

THE FOLKWAYS OF MAKING AND WHISKING HANDMADE POWDERED GREEN TEA IN NAKAZOSHI TOWN, NARA.

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Summary

Nakazoshi town is located in Kashihara City, Nara. The folkways of making and whisking homemade powdered green tea have been handed down in this district from old times. The tea is grown at the borders of the fields or houses, and become ready for cropping in May. Immediately after the leaves are picked, they are steamed, rolled on the straw mat, and then sunned. After that, they are roasted, crushed by hands, and then ground by the millstone. The powdered green tea mixed with some hot water by a bamboo whisk. Then a pinch of salt is added. After the tea powder is dissolved well, some hot water is poured, and lastly bits of *kiriko* (cubic rice crackers) are added. They float on the tea. In old times, this tea drinking or eating style was used in every ceremonial occasion. However in these days it is maintained only by a group of volunteers. The beginning of these folkways is not known. The moat that surrounded the town has kept the residents very close with each other, and suggests why these folkways have survived here. Each family owns its own millstone with different shape and stone type. This is a very unique case. This will be an important clue for reconsideration of the currently accepted understandings of the Japanese tea culture.

Keywords

Handmade tea, whisking the powdered tea, The tea meeting, The millstone.

Introduction

We have a strong interest in the method of manufacturing of handmade tea and folkways in Japan. According to the recent agricultural statistics in Japan, tea is produced mostly by machines, and almost of the machine made tea is produced by steaming. However, besides steaming, there are another ways of keeping the tea buds from oxidation such boiling and roasting as handmade tea. In many cases, after that, a tea buds are rolled on the straw mat, and then there are sunned. As for the way of drinking tea, pouring hot water into the tea leaves is not the only way, but there are also other ways such as brewing and whisking.

Based upon these interests, we will report the case of Nakazoshi town regarding its folkways of tea that is still maintained nowadays. It includes mixing handmade powdered tea with some salt and hot water by bamboo whisk. In this folkways, there are no rigid rules to be followed as you see in the case of formal tea ceremonies. We think that it is rather eating tea than drinking it.

Materials and methods

There was some preceding research about the folkways of tea in Nakazoshi town

until now, and we referred to it, However, we will report more detailed contents about the millstone for the first time in the nation.

Nakazoshi town is located at the end of the northwest of Kashihara City in the center of Nara Prefecture. It is the typical village surrounded by the moat. We visited the site, and did investigation twice interviewing residents until now as joint research. The first time, at December 21, 2003, the interview was done by joining their traditional tea meeting. In the second interview on January 25, 2004, with Nara prefectural Museum of Folklore, 14 families showed us their millstones having been maintained in the families. 15 to 20 residents attended at town center each time.

Results

* About making tea.

About 30 to 50 years ago, the tea buds was grown at the borders of the fields or houses, and became ready for cropping in May. Immediately after the leaves are picked, they are steamed, rolled on the straw mat, and then sunned. After that, they are roasted, crushed by hands, and then ground by the millstone.

Recently, a powdered tea sold in the market is used. In the last investigation, the tea leaves sold in the market were ground with the millstone, and powdered tea was made to be used. As for the taste, tongue touch was rougher than a powdered tea on the market without sweetness. However, people said that it is close to its original taste of handmade tea.

* About the millstone

Although we do not have enough knowledge to identify the exact types of stone, it was apparent to us that several different types of stones were used to make the millstones. We also found that each millstone includes different shape of rhombus that surrounds the hole for the handle. We found that fourteen families owned millstones by last investigation, and later found that the Nara Prefectural Museum of Folklore owned one millstone.

The quality of stone and the craftsmanship are generally rough. Some of the millstones do not have the circular margin with out furrows that are typically seen in the current millstone. The furrows are very coarse. In some millstones, the furrows have been worn away and they are not visible. Refer to the attached list for the details.

* About the tea meeting (“*cha-yoriai* ”)

In old times, the villagers held the tea meetings very often by inviting each other as part of ceremonies, seasonal festival and so on. There were often more than one tea meetings on the same day. However in these days those tea meeting are maintained only by a group of volunteers.

Discussion and Acknowledgement

Although there are some local stories, the exact beginning of these folkways is not known. It is clear that they existed in Edo period at least. The moat that surrounded the town has kept the residents very close with each other, and suggests why these folkways have survived here. Each family owns its own millstone with different shape and stone type. This is a very unique case. Though it is not found in at present, the folkways that the people grind the tea and drunk it has the possibility, it was being done in each place before. This will be an important clue for reconsideration of the currently accepted understandings of the Japanese tea culture. (Written by Akiko Ito)



【The list of the millstone in Nakazoshi town confirmed by the investigation until now】

A = Diameter of Runner stone. (The unit is centimeter)

B = Height of Runner stone. (The unit is centimeter)

C = Master furrow & Secondary furrows.

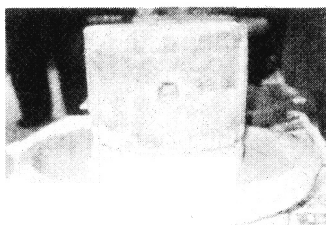
D = Type of stone.

E = Difference in the expression of rhombus.

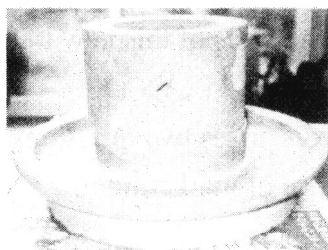
“suri-awase” = circular margin without furrows.

owner	A	B	C	D	E	Note
1.Fujita family(a)	20	13.7	Worn away?	Runner stone … Sandstone. Bed stone … Sandstone	Two tiers	Did are Runner stone and Bed stone come from different sources?
2.Fujita family(b)	20.5	12	8 & 8	Diabase	Three tiers	There is “suri-awase”.
3.Okahashi family(a)	19	11	Furrows are not clear.	Granite?	Two tiers	There is no “suri-awase” The furrows are almost worn away.
4.Okahashi family(b)	20	11	8 & Furrows are not clear.	Granite?	Three tiers	Was the wooden rod replaced with the iron rod later? Both “suri-awase” and the furrows are not clear.
5.Iwamoto family	(20)	—	8 & 7~9	Diabase	Because there is no runner stone, its diameter can be assumed only by with the bed stone. There is “suri-awase”	
6.Yokoyama family	23	11	8 & 14~16	Type of rock is not identifiable.	Three tiers	There is “suri-awase”.
7.Murata family (The town has a millstone for a move.)	19	12	8 & 6~9	Granite?	Two tiers	There is no “suri-awase”. Rhombus is deformed.
8.Matsuda family(a)	20	11.15	8 & 4~5	Andesite?	Two tiers	There is no “suri-awase”.
9.Yoshida family	18	10	8 & 12	Granite?	Two tiers	There is “suri-awase”.
10.Yoshimura family	20	11	Worn away?	Type of rock is not identifiable.	Three tiers	Some remains of lacquered surface. A supplementary tool to easily grind is attached.
11.Nishimoto family	20	10	Worn away?	Type of rock is not identifiable.	Rhombus is not clear.	
12.Morimoto family	19	12	Runner stone … Furrows are not clear. Bed stone … Worn away?	Runner stone … Andesite? Bed stone … Type of rock is not identifiable.	Single?	Did are Runner stone and Bed stone come from different sources? Was the wooden rod replaced with the iron rod later? Rhombus is deformed.
13.Takagi family	21	13	8 & 5~6	Type of rock is not identifiable.	Two tiers	There is “suri-awase” A supplementary tool to easily grind is attached.
14.Matsuda family(b)	20	11.5	Runner stone … Furrows are not clear. Bed stone … 8 & 6	Runner stone … Sandstone Bed stone … Sandstone.	Two tiers	Did are top part and bottom part come from different sources? Was the wooden rod replaced with the iron rod later?
15.Yoshihara family	20.5	12	Worn away?	Andesite?	Two tiers	A millstone is owned by Nara Prefectural Museum of Folklore.

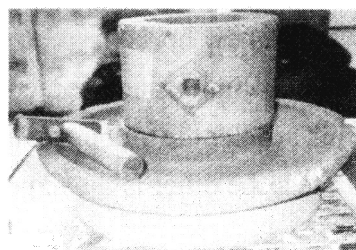
【The photograph of the millstone in Nakazoshi town confirmed by the investigation until now】



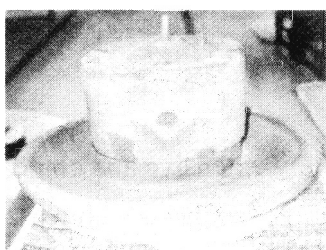
1. Fujita family (a)



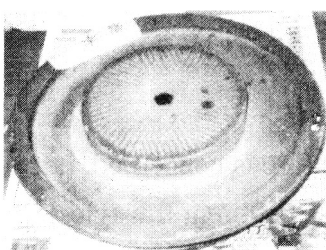
2. Fujita family (b)



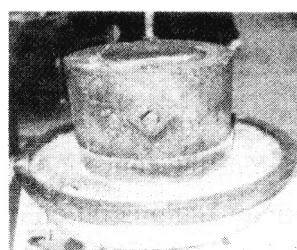
3. Okahashi family (a)



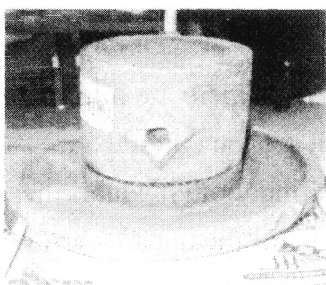
4. Okahashi family (b)



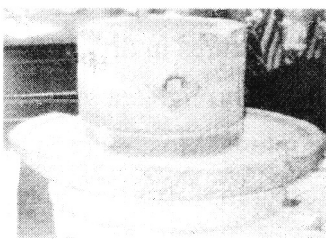
5. Iwamoto family



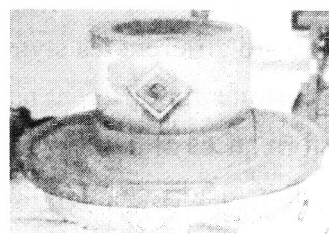
6. Yokoyama family



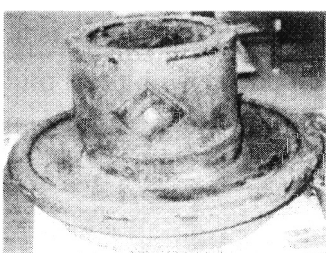
7. Murata family



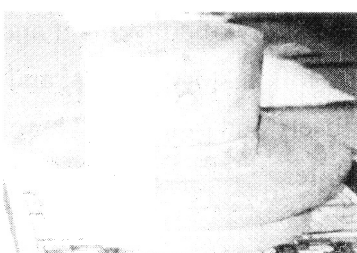
8. Matsuda family (a)



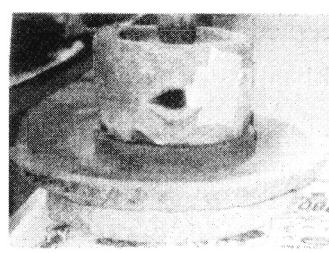
9. Yoshida family



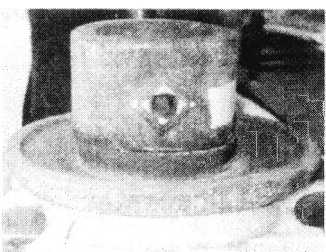
10. Yoshimura family



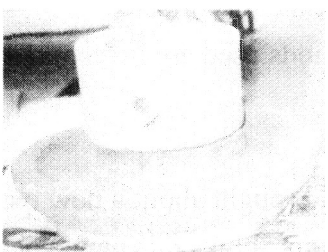
11. Nishimoto family



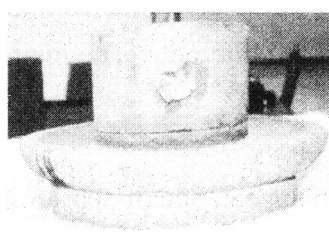
12. Morimoto family



13. Takagi family



14. Matsuda family (b)



15. Yoshihara family