



## The Cultural Significance of the Indigenous Beverages of Aborigines of the *Paradise on Earth*-Kashmir, Jammu & Kashmir, India

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### ABSTRACT

*Kashmir is famed for its exquisiteness, magnificence and natural panorama all through the globe and portrays anthropological, topographical, civilizing and ecological miscellany. This paper enumerates on the indigenous beverages of Kashmir valley which are employed by its aborigines. Since summer is pleasurable but winter is very chilly in Kashmir, so the beverages like Kehva, Zari Kehva, Shier Chai, Doodhe chai & Lipton chai take care of both the seasons and guarantee a prologue to a native ethnicity, uniqueness, sustenance and flavor. The requisite ingredients, mode of preparation, means of consumption and their cultural importance are documented owing to being alien to the scientific world.*

**Keywords :** Kashmir, Kehva, Zari Kehva, Shier Chai, Doodhe chai, Cultural worth

### Introduction:

The Kashmir valley is famous for magnificence and innate panorama throughout the globe. The grand Persian poet Sheikh Sadi is believed to have said about the mesmerizing exquisiteness of Kashmir, "If there is any heaven on earth, it is here in Kashmir". The Mughal Emperor, Shahjehan named, Kashmir as a "*Paradise on Earth*". The terrain of the State of Jammu and Kashmir lies amid four degrees of latitude from 32.17 to 36.58 North and East to West, the State lies between 73.26" and 80.30" longitude. The length of state is 640 Kms from North to South and 480 Kms from East to West. Kashmir is positioned between the *Pir Panjal* range and the *Zaskar* range with an area of 15220 sq kms and circumscribed on all sides by mountains and the average height of the valley is 1850 meters above sea level. The territories of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Gilgit figure the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir valley has 10 districts as Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Kupwara, Shopian, Kulgam, Budgam, Pulwama, Ganderbal, and Bandipora.

S.NO.	District	Area in sq km	Population (2011)
1	Anantnag	3,984	1070144
2	Kulgam	-	422786
3	Pulwama	1,398	570060
4	Shopian	-	265960
5	Badgam	1,371	735753
6	Srinagar	2,228	1269751
7	Ganderbal	-	297003
8	Bandipore	398	385099
9	Baramula	4,588	1015503
10	Kupwara	2,379	875564

### Regions of Kashmir:

An attempt has been made to bring forth those beverages which are used by the aborigines of Kashmir i.e.; Kashmiri Hindus which are true representative of Kashmir, and their

preparation methods are discussed in detail. The ritual of bakery is elite to the Central Asian civilization. The cuisine has been opinionated by the customs which arrived amid the attack of the Kashmir province by *Timurlung* from the locale around current Uzbekistan, Afghan and Persian cultures.

Usually the cooking is done on a *Dan* - an oblong terracotta oven, about 3' x 2' - and a foot and a half in height. It has a floor-level outlet, through which fuel is fed and has usually 3 orifices on the crown, on which cooking is done in varied pots like *Lejj*. Currently, due to paucity of firewood, LPG and kerosene stoves are frequently employed. The aim of this paper is to record the indigenous knowledge of the beverages by the ethnic people of the Kashmir province on the processing, preparation and production of the same.

### Methodology:

The data was collected by the author through interviews, interaction, discussion and questionnaires of descriptive types with cooks (K-'*Wazae*'), family members and local elder Kashmiri Hindu women belonging to different districts of Kashmir and having sound knowledge of the beverages of the valley. All interviews were performed in the local Kashmiri language. Throughout the interviews, information was collected on the requisite ingredients, the method of preparation, and the cultural significance of the customary beverages of the dale. The information from one resource person of one district was cross checked with other resource persons of other districts and available literature source. The personal ancestral knowledge was also a source of information.

### Results & Discussion: Kashmiri Beverages:

#### 1. Shier Chay/ 'Pahaer Chay'

Shier Chay is the most well-liked form of beverage, prepared by Kashmiris, who are considered as the grave tea drinkers. The tea for preparing this is also im-ported from exterior of Kashmir and is called '*Pahaer Chay*'. '*Pahaer Chay*' is rolled into petite strings of blackish tint. The black tea is contrived from green foliage which is withered by passing air through these and when the leaves become pliant, these are rolled

inside a rolling bench, and consequences in rupturing of cells along with liberation of enzymes. On exposure to oxygen, fermentation takes place. Then leaves turn copper burgundy in shade subsequent to the accurate fermentation point. Then these are bare to incredibly scorching and dehydrated air, which arrests auxiliary fermentation plus conserves these, and turns to blackish paint. For nearly one and all Kashmiri Muslims, '*Shier Chay*' or '*Noon Chay*', as they entitle it, is an obligation at breakfast and in the afternoon. '*Shier*' in Persian connotes milk. Tea into which Milk and Salt is added, is known as '*Shier Chay*' or '*Milk Tea*'. When milk is not added, it is known as '*Teth* (bitter) *chay*'. The key ingredients of *Shier chay* are, '*Pahari*' tea leaves, sodium bi carbonate, salt, water and milk. The atypical shade of the tea is an outcome of its distinctive preparation technique and the adding up of soda. This salted tea is to a great deal like the salted tea ubiquitous in diverse divisions of India. *Shier Chay* is a frequent breakfast tea in Kashmiri family units. Frequently, this tea is dished up in huge Samovars. Kashmiri Hindus, condiment it, and make it affluent, generally by adding up green cardamoms, *Elettaria cardamomum*, (Family: *Zingiberaceae*) (K-'*Ael*'), Poppy seeds, *Papaver somniferum* (Family: *Papaveraceae*) (K-'*Khash Khash*'), '*Malayi*' (Skim of boiled milk), and compressed almond, *Prunus amygdalus* Batsch. (Family: *Rosaceae*) (K-'*Badam*') seeds and so on. They deem it to facilitate digestion subsequent to a vigorous feast.

Oolong tea, prepared from moderately fermented tea leaves is as well second-hand for '*Shier Chay*'.

#### Technique of Preparation:

In a steel or tinned, copper or brass '*Patila*', or customarily earthen pots "*Chay Patila*" of about 3 litre capacity, 1/2 litre of water to which 2 teaspoons of '*Pahari*' tea leaves, locally '*Paher chay*' supplemented with a pinch or two of Sodium bi carbonate (K-'*Phull*'), is boiled meticulously on average heat. After about 25 minutes, the mixture boils down, to one thirds of its original amount, to this concentrated ruddy fluid, about a liter of water, and half liter of milk, (K-'*Dodh*') is added. The tea will at this moment be of 'Peach flower color', or pinkish in color. Then dehydrated ginger, *Zingiber officinale* (Family: *Zingiberaceae*) (K-'*Adrak*') sections, subsequent to crushing it a bit or segmented green ginger, the cinnamon *Cinnamomum verumm* (Family: *Lauraceae*) (K-'*Dalchin*'), and compressed almonds, *Prunus amygdalus* Batsch. (Family: *Rosaceae*) (K-'*Badam*'), in conjunction with '*Malayi*' or cream is added to this tea. Swirled following boiling for few additional minutes, and the '*Shier Chay*' is all set. It used to be served in Bronze cups (K - '*Khaes*' and '*Kenzh Khaish*') by Pandits or handle less shallow ceramic bowls, (K - '*Chin Pyala*'). by Muslims. At the moment, contemporary tea set is used for service. '*Malayi*', mentioned above, is the skimmed crest of milk boiled and then refrigerated, which is wealthy in fats plus proteins. The requisite ingredients for *Shier Chay* preparation are given in Table No 1.

A '*Telavoer*', '*Katalama*', or a '*Kuelcha*' is by and large served with the '*Shier Chay*', particularly at breakfast or at afternoon tea. At this instant, it is equipped to serve with *tomle choet* (*chawal ke aate ki rooti*). In various cases, baked local rice grains, *Oryza sativa* L. (Family: *Poaceae*) (K-'*Tomul*') are supplemented to the *Shier Chay* and boiled along with it. This is recognized as '*Tomle Sout*'. The baked rice flour is also used to formulate *Sout*.

## 2. Kahwah/Moagael chay/Qahva

At matrimony feasts, celebrations, and pious places, it is traditional to serve up Kahwah, or Qahwah - initiated from a 14th century Arab coffee, which consecutively was given name subsequent to a primordial beverage of the Sufis. Kahwah is a green tea prepared by way of saffron, *Crocus sativus* (Family: *Iridaceae*) (K-'*Kong*'), spices and almonds, *Prunus amygdalus* Batsch (Family: *Rosaceae*) (K-'*Badam*') or walnuts, *Juglans regia* L. (Family: *Juglandaceae*) (K-'*Doone*'). In excess, 20 varieties of Kahwah are prepared in diverse family units. Several populaces moreover pour milk in Kahwah and

craft it as partly milk plus partially kahwah known as *Doodhe chay* in Kashmir.

Kahwah (also spelled qehwa, kehwa or kahwa) is a conventional green tea *Camellia sinensis* (L.) Kuntze (Family: *Theaceae*) (K-'*Bomai chay*') formula that originated from the Kashmir Valley. It is prepared in Kashmir Valley in India and Pakistan, the Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan, in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Afghanistan plus additional regions of Central Asia. The Kashmiri Hindu migrants existing in the North Indian Plains, predominantly in the metropolitan agglomeration of Delhi, have contributed to its reputation in the midst of non-Kashmiri Indians.

#### Origin:

The Arabic word *qahwah* possibly will have been the core for kahwah or kehwa. Nevertheless, *qahwah* is employed for beverage made from baked coffee beans in several countries, the BMC kehwa or *Moagael chay* of Kashmir is a moderately dissimilar from that which is green scented tea and is made from entire green tea leaves. The green tea like black tea is prepared of leaves, buds and internodes of *Camellia sinensis* (L.) Kuntze (Family: *Theaceae*) (K-'*Chay*'). The fabricating procedures of green and black tea are at variance. In green tea the newly plucked leaves are shrunk by instantly subjecting these to elevated temperature, by exposing to steam. In Moroccan category of manufacture, leaves are put in scorching ovens. Elevated heat exterminates the entire enzymes inside the cells. Consequently, no fermentation takes place and leaves recuperate a green tint, because of which tannins and caffeine are not figured. Then it is desiccated by passing burning air through it for conservation. Although precise sources of kehwa are still blurred, most Kashmiris accept as true that the aromatic customary drink kehwa dates back to era immemorial & has been a ingredient of local utilization for ages. Certain sources also map out the foundation of the drink to the Yarkand vale in Xinjiang Area (Areas of Kashmir & Xinjiang were part of the Kushan Empire during the 1st & 2nd century AD). It is likely that use of kehwa & its spread from one region to another was made possible & admired in these regions during the Kushan rule.

In times immemorial green tea used to be imported from china through Ladakh in the figure of compressed blocks which at the present are unusual. Nowadays, black tea producers in addition make green tea, but various Tibetans in Dehradun, Darjeeling and Himachal Pradesh as well contribute.

#### Technique of Preparation:

The tea is prepared by boiling green tea leaves (K-'*Bomai chay*') amid saffron strings, *Crocus sativus* (Family: *Iridaceae*) (K-'*Kong*'), cinnamon bark, *Cinnamomum verumm* (Family: *Lauraceae*) (K-'*Dalchin*'), cardamom pods, *Elettaria cardamomum*, (Family: *Zingiberaceae*) (K-'*Ael*') & sporadically Kashmiri rose petals, *Rosa sinensis* L. (Family: *Rosaceae*) (K-'*Gulab vather*') to append an immense aroma. As a general rule, it is served with sugar or honey, and crushed nuts, and frequently with almonds or walnuts. Diverse varieties are prepared as a herbal concoction merely, devoid of the green tea leaves. Conventionally, Kahwah or Kehwa is primed in a brass kettle recognized as a *samovar*. A *samovar* consists of a "fire-container" running as a middle crater in which live embers are positioned keeping the tea everlastingly sizzling. In the region of the fire-jug there is a room for water to fume and the tea leaves and other ingredients are assorted with the water for just rights amalgamate. Kehwa possibly will also be prepared in customary pans and containers, as contemporary day metropolitan livelihood possibly will not forever authorize the exercise of detailed samovars (or samovars, as they are prevalently called in Kashmir). Kahwah is frequently served to visitors or as part of a ceremonial dinner, and saffron, *Crocus sativus* L. (Family: *Iridaceae*) (K-'*Kong*') is supplemented to the Kehwa for extraordinary guests. It is frequently served in petite, shallow cups. Kehwa in Kashmir is also usually served subsequent to Wazwan and intricate family unit dinner. Now and then milk is supplemented to the kahwa, but this is by and

large given to the mature or the ailing persons.

The 'Nanvayis' or 'Kandur', bake the 'Telavaer', 'Katalam' and 'Kuelcha', along with breads called 'Choechi', 'Girda' and 'Baqirkhani' (flat rounds with raised rims, of leavened wheat dough), every day early in the morning or in the afternoon, to supply these baked, hot from the oven breads, for breakfast and evening tea, of Kashmiris.

'Katlam' or 'Kuelcha', and also 'Khatay Kuelchi' (sweet or salted), are usually eaten with 'Kahva'. At breakfast, freshly baked 'Choechi' and 'Girda' are commonly eaten with 'Kahva' or 'Shier Chay' in Kashmir.

**Alternate Methods of Preparation:**

Approximately 3 cups of water are boiled in conjunction with cinnamon, *Cinnamomum verumm* (Family: Lauraceae) (K-'Dalchin'), cardamom, *Elettaria cardamomum*, (Family: Zingiberaceae) (K-'Ael') and cloves, *Syzygium aromaticum* (L.) Merrill & Perry (Family: Myrtaceae) (K- 'Rong') and the tea is transferred and put down to infuse over a very low flare. In the meantime, saffron is liquefied in minuscule water by rubbing it softly. The tea is strained and the liquid saffron in concert with almonds is added. It can be sweetened according to the taste and served hot. The requisite ingredients for *kehwa* preparation are given in Table No 2.

Traditionally, green tea is supplemented to water in a samovar. Subsequent to boiling it for few minutes, sugar to flavor is added. Green crushed cardamoms, *Elettaria cardamomum*, (Family: Zingiberaceae) (K-'Ael') busted cinnamon *Cinnamomum verumm* (Family: Lauraceae) (K-'Dalchin') bark pieces and skinny shavings of almond *Prunus amygdalus* Batsch (Family: Rosaceae) (K-'Badami') kernels are supplemented prior to serving. Occasionally, crushed tablets of 'Gulab chrechi' are also added, which contain cloves, *Syzygium aromaticum* (L.), musk, cinnamon, *Cinnamomum verumm* (Family: Lauraceae) (K-'Dalchin'), green cardamom seeds, *Elettaria cardamomum*, (Family: Zingiberaceae) (K-'Ael'), green ginger, *Zingiber officinale* (Family: Zingiberaceae) (K-'Adrak'), black peper, *Piper nigrum* L. (Family: Piperaceae) (K-'Maritch') corns, saffron, *Crocus sativus* L. (Family: Iridaceae) (K-'Kong') and sugar etc. This green tea beverage is subsequently called 'Zari Kehva'. The requisite ingredients for *Zari Kehva* preparation are given in Table No 3.

A samovar is a handy metallic cistern to concoct green tea. It is an aboriginal mutual appliance of a kettle and a heater. In the tube live charcoals, frequently from a *Kangri* are fed by means of forceps to heat the tea inside the jacket. The cylinder gets air through a great deal of punctures at the foundation. The tube along with the jacket stands on a round podium, which is magnificently imprinted with flower-patterned blueprint. The cutout interspaces of this blueprint aerate the blaze in the cylinder. This platform which is closed at the foundation also serves as an ash pit. The jacket has an opening for pouring tea and a garlanded grip to embrace the kettle. Mutually the jacket and the fire cylinder have separate lids. The jacket lid swathes the tea, whilst boiling to regulate the free flee of vapor and fragrance, and the cover of the cylinder serves to quench the flames when it is blocked to impede the boiling. The samovar is an incredibly gorgeous decorative kettle sovereign of a stove. The Hindus utilize brass samovars while Muslims employ copper and tinned and habitually their jackets are as well imprinted with adorable designs. Currently, samovars of silver or paper machine are exercised for decorative rationale as a pictogram of Kashmiriyat.

**Conclusion:**

The traditions and cuisines of Hindus- aboriginals of Kashmir valley were influenced during the reign of Muslim rulers. The traditional beverages which are part of not only the daily dietary system of the Kashmiri people but has also of their social and religious worth, are made with the use of indigenous agricultural products and typical practices, but now the cosmopolitan culture has also affected this system. The *Dans, Voru*

and *Samovars* are nowadays replaced by more modern LPG, Stoves, Induction Heaters and Kettles.

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**Table No.1: The requisite ingredients for Shier Chay preparation**

S. NO.	Essential ingredients	Quantity	Optional ingredients	Quantity
1	Pahari Tea Leaves	2 table spoons	Cream	250 gm
2	Sodium bi-Carbonate	a pinch or two	Green Cardamoms	6 No
3	Salt	1 tsp. or to taste	Almond Kernels	6 No
4	Milk		Poppy Seeds	1table spoons
5			Black Pepper Corns	2 No
6			Cinnamon	2 pieces
7			Green or Dry Ginger	a pieces

**Table No.2: The requisite ingredients for Kehwa preparation**

S. NO.	Ingredients	Quantity
1	Kashmiri green tea	4 table spoons
2	Saffron	4 pinches
3	Cardamoms	2, slightly crushed
4	Almonds, blanched and chopped	8 No
5	Cinnamon	1 stick
6	Cloves	2 No
7	Sugar or Honey	2 table spoons

**Table No.3: The requisite ingredients for Gulab Chrechi preparation for Zari Kehva**

S. NO.	Ingredients	Quantity
1	Fragrant fresh rose petals	100gm
2	Sugar	100gm
3	Green cardamom seeds	5 gm
4	Cinnamon	10gm
5	Green ginger/Ginger powder	10gm/5gm
6	Cloves	5gm
7	Saffron	5gm
8	Musk(optional)	1/4gm
9	Black pepper	5gm
10	Nutmeg	1





(a) Kahwah Chay Leaves (b) Kahwah Chay



(c) Shier Chay Leaves (d) Shier Chay

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