



Our Mission



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The Tea Institute at Penn State

The Tea Institute at Penn State is a research Institute on The Pennsylvania State University's University Park Campus. The Institute is dedicated to the preservation and development of all tea ceremonies, while offering educational and research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students.

The Institute runs The Traditional Chinese Tea (功夫茶) Ceremony Club, The Japanese Tea Ceremony (茶の湯) Club, and the Korean Tea Ceremony (다례) Club. These Clubs offer training in their respective field to students, faculty, and community members. Students may graduate from one of the Clubs into the Institute though a testing process, though this is not a requirement.

Members of the Institute are supported with opportunities for research grants, scholarships, personal mentoring and employment at 蓝白色茶馆 | The Penn State Tea House. Tea reviews by Institute members are automatically added to the Tea Library.

Mission Statement

The Tea Institute at Penn State aims to teach and preserve all aspects of tea culture & science by serving as the English language center for tea knowledge.

The Institute aims to propagate general connoisseurship and the Tea Ceremonies of all Cultures through the training of our members.

We aspire to build and maintain the world's foremost academic Tea Library; containing teas, reviews, and publications.

The Institute is student oriented and focused. We take an expansive view of tea knowledge in order to allow research in all majors and areas of study.

Officers of the Institute

Jason M. Cohen – Director of The Tea Institute at Penn State



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Jason Cohen began studying tea on his first trip to China in 2007. Since then, Jason has dedicated wholly too much time to studying, teaching, and preserving Tea Ceremony.

He continued his study of tea with follow-up projects in India and Nepal, before returning to China in the 2009. Jason founded the Tea Institute at Penn State and the Traditional Chinese Tea Ceremony (GongFu Cha) Club, which quickly gained University wide notability for its quick growth and scope of functions, and notoriety for the life-consuming interest it sparked in members, and Jason's proclamation banning tea bags on campus (yet to be implemented).

Jason is studying Political Science, Economics, and Anthropology, with a minor in Chinese Language (Mandarin).

Pat Penny – Director of Tea House Operations



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Patrick grew up in an environment devoid of artisan tea, preferring to compare the taste of Tetley and Lipton in his early years. He stumbled into one of the 2010 Fall semester's first Club meetings, after seeing a presentation at the involvement fair, and was instantly taken with the life-consuming interest that Jason warns potential members about. Patrick has since become the Director of Tea House Operations.

Patrick has not yet decided what he would like to do with his life besides brew tea every day, and is currently in the Division of Undergraduate Studies.

Gabrielle Parker – Director of Marketing



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Gabrielle started as the Penn State Tea House's most reliable customer. It took her a semester to make the jump into Club meetings, and another half semester to decide to take on the responsibilities of a deputy director. She has since passed the Tea Specialist / Institute Membership Examination, and now enjoys oodles of power as Director of Marketing for the Institute. Gabrielle is commonly referred to as the Minister-ess of Propaganda.

Gabrielle is majoring in Advertising and minoring in Japanese.

Long night;
Weary with the work of writing things
Blew the fire to life and drank some tea
- Masaoki Shiki (1867 - 1902)

Undergraduate Research

The Institute is focused on expanding undergraduate research opportunities at Penn State. The Institute will offer research positions in all fields of study relating to tea, and is working with academic departments within the university to expand beyond our primary fields of anthropology, chemistry, aesthetics, and history. Students will be responsible for their own research, after approval, while being held to the same high standards as any of Penn State's many research and academic institutions.

The addition of an expanded base for interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research at Penn State benefits the University as a whole, while targeting the growing need for early self-led, well mentored, research opportunities to the undergraduate population. This basic research would put Penn State at the forefront of global research on tea.

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 (715 - 803), Cha Jing

Academic Classes

The Institute has proposed to create 12 academic classes under its Institutional direction. The Institute has proposed three classes for each tea ceremony, its culture, and related arts. The three remaining classes are a research internship, an advanced comparative tea culture course, and a mentored "independent" study course.

The advanced courses would allow students to receive credits for their work with the Institute, while the introductory classes would serve a similar purpose to club meetings, with a greater level of involvement. All students who receive an A in one of the introductory courses will attain Tea Institute Member status, pending the approval of the instructor.

Stone stove left behind by immortals,
Left in center of stream.
Tea finished, two boats drift on abreast,
Tea smoke; wafting delicate fragrance.
- Zhū Xī

The Tea Institute's Cultural Immersion Program

The Tea Institute has made progress on a Cultural Immersion Program for Institute Members. This is an experiential educational program, where students are led on a trip to either China, Japan, or Korea, and spend time harvesting tea, learning production methodologies, training under a Tea Master, and living with a host family. These trips will be 2 - 3 weeks long over winter break, and 5 - 8 weeks long over the summer.

The Penn State Strategic Plan calls for the internationalization of the classroom experience, and for Penn State to realize its potential as a global institution. The Institute is dedicated to meeting these goals through our programs at Penn State and our Cultural Immersion program. Tea Institute members would have a hands-on experience learning about tea production, economics, and agriculture. The Cultural Immersion program would provide an experience that could not be replicated by any form of classroom based study. It is the goal of the Institute to see our members become outstanding global citizens and to lead the way forward through mutual respect and understanding.

High wind - tea
Leaves whip against
the brushwood gate
- Matsuo Basho

The Urasenke Chanoyu School at Penn State

The Tea Institute at Penn State has partnered with The Urasenke Chanoyu School. Urasenke will teach members of the Institute and Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony (茶の湯) Club Chanoyu and the related arts. This partnership is expanding the Institute's ability to teach and research Japanese Tea Ceremony.

Urasenke will be offering classes to Institute members and select Club members starting Fall 2011, while proposed academic classes and further club training is scheduled for Spring 2012.

When tea scent is strong
The power of tea is infinite
Limited only by its drinker
- Jason M. Cohen

The Tea Library

The Tea Library is the Institute's physical stock of exemplary teas, a catalog of Institute tea reviews, and an archive of selected publications.

The Tea Library will be the bedrock of the Institute's research and educational programs. The stock of tea will exemplify the production methods, regions, and cultivars of China, Japan, and Korea. The catalog of reviews will allow for the identification of patterns and shifts in flavor profiles and quality through time, as well as offer a window into the systematic ageing and long term storage possibilities for tea. Finally, our archive of selected publications will be the starting point for Institute research; these verified and trusted publications will give direction to new members writing their first papers, while offering even the experienced members a reference or sought-after citation.

The essence of the enjoyment of tea lies in appreciation of its color, fragrance, and flavor, and the principals of preparation are refinement, dryness, and cleanliness.
- Cai Xiang (1012 - 1067), Cha lu

The Tea Selection process for The Tea Library

The selection processes for tea starts with samples. Each sample goes through two to three individual tasting sessions, followed by a comparison to similar teas, multiple inspections of leaf quality, comparison of our members' reviews, and finally a vote of all Institute members who participated in the selection process. The amount of any single type of tea accepted into the library will vary from year to year depending on the harvest.

The Institute does not plan, nor want, to accept every tea we review. Rather, only the teas that exemplify their type, region, or cultivar will be accepted.

Fetch spring water - Fragrant with fallen flowers
Set up a fire in a marble stove - prepare tea
Under the green garden shade - bees report harvest
- Tai Bing (Song Dynasty)

蓝白色茶馆 | The Penn State Tea House

The Penn State Tea House is a fully functional, student run, traditional Chinese tea house, managed by the Tea Institute at Penn State. All tea is served according to GongFu Cha (功夫茶) using handpicked, tea master sourced teas. All brewers are trained members of the Institute. The goal of the Tea House is to introduce the greater campus community to tea culture, connoisseurship, and high quality Chinese tea, while promoting cultural awareness and generating revenue for the Institute.

The Penn State Tea House benefits the community by introducing knowledge of Chinese culture and tea culture, as well as providing a cultural hub focused on the appreciation of high quality tea and art. The Tea House achieves this in an elegant, relaxed atmosphere. The Penn State Tea House benefits the Institute by providing approved brewers with teaching and brewing practice to hone their knowledge and skills in tea ceremony. The revenue generated by the Tea House is used to fund the Institute's undergraduate research opportunities, and is invested in the Tea Library and Tea House. The non-profit Tea House is self-sufficient, and it is not an economic burden on the Institute.

opening my eyes -
no teatray, no teapot
no teataste, no tea
- Hobbes

The Tea House Gallery

The Institute has partnered with the Penn State University HUB-Robeson Galleries to create The Tea House Gallery; a permanent, rotating, art exhibition inside the Penn State Tea House for the display of Asiatic themed student art.

The Tea House Gallery will provide student artists a chance to exhibit their art, which will culturally compliment the tea house's Asiatic aesthetics. The Tea House Gallery will further the Tea House's role as a cultural hub at Penn State.

The Way of Tea is naught but this:
first you boil water,
then you make the tea and drink it.
- Sen Rikyu

Publications

The Institute is planning on publishing a bi-yearly research journal, "Tea Knowledge", concentrating on research from Institute members. "Tea Knowledge" will be an Interdisciplinary and Multi-Disciplinary journal encompassing the hard sciences, the social sciences, and the arts.

The Institute will also translate foreign works on tea, through partnerships with various language departments at Penn State. The translations will be carried out by graduate or undergraduate members of the Institute who are fluent in the original language of the material to be translated.

Meeting Information

蓝白色茶馆 | The Penn State Tea House:

Open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday,
12:15 - 2:30pm.

Club Meetings:

Mondays 5 - 7pm,

Wednesdays 8:30 - 10pm,

All meetings are held in the Tea House (34 Ritenour).

List of Universities with tea facilities

University of Illinois

- Japan House, Teaches Japanese arts including:
 - Chadao - The way of tea
 - Ikebana - Flower arrangement
 - Shodo - Japanese Calligraphy
 - Sodo - the Way of Kimono
 - Kado - Poetry
- Facilities:
 - Three tea rooms
 - Japanese tea garden
 - Strolling garden
 - Zen style rock garden
- Offers two 3 credit courses on Chadao
- Website - <http://japanhouse.art.uiuc.edu/>

Cornell university

- Tea house & Tea garden
- Academic Class in Chanoyu
 - Associated pottery class
- Website: <http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/la694/index.html>

Washington and Lee University

- Japanese Tea Room
 - Two 3 credit Classes on Chadao per semester
 - lectures and demonstrations
- The Reeves Center for the Research and Exhibition of Porcelain and Paintings
- Website - <http://tearoom.wlu.edu/>

Song of the Seven Cups

One bowl moistens the lips and throat;

Two bowls shatters loneliness and melancholy;

Three bowls, thinking hard, one produces five thousand volumes;

Four bowls, lightly sweating, the iniquities of a lifetime disperse
towards the pores.

Five bowls cleanses muscles and tendons;

Six bowls accesses the realm of spirit;

One cannot finish the seventh bowl, but feels only a light breeze
spring up under the arms.

- Lú Tóng of the Táng Dynasty