



## Butter Tea Bowl (Tsampa)

**Date**

19th to 20th Century

**Medium**

Wood and silver

**Description**

This bowl is used for the drinking of yak butter tea (po cha). Butter tea, which is made simply by melting butter

into boiling pu-erh black tea, is an important part of daily life for Tibetans, and is consumed for both practical and ceremonial purposes. In the cold, mountainous regions of Tibet, the yak butter in the tea provides necessary warmth, fat, and caloric intake, and the butter is also said to prevent chapped lips. The yak butter itself is held in high regard by Esoteric Buddhists, so Tibetan monks also frequently drink butter tea, and butter lamps are constantly kept lit in monasteries and many home altars to symbolize wisdom and aid in meditation. Tea bowls such as this one are made from a hard burl wood and are lined with silver because it leaves no aftertaste and is considered second only to gold on the Buddhist scale of purity versus pollution.

**Dimensions**

3 1/8 × 7 1/16 in. (7.9 × 17.9 cm)