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FOOD IN WORLD HISTORY

5/26/2019

**Chinese Rice**

**Introduction:**

Every country has its own culture and lifestyle. They are famous for their religious beliefs, culture, and food. China is the country whenever rice is always discussed with its name. China is well known for growing and cooking rice. However, the land of the whole of China is not favorable for rice growth. Rice is cultivating in the southern region of the country while the northern area due to its cold climate that is not suitable for rice growth. In addition, both regions have different consumption level of rice as Southern region consumes more rice than the northern region that prefers wheat over rice. As China is the largest producer of the rice it provides thirty percent of the total rice to the world. Therefore, due to higher production people of China consume a large percentage of rice domestically (Boston and Ma 02115 +1495‑1000). The main purpose of the paper is to get more information regarding the diet pattern and rice importance in China. With the increase in the production and usage of rice in the life of Chinese people, rice got the place in their traditions and rituals. This paper will cater the details of the festival and role of rice as tradition and rituals to indicate the fact that rice is not only the economic component, it is also the part of traditions and rituals.

**Discussion:**

Growth and consumption of rice in China have a history itself. From ten thousand years ago, rice is growing and eating within the country. It was the time when the population of China was limited to lower Yangzai. Yangzai region was favorable for the growth of rice; therefore, people started cultivating rice in the region. Initially, the growth was limited due to which price was higher for the common people. Therefore, only rich people were able to consume rice during the Zhou dynasty. Rice became the regular meal at the time of the Han dynasty (*Rice in China*). With the passage of time growth of China increased the rice production and it became the symbol of success and failure of the country. With the belief of success and failure based on rice, people of China use festival cakes made up of rice on the occasion of "double nine". The festival happens on the 9th of the ninth lunar month. This is the time when people finished harvesting rice and therefore cakes are made up from the fresh new rice. People carry this food while climbing the mountain on this day.

Rice became part of the festival. At different festivals, different types of rice food are used to show rice's ritual and traditional importance. For instance, the concept of lucky meals. During Lunar New Year and spring festival special meal get ready which consist of the number of dishes. Food varies from region to region however, few dishes become the part of everyone’s dinner. These dishes include Jiaozi, noodles, Buddha's delight, mandarin oranges, and glutinous rice cake. Rice plays an important role in this festival. Jiaozi are eaten at midnight is the symbol of wealth and prosperity which is made up of rice. Noodles also made by rice especially in the southern region, however, in north noodles of wheat are used. According to the tradition, people do not cut these noodles and leave them long, it symbolizes longevity. Then there are the glutinous rice cakes known as Nian gao is eaten. It is made up of sugar, sticky rice, and other ingredients. Eating rice cakes symbolizes prosperity. The reason behind calling it happy meal is the belief that eating this meal and the food that left behind indicates that how will be the next year for the person or for the whole family.

Technology advancement and efficient use of resources helped China to grow as the biggest supplier of rice. To grow rice, lots of water is required. In China two methods are used to supply water include; flooding to suppress weeds and irrigation. Irrigation supply water to ninety percent of the land. About 298,997,512 acres of land is used for the cultivation of rice in the country. Other than irrigation, high rainfall is the source to provide water to the fields. In comparison between the southern region and the northern region of the country, the southern region is excellent for the growth of rice. The climate in both regions is totally different. One side is the northern area with its cold climate unable to produce rice on its land. Another side is the southern region which is perfect for rice production due to its warm climate and this is why the region is able to produce two harvests each year. South China supply rice to North China to fulfill their rice demand over there. The northern region of China produces wheat and therefore wheat is the regular meal of the region rather than rice. People in the north prefer wheat items like wheat noodles and dumplings whereas rice is the regular meal in the south. However, rice dumplings are used in both the region during the fifteenth night of the first lunar month. This is the first full moon of the New Year on which people eat rice dumplings. In the northern region, these rice dumplings are known as Tangyuan while in the southern region people call it Yuanxiao. The reason behind eating rice dumplings is the belief that it will bring satisfaction and everything will be fine in the future.

There are two types of rice which are white rice and brown rice. White rice is the refined form of brown rice; therefore, fewer nutrients are present in it than brown rice. Brown rice is full of fiber while white rice does not contain fiber. People of China use more white rice than brown rice hence the nutrition level is low. 94% in China consume three meals a day while 5% take only two meals every day. As they use more white rice than brown rice, according to that their nutrients consist of carbs and protein. Rice is a complete diet with 130 calories, 28.7g carbs, 69% of water, and 2.4g protein. White rice does not contain sugar and fiber with a minor amount of fat. Rice is composed of water and carbs where carbs are starch. Starch is the form of carbohydrates and its percentage vary according to the type of rice. High digestibility is the disadvantage of sticky rice and it is not good for the patient of high blood pressure and diabetes. There are different uses of rice, various kind of dishes are made up of rice. Glutinous rice is available in the package. It is the stickiest rice which is wrapped in the bamboo leaves after cooking. During dragon boat festive the consumption of glutinous rice increases. The festival takes place during the fifth lunar month. The dish made up of glutinous rice known as zongzi is eaten by the people. People eat zongzi in the memory of Qu Yuan, an official of the Chu state. He committed suicide by jumping into the Miluo river. People not only eat zongzi but they also throw a large quantity of zongzi into the river with the belief that by doing this fish will not eat the body of Qu Yuan. Another use of rice is in the form of flour. Rice flour is commonly used in China. Noodles made up of rice are used in everyday meal. In addition, fermenting rice is used to make wines.

If we look at the economic view of rice, it can be understood that rice is a big part of the country's revenue. This is why it is considered as the symbol of success and failure in the country. China is the world largest producer of rice. It produces 30% percent of the world's high-quality rice. Therefore, it is considered as an important export item. High production of rice makes the price of the rice lower domestically. Low price enables middle and lower class people to consume more amount of rice. This is one of the reasons that rice is used at a large scale within the country. By using 298,997,512 acres of land for the production of rice, China is getting high revenue by exporting it. In addition, the demand for rice in the northern region of China is also fulfilling by providing them rice from the Southern region (Yuan et al.).

Rice is the part of rituals, festivals, and the economy of the country. However, it is not the only food consumed by the people of the country at large scale. The most interesting fact is that with this much high consumption, rice is not the main meal of the people. For instance, during the 8th day of the twelfth lunar month, people eat porridge. Unlike other festivals where food made up of rice is being used as ritual, people use porridge made with dried fruits, beans, wheat, cereals are used. Rice porridge is also used however people do not eat it as ritual or tradition. This is the day when people bath Buddha. A large percentage of produced rice is consumed by the southern area where northern region prefer wheat as it is more economical than rice there. People in China use meat and eat almost all animals. The common meat they use included; chicken, perking duck, pork meat, mutton, and beef. Meat can be cooked separately or they add it with rice. Besides meat numbers of vegetables are being cooked in the country. Vegetables that are commonly used include; Chinese eggplant, Chinese cabbage, cucumbers, potatoes, and white radish. Vegetables can be cooked along with the rice. For instance, fried rice is the famous food in China which consists of white rice along with different vegetables and boiled egg in it. As rice is not the main meal for the people therefore, they add vegetables or meat dishes with rice. The basic role of the rice is to fill the stomach. Therefore, people eat special dishes of meat or vegetables and then eat white rice with it to fill their stomach. Foods that are served with rice includes; salad, vegetables, burritos, sweet stuff, and soup. The most favorite food of Chinese is Chew Mein. Chew Mein consist of noodles made up of rice along with different vegetables and small pieces of meat in it. It is, therefore, full of nutrient as all three main food that is rice, vegetables, and meat is used in one dish. People in the Northern region also eat Chew Mein but they use wheat noodles more than the rice noodles in it.

**Conclusion:**

Rice is the most common grain used in China. China is growing rice from about ten thousand years ago. Rice makes China's economy strong by producing about thirty percent of world rice. However, not the whole country harvests rice. It is the southern region that produces rice because the Northern area is not suitable for rice production due to its cold climate. The southern region produces rice which meets the demand of rice for the Northern region of the country as well as the demand of the world market. Southern region harvests rice twice a year. People of China uses white rice which consists of carbohydrates, protein, and fewer amount of fat. It does not contain fiber and sugar. Therefore, it is the food item full of nutrient for the people. The consumption of rice in the country is high still; rice is not the main meal of the people. They use it to fill the stomach after eating special food made up of different vegetables or meat. There are numbers of uses of rice that is boiled rice, noodles, flour, and wine made up of fermenting rice. Chew Mein is the favorite dish of the Chinese that contains rice noodles, vegetables, and meat all in one dish. Besides this number of dishes are made from rice. The main reason for the high consumption of rice is high production. High production keeps the price of rice lower and therefore, more people are able to consume it as a normal food item. Rice is the part of ritual, festival, and economy of the country. Eating and using pattern of rice indicates the importance of rice related to the rituals and tradition of the people. There are numbers of festivals where different type of rice is used as a tradition. First, rice cake is used as a tradition. Second, rice dumplings are eaten throughout the country with the belief that the future will be according to their wish. Third, people eat zongzi during the dragon boat festival. People also throw it into the river to prevent the fish eating body of Qu Yuan body. In addition, people use rice food during double nine festival and 8th day of the twelfth lunar month. All these eating patterns of rice made food indicates that rice is not only the economic component of the country, it is also a part of the traditions and rituals of the people.

**Work Cited**

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