

The Chapter 5

Teahouse Culture

Teahouses, those public places in cities and towns where people gathered to drink tea, took shape during the Tang Dynasty, and flourished during the Song Dynasty. They were popular in South China, for southerners loved drinking tea, and they could also be found everywhere in North China. There were various types of teahouse. Many varieties of tea were served in teahouses, including ordinary tea, ginger tea with seasonings, peppermint tea and plum tea. In terms of their social function, the teahouses of the Tang and Song dynasties, however, only acted as meeting places for townspeople.

Considerable progress was made in the colorful teahouse culture from the Ming and Qing dynasties, when teahouse culture was integrated with regional culture.

Ba-Shu Culture and Sichuan Teahouses

Ba-Shu is one of China's earliest famous tea producing areas. The local people have kept up the hobby of drinking tea until present. As the proverb goes, "there are few clear days, but many teahouses" in Sichuan Province, Chengdu City was most noted for its teahouses of various sizes. The large ones had hundreds of seats, while the small ones, only a few. Sichuan

teahouses stressed good service, elegant styles of **shop fronts**, and excellent tea, teaset and operation skills. Traditional Sichuan teahouses served customers with red copper teapots, tin saucers, teacups with covers made of Jingdezhen porcelain, tuo cha—a bowl-shaped compressed tea leaves—and tearoom keepers experts at all manner of work.

However, Sichuan teahouses not only attracted people's attention with their great number and excellent service, but also with their social functions.

Sichuan Province, a beautiful place, is rich in resources, and its local culture flourished in ancient times. During the Three Kingdoms Period, Zhuge Liang helped Liu Bei establish the State of Shu in Sichuan, which played an important role in the development of Ba-Shu culture, and Sichuanese preserved the tradition of concerning themselves with state affairs. Because Sichuan was difficult of access, it was hard for local people to get information about state affairs. The Sichuan teahouses an important role in spreading this information. The local people went to teahouses not only to drink tea, but also to exchange information. The most important function of the teahouses was that people could chat with each other there. Each large teahouse was a society in **microcosm**. Teahouses could be found everywhere in Chongqing, Chengdu, and other large and small cities and towns throughout Sichuan Province. In the old days, many Chongqing people liked to **linger** in teahouses. They would go there immediately after they got up, and some of them even washed their faces there. They would drink tea and have breakfast,

and then chat with each other. Though simply furnished, Sichuan teahouses were elegant yet informal, making people feel at home. Customers could sit at tables or lie on bamboo deck chairs, the waiter would greet him warmly, and make tea for him. The **tearoom** keeper would take off the cover of the teacup with his left hand, while making tea with the right hand. His two hands worked very well together, and dozens of cups would be filled with tea in an instant without a single drop being **spilled**. The **manoeuvre** reflected the tradition of “even cream ” in the tea culture, and also demonstrated beautiful rhythm and superb skill. Sichuanese liked drinking **tuocha**, the bow-shaped compressed mass of tea leaves with a strong taste and delicate fragrance, especially when they talked for a long time, as tuocho’s qualities were very long-lasting. Some people would drink from early morning till noon, and ask the tearoom keeper to keep their teacups so that they could continue to drink after lunch. **Quick-witted**, and skilled in debates, the Sichuanese could talk with old or new friends about everything in an accomplished way. Sichuan teahouses served as information exchange centers, which was their most important function. They also served as unofficial courts. Local people would gather at a teahouse, and ask the powerful security group heads, rural elites or the **Paoge Master** (a secret society in the provinces in the southwest part of China in the old days, or its members) to settle a **dispute**. God knew whether the resolution was fair or not. However , the practice showed that Sichuanese regarded teahouses as fair places to settle disputes. Compared

with teahouses elsewhere, Sichuan teahouses had more obvious political and social functions.

It was not true that Sichuan teahouses were always vulgar, for many scholars often went there. It is said that some Sichuan authors liked to write in teahouses, for they could “keep quiet in a noisy neighborhood,” and draw their inspiration from teahouses. On **fair days**, the seats of a local teahouses would be placed outside so that people could appreciate Sichuan opera, **Qianyin**(a type of **ballad**-singing popular in Sichuan Province), **shuochang**(a genre of popular entertainment mainly including talking and singing), and **puppet shows**.the teahouses served as public for holding folk cultural activities.

Sichuan teahouses also served as economic exchanges, an important function which was often ignored. Special teahouses for businessmen in Chengdu City were installed with comfortable seats, where tea was served with light refreshments, and people could order dishes at any time, they were very convenient for people to negotiate business. In the old days, people also purchased official positions and sought higher rank in teahouses . businessmen also often gathered at village teahouses.

With their political, economic and cultural functions, Sichuan teahouses played an important role in making good the **omissions** and **deficiencies** of society. Though they were not **learned** and **refined** places, tea's cultural and social functions were fully reflected in the teahouses.

Wu-Yue Culture and Hangzhou Teahouses

Situated the remote area far from the national political center, the lower Yangze River valley **retained** the culture features that formed the unique style and characteristics of the ancient culture of the State of Wu and Yue (**hereinafter** referred to as Wu-Yue Culture) . The area was long **inhabited** by the ancient **tribes** in the east. It is one of China's famous tea-producing areas and the birthplace of Chinese tea culture, for green tea produced in Zhejiang Province played a decisive role. Several important factors contributed to the region's significance for tea culture.

Noted for its beautiful landscape, the area has not only suitable natural conditions for producing tea, but also the artistic environment for tasting tea. It is rich in famous teas, mountains and rivers. Chinese tea culture always advocates natural agreement. Therefore, Wu-Yue Area, including Taihu Lake and the Qiangtangjiang River valleys became a large natural "teahouse."

Southeastern China is a Buddhist and Taoist center. However , because people there respect ancient customs and local traditions, Buddhist has kept fewer of its original features in the area than in Qinghai, Tibet and other western regions. Any culture has to be remoulded to suit local customs. **Esoteric** Buddhist is practised most in the Qinghai-Tibet area, which has retained the original features of Indian Buddhism; in Beijing the Vinaya

school has been remoulded to suit Chinese culture; in the WU-Yue area, Zen practiced. It is a completely remoulded Buddhist school which is closer to Taoist and Confucian thought—China's "original" culture. Therefore, the famous Wu-Yue tea producing region integrates Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist thought, a combination which created by the system of Chinese tea culture.

The economy of the lower Yangze River valley has flourished since the Sui and Tang dynasties. The Southern Song government had its capital in Lin'an, and as a result, the local culture developed rapidly. The area is greatly affected by the fresh cultural flavor of regions south of the Yangze, and the local culture is also blended with ancient customs. The ancient Chinese tea culture has changed dramatically in modern times, but its essence has been retained secretly not only in the Wu-Yue area, but also in Fujian and Guangdong provinces. Up to now tea markets in Zhejiang Province have been the most **flourishing**, and various organizations have been established. These include the Lu Yu and Jian Ran tea groups, folk te parties in Huzhou City; the modernized China Tea Research Institute and the tea museum covering past and present tea **lore** in Hangzhou; the teahouses by West Lake, and the Tea Connoisseurs Association, a combination of teahouses , tea party and tea research institute.

Hangzhou teahouses culture originated in the Southern Song Dynasty(1127-1279). After the Jin people (an ethnic minority in North China

which established the Jin Dynasty during 1115-1234)overthrew the Northern Song Dynasty(960-1127), the Southern Song Dynasty established its capital in Hangzhou. The Confucian studies and palace culture of the Central plains spread to the city, where tea markets and teahouses prospered. A book records that “Hangzhou teahouses keep up their appearances with seasonal flowers and famous paintings, sell excellent tea, soup and wine throughout the year, for instance, seven-treasure *leicha* tea, fried dough twists, onion or *yangutang* tea in winter, and meihua (plum blossom)wine in summer.” Thus we can see that the custom of combining paintings and calligraphy in Hangzhou teahouses and various popular drinking methods were developed as far back as the Southern Song Dynasty. Leicha tea, a health drink made of pounded tea, sesame, rice flowers and other food, could work up an appetite. The Yanggutang tea referred to might be yangdou tea now popular in Zhejiang Province. It was a common practice to add onion and gingers to tea during the Song Dynasty.

The present teahouses in the Wu-Yue Area are fewer than those in Sichuan Province because most of the Zhejiang people drink tea at home. However , the culture atmosphere of Hangzhou tearooms is much stronger.

The Hangzhou teahouses have several features. They emphasize making tea with famous water, and tasting it in an excellent environment , thus achieving the true objective of tea art.

Unlike Sichan teahouses, which have tea seats, complete teaset and

skillful tearoom attendants, Hangzhou tearooms are valued in their genuineness. Longjing tea is regarded as the best tea in Hangzhou. The best-quality longjing tea is hard to come by, for it does not originate in Longjing Village, but from Lion Peak. However, people can taste the superfine or first-grade longjing tea. It is classified as green tea, which keeps tea's natural color. A cup of longjing tea is a work of art with its clear tea water, beautiful leafbuds, and mild and sweet taste similar to that of sweet dew. Good quality water is of vital importance to it. Water from the Running Tiger Spring is regarded as the best; the water quality in other areas, while inferior, is still much better than those of inland water. People enjoy themselves visiting the West Lake and Temple of Inspired Seclusion, and drinking first-grade longjing tea with water from the Running Spring. The charm lies in the fact that both tea and water keep their original color, fragrance, taste and natural qualities when people drink in pavillions, terraces and open halls, or in mountain valleys.

Tearooms by the West Lake are full of celestial, Buddhist and learned and refined atmosphere. In Hangzhou, most tearooms are elegant, simple and unsophisticated. Few are like the teahouses in Beijing and Tainjin, which combine shuochang (a genre of popular entertainment including mainly talking and singing) and Quyi(Chinese folk art forms).None is like the Shanghai fuchaguan(teahouses which also serve as public baths). Few adopt the practice of drinking tea with refreshments and meat gruel common in

Guangzhou and Hong Kong teahouses. Scholars' reading rooms and Buddhist meditation rooms are both called rooms. Thus Hangzhou teahouses are called tearooms because of their elegant, quiet and beautiful artistic conception. Small shops attached to the tearooms sell handiworks such as Hangzhou fans, bamboo carvings, small images of Ji Gong, or West Lake lotus root starch.

People feel that the lake and sky, and they themselves and the tea are at one when they drink tea in the tearooms along the Su and Bai causeways; when they appreciate the gurgling Running Tager Spring and its folk stories, they can sense the wonderful Taoist celestial atmosphere. When they drink longjing tea while listening to the gurgling spring and the clear and melodious sound of bells, watching the wreaths of incense smoke and the devoted Buddhists chanting in the Temple of Inspired Seclusion, visitors will realize the truth of Buddhist allegorical words or gestures even if they themselves are not Buddhists. Decorated with paintings, calligraphy and poetic prose works, the Association of Tea Connoisseurs beside the Xileng Printing Office has a learned and refined style. Thus people can feel tea's cultural flavor in Hangzhou tearooms not only because of the methods of brewing and making tea, but also because of the historic atmosphere. Tea is full of celestial airs, for it produced in the area where the remains of holy hermits and immortals lie.

The beautiful scenery of Hangzhou City provides an excellent natural environment for the development of tearooms by the West Lake.

The whole Hangzhou City is a large natural “teahouse.” Tea integrates naturally with man, heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, clouds and mists, bamboo and stones, and flowers and trees. Humanity and nature, and tea culture and Wu-Yue culture also become **melded**. local teahouses also have the function of settling civil disputes. When both sides agree, they may go to a teahouse to settle the dispute in public. Though opposing each other, the two sides have to speak in a mild tone when defending themselves in an elegant teahouse. The losing side will have to pay for tea, which is called *chipincha*. As a result, the parties are able to distinguish clearly between right and wrong without hurting each other, and **manifest** the golden mean principle and theory of governing by doing nothing that is against nature.

Tianjin Teahouses, Shanghai Fuchaguan Teahouses and Guangdong Tearooms

Tianjin became a city after the Jin and Yuan dynasties to service the Great Canal. It has been an important industrial and commercial metropolis in North China in the modern times. Because it is close to Beijing, the capital, Tianjin teahouses imitated those in Beijing to meet the needs of industrial and commercial development, as well as those of ordinary people. In old China, besides formal teahouses, the public places for tea-drinking included **public baths, brothels**, restaurants and **tea stalls**.

As in the large Beijing teahouses, the formal Tanjin teahouses sold **refreshments**, accompanied by the singing of opera **arias**, storytelling and *dagu* (a versified story sung to the accompaniment of a small drum and other instruments). Every customer was served with a teapot and cup, while groups of customers were provided with a teapot and several cups. People of various trades drank tea while eating refreshments and appreciating performances. Some of them came to teahouses to look for jobs, such as **lacquering**, **bricklaying** and **woodwork**. Teahouses were often antique trading floors. In the Sandexuan teahouse, **craftsmen** drank tea and looked for jobs in the morning, while at noon, storytelling and *dagu* were performed; in the Donglaixuan Teahouse, cooks sang opera arias in the morning, while in the evening, actors/actress and **amateur** performers sang together. Some famous Beijing opera performers often went to the Donglaixuan Teahouse. People from all walks of life killed time, read newspapers, exchanged information or played chess in the teahouses. Unlike Beijing teahouses, which were carefully classified, Sichuan teahouses or Hangzhou teahouses, which have their unique local features, most of the Tianjin teahouses met the needs of business people from different parts of China.

In the old days, customers in Tianjin restaurants would be greeted with a cup of top-grade tea as soon as they arrived so that they could refresh themselves and **whet** their appetite. After that, formal courses would be served. Tea would be served again after the meal so that customers could rest

for a while before leaving . it was a good tradition. In such a way, Tianjin teahouses gave full play to the social and economic development of the city. The old local residents drank tea three times a day. The cultural atmosphere of the teahouses, however, was not strong, which was a common characteristic of the teahouses in North China.

However, the teahouses in Shanghai, another modern industrial and commercial metropolis, had a strongere cultural atmosphere . in the past, the tearooms in gardens were often filled with guests and friends. Many sons and daughters of the rich went to tearooms to learn civilized manners and **mingle** with men of letters and scholars and to pose as lovers of cultura. Although, compared with Baijing teahouses where tea was served without refreshments, Shanghai tearooms had a less **literary** atmosphere, they could be regarded as learned and refined places in Shanghai. The most typical teahouse with local features was situated in the old Chenghuangmiao (Temple of Town God) area. For example, in the old Deyilou teahouse, the customers on the ground floors were small trademen, **porters** and other laborers, and the stalls at the gate sold **sesame** seed cakes. The second floor, where customers drank tea while listening to storytelling, had a greater cultural atmosphere, and the third floor where bird connoisseurs gathered, was full of the joy of life. The most quietly and tastefully laid out tearoom was situated in Yuyuan Garden, neighboring Chenghuangmiao. Though **inferior to** Suzhou garden, the traditional zigzag southern private garden was very beautiful. The tearooms

close to ponds and bamboos were very elegant. Shanghai people called teahouses fuchaguan to express their longing for leisure. We can thus see that teahouses were popular in modern cities.

The teahouses in Guangzhou, another modern city, looked grander. The local people called breakfast zaocha(morning -tea). If a Cantonese said "I would like to invite you to drink tea tomorrow," he meant to invite you for a meal. The old Guangdong tearooms were inexpensive. Regular customers would be served with a cup of tea, and two steamed buns **stuffed** with **diced grilled** pork, steamed dumplings with shrimp stuffing. However, present teahouses are different. A waitress serves customers with a pot of strong tea as soon as they arrive, and asks them to select from a great variety of refreshments on the food **cart**.

Some small village teahouses in Guangdong were like little and dainty waterside **pavilions** with bamboo or **bark** fences. Customers were served with a cup of tea with thick **stalks** and large leaves, and two steamed dumplings with the **dough** gathered at the top or other refreshments, but compared with the teahouses in Guangzhou and Hongkong, they had a stronger cultural and artistic **ambience**. Though not as learned and refined as the teahouses by the West Lake, the simple and **unadorned** teahouses were full of the **appeal** of waterside villages. The villagers drank tea three times a day in the waterside teahouses. In the morning, they appreciated the rising sun and misty **morning**; at noon the passing boats setting sails or **sculling**; in the evening, the moon

rising in the west, which was reflected in the water. As a result, their weariness dissolved. The waterside teahouses in Guangdong were called **tancha**. Tan meant to enjoy. People could learn tea'taste, and the joys and sorrows of life. Compared with the teahouses in large cities, they were rich in the philosophies of life and nature.

Beijing Teahouse Culture

Beijing teahouses epitomized the advantages of other local teahouses ,and were noted for their great variety, complete functions , and rich and profound cultural aims.

Historically, there were many kinds of Beijing teahouses, including dachaguan (great teahouses), **qingchaguan** (teahouses serving tea without refreshments) , **shuchahuan**(teahouses where storytelling was performed), **erhunpu**(teahouses selling both tea and wine and dinners), **hongluguan**(teahouses installedwith red stoves) and **yechaguan**(teahouses on the country). There were also innumerable tea stalls and booths. The teahouses bacame the meeting place for people of all sorts. It was more convenient for people to carry out activities in teahouses than in formal hall or restaurants, for it cost less money, and one felt more at ease meeting friends in a teahouse than at home. Strangers without families could also relax in teahouses. Teahouses became popular because of the special composition of

the population. Therefore, teahouses of various forms and with varied functions spread all over Beijing. I would like to introduce several varieties from the angle of their cultural and social functions.

Storytelling and folk literature in *shuchaguan*

Novels of the Ming and Qing dynasties occupy an important place in the history of Chinese novels, especially full-length masterpieces, were not written solely in the writers' studies, but were revised according to storytellers' scripts. They became the masterpieces included *The Romance of Three Kingdom and Outlaws of the Marsh*. Because ancient Chinese novels took root among the masses, they displayed a greater vitality than other literary works. Teahouse culture since the Song and Yuan dynasties made a special contribution to the development of the novel, and Beijing *shuchaguan* was the best evidence of the method of development.

In the old days, there were many *shuchaguan* in Beijing, where tea only acted as a medium, and people came there mainly to listen to storytelling. Storytelling was performed two times a day: from 3:00pm to 6:00pm or 7:00 pm, and from 7:00 pm or 8:00pm to 11:00 pm or 12:00pm. Sometimes the storytelling started one or two hours earlier, providing opportunities for ordinary performers to practice. Before the performance started, tea was served without refreshments so that passer-by could have a break and *quench* their thirst. After the storytelling began, the teahouses only received customers who listened to it. Customers would refresh themselves with tea

while listening. They included all sorts of people, such as unlucky officials , politicians and office workers, shop managers and accountants, old ladies enjoying themselves, and the **toiling** masses. The bill was called payment for storytelling instead of payment for tea because customers went to teahouses to listen to storytelling ,while tea only acted as a suppliment. Famous shuchaguan were **exquisitely** furnished with cane or wooden tables and chairs, and decorated with works of calligraph and paintings to build an atmosphere for storytelling. A teahouse would invite a storyteller to perform well in advance. A long story would last two or three months. The teahouse took 30 percent of the income, while the storyteller received 70 percent. As an intellectual, the storyteller was greatly respected by the teahouse manager. There were all kinds of stories, including historical stories, such as **the Romance of Three Kingdoms, Records of the Eastern and Western Han Dynasties, and Romance of Sui and Tang Dynasties**; tales of complicated legal cases, such as **the Cases Handled by Lord Ji, and Cases Handled by Lord Peng**; and stories about gods and spirits, such as **The Journey to the West**. The Biograph of Lord Ji, and The Romance of the Canonized Gods. The strange **Tales from the Make Do Studio**, which was full of beautiful love stories, had to be told in a way which suited both refined and popular taste, for if told in popular terms, its original intention was lost, while if recounted in refined terms, it was difficult to understand. Customers enjoyed themselves listening to the interesting stories about gods and spirits told by excellent story-tellers,

who expanded the meanings of the stories to **illustrate** the **fickleness** of the world.

Various **quyi**(Chinese folk art forms) were performed in the shuchaguan in the Tianqiao area; they included meihua dagu, lihua dagu, and storytelling in Beijing and Tangshan dialects with drum accomplishment. The stories were either taken from **voluminous** storytelling books or newly-**compiled** in order to be fashionable and to suit the contemporary environment.

People drank tea in shuchaguan to increase their historical knowledge, kill time and amuse themselves. So shuchaguan were best suited to old people. I remembered that during the initial post-liberation period, my grandmother's old neighbor, who pulled a **pedicab**, used to take her to a teahouse in Gulou. After she listened to storytelling for several hours, the neighbor would pick her up and return her in the evening. Our family would invite him to have supper at home. At present, there are increasing problems of the aged. A revival of the shuchaguan would be a nice place for today's old people.

Entertainment in Beijing's qingchaguan and qichaguan (teahouses in which people played chess):

Though shuchaguan had a strong atmosphere of folk culture, they were monotonous. There were many qingchaguan in Beijing, providing places for people from all walks of life to entertain themselves elegantly. Tea was served without refreshments in these teahouses. Most of them were simply furnished

with elegant square tables and wooden chairs, and teacups with covers were used. In spring, summer and autumn, a shelter would be set outside or in the courtyard of the teahouse. The seats in the front shelter were for ordinary customers, while those in the room were for regular customers. Comfortable seats were set in the courtyard. Wooden signboards with characters such as **maojian, queshe, yuqian, and dafang** were hung in front of the gate or under the roof of the shelter to show that the teahouse was selling first-class tea. The teahouses opened at five every morning. Most of the customers were idlers, including the old and young **survivors** of the late Qing Dynasties, children of families in decline, and common people. Residents of old Peking were accustomed to getting up early to do exercises, which were called liuzao. They would go for a walk in quiet places or on the banks of the **moat**. When they and the birds breathed enough fresh air, they would return to the town and enter teahouses. They would hang the birdcages on a **pole** and drink tea while appreciating the birds' calls. The trained **larks, babblers, hongdian, landian** and other species could call in more than 10 ways, and imitate the cries of **magpies, titmice, hawks, cuckoos**, wild geese and babies. The old customers then talked about their experiences of cultivating tea and keeping pets, engaged in small talk, or commented on current events. They developed a unique method of integrating tea and nature. The shopkeepers of qingchaguan helped well-known pet keepers to organize **chaniaohui** (parties to appreciate both tea and birds) to **solicit** customers. They would send

invitation cards on **fancy stationery** and red envelopes to old customers , and put up posters on the street. The pet keepers would go to the parties and old customers took pleasure in them, while teahouses could reap great profit. In winter, besides warming themselves and chatting in teahouses, customers liked to appreciate butterflies spreading their wings, and watch **cricket fights**, activities which added **vitality** to the **bleak** winter, and made their life more colorful. It was an unique scene in Beijing. In the afternoon, these old customers were replaced by businessmen or **pedlars**, who negotiated business at teahouses.

There were also qichaguan in Beijing where customers played chess. Qichaguan were simply furnished with **timber** or **lumps** of wood painted with chessboards, which were partly buried in the ground, or chessboards with benches on both sides. More than 10 customers would drink tea in a qichaguan while playing chess each afternoon. People of Beijing in old times, even the poor m had refined hoobies. Qichaguan wqas an example. When they played chess while drinking **scented** tea or other ordinary tea, the chessboard was like an battlefield of life, and they would temporarily forget about their sufferings. Because of this quality, tea was also called wangyoujun (Mr. Worry -free).

People went to yechguan(teahouses in the country) and **seasonal tea sheds** for **outings** to appreciate beautiful gardens. People of Beijing in old times loved going for outings. They went out to enjoy the beautiful scenery in

spring, in summer to appreciate the lotus flowers , in autumn the maple leaves and in winter the Western Hills shimmering with snow. Some old people loved the melon sheds, bean poles, vineyards and fishponds on the outskirts of the city, so yechaguan appeared in these beautiful areas. For example, the Maizi Teashop at Chaoyangmanwai was established in a peaceful and secluded place surrounded by reeds and many ponds. Skillful fish farmers often went there to net water fleas. When the sun was sinking in the west, old men walked on crisscross footpaths between the fields and gathered at the teahouse. The teahouse at Liupukang was surrounded by melon sheds and bean poles. Customers could appreciate rustic sights such as the flowers of cucumbers and eggplants, and butterflies while drinking tea, just as Lu Fangweng (Lu You) had taken great pleasure in chatting about the cultivation of mulberries and hems with old farmers. People recovered their original simplicity in such an environment. The Vineyard Teahouse at Chaoyangmenwai was close to a clear and many grapes trellises and towering old trees surrounded by low fences to the north. Scholars often went there to play chess , solve riddles or write poems.

Good-quality water was rare in Beijing , and most of the city water was bitter. The Qing Palaces took water from the sweet and refreshing spring at the Jade Spring Hill in the northwest part of Beijing. Because of the poor quality city water it was best to build yechaguan in beautiful places near excellent springs. The Shanglong and Xialong teahouses at Anddingmenwai

were such teahouses. They were only about 100 paces apart. The Prosperity Temple was situated there in the Qing Dynasty, and there was a dozen mu of pond to the north. When the 300-year-old “memorial tree to King Wen” blossomed, the fragrance spread all over the courtyard. There was also a well with sweet , refreshing and clear water outside the temple. Rich with cultural relics, beautiful views and excellent water , it was an excellent place to drink tea. The shopkeeper built a canopy near the well to sell tea, wine and steamed buns. The teahouse was a small earthen structure standing on the slope. When customers drank tea with the water from the Shanglong Well while looking out the windows at the old trees in the courtyard and near the well, at the reeds and lings in the pond, and the sun dipping to the Western Hill, and while listening to the bells from the old temple, the roosters crowing and the dogs barking in the village, they could feel the sweetness and bitterness of life. The teahouses by the Gaoliangqiao and Baishiqiao bridges flourished because pleasure-boats passed there during the Qing Dynasty. Yechaguan , quiet spots away from the noisy city, enlivened the people’s life and added natural interest to tea-drinking. Although not as secluded and quiet as the teahouses by the West Lake in hangzhou City, they were simple and unadorned and , thus, closer to the true spiritual qualities of the Chinese tea ceremony.

Such teahouses also included seasonal tea sheds in parks. The most famous ones were situated at Little Western Heaven by the North Lake, in

which lotuses grew. **Almond** tea, **mashed** peas and *suzao* meat were also served.

People had social contacts in Dachaguan(great teahouses) with **catering** services. The old Beijing dhchaguan ahd various functions. They served tea and food, and provided excellent service to people in various trafdes, such as businessmen and scholars. **Teahouse**,the famous opera written by Lao She, described the model of the old Beijing dhchaguan. The Lao She Teahouse at Qianmen has carried on the tradition and oipened a way for those who follow. Dachaguan became popular because of their multiple functions and good services.

Tianhuixuan teahouse at Dianmenwai was the most famous old Beijing dachaguan; Huifengxuan Teahouse at Donganmenwai was second only to it.

The teshouses were tastefully furnished. The first counter at the entrance was in charge of **take-outs** and the accounts for the front hall, the second counter, for the accounts of the Yaoshuan or middle hall connecting the front and back halls, and the back counter, the back hall and comfortable seats. Each counter received different types pf customers. In some dachaguan , the back and middle halls were connected with each other while, in some, the halls were separated by a courtyard.

The teahouses served customers with exquisite teasets. Teacups with covers kept the tea **sanitary** and warm. Pekingese stressed **etiquette** while drinking tea. They used the covers of teacups to stir tea and cover their

mouths waiters would take good care of customers' teaset and seats so that they could continue to drink after lunch.

In terms of services, Beijing dachaguan also included hongluguan (teahouses installed with red stoves), wowoguan (teahouses serving tea with refreshments), and banhuguan (teahouses installed with a large copper pot).

Hongluguan were installed with red stoves which baked Manchurian and Chinese pastries. They served all kinds of pastries, which were smaller and more exquisite than those made by pastry shops. Customers could drink tea while sampling these pastries.

Wowoguan served various refreshments, including aiwowo, steamed sponge cakes, paicha, pengao and sesame seed cakes.

Characterized by a large copper pot, banhuguan suited both refined and popular taste.

Erhunpu served tea without refreshments, but provided dining and wining facilities. It supplied customers food cooked from raw materials provided by itself or brought by customers. For example, educational circles used to gather at the Longhaixuan Teahouse on Changanjie Street. During the late Qing Dynasty, new-type schools appeared suddenly in Baoding, and disputes often occurred between the Beijing and Baoding types. On such occasions, adherents of the Beijing type would hold a principal joint meeting at teahouse to discuss countermeasures. This custom led to the Beijing type of education being sometimes called Longhai Type.

Dachaguan had many functions—people could drink tea, dine, make social contacts, and entertain themselves there. They were broader in scope, and had a more profound influence than other teahouses. Lao She Teahouse is still popular among people from all walks of life today. Tea acted as a medium of contact and had great social functions in the dachaguan.