

**TEA CULTURE IN CONTEMPORAY CHINA:
A CASE STUDY OF 'LAOSHE TEAHOUSE' IN BEIJING**

**Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This dissertation titled “**Tea Culture in Contemporary China: A Case Study of 'Laoshe Teahouse' in Beijing**”, submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.



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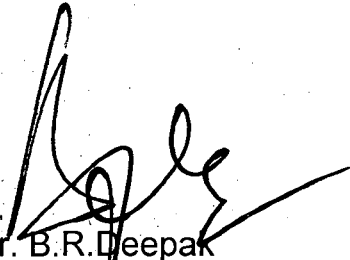
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Date: 29 July 2010

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Tea Culture in Contemporary China: A Case Study of 'Laoshe Teahouse' in Beijing” submitted by Mr. Jitender Chandak for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** has not been previously submitted for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.


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Introduction

Cultures are created and evolve over time, though the rate of change is glacial (Vaisey 2008:603). A culture might not experience a significant shift for generations. When cultures do change, the change occurs in the same way in our brains- via powerful imprints. These powerful imprints alter the “reference system” of the culture (Hannerz 1994:111), and the significance is passed down to subsequent generations. Therefore cultures emerge and change slowly and our cultural adolescence informs our behavior in a wide variety of ways. In the same vein the Chinese culture that has evolved for thousands and thousands of years, and like any other culture it is that complex whole which includes knowledge, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society (Kaufman 2004:335). Now with standing its uniqueness, the one aspect that truly sets it apart from other cultures and countries is the connected split between old and new (Mohr 1998:118). Chinese culture as a whole can clearly be divided into two: Traditional Culture and Modern Culture. Like all other cultures of the world, the Chinese Culture is changing continually. Throughout history it has evolved and changed, especially during the 20th century.

Social scientists believe that there are four chief factors (Rapaille 2006:33) that cause a culture to change: changes in the environment, contact with other cultures, invention, and the further development of the culture itself. The last three have proved to be the key factors in China's cultural change from old to new, as China began opening its doors to foreign relations and making scientific, technological, social, and economic advances.

Before the mid-1900's, traditional Chinese culture was prominent as people and families lived by traditional values and beliefs as well as old teachings and ways of life. However, after the political change in 1949, a new culture developed as modern Chinese culture was developed. The ways of life of the Chinese people took on a whole new character as the traditional styles and ways were put behind. Today, however, the culture of China is not traditional nor even fully modern, as most people would think it to be; it is

a combination of both. You may see high-rise buildings and people wearing western-style modern clothing in many parts of China today; or you may see a Sea-World-type Ocean Park in Hong Kong or an upbeat city night life in Shanghai. And the ways of life of the Chinese people might seem similar to those of the United States or Europe. Yet you will also see traditional festivals being celebrated, tributes to ancient styles and artifacts, the integration of traditional sounds in modern music, celebrations of traditional art and design through stores and classes, and special concerts and programs shown both live and on TV devoted to the traditional culture. Chinese living and values have attracted much attention from all over the world in all aspects.

So the question that arises in our minds is what is Culture? Does it include actions, feelings, or thoughts, or the ideas, objectives, ways or values, or customs and traditions (John Storey 2004:3)? Or is it something as simple as a field of activity or as complex as a never-ending experiment as argued by Rapaille (2007:27). Social scientist has tried to define culture and society without culture in different ways and forms. Albert Camus (2006:33) posts that “Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation like tea is a gift to the future”.

While talking about sociology of culture Williams (1981:87) argues that culture is “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language, Geertz (1973:89) on the other hand maintains that the word-culture has “acquired a certain aura of ill-repute...because of the multiplicity of its references and the studied vagueness with which it has all too often been invoked” , and Jepperson et al (1994:359-371) further argues that the “cacophony of contemporary discourse about culture continues unabated, conceptual debates over what the term means persist, which then have consequences for how to study it. No one subfield can claim culture as a specialty. As John Mohr (2003:4) argues, “culture is not a sub-field of the discipline concerned with a particular institutional sphere (such as the arts, the media or popular culture), Culture is that project which seeks to track the way people make sense of the world”.

“Conceived as a perspective,” Jeffery Goldfarb (1987:2) clearly observes, “the cultural is everything. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, is it anything in particular?” Richard Peterson (1979:137) parsimoniously suggests that when sociologist says “culture,” they generally mean one or more of “four elements: norms, beliefs, values, and expressive symbols”. Over the years the studies of culture have attended more to these and many others conceptual efforts than to relate yet distinct concerns of operationalism, that is, how to concretely measure the concept. Culture is a word that has grown over the centuries to reach its present broad meaning.

Binder et al.(2008:6) the editors of a 2008 special issue of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science devoted to “Cultural discipline”* are contrary to above arguments and abandon the definitions altogether. According to them, “we abstain from coming up with an analytical definition that fixes the conceptual boundaries of what is taken to be culture. In fact we happily embrace the nature of culture as a concept and the many shapes and forms culture takes”. Phrases like “cultural structures” and “strong program” (Alexander 2003:42) along with “autonomy of culture” (Sewell 1999:35-61) routinely enter scholarly conversations. Geertz’s (1973:89) emphasis on “ an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols,” with Williams (1976:32) discussion of culture as “a way of life” of a group of people , with Wuthnow’s definition of culture as “symbolic expressive behavior” (Schudson 1989: 153-180).

The word culture has a long and involved history, and this is reflected in the variety of ways the term has been defined and used across various academic disciplines, ranging from literary studies to anthropology and sociology. Robert Boccock (1992:24) has identified five ways in which culture had been defined and can be summarized as: 1) Cultivating land, crops, animals; 2) Cultivation of minds, arts, civilization; 3) Process of social development; 4) Meaning, values, ways of life; 5) Practices which produce meaning .Therefore, culture is not something that we simply absorb – it is learned. In anthropology this process is referred to as acculturation or enculturation (Benedict 2005: 26). In psychology it is described as conditioning (Dudbridge 2005:44). Sociologists have

tended to use the term 'socialization' to describe the process by which we become social and cultural beings.

The shared aspect of culture means that it is a social phenomenon; idiosyncratic behavior is not cultural. Culture is learned, not biologically inherited, and involves arbitrarily assigned, symbolic meanings. For example, Chinese are not born knowing that the health benefits of Tea, and indeed this is not a universal cultural symbol. Culture describes the many ways in which human beings express themselves for the purposes of uniting with others, forming a group, defining an identity, and even for distinguishing themselves as unique. Cultural expression is highly sensual in that human beings often create activities, practices, symbols, and so on that can be easily consumed by our senses. For example, culturally distinct forms of dance or physical movement attract our senses of touch and sight; whereas culturally specific drinks like tea, seek to activate our sense of taste and smell.

Sometimes, other societies and people seem to be a little odd because they have a different culture from ours. We must remember that every society has a distinct culture that forms the backbone of the society (Archer 1996:7). Culture does not remain stagnant; on the other hand it is evolving constantly and is in fact somewhat influenced by the other cultures and societies. It is a learned pattern of behavior and ways in which a person lives his or her life; for example, Tea leaves in China is taken with boiled water only, however after China opened to outside world, various kinds of teas have find its places in the shopping malls as soft drinks, however certain aspects of a country strongly showcase the country as a whole. For example, when we talk about China the first thing that comes to our mind is The Great Wall, an architectural wonder of the world, could be leveled as a carrier of Chinese culture. There are other carriers such as Chinese wine, food and eating habits, folk and music, stories and poems etc., but since we are primarily concerned with the tea culture, other carriers will not be discussed and we will keep this study just confined to the development of tea and how it had carried forward the traditions and culture in the present day Chinese society.

1. Theorising culture

“Theory” is a word that is perhaps as difficult to define as “culture”. Theorizing culture means bringing together diverse issues, customs, arts, and societies into a single form that necessarily involves frameworks of explanation. Oxford English Dictionary (1980:201) defines theory as “A supposition or system of ideas explaining something, especially one based on general principles independent of facts”.

Investigations have arisen from belief in many different theories of culture like functionalism, orientalism, rituals and symbolism, habitus, structuralism and many more and these theories have often given voice to new theoretical bases for approaching an elusive term. Many early anthropologists conceived of culture as a collection of traits and studied the diffusion, or spread, of these traits from one society to another. Cultural evolution theory holds that traits have a certain meaning in the context of evolutionary stages, and they look for relationships between material culture and social institutions and beliefs (Williams 1976:88).

This study takes why some artifacts, customs, habits become meaningfully incorporated in different countries and as well as small groups. Habitus as one of the component of content theory of the culture indicate that to a very large extent we do not choose our identity. We receive the cultural identity which has been handed down to us from previous generations.

In the words of Robbins (1991:166) Habitus is the “cultural framework wherein and whereby the habitual aspects of everyday social thought and action operate”. People’s perceptions, thoughts, tastes and so forth are shaped by their habitus. As we can see that Chinese cultural society has been largely impacted and benefitted by their tea culture, which has been predominant since more than 3000 years. These habitual principles are symbolically mediated in action and are learned through experience. However, the power of the dominant classes ensures that their cultural habitus is preferred over others. Wuthnow (1989:33) opines that due to this social tendency, the

habit of drinking tea has survived and others have withered and died away. Bourdieu (1984:226) is especially interested in the ways in which particular groups (classes) in society mark their identity, the symbolic ways in which they express values and seek to maintain boundaries between themselves and other groups. He describes this as the process of 'distinction'. Again there is a stress the culture is deceptive. While novelty and creativity is acknowledged, the emphasis lies on the ways in which what is learned and practiced is an affirmation of an existing set of hierarchically organized systems of relations. Tea houses in china have been successful in carrying tea culture through ages along with other cultures. Tea ceremonies have been taking place in these tea houses and people have become habitual of going to these places to enjoy their national drink. Robbins (1991:174) agrees to this view point and echo's Bourdieu's position when he asserts that "to a very large extent we do not choose our identity. We receive the cultural identity which has been handed down to us from previous generations. We adhere to groups, whether clubs or political or religious organizations, and we adopt the identifying images of social groups, whether in hair-style or clothing, so as to confirm our social identity. For the same reason, we take steps to distinguish ourselves from those who belong to different groups. Our tastes and our lifestyles have no intrinsic value but serve to maintain the coherence of the group to which we belong. "

Yet another component in the context of tea culture in China is 'eating' not with standing the debate whether it is a disciplined or a civilized cultural practice? Food is the most basic individual human need (Fiddes 1991:20); we eat or we die. Every society elaborates upon this need in distinctive ways and food and drinking are excellent ways to explore cultural diversity. As with most cultural features, each society considers its particular food and eating protocols as normal, as the way things should be.

Simmel (1994:22) points that "Eating and drinking are plainly learnt, culturally shaped activities." He further states that 'Of everything which people have in common, the most common is that they must eat and drink'. What we eat, how and how often are influenced more by cultural than biological factors. Chinese tea drinking can be said as one such dietary need which has been prevailing since last several thousand years in

Chinese society. Tea is commonly consumed at social events, and many cultures have created intricate formal ceremonies for these events. Western examples of these are afternoon tea and the tea party. In the east, tea ceremonies differ among countries, China's complex, formal and serene one being the most known. Other examples are the Japanese tea ceremony (Tanaka 1973:23) or some traditional ways of brewing tea in Chinese tea culture. Unique customs also exist in Tibet, where tea is commonly brewed with salt and butter, or in the Middle East and Africa where tea plays an important role in many countries (Richardson 2005:242).

Lack of exercise, a surplus of food, intoxicating drinks and urban life-styles were particularly threatening to the health standards of the upper classes, especially among 'the rich, the lazy, the luxurious, and the unactive' (Cheyne 1733:22). The availability and abundance of strong drinks among the elite enraged their passions to 'quarrels, murder, and blasphemy'. Changes in eating habits and fashions in cuisine stimulated the appetites of the upper classes in ways which were contrary to nature and which interfered with the natural process of digestion Cheyne (1733:22) lamented that when mankind was simple, plain, honest and frugal; there were few or no diseases (Baldwin et al. 2004:285). Tea was one of the toxic herbs that helped to cure the ailments. Tea removed discomfort and is one the first eating habit that mankind discovered. Western researchers are beginning to discover what tea drinkers in the East have believed for centuries-that tea is beneficial for maintaining health and vigor. Asian cultures believe strongly in the beneficial cause and effect of food on human health; in effect, what we eat is reflected in how we feel. Tea prevents the rise of homocysteine which is known to be an important and significant risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, due to the content of vitamin M in tea. The vitamin M, which is a B complex vitamin, assists in preventing cancer and it also plays an important part in the health of the nervous system, the eyes and other systems. Epidemiological studies have shown that anyone who drinks large quantities of tea has a lower risk of certain cancers, primarily stomach cancer, cancer of the digestive system and bladder cancer. Studies have shown that anyone who drinks large quantities of tea has a lower risk of certain cancers, primarily stomach cancer, cancer of the digestive

system and bladder cancer. Tea leaves contain fluoride which helps strengthen bones and teeth and fights cavities (Chen et al. 2003:69)

Because of their long history of practice and discourse with tea, Asians are said to be born with “tea in their veins” (Zhu Quan 2009:46). Researchers are studying both green and black tea to understand the potential healthful benefits of their naturally occurring antioxidants. Although each class of tea offers different antioxidants, the reports coming in for both types of tea are positive. Some researchers believe that the activation of tea enzymes during the manufacture of black tea may result in the formation of antioxidant compounds that are more powerful in preventing some disease than those contained in green tea. Eating joints like tea houses were opened all over the world in 19th century.

Besides being an important drink, tea gradually became a part of the social process and a civilized cultural practice in the oriental world. “For the Chinese, health means being in harmony with nature” (Burges 2005:151). Chinese medicine has been around for 5000 years and has always taken into consideration the human being’s place in the natural world-curing illness using plants and herbs, astrology, and even the phases of the moon. The Chinese believe that they live in permanent connection with the natural elements and that good health is related to being at peace with nature.

According to Baldwin et al. (2004:171) “Orientalism is ‘an institution’ which has three parts. First, it is the style of thought as expounded above. Second, it is an academic discipline. Academics associated with institution such as the Royal Asiatic Society identified themselves as ‘Orientalists’ and set out to produce knowledge about the Orient. Finally, it is what Said (1978:39) calls ‘a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient’ This certainly involved words and knowledge since a large part of dealing with the Orient was about ‘making statements about it, authorizing views of it, and describing it’,

Another part of the context theories of culture that could be associated with Tea culture in China is the Ritual and symbolism. “The symbolic and the real deals with the

fact that ideas, beliefs, and practices have two aspects”. On the one hand, most parts of culture have some practical import for people's lives; and the same things are meaningful, expressive or symbolic. Thus, food and meals, for example, are not just a matter of ingesting proteins and calories.”(Walter et. al. 2001:229)

In the words of Hebdige (1979:219) “it is often in the ritualistic side of everyday objects and activities that culture most clearly manifests itself”. Ritual theories assert that focused interaction, which these theories refer to as ritual, is at the heart of all social dynamics. Williams (1978:8) posits that “Rituals generate group emotions that are linked to symbols, forming the basis for beliefs, thinking, morality, and culture. People use the capacity for thought, beliefs, and strategy to create emotion-generating interactions in the future. This cycle, interaction → emotions → symbols → interaction, forms patterns of interaction over time. These patterns are the most basic structural force that organizes society.”

Lukes (1975:23) also agrees with what Williams say when he asserts that “Rituals involve a standardized sequence of acts and utterances ‘of a symbolic character which draws the attention of participants to objects of thought and feeling’ which they hold to be of special significance”. Religious rituals, such as Cenotaph ceremonies, May Day parades or street demonstrations, are extent to build social solidarity among participants and reaffirm shared values. Mennell (1991:152) suggests tea as ‘one more example of a long-term civilizing process’. In China tea has been a very important ceremony in marriages, parties, art and aesthetics, religions, poems and even used as money for buying things.

Ancient tea trade along with modern and especially post modern tea tourism could be categorized as yet another component as regards theorization of tea culture in China and beyond. Traders have long traveled in search of tea. Travel itself has a rich connection with tea and has contributed to disseminating tea cultures and traditions. Tea is part of many tourist activities, whereby local tea traditions, cultures, services and attractions are experienced. This may vary from experiencing tea in the tea houses of

Beijing, Hangzhou in China or Taipei, museums of London, England and Ping Lin, purchasing tea as a souvenir in the airport shops of Hong Kong and Beijing, China (Li Xiusong 1993:75-89). Tea has many roles in relationship to tourism, society and its institutions (Jolliffe 2001:23-77). In this study, tea is being considered as a central analytical tool for tourism and the discourses, networks and impacts created by the relationship between tea and tourism. Therefore, role of tea and its consumption as an instrument of hospitality; an influencer in terms of tourism and social change; a component of tourism experiences; and a dedicated focus for tourism attractions cannot be underestimated.

Present-day tea-related tourism has the potential to be an instrument of social change in terms of sustainable development projects in conjunction with tea gardens. Such projects have been proposed in China. In these cases tea tourism is seen as a means of generation of local revenue and poverty reduction. The irony of this situation is that very often the projects seek to address the very inequalities in local societies created by the initial development of the tea gardens. Tea tourism has the potential to address social inequalities at tea-producing and tea-consuming countries. Tourism also has the potential to impact local tea cultures as hosts develop the tea services they think tourists would like to experience.

2. Tea culture in China: A Historical background

2.1 Pre-classic period (Before 628 A.D)

Are “Cha,” “Tay,” “Tea” or the very Indian “chai” the same? Some westerners may be puzzled that tea is actually pronounced “cha” in Mandarin, the national language of the country. The pronunciation of “tea” actually comes from a different Chinese dialect. Tong (2005:6-10) asserts that in Mandarin and Cantonese tea is pronounced as “cha”; while in Fukienese (a dialect of south Fujian Province), it is “tay”. Both of these names spread to the rest of the world. For instance, in the last year of the Ming dynasty (1644), British merchants came to trade at Xiamen Port, where the Chinese tea was called “tay”, and they spelled it as “tea”. So “tea” later became widely accepted by the English

speaking world. The French “the”, Italian and Spanish “te”, Korean “ta” as well as German and Dutch “thee” are also descendents of “tay”. Through the route of Persia, “cha” in Mandarin came to be “cha” in Japanese, “shai” in Arabian, as “chay” in Turkish, and “chai” in Russian. (Zhang et al. 1989:27)

Who was the first one to savor the fragrant delicacy of tea? There are at least two totally different versions that make the truth of Tea a mystery (Yun 1976:26).

The earliest answer to this question comes from a record dating back to the Western Han dynasty 206 BC, which says, “Shen Nong¹ came across seventy-two toxic herbs daily in tasting hundreds of plants, but took Tu (the name of tea before the Tang dynasty) as an antidote (Pettigrew 1999:4).” Shen Nong who lived 5,000 thousand years ago and taught people farming methods is regarded in the Chinese folklore as the ‘God of Agriculture’. When people became sick or even died of poisoning plants, Shen Nong, decided to taste all plants in the remote mountains so as to cure ailments. He placed those edible or useful as healers (the original forms of today’s herbal medicines) in his left bag and the toxic ones in his right bag. It is said that Shen Nong had a transparent belly, meaning that he could see through his skin to look at whatever he had eaten. It is also said that when he was poisoned. Chunjiang (2008:2) say that there is yet another anecdote about his death, when one day he tasted a fatal herb called “Duan chang cao” (literally meaning gut breaking herb), it caused his sudden death. This herb was so deadly that Shen Nong did not have the slightest strength to open his bag for tea. (Chunjiang 2008:2).

The other completely different version says that Bodhi-Dharma², the first patriarch of Chinese philosophy, discovered tea. Dharma travelled from India to China to

¹ Shennong 神农; also known as the Yan Emperor who lived some 5,000 years ago, and taught ancient China the practices of agriculture. Appropriately, his name means “the Divine Farmer”. Considered to be the father of Chinese agriculture, Shennong taught his people how to cultivate grain as food, so as to avoid killing animals.

² Bodhidharma was a Buddhist monk from southern India who lived during the early 5th century and is traditionally credited as the transmitter of Zen (Chinese: *Chán*) to a China.

practice Buddhism. It is generally believed that he vowed to “face the wall and meditate” for nine years without sleep in a cliff cave near the Shaolin Temple (Yun 1976:28). Outside the cave, there were singing birds and fragrant flowers complimented by an endless vista of natural beauty. But inside, there was only loneliness and darkness. Dharma eventually fell asleep by accident. He was so furious when he woke up that he cut off his eyelids and threw them on the ground nearby. Unexpectedly a tree grew from where his eyelids lay. Whenever he felt drowsy, Dharma would pick a leaf from the tree to chew to cure his sleepiness. From then on, the refreshing effect of tea leaves gradually spread. (Jane Pettigrew et. al. 2005:3-5)

Which of these versions is the closest to the truth?

Dharma came to China during the sixth dynasty while written records and archeological evidence of tea already existed in the Han dynasty, hundreds of years before his arrival. Therefore, to attribute the invention of tea to Dharma is not logical. It appears that the spread of Buddhism from China to Korean and Japan along with the introduction of tea could be one of the reasons that are why Bodhi-Dharma is regarded as the “father of tea” by some.

While both the versions enjoy widespread popularity, it is important to mention that the Shen Nong version is simply a representative of Chinese ancestor’s folklore that could not be reattributed as the inventor of tea. Although all those discoveries and inventions related to agriculture and tea are attributed to him, for credible historical as well as archaeological survey, they are in essence with the embodiment of the collective wisdom of the people at that time.

2.2 The tea trade: taking tea to the masses during the Han and Sui dynasty

After the discovery of tea, it was restricted to the corner of southwest china due to the inconvenience of transportation and communication (Liu 1997:112). It was until 316 BC when the troops of great king Hui of Qin kingdom brought tea back to the central

China. Under Han rule, China expanded territorially, economically, intellectually and culturally. The Silk Road was opened to allow trade in tea, spices and silk with India, west Asia and Rome (Liu 2010:14).

She argues that the trade was one almost entirely in luxury goods like tea, used for conspicuous consumption, to improve or maintain the positions of elite's. She suggests that the consumption was by the Emperor and aristocrats of China and in India she suggests that the goods were used in religious festivals and by monasteries. Her other conclusion that Buddhism's concept of the seven treasures encouraged trade is hard to fully accept. There can be no doubt that the seven treasures and the luxury items traded are the same but it seems more likely that Buddhist groups adopted items of luxury as their seven treasures. Increases in trade are more likely to be the result of a period of prosperity and political stability. Her final argument that the trade represents an 'imperfect market' is most interesting. She suggests that tea trade existed, giving of gifts, simple exchanges. She makes a convincing argument that the government supported trade of tea and that merchants operated on a profit basis.

Seemingly tea had spread from these frontier regions into China Proper centuries before the rise of the Tea-Horse trade, and was cultivated in Fujian among other eastern provinces. As early as the 6th century BC the philosopher and naturalist Laozi described the infusion as 'the froth of liquid jade', an indispensable ingredient of the elixir of life (Litvinsky 1996:266). In 59BC the Chinese scholar Wang Bao wrote the first known treatise on buying and preparing tea, establishing that tea was not just a medicine but also an important dietary supplement by this early date. In 220 AD Hua Tuo³, a physician from Anhui, praised tea for its restorative properties, commenting in his medical treatise *Xin Lun(New Discoveries)* that: 'to drink bitter tea constantly makes one think better'(Tong 2005:33).

³ Hua Tuo is a famous physician of the Han Dynasty who is widely respected .He has been compared, in this regard, to Jivaka of India, who lived at the time of Buddha (about 500 B.C.) and was renowned for surgery.

Yet tea seems to have remained unknown, or at least unappreciated, in Tibet and Central Asia until Tang times – coinciding, fortuitously for the Chinese, with the decline of the Silk Monopoly. During the Sui Dynasty (581-617), tea started to be drunk more for its taste than for its medicinal benefits. It was also during this period that China began to use tea as a currency, bartering tea bricks with her Mongolian neighbors for items such as herbal medicines, horses, wool and musk (Tong 2005:33). In the far reaches, tea pressed into cakes served as a medium of exchange almost from the beginning of the tea trade. Tea cakes continued in this role even after paper money was introduced in the eleventh century.

Classical period – Tang (618 -907 A.D.) and Song dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) and the writing of *The Tea Classic*

In Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) which is also called as the golden period in Chinese history, tea drinking evolved into a form of art. At its peak in around 750, the Tang capital of Chang'an [present-day Xi'an] was the largest and most populous city in the world. An estimated 800,000 to one million people lived within the city walls, with another one million or so living outside the walls in the greater metropolitan area. The city walls were simply massive, rising through 5.5 metres in height, and extending for 35 kilometres to form an elongated square with sides 8 kilometres by 9.5 kilometres. As many as 25,000 foreigners, including such diverse peoples as Turks, Persians, Arabs, Mongols, Indians, Koreans, Malays, Japanese and Armenians, lived within the city walls, congregated mainly around the Western Market (Binder et al. 2008:28).

Prof H.P.Ray (2003:89-95) expands in his excellent study on trade and trade routes between India and China that “tea consumption spread throughout the Chinese culture reaching into every aspect of the society. In central Asia, tea was brought from China during the Tang dynasty (7th century); it was given to the nomads of Tibet and Mongolia”. Tea was a great source of vitamin C, as these nomads were unable to find green vegetables in the plains of central Asia. As a matter of fact, the Chinese

government during the Ming and Qing dynasties was able to manipulate these threatening people by trading tea with them.

2.3 *The Tea Classic*

In 800 A.D. Lu Yu wrote the first definitive book on tea, *The Tea Classic*. Drawing from his vast memory of observed events and places, he codified the various methods of tea cultivation and preparation in ancient China. Lu Yu, a poet, saw the same harmony and order which reigned through all things in the Tea-service. By the time Lu Yu wrote the *The Tea Classic*, tea was already a fairly common drink in China. But Lu Yu's work was the single most influential aspect in developing the cultural significance of tea. *The Tea Classic* was probably commissioned by a group of tea merchants, wanting to popularize the drink that was the basis of their livelihood. (Carpenter 1976:12)

Lu yu (A.D 733-804), also named Ji, was born in Jingling, Fuzhou of Tang (now Tianmen of Hubei Province). He was once an abandoned boy and his life was full of frustrations. He was adopted late by Buddhist monk Zhi Yi , who was proficient in conducting ceremony. When Lu Yu was young, he was in the good graces of Li Qiwu and Cui Yuanfu who were demoted to Jingling and Lu was trained by them. Later Lu Yu roamed to Huzhou and later dwelled in Zhaoxi in seclusion. He got acquainted with monk Yan Zhenqing⁴, the Huzhou governor and great calligrapher. He sought quiet in the time of turmoil. He dedicated himself to practice, and traveled Jiangnan tea producing area to investigate tea affairs. According to his tea knowledge and tea tasting experience as well on the basis of summarizing the forefathers' experiences, he wrote the *The Tea Classic*, the first book on tea in the world (Carpenter 1976:3).

Lu Yu was respectively called Lu Zi by the later generations of tea scholars. The system of Lu's scientific tea theory was called "Lu's Science" and the tea merchants

⁴ Yan Zhenqing was a leading Chinese calligrapher and a loyal governor of the Tang Dynasty . His artistic accomplishment in Chinese calligraphy parallels the greatest master calligraphers throughout the history, and his calligraphy style, *Yan*, is the textbook-style that every calligraphy lover has to imitate today.

worshipped him as a “Tea God” (Yuan 2000:8). *The Tea classic* was a special book on tea. It summarized and reviewed the popular tea customs at that time and discussed the origin, history, production, manufacture, brewing and tasting of tea as well as various humane and natural factors, which made the tea science become a special discipline.

2.3.1 Contents of *The Tea Classic*

Lu Yu's Cha Jing was the earliest treatise on tea in the world. The entire book is 55 pages and just over 700 characters but had detailed description of its origin, preparing techniques, manufacturing, plantation etc. The book is described into the following 10 chapters.

Chapter 1. Origin - This chapter expounds the mythological origins of tea in China. It also contains a horticultural description of the tea plant and its proper planting as well as some etymological speculation. Tea grows everywhere. Luyu has explicated tea of high quality before. It is piteous that those were only premium in the past time, as better ones are made nowadays. If Tiger Hill tea in Suzhou is regarded as the best, then Luojie tea follows while Tianchi, Longjing and Fulong tea are the lowest. If Songluo made in Xin'an is regarded as the best, then the tea made in Langyuang and Cangxi follows, while the tea made in the Yellow Mountain is the lowest.

Chapter 2. Tea Tools - This chapter describes fifteen tools for picking, steaming, pressing, drying and storage of tea leaves and cake. Some of the tools are square bamboo chest, bamboo basket, boiler, pestle and mortar, gauge, bearing, apron, bamboo tray, knife, pointer, roaster, string, and shed which is also called stack, thread, tea preserver etc.

Chapter 3. Manufacture - This chapter details the recommended procedures for the production of tea cake. Tea is graded into eight levels; top level has leaves that crease as that of leathern boots, inferior level tea has leaves that are as withered as that of frozen lotus leaves. An inferior way that some people use to distinguish good from bad tea is by judging its appearance in terms of being shiny, dark, flat and even. Another inferior way

to distinguish good from bad tea is by judging its appearance in terms of being crimped, yellow and scraggy. The best way to distinguish good tea from bad tea is to both notice both its excellence and its defects. Why is it so? Tea cake shines when through compression the liquid is expelled, crimped when the liquid is withheld. Tea is dark when it is made overnight, yellow when it is made the same day. Tea is flat and even when it is compressed tightly, scraggy when it is left to take its own course.

Chapter 4. Tea Wares -This chapter describes twenty eight items used in the brewing and drinking of tea, such as porcelain and unglazed earthen ware, bowls like upturned bell, purple clay tea pots, silver tea ware, and porcelain tea bowl in grey – greenish color, called “Bise”, were also used.

Chapter 5. Brewing -This chapter enumerates the guidelines for the proper preparation of tea. Tea is closely associated with water. Good water makes good tea . boiling water for tea also calls for a good attention. Different ways of brewing black, green, scented, oolong tea have been given in this chapter.

Chapter 6. Drinking Tea –The author describes the various of tea, the history of tea drinking and the various types of tea known in 5th century China.

Chapter 7. Anecdotes - Various anecdotes about the history of tea in Chinese records, from Shen Nong through the Tang dynasty are expounded in this chapter.

Chapter 8. Places -The chapter ranks the eight tea producing regions in China. These regions are Hangzhou, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Anhui, Yunnan, Anxi, Fujian, and Hainan.

Chapter 9. Omission - Lists those procedures that may be omitted and under what circumstances.

Chapter 10. Diagrams -This chapter consists of four silk scrolls that provide an abbreviated version of the previous nine chapters.

The Tea Classic itself elevates the preparation and drinking of tea to near-religious status. Like a religious ceremony, there is a set ritual, using particular implements which are endowed with individual significance, and there are guidelines on the appropriate state of mind for the tea drinker, and the atmosphere in which tea should be drunk. This similarity to religious ritual is no coincidence; the Taoist faith was central to culture in eighth century China, and with it the belief that every detail of life was an act of living that was worthy of celebration, and that one should attempt to find beauty everywhere in the world. Thus the emphasis on tranquility and harmony in the preparation and drinking of tea was recognition of its part in the masterpiece of life. Lu Yu's work made him not only a celebrity but also a god in the eyes of the tea-drinking public. People in the tea business made offerings to porcelain statues of Lu Yu, praying that the tea crop be large and profitable.

During Song Dynasty (690-1279 A.D.) every aspect of tea was further refined. Tea was originally made in bowls, but pots were introduced during this period. Harvests became carefully regulated affairs. In the Song dynasty the whipped tea came into fashion and created the second school of Tea (Chunfang 1990:83). The leaves were ground to fine powder in a small stone mill, and the preparation was whipped in hot water by a delicate whisk made of split bamboo. The new process led to some change in the tea-equipage of Lu Yu, as well as in the choice of leaves. Salt was discarded forever. The enthusiasm of the Song people for tea knew no bounds. Epicures vied with each other in discovering new varieties, and regular tournaments were held to decide their superiority.

The greatest development and contribution of Song people to tea culture was reflected in the harmony with tea and related arts, it carried tea tasting toward the perfection of scholar tea. Scholar tea tasting was very popular in the Song Dynasty. The purpose of tea tasting of scholars, monks and priests of the past dynasties was mainly for

intellectual enjoyment. So they wrote a lot of poems and prose about tea tasting and they advocated tea banquets, tea ceremonies and tea parties. For them, tea was a precious and noble drink and tea tasting was an intellectual enjoyment, means of cultivating moral character and nature, and realm of artistic atmosphere.

2.4 Naturalistic period: Ming and Qing Dynasties, 1368-1911 A.D.

During Ming dynasty Zhang Yuan composed the outstanding *Tea Records* according to what he learnt from his long term experience of tea tasting (Yaohong 2008: 99). Xu Cishu was particularly good at tea ceremony and wrote *Tea Reports*; among which Zhu Quan and his *Tea Manual* had a special tea contribution (Tanaka 1977:34).

Zhu Quan (A.D.1378-1448), the seventeenth son of Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, was considered to have "handsome manner, wisdom and eloquence" (Heiss 2007:16). He hid his light and dwelled in seclusion in the South for a long time to live out his life in retirement, during which time he kept his mind clear and calm by tasting tea, playing musical instruments and reading, paying no attention the world affairs. He clearly indicated that his fondness of tea was to use tea as a medium to express his lofty aspirations and to cultivate his moral character rather than to love the taste of tea itself. Zhu Quan explored the loose tea drinking method after the ball tea processing was stopped. He reformed the traditional drinking method and the tea sets, and advocated simple process to keep the nature of tea (Heiss 2007:17). From 1405 to 1433, Zheng He, a Ming dynasty eunuch, made seven long voyages to middle-southern peninsula, South Ocean islands, Bangladesh, India, Iran and Arab States. The farthest areas he reached were the east Coast of Africa and the Coast of Red Sea (Ray 2003:137). Every time when he set out he carried with him.

South Asian countries played an important part in the spread of Chinese tea. It was these countries that played a role of medium between China and the Mediterranean or European Countries by sea. After the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, Chinese tea was transported to Europe by way of these countries and so "The Tea Road" by sea was

formed (Heiss 2007:18). It was this route that promoted the spread of Chinese culture all over the Europe and America.

During the early Qing Dynasty, the main stream of Chinese tea culture - the spirit of traditional culture of nation began to enter common people's life. Tea house culture (Stran 1989:32) and tea customs (Yan 1997:17) culture replaced the former elite tea culture. Tea culture penetrated into the city people's daily life and became common customs and a noble national sentiment as it was integrated with traditional etiquette and order of importance and seniority in human relationships. Chinese tea production developed with surprising rapidity. The tea field area and production volume were increased by a big margin. Chinese tea rapidly entered the world market as a staple trade commodity and once monopolized the whole world tea market. Then tea entered the commercial era. Teahouse trades in the Qing Dynasty prospered greatly. Various tea houses were distributed all over the cities and the country, they were beyond count and all afforded magnificent views (Jiangong 2000:103). They constituted the basis of the modern magnificent teahouse phenomenon. Teahouses were distributed all over the country in the Qing Dynasty (Howard-Gibbon 1980:88). The special teashops, tea stores, tea companies and tea firms appeared one after another.

During this era, tea became a beverage to be enjoyed by everyone, rich and poor, Chinese and Europeans. The first written mention of tea in Europe was in Gaimbattista Ramusio's book *Voyages and Travels* (Taknet 1998:74). He was a secretary of the Venetian Council of Ren, and he wrote about the health enhancing properties of tea. In 1606, the Dutch East India Company imported the first shipments of Chinese tea. Tea consumption spread throughout Europe, Africa, and the rest of Asia. In 1773, a group of U.S. colonists protesting the taxation of tea by Great Britain, boarded a ship from the Dutch East India Company and dumped its cargo of tea. This event known as the Boston Tea Party is the reason why tea is not subject to import taxes today in the United States (Heiss 2007:21). Tea during this time was made from loose leaves steeped in hot water. Different methods to process tea originated during this period, which as a result led to different types of tea such as green, oolong, and black teas.



History is continuous. As one piece of fuel is consumed, the flame passes to another. Tea entered the magnificent world from the luxuriant jungles of Southwest China, during which it went through numerous sufferings and protracted tortuous struggle. Tea embodies the intimate relationship between humans and nature. It infiltrated into the lofty life ideal of the Chinese nationality since the beginning when tea was introduced into human life.

Today, there are more than 1,500 types of teas to choose from because over 25 countries cultivate tea as a plantation crop (China tea import and export cooperation, Hong Kong, 1994:79). China is one of the main producers of tea and tea remains China's national drink. Today, tea is the world's most popular beverage besides water. Since its discovery many centuries ago, it has played an important role in events, ranging from mystic to gilded to simply comforting. In China, tea remains a fixture of daily life, as it has for centuries. Buddhists focus on peace and simplicity while using it in a ceremony that can take up to three years to perfect

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Shapira et al. (1975:233) indicates that ceremonies, customs and rituals that have grown up around the practice of tea drinking are an integral part of the life and culture of many societies'. These tea customs and traditions are part of social change, arising as tea has been adapted from one society to another. While this has been a gradual process that has taken centuries, even today contemporary tea traditions experienced through tourism have the ability to influence the tea traditions of other societies. For instance, the Chinese tradition of 'bubble tea shops' is now being introduced in other countries, for example in the major cities of North America several of these shops are now open. In China the popularity of tea houses is reported to be on the increase (Eurominator 2004:22). These trends demonstrate the transference of tea cultures and traditions across borders and continents.

To summarize it we can we can say that Culture has been defined as "a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development". A second use of the word 'Culture' might be to suggest "a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a

group. Any cultural development creates a feeling of belonging and togetherness among people in the society. This chapter basically tackles the concept of culture. In the first part I have discussed the definitions of culture as used by different scholars. It has been mentioned that culture is difficult to define and that it is a broad concept to reckon with. The concept of popular culture is also very difficult to define compared to other related concepts such as folk culture, dominant culture, and mass culture. The basic definition of culture is that it is a culture which is well-liked or desired by the people. For instance, one way of knowing that tea is linked to a popular culture is by looking into the trade, customs and traditions and ceremonies which has been prominent since last 3000 years of Chinese history. Culture is also defined as a specific way of life or the customs of the people and as well as signifying practices. Culture is hard to define knowing the different interpretations of its broad concept.

Going by this definition, Tea has become an integral part of the Chinese way of life, their cultural traits, and customs, which, like the Chinese civilization has continued its development, and had adapted well to the historical as well as contemporary times. Tea begin with a tea trail, from the lush forests of China, where tea cultivation first flourished, to the Buddhists temples of Japan, to the vast tea gardens of India, and beyond. Offering an insider's view of all aspects of tea trade, we examine *Camellia sinensis*, the tea bush, and show how subtle differences in the terroir and production contribute to the diversity of color, flavor, and quality in brewed tea. Many western people study orient culture of China for business, career, family life or just because they have an interest in culture.

The history of tea culture runs long and deep in China it is not only a traditional art form intertwined with daily living, but drinking tea also serves as a way for the contemporary Chinese to relax. As China is the original land of tea culture, its teahouses are primarily concerned with spreading the knowledge and benefits of this rich practice, while protecting it from dilution. Therefore, presenting the highlights of the tea culture has been a core-content of most teahouses. The teahouses in China have taken up many traditional forms, such as those of a Chinese place, garden, or communal hall. Other commonly seen forms include the traditional teahouses, Europe cafes and forms of joint

lineage. As we experience Contemporary Teahouses in China, it is essential that we do not overlook the old tea culture manifested in the Lao She teahouse. Tea culture reflects social changes in society. Tea houses had an important influence on nurturing these changes. Even today, the traditions and cultures related to tea are constantly being adapted and influenced by societies and their institutions. Whatever our tea experience may be, one thing is certain: Every sip reaffirms your part in a remarkable, timeless story.

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Chapter 1

Tea Plantation:

Classification and Tea producing regions in China

Tea's journey through the ages and across every continent has inevitably meant the gradual development of new production methods, new rituals and customs such as Tea ceremony, Tea houses, Tea in arts and aesthetics etc. Through the centuries, tea has inspired artists, enhanced religious experience, played a pivotal role in the emergence of world trade, and triggered cataclysmic events that altered the course of humankind.

Tea has played a variety of striking roles on the world stage—as an ancient health remedy, an element of cultural practice, a source of profound spiritual insights, but also as a catalyst for brutal international conflict, crushing taxes, and horrific labor conditions. During tea's long history in China it has been served in luxurious salons and rustic huts, both built especially for the pleasure; in private homes; and on horseback by nomadic peoples riding over the steppes. Throughout this history tea played its ever-changing, yet ever-constant role. Various types and categories of teas developed during this historical span and are predominant in contemporary times.

But along its journey of more than two thousand years, tea has developed into something much more complicated and place specific. Time has allowed for the creation of tens of thousands of different teas, each of which is produced by people who till the soil in a multitude of tea gardens large and small. The net result is a staggering and different amount of tea produced annually. Therefore, it can be said that tea is as important to life as food. Tea is both consumed as a thinking person's beverage and as a common man's delight. Tea drinking is a tactile, sensory activity that provides both intellectual stimulation and aesthetic inspiration during times of social gathering or solitary contemplation. In the East, tea is more highly regarded for these transcendental qualities than it is for its caffeine content or health benefits. The pleasurable ritual of tea

drinking is deeply encoded in the cultures and religions, and tea permeates and sustains life in different ways.

Wu Juenong (2006:6) posits that tea has played many roles which includes tea being a medicinal plant, recipe ingredient, refreshment, tax source, sign of social status, traditional comfort beverage, vehicle for social engagement, important focus of ritual, elixir of immortality, source of spiritual insight, catalyst for wars and rebellions, and center of traditions that have endured for centuries through its long history. In China its use has long been documented in print, celebrated in poetry, and depicted on scrolls, paintings, and the ceramic pieces used to prepare and serve it. From its beginnings as a wild herb through its transition as an agricultural crop, tea now grows in China and over forty other countries.

1. Tea plantation and tea producing areas in China

Data by China Tea Import and Export Cooperation (1994:64) shows that tea plantation in China totals over one million hectares, spreading in an area of 38 degrees from east to west and 19 degrees from south to north, between longitude 122 degrees (the east coast of Taiwan) to 90 degrees (Milin in Tibet) and between 18 degrees N (Yulin in Hainan Island) up to 37 degrees north (Rongcheng County in Shandong Province). Within this area there are 967 counties in 19 provinces where tea is grown.

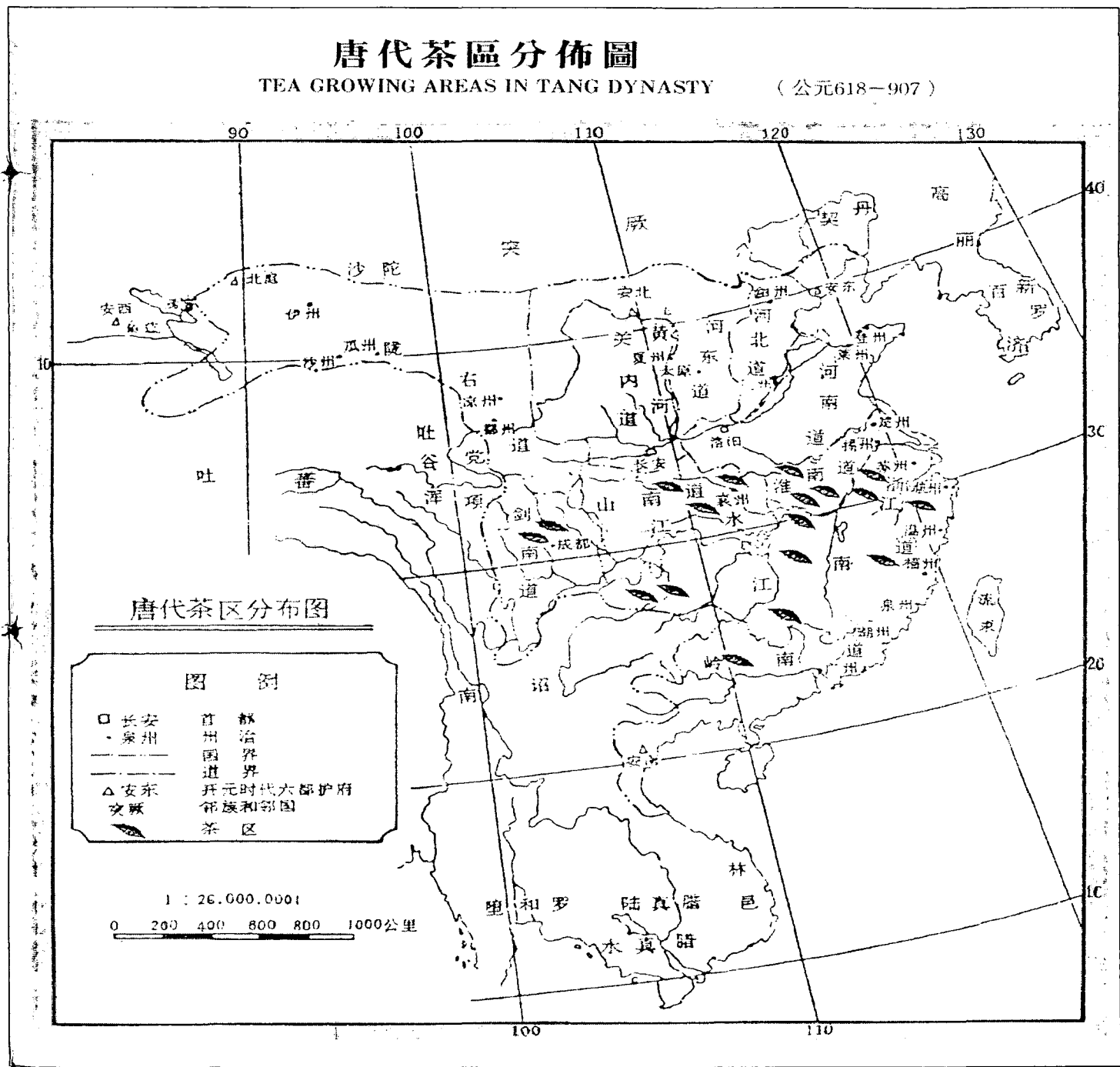
If we compare map 1 and map 2 at page 31 and 32, we discover that the distribution of tea plantation has remained almost same even after 1200 years or so.

The tea growing areas in China can be divided into four areas: the Southwestern, the South China, the Jiangnan (south of Yangtze River) and Jinagbei (north of the Yangtze River) areas.

唐代茶區分佈圖

TEA GROWING AREAS IN TANG DYNASTY

(公元618—907)



Source: China Tea Import and Export Cooperation (1994:41) 《中国-茶的故乡》 (China-Homeland of Tea)

Distribution of Modern Tea Plantation



Source: Fu, Chunjiang. (2008,16) *Origins of Chinese Tea and Wine*, Singapore; Asiapac books Pvt Ltd.

1. The Southwest:

In this area, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Tibet etc provinces are included (Tong 2005:32). This is also one of the oldest tea producing areas. Varieties such as black, green, compressed and pu-er tea are prominent.

Zhao Ding (2009:7) in his book *The story of tea*, <<茶的故事>> asserts that Yunnan-Guizhou plateau is the center of origin of Tea. It has complicated topography.

Discrepancy in altitude and temperature exists at the places of the same latitude. Chiefly, the temperature is subtropical monsoon climate which is beneficial to the growth of tea plants. The soil is chiefly yellow in Sichuan and Guizhou and brown in Southwestern Tibet. Yunnan is chiefly red terracotta and highly red clay with more contents of organic matters than other districts.

1.2 South China

South China area includes Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Taiwan and Hainan etc. provinces (Tong 2005:33). The trees are either high, low arbor or bushes. Black tea, oolong tea, white tea and Liupao tea are produced. Specially noted is a kind of broad-leaf black broken tea, which produces liquor of well-balanced thickness.

With the exception of the northern parts of the three provinces Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi, the average yearly temperature is between 19 degrees to 22 degrees and the low records are 7 degrees to 14 degrees in January. The period of growth of tea is more than ten months. Annual precipitation is 1200-2000 mm, whereas Taiwan is the highest of China with an annual precipitation even more than 2000 mm. The old clay soil is the chief soil in this area with some red clay and yellowish soil. The soil is deep and has fuller contents of organic matter.

1.3 South of Yangtze River

Territory to the south of the lower reach of Yangtze River including Zhejiang, Hunan, Jiangxi, southern parts of Anhui, Jiangsu and Hubei provinces are parts of this area. (Tong 2005:34). It is the major tea producing area in China. Annual production reaches two-thirds of the entire tea produced in China in green, black, dark green, scented and several other famous teas such as Xihu Longjing, Huangshan Maofeng, Dongting Biluo, Junshan Yizhen, Lushan Yunwu and others (Yuqing 2008:21).

In this area, tea plantation is mainly located at hilly lands, with a fewer exceptions at higher altitudes. There are four seasons which are clearly distinguishable. Annual temperature is 15-18 degree Celsius. In winter, it is generally -8 degree Celsius. Precipitation is 1400- 1600 mm, 60% to 80% of which is concentrated in spring and summer. Autumn is dry. The soil is mainly red with some yellow and brownish yellow. A minor part is alluvial soil.

1.4 North of Yangtze River

Territory on north of the lower reach of Yangtze includes Henan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Shandong and the northern parts of Anhui, Jiangsu and Hubei provinces (Tong 2005:35). The main produce is green tea.

The annual temperature is 15 degree to 16 degree Celsius on average. The lowest temperature in winter is -10 degree Celsius. Annual precipitation reaches 700-1000 mm but is not evenly distributed. Tea may suffer draught. The soil is yellow or brownish-yellow, a transitional soil belt starting from the Southern down to the Northern China. In several mountainous areas, owing to good local climate, better tea is cultivated such as Lu-An Guapian, Xinyang Maojian, etc.

2. Famous tea producing areas

Of the few larger tea producing regions in China mentioned above, there are some specific areas, sub regions that are famous for specific teas in China. Some of the better known regions could be classified into the following categories.

2.1 Xihu of Hangzhou

Peng Lin (2006:67), a scholar of Chinese etiquette posits that Longjing Tea has long been in the first place among the Chinese teas. He says that the tea gets its name, Longjing which means dragon well in Chinese, from the saying that a dragon once drank

from a well in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. Crowned as “the queen of green tea”, she was born in Hangzhou city, Zhejiang Province in East China. This city, called “heaven on earth”, gets its fame from its beautiful West Lake (Xihu). The area producing Xihu Longjing tea is not far from West Lake. It is surrounded by mountains on three sides, which forms a natural barrier for a unique microclimate. Historically, five spots in this area produced the best Xihu Longjing tea. Now the finest ones are mainly from three spots, Shifeng Mountain, Meijia Wu and Xihu Longjing village.

Among the three, Shifeng (Lion Peaks) Longjing is considered the highest quality. Longjing tea is best when the leaves are fresh buds. Ye Yuying (2008:18) while talking about “Mingqian Tea” states that it is called so because farmers pick the tea before the Qingming Festival, which takes place in the 5th solar term of April. Known for its superior quality, Mingqian tea has tender buds and a rich fragrant smell. Folklore states that when Qing emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) was in one of his six tours to many places south of the Yangtze, he was entertained with the Dragon-Well tea. The fragrance of the tea provoked his royal interest so that he named the eighteen tea tress planted there the “Imperial tea”. The royal patronage doubled the reputation of Dragon-Well tea (Yun 2009:51)

2.2 Hainan Wuzhishan (Five Finger Mountain, Hainan Island)

Hainan Island was included as province only in 1988. The Five-finger Mountain is representative of this province. It has not only beautiful scenery but also is the most suitable area for tea, having fertile soil and suitable climate. Low latitude, longer sunshine period, bigger temperature discrepancy between day and night are other beneficial factors. The fertile soil is drenched with an average precipitation of 2000-3000 mm and refreshed by continental and oceanic monsoon under a yearly average temperature of 23 degree to 24 degree Celsius and the humidity of 80 % to 90 %. The polyphenol content of this tea is 34-38%.

Tea is harvested in all the seasons. The growers employ the method of intercropping tea with gum that offers the best utilization of natural light, heat, soil, water and air by which both tea and gum are benefited. The gum trees, tall and thick, give protection to the tea bushes under them from strong sunshine. Hohenegger (2006:4) believes that this increases the content of polyphenol and catechol in tea and decreases coarse cellulose, causing tea leaves to become tender and plump. It improves quality, strength and flavor; and intensifies the color of liquor.

2.3 Huangshan in Anhui province

This mountain ranges on the juncture of four counties – She, Tiping, Yi and Xiuning. The 72 peaks of Hunagshan Mountain are under constantly changing clouds, perpendicular cliffs, hanging stone ways, stout pines, pearly waterfalls and lively springs. The entire tea growing area is about 500 square kilometers around Huangshan (Yun 2009 :302) It is a noted place among tea plantations. Quality of tea production of county She is the highest from any single county. It is also the place of the famous Tunxi green tea.

2.4 Zhejiang Pingshui

The greater area of “Pingshui” includes ten counties: Shaoxing, Zhuji, Shengxian, Xinchang, Tiantai, Shangyu, Yuyao, Fenghua, Yinxian and Dongyang. In this area, there are a consecutive range of mountains: Kuaiji, Siming, Tiantai with interlocking creeks and brooks. The climate is mild. Chang (1994:189) describes “Pingshui Gunpowder” as a species of green tea that is famous in the world market with the nomenclature of “the green pearls”.

2.5 Jiangxi Wuyuan

Wuyuan in the north eastern mountainous district in Jiangxi Province is a growing district of tea for export. Wuyuan Tea had been a major species for export in 17th and 18th

century (Zhuquan 2009:43). A new type of processed tea- Zhulan Chajing (essence of pearly- orchid tea, famous since centuries) resumed production recently, and is made from Wuyuan green tea and pearly orchid flower. Tea mountains in this area are Wulongshan, Shi er shan , Julishan, Zahng-gongshan and Gaohushan. When one travels along the River Xi one can see tea gardens dotted on either sides of the river all the way.

2.6 Anhui Qimen

While it appears that black tea comes from red leaves, the fullest fermentation process causes the green leaves to turn in dark color. Qimen black tea comes from the southwestern part of Anhui Province, near the production area of Huangshan Maofeng. The area that grows Qimen black tea has an advantageous natural condition: a great number of woods in a mountainous region, a warm and humid climate, and thick layers of earth with abundant rainfall, and cloudy or foggy weather most days of the year. The rich contents and high enzymatic activity in the soil make the local tea trees suitable for creating black tea. Chow (1991:25) says that Qimen black tea was favored by the royal family and nobility and is regarded as the champion among all teas in Britain, Qimen. People would scramble every time fresh Qimen black tea came to a market. They believed that they “found the fragrance of spring in the aroma of the Chinese Qimen black tea.”

Chow (1991:29) maintains that Chinese began drinking black tea in the southern Song dynasty over one thousand years ago. The Chinese prefer to drink black tea plain while the British prefer to drink it with milk and sugar along with some cakes as breakfast tea or afternoon tea. The tea’s taste remains strong after milk is added. Therefore, we can say that two styles of drinking black tea are formed, one that originated in China, and further in Britain into the practice of afternoon tea. Hohenegger (2009:143) tells a story where Sir Thomas Lipton, the holder of Yellow Label instant teabag, visited Shanghai; a rich Chinese person entertained him in his home. He expected to be a traditional Chinese tea when he asked for a cup, but was surprisingly served Lipton’s tea with milk and sugar.

2.7 Anxi

Tie Guan Yin (Iron Bodhisattva of Mercy), the most typical Oolong tea, grows in Anxi County in the south of Fujian Province. The tea trees are planted in curved lines on the southeast slope of the mountains. From the sky, it looks like a carefully designed green labyrinth. During the late Qing dynasty, Anxi Tie Guanyin was successfully introduced to Taiwan province, and Guangdong Province, which promoted the development of Oolong tea there. But the question is that how do we recognize Tie Guanyin from other teas? Granular Tie Guanyin weighs more than others in the same volume. It's rolled in balls before steeped in water. When fully infused, green tea leaves with red rims can clearly be seen. It differs from other Oolong teas for its natural orchid aroma and special appeal called "Guanyin Yun" (mainly referring to its strong perfume, bursting flavor and lightning aftertaste).

As regards the nomenclature of this tea, Huxley (1959:54) believes that this tea has a special name because it was a bestowment from Guanyin (the Bodhisattva of Mercy) and named by the emperor, according to the legends. In the Qing dynasty, there was an old farmer named Wei Yin who believed in Guanyin. For many years, he piously worshipped Guanyin every morning with a cup of tea. One night, he dreamt that he carried a hoe to a mountain stream nearby whereby he found a tea tree flourishing with lush leaves. The next morning, he went along the path in his dream, to really find a tea tree that looked exactly like the one from his dream. But Owyung (2009: 65,98) comes with another totally different story where he totally oppose the views of Huxley and says that after drinking the tea, Emperor Qianlong proclaimed, "coming from the dream sent by Guanyin and weighing like iron, this tea should have a more refined name like 'iron Guanyin'".

2.8 Wuyi Minbei

Wuyi rock tea, a famous kind of Oolong in China, grows on the Wuyi mountain of Fujian province. On the skyline it has 36 peaks and 99 interlocking cliffs. The tea Da

Hong Pao is outstanding among the rock teas. The tea trees come from Tianxin yan rock, but large tea gardens are not to be found here. Dong Fei in his book <<中国茶道>> (Chinese Tea) talks about the four tea trees growing at a sunken spot on the cliff called “Jiulong Ku” (literally meaning “Nine Dragon Cave”). In the sunshine, the tea shoots glistens with a lovely luster of reddish purple. Despite its black and loose look, Da Hong Pao actually has great brewing durability. Even after seven or eight infusions to keep the tea hot, its floral fragrance can still remain as if it penetrated the cover of the cup in an undispersed “cluster”. The Da Hong Pao leaves can keep the “cluster” of aroma for a fairly long time at the bottom of the cup, which is called “bottom fragrance” or “cold fragrance” by tea masters all around the world.

Graham (1998:56) explains that in the past, when the tea trees shot up, monks of Tianxin Province would gather the monkeys they tame with drums. Nowadays, tea farmers in Mount Wuyi will set up high aerial ladders instead of using monkeys. The total output of rock tea is limited because they can normally only pick about 11 liang (a unit of weight equal to 50 grams). The tea can now be produced and put into the market in batches with clone technology.

2.9 Yunnan Menghai

Menghai is located in a high-altitude district but in a low latitude zone, having no severe winter and no harsh summer and with sufficient rainfall and fertile soil. Many tea trees have grown in this district. From these trees, the famous Dianhong congou and Black broken tea are made. Strong liquor, brightly reddish colour and striking looking golden floss are among its uncommon features. The famous Pu'er tea, possessing therapeutic value, which has been known to all tea lovers, comes from this area.

2.10 Taiwan Dongding

Dongdingshan, a 700- meter peak to the south of Lugu Town in county Mantau, Taiwan, is an important production point of Taiwan Oolong tea Fu Chunjiang (2008:82)

tells us that scholar Lin Fengchi of Lugu, about 140 years ago, on returning from the government examination at Fuzhou, brought back from Wuyi 36 Oolong sprigs and planted them on Dongding Mountain slope where the soil was very fertile and climate suitable. By careful cultivation, the tea thrived and years later the place developed into a big tea plantation. Dongding tea is favorable and is a famous tea produced in Taiwan.

3. Classification of tea and its features

We have already discussed in the preceding chapter that all the varieties of tea and their related traditions and activities have their source in one plant: *Camellia sinensis*. Shi Haigen (2007:14) observes that the term ‘tea’ refers only to the beverage produced with leaves of this plant, whether it is black, green, oolong, yellow, red, or white tea and whether it is loose-leaf, compressed, powdered, or —CTC (cut-tear-curl). The difference in color and shape is due to the manufacturing process and the varying levels of oxidation to which the tea leaves are exposed—black teas are fully oxidized, oolongs are semi-oxidized, green and white teas are non-oxidized. Chamomile, rooibos, mint, and the likes, which are derived from other plants, are herbal infusions, not teas. Research by China national native produce and animal by-products import and Export Corporation and its subsidiary China tea import and export corporation (1994:75) shows that today two main varieties of the tea plant are recognized. One is *Camellia sinensis* var. *sinensis*, the Chinese multiple-stem shrub with small leaves, which is long-lived and can withstand cold weather. The other is *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*, the Indian single-stem plant with larger, softer leaves—more like a tree—which is more delicate, shorter-lived, and best grown in subtropical and rainy regions. The leaves are served as a powdered substance, compressed into brick or cake form, a measure of loose leaves, and encased in today’s ubiquitous tea bags.

Ye Yuqing (2008:7) assume that across the globe, more than 10,000 different teas are made from different varieties of *Camellia sinensis*. As with the production of wine, the character, color and flavor of each tea when it is brewed and served are determined by a long list of variable factors - location of the plantation, altitude, climate, seasonal

change, the soil, the minerals it contains the way in which it drains, cultivation methods, plucking methods, how the leaf is processed, what happens to the leaf at the end of the manufacturing process and the way in which the tea is eventually brewed. He further states that teas are classified by the process used to make them and, although the name of the different categories (White, Yellow, Green, Oolong, Black, Pu'er and Compressed), often tell us about the color and appearance of the dry leaf; it is the manufacturing method that decides the categories. Levels of caffeine vary in different teas. This thought depends on the varietals of the bush, the age of the leaf when it is picked, its location on the stem, the length of oxidation time, the size of the tea leaves brewed, the quantity of leaf used to make brew, and the length of the brewing time. New buds and young leaves have been found to contain higher levels of both caffeine and antioxidants.

3.1 White Tea

White tea was originally named after the tiny white or silver hairs that cover the bud as it develops at the tip of each tea shoot. Liu (2005:45) puts forward that white tea was originally only made in China from two varieties of the tea plants, *Shui Xian* or water sprite and *Da Bai* or Big White. White teas are now being produced in other parts of the world using other varietals and, although some white tea are made from only the new leaf bud (gathered before it starts to unfurl), other white teas are made from the new bud and one or two young open leaves or just from the open leaves, but Zhu Quan (2009: 87) stressed that White tea is totally different from *Yin Zhen* silver Needles. He further defines the bud style white teas, as the size of the bud can vary from sturdy buds that measure up to almost 2.5 cm (lin) in length, to much smaller, thinner and more wiry buds. In the same way, the size of the open leaf wiry depends on the bush varietal used.

Once the new buds and baby leaves have been carefully gathered, they are dried in the sun or in a warm, drying room. When brewed they give a very pale, champagne-colored liquor that has a very light, soft, sweet, velvety flavor. The antioxidant levels are higher than in other types of tea. This type of Chinese tea is sometimes considered as subclass of green tea. Perhaps it is for the fact that it is only withered and then roasted.

Just like green tea, white tea escaped fermentation process. And, it has low caffeine content. This tea has a soft taste that reflects the time of year when it is harvested, the spring, when water is in abundance and the sprouts of the tea tree are ripe with the flavor of the sun.

White Tea is the specialty of the Fujian province and is picked from the youngest white shoots from the tea tree. The finest White Teas such as the much sought after Silver needle are only picked during the spring time when there is an abundance of water and good sunlight to promote early growth. This tea is not left to ferment and is quickly dried after picking which helps to retain a soft sweetness and a clear color. White Tea is rich in antioxidants and is very healthy for you with strong anti-viral and anti-bacterial qualities.

The White Tea is classified into traditional-style budset white tea and the modern new-style leaf white tea.

3.1.1 Traditional-style budset white tea

The original, traditional Fujian budset white tea is Baihao Yinzhen (白毫银针) (Flowery White Pekoe or Silver Needle). Made exclusively from a select picking of plump spring buds, Baihao Yinzhen (白毫银针) is the most expensive grade of authentic, traditional-style Fujian white tea. Amador (1993:62) estimates that more than ten thousand handpicked buds are needed to produce just 1 kilo of this exquisite tea. Baihao Yinzhen is light in color and tinged with a soft greenish gray cast. The buds are covered with tender, downy hair that gives the tea a velvety appearance. The liquor is pale in color and delicate in flavor, reminiscent of ripe melon, fresh apricots, or peaches.

3.1.2 New-Style White Tea

Enterprising tea enthusiasts created new-style leaf white tea, a unique sub-category of white tea made from the first leaf bunch of the tea plant, processed as carefully and almost as minimally as is traditional budset white tea. This new-style leaf

tea is essentially just shade-dried tea. New-style white tea has a slightly more concentrated flavor profile than true budset white tea (and the health benefits) at a significantly reduced cost.

3.2 Yellow Tea

Yellow teas are among China's rarest. Manufacture is very similar to that of green tea but there is an extra stage during which the leaf is exposed to gentle heat and allowed to mellow by a process of non enzymatic fermentation. Traditionally this is achieved by gently frying the leaf after it has been pan-fried to kill the enzymes. The warm leaf is wrapped in "cow skin paper" (an old type of paper that has a yellow appearance and allowed to dry naturally inside the warmth of this parcel for a few hours). The pan frying and wrapping is repeated until the tea reaches the required look, feel and aroma. Yellow teas are slightly more yellow-green in appearance than green teas and when infused give a pale, yellow-green liquor that has a delicate, honey-like sweetness and a fresh aftertaste.

3.3 Green Tea

Green teas are generally described as 'unoxidized' teas and no chemical change occur during their manufacture. Processing of green tea differ from country to country but the basic manufacture sometimes involves a short period of withering to allow some of the water content in the leaf to evaporate, then steaming or pan-frying, to de-enzyme the leaf. Next comes a series of rolling and fryings to shape and dry the leaf. Sometimes the leaf is alternately rolled or shaped by hand, giving each tea its own characteristic appearance-for example the tiny pellets of Gunpowder, the curved eyebrow shape of *Chun Mei* (Precious Eyebrows), or the tightly wound spirals of *Biluochun* (Green Snail Spring). After shaping, or sometimes as the shaping process is taking place, the tea are dried in wok-like pans, in closed ovens, on baskets or cloth set over charcoal fires or in tumble dryers. Methods of shaping and drying vary from country to country and region to region. In many parts of China, Korea and Vietnam, for example, the teas are hand craft, sometime with the help of some simple machinery, and the skills involved in making the

teas are passed on from one generation to the next. In other producing regions the manufacturing process has been totally mechanized or automated. Okakura (2005:109) posits that in Japan the entire process for most teas is entirely mechanized and the leaves are first steamed on a rapidly moving conveyor belt to make them soft and simple, then mechanically cooled and repeatedly rolled, pressed, sorted, polished and dried before being cooked again and packed at the end of the production line. Various green teas are classified as following:

3.3.1 Anji White Virgin

Despite its name, this is a rare green tea grown in a pure, pollution-free environment in Zhejiang province. The silvery-pale underside of the leaves and buds accounts for its name and it is particularly high in amino-acids and so is well respected for its health benefits, the liquor is very pale, with a wonderfully sweet flavor and a hint of astringency.

3.3.2 Biluochun green tea

This famous green tea comes from two mountains in Jiangsu province known as east and West Dongting. The bushes grow in very humid conditions surrounded by fruit trees and so absorb the aroma of the blossoms in early spring when the tender leaves of the tea bush are just beginning to form. One new bud and one leaf are plucked by hand into neat little spirals that look like tiny snails. The curled leaves are covered in fine white hair and untwist to give a clear, green to pale golden-yellow liquor that has a wonderfully delicate and fragrant aroma and a clean aromatic flavor.

3.3.3 Jade rings green tea

These rings are made in Guanshan by meticulously hand-rolling silvery-white, green tea shoots into small rings. When infused, the little rings open up to create a

magnificent cup of tea. The flavor from these early spring buds is subtle, sweet and classic.

3.4.4 Longjing green tea

This tea is named after the village where it grows in Zhejiang province. The best is made from one new bud and one leaf, which are pressed flat and dried. The next grade, Queshe Longjing is made with a bud and two new leaves which open during brewing to look like a bird's beak and tongue. The teas are famous for their beautiful green color, elegant shape, smooth flavor and fine aroma.

The buds point upwards while brewing and release a clear, light yellowy-green color. The clean well-balanced aroma suggests freshly cut grass and toasted chestnuts. The flavor is mellow with a bittersweet- savory finish.

3.4.5 Zhen Mei

It is the curved shape of the dried leaves that gives this tea its name. The manufacturing process for this tea demands great skill. Each leaf must be rolled at the correct temperature, for the correct amount of time, to achieve the desired curve. The dark jade leaves give a light amber liquor with a soft, smooth, slightly plummy flavor.

3.4.6 Zhu cha

This is also called as pearl gunpowder tea. Most gunpowder teas are made in Zhejiang province and get their name from the fact that the tightly rolled little 'pearls'; of tea look like pellets of gunpowder. Pearl gunpowder is solid in various sizes from very small 'Pinhead' to larger, more loosely rolled varieties. It was originally marketed in Europe as 'Green Pearl' tea

The little pellets gradually open in the hot water to release their warm amber color and give a mellow, quite strong, slightly astringent flavor with a lasting aftertaste.

3.4.7 Oolong tea

Oolong teas, known as partially or semi-oxidized (or partially or semi-fermented.) and sometimes referred to as 'blue or blue-green' teas, are traditionally manufactured in China and Taiwan, but other countries are now also producing them.

Two very different methods of production are used to manufacture two different styles of oolong—dark, open-leaf oolong and greener, balled oolongs. Darker, open leafed oolongs are made by withering the leaf in the sun outdoors and then indoors on bamboo baskets. They allow some of the water in the leaf to evaporate and start the oxidation process. The leaves are turned every two hours and shaken or 'rattled' in the baskets to break the shells inside and on the surface of the leaf. When the oxidation level has reached about seventy percent the leaf is turned for 5-10 minutes inside a hot panning machine to halt any further oxidation and then dried in hot ovens. These darker oolongs can be infused several times, give pale amber liquor and have a soft fruity, honeyed character with undertones of peach and apricot (Burgess 2005:32).

The manufacture of the greener rolled or "balled" oolongs starts with the withering and tumbling of the leaf as for the darker oolongs. When they have reached 30% oxidation, the leaves are put through the hot panning machine for 5-10 minutes to stop any further oxidation, then dried and allowed to rest overnight. Next day, the leaf is wrapped inside large cloth to form balls that contain 9 kg of tea. Each bag is tightened and then rolled in a special rolling machine to bruise and squeeze the leaves inside. The bag is then opened and the compacted leaf is separated and immediately wrapped in to a ball again. This tying and rolling of the bag is repeated at least 36 times and sometimes up to 60 times until the leaves are tightly rolled up in to rough green pellets. The semi-balled tea is then dried in large ovens. These greener oolongs can also be infused several times give a very pale amber-green liquor and have a wonderful fragrant character that is often

reminiscent of narcissus, hyacinth, and lily of the valley. Bao zhong tea is another type of oolong tea but because of a much shorter oxidation time, they are closer to green teas and have a much greener appearance.

3.5 Black tea

In China, these are defined as 'red teas' because of the copper-red color of the liquor that they yield. For the black tea, methods of manufacture and the varieties produced vary enormously from country to country and from region to region, but the process always involves four basic stages- withering, rolling, oxidation (also misleadingly referred to within the tea industry as 'fermenting') and frying (drying).

Li Xiusong (1993:67) describes the two major processing methods of black tea are 'orthodox' and 'CTC'. The traditional orthodox method is still used in China, Taiwan, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and elsewhere, and tends to treat the leaf with more respect than the modern CTC method. For orthodox teas, the leaves are spread out in warm air and allowed to wither for up to 18 hours in order to reduce their water. The leaves are then soft and pliable, ready for rolling. The yellow-green leaf is then put in to in a special rolling machine that presses and twists the leaves, breaking the cells inside them and releasing the natural juices and chemicals that will start the oxidation process. After the first roll, the smaller pieces of leaf is sifted off and the larger particles are put back in to the roller for a second time and sometimes third rolling. The leaf is also sometimes put through a rotor vane machine (a little like a large mincing machine that twists and breaks the leaf even more than orthodox roller) to maximize production of smaller broken grades of leaf. After rolling, the leaf is broken up and spread out in thin layers in cool humid air and left to oxidize for 20-30 minutes or longer, depending on the conditions and temperature. The leaf now begins to develop its recognizable aroma and flavor, becomes darker in color and develops the tea chemicals known as theaflavins and thearubigins. To arrest the oxidation, the tea is finally fed in to large automatic dryers inside which it is carried along on the conveyor belts or on a moving stream of hot air in temperatures of 115-120 degree Celsius (240-250 degree Fahrenheit) and this reduces the moisture

content of the tea to just 2 to 3%. 'Fluid bed dryers' that blow the particles of tea on a stream of hot air are the most efficient type and ensure that the pieces of leaf are evenly dried.

The CTC method of manufacture is widely used in major tea-producing countries to give a small-leafed tea that brews more quickly and yields strong liquor-characteristics that are desirable for the production of tea bag blends. Liu Tong (2005:19) says that the process was developed in the 1950's when the tea bag was becoming more popular. To produce such teas, the leaf is withered in the same way as for orthodox teas but, instead of being rolled, it is macerated by the blades inside a CTC machine that rotate at different speeds, or in a Lawrie Tea Processor (LTP) rotating hammer nil leaf disintegrator, which tear and breaks the leaf in to tiny particles. The remaining oxidation and drying stage of the process are the same as for orthodox tea. Oxidation usually takes place on a conveyor belt that slowly moves the oxidizing tea towards the oven.

3.6 Pu'er Tea

Pu'er tea is called 'black tea' by the Chinese and was exclusive to China for centuries. Pu'er tea is thought to have various positive health benefits and is consequently becoming more and more popular throughout the world. Pu'er tea have an earthy, mature character and are said to be excellent for digestion, to ease stomach upsets, to help reduce cholesterol in the blood and to help those on a diet to lose weight more easily.

Traditionally, pu'er teas come from Yunnan Province in the south west china and are made from a large-leaf variety of *camellia-sinensis* that grows in the area. The particular varietal of the tea bush, along with the Yunnan soil and the climate in the region produce teas that have a rich, woody, slightly earthy character and when that leaf is matured or aged by a special process in special conditions, it acquires an elemental, slightly' mouldy character.

Neruda Pablo (1994:33) the famous spanish poet has classified pu'er cha into two types -Raw pu'er and, Cooked pu'er.

3.6.1 Raw pu'er

This is made by withering, pan-frying to kill the enzymes, rolling and kneading, then sun-drying for high quality leaf or air drying for less expensive teas. The leaf may then immediately be steamed and compressed into round cakes or flat rectangular slabs or it may be left loose. The tea is then allowed to mature for a year or more before being compressed. The maturation period allows a slow natural fermentation in naturally warm and humid, well-ventilated conditions. Because of the water content in the tea and the oxygen in the air, the leaf slowly ferments (this really a fermentation and a different from the oxidation that takes place during the manufacture of black and oolong teas) and turns the leaf from green to red and then to dark brown. The loose or compressed teas are then aged for up to 50 years in conditions where humidity and temperatures are carefully controlled to encourage the pure to develop a mature, complex, earthy flavor and aroma. As the tea ages, it becomes less astringent and bitter and the flavor becomes sweeter and smoother. The best of this raw pu'er, sell for thousands of dollars and are often, now, bought as investments.

3.6.2 Cooked pu'er

It was developed in 1970's to replicate the mature earthiness of raw pu'er by a faster method. The leaf is picked, withered and then mixed with a carefully measured quantity of water and bacterial culture taken from ancient pu'er. The tea is then piled and covered for up to 40 days in a hot, very humid room. From time to time the covers are removed in order to regulate the amount of heat and moisture that builds up in the piles of teas and the mixture is regularly turned to distribute the bacteria, the heat and moisture evenly throw the mass of leaf. The bacteriological activity causes the leaf to change from a yellow-green to a red-brown. After the process of piling and fermenting, some maturation is necessary in order to allow the flavor of the fermentation to dissipate.

3.7 Compressed Tea

China during the days of the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-906), tea producers started compressing processed tea into cakes or bricks in order to conserve the leaf and make it easier to transport (Pettigrew 1999:26). Many compressed teas that are available today actually consist of pu'er tea, though the other is made from black teas.

The shape of compressed teas vary from neat little balls to flat circles or triangles, balls shaped like birds' nests globes in the form of a melon, tiny discs or balls and rectangular or square slabs. Some are wrapped in bamboo or dried banana leaves, others are packed inside grasses or paper. Some are packed singly, other in a stack of four or more cakes.

3.8 Flavored Tea

Any type of tea-white, green, oolong, black or pu'er may be scented or flavored with flowers, fruits, spices, or herbs. The additional flavorings in the form of flower petals, pollen heads dried herbs, pieces of dried fruit or spice, are blended with the leaf at the end of the manufacturing process. Blenders also usually add flavoring oils or granules to the mixture in order to ensure an even enduring flavor and aroma. Oils are generally used for loose blends and granules for tea bag blends. Once flavored the teas are then packed as tea bags or loose leaf.

One of the best known flavored teas is Earl Grey which is made by blending black, green, oolong or white tea with the essential oil of bergamot. This Chinese citrus fruit gives the tea a refreshing orange-lemon flavor. Other flavored teas popular around the worlds is Jasmine, made by allowing the heady perfume of fresh jasmine flower to permeate the tea: Rose Petal, which has deliciously sweet scent of pink rose: and mint, which is usually made with pieces of dried mint leaf. The possibilities are endless and

today's flavor teas range from such simple mixtures lemon tea to complex blends that include several different flowers and exotic spices.

Flavor tea should not be confused with herbal infusions that are made from plants other than *camellia sinensis*. Many herbs and flowers, for example camomile, mint, rose hip and hibiscus are used to give soothing, beneficial brews but if the leaves of the tea plant are not included, neither the dried product nor the liquor should be referred to as 'Tea' (Haigen 2007:119).

In summation, today China produces 18 percent of the world tea exports and a variety of tea are grown and produced in 16 different regions – Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Zhuang, Guizhou, Hainan, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, Shandong, Sichuan, Yunnan and Zhejiang. The names by which the different teas are known and sold can be confusing. Names may give information about the garden where the tea grew, the time of the year when the tea leaves are picked, the village or province, the method of manufacture used, any additional flavorings blended with the leaves and perhaps also a legendary name. Further confusions arise because the Chinese prefer to call what we call 'black tea' as 'red tea' and because there are different dialectal languages and spellings used in the different regions. Names may be in Fukienese, which is spoken in Fujian; Cantonese, which is spoken in Canton; or English, if a particular type of tea has been marked by that name since trade with Europe began. For example, *meigui hongcha* in Pinyin is *Mui Kwai Hung Cha* in Cantonese but the tea is usually marketed as Rose Black Tea. And Pinyin *Tie Guanyin* becomes *Tit Koon Tam* in Cantonese, *Ti KwanYin* for the international market, and translates as Tea of the Iron Goddess of Mercy. Along with its individual name, each tea is also given a grade number that indicates to customers that the tea is of a given standard. And some retailers and suppliers also add a 'chop' mark to their packaging that gives further information about the type of bush the tea came from, the season it was harvested and the finishing style used.

Many of China's finest teas are still made by hand and the skills needed for its making are passed down from one generation to another. Today, more and more people around the world are beginning to appreciate the superb quality and vast fascinating histories of the vast array of white, yellow, green, black, oolong, puerh, compressed and scented teas, that are now more widely available.

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Chapter 2

“Lao She Tea house”:

A Cultural Base with Tradition and Modernity

The Chinese tea houses are traditional institutions of sociability whose wide social and cultural appeal overshadowed its primary business. Historically, it was closely woven into the fabric of Chinese life. In many communities the teahouse served as a center of information, a locus of leisure and social gatherings, and marketplace for many practitioners in an arena where various social forces compete for status and influence. Urbanization in the late Qing dynasty further contributed to the growth of teahouses, especially in the Yangzi River region (Suzuki 1982:17). However, while teahouses continued to flourish in the early Republic, teahouse culture became a target, a constant target in some areas of social critics.

As regards the Tea house culture Chen (2003:2) quotes an ancient Chinese saying, that "If I'm not in the teahouse, I'm on the way there". Chinese teahouses are the traditional ancient cafes of the east, for getting together and generally passing the time. In recent years, the tradition has been revitalized and becoming fashionable in modern cities. The teahouse as a social setting played an important role in Chinese history. Even though there is no original documented record of when the first teahouse was established, teahouses historically have been, and currently are common throughout China, especially in the southern tea producing regions discussed in Chapter 1. In ancient times, the teahouse was the only non-religious place for public communication, recreation, and social activities. In large cities, some of the teahouses were the centers of non-government organizations and clubs, while others were used for transacting business.

Teahouse culture had both historical and local attributes. While some of its characteristics transcended temporal and spatial boundaries, the culture itself varied in different local settings. A tea house or tearoom is a venue centered on drinking tea, its function varies widely depending on the culture, some cultures have a variety of distinct

tea-centered houses or parlors that all qualify under the term "tea house" or "tea room." In China, a tea house (茶馆, "cháguǎn" or 茶屋, "cháwū") is traditionally quite similar to the American "cafe", albeit centered on tea. People gather at tea houses to chat, socialize, and enjoy tea. Young people often meet at tea houses for dates. Especially, the Beijing style teahouses are very famous abroad, such as in New York, San Francisco, etc. These tea houses not only serve tea, but also dim sum (点心), people can eat different kinds of food when they drink tea. People call these kinds of tea houses “茶楼, chálou”.

Teahouses have been a frequent topic of Chinese popular literature (Lao She 1980; Yu 1976; Zhuo 1978). Recently, a number of Western scholarly works on Chinese Tea, the tea industry, and urban history have touched briefly upon the culture of the teahouse (Strand 1989: 32, 145, 154, 155; Smith 1991: 53-54; Lu 1995: 103). To date, however, there has been no study that takes as its central theme the changing image of teahouse culture in the life of a particular community. This study takes Lao She Teahouse in downtown Beijing as a cultural base to reflect the traditions and modernity in China.

Focusing on teahouses as a favored meeting place for the traditional public and the new cultural elites -this study illuminates the relationship between modernization and the intensified demand for popular Cultural outlets. Villages in rural china usually don't have teahouses, but every market or county town has one or more. Historically the teahouse was centre of social life for the men, as it remains in rural areas today. Peddlers and farmers coming to town with their produce can have a cup, or a bite to eat, and rest and relax in the shade of a woven straw-mat awning.

It is a place to exchange news, meet, talk with friends and even to conclude business deals. The occasionally used phrase *Shang chaguanr*, literally “to go the Tea house”, also means to take a dispute to be settled (Yu 1976:44). Teahouses were a favourite hangout for elderly retirees, who might park their pet caged birds on a nail and stay all the day, and the teahouse still had this function where there is no village club. Sichuan province, possibly the birthplace of tea drinking, is famous for its teahouses (Smith 1991:11). But almost as famous are those the city of Suzhou on the Yangtze,

noted for its teahouse ballad singers, and Guangdong province, a great tea producer, known for their evening entertainment of Cantonese songs. An estimated 200,000 people go to the Guangzhou tea houses daily (Liu 2005:122). But teahouses exist in every city and area. Standing as it does between old and new China, and deeply rooted in both, teahouse shimmers with a fine sense of ambivalence. .

1. Historical significance

Historically, the culture of tea-drinking embraced both the highbrow and tire lowbrow. In the Tang dynasty, tea drinking was the subject of poetry, symbolizing culture of the well established (Schafer 1962:137,149). With the rising of commercial teahouses in major urban centers of Song China, teahouse-going became part of the commoner's life (Freeman 1977:159, Gernet 1988: 36, 47-49). Tea culture was further polarized in the Ming dynasty. On the one hand, there was "*wenren cha*" (literati tea), a highly refined art for character molding, and, on the other hand, there was "*shumin cha*" (commoner tea), supposedly merely for thirst relief (Wu 1996:188).⁵

Teahouse culture reflected this distinction in the highly commercialized cities of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces in the late Qing dynasty; some teahouses, tastefully furnished were elite literary establishments; others, lavishly decorated, were merchants social institutions; and still others, crudely equipped, were lower-class gathering places (Suzuki 1982:530). Treating teahouse culture as an abstract entity, one could indeed conclude that teahouses, like a stew with many ingredients, accommodated people from all walks of life, from nobility to street wanderer (Takeuchi 1974:4; Lao She 1980:82).

Thus conveying the prevalent notion of teahouse equality .However commerce studies of Teahouses show that the institution itself was stratified according to the status

⁵ In the late Ming, frequent struggles among political cliques forced many scholar-officials out of their government positions. Some retreated their hometowns, forming groups and immersing themselves in cultural activities – literature, music, arts, and tea to compensate for their political loss (Wu 1996: 89-95, 176-87). Such groups were most prominent in the Jiangnan region, where economic affluence and cultural refinement had produced, and in turn was advanced by, a number of celebrated men of letters and artists such as Wen Zhengming. In this milieu, tea-drinking came to represent political uprightness, moral superiority, and cultural sophistication (Wu 1996: 83, 186-88, 194-96).

of its customers. Indeed this indicates that social division and exclusion existed within as well as between individual teahouses. (Li 1993:80)

Though teahouses were supposedly open to everyone except women as regular patrons,⁶ local notables, refined scholars, and upper-middle-level merchants consciously refrained from visiting teahouse. Teahouse patrons were not a blend of the high and lower classes, but a mixture of those below the middle class. They included shopkeepers, their business partners and clients, retailers' itinerant entertainers, city dwellers, brokers, policemen, gangsters, peasants, and other rules of working men. Nor did these separate strata necessarily mix in any given teahouse. Of the three categories of teahouses mentioned earlier, the tiger stove teahouses weft mainly for working men, while frequent visitors to the teahouses usually had to have some regular income (Evans 1992:141). The pure teahouses were known as places of local entertainment, principally storytelling and folk music, which attracted many city dwellers.

K.C.Chang (1977:141) posits that some Beijing teahouses were more respected than others, depending on the status of their owners, the location and ambiance, the types of patrons they attracted, and, related to this, the sideline business, if any, they promoted. The quality of the tea also mattered, as did the utensils used for serving it, i.e. whether the teapots were purple sand earthen pottery from craftsman of Yixing county of Jiangsu province, a place known for producing the best teapots in China, or bronze antique ware with a touch of ancient Shang and Zhou culture, or refined porcelain ware, or ordinary pots, cup, and rice bowls.

With in a teahouse, the arrangement of seats and tables was of social significance, as typified by the existence of the "zhuzuo" (master table). This table was often set up

⁶ Women were not completely absent from teahouses. Some teahouses used women, so called "peicha," to keep company such women were considered prostitutes, which explain why women's association with teahouses had a negative connotation.

either in the center of the teahouse or in the corner farthest from the front door, away from traffic. It was considered the most honored and prestigious spot in the teahouse. An old fashioned wooden armchair (taishi yi) was often set up in the center facing the door, with additional chairs placed on either side of the table. The table itself was made of hardwood. Placed on the master table were gold-trimmed antique teapots, while other tables had simple bowls or teapots. Waiters would refill the antique, teapots first. The master table was reserved for powerful patrons and special clients; regular customers knew the rules and never dared to occupy it. Such master tables existed in Lao She's Teahouse (1980:16), in the teahouses of contemporary Beijing (Barry 1994:213), and in the teahouses of early twentieth-century Beijing, though their arrangement might vary. Thus, teahouses were not places that automatically produced instant friendships, or provided sanctuary for tea "hodge-podge of humanity" that made the stress of the world give way to a remarkable sense of serenity and harmony, as some observers have suggested (Evans'1992:141; Li 1993:80-131)

Teahouses as a microcosm of the society incurred social change, which was especially evident in times of major upheavals, as in the case of the early Republic. The rapid change of that time brought social and political dislocation to many people. Previous class boundaries were being shaken and reconstructed. Teahouses both reflected and shaped such reconstruction. Teahouses were not merely a source of commercial income, but a power zone within which they could seek to influence community affairs. Their background and experience not only reflected certain characteristics of Beijing teahouse culture, but also the struggle to deal with the changing times.

Teahouses were centers of community life, their operators often assumed a certain degree of authority as unofficial community leaders. They may not have been liked, but they were needed. People turned to them for problem solving. Some even proved to be popular. Teahouse owner Huang of Hongqiao Township gained the nickname "Half-Street Huang" (Huang banjie) because he controlled the entire eastern part of the town. Once sued for beating a customer, Huang got the towns people to sign a petition that was to bully' but sent to the country magistrate, accusing the unfortunate customer of being a

gangster (Xinbao 27 September 1917:7). The influence of teahouse owners came from a number of channels. One was their broad network connections, especially with traditional social organizations like underground gangs and secret societies. Another was their access to information. Teahouses were information centers and forums where customers would come to gossip, to exchange news and to offer their opinions. Their conversational topics could range from national issues to local tax policy to more personal concerns (Xinbao 3 November 1918:6). Information about community affairs including intimate details of interpersonal relationships and family matters was useful capital. It could be exploited to benefit some and harm others. By Constructing a power zone based on business contacts and opportunities and operating mostly, outside the mainstream of the local elite circle, teahouse owners, most from humble origins, could strive to maintain and improve their socioeconomic situation in a highly unpredictable world.

While teahouse operators could hope to gain status in the community, some members of the former elite were severely disadvantaged by the changing times and had little hope of regaining their lost social standing. They escaped to teahouses to look for comfort. To those from downwardly mobile families, the teahouse helped them forget about and also absorb the shock of social change. Occasionally, they could even show their literacy skills, enabling them to earn some money and feel useful. Teahouses thus lent their lives a certain routine and coherence and, perhaps more importantly, a sense of control over their own associations and activities, even as other things in their lives seemed to be falling apart.

The Beijing teahouse appealed to these and other city dwellers for other reasons as well. It was perhaps one of the most affordable public social spaces. For three to ten copper coins, one could easily pass two hours. For an additional two to five copper coins, one could get a couple of dumplings or other dim sum from nearby bakeries and restaurants (Faison 1997:91). If a patron had to leave for a while, so long as he left his teapot uncovered his seat would be reserved and he could come back without paying, extra a practice that uniquely fitted the teahouse, since one could not drink tea for several

hours without visiting a restroom, with which few teahouses were equipped. The, teapots on the tables were filled periodically and would be collected only when, they were lidded.

2. Laoshe Teahouse in Beijing: A case study

In the aftermath of the economic success story of China, the city landscape of China, especially the mega metropolitan like Beijing and Shanghai, the traditional tea houses have become the brunt of demolition and relocation. However, some of them have reinvented the tradition in present day modernity and consumerism in China, and have attracted domestic as well as worldwide attention. Laoshe Teahouse in Beijing is just an example.

As one of the biggest teahouses in Beijing, the Laoshe Teahouse, located downtown, with a history of more than a hundred years, is a legacy from the Qing Dynasty. It is a symbol of the city's prominent teahouse culture, whose dedicated customers spend countless hours each day kicking back in its tranquil atmosphere discussing current affairs, playing mahjong, poker or Chinese chess, enjoying chair massage and some of China's unique traditional treatment such as ear cleaning. Nearby, rows of birdcages are hung up on the trees. A steady chirping mingles with the chat of the birds' owners. Tea, however, is of secondary importance to the hordes of retired folk who represent the traditional Beijing's teahouse culture. For most teahouses regular customers, enjoying each other's company in a relaxing atmosphere counts more than anything else.

Laoshe teahouse at Qianmen is named after the drama *Teahouse* by Chinese author, Lao She. Although an attempt to give a taste of a Beijing tea-house during Lao She's time, it has instead transformed into a wonderful entertainment house with short shows by comedians, singers, musicians, acrobats and opera performers. In short, one can have a kaleidoscopic view of Beijing culture while sipping tea with light refreshment. Dinner before the show is provided separately in another section of the building and the price of the food is reasonable. An adjacent room displays paintings, art objects like paper cuttings, figurines, antiques, kites and jade carvings.

The Lao She Teahouse opened in a corner of the third floor in 1988 above what was once a run-of-the-mill bank. The teahouse expanded to its current size in 2006 and recently underwent extensive renovation in preparation for the Beijing Olympics. With service area of more than 2,600 square meters, the teahouse provides an antique-flavor, Beijing-styled environment, where you can watch wonderful performances by celebrities from folk arts and drama on any given day while enjoying famous teas, palace snacks as well as traditional Beijing flavor state, numerous celebrities and more than 2 million Chinese and foreign tourists have visited Lao She Teahouse since it was founded. It has been a window for exhibiting the national culture and bridge that connects China with the rest of the world. It is in the form of a courtyard house, a kind of ancient, classic traditional building in Beijing, with the tea art at its core.

Upscale kitsch is the name of the game here at the Lao She Teahouse where visitors can choose activities based on the size of their parties or their familiarity with Beijing's teahouse culture. Acts in the 90-minute show offer a peek at the elements that make up China's traditional performing arts - Wang Limin's fish conjuring act, a selection from a Peking opera, acrobatics, and the favorite, Sichuanese face-changing.

A highlight in Laoshe Teahouse is the tea pouring acrobatics of the waiters. The waiters masterfully pour tea from a very long spouted tea pot into a small tea cup, which is always greeted by much applause. Amazingly fresh tea is served throughout dinner and the performance. There is also a tea and curio shop in the teahouse. Nonetheless it is still very enjoyable for those seeking an introduction to traditional Chinese entertainment.

Today the teahouse has become a comprehensive cultural enterprise which blends Chinese opera, food, tea, and Beijing culture, and which features various forms of teahouses found in old Beijing, such as the plain teahouse, the teahouse-restaurant, the roadside tea stall, and the teahouse with story tellers. An adjacent room display paintings, art objects like paper cuttings, figurines, antiques, kites and jade carvings.

The shows are accompanied by such refreshments as famous kinds of tea, court and local snacks, and Beijing-style delicacies. In the east of the third floor is the Big-bowl Tea Restaurant, which offers old-Beijing cuisine, specially fashioned tea-accompanying dishes, and tea banquet. Since its open, Lao She Teahouse has received 47 foreign leaders, wives of ambassadors from over 40 countries, a number of celebrities, and over 3 million tourists from home and abroad. It has become a special window to Chinese culture and a tie of friendship between China and other countries of the world. Visitors range from former and current heads of state including former US president George H W Bush and Queen Rania of Jordan to Beijingers newly returned from abroad and families just hoping to spend some quality time together.

3. Lao She's *Teahouse*

For China's great novelist and playwright Lao She (1899-1966)⁷ the Beijing teahouse was a microcosm of urban life. He chose it for the setting of his 1957 play *Teahouse*, he said, because it was a place where people from all the walks of life met. Set in a typical old Beijing teahouse, the Yu Tai 裕泰, the play portrays the lives of the manager and his customers at three different stages of modern Chinese history: the last days of the Manchu rule, the war-lord years, and the post-1945 period (Laoshe 1980:3). The play thus spans fifty years and it has a cast of over sixty characters drawn from all walks of Beijing life. Lao She chose to construct a play that had no central plot, and had no particular major role. Each act is multi-focused, and is made up of a series of exchanges. Set in three different historical periods the play also has a wide time scale. Lao She shows his interest in traditional art forms, introducing a character, Oddball Yang, to sing clapper songs before each act, and at the end of the play, which briefly summarize the action. Despite the obvious difficulty of covering fifty years of political and social

⁷ Lao She (1899-1966), real name Shu Qingchun, was of Manchurian descent and the famous author of the book called "Rickshaw". It was a bestseller in the US where Lao She was a visiting professor. He also taught Chinese at the Oriental School of London University in his earlier days. His drama *Teahouse* displayed his linguistic talent of the Beijing dialect, depicting the customers with their bird cages and their pipes enjoying tea and gossip. Other famous works are *Crescent Moon*, *City of Cats*, *The Yellow Storm* and *the Drum Singers*. Unfortunately, despite his great love for China, he was hounded by the Gang of Four to suicide by drowning. He was posthumously rehabilitated in 1979 and his complete works were fully available. His wife, Hu Jieqing (1905-2001) was an accomplished painter.

changes, and handling so many characters in one play, Lao She succeeds in shaping with great skill a series of compelling and ultimately tragic images.

Evans (1992:68) posits that large teahouses like one described by LaoShe in his *Teahouse* are no longer to be seen, but a few decades ago every district in Beijing had at least one, where in addition to tea, simple snacks and meals were served. He also tells about those every day bird fanciers, after strolling about with their caged orioles and thrushes, would come in to rest a while, enjoy a pot of tea, and compare the singing abilities of their birds. Go-betweens and those who had deals to discuss also frequented such teahouses. In those days there would often be quarrels between gangs, but there were always friends about to calm things down. The two sides would crowd around these mediators who would reason first with one side then the other; then they would all drink tea and down bowls of noodles with minced pork... hostility transformed to hospitality. In the teahouses one could hear the most absurd stories, such as how in a certain place a huge spider had turned into a demon and was then struck by lightning. One could also come in contact with the strangest views; for example, the foreign troops could be prevented from landing by building a Great Wall along the sea coast. Here one might also hear about the latest tune composed by some Beijing opera star, or the best way to prepare opium. In the teahouses one might also see rare art objects newly acquired by some patron - a jade fan pendant, recently unearthed, or a three-colour glazed snuff bottle ... the teahouse was indeed an important place, it could even be reckoned a kind of cultural centre. (Wang 1998:91)

Lao She, having established *Teahouse* in this way as a focus of life in Beijing and of the maintenance of traditional values and customs, homes in on one particular teahouse, the *Yutai*. The first act opens with the teahouse fully packed. It is a largely male-dominated place, and the atmosphere is bustling (Smith 1995; Haine 1996). Among the customers, some are softly singing opera tunes to themselves, and others are captivated by a cricket in an earthenware jar; chess fans are engrossed in their game, special police agents talk secretively, and fierce looking thugs in fighting gear head for the inner courtyard in twos or threes, ready to settle a gang dispute over a pigeon.

In Act II war-lords vie with each other for power and wealth. The presence of foreign powers is even more significant, as they now support different war-lord factions. The economy is not getting better. Most teahouses in Beijing have closed down, except the Yu Tai, which survives thanks to Wang Lifa's clever "reform" (*gailiang* 改良) policy. Police and soldiers demand bribes, and the activities of spies are becoming more uncontrolled. In the last act, set in the period after the Japanese war, this message is even more explicit. It seems to matter little whether the war-lords have been replaced by the Guomindang 国民党, for the corruption of the government remains the same. The play is filled with nostalgia for the past. At the very beginning of the play Lao She sighs about the dwindling numbers of teahouses in Beijing. In Act III he shows his concern over the loss of interest in traditional arts. Lao She explained that his reason for ending the play in such a way was to "bury the three periods" (*zangsong sange shidai* 葬送三个时代)

4. Parallel and Contrast between Laoshe Teahouse and *Lao She's Teahouse*

The play *Laoshe's Teahouse* depicts the diverse people in old Beijing society who go along in their daily lives smoking pipes, enjoying gossip and showing off their bird cages while relaxing in an ordinary teahouse where they happen to like spending their time. Whereas today's Laoshe Teahouse is a multi-levelled tourist establishment, that has many spaces for people from "all walks of life", it is a restaurant, teahouse, shop and theatre, where it is able to bring together locals and tourists alike to be thrilled by the entertainment schedule that ranges from folk music recitals, opera concerts, shadow plays to zither performances. But in both Laoshe Tea house and *Laoshe's Teahouse*, a "Beijing flavor," evoked through the descriptions of the city's landscape, local customs, manners of the characters and use of local language, is found from beginning to end.

Laoshe's Teahouse accommodated clients with diverse social backgrounds and habits. Bird lovers could bring their cages to hang under the eaves. Water pipe smokers could have teahouse waiters affix shredded tobacco to their pipes. But all this is not there

in the present day Laoshe Teahouse because of the economic development and pressure on people to earn money , they don't get time for all such activities, people just use to come and enjoy folk music and house entertainment and sometimes even participate and perform for their peers. *Laoshe's Teahouse* started their business at about 5 o'clock in the morning serving tea until noon but today they are open from morning to late evening and also arrange special parties, educational tours and business meetings.

Entertainment, mainly storytelling and folk music, was another major attraction of teahouses. Storytelling usually took place in pure teahouse in the afternoon and evening. Most storytellers were invited from out of town by teahouse owners. Often they would, perform over a period of ten or twenty days (Xu 1992:34-36). Such events would be advertised with brief informal notes posted at the entrances of city streets, lanes, and alleys, similar to the way other official and public announcements were posted, Afternoon and evening patrons, consisting mostly of local residents, were not as diverse as the morning customers. Children were allowed to attend teahouse storytelling with their fathers. Members of the audience often participated actively in the storytelling process, for most stories were based on Chinese popular fiction and were thus familiar to the audience. But this tradition seems to have died in present day tea house.

However, teahouses in Pre republic time were not merely places of leisure; they were working spaces as well. The popular notion that a teahouse was a leisure locus needs to be reexamined. Admittedly, many people went there for relaxation, and some teahouses were more leisure-oriented than others; but teahouses also served as "offices" for various tradesmen. Teahouses also served as "offices" for litigation and other brokers, as well as for policemen gathering information (Haine 1996:22). That is why they were sometimes identified by such functional terms as "jiangcha" ("talk tea" - informal mediation of disputes), "dingwu shichang" (real estate market) (Yu 1987:214). In some cases, the name and location of teahouses not only indicated their character as working spaces, but also the kind of business they conducted. In the late Qing dynasty, two teahouses were located on the eastern and western sides of the Haimen county yamen respectively. Both teahouses served as informal offices for litigators (Chen 1992:29).

Present day teahouses are much far from being any informal offices. They are just place for leisure and entertainment. People and families just enjoy them as gathering places but in pre republican period its was a popular gathering place favored by practitioners of various fields.

Teahouses came to reflect new tensions in career dislocation and competition. Such tensions, for example, were visible in the legal domain, where traditional litigation brokers were challenged by new developments in the early Republic, including the use of professional lawyers. Litigation brokers had long been active in local society in imperial China. They played a vital role in informal justice by writing complaints for and advising litigants (Macaulay 1994:22). Social change in the late Qing and early Republican period significantly affected this group. For one thing, their number increased toward the end of the Qing (Chang 1994:316), due in part to institutional changes and consequent career dislocation. For instance, the abolition of the civil service examination system left many private tutors without jobs. Alternative opportunities were available, but they often required updated education and training. The transition for many was not easy. Also, while low-level government students such as shengyuan still comprised a segment of litigation brokers (Chang 1994:314-15), litigators became increasingly diverse in their composition. As Chang (1994:298-303-308-9) pointed out, formal legal training in Qing China was not necessary even for those who worked within the legal system, and customary rules embedded within a particular culture and the operational rules of local government were often as important as the formal legal code. Therefore, it did not take academic degrees and expertise to become a litigation broker. Whereas if we see modern day Teahouse though there are no brokers in teahouses any more, and more over the people who are appointed in the teahouse as entertainers or servicemen are from good educational institutions and they hold good degrees in their respective professions.

Today comprehensive performances in teahouses include Folk Music Play, Beijing Opera, Danxian (story-telling to musical accompaniment), Hand Shadow Play, Folk Dance, Face Changing, Acrobatics, Magic Tricks, Allegretto, Comic Dialogue Show and Chinese Martial Arts, whereas if we see the pre republic teahouses as shown in play *Laoshe's*

Teahouse we see that except all these, there use to be fortune tellers and match makers in the teahouses and as serious as political issues were also discussed there.

The play *Teahouse* though does not deal with the political issues, but it does have a political message, in that the suffering and hardship of the common people are revealed in the lives of the teahouses's staff and its customers, and the audience is made all to aware of the pessimistic state of affairs in China. With its incidental rather than didactic approach, the play expressed changes in political systems and warfare. But present day Laoshe teahouse in downtown Beijing doesn't discuss politics in any way because of the fact that today China is a communist society and discussing politics in public places is sort of an offense, and second reason is that present teahouse in an entertainment and leisure place, rather than being a place to discuss politics.

In Laoshe Teahouse in Beijing the audience can enjoy a variety of local snacks and as many cups of tea as they can muster throughout the show, while seated comfortably around tables accommodating about six people. The hall, furnished in the late Qing dynasty style, is decorated with beautiful Chinese lanterns, paintings and calligraphy works, which make for a warm and cozy atmosphere. The snacks on offer include delicious candied hawthorn berries, melon seeds, bean cakes (wān dòu huáng 豌豆黄) and glutinous rice balls with sweet bean paste filling (lú dǎ gǔn 驴打滚), among others. About halfway through the show, a bowlful of sweet hawthorn berry soup is also served. Other food and beverages can be ordered from a menu for a separate charge.

Today in Laoshe Teahouse one has to pay almost 100 RMB for enjoy a cup of normal tea and snacks along with it, but in the pre republican era the cost of the same only 2 to 5 mao and people from downwardly mobile families also used to enjoy the tea. but since today the Teahouse has become a major tourist attraction from visitors all around the world, people are ready to pay hefty amount to but a seat in Laoshe Teahouse at Qianmen.

In the *teahouse*, the arrangement of seats and tables was of social significance, as typified by the existence of the master table. This table was often set up either in the center of the teahouse or in the corner farthest from the front door, away from traffic. It was considered the most honored and prestigious spot in the teahouse. An old fashioned wooden armchair (taishi yi) was often set up in the center facing the door, with additional chairs placed on either side of the table. The table itself was made of hardwood. But today in Laoshe Teahouse fancy chairs, tables and sofas are used for seating arrangements and there is no social significance behind them. Though they still have the master table, but it is not kept in the middle of all chairs. Seating arrangement is done according to the setting of the stage on which performances take place in the evening. People can book seats in advance and can also ask for the seat on which they would like to sit. Different from the past arrangement, the chairs are put in orderly rows, all facing the TV set in the inner hall. When the evening falls, a dense crowd of employees seat themselves in the tea houses.

The status of Teahouse has also increased due to its traditional and historical significance, and also due to the visit of some famous political figures from all over the world. So Teahouse today has become a must in all the tourist itineraries and has become a prestigious issue for people in China to visit Teahouse on regular basis. But in some local teahouse only for a few yuan, migrant workers can enjoy tea and video the whole evening.

Unfortunately, the dualistic nature of teahouse culture often went unrecognized. In the case of Beijing, what seems ironic is that while the flourishing of local teahouses was a by-product of the high-speed commercial and modern development in the region, the teahouses themselves and their culture were never embraced by the emergent cultural elites of the early Republic in fact, the new cultural elites considered teahouses part of the vanishing past, a negative influence on the new, Republican age.

In *Laoshe's Teahouse*, one can see that Laoshe exploited to the full his experience as a novelist and as a playwright. Lao She was not dealing with contemporary issues but

with the problems of pre-Liberation Chinese society, about which he could write with more assurance. The mood of the times was skillfully captured through the feelings and attitudes of a range of individuals, and that unique Beijing atmosphere so typical of Lao She was brought to life. The local Beijing residents in the play are all vividly portrayed, and each of them speaks his or her variety of Beijing vernacular. Their thinking and behaviour accurately reflect their background and character also.

The study of Beijing teahouses suggests that public spaces in early Republican China were vigorously contested not only as physical settings but also as cultural representations. Such contestation, as reflected in *Xinbao's* denial of the teahouse as a public place and in its promotion, of novel leisure spaces such as public parks and sport stadiums, helped to sharpen the distinction between tradition and modernity. But this distinction was defined by and in turn served the need of the May Fourth new cultural elites. For them, unless everything old in Chinese culture was swept away, a strong, new China could never be created; consequently, they arrogated to themselves the mission of building the new China. This missionary mentality, along with an obsessive belief as agents of China's salvation, was among the most salient features of the May Fourth intellectuals (Lee 1987:501).

As for the Laoshe teahouse, while inevitably reflecting the changing times, they remained largely traditional. Ordinary people used the teahouses to while away side time or to engage in various purposive activities, just as they had been doing for centuries this was clearly a disappointment to China's new cultural elites and perhaps also to those contemporary scholars who seek to discern within the public arena nascent civil society. While teahouses in other areas and times may have witnessed greater political activity and higher civic consciousness it must be noted that there were a large number of conventional, political public places in early-twentieth-century China, including local bathhouses, barbershops, taverns, restaurants, grocery stores, and small theaters. Such public spaces were a prime focus of neighborhood life in villages, markets, towns, and small cities where the majority of the Chinese population lived. They continued to serve their communities in the, old ways long after the dawn of the modern era. Their vitality

and resilience law in their satisfaction of the human need for sociability, which transcended the often ambiguous distinction between modernity and tradition.

The old fashioned Teahouses as described in *Laoshe's Teahouse*, were occupied mostly by the elderly. They visit the tea houses even in the early morning. Some old folks are used to taking tobacco pipes over one-meter long when drinking tea. Sometimes when the pipe goes out, they are able to press the lighter on the ground and light up the pipe again, mimicking the action of fishing. In those Teahouses, tea drinkers can spit on the ground as if there is no one else around, and wear nothing on the upper body with so much ease. These old-fashioned tea houses were often noisy, and the tea drinkers, strangers to each other, usually come from different places.

The rapid development of China's market economy brings dramatic changes to all aspects of social life. But one thing never changes that the Beijing people always need a place for leisurely tea-drinking and chatting. Well aware of that, Laoshe Teahouse lose no time in getting hold of the business opportunities. As such, Laoshe Teahouse emerges as required by times. The atmosphere in present day Laoshe teahouse changes dramatically. Materialistic desires are exposed. Businessmen's manners penetrate throughout the tea houses. The leisure and ease of the old-fashioned tea houses in the past are gone. Cultural and artistic lectures and literary coaching in various forms are often held in the tea shop, attracting teenagers seeking for extracurricular studies.

With western furnishings and graceful tea sets, they are as magnificent as royal palaces. You can enjoy light music and piano performance, too. Of course, prices in present day Laoshe Teahouse hike up considerably. Such classes of tea as the past "Sanhua" (third-grade jasmine) are no longer tolerable here. A cup of tea costs at least a dozen yuan or even up to several dozen yuan, and so-called "gentleman tea" and "lady tea" are distinguished in some tea houses. Young people are the major customers. They wear suits or dress themselves with fashionable and pretty clothes and go to tea houses with confidence and ease. They go there for dating, business negotiations, business

operation planning or information exchange, or for other specific purposes. A new tea custom has come into being in Laoshe Teahouse.

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Chapter 3

Contemporary tea culture in China

Today tea is known as one of China's great treasures throughout the world. Tea has played an important social and cultural fabric of life around the world as it has been an important part of Chinese traditional culture, which covers a wide field and is rich in content. It not only has the embodiment of spiritual civilization, but also the extension of ideological form. No doubt it is beneficial in enhancing the cultural accomplishment and level of art appreciation among the Chinese people. It has also been linked with health from the very beginning, and is prized for its ability to banish fatigue, stimulate the mental powers, and raise the energy level. The Taoist philosophers and Buddhist monks, who did much to promote tea and improve its cultivation in China, imbued tea drinking with greater meaning than is applied to any other beverage.

In contemporary China, tea is always served to guests as a sign of welcome and hospitality, and in restaurants, a pot of tea is always the first and the last thing to be brought to the table. *Laoshe* (1980:77) in his play *Teahouse*, exhibits that in teahouses, the traditional 'gongfu' ceremony is performed using a set of delicate tea bowls, straight-sided smelling cups, a small earthenware teapot and the traditional method of making several infusions from the same measure of leaves, each with its own individual aroma and flavor. On trains, every carriage had a boiler to provide hot water for tea brewing and each compartment has a thermos that is filled and refilled from the boiler throughout the journey. Travelers carry cups or jars, or sometimes covered mugs are supplied by the railway, and conductors sell packs of tea for a few pennies. At work, every factory and office has a boiler, and mugs or cups of tea are brewed constantly throughout the working day. Teahouses, which fell from grace during the Cultural Revolution because they were seen as hotbeds for political intrigue and dissent, are now very much back in fashion and appeal to all types and ages.

Besides being a national and healthy drink, tea in course of time has also become and integral and necessary part of Chinese traditional life, marriage ceremonies, tourism, arts and aesthetics, religion etc. So it's no wonder that a simple cup of tea is far from a simple matter, and that tea enthusiast' attraction to this exhilarating beverage was responsible for changing tea traditions and its drinking purpose.

1. Tea Ceremony

Tanaka (1973:3) says that “Ceremony is any activity that is performed in an especially solemn elaborate or formal way”. The evolution of the Chinese Tea Ceremony mirrors the growth and importance of tea within Chinese culture. In the beginning, tea was cultivated and used solely as herbal medicine mostly within temples. Monks began to use tea to teach a respect for nature, humility and an overall sense of peace and calm. In fact, the spirit of the Chinese Tea Ceremony is described as *he, jing, yi, zhen* which translates to peace, quiet, enjoyment and truth (Yun 2009:19-27).



Monks felt they could illustrate deep philosophical concepts through tea service. It is for that reason that the underlying philosophies of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism blend together through the Chinese tea ceremony. Tea ceremonies could be seen in memorial celebrations for both emperors and family ancestors. It has been so inspiring to artists that the Chinese tea ceremony, as it is called, has been written in songs and poetry also. The ritual of preparing and serving tea has even held a special place in the hearts and minds of the Chinese aristocracy, court officials, intellectual, poets, and even the common people.

The first written account of tea ceremonies was during the Tang Dynasty over 1200 years ago (Li 2007:248-257). The term to describe the serving of tea was initially called *Cha Dao* or the way of tea. Japanese monks traveling through China during this

period began to learn tea and tea culture. After bringing this knowledge back to Japan, tea ceremonies evolved in Japan as it blended with Japanese culture resulting in the well-known Japanese Tea Ceremony and is still called *cha dao*. Although *cha dao* originated in China, many felt a new term was needed to distinguish between Japanese and Chinese tea ceremonies. In 1970, a Taiwanese tea master Lu Zikuang coined the term *cha yi* or art of tea, to represent current Chinese tea ceremonies.

Back in the Song Dynasty, it was customary for the groom from a wealthy family to come armed with precious ornaments made from rare stones, jade and gold, rolls of satin and silk as well as tea cakes to the bride's home (Peng 2006:33). In the Ming Dynasty, a bride had to drink tea when she accepted the offer of marriage. It was a common belief that once the seeds of a tea tree were planted, it could not be moved. Moving the tree would mean death for the plant. Thus the drinking of the tea symbolized staying true to one person throughout one's life.

It was common in ancient China for the evergreen tea tree to be seen as the tree of love. Tea was always part of the dowry and carried with it all the blessings of family members. Even today, in many provinces of China, tea is still seen as an integral part of the engagement and wedding ceremony. Tea is served at the announcement of the engagement, the acceptance of the dowry, the bidding of farewell to the bride's parents and the actual wedding ceremony. The people think that tea served during wedding will leave to lifelong relationships. In the indigenous tribes of the north, tea is even more frequently seen as an accompaniment to auspicious occasions.

On its most basic level, the Chinese tea ceremony emphasizes the tea itself, rather than the ceremony. It focuses on what the tea tastes like, smells like, and how one tea tastes compared to the previous tea, or in inclusive rounds of drinking. It doesn't mean that each server will perform the ritual the same way and it is not related to religion. Every step taken during the ceremony is meant to be a sensory exploration and time of appreciation.

2. Tea and wedding ceremony

Tea Ceremony is an official ritual to introduce the newlyweds to each other's family, and it's a way for newlyweds to show respect and appreciation to their parents. The newlyweds kneel in front of their parents, serving tea to both sides of parents, as well as elder close relatives. Parents give their words of blessing and gifts to the newlyweds. During tea presentation, a "Good Luck Woman" would say auspicious phrases to bless the newlyweds and the parents. These auspicious words of blessing are almost a lost art now a days, that are designed to bless and amuse the family and make the occasion filled with fun and joy.

In tea ceremony Lotus seeds and two red dates are often used in tea. There are two reasons behind this. First, the words "lotus" and "year," "seed" and "child," and "date" and "early," are homophones, i.e. they have the same sound but different meanings in Chinese. Secondly, the ancient Chinese believed that putting these items in the tea would help the newlyweds produce children early in their marriage and every year, which would ensure many grandchildren for their parents. Also, the sweetness of the special tea is a wish for sweet relations between the bride and her new family.

On the wedding day, the bride serves tea (holding the teacup with both hands) to her parents at home before the groom arrives. She does this out of respect and to thank her parents for raising her. The tea at this time does not need to have the lotus seeds or dates, and the bride does not need the assistance of a "lucky woman." She pours and serves the tea by herself without the groom.

Traditionally, after the wedding ceremony, the newlyweds serve tea (holding the teacups with both hands), inviting the groom's elders to drink tea by addressing them by formal title, e.g. first uncle or third aunt. Bergfre (1997:309) tells us that the general rule is to have the woman on the left side and the man on the right side. The people being served will sit in chairs, while the bride and groom kneel. For example, when the newlyweds serve tea to the groom's parents, the bride would kneel in front of her father-

in-law, while the groom would kneels in front of his mother. The newlyweds serve tea in order, starting with the groom's parents then proceeding from the oldest family members to the youngest, e.g. the groom's parents, then his paternal grandparents, then his maternal grandparents, then his oldest uncles and aunts, and all the way to his older brother.

In return, the newlyweds receive lucky red envelopes ("li shi," which means "lucky") stuffed with money or jewellery (Bergfre 1997:311). The helpers, who are usually women blessed with a happy marriage or wealth and chosen by the fortuneteller or bride's mother, also get lucky red envelopes stuffed with money from those being served. These envelopes are placed on the platter, which holds the teacups. The tea ceremony has undergone few modifications throughout the years and today's tea ceremony, whilst still full of significance and meaning, is often a shortened procedure involving the presence of close friends of the bride and groom.

2.1 Tea rules for unmarried girls – Fu Chunjiang (2008:77) reveals that in the province of Fujian, unmarried girls were forbidden to drink tea served outside her home. If she drinks tea in another household, it means she has consented to become the daughter-in-law to the household in question. This tradition stems from the immovable nature of the tea tree. Tea is regarded as a token of trust. This customs still prevails in downtown areas of Fujian province but at the same time are getting out of fashion with modernization.

2.2 Three tea customs - In Fujian province three different kinds of teas, each with distinct symbolic meaning, are served during the marriage ritual. When the matchmaker arrives at the home of the potential bride, she has to drink a sugared tea that symbolizes her words will be sweet and appealing. When a prospective groom visits the home of his betrothed, he is served a clear, light tea. After he finishes his tea, he places a valuable ornament or money inside the teacup. If the lady in question accepts the teacup, it signifies she has accepted the proposal for marriage. On the wedding night, red dates, peanuts are added to the tea that is served to the couple. These three items are seen as symbols of fertility (Xiusong 1993:456).

2.3 Tea as betrothal gift -Tea has always been part of the betrothal gift collection. The tea had to be high grade and placed inside two porcelain jars. The pairing of porcelain jars signifies the bride and the groom. The bride-to-be will then give the tea away to her close friends and family to stress the immovability/solidity of the union. It is a public form of announcement that they intend to stay together till death do them part.

2.4 Tea in treating guests in wedding ceremony -When guests arrive for the wedding party, they are immediately served tea alongside 'tea snacks' such as candy, peanuts and watermelon seeds.

2.5 Serving tea for the family - On the first day or third day after the wedding, the bride has to prepare a meal for the entire family. During this time, she will serve tea and snacks from her hometown as a show of respect for her new family.

2.6 Suzhou spring tea dance - In Suzhou, it is customary for a tea dance to be performed when the groom arrives at the bride's home with his entourage. This tea dance requires a certain degree of finesses, the wooden tray with four filled teacups on it cannot spill during the dance. Whenever the tea dance performance takes place, the room is generally crowded with onlookers who will cheer the dancer on – all this adds to the festive atmosphere of the wedding celebrations.

2.7 Boiling tea by bride – Burges (2005:141) posits that in some ethnic tribes of China, the bride is called on to light the kitchen hearth the day after the wedding. This is called the ritual of 'lighting a new fire' for her new home. The bride will use the fire to brew fresh tea and serve the tea to all the members of the groom's family. The groom will take this opportunity to formally introduce his wife to the family.

2.8 Gift money for serving tea - In some mountainous regions surrounding Hubei, Hunan, and Sichuan, the newlyweds have to serve tea the day after the wedding to guests

who attended the wedding party. At this time, the guests will provide gift-money to the newlyweds and offer their best wishes.

2.9 Tea for new marriage - In Yunan province, the bride and groom have to drink tea out of the same cup on their wedding day. This ritual signifies their union and the tea of choice is usually Pu'er. Chen Bingsheng (1991:5) points out that in China the reddish color of the Pu'er tea symbolizes fortune and celebration. After drinking the tea, the couple is expected to love and honor each other all through their lives.

2.10 Tea plant as dowry - In certain Yunan tribes, the bridal dowry consists of a few tea tree saplings that must be planted in the groom's home. The tea tree saplings must have been nurtured by the bride herself beforehand. The tea tree symbolizes eternal love. If the couple gets divorced, the tea trees will be uprooted and returned to the bride's family (Wang 1998:99).

2.11 Oil-tea with brown sugar –Wu Zhihe (1996:211) explores the role of tea in certain Yunan tribal customs, and finds out that tea as beverage is served to the wedding guests known as oil-tea (a concoction made of tea leaves, peanut powder and sesame) with brown sugar. Before the guests enjoy this sweet drink, they have to first sip a strong cup of bitter tea. This ritual symbolizes the determination of the newlyweds to weather all obstacles they come across through the course of life. The tea drinking is emblematic of their life together: they will first experience the bitter (hardships) and then the sweet (fruits of their labor).

3. Tea and religious ceremonies

Tea is related with many major religions in China – Buddhsim, Taoism and Islam, in addition to its relationship with Confucius teachings. Yu Yu (1976:10) in her book 茶事茶话 (Things and talks about tea) discuss that the earliest history of proliferation of tea owed much to the support from Buddhists, as they had tea drinking activity in Buddhist monastery. In monasteries they had red board hanging on a pillar which meant “Tea for

all". Zensect, one of the chief branches of Buddhism, glorified around 730 A.D. of Tang dynasty. The center of Zen tenet learning was then at the monastery Lingyansi on Mount Taishan. The basic form of meditation performed by the Zen student monks was hard sitting, allowing no doze-offs. As no evening meals were served to them, the only thing that students were permitted to take was tea. So people use to carry their own tea utensils and make tea wherever suitable.

There arose an appraisal that "tea and Zen savour the same." This idea had gradually been seeping to abroad and caused the Japanese monks who came to China to study Buddhism always on the alert not to forget bringing tea seeds to Japan. Master Eisai who was a dedicated learner of Buddhism coming form Japan to China was the author of *Keeping Health by Taking Tea*, a book on the reliance of healthy life on tea. Master Eisai was regarded in Japan as the "ancestor of tea."

The core of Confucianism is etiquette and harmony. For example, the Chinese have the custom "When a guest arrives, a cup of tea will be served". After seeing the guest, the host will serve tea as a way to welcome him. During the conversation, tea will add to the friendly atmosphere. At the end of the visit, the host raises the tea cup as a way to say its time for "goodbye". Tea served in the teahouses exhibits harmony. You'll find all tea cups only 70% full instead of completely full. The tea house owner or the tea servers will explain to you that this means "seventy percent tea and thirty percent affection". One may ask the same question other way, why not 30% tea and 70% affection? Why not show more affection? In fact, the "thirty percent affection" explanation is a modern misinterpretation of a tradition that originated from the Han and Tang dynasties. The remaining space in the tea cup means to keep one's mind open, implying the moral of "Pride hurts and Modesty benefits". (Wang 1998: 121)

As regards the Taoism, when Taoists pray at the altar, cups of tea are put on the platform where they kneel on the ground donating items of contribution to the fairies, tea being one of the chief items. When the Taoist are keeping fast prior to performing certain important rituals which ask for pureness and cleanness of the body and soul, tea displays

indispensable functions. This explains why tea is generally planted at the Buddhist and Taoist monasteries. Tea culture has thus developed by the side of religious activities. Islam forbids its followers to take alcoholic beverages, the followers take tea instead. Green tea from China is cherished by Muslim nations in Africa.

4. Tea and Literature

Amid the vast ocean of the ancient literatures in the long history of China, the topics of tea are recorded in the authentic annuals, history books, anecdotes and other writings in the form of sketches and notes, laws and regulations, poems and essays, archaeological studies and local records etc. have made a very rich and abundant documentation about tea. Studies and researches show that up to the present moment, apart from a great number of books and articles written after the founding of the People's Republic of China, there are 563 books and quotations handed down from the earlier generations (China tea import and export cooperation, 1994) from which their original texts could be seen or the quotations could be traced.

Lu Yu's (陆羽, 733-804) crowning work, *The Tea Classic* 《茶经》, written during the Tang Dynasty (唐代, 618-907) remains the most outstanding work as regards the cultivation, classification, brewing of tea in China. Books on tea in later generations were all influenced by it in one way or another. Because of this, Lu Yu was idolized by later generations as "God of Tea", "Saint of Tea", "Ancestor of Tea", "The Immortal of Tea", and so on. *The Tea Classic* consists of two parts. The first part has ten sections, dealing with quality of tea and ways of cooking and drinking. The second part has nine sections, talking about apparatus for cooking. Thus, *The Tea Classic* covers the whole process from tea-picking to tea-making, and refers to every aspect of tea culture. In the same vein Zhu Quan's (朱权, 1378-1448) *Catalogue of Tea* 《茶谱》 comprises of two parts – preface and the body, body being sub-divided into discussion on tea and catalogue of tea.

Pu'er Black Tea Classic 《红茶普洱经典茶艺》 by Wang Jingzhu (王琼主) says, there are four "true teas." A true tea is a tea that originates and uses the leaves from

a specific plant called *Camellia Sinensis*. The "true teas" are green tea, black tea, white tea and oolong tea. These different types of tea are the result of differences in the tea manufacturing process, and not due to different types of tea plants. 《茶艺服务》 (*Tea Services*) by Li Shuhe (栗书河) not only talk about different kinds of natural teas but also Tea as a blend of some combination of the four main types listed above. Teas can also be flavored with oils or scented with flower petals during the processing stage. This books extensively talks about tea in different Chinese cultural traditions like marriage, dance, art, etc.

Chinese literary works of many forms such as poetry, verse, prose and song with tea either as its topic or related to tea are abundant in number and are a part of treasures of Chinese literary art. Tang dynasty saw thriving classical poetry and tea was one of the centers of interest. Poet Bai Juyi (772-846) had an oft-recited long poem *Song of the lute* in which tea was mentioned as a traded article (Dong 2009:168):

“My beauty Faded and fewer
carriages came than before,
until finally I married a trader
whose mind was only on profits
and who thought little of separation;
one month before, he left to but tea
in Fuliang. With him away, I
came out on the river under
the cool autumn moon to recall
my youthful years, see
how the tears stain my face
with rouge”

Poet Yuan Zhen (779-831) who's Story of Miss Ying was noted to have induced creation of the very famous play *West Chamber*, based on the story, by Wang Shipu, had a verse about tea written to a peculiar form-an isosceles triangle.

Tea

Sweet leaf, tender bud
Befriend poet guests, love Buddhist abbots
Grind made of jade, mesh of red gauze
Wok boils to yellow color, liquor swirls to white dust
Inviting moon to come after dusk, facing dawn aurora before daybreak
Wash tirelessly everyone, past and present, don't prattle after you're tipsy and pleasant

“An isosceles poem triangle”

(Wang 1998:129)

Many other famous poets wrote about tea. Among whom were Ouyang Xiu (1007 – 1072), (*On Double-well tea*); Huang Tingjian (1045-11105), (*Verse on Tea*); Xie Zongke (1280-1368), (*Make Tea with Snow*) and Hong Xiwen (1280-1368), (*Boil Crude Tea*) etc. It could be discerned that tea has permeated the poems since a very early time. From the earliest tea poems (such as Poem on Lovely Young Girls written by Zuo Si) to the present time, lasting one thousand and seven hundred years, a large number of poems and litterateurs have created many graceful poems about tea.

Leaves burst to a shape like phoenix claw; Mild
Winter keeps early buds to grow; With downy white on
surface and pink pouch underneath. Brinhg them in
fresh and turn out tea to do business, From an hundred
weight an ounce for sale is made; For three days the
riches in Chang'an kept it once they had
enjoyed the flavor of Double-well. Nature of man has
it: loving new favourite and loathing the old. But man
of virtue treasures his affection to the original. Did'nt
you notice the “Dragon-phoenix Buck Tea” of Jiangxi ?

(Zhu Quan 2009:228)

5. Tea and Tourism

The places of growth of famous Chinese tea are usually the famous scenic spots and thus places of tourism. Laoshe Teahouse has been included in all the itineraries by most of the tourist companies in Mainland China, and thus is a must visit for any foreigner who is visiting the capital of China, Beijing. Besides Laoshe teahouse there are tea shops who sell famous Chinese tea and people visit these shops to buy Chinese teas and also some souvenirs to gift people back home. There are also some mountainous tea growing areas which have become tourist destinations for travelers from around the world to China. Most prominent ones are the Hungshan in Anhui, Xihu in Zhejiang, Lushan in Jiangxi, and Xishuangbanna in Yunnan provinces

Huangshan or the Yellow Mountain in Anhui is famous for Tunxi green tea as well as a scenic spot visited by Chinese and overseas tourists. The incomparable beautiful Westlake of Hangzhou is the homeland of Longjing (Dragon Well) green tea. Another scenic mountain Wuyi is the birthplace of Oolong black tea. Mount Emei, the mountain associated so much with fairy stories and Chinese Wushu legends the homeland of Emei Maofeng (Summit of Mount Emei) black tea early in Tang Dynasty. A couplet has been recited through ages on Mengding tea. “The water of Yangze River, the tea on the summit of Meng” Hainan black tea originates from the Wuzhishan (Five Finger Mount) where the name *Hawaii in China* has been given in the tourism trade.

Xishuangbanna, an ethnic territory so enchanting with its natural beauty in Yunnan, is a tourists’ “must” if they choose to make a trip to southeastern China, this territory is the birthplace of tea as a plant in the world. The oldest tea, tens of meters tall, are found in this territory where people climb on ladder up the tree crown to pluck tea leaves. It is a great pleasure to see the beautiful scenic places and at the same time sip good tea brewed with famous fountain water. The district of Xihu Longjing tea (West Lake, Dragon well tea) had now been laid off as an area specially decorated for tourists to let the guests pluck and process tea by themselves.

6. Tea and Politics

Over the centuries, the tea trade has shaped culture and significantly influenced power and politics in both the East and the West. In the early 1200's the Mongols invaded China, ushering in the Yuan Dynasty that lasted until 1368. These Mongolians did not pay great attention to tea service but they did adopt the habit of salting their tea and mixing it with milk; they still consume it in this fashion today.

Political historical crunches took place in 16th and 17th century Europe; where the favorite tea became black tea, prepared from fully fermented green tea leaves. France and the Netherlands were the two largest tea-consuming nations until the late 1650s. As the English rose to dominate the oceans of the known world, trade ships known as Tea Clippers were born. These vessels carried silk, porcelain and other goods from China to Europe, but they took their name from their most important cargo. Over the centuries, the tea trade has shaped culture and significantly influenced power and politics in both the East and the West. In 1610, the Holland United East Indian Company bought their first crop of Japanese tea in Hirado and Chinese tea in Macao from a Portuguese merchant (Heiss 2007:78). Eventually, tea became very popular among Holland's royal families and its upper class. In the 1630s, the Dutch began selling teas to France, Germany, North America, and England. Holland developed a major tea plantation in Indonesia in the 1870s and supplied teas both domestically and internationally. It helped transform Indonesia into one of today's major tea producing nations. By 1760, five thousand tons of teas were imported (this includes smuggling) from China to England. By the 19th century, tea was the major commodity traded between China and England. Tea was paid for in silver. The Chinese imported far less than they sold and they levied extensive tariffs. As a result, England incurred a massive trade deficit and a shortage of silver in Great Britain. Subsequently England forced China to accept opium from their Indian colony as payment to reduce their deficit, causing a dispute that eventually leads to the Opium War in 1840.

The addictive nature of opium eventually led to high demand in China. The balance of trade was reestablished with this narcotic and the tea trade once again became lucrative for the English. Understanding the addictive and destructive nature of opium and the impact it was having on their society, China's Qing dynasty banned the trade of opium as well as the outflow of silver, also used to pay for commodities they imported. England responded by starting the Opium Wars (1840-1842) using military force to achieve what trade and diplomacy failed to. England defeated the Chinese in two conflicts. The two countries signed the Nanking Treaty, giving way to the free trade system. Great Britain gained the territory of Hong Kong as well as numerous trade concessions including access to five other ports, most notably the Shanghai port. France and the United States soon gained similar free-trade rights.

The French and Indian War exacerbated Great Britain's financial problems in the mid-18th century. As a result, a series of tariffs and direct taxes were imposed on the English colonies in North America to help recover some of the costs of the war. Taxation without representation was a major irritant to North American Colonists beholden to the English crown. By this time, the American colonies were consuming more tea per year than England. The Colonists boycotted English products and tea was taxed in retaliation, leading to an extreme decrease in tea consumption in the colonies and a surplus of tea in England. A black market in illegal trade of this very popular commodity was also spawned as a result. The English tried a variety of measures to halt the illegal trade in tea resulting from the official boycott, but the taxes remained. Finally, the English parliament was forced to allow the sale of tea without tax in America. Four ships loaded with tea were sent from England and arrived in Boston. Angry over the British tax policy, a group of colonists disguising themselves as Native Americans dumped hundreds of pounds of English tea into Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773 in an event that became known as the Boston Tea Party. British ships subsequently carrying tea from England suffered a similar fate. Tensions escalated, and the English sent troops to the colonies leading to the start of the War for Independence in 1775. The Boston Tea Party became one of the primary catalysts for the American Revolution that led to the independence and subsequent creation of the United States. (Evans 1992:88)

After the Revolutionary War, the United States became a trading nation in its own right, gaining direct access to Chinese tea commerce. The drive to expand its own trading routes and status eventually led the United States to end three centuries of Japanese isolation in the 1860's when its infamous black warships sailed into Nagasaki harbor – a less than subtle indication of the clout behind its trade mission. Japan eventually opened up because of this mission, and shared its evolving and distinct tea culture with the West. Throughout the nineteenth century the English in India, Sri Lanka and Burma and the Germans in East Africa established tea plantations. China had finally lost her sovereignty regarding tea.

Today, after water, tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world. It is now grown in Africa, India and other parts of Asia. Ireland currently has the highest per capita consumption of tea in the world while modern China is experiencing a rise in instant commercial teas of lower quality among younger people who profess that they have no time to brew tea properly anymore. Chinese tea is still highly esteemed throughout the world. Indeed, the lesson of how one Chinese herb has profoundly influenced world trade is worth examining, especially as China has now taken her place in the international commercial marketplace.

Tea has been one of the daily necessities in China since time immemorial. Countless numbers of people like to have their tea after meal. Contemporary tea-drinking people of China pay great attention to the health-care properties of the tea they drink, it is necessary to mention here that tea contains two alkaloids, i.e. caffeine and theophylline besides a number of other chemical ingredients. Both caffeine and theophylline are diuretics and cardiac stimulants. They can stimulate the central nervous system of the human body; thereby lifting the person's spirits and invigorating his/her brain function. If a person drinks a few cups of tea a day, the acidic substances in his/her muscles, being neutralized from time to time, will not be able to accumulate. He/she will not easily feel tired; will almost always be in high spirit, and will be able to work with high efficiency. In the present -day world obese people tend to increase in number. The flavonoid,

aromatic substances, and theophylline that exist in tea can reduce the contents of cholesterol and triglyceride in human blood and also diminish the density of blood fat. Therefore, tea has the power of reducing adipose.

Scientific experiments have shown that drinking tea can protect the human body from harmful effect of radiation. It can be inferred that tea leaves must contain materials which can defend the body's blood -making mechanism. Therefore tea in China is not only considered as health tonic, but has imbued in the Chinese way of life in such a way that it is inseparable from its culture and tradition, religious life, but is increasingly the part of cultural tourism across China.

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Conclusion

Culture is a broad concept which helps to understand a particular way of life, whether it is related to the common mass, a particular period or a group of people. This study has taken cultural theories like Habitus, Orientalism, Eating and drinking etc, and shown that tea, in which nature and nurture co-exist in harmony, simplicity and sophistication combine in perfection, best symbolizes the unique Chinese culture of “integration of nature and man.”

Tea is not just a kind of drink in China, but a culture that has traversed through centuries, and manifested in various shapes and forms through the dynasties as well as contemporary history of China. The spirit and vitality of tea has roots deep in the national character of the people of China. Looking back at the journey of the Chinese nation’s development, it’s easy to see that, since the time of Shennong, every historical phase reflects the impact of tea; every ideological trend renovates the connotation of tea; every regional group has its specific understanding of tea; and every detail in life is wrapped with the thin aroma of tea. From picking, making, cooking to drinking, every step conveys profound cultural implication.

The history of Chinese tea culture runs long and deep in the traditions and customs of Chinese life, and has continued its development, and had adapted well to the historical as well as contemporary times. Tea came out of China and spread to the other parts of the world. The experiences of tea planting and drinking were introduced from China, either direct or through intermediate, to the world. From Japan, and Persian markets during the Tang dynasty, to Southern Asia and Eastern African coast in Ming dynasty, and to France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Spain in the 17th and 18th century, tea was accepted as a beverage in the entire world. In the same period, tea was also sold from Europe to the British colonies in America where it found its daily drinkers too. After America obtained its independence, Sino-American tea trade thrived for a while. The tiny leaves calmly and quietly changed the power structure of the world.

Confucius, the founder of Confucianism who lived more than 2000 years ago said, “the bygone is like this, day and night without stop,” regretting that time was like flowing water, endlessly going ahead. A Chinese folksy also has it, “a piece of time is like a piece of gold, but this piece of gold is not enough to buy this piece of time.” Ancient Chinese accentuated the value of time and advised people to seize every opportunity. This is well reflected in tea picking. Time plays an essential role in tea picking. Picked several days earlier, the tea leaves are peerless treasures. But if picked several days later, they are no better than common. What tea picking requires is accurate grasp of chance.

There are various varieties of teas in China, Chapter 1 classifies two dozens of these, Xihu Longjing, Dongting Bilouchen, Baihaoyinzhen, Junshanyinzhen, Wuyiyuan, Maosheng, Oolong, Lushan Yunmu, Xinyang maojian, Anqi Tieganyin are most prominent. Fame teas are mostly from famous mountains. Since “water and soil in certain place raise certain kinds of people,” the development of humans is closely bound up with natural environment. Northern people are generous and straightforward while southern people are reserved and mild. Tea leaves produced from different regions also take on strong local characteristics, in response to the characteristics of the local people. Lu Yu said that good tea leaves didn't rely on producing places and that making techniques were the real key factor to decide the quality of tea leaves. Tea leaves should be deprived of their “green”, like crude jade should be carved and refined. People also became tranquil and philosophical after a life of tempering. The ancients believed in “similar in nature but far apart in culture”, saying that the power that shaped our personality and quality was postnatal experience and effort.

Like the tea ceremonies, the teahouses also became an integral part of the Chinese tea culture. Teahouse was a micro world where people of all walks gathered, and as a microcosm of the society incurred lots of social and political changes. Teahouse was not only a commercial source of income, rather an influential public place. People use to come to teahouses in search of comfort. In addition, teahouse didn't have a time limit, so the advantage of longtime sitting naturally made it the centre of information collection and distribution. Tea doctor in a tea house was the most informative man. Had one had

anything to ask, He was the right guy to go to. Song dynasty was the golden time for Chinese tea culture, when teahouse existed everywhere in city and even carried its way to the villages. Teahouses of Song dynasty were almost all decorated golden, lacquered, elegant and tidy, with flowers and calligraphic works or paintings of celebrities with in. After Qing dynasty, with the introduction of western culture, teahouses look on some new features as well. Some luxurious western styles teahouses also came into being. Some teahouses were situated in picturesque suburb, under a melon pavilion bean shed, in a grape garden or near a pool. So they could meet customers' needs in different seasons. Because of their special function, these teahouses were liked by the people from all walks of life.

To attract customers, teahouses usually introduced some entertainment, some teahouses hired geishas and musical band to play music or sing songs, some acted as a school and taught music fans how to play and sing, some provided chess, Chinese chess, and conundrums, functioning like an arena of intelligence. The most common was to hire storytellers to tell historical anecdotes, myths and legends, and love stories between a bright boy and a beautiful girl. Storytellers were very eloquent and their stories were vivid and real, full of humor and wit. One story could last two or three months. In this way many people became big fans of the story tellers and regular customers in the teahouse as well .storey listening and tea drinking had separate bills. Teahouse also played an incredible role for opera. Some even say that “opera is an art irrigated by tea juice”.

The teahouse culture also reminds of the famous *Teahouse*, a play written by Lao She. Based on the ups and downs of a teahouse, the play demonstrated a half century social turbulence from 1898 to 1945, vividly depicting a picture of all kinds of people living in a troubled time. The *Teahouse*, written in 1956 is rich in social contents, and introduces more than 70 characters. These characters include figures of high positions, underdogs at the bottom of social ladder, boss and lads in teahouses, favored eunuchs, despicable pimps, and scouring entrepreneurs who believe in saving China through industry, old and new secret agents and hatchet mens, storytellers, physiognomists,

deserters, and kind hearted workmen, embracing almost all levels of the society. All activities are confirmed within the teahouse, which, like a mirror, displays one by one the diverse human beings.

On the other hand the Laoshe teahouse in downtown Beijing is the continuation of teahouse culture in China, which is manifestation of the rapid development of China's market economy, brings dramatic changes to all aspects of social life. The atmosphere in present day Laoshe teahouse changes dramatically. Materialistic desires are exposed. Businessmen's manners penetrate throughout the tea houses. The leisure and ease of the old-fashioned tea houses in the past are gone.

Today tea is the second most consumed beverage in the world after water and had become a daily necessity. Contemporary tea drinkers in China and over the world pay great attention to the taste and health-care properties of tea. The consumption of tea is a regular practice on casual as well as formal occasions. Tea culture as such is imbued closely with other customs and traditions in China. It is the integral part of various ceremonies, such as wedding, spring tea dance, betrothal gift, dowry, religious ceremonies etc. Newly married couples often serve tea to their parents expressing their gratitude for their services as parents. The serving of tea is also used to connect larger families on the occasion of a wedding. Tea hence becomes an excuse for both the parties to come together.

Therefore, tea as a culture has become an integral part of the Chinese way of life, their cultural traits, and customs, which, like the Chinese civilization, has continued its development, and had adapted well to the historical as well as contemporary times. Modern Chinese youth considers drinking tea because it contains vitamins, tea derivatives are used everywhere in food, tea essential oils are very good for skin, etc. Therefore Chinese people believe that frequent tea drinkers enjoy an increased life span. Its medical properties and benefits to the human body have actually been scientifically proven, and tea has come to be generally recognized as a natural health food. So at last we can say that tea has adapted well to the changes and processes of globalization in China and remains one of the most important carriers of China's cultural tradition.

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