

## Recitation E

### History of Tea

The story of tea has a long and fascinating history. Since tea was first discovered in China, it has spread out to become the most popular drink in the world.

One legend says that tea was discovered by the Emperor of China in 2737 BC. People drank tea for medical purposes and later it was used as a religious offering. During the Han Dynasty not many plants were known and used for making tea and only rich people could drink it. They enjoyed it not only for their health, but also for the taste. As more tea plants were discovered, tea drinking became common among the lower classes as well. The Chinese government supported the planting of tea plants and soon everyone could enjoy tea.

In 805, tea was brought into Japan by Japanese priests studying in China. It was first drunk by priests and by the rich for its medical benefits. Tea is often associated with Zen Buddhism in Japan because the priests drank tea to stay awake and meditate. Soon, these Buddhists developed the famous Japanese tea ceremony. The Emperor of Japan enjoyed tea very much and imported tea seeds from China to be planted in Japan, making tea available to even more people.

Tea finally arrived in England during the 17<sup>th</sup> century when King Charles II married a Portuguese princess. The Queen made tea the drink of royalty and imported it via the East India Company. Afternoon tea parties became a common way of drinking tea. Later the East India Company began exporting tea to America. The tea was heavily taxed, and this made some Americans angry. It actually became one of the reasons that America broke away from Britain.

Tea plays an important role in our daily life. The more we learn about tea, the more we find out about its importance in history as well.

(310 words)