focus on



different tea products. For Mae Salong, domestic tea culture tourists accounts for large proportion and they prefer consuming oolong tea products and enjoying scenery. For Thai Nguyen, the majority of tourists are the foreigners from different countries, and they are inclined to visit the natural tea plantation, take part in tea-related activities in person and learn pertinent knowledge, like the processing techniques of green tea and the way of drinking tea.

This research work clearly illustrates the development history of tea and specific mode of tea culture tour packages in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen and offers explanation about tourists' impressions on—and consumption from—the tea culture tour package by analyzing online travelogues, reviews and videos; whereas this explanation is relatively brief because tea culture tourism is still such a niche market with limited number of tourists. Furthermore, distance, expenses and language barrier are the reasons that this research does not achieve comprehensive materials of Thai Nguyen. Moreover, this thesis mainly aims to provide a new angle to study the cultural tourism in Southeast Asia. It also makes up for the vacancy of academic material about tea culture tourism and offers perspectives of tour guides, tea shop owners and tourists on describing tea culture tourism in Mae Salong and Thai Nguyen.

Compared to tea-drinking countries with long tea history, the tea planting and tea tourism in Southeast Asian countries seem to just be on the starting steps and has a lot of room for development. In other words, tea culture tourism in Southeast Asia harbors huge potential to attract more tourists in the future when cultural tourism is more able to satisfy tourists' demands than other tourism. As tourism contributing to high revenue for Southeast Asian countries, cultural tourism has great prospects because it is consistent with sustainable development. The cultural tourism themed on tea will welcome more potential tourists due to the fact that tea is a healthy drink which satisfies today's increasing demands for healthy food. In addition, tea culture tourism also can be seen as a type of ecotourism where tourists enjoy natural scenery while avoiding environment pollution. At present, Thailand and Vietnam are developing tea culture tourism. Thailand has more mature patterns for sightseeing tourism, but the tea culture tourism needs to increase quality and explore more tea-related activities. As for Vietnam, it is crucial to improve tourism infrastructure to add



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availability of tour packages. In the future, the ways these countries promote tea culture tourism and attract targeted tourists can be further studied.

Apart from the tea culture destinations mentioned in the thesis, Southeast Asia has more tea culture tourism resources to be explored and marketed, such as the lotus green tea (Tra sen) in Vietnam—which has popularity and valuable long history to create tour packages. In addition, the Shan State of Myanmar, Lam Dong province (Bao Loc city) and Son La province (Moc Chau district) of Vietnam, north Sumatra and south Sumatra provinces of Indonesia are also starting to be visited by tea cultural tourists and have the potential to develop distinctive tea culture tourism in the future.



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## Appendices

### 1. Appendix for interviewees in Mae Salong

Name of Interviewee	Occupation	Interviewing Date
Mrs. Y	Shop owner of 101 tea company	February, 2019
Mr. C	Shop owner of Yan-Hui tea shop	February, 2019
Mrs. Z	Shop owner of Zhi-long tea shop	February, 2019
Mr. A	Shop owner of A-yin tea shop	February, 2019
Headman	of Mae Salong village	February, 2019
Staffs	of Japa tour, ND Ideas Tour, Laila group Chiangrai tour, and Bamboo tour	February, 2019
Mrs. X	Staff of Ama Mae Salong Hotel	February, 2019
Mrs. Yang	Staff of My Place hotel	February, 2019
Mr. H	Owner of Mae Salong Mr. Ho's Guesthouse	February, 2019
Mr. W	Shop owner of Wang Put Tan tea company	May, 2018

### 2. Appendix for interviewees in Thái Nguyên

Name of Interviewees	Occupation	Date of Interview
Ms. Le Huyen	Local tour guide	December 2018
Mr. Thiep Nguyen Binh	Manager of Red Lotus travel agency	December 2018
Mr. A	Staff of the Sinh café tourist	December 2018
Mr. B	Staff of Hanoi old quarter travel	December 2018
Mr. Nguyen Thanh Duong	Tea master of An Duong Tra	December 2018

### 1. Appendix for Interview questions in Mae Salong

#### 3.1 Interviewing with tour agency

##### 3.1.1 What kinds of tour packages do you have for Mae Salong?

3.1.2 In your opinion, what are attractive points for tourists who travel to Mae Salong?

3.1.3 When did you start to arrange tour package to Mae Salong?

3.1.4 Who are the main customers to book the tour package to Mae Salong?

3.2 Interviewing with tourists

3.2.1 Where do you come from?

3.2.2 Why do you travel to Mae Salong?

3.2.3 If it is because of tea, where do you get the information about the tea tour in Mae Salong?

3.2.4 What kinds of tea-related activities are you interested in? Tasting tea? Picking tea? Visiting tea factories? Appreciating tea rituals?

3.3 Interviewing with receptionist of the hotel

3.3.1 When did the tea tour become popular? When did tea gardens become attractive to tourists?

3.3.2 Who are the main tourists for visiting Mae Salong because of tea?

3.3.3 Did the local government have any actions to develop tea tour?

3.3.4 Which tea gardens will tourists prefer to go in Mae Salong? How do they approach to the tea gardens?

3.3.5 When did tourists who traveled to Mae Salong start to go to visit tea gardens?

3.3.6 At first, did the hotel staff or tourists themselves propose to visit tea gardens?

3.4 Interviewing with tea shop owners along the main street of Mae Salong

3.4.1 What kinds of tea do you sell ? Which one is the most popular?

3.4.2 Who are the majority of customers that are interested in and buy tea?

3.4.3 Are the customers interested in the way of drinking tea?

3.5 Interviewing with staff of 101 tea company (101 tea is one of biggest tea brand in Mae Salong which combines tea shop, tea plantation and tea hotel)

3.5.1 When did 101 tea company build tea hotel?

3.5.2 What are the reasons that drive your company build hotel near tea gardens?

3.5.3 What kinds of service related to tea do you provide?

3.5.4 Who are the main customers of your hotel?

3.5.5 Do you think what are factors that attract tourists book you hotel?

3.6 Interviewing with official of local government

3.6.1 Did the local government has any projects to develop tourism in Mae Salong?

3.6.2 Do the local government have any plans to develop tourism in Mae Salong?

3.6.3 How have Mae Salong publicized oolong tea in Thailand and even in the world?

## 2. Appendix for Interview questions in Thai Nguyen

4.1 Interviewing with tour guide/ tour agency/ receptionist of the hotel

4.1.1 When did the tea tour package become popular?

4.1.2 Why did you start to open tea tour? In your opinion, what are the reasons that attract tourists come to take part in tea tour in Thai Nguyen?



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- 4.1.3 How many tea tour packages do you have and what are they in details?
- 4.1.4 How much for each tea tour package?
- 4.1.5 In your opinion, what part of the tea tour package is the most interesting?
- 4.1.6 Who are the main tourists for tea tour package?
- 4.1.7 Did government have any actions to develop Thai Nguyen tea tour?
  
- 4.2 Interviewing with tea shop owners
  - 4.2.1 How do you think of the tea from Thai Nguyen?
  - 4.2.2 What kinds of tea from Thai Nguyen do you sell ? What are the tea brands from Thai Nguyen?
  - 4.2.3 Which one is the most popular? Are they produced by large tea business or small and medium-sized tea factories?
  - 4.2.4 Who are the majority of customers that are interested in and buy Thai Nguyen tea?
  - 4.2.5 What are the tea wares for drinking tea in Vietnam?
  
- 4.3 Interviewing with tea growers/ villagers
  - 4.3.1 What kind of tea cultivar do you plant?
  - 4.3.2 How many times a year you pluck the tea? And which place do you sell the tea leaves to?
  - 4.3.3 How do you think of letting tourists pick tea leaves?
  - 4.3.4 Do you think the tea tour in Thai Nguyen improve your life?
  
- 4.4 Interviewing with tourists
  - 4.4.1 Where do you come from?
  - 4.4.2 Why do you take part in tea tour in Thai Nguyen?
  - 4.4.3 Where do you get the information about the tea tour package of Thai Nguyen?
  - 4.4.4 How do you feel about the trip?
  - 4.4.5 Which part of the tour package do you like the most?
  
- 4.5 Interviewing with staff working in Tan Cuong Tea Cultural Center (if any)
  - 4.5.1 Who are the major visitors ?
  - 4.5.2 What are reasons that Thai Nguyen built this museum?
  - 4.5.3 What are the main tea cultivars in Thai Nguyen?
  - 4.5.4 What are the contributing factors for the quality of Thai Nguyen tea?
  - 4.5.5 In your opinion, what are the reasons that Thai Nguyen tea tour can attract tourists?
  
- 4.6 Interviewing with official of local government
  - 4.6.1 Did the local government has any projects to develop tourism in Mae Salong?
  - 4.6.2 Do the local government have any plans to develop tourism in Mae Salong?
  - 4.6.3 How have Mae Salong publicized oolong tea in Thailand and even in the world?

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