

## Things We See And Hear

### Caffeinated Beverages - Part One

*Many of us staying here in the kingdom need a good strong cup of coffee when we get up in the morning.*

*I never thought too much about it until one day when discussing with a colleague the effects coffee, and for that matter all caffeinated beverages, has on the body. It prompted a little bit of research and we came up with this little pearl. It hasn't put me off coffee, but it does explain a lot of things.*

Coffee contains purine alkaloids, with the main ones being caffeine, theobromine, and theophylline. It also contains trigonelline and carbonisation products of hemicelluloses and chlorogenic acid. The acids present in coffee cause calcium to be drawn from the bone to neutralize them. The effects are absorbency and astringency, a stimulatory effect on the

central nervous system and the gastric secretions, and an increase of psychomotor stamina.

Decaffeinated coffee removes only caffeine, and not theobromine or theophylline, which are also stimulants. It takes over 100 different chemicals to remove caffeine from the coffee bean. This is in addition to the chemicals sprayed on them as they enter the US for processing. Not all of the caffeine is removed from decaffeinated substances. There can still be about 10 mg. per cup, depending the size and how it is brewed.

The history of coffee is obscure but most often is attributed to the story out of Ethiopia. Too tired to go any further, a herd of goats began eating some red berries from a strange bush. Unusual behavior soon followed. Noticing this, the herder tasted the berries himself and soon he, too, was racing around the hillside. When he took these berries to the local monastery, "evening prayers became more pleasant." Until the 10th century, coffee was considered a food, but later fermented into wine. Later, it was used as a medicine. Pope Clement VII was skeptical of this pagan drink until he, too, succumbed, stating that it could not possibly be pagan. This decree released coffee from requiring a

prescription.

Caffeine is the most popular drug in the western world. In the US alone, over 400 million cups of coffee are consumed every day.

Found in some eighty plant species, caffeine is thought to be a protective agent against insects, fungi, and bacteria. Most of the caffeine

consumed is via coffee, tea, cola drinks, medications, and chocolate. Other forms include such herbal drinks as guarana, yerba maté, ephedra (ma huang), and supplements that contain green tea.

Caffeine is a member of the alkaloid family. Other relatives include morphine, nicotine, and cocaine, yet caffeine is the only one singled out as being "relatively harmless" and not subject to any warning labels. For all the health problems it causes, it should not be considered harmless. Many of those "relatively harmless" ideas can be attributed to studies conducted by the International Life Sciences Institute. For decades, they have been in the forefront of information sent to governments, academics, and other public institutions, yet

few realize they are funded by the caffeine industry, including Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo, Hershey Foods, NutraSweet, and Proctor and Gamble. With backing of that calibre, it is safe to assume that results dare not be anything other than favorable toward the industry.

In addition, they play the numbers game. When the industry uses "standard" or "normal" amounts, they list those as being 5-6 ounces. A teacup holds 6 ounces and rare is the person that consumes only a teacup full of coffee or soda. The average mug of coffee sold now is 20 ounces, while a can of soda is 12 ounces. The "standard" numbers are used so that people will not be shocked if and when they glance at the labels. While 300 mg. is indicated as being the cutoff before toxicity, people are consuming much more than that in a single day without even realizing it. An 8-ounce cup of coffee has about 100 mg. of caffeine in it (more or less, depending on the type) and starts many-a-day. Add this to continual refills and a parade of breaks, sodas, chocolate, and medications taken throughout the day, it is not uncommon for most to have consumed 600 to 1000 mg. or more.

*Part Two Next Month*

## Win A Dinner For Four People Without Doing Anything

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**The Andaman Post** now goes to Australia and New Zealand. Since the November issue, the Andaman Post has merged with the Australian publication Thai News. The Thai News has been operating for over five years and its online edition alone has over 20,000 regular monthly readers.

The Andaman Post now benefits from this and with nearly 5,000 hard copy issues will now enjoy a much wider readership.