
On The GreatWall

5 Minute Chinese

Why Is Haaland Advertising Chinese Herbal Tea?



PandaWu: Hello, this is 5 Minute Chinese from On The GreatWall. I'm PandaWu.

Emma: And I'm Emma.

Emma: I saw the Haaland WALOVI advertisement last night, and my first thought was, "This has to be AI." But then I realized, no, it is actually Haaland, actually speaking Chinese, actually selling Chinese herbal tea.

PandaWu: That reaction is very normal. Football star, Chinese lines, fire, herbal tea. It feels like three different internet tabs opened at the same time.

Emma: I understand Haaland scoring goals. I understand football advertisements. But Haaland, Chinese herbal tea, and fire coming out of his mouth? That is a new universe for me.

PandaWu: It looks random from the outside, but the fire is not random. That is where the Chinese idea behind the drink begins.

Emma: So the advertisement is funny, but not random?

PandaWu: Exactly. It is funny because it looks wild. But it makes more sense once you understand 凉茶 and 上火.

Emma: So what is WALOVI, and why does Chinese herbal tea need a football star and so much fire?

PandaWu: WALOVI is the international name connected with Wang Lao Ji, a famous Chinese herbal tea brand. The advertisement looks strange if you only see the celebrity and the fire. But in Chinese food culture, fire connects with 上火, and herbal tea connects with the idea of cooling things down.

Emma: Okay. So it is not just a random celebrity commercial. There is actually a cultural logic underneath.

PandaWu: Right. Wang Lao Ji is not ordinary iced tea. It is closer to a sweet herbal drink connected with 凉茶. In southern Chinese food culture, 凉茶 does not simply mean cold tea. It means cooling herbal tea in a cultural sense. People often drink it with hot pot, barbecue, fried food, spicy food, or in summer heat.

Emma: So you eat something hot and spicy, and then you drink something cooling. That makes sense.

PandaWu: Exactly. And this is where today's useful phrase comes in.

PandaWu: 上火

Emma: 上火

PandaWu: It is a very common everyday phrase that is hard to translate directly. In daily life, people use it when they feel too much internal heat, often after spicy food, fried food, barbecue, late nights, or stress.

Emma: So it is not a medical word. It is more like a feeling.

PandaWu: Yes. In everyday conversation, someone might eat hot pot at night and say, "I think I'm 上火." It does not mean they are literally on fire. It means they feel heaty or irritated, and they may want something cooling.

Emma: That actually explains the fire in the Haaland advertisement. He is not burning. He is 上火.

PandaWu: That is a great way to put it. The advertisement is funny on purpose. Haaland is known for power, energy, and goals. The advertisement uses exaggerated fire because fire is easy to understand visually. But in the Chinese context, the fire also plays with the idea of 上火. The drink is set up as the cooling answer.

Emma: So the contrast is deliberate. Heat on one side, cooling drink on the other.

PandaWu: Yes. That is why the advertisement may look bizarre, but it is not random. Viewers outside China see a football star, a strange drink, Chinese lines, and fire. Viewers in China are more likely to understand the connection between spicy food, heat, 凉茶, 上火, and 降火, which means bringing the heat down. The advertisement goes viral partly because that cultural gap makes it funny and memorable.

Emma: It is almost like someone played a joke that you only get if you know both sides.

PandaWu: That is a good description. And the everyday scene behind this is very real.

PandaWu: Picture a group of friends in Guangzhou eating hot pot or barbecue. The table is covered with meat, chili, grilled skewers. And between the plates of spicy food, there are cans of Wang Lao Ji or another herbal drink. Someone says they are worried about getting 上火. Someone opens a can. No one thinks it is strange.

Emma: So the Haaland advertisement is just the international version of something very ordinary in China.

PandaWu: Exactly. And now when you see fire in a Chinese drink advertisement, you know what it is playing with. Not drama for no reason. It is a visual translation of 上火.

Emma: Okay. So let me recap. WALOVI is connected with Wang Lao Ji. It is a cooling herbal tea linked with 凉茶. The fire in the advertisement connects with the Chinese everyday phrase 上火. People use 上火 to describe feeling heaty or irritated, often after spicy food, fried food, barbecue, late nights, or stress. And the drink is not a medicine. It is just part of the culture.

PandaWu: That is exactly right. And the useful phrase is 上火. Recognize it. Do not treat it as a formal medical diagnosis. It is an everyday cultural expression about how food and body feel connected.

Emma: One football star, one can of herbal tea, and one Mandarin phrase I will never forget.

PandaWu: That is the Haaland WALOVI advertisement in one sentence.

Once again, our five minutes are up, but if you'd like to hear more authentic stories about Chinese food, history and culture, you can head to our topic page, onthegreatwall.com. See you again soon. But for now, it's goodbye.

Useful Examples

上火

Shàng huǒ

An everyday phrase for feeling heaty or irritated, often after spicy food, fried food, late nights, or stress.

凉茶

Liáng chá

Cooling herbal tea, especially common in southern Chinese food culture.

降火

Jiàng huǒ

To reduce internal heat, in everyday Chinese health language.