

# **An Investigation on Tea Drinking as a Cultural Event and its Utility for the Development of Human Social Relationships (Based on Japanese and Sri Lankan Buddhist Culture)**

W.B. Sugandi

Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies - University of Kelaniya

wbsugandi92@gmail.com

Tea drinking is an art and a central Buddhist cultural ritual in *Mahāyāna* country called Japan. This culture helps to develop many excellent human qualities including equality, mutual harmony etc. On the other hand, tea drinking seems cultural element which is an essential part of Sri Lankan Buddhist Culture. It can also be identified as ritual that symbolizes inter-personal and social harmony. Treating any visiting friend or guest with a cup of tea, or inviting it, is a cultural aspect of Sri Lankan Buddhist culture. It creates a beautiful heaven for strengthening personal relationships. In Japan, this ritual celebrates as the ‘*Cānoitam*’ Festival. From it, the path to spiritual learning opens. But as moral declining this art is currently disappearing in Sri Lankan society, which is famous as Theravada Buddhist country. Here the present study is to examine the development of human social qualities associated with Japanese and Sri Lankan tea art. The study is limited to examine the tea drinking in Sri Lankan and Japanese culture. The purpose of the study is to investigate to which extent tea drinking has influenced human social development in Japan and Sri Lanka. The study is carried out qualitative research method based on literary sources and scholastic views included in secondary and tertiary sources. The main objective is to reveal the effect of Japanese and Sri Lankan tea drinking for developing of social and human qualities. A secondary objective is to learn how spiritual development takes place from a physical proposition such as the culture of tea drinking. In Japan, as a popular *Mahāyāna* Buddhist country, we can recognize that how this tea drinking has become an advanced spiritual discipline through the inspiration of Buddhist culture.

**Keywords:** Tea drinking, Human social relationships, ‘*Cānoitam*’ Festival, spiritual discipline