

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Chinese tea

Origins of tea and tea culture in China

The origins of tea date back to 2737 BC (Chow & Kramer, 1990). According to Chinese legend, tea was discovered accidentally by Shen Nong, the Divine cultivator who also supposedly invented agriculture and herbal medicine. He is honored as one of China's three early mythical sovereigns. His predecessor, Fu-his, the first Emperor, had given humanity knowledge of fire, cooking, and music, while the third Emperor completed the Promethean task of human happiness by revealing the secrets of the vine and astronomy. The story goes that one-day tea plant leaves fell into boiling water, and Shen Nong became interested in the new liquid, which had a pleasing aroma and delightful flavor. Later he found the tea to have medicinal value. This led to the culture of tea drinking in China (Chow & Kramer, 1990).

Tea was cultivated in Szechwan by the third century AD. The first detailed description of tea drinking is found in an ancient Chinese dictionary, noted by Kuo P'o in 350 AD (Chow & Kramer, 1990). At that time the fresh green leaves were picked and pressed into cakes that were roasted to a reddish hue. These were crumbled into water and boiled with the addition of onion, ginger, and orange to make an herbal soup that was considered to be a good remedy for many diseases. By the time of the Jin Dynasty (265~420 AD) tea drinking had spread to all parts of the country (Chow & Kramer, 1990).

In the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), one of China's golden ages, tea drinking became an art. The major turning point in tea history was the publication of the first tea book, *Cha Jing*, which is now known as "The Classic of Tea", by Lu Yu (733-804 AD) (Ouyang, 1998). In this book, Lu Yu summarizes everything known at that time about every aspect of tea planting and preparation. He describes the origins of tea, types, quality and characteristics of tea, and tea production regions. Also included in Lu Yu's book is a history of tea drinking, utensils needed for preparing and serving tea. This book contains three volumes and ten parts, which are as the following:

1. Origin, characteristics, name, and qualities of tea.
2. Tools for plucking and processing tea.
3. Varieties, plucking and processing tea.
4. Utensils for making and drinking tea. (The materials and methods for making utensils as well as the size and the functions of each utensil.)
5. Methods of making tea and the water of various places.
6. Habits of tea drinking. (The origin of tea drinking, tea spread, and tea drinking customs.)
7. Stories about tea from ancient times to the Tang dynasty.
8. Which kinds of tea are better in different locations.
9. Utensils which may be omitted.
10. How to copy this book on silk scrolls in order for everyone to understand.

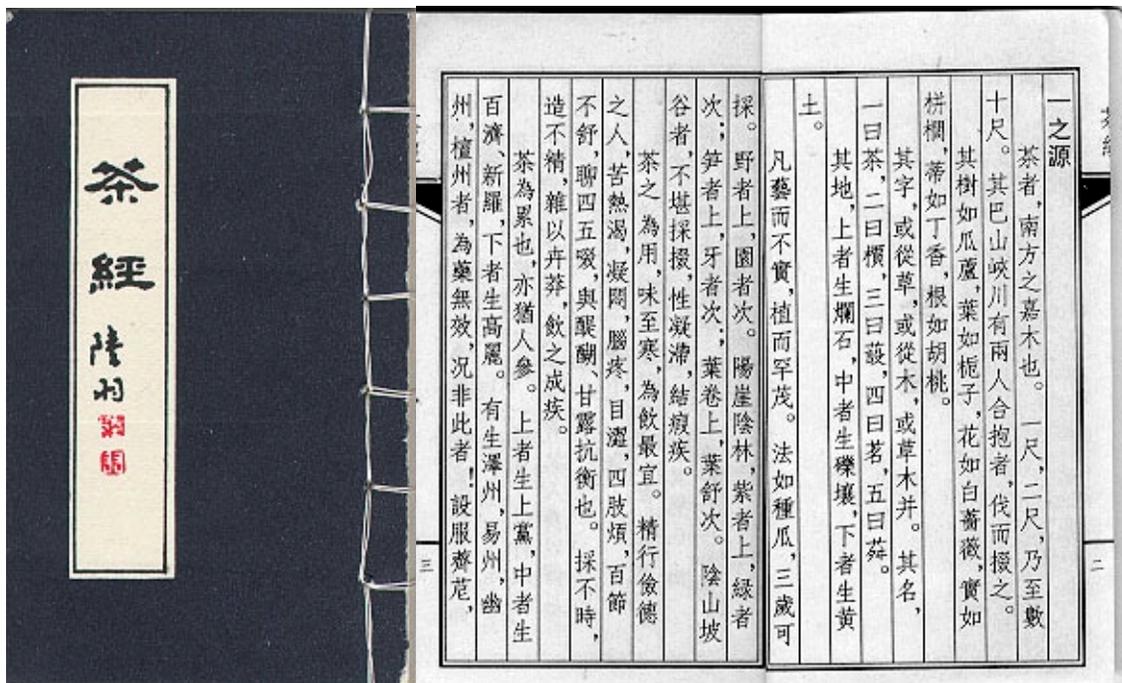


Figure 1. Cover and book of *Cha Jing* (The Classic of Tea)

This book contributed to turning tea drinking into an art and helped to popularize the art of tea drinking across the country. It played a great role in giving tea cultural significance. The

neighboring countries Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia also adopted the tea drinking custom (Ouyang, 1998). Lu Yu was the first to suggest that the ritual of preparing and drinking tea represented a code of symbolic harmony and order which reflected the ideals of the cosmos and society (Ukers. 1935). In his book, *Cha Jing*, Lu Yu lists more than twenty-four implements that are essential at the time for the correct preparation of a cup of tea. These include equipment needed for roasting and grinding the cake tea, a stove for boiling the water, and cups for serving tea. Lu Yu suggested that the brazier for boiling water could be made of brass or iron and shaped like an ancient Ding which was used for sacrifice and formal ceremony (See Figure 2). Its three legs represent water, wind, and fire, which indicate a proper balance of the five elements* in Chinese culture (Sen Soshitsu, 1996). Besides the physical and mental refreshment that can be

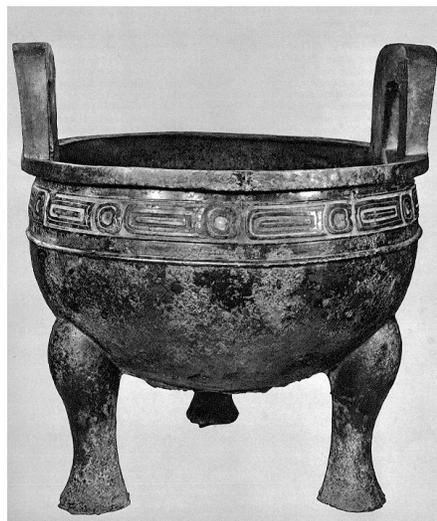


Figure 2. Chinese Ding. Chou Dynasty (827-781 BC) Height: 53.5 cm.

Chinese art treasures

*Five elements: Taoism, one of the most important philosophical schools of thought in China, believes that Tao is the first cause of the universe, the force that flows through all life, the only working principle of the universe. It is divided into two opposite parts, ying and yang, and are operated through five physical material agents or five elements, which are metal, wood, water, fire, and earth

(<http://www.religioustolerance.org/taoism.htm>).

received from the tea, as Sen Soshitsu (1996) points out, tea drinking

was also a means of spiritual refreshment, of moving into a realm of spiritual conviviality...by drinking tea, to disencumber themselves, to rise above the vexations of the mundane, and to cross over into another dimension where they can enjoy freedom from the world's cares (p. 43).

In the time of the Tang Dynasty (618~907 AD), tea was compressed into teacakes to keep it fresh. The teacake was boiled with nothing but a little salt. Since this kind of tea could be transported easily, the culture of tea drinking spread far beyond China (Chow & Kramer, 1990). A great change came with the transition to the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 AD) when Chinese culture reached a new level of refinement. During this period, the artistic concept was to blend several art genres together. For example, a painting would have a poem in it. The same thing happened with the tea culture, in that it was combined with the subtleties of Chinese poetry, calligraphy, painting, and sculpture. These art forms also appeared in the design of teacups and equipment (David & Schapira, 1975). Tea was prepared with dried blocks of green leaves ground to a fine powder and mixed with water by being whipped to a froth with a bamboo whisk in large dark-glazed bowls to produce a deep, beautiful color. In the Ming Dynasty (1368~1644 AD), the method of tea preparation changed. Green tea was discovered and an easier way of tea brewing came into fashion. Tea was directly brewed in the teapot. Teapots became an important utensil for preparing tea and a variety of designs in tea sets appeared. The tea set evolved into an integral part of tea drinking (David & Schapira, 1975).

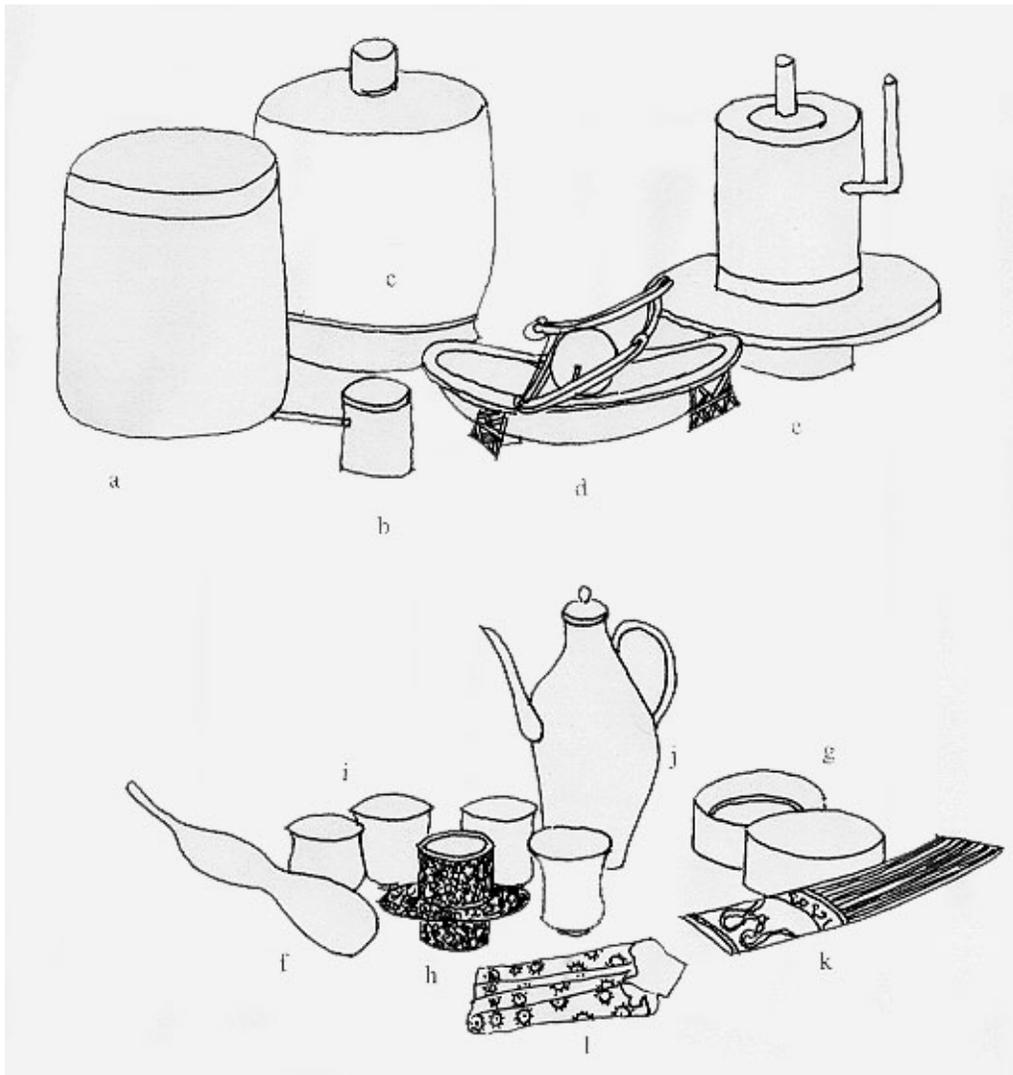
The art of the traditional Chinese tea set

Chinese who are interested in tea drinking also usually appreciate the beauty of tea sets. The tea set typically includes the teacup, teapot, Zhan (small cup), teacup holder, and tea plate. The design of the tea set is an important part of the Chinese traditional tea culture. In Lu Yu's *Cha Jing*, there are 12 of the 24 utensils illustrated (see Figure 3) for tea-drinking preparation which include a bamboo basket for firing tea, an anvil, an iron grinding boat, a stone grinding mill, a water measure, a sieve, a brush, a lacquer cup holder, a tea cup, and a bamboo hand brush (Ukers, 1935). The early teacup was a handle-less bowl. The diameter of a cup averaged about 4.0-4.4cm (1.57"~1.73"), just large enough to hold the bowl in one's palm comfortably (Palmer, 1998). During the Tang Dynasty (618~907 AD), the tea was both prepared and served in this kind of bowl. The blue glazed bowls were regarded as the best choice for the boiled tea. During the Song Dynasty (960~1279 AD), because of the popularity of the powdered tea, different tea

bowls were designed with dark colors and streaked glaze to suit the muddy gray-green liquid. During the Ming Dynasty (1368~1643AD), green tea was discovered and the way of making tea changed. The new method was to allow the tea leaves to soak in the hot water for a time before drinking. White glazed porcelain cups were favored for brewed teas to enhance the tea colors, which ranged from light greens to rich saffron and amber (Clark 1989).

Teapots were widely used for brewing tea. The Yi Xing teapot was regarded as the best teapot for preparing brewed tea (Clark 1989). Yi Xing, a town located in Jiangsu Province, about 100 miles away from Shanghai, is known as the "Pottery Capital" in China. During the Tang Dynasty (618~907 AD), Yi Xing became known by its tea tribute*. Later, the Yi Xing teapot was recognized as the best for brewing tea because of its ability to maintain the aroma and the taste of the tea (Chow & Kramer, 1990). This special teapot was the first teapot designed specifically for brewing tea (See Figure 4). It is made of special purple unglazed clay, called 'Zisha'. This clay is from the deep earth of the Yi Xing region. Because it is a porous material, the ceramic absorbs a very small amount of tea with each brewing. With the continued usage, the flavor, color, and scent of the tea is enhanced. It is said that this kind of teapot should never need washing. And after use, it is just simply rinsed out with fresh water and dried naturally. This kind of teapot is relatively small in size, only about 100-300 ml. This size assures that the tea is served fresh, hot and strong without the cooling and bitterness that may occur when the tea leaves are left in the teapot too long. A bamboo knife was used to carve the main form of the earliest Yi Xing teapots. Then, the handles and spouts were added. The shape of this teapot is one of simple elegance with a nature motif added as decorative detail. Some of the motifs held auspicious meanings, such as longevity, good wishes, or happiness (Clark, 1989). Poems with beautiful calligraphy commonly appeared on the teapots. The colors of the Yi Xing teapots are all natural. Each teapot has a unique "chop" mark identifying the designer. For the Chinese, the quality of the tea is in the fragrance and the taste of the tea. The Yi Xing teapots best serve this function (The tea man, 1996).

*Tea tribute: In ancient China, each region was required to give the best products from the region to the Emperor each year. In tea producing regions, the best tea would be sent to the Emperor. Government officials had a list of the best teas in each region, which was called the Tea Tribute List.



a. bamboo basket for firing tea

b. iron mallet

c. wood anvil to mould the tea into cakes

d. iron grinding boat

e. stone grinding mill

f. gourd for measuring water

g. sieve to separate coarse from fine tea

h. lacquer cup holder to avoid burning the hands

i. teacups

j. teapot

k. bamboo hand brush

l. towel for cleaning cups

Figure 3. Utensils used in the LuYu's time for preparation of tea



Figure 4. Yi Xing teapot



(a)



(b)

Figure 5(a)&(b). Blue-White porcelain teapot (Qing Dynasty).
Chinese art treasures

Today, tea sets are made from porcelain, glass, or pottery. The highest quality of tea set is from the porcelain capital JinDeZheng in Jiangxi Province and the pottery capital Yi Xing in Jiangsu Province, which are both in the southern region of China. A Yi Xing tea set can keep the scent and flavor of the tea. Since a pottery tea set is the natural clay color, it is not suitable for watching the change of the tea leaves and the color of the tea. The designs of porcelain tea sets show attention not only to styles, but also to the art of calligraphy and painting on the tea sets (see Figure 5). The color of porcelain teacups is white and the size is large enough for brewing tea so that one can enjoy watching the change in tea leaves in the teacups and the color of tea (China Tea Association & China Tea Trade Company, 1990). The choice of tea sets is important, especially for traditional Chinese tea ceremonies.

The art of the Chinese tea ceremony

Etiquette for the traditional Chinese tea ceremony evolved from ancient Chinese hospitality. The tea ceremonies served a wide range of social occasions, such as royal court tea ceremonies, scholar tea meetings, meditation room tea feasts, and folk customs (Liu, 1998). The tea ceremony is believed to combine the spirit of all three ancient Chinese philosophies. It focus on cultivating individual moral character through drinking tea and on living a thrifty and simple life (Liu, 1998).

The tea ceremony has a well-ordered set of steps to follow in preparing, servicing, and drinking tea (Liu, 1998). Special attention is given to choosing the tea, brewing the tea, selecting the tea set, and creating the proper drinking environment. Early in the Tang dynasty (618~907 AD), Lu Yu, the oldest tea master, listed in his book the proper ways to make a cup of tea. He included selecting the right kinds of tea, using the right kind of fire and suitable water, and brewing properly to achieve harmony between man and nature (David & Schapira, 1975).

- The choosing of tea and water:

Over the centuries the process of preparing tea has been developed to a high level of precision. The choosing of tea normally depends on personal taste. The quality of tea is discerned by the sensory organs of sight and smell. The form of the tea leaves and the scent of the tea determine the difference in quality. Soft water that is clear and fresh is required to steep tea. The correct water temperature varies according to the tea selected. For the most fully fermented and moderately fermented, such as Wulong tea and black tea, a high water temperature (95°C or higher) is needed. For lightly fermented Wulong and green tea, the proper

water temperature normally is around 85°C to 95°C. For high quality tender tea shoots, the water temperature should be no more than 85°C. The time for brewing tea varies from 50 seconds to 3 or 4 minutes depending on the kinds of tea, the water temperature, and the quantity of tea (Cai, 1998).

The health benefits of tea drinking

Since ancient times, tea has been regarded as a medicinal drink in China. The famous ancient Chinese surgeon Hua Tuo, originator of anesthesia, wrote in the third century that tea drinking increased concentration and alertness (Chow & Kramer, 1990). In *Cha Jing* (Tea classic), Lu Yu wrote: "Tea tempers the spirit and harmonizes the mind; dispels lassitude and relieves fatigue; awakens thought and prevents drowsiness; lightens and refreshes the body and clears the perceptive faculties" (Serena Hardy, 1979). He recorded the efficacy of tea as being: "of a cold nature and may be used in case of blockage or stoppage of the bowels. When its flavor is at its coldest nature, it is most suitable as a drink. If one is generally moderate but is feeling hot or warm, given to melancholia, suffering from aching of the brain, smarting of the eyes, troubled in the four limbs, or afflicted in the hundred joints, he may take tea four or five times. Its liquor is like the sweetest dew of heaven" (Sen Soshitu, 1998). A long list of claimed beneficial effects of tea drinking has been drawn from Chinese ancient literature in the book *China tea and health*. For example, tea drinking is thought to increase blood flow, which helps retain clear thinking, mental alertness and create a sense of well being. It can increase the body's power of resistance to a wide range of diseases, eliminate fatigue and depression, and eliminate alcohol and other harmful substances from the body. In addition, it also can assist the digestion, brighten the eyes, help reduce the summer heat in the body, as well as provide many other benefits. As time went by, these ideas became deeply rooted in the minds of the Chinese (China Tea Association & China Tea Trade Company, 1990).

Tea is the most popular beverage in the world today (Trapasso, 1997). One reason for its growing popularity, according to Frank Miller (1997), is the medicinal properties and health benefits to the human body, which have been confirmed through research (Clausen, et al, 1997). Numerous publications show that tea drinking can protect against such serious diseases as strokes, cancer, and heart disease. There are no calories, fat, or sugar in tea. Green tea contains ascorbic acid, vitamin B, potassium, and other minerals. All of these benefits, along with being a

natural product, contribute to tremendous growth in consumption of tea in the world (Clausen, et al, 1997).

Chinese tea production

Tea plants are flowering evergreen shrubs. The mature leaves are elliptical shapes from one to twelve inches in length with a dark green color and smooth, leathery texture (David & Schapira, 1975). A tea bush can grow thirty feet high, but for commercial tea the bush is typically kept at one-tenth of its natural height for the plant to produce more flavorful leaves. The tea plants, to grow well, need a constant heat of around 85°F, with an average annual rainfall of at least 100 inches. The finest tea is grown at over 5,000 ft above sea level. The cool temperatures at such height can cause the tea plant to grow more slowly and produce a richer, complex leaf (David & Schapira, 1975). However, an excess of cold can cause leaves to blacken on the tea bush. Normally, a new tea plant must grow four or five years before the tea leaves can be harvested. In the high hill or mountain region, it sometimes will take about 10 years for the tea bush to reach maturity since the average temperature is cooler. The slower maturation allows leaves to develop more character. Therefore the price of this kind of tea is higher. The tea plant may produce for about six years after they mature. Then the old bushes need to be cut off to force new stems to form from the roots (David & Schapira, 1975).

Once the tea leaves are mature, the picking process begins. The picking season in China begins in early March and lasts through October. There are only four or five pickings, and the first and the second are regarded as the best ones. Picking is a slow, tedious, labor consuming process that requires special skills (David & Schapira, 1975).

The fermenting process, which causes physical and chemical changes in the leaves, results in three major types of tea: Green tea, which is unfermented, Wulong tea, which is semi-fermented, and Black tea, which is fully fermented (David & Schapira, 1975). The fermenting process establishes the character of finished tea, reshapes the tea leaves, and dries the tea leaves thoroughly to preserve the flavor of the tea. Two by-products of the process are brick tea and cake tea. Brick tea is made from the old leaves, stems and twigs, steamed and forced into a flat brick shaped for use in Tibet and Russia. Cake tea is made from bitter leaves by the same process used to make brick tea (David & Schapira, 1975).

Sichuan Province, located in southwest China, began to cultivate tea by the third century AD, and remained as the nation's foremost tea producer into the late Tang Dynasty

(618~907AD) (Simoons, 1990). The Tang's tribute lists show that tea and tea-buds (finest tea) came from eight provinces in the southern region of China. During ancient times, there were 8,000 different grades of tea recognized by the manner and quality of production, the quality of the leaf, the places of growing and the location of the production. Because the production of tea depended on techniques, skillful workers, and weather, tea produced in different locations creating different results (David & Schapira, 1975).

Today, tea is still widely produced across the southern region of China, from the southern extreme of Hainan Island to Shandong Province in the north, and from Tibet in the west to Taiwan in the east. Chinese tea production regions may be divided into four major areas: the Jiangnan area, the Jiangbei area, the southwest area, and the Lingnan area (See Figure 6,7). The large amount of black tea, known as "red tea" (hong cha) is produced in the southwest regions. The black tea is divided into two different kinds: one is North China Congous, which is aromatic, full-bodied, and sweet liquoring; the other is South China Congous, which is bright and rich flavor. Green tea is mainly produced in Jiangnan and Jiangbei areas. It keeps the original color with a light-liquoring, sweet flavor. The Jiangnan and Jiangbei areas also produced Dragon Well tea from Zhejiang, Mao Feng tea from Huangshan Mountain, and Bilouchun from Jiangsu. Wulong teas are mainly produced in the Lingnan area (China Tea Association & China Tea Trade Company, 1989).

Almost all marketed teas are blends so as to gain the best result in flavor, strength, body, shapes of leaf and cost (David & Schapira, 1975). Various floral scents and herbals are blended with different types of tea to produce nearly infinite varieties of teas. Jasmine and magnolia are commonly added to make Chinese scented tea (China Tea Association & China Tea Trade Company, 1989).

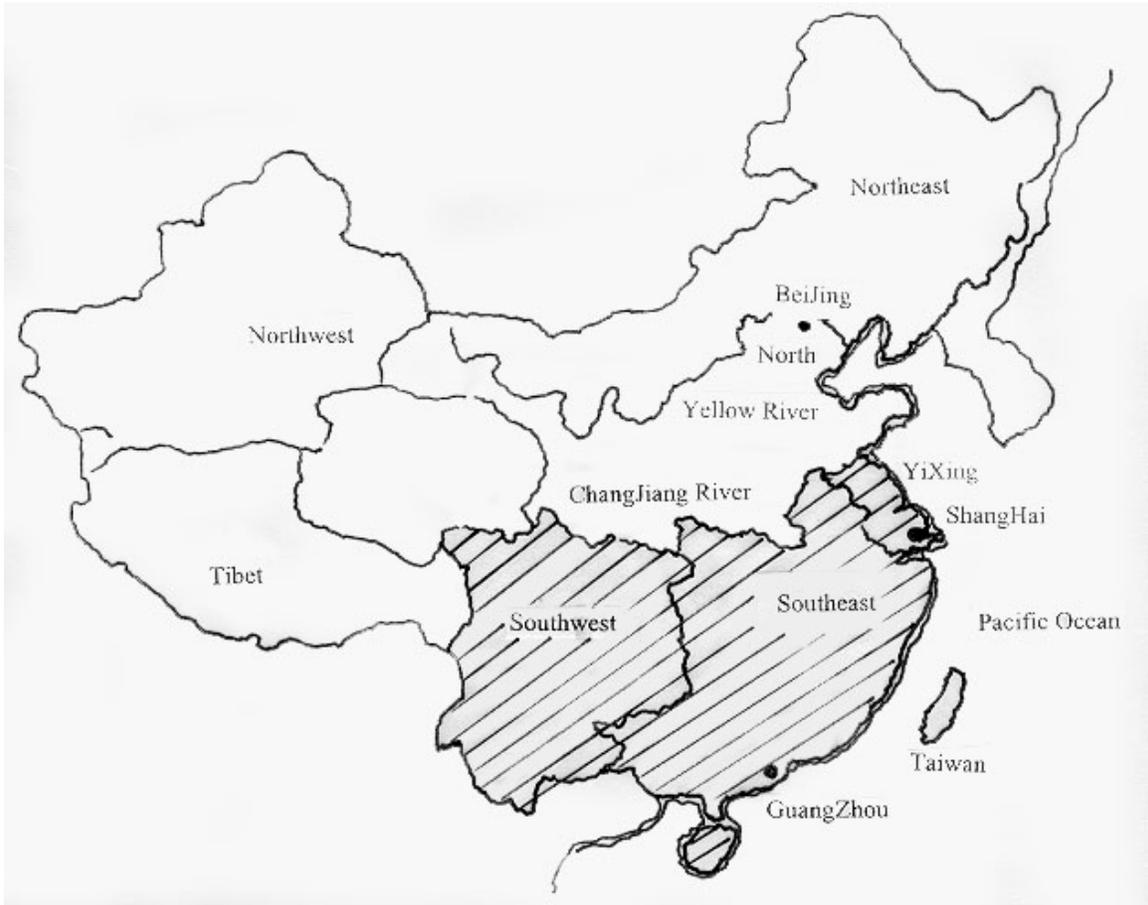


Figure 6. Map of China

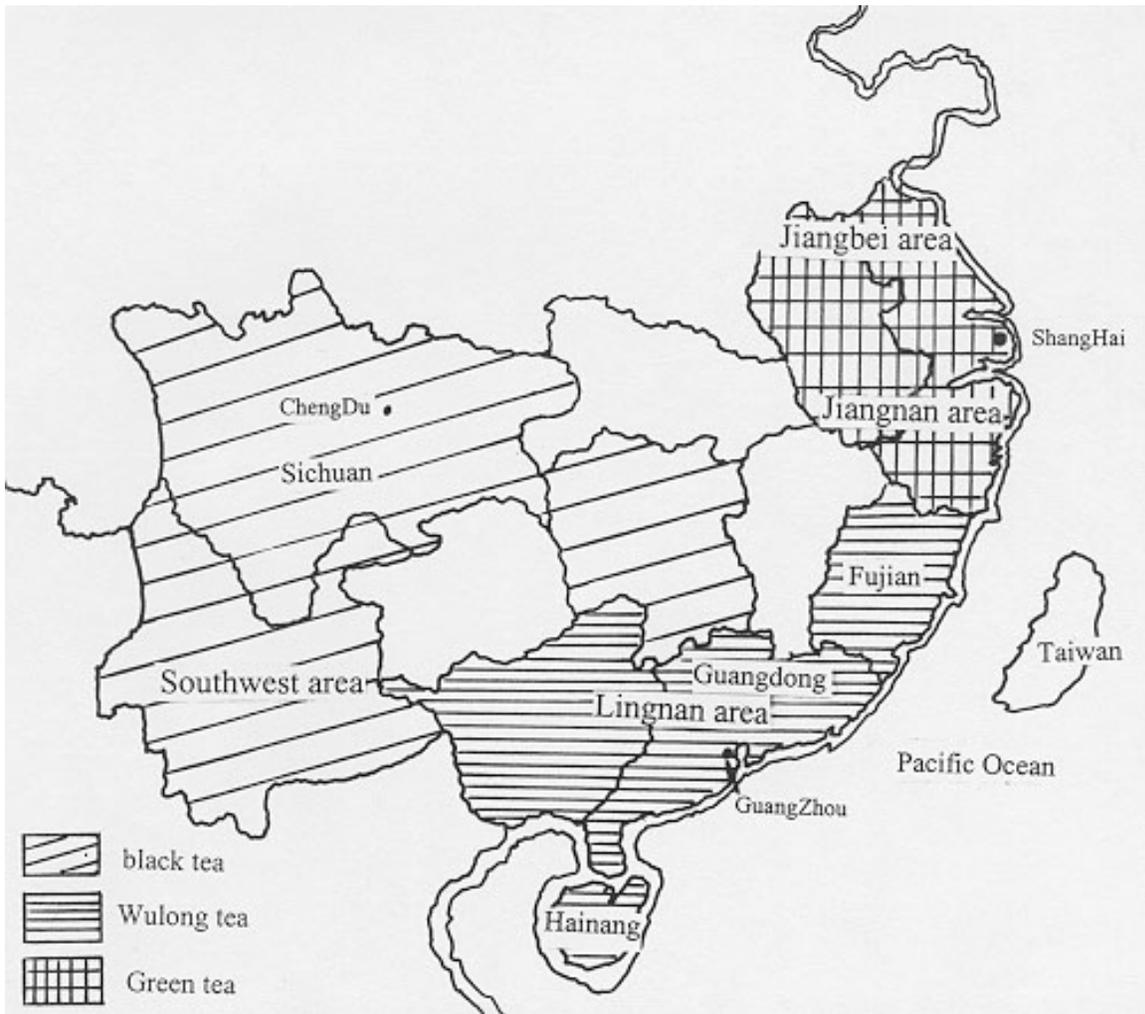


Figure 7: Tea Producing Regions in China
 (Enlarged map of the Southwest and Southeast regions)

Tea drinking in Europe and America

Tea was introduced into Europe in the 1600s by a Dutch company and tea drinking quickly became a fashionable social activity among the wealthy. High cost limited the use of tea until the amount of imported tea increased and the price began to drop. Tea arrived in England between 1652~ 1654 and rapidly became available throughout England to all classes of people. Peter Stuyvesant is thought to have brought tea into the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam, what is now New York, as early as 1650 (Tea facts, 1998).

In England, the consumption of tea dramatically increased from 40,000 pounds in 1699 annually to 240,000 pounds in 1708. This increase was due, at least in part, to the introduction of "afternoon tea". Traditionally, the English only had two main meals daily, breakfast at the beginning of the day and dinner at the end of day. The "afternoon tea" included serving tea and snacks and occurred between the two main meals. This activity was quickly adopted and became a common pattern of daily life. Along with the custom of "afternoon tea" came the development of tea gardens, which is a public gathering place opened to all people regardless of social class (Tea facts, 1998).

Although tea was introduced into America in 1650, tea did not appear on the market until 1670. The first tea garden opened in New York City around 1690. In 1789, America began to trade directly with China. By the mid-1800's, many western countries were involved in the clipper ship race. They competed with each other to build the fast ships for bringing only tea from China. England and America were the leading rivals. In 1871 steamships, which are faster than the clipper ships, replaced the clipper ships in the export trade (David & Schapira, 1975).

During the twentieth century there were three developments in America that deeply influenced the custom of tea drinking (Clark, 1989). In 1904 at the St. Louis World's Fair, Richard Blechynden, a tea merchant and tea plant owner, could not sell his hot tea to the customers, so he resorted to pouring ice into the tea and served the first "ice tea". Four years later, Thomas Sullivan, a tea merchant, invented the bag tea. He wanted to give away free tea samples to his customers, so he put a small sample of tea in a sealed silk bag. This was immediately accepted by American consumers. In the 1940s, powdered instant teas with a variety of flavors were introduced into the American market (Clark 1989).

Tea rooms and tea courts became fashionable both in America and England in the late 1880's. Fine hotels offered service to customers who met there for tea and conversation. The

varieties of tea served became a hallmark of the elegance of the hotel. Tea drinking was further popularized when, between 1896 and 1911, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, a famous Scottish designer, was commissioned to design seven tearooms for Miss C. Cranston (Macleod, 1983).

Currently, tea is more popular than ever in America. Joseph P. Simrang (1997), the president of the Tea Association of the USA, forecasts the tea market and states that "tea will continue to grow at double digit rates over the next several years and might even exceed those expectations with increased marketing investment" (p10). Simrang goes on to say that tea is served in most coffeehouses in the United States and the number of restaurants serving tea has been increasing and will continue in the future. Hotels serving afternoon tea are again popular in metropolitan areas. Tea salons, also often sell tea, teapots and strainers, as well as provide instruction on the art of tea brewing. The tea salons first appeared in New York City and have increased for the last several years (Tea time, 1995). Every indication is that there will be a strong market for tea in the United States for the next five or ten years (Simrany, 1997).

Traditional teahouses in the southern region of China

Historical development of teahouses

A Chinese saying identifies the seven basic daily necessities as fuel, rice, oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, and tea. Tea drinking, as a national custom, has developed over almost five thousand years. It is typically a ceremonial act, which has developed into an art form. The teahouse, approximate equivalent to the western café, provides the social setting for this ceremony.

During the Song Dynasty (960-1126 AD) tea was introduced into general use as a distinctively social beverage (Ukers 1935). An Arab merchant who visited China during the 9th century wrote that tea was the common beverage of the country. He further noted that: "Elaborate teahouses appeared in many cities and the tea was widely cultivated" (Hardy, 1979, p49). These teahouses had delightful names and appeared in neighborhood settings. Ukers (1935) described these houses as reflective of the luxury of the time. "Bouquets of fresh flowers adorned the room, and 'Precious Thunder tea', tea of fritters and onions, and pickle broth were displayed for sale" (p397).

A later record was found in an ancient Chinese painting "Qinming shanghe tu" from the Song Dynasty (960~1279 AD). This painting depicted the daily life and commercial business in

the Song capital, Kaifeng. A teashop appears in the painting, which is a square, one-story building connected with other shops and open to the street. A long counter is used for selling teas and a long bench is provided for people to sit down and drink (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Qing-Ming festival on the river. Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD)
Street hawkers offer food, drink and fans to the crowd Kaifeng Street. The buildings in the background are (left) a tea shop, an antique store and an entry way to a temple.

Cohen & Cohen (1994) [China today and her ancient treasures](#)

During the Ming (1368~1644 AD) and Qing (1644~1911 AD) Dynasties, teahouses became common in urban areas. There were two kinds of tea stores: one just sold packages of tea and teapots, and the other was the teahouse, which offered a full service of tea and snacks. The teahouse also served as a social center. As Ukers (1935) records, during the late Qing Dynasty (1644~1911 AD), there were about 400 teahouses in Shanghai, and each of them had a regular clientele. Different groups of people came at different times. They were allowed to bring their

own tea and they could sit at the table all day long and have as much hot water as they wanted (Ukers, 1935).

Historically, the southern region was the economic and cultural center of China, and has had a significant influence on all of China. This region includes the areas of Jiangnan, Jiangbei, Lingnan, and the southwest of China. The majority of Chinese tea was produced in the southern region as well as large quantities of food and cloth. Goods were transported throughout the country on the vast network of rivers. The custom of tea drinking in the southern region was much more popular than in the northern region. Typical cities in these areas are Guangzhou (the center of Lingnan), Chendu (the capital of southwest), and Shanghai (the center of Jiangnan & Jiangbei). Teahouses from these cities are representative of the styles of teahouses and the tea culture in the southern region.

Guangzhou is the economic, art, and culture center of the Lingnan area. A tea house industry emerged there around the year 1874, and gradually became the largest hospitality trade in this city. In the Qing Dynasty (1644~1911 AD), Guangzhou became a trading port, which attracted investments to build teahouses (Feng, 1982).

The teahouse industry in Shanghai began during the late Qing Dynasty (1644~1911 AD), and increased rapidly during the early twentieth century. From 1909 to 1919, teahouses increased in number from 64 to 164 (Liu, 1996), and reached 400 around 1930 (Ukers, 1935). Shanghai's oldest teahouse is the Huxinting teahouse, which was opened in 1855 (Liu, 1996).

Sichuan Province is the main tea production area in the southwest region. Chengdu, as the capital of Sichuan, had about 455 teahouses in 1909 which grew to about 599 teahouses in 1935 (Chen, 1982). Since Chengdu had about 600 roads or avenues at that time, almost every street must have had at least one teahouse, which indicates the importance of teahouses to daily life. Most teahouses were located in the business center or park where there was a large concentration people. The names of these teahouses were chosen by scholars after careful deliberation, and each had its own special meaning. Many were drawn from ancient literature, poems, and the names of classical gardens (Chen, 1982).

Social activities in teahouses

Teahouses served as one of the few public recreation places during ancient times that most people could afford (Chen 1982). Sitting and talking were the most common activities in

teahouses. LinYutang, a famous Chinese writer, recorded in his book, *My country and my people*, the following:

... In the years, they have had plenty of time to drink tea and look at life quietly over their teacups, and from the gossip over the teacups they have boiled life down to its essence. They have had plenty of time to discuss... to ponder over their achievements and to review the successive change of the modes of art and life, and to see their own in the light of the long past. This became the 'mirror' which reflects human experience for the benefit of the present and future (p. 135).

Other activities in teahouses were chess and card playing. Some of the teahouses had story telling, music, and local opera to attract more people. This type of teahouse normally had a corner or a stage in the teahouse arranged for the shows.

In the 1910's, with the development of business, teahouses became places for conducting business and communicating information. They provided not just a place, but also a comfortable atmosphere. Every industry had a close relationship with a teahouse. Some of them used teahouses as the market place for trading goods. Most, however, used teahouses as a place for getting together and having a social meeting. In addition, teahouses were the best meeting place for non-government organizations, clubs, or different groups of people (Chen, 1982).

Traditional design of teahouses in the southern region

Teahouses varied in design from one region to another in China. Building forms and selection of materials displayed regional difference, as did the furnishings. Styles of teahouses usually can be grouped as either southern or northern styles. The differences between southern and northern styles are described later under the topic of Chinese traditional architecture and interior design.

- The site of teahouses

The chosen site was critical in the successful development of a teahouse. During the late Qing Dynasty (1644~1911AD), recommendations for a successful site in a business area were to locate:

1. In the commercial center with a large concentration of people
2. Near railway stations, docks, main street of the cities, or transportation centers (Feng, 1982)
3. In gardens, parks, scenic spots, or historic landscape areas. Teahouses in these places provided resting places for people who visited these locations. These kinds of teahouses

were designed so that the structure fit well with the site. In some places, existing residential structures were chosen and reconstructed to fit the new requirements of the teahouses (Chen, 1982).

- The layout of teahouses

During the late Qing Dynasty (1644~1911AD), teahouses in Guangzhou were all built about two to three stories high, not only because of the high price of real estate, but also for accommodating more people. Because elevators were not used, buildings were of limited height. The structures of the teahouses were wood and sometime later of concrete. The first floor was used as a store, which had a high ceiling to create a visually grand and commodious feeling, and also for hanging large advertisement signage. At the Moon Festival*, every teahouse would hang an elegant custom-made moon cake signboard. It was made of wood with carved ancient figures, flowers, birds, a dragon and a phoenix, and decorated with gold. The size of the signboard was about a 2.5-meter (8'2") high and a 1.5-meter (4'11") wide with traditional red silk ribbon attached to the lower edge (Feng, 1982).

The kitchen and storage areas were behind the store area. The ceiling height was around four meters (13'). The second and third floors accommodated the main tea drinking areas. Here the height of the ceiling was about 5 meter (16'4"). The exterior walls accommodated large windows that could be opened for fresh air (Feng, 1982).

Fresh snack food, such as moon cakes, cookies, Chinese candies, and jiaozi (dumplings) were served in the teahouse. In order to keep the food warm, the main kitchen area for serving the food was connected with the main tea drinking areas via a mezzanine level between the second and the third floor tea drinking areas so that the food was easily delivered to all the floors (see Figure 9) (Feng, 1982).

The teahouses in Chendu, Sichuan Province were simpler. Normally, they would be one story high and would serve different kinds of teas. Some had just one big room with a small

*Moon Festival (or Mid Autumn Festival): The Chinese traditional festival held on the 15th of August in the Chinese calendar every year. The traditional food eaten at the Moon Festival is Moon Cake, which is a kind of dessert similar as the western pie.

area divided off as the kitchen. Others had two or three rooms divided by courtyards (see Figure 10). The teahouses in gardens or parks always had an open space, which served as a part of the tea drinking area (Chen, 1982).

- The interior of teahouses

The interiors of historic teahouses in the southern region were decorated in ancient Chinese styles. Pingfeng (Chinese screen door or paneled door) with Chinese paintings were used as interior partitions. Some screens were decorated with poems and maxims from the Tang (618~907AD) or Song (960~1279AD) dynasties (Feng, 1982).

The ceiling structure was exposed. The Yan (eaves board) below the ceiling were specially decorated by using carved wood boards. These boards were ornamented with Chinese Shanshui (landscape) paintings, or paintings of figures, animals or plants covered with gold (Feng 1982).

The furniture used in teahouses, which included tables, chair, and stools, was well-constructed and durable. The seats of the chairs were made of one piece of wood. Bamboo chairs and low tables were typically used in the Chendu teahouses. Most utensils in these teahouses were made of brass (Chen 1982).

Chinese traditional architecture and interior design in the southern region

- The structure of the traditional architecture

Chinese traditional architecture dates back 7000 years (Fu, 1984). Although different geographical and climatic conditions formed diversity in the architecture of different regions, a unique system based on the wood structure framework gradually developed and dominated architectural styles in most regions. The wood framework, as the main structure of the building, supported the weight of the roof and upper stories. Walls were just for enclosing the interior areas and only supported their own mass. This kind of structure allowed for a more flexible interior layout and for a larger proportion of doors or windows on the exterior walls (Fu, 1984).

The wood framework appeared in two different forms. One was called Tailiang, or column, beam, and strut system; the other was Chuandou, or column and tie system (Fu, 1984) (See Figure 11). In Tailiang system, the major beams were supported by the columns, with shorter smaller beams laying over them. Then the struts were laid on them to create a roof line sloping to either side of the building. In Chuandou framework the columns themselves rise to a

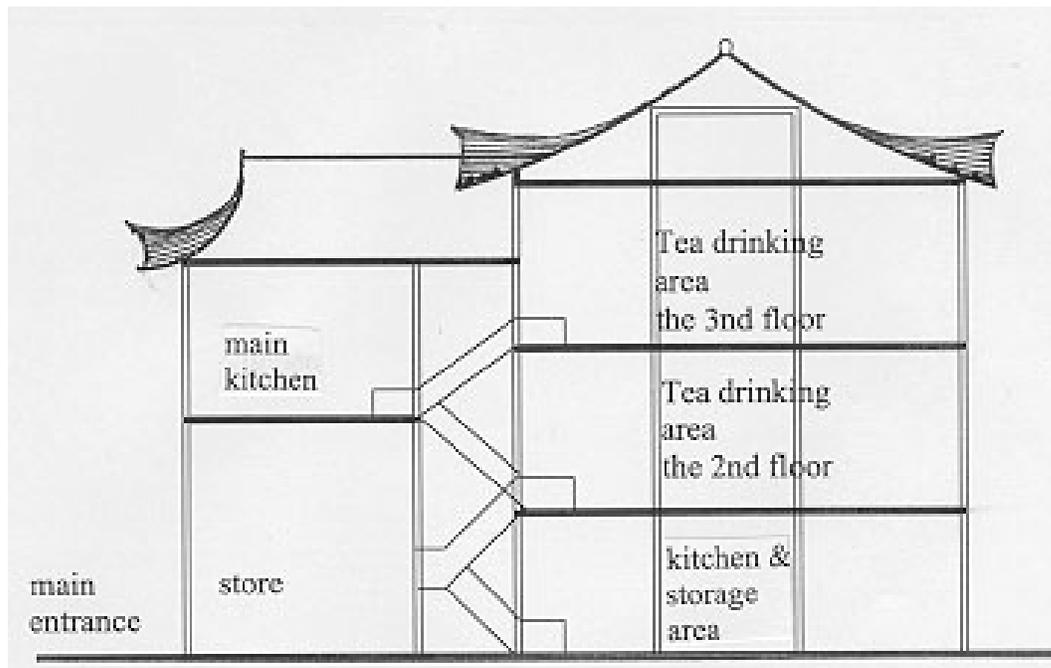


Figure 9. Guangahou Teahouse

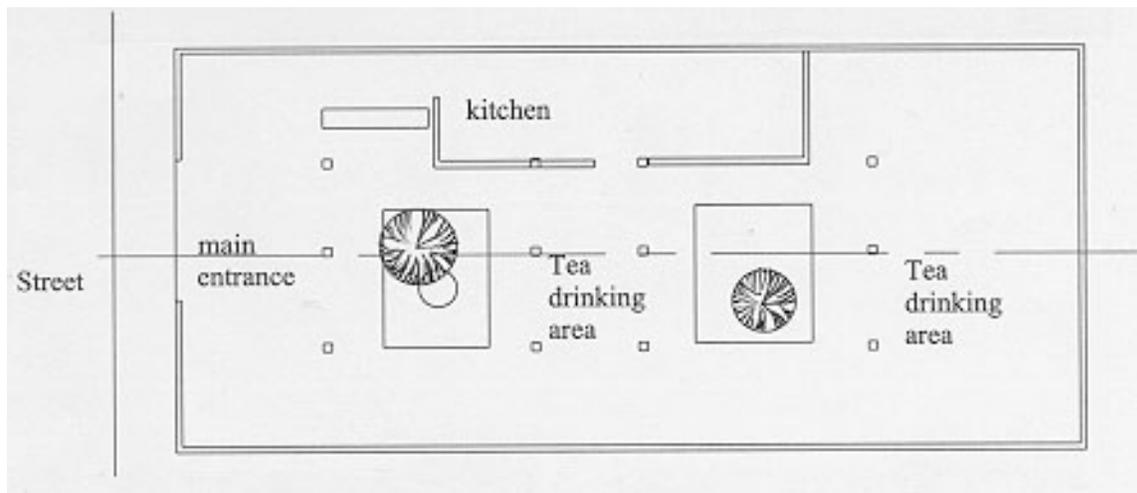


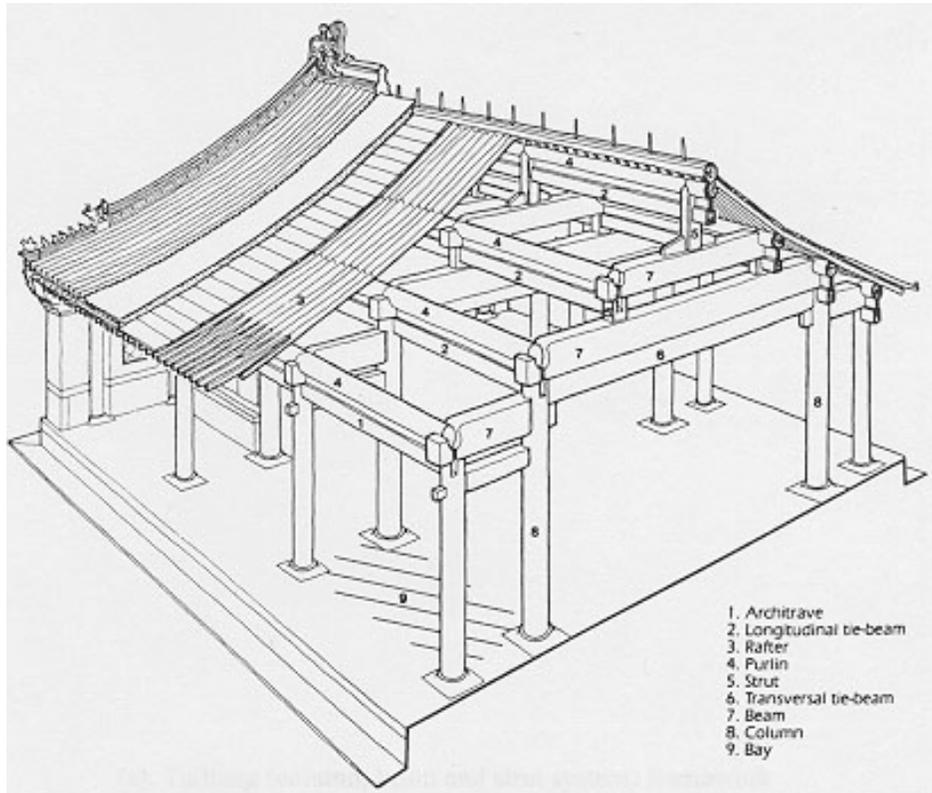
Figure 10. Sichuan courtyard teahouse

certain height to form the roof line slope. The beams penetrated the bodies of the columns, knitting them together into a framework. The Tailiang system was widespread in central and northern parts of China. The Chuandou system was prevalent in the southern regions. However, the temples and residence houses in the southern region were usually built in the Tailiang form (Fu, 1984).

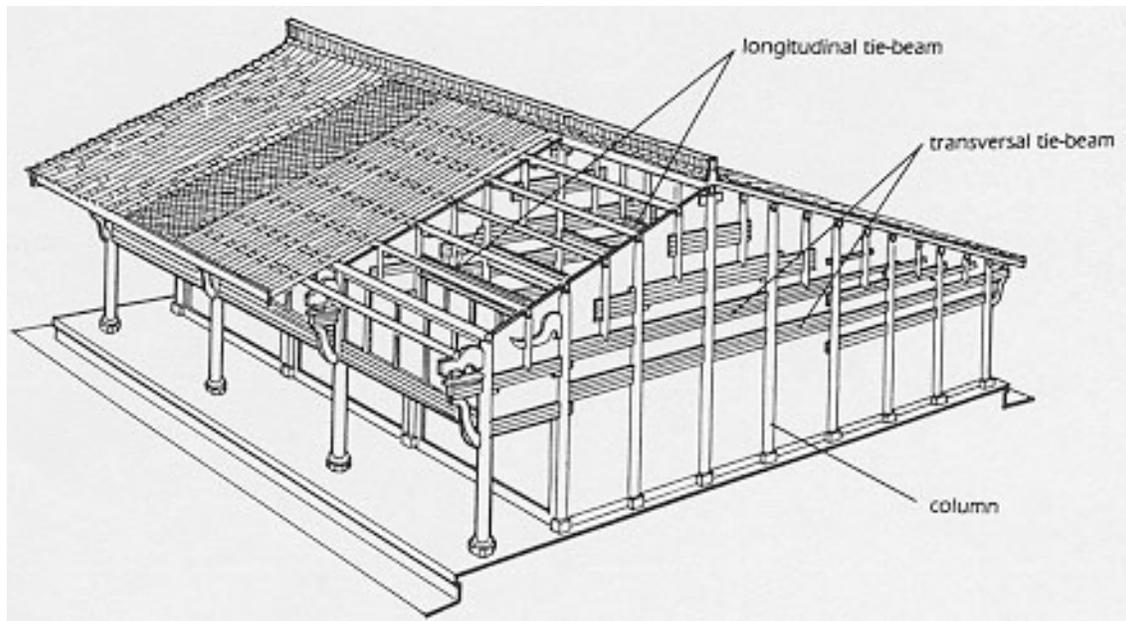
There were several important architectural characteristics formed by using the wooden framework:

1. The elevation is clearly divided into three parts: platform, building proper, and roof.
 2. The roof has concave surfaces and corners that curve upward. The design of this concave surface was believed to facilitate water-shedding from the roof and penetration of light into the interior. In the southern region, the roof corners turn exaggeratedly upward, even though it is not clearly shown in the figure 11(b).
 3. The most outstanding characteristic of Chinese traditional architecture is the use of Dougong (brackets). They were used at the top of columns to support the beams and to the extreme outside to form the roof frame as well as an interior decorative element.
 4. The building used partitions to divide interior spaces (See Figure 12). Because the wood framework supported the weight of the building, the interior space could be left completely open or partitioned. The partition might assume either "Shi" (positive) or "Xu" (negative) modes. The positive mode used screens, folding panels or solid walls to divide the space into separate parts requiring doors for entry and exit. The negative mode used partitions that partly divide the space but allowed for free access and some continuity of vision to achieve the effect of separation without division. Both positive and negative methods were commonly used in traditional Chinese interior layout and arrangement (Fu, 1984). These partitions could be changed depending on the usage of the room.
- The use of color:

Color selection was based on the principle of harmony and composition. Strong colors, such as red, yellow, blue, green, black, were widely used in traditional architecture (Su, 1964). The choice of color was also related to the Five Elements* (see page 7) which were metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. Each color has its own significance and symbolic value for the Chinese. For instance, red, a bright and auspicious color, associated with warmth and the Fire Element, represents good fortune and happiness and is the predominant color in the historic buildings. In



(a). Tailiang (column, beam and strut system) framework



(b). Chuandou framework

Figure 11. Wooden framework structure.

(The history of Chinese traditional architecture, 1980)

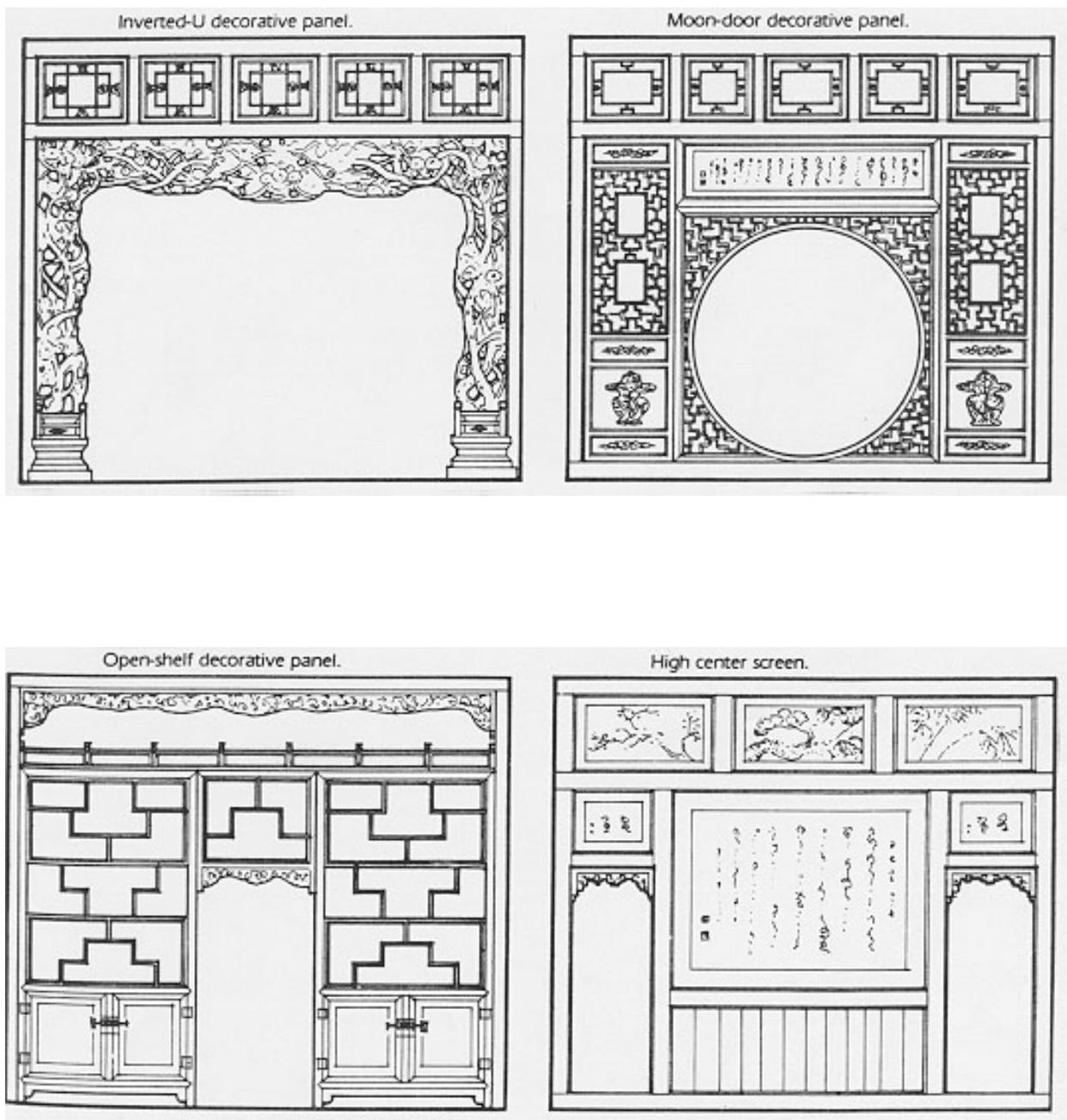


Figure 12. Interior wooden partition (negative) in traditional Chinese architecture
 (The history of Chinese traditional architecture, 1980)

north China, rich and pure colors, such as red, blue, green, and yellow (only for Emperors) were used. In the south, more subdued colors were applied. Whitewashed walls were often used in contrast to the darker wooden frames and grey roof (Su, 1964). Color was used to achieve balance and harmony with nature.

- Decorative motifs:

There are seven basic types of motifs used for decorating both the interior and exterior elements, which have been categorized by Dr. Lip (1995) as follows:

1. Animals such as the dragon, phoenix, tortoise and unicorn.
2. Plants and trees such as the peony, chrysanthemum, orchid, pine, or bamboo.
3. Natural forces such as the cloud, lightning, rain or wind.
4. Human or supernatural figures such as the Taoist deities.
5. Geometric motifs such as circles, squares or rectangles.
6. Auspicious Chinese words
7. Forms of precious utensils or objects such as bronze tripods, coins or pearls (p. 36)

These decorative motifs were widely used on roofs, tiles, wooded-frame structures, windows, doors, and interior partitions. The selection of motifs was based on achieving balance and harmony with the rest of the interior as well as reflecting the status of the owners* (see note on page 28) (Lip, 1995).

- The art of interior display

The interior design of the traditional Chinese buildings normally included two parts: the interior furnishings which refers to furniture and the carving and painting of interior elements, such as walls, ceilings, beams, and doors; and interior display which refers to the different decorative objects and their arrangement (Wang, 1998). Typically, the decorative objects used in traditional Chinese interiors are bonsai, curios, paintings, and calligraphy works.

Interior furnishings and finishes: The interior décor for the traditional building was simple. Paint was normally applied to building elements, such as columns, beams, struts, and interior partitions, which not only protected these building elements, but also gave them symbolic significance (Lip, 1995). In the southern region, these building elements were painted with one color and carved with relief motifs; while in the northern region, multiple colors were used to paint motifs. White paint was used on the interior walls. Blinds, screens, and curtains were commonly used in interiors for dividing the interior space. A wide range of designs was

applied to these blinds, screens, and curtains. Stone and brick were the common flooring materials used on the ground floor, and wood was used on the upper floor. In the southern region, ceiling structures are normally exposed, while in the northern region, ceilings were typically covered with square caisson (Lip, 1995).

In the period from the Shang Dynasty (1700~1027 BC) through to the Tang Dynasty (618~907 AD), art display developed slowly due to the emphasis placed on architectural construction and the custom of kneeling on the floor, which eliminated the need for chairs. Tables were small and short-legged. In ancient China, food display was an important element in sacrifices and in ceremonies. Therefore, eating and drinking utensils were intricately designed and became the most important objects in the interior display. During the Song (960~1279 AD) and Yuan (1279~1368AD) Dynasties, the art of interior display developed rapidly. The old custom of kneeling on the floor changed. This led to the popularization of furniture with legs. Later the forms and artistry of furniture became the most important element in the interior. This also led to the development of a variety of small decorative items, or cultural artifacts used as accessories, such as bronzes, calligraphy, paintings, lutes, chessboards, tiles, and unusual rocks. In the Ming (1368~1644AD)-Qing (1644~1911 AD) Dynasties, the Song-Yuan traditions were perpetuated and achieved a high level of maturity in the interior display. Greater attention was paid to the selection of materials and technical workmanship. Wood dividing panels were carved with poetry and prose by famous calligraphers, and the upper part was covered with stretched silk gauze with flower, bird, or landscape paintings. A great deal of attention was paid to the art of interior display not only because of the elegance the art embodied, but also because of the spatial arrangement of the art in order to achieve a high degree of interior harmony and unity of the interior space (Wang, 1998).

In ancient China, hierarchical gradation*, the ancient Chinese social patriarchal clan order, was an important element that penetrated every aspect of social life, even to architecture and interior design. The social status determined the location of the house, the dimension, type of roof, and type of painting of that house, as well as the style of the interior. The interior

*Hierarchical gradation: in ancient China, people were divided into several social classes: emperor was the first class, official was the second, and scholar was the third... There are rules and principles with regard to building size, roof forms, materials, color schemes, motifs, exterior and interior wood paint associated with the different classes of people. The rules were recorded in the book "Yin Zao Fashi" (building standards).

furnishings and display were designed to show the social and economic position of the owner.

There was another cultural tradition called "scholar-gentry" which influenced interior display throughout China, especially in the southern region of China. Accessories, such as books, paintings, couplets, curios, antiques, bonsai, writing implements, tea sets, and musical instruments were common items used in interiors for the expression of the ideal human character. In scholar-gentry traditional culture, towering bamboo represented noble and unsullied character, and this symbol was widely used in interior decoration (Wang, 1998).

Contemporary coffee/ tea house design in the United States

During the 1990s, the number of coffee shops has grown dramatically in the United States (Brumback, 1995). According to the National Coffee Association, coffee consumption has increased per capita from 1.75 cups per day in 1991 to 1.87 cups per day in 1993. The Restaurant Consulting Group's annual census shows that the number of specialty gourmet coffee shops increased from 564 units in 1993 to 2,273 units in 1994 and about 10,000 coffee houses, espresso bars and espresso units were predicted to be operating by 1999 (Brumback, 1995).

With the increased popularity of coffee drinking, interest in coffee shop design has increased. Studies on coffee shop design have identified the following as important design considerations: creating a corporate identity, choosing the right site, choosing the exterior and interior finishes, furnishings, color, lighting, and equipment to project the desired image reflecting both quality and category of goods and services being marketed (Novak, 1977; Israel, 1994; Selame & Selame, 1975; Brigham, 1996; Strauss, 1995; Packard & Carron, 1982; and Fisenko, 1996).

Corporate identity and site selection:

One of the most important aspects of store design is to identify the target customer (Israel, 1994). Store design will have a different orientation based on the characteristics of anticipated customers. Many of the stores are designed to appeal to customers who share similar backgrounds, life styles, and goals. After identifying the target market, an appropriate store identity image can be developed, which will distinguish it from its competitors and be recognized by its customers (Israel, 1994). The corporate identity image "is composed of all planned and unplanned verbal and visual elements that emanate from the corporate body and leave an impression on the observer" (Selame & Selame, 1975). The corporate identity tells the

consumers who produces the goods or services they are buying and should honestly reflect both the price and quality of the merchandise as well as the services provided. The goal of creating an identity is to be seen and to be remembered through visual communication. The plan, the design, and the use of materials should be carefully chosen and should express the company's philosophy and culture (Selame & Selame, 1975).

Bruce Brigham (1996) suggests ways to create or improve the identity image of coffeehouses, many of which can be recommended to teahouses:

- Make the storefront grab customers' attention to create a clean, fresh, and exciting environment to attract the customer. The sign should be high quality with an appropriate color scheme and be well illuminated. It should be easy to read, and should match the store's style.
- Use the entrance to tell the customers the characteristics of the store by using strong images, new drink ideas, special offers, or gift items.
- Pull the customers all the way to the back of the store by setting a product display space.
- Create a lively and inviting atmosphere by carefully choosing colors and materials used in the store. Make them consistent, colorful and interesting.
- Use lighting to enhance the atmosphere. Use different lighting levels in different parts of the store (p. 23).

Store image should be creative, imaginative, and different. It should be sufficiently unique so that it is difficult to copy (Brigham, 1996).

In addition to developing these market strategies, choosing the right site is important. There are several factors that should be considered in this process including the target consumers, economic and population trends, income of an area and the ambiance of the site (Strauss, 1995). College and university towns are a common setting for the coffee/tea shops (Fisenko, 1996). Fisenko gives out some suggestions for the location and design of coffeehouses on or near a college campus:

- Common locations to be within student shopping areas, next to restaurants, bookstores, or theaters (ideally where students can walk between their class breaks).
- Stores should be big enough for students to use as their second home where they can do their homework, read, or meet with friends. Easy chairs, coffee tables, sofas, plants, and student artwork can be used in the interior instead of more expensive furnishings and fixtures.

- Keep in mind that the customers come not just because of the coffee or tea, but because of the atmosphere that makes them feel comfortable.

The goal of coffee and tea house design is to create an atmosphere that would translate the given space into a sales-stimulating, three-dimensional advertisement to draw customers (Barr & Broudy, 1986). This involves the exterior design, signage design, and interior design all working together to reinforce the store image (Selame & Selame, 1975).

Exterior Design of the coffee or teahouse:

The design of the store exterior is crucial for conveying an identification quickly and legibly (Selame & Selame, 1975). The real challenge is to design distinctive signage and display windows, which can show the merchandise or interior. Some factors to be considered in the design of store exteriors:

- Selection of the materials should enhance the forms and style to reflect the character of the store. They should appeal to the taste of the target customers. They should be chosen to match the style of the store and contribute to the store's image (Israel, 1994).
- The entrance should be totally barrier free, inviting, and welcoming (Israel, 1994).
- Large display windows that expose the store's interior can attract the passer-by. Especially at night, when the store becomes the show, the color and atmosphere can be seen through these windows.
- Exterior seating and other public accommodations need to be well designed. The parking lot should be treated as a part of the store. It should provide enough light for security and customer convenience. The area marks, used to define the store's area, such as parking lot signage or exterior lighting, can be designed to enhance the image and reflect the identity (Selame & Selame, 1975).

Interior layout of the coffee or teahouse:

The design of the interior should work together with the exterior (Selame & Selame, 1975). The aim of designing the coffee or teahouse interior is to create a richness, excitement, and sense of "perceived value" to grab the customers' attention, and attract them in (Brigham, 1996). Every element of the interior should be well thought out. Brigham (1996) concludes with five design principles to create or improve the interior atmosphere of a store, which are the following:

Principle 1. Every aspect of the store must validate the worth of your merchandise... and create an unfolding story through creating different interesting points of selling, focal displays and variety in product merchandising.

Principle 2. All the detail of your store must mirror your customers' self-images and aspirations.

Principle 3. A well-designed store breaks down your customers' inherent defenses to the selling environment.

Principle 4. Stores must communicate a high level of comfort and security to the customers through creating uniqueness within a familiar context. The store interior must provide visual rest areas, as well as physical rest area; sight lines throughout the space must be clear to provide security; and attention to detail in customer amenities is essential.

Principle 5. A store must take customers out of their pace by suspending reality for a brief moment and leave an indelible impression on their minds (p. 27)

Summary

Tea has been China's national beverage for over four thousand years and tea drinking has been an important aspect of Chinese culture. Tradition and art has had an impact on shaping the tea culture in China and helped to elevate tea drinking into an art form known as the "tea ceremony".

Teahouses that served as the social communication centers were first established in the tea-growing region (southern region) and spread rapidly to all of China. Based on the traditional architecture and art, teahouses developed their regional styles. Historic teahouse design in the southern region of China provides rich resources from which to draw inspiration for designing a contemporary teahouse.

The custom of tea drinking was spread to neighboring countries around 900 AD and was introduced into Europe and America in the seventeen century. "Afternoon tea" and Tea Gardens have been popular throughout the western world. Currently, tea is the most common beverage in the world. There is a growing interest in tea in America as people seek a healthier lifestyle. According to the Tea Council of the U.S.A., the U.S. tea industry expects continued strong growth over the next five years.

This growing interest in tea drinking indicates a potential market for a new tea shop business. The popularity of coffeehouse/shops in the United States can serve in a number of ways as a model for teashop design: operational practices, functional plan, and shop image.