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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TEA HERITAGE AND PRODUCTION METHODS OF MYANMAR

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ABSTRACT

Tea cultivation in Myanmar has a long history, rooted in both tradition and culture, and continues to play a vital role in the nation's agriculture and economy. Myanmar's favorable climatic and geographic conditions, particularly in highland regions such as Shan State, support the growth of both indigenous and hybrid varieties of Camellia species. The production system involves careful propagation, contour planting, pruning cycles, plucking methods, and the use of shade trees to maintain quality and yield. Over the years, tea cultivation areas have expanded steadily, with significant contributions from different states and regions. Myanmar produces three main types of tea such as green tea, black tea, and pickled tea (Laphet), the latter being unique to the country and central to its cultural identity. Value added tea products are popular because of consumers demands and most tea products are used for domestic consumption. Traditional processing methods remain prevalent, though modern mechanization is gradually being introduced. Beyond being an agricultural product tea, especially Laphet holds deep cultural and social significance, often served in ceremonies and daily life. Thus, tea in Myanmar represents a unique intersection of agriculture, economy, tradition, and cultural heritage.

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INTRODUCTION

Myanmar is situated in the northwestern region of Southeast Asia, and shares its borders with five nations: China, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Laos. The backbone of Myanmar's economy is agriculture, which accounts for 22.7% of the nation's GDP (Kumar, 2024). Tea plants are part of the Theaceae family, and the cultivated varieties are hybrids of *Camellia sinensis* and *Camellia assamica*. Wight (1962) disputed this classification, suggesting that the Assam tea plant should be recognized as a distinct species. He recommended the names *C. sinensis* L. for the China variety and *C. assamica* (Masters) for the Assam variety, with Masters (1844) being the first to identify Assam tea as unique. Another variant, known as the "southern type" and termed Cambodiensis by Kingdon-Ward (1950), has long been acknowledged at Tocklai as a separate variety. In Myanmar, *Camellia assamica* and *Camellia sinensis* are the most common species. In addition, various Camellia species thrive in the country, such as *Camellia irrawadiensis*, a native species of Myanmar that is located along the Irrawaddy valley.Wight (1959) suggests that the main origin of tea is believed to be near the intersection of latitude 29°N and longitude 98°E, close to the source of the Irrawaddy River in Northern Myanmar. Tea expert Mr. TD Inn notes that it began at the headwaters of Myanmar's vital Ayeyarwaddy River and quickly expanded in a fan-like pattern to the river's left side. It spread westward along the Myanmar-Assam border to regions such as Naga, Manipur, and the Lexi Mountain areas, and eastward towards China (Wight, 1959; Devi, 2013).This evergreen shrub has smooth, leathery leaves (Barua, 1958). According to Roberts *et al*. (1958), *C. irrawadiensis* closely resembles *C. assamica* but differs in its biochemical profile and notably lacks caffeine. It contains higher levels of theobromine and theogallin compared to *Camellia sinensis*. Agriculture forms the foundation of Myanmar's economy and provides employment for a large share of its population (Tun *et al*., 2015). It is the country's main source of food production, playing a crucial role in ensuring food security and supporting livelihoods, particularly in rural communities. Key agricultural activities include the cultivation of rice, pulses, and various other crops (Thant *et al*., 2022). Within the agricultural sector, perennial crops offer numerous advantages. They are vital for developing resilient, sustainable, and economically viable farming systems. Perennial cultivation supports biodiversity, improves soil health, promotes water conservation, and aids in carbon sequestration making it an essential component of sustainable agriculture. Common perennial crops include coffee, tea, citrus fruits (such as orange and lemon/lime), lychee, mango, and rubber (Moe, 2024). Tea is an economical perennial plant to cultivate. Fresh tea leaves can be transformed into a diverse range of products, such as drinks, extracts, powders, green tea-flavored foods, soaps, skincare and cosmetic products, supplements, essential oils, scented candles, and numerous

other value-added items (Moe, 2024). Tea production is concentrated mainly in Myanmar's hilly regions. The local term for tea leaf, laphet, is often paired with the name of the region where it is grown for example, Moe-goke laphet from the Moe-goke area or Namhsan laphet from the Namhsan area (Htay, 2006). The aim of this paper is to know tea culture and different production system of tea in Myanmar.

Tea production in Myanmar: Tea cultivation in Myanmar is believed to have originated on the Shan Plateau, situated about 6,000 feet above sea level, during the Bagan period. As the story goes, King Alaung Sithu (AD 1113–1167) gifted tea seeds to the Palaung people, an ethnic group in Myanmar, during his royal journey to Namshan, a small town in Northern Shan State. This event is said to have initiated the spread of tea cultivation throughout the country (Cho, 2012).

In Myanmar, tea grows well in high-altitude regions ranging from around 2,000 meters to over 6,000 feet. Optimal growing conditions include temperatures between 10°C and 30°C and annual rainfall of about 1,250 millimeters. Tea can be cultivated on slopes with gradients of 0.5° to 10°. Areas located more than 1,500 feet above sea level, with temperatures from 18°C to 25°C, relative humidity between 75% and 85%, and rainfall below 80 inches, yield high-quality tea. The crop thrives in well-drained soil with a pH of 4.5 to 5.5, though excessive wind, snow, or rainfall can negatively affect its quality (Dunford, 2024).

Propagation: Tea plants can be propagated through seeds, cuttings, and tissue culture (micropropagation). This text outlines the most effective techniques for seed propagation, which involves using seeds from tea bushes, and vegetative propagation, which involves using cuttings from tea bushes.Seed propagation can be accomplished by either directly sowing the seeds in the plantation or by initially nurturing them in seed bags within a nursery, from which they will later be transplanted to the plantation.The initial step in vegetative propagation involves selecting the mother bush from which the cuttings will be taken. This step is crucial because the tea bushes that grow from these cuttings will inherit the genetic traits of the mother bush (Sein, 2020).

Vegetative propagation: A cutting refers to a portion of a plant that is removed from its parent (or "mother") plant and, under favorable conditions, can develop into an independent plant. To ensure successful propagation and the production of high-quality tea plants, specific criteria must be followed when selecting cuttings. They should originate from robust mother leaves that have a lively axillary bud and are devoid of pests and diseases. Only strong young shoots, generally aged between five to seven months, are suitable for this task, and the chosen leaves must have a shiny appearance (Sein, 2020). To ensure high-quality vegetative propagation of tea, once a bush is deemed suitable for producing quality cuttings, it should be designated solely as a mother bush and not harvested like other tea plants in the plantation. Each year, a mother bush can yield around 250 cuttings. It is best to take these cuttings either in the early morning or during the evening. The young shoots chosen for cuttings should be sliced at a 45degree angle. Discard the very soft tips and the hard lower parts where the bark is developing. Only the green, semi-hardwood section is suitable for stem cutting. Each cutting should include a single leaf with 1 to 1.5 inches of stem below it, featuring an active axillary bud at the base of the stem (Sein, 2020).

It is recommended to use polythene sleeves for growing cuttings. The cutting should be positioned at the center of the sleeve, making sure that neither the leaf nor the bud below it comes into touch with the soil. If the leaves of the cutting naturally deflect, the stems should be angled into the soil to prevent the leaves from contacting the soil. The cuttings should be kept moist through regular watering, but watering should be gentle to avoid displacing the cuttings (Sein, 2020).

Seed propagation: Regarding seed propagation, tea bushes can begin to flower approximately 3 to 5 years after planting. Nevertheless, as tea bushes age, they typically yield a greater number of flowers and fruits, since the process of flowering and fruiting tends to intensify with the bush's maturity. Additionally, the Sinensis variety (Chinese variety) typically flowers more than the Assamica variety.

Tea bushes can flower throughout the year, but fertilization and fruit setting mainly occur from June to July, leading to fruit development. The seeds of the tea bushes are found within these fruits, typically ranging from one to three in number.About 100-120 days after flower fertilization, tea fruits reach maturity. Generally, the ripening phase of tea fruits takes place from mid-October to early December (Moe, 2024).

Generally, seeds derived from single-seeded fruits tend to be of higher quality than those from multi-seeded fruits. High-quality seeds typically have a shiny, dark-colored coat and measure about half an inch in diameter, which can be verified using sieves. Heavier seeds are preferred, while lightweight or hollow seeds should be removed. Quality seeds will sink when immersed in water; to test this, immerse 1 kg of seeds in at least 5 liters of water good viability of seeds will settle at the bottom after 24 hours. The lifespan of tea seeds after being collected is quite limited, typically lasting no more than a month or, at most, six weeks, beyond which they lose their ability to sprout. Consequently, it is essential to initiate germination within three weeks of harvesting the seeds from tea plants.

If immediate use is not possible, seeds can be temporarily kept in paper cartons stored in a cool, dry environment (Moe, 2024). On the cracking beds, seeds should be arranged in rows with a one-inch gap between each seed and between rows. The scar of the tea seed should face downward, with only a quarter of the seed visible above the surface of the cracking bed to monitor the cracking process. Once germination occurs, the seeds should be moved to pre-prepared seedling bags. Seeds that take longer than three weeks to germinate should be discarded. In the seedling bags, seeds should be placed centrally with the tap root in the soil, leaving a quarter of the seed exposed to the air. Regular watering is necessary to keep the seedlings moist, but it should be done gently to avoid displacing them with strong water jets (Sein, 2020).

Tea plantation

Single row planting systems (Contour): Cultivating tea using a contour row system is particularly suitable for hilly terrains. In this method, tea plants are planted horizontally along the slope at uniform elevations, following contour lines that run level across the hillside. This planting approach helps minimize soil erosion and enhances water retention in the soil (Sein, 2020).

Double hedge planting system (Contour): This technique consists of planting two rows of tea bushes two feet apart vertically in a staggered or zigzag pattern, with each plant spaced two feet apart within the rows. The next set of double rows is placed 4–6 feet away vertically from the previous one. The contour double hedge planting system is considered the most suitable arrangement for tea cultivation, as it produces a dense stand with a high plant population (approximately 7,400 plants per acre). This configuration not only helps conserve soil and reduce weed growth but also promotes an early and higher yield (Sein, 2020).

Types of pruning: Various pruning methods should be applied at different stages of a tea plant's growth and maturity, considering local weather conditions and the plant's overall health. A complete pruning cycle generally spans 3 to 5 years before it is repeated, though this duration can vary based on the plucking schedule and environmental factors such as altitude. In areas situated above 4,000 feet, pruning is typically performed every five years, whereas in lower elevations, it is usually done every three to four years (Moe, 2024).

Medium pruning involves trimming all the branches of a tea bush to a height of about 16 inches. This practice is carried out only on healthy bush frames. During the first year after medium pruning, tea yield typically decreases by 60–70%, but production returns to normal in the second or third year. This type of pruning is generally conducted between December and January (Sein, 2020). Light pruning is carried out 3 to 4 years after medium pruning, cutting the tea bushes about 2 inches above the previous pruning level. This procedure is typically done after the Shwephi season in May. The main purposes of light pruning are to encourage new vegetative growth, maintain a uniform yield, and shape the plucking surface of the tea bushes (Sein, 2020). Skiffing refers to trimming the tea bushes about 4 inches above the previous cut made during light pruning. At this stage, the branches tend to interlace and resemble chicken legs in shape. The main goals of skiffing are to reduce the height of the plucking table and to encourage the early growth of quality tea shoots. Additionally, it can be used to delay subsequent pruning operations. Skiffing is typically carried out between June and August (Sein, 2020). To facilitate tea bushes recovering and continue producing shoots after pruning, a specialized technique known as lung pruning can be applied. This method follows the same general pruning principles but intentionally leaves some branches, called "lung branches," uncut above the pruning line. These branches protect the plant from sunburn and continue photosynthesis, providing extra energy for regeneration and new shoot growth. During intensive pruning, it is advisable to leave 1-2 lung branches with about 35-40 leaves each. Once new shoots emerge above the pruning cut and have developed 2-3 leaves, the remaining lung branches should be removed. This practice, commonly used in modern tea-growing regions, is typically carried out between May and September (Moe, 2024). Heavy pruning is typically carried out on tea bushes over 20 years old that show a gradual decline in yield. The process begins by cutting all branches above half the plant's height to reduce overall weight. Subsequently, the remaining branches are trimmed to a height of 6 to 10 inches, leaving no leaves intact. This method removes all above-ground portions of the plant and is performed only when the root system is strong enough to handle the stress and support new growth. However, heavy pruning is now rarely practiced due to the high mortality rate it can cause. While it can rejuvenate old tea bushes and boost productivity, it carries significant risks, so it should only be applied to healthy plants with sufficient starch reserves. Naturally, yields decrease considerably in the years immediately following this type of pruning (Moe, 2024). Tea cultivation is most extensive in Shan State, followed by Mandalay Region, Kachin State, and Chin State. Shan State leads in production and experiences a maximum temperature of about 27.92°C, a minimum temperature of -5°C, and an annual rainfall of roughly 1,478 millimeters. Tea is grown throughout nearly all states and regions of Myanmar, with the exceptions of the Ayeyarwady Region and Rakhine State. Cultivation also began in the Tanintharyi Region in 2021. The main tea types grown in the country are the China and Assam varieties. In Shan State, both types are planted, though the Assam variety is the most widely cultivated (Moe, 2024).

Plucking: Plucking two leaves and a bud yields the finest quality tea, which in turn commands the highest market price per viss. Harvesting three leaves and a bud can still produce good quality tea. However, taking additional leaves increases the plucking volume and slows the upward growth of the plucking table making harvesting easier but it negatively impacts the plant. Excessive plucking weakens bush health, slows the formation of new shoots, and encourages the development of crow's-feet branches, all of which reduce long-term yield. For this reason, the mother leaf (the leaf directly below the plucking point) should always remain on the bush to speed up the next flush. Fish-leaf plucking removing more than five leaves is strongly discouraged (Sein, 2024). In most tea-growing regions of Myanmar, plucking takes place from March to October, spanning about eight months. During March, April, and May, harvesting is carried out three times per month (nine rounds in total). Tea picked before the onset of the rainy season in May is called Shwe Phi Moe Lut, noted for its stronger flavor and superior quality. From June through October, plucking frequency decreases to twice per month (ten rounds). Altogether, a tea bush should be plucked roughly 19 times per year. The plucking interval the gap between two consecutive harvesting rounds should be kept consistent. When this interval becomes too long, tender shoots harden and Banji buds develop, leading to reduced yield and lower tea quality. Extended intervals also cause the plucking table to rise unnecessarily, which is undesirable for proper harvesting. Depending on location and plant height, a harvester can gather between 22 and 33 kilograms of fresh leaves per day (Moe, 2024).

Planting of shade tree: Both temporary and permanent shade trees or plants should be established before planting tea. In existing plantations, shade trees are best introduced after pruning so that they receive adequate sunlight for proper growth. Temporary shade plants are used only for a limited period and can be removed once the permanent shade trees reach an appropriate height. Permanent shade trees provide long-term cover for tea bushes, often lasting 20 years or more. *Grevillea robusta* (silver oak) is a common choice, offering the added benefit of timber that farmers can sell when the trees mature, as its typical lifespan is around 30 years. Other suitable long-term shade species include *Cassia fistula*, *Cassia renigera*, and *Delonix regia* (Sein, 2020). The table (1) presents the trends in sown acreage, harvested acreage, and tea production in Myanmar from 1995-1996 to 2000-2001. Overall, the data show moderate fluctuations in cultivated areas and production during this six-year period. The cultivated tea acreage increased steadily from 154,000 acres in

1995-1996 to 174,000 acres by 1999-2000, showing a gradual expansion of tea cultivation. A similar trend is observed in the harvested acreage, which increased from 148,000 acres to 167,000 acres over the same period, suggesting improved utilization of planted areas. Despite variations in acreage, tea production showed a general upward trend, increasing from 53,219 tons in 1995-1996 to 66,820 tons in 1997-1998, before experiencing a slight decline to 61,440 tons in 1998-1999 and stabilizing at 62,909 tons in both 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. The substantial rise in harvested area in 1997-1998 accompanied by a marked increase in production indicates a period of unusually favorable growing conditions or higher productivity. Although production fluctuated slightly, it remained relatively stable toward the end of the period, reflecting consistent output despite year-to-year changes in cultivated area. Overall, the data suggest a phase of gradual expansion and stabilization in Myanmar's tea cultivation and production during these years.

Table 1.The status of tea cultivation in Myanmar from the year of 1995 to 2001

Year	Sown acreage	Harvested acreage	Production (Ton)
1995-1996	154,000	148,000	53,219
1996-1997	155,000	151,000	55,448
1997-1998	108,000	168,000	66,820
1998-1999	168,000	155,000	61,440
1999-2000	174,000	167,000	62,909
2000-2001	174,000	167,000	62,909

The data presented in the table (2) illustrates the trend of tea cultivation across various regions of Myanmar from 2001 to 2023. Overall, the total area under tea cultivation expanded steadily from 178,703 acres during 2001-2005 to 242,121 acres in 2021-2023, indicating a consistent growth in the country's tea sector over the past two decades. Among the regions, Shan State has remained the dominant tea-growing area throughout all periods, with its cultivated area increasing from 166,014 acres to 205,119 acres, accounting for 84.73% of the national total in 2021-2023. This reflects Shan State's favorable agro-climatic conditions and long-established tradition of tea production. Other regions, including Mandalay and Sagaing, have shown notable growth in tea cultivation. Mandalay expanded rapidly from 2,257 acres in 2001-2005 to 17,520 acres in 2021-2023, while Sagaing grew from 6,940 acres to 11,994 acres over the same period, contributing 7.24% and 4.95% of the total tea area, respectively. Kachin State also demonstrated moderate expansion, with its tea acreage more than doubling from 1,366 acres to 3,361 acres, whereas Kayin State experienced a gradual increase from 848 acres to 1,203 acres, indicating slow but stable growth. In contrast, Chin State exhibited significant fluctuationsits tea area rose sharply to 10,010.5 acres during 2006-2011, followed by a steep decline to 652 acres in 2021-2023, possibly due to environmental constraints or a shift toward other crops.Tea cultivation in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway, Mon, Taninthayi, and Kayah remains limited, with each region contributing less than one percent to the national total. Nay Pyi Taw introduced tea cultivation only after 2011, maintaining 1,537 acres since then, while Taninthayi reported a minimal 30 acres by 2021-2023. Despite these regional disparities, the overall trend suggests that tea cultivation in Myanmar has expanded gradually over time, with increasing diversification across regions. Nevertheless, the dominance of Shan State indicates that tea production in Myanmar remains highly concentrated geographically, emphasizing the need for further regional development and diversification to ensure balanced growth of the tea industry.

Tea products: In Myanmar, there are three primary varieties of tea produced: pickled tea (also referred to as fermented wet green tea or Laphet So), green tea, and black tea. Among these, pickled tea accounts for about 44% of the country's total tea production, followed by green and black tea (Htay, 2001). Each type is manufactured through distinct processing methods that contribute to its unique flavor and characteristics. Green tea, for instance, is traditionally made using the pan-frying technique, where freshly plucked leaves are heated in large pans to halt enzymatic activity and preserve polyphenols.

The heated leaves are then hand-rolled and dried under sunlight. This artisanal method has been practiced by local households in Myanmar for more than a century and remains the dominant technique for green tea processing, though some modern enterprises have begun adopting mechanized systems (Htay, 2006). Plucked tea leaf is placed in hot water to stop the enzymatic reaction for about 3-4 minutes. Hot dipping tea leaves are cool and placed in table roller for first rolling and followed by first drying with drying machine. And then tea leaf is let to cool and second rolling and then final drying. And produced value added green tea and ready to drink tea mix (Figure 1).

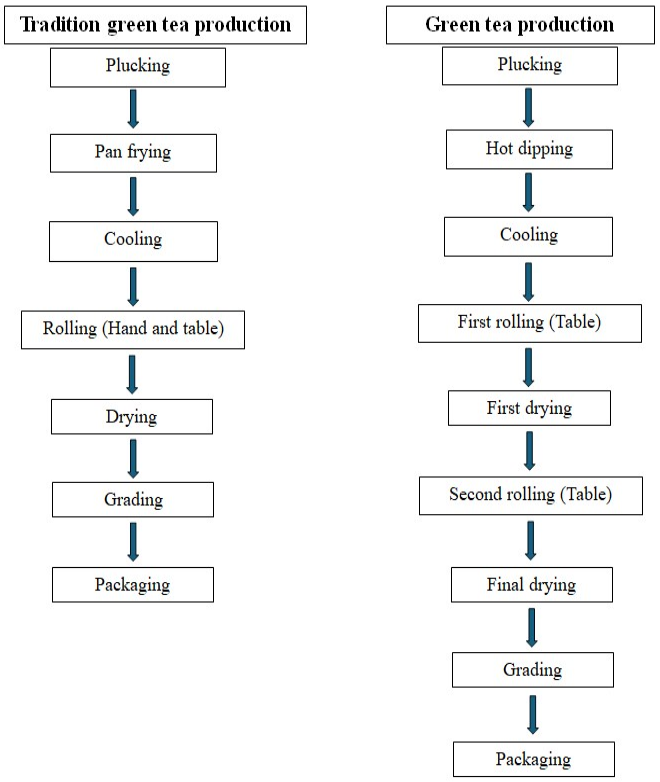

Figure 1. Green tea production system

Black tea is also called orthodox tea. Fresh tender tea leaves are plucked and placed in withering tough about 12-14 hours for withering to stop the enzymatic reaction. Withering tea leaves are placed in table roller about 30-45 minutes. The rolled tea leaves are placed in sifter machine for grading of leaves and followed by fermentation with the help of temperature and relative humidity. The fermented tea is placed in drying machine for drying to get 3-4 % of moisture content (Figure, 2).

Table. Tea production in Myanmar from the Year 2001 to 2021 in the 5-Year Project of each period

No.	Regions	2001-2005 (Acre)	2006-2011 (Acre)	2011-2016 (Acre)	2016-2021 (Acre)	2021-2023 (Acre)	%
1	NayPyi Taw	-	-	1,537	1,537	1,537	0.63
2	Kachin	1,366	1,842	3,525	3,355	3,361	1.39
3	Kayah	8	10	52	53	53	0.02
4	Kayin	848	938	1,138	1,195	1,203	0.50
5	Chin	1,270	10,010.5	1,957	1,424	652	0.27
6	Sagaing	6.940	8,952	9,216	11,427	11,994	4.95
7	Taninthayi	-	-	-	-	30	0.01
8	Magway	-	-	1,187	320	320	0.13
9	Mandalay	2,257	6,396	17,126	17,519	17,520	7.24
10	Mon	-	92	333	333	333	0.14
11	Shan	166,014	175,512	200,505	202,378	205,119	84.73
	Total	178,703	203,752.5	235,478	239,541	242,121	100

Source: Department of Agriculture, 2023, Myanmar

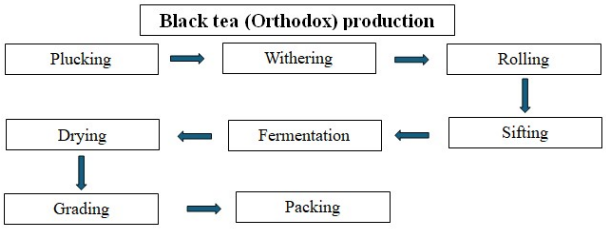

Figure 2. Black tea production system

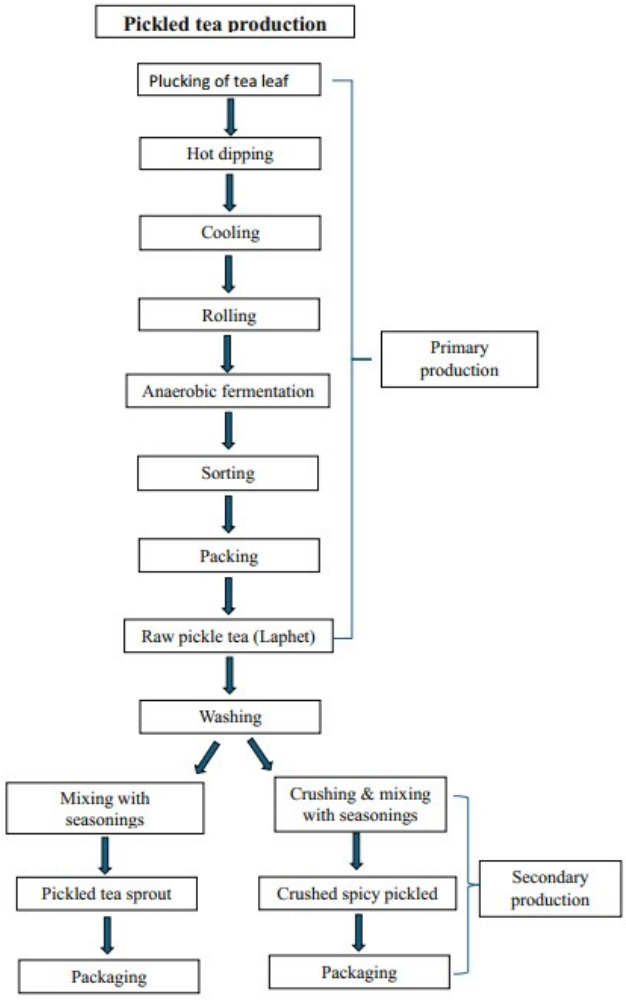

Figure 3. Pickled tea production system (Aung *et al*., 2009)

The preparation of Laphet, a pickled tea, is a distinctive and traditional practice in Myanmar. Initially, freshly harvested tender shoots, which include two leaves and a terminal bud, are immersed in hot water for approximately 3 to 5 minutes to halt the enzymatic activity.

After cooling, the rolling process is performed to effectively mix the enzymes with their substrates, ensuring that the crushed surfaces are exposed to the air. Two main rolling methods are used in tea processing: traditional hand-rolling and mechanical rolling, the latter being preferred for its efficiency in saving time and labor. Once rolled, the tea leaves are either placed in clay containers or baskets lined with plastic, and then weights are applied to remove air, establishing the anaerobic environment needed for natural fermentation. The fermentation period typically ranges from two weeks to two or three months, although in some regions it can extend up to a year. Longer fermentation at lower temperatures is beneficial, as it allows for sustained production of the aflavins, which enhance tea quality (Aung *et al*., 2009).

Once fermentation is complete, the pickled tea is sorted on bamboo racks or tables to separate different grades through sieving. The resulting raw pickled tea (Laphet-so) is then packaged and distributed to value-added processing facilities or wholesalers. In Myanmar's local markets, several forms of pickled tea are available, including raw Laphet-so (which consumers season with oil and spices to taste), preserved pickled tea, ready-to-eat pickled tea (Laphet), and crushed spicy pickled tea (Shu-shae). The latter, Shu-shae, has become particularly popular; it is produced by washing and grinding raw pickled tea into small pieces, then blending it with ingredients such as oil, chili, salt, sugar, and other seasonings. After being left to rest, the mixture is packaged in plastic bags or bottles for sale (Aung *et al*., 2009). Pickled tea (Laphet) is one of Myanmar's most renowned traditional foods, and its consumption styles vary across different regions of the country. It is typically enjoyed in two main forms: as a salad-style dish known as Laphet-thoke and as a ceremonial snack called Ahlu-laphet. The recipe for Laphet-thoke differs depending on local customs, ingredients, and personal preferences. Typically, raw pickled tea leaves are quickly immersed in boiling water to reduce their bitterness before mixing with chopped garlic, oil, salt, and lemon juice. Afterward, this mixture is tossed with fried peanuts, beans, garlic chips, dried prawns, and slices of tomatoes and cabbage, resulting in a delicious salad that can be savored on its own or paired with rice (Aung *et al*., 2009). The tradition of consuming tea in contemporary Myanmar has roots that stretch back to ancient times, showcasing a heritage of native tribes who preserved and fermented tea leaves using bamboo tubes, baskets, plantain leaves, and pots. During the pre-colonial period, lahpet was regarded as a symbolic gesture of reconciliation between rival kingdoms in ancient Myanmar, customarily exchanged and eaten after resolving conflicts.

In contrast, Ahlu-laphet involves preparing the tea leaves and accompanying ingredients separately. During traditional ceremonies, this type of pickled tea is often served in lacquer ware for decorative and cultural significance. Such presentation highlights its role in Myanmar's social and cultural gatherings (Htay, 2006).

CONCLUSION

Tea cultivation in Myanmar is not only an important agricultural activity but also a cultural heritage that has shaped the livelihoods and traditions of its people for centuries. With favorable climatic conditions and diverse indigenous tea species, Myanmar has developed a unique tea culture, producing green tea, black tea, and especially the iconic pickled tea (Laphet), which holds deep cultural significance. The expansion of tea-growing areas over recent decades reflects its economic importance, while traditional practices such as contour planting, careful pruning, and artisanal processing methods highlight the balance between heritage and productivity. Challenges of tea production in Myanmar include political instability, labour shortage and climate change leading to extreme heat and erratic precipitation, and the use of traditional, low-yield farming and processing methods. And limited access to local and international markets due to civil unrest, and a lack of funding and resources, also hinder the sector's growth and sustainability.As Myanmar continues to modernize its tea industry, integrating traditional knowledge with improved techniques offers vast potential for enhancing quality, expanding markets, and preserving the nation's cultural identity linked to tea.

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