

Chapter 6

Tea and Literature and Art

Representative Works of Tea Painting

Chinese tea culture came into being at the height of Tang Dynasty, and Chinese tea paintings began to appear at about the same time. However, tea paintings of this time, like other drinking banquet paintings or recreation paintings, just displayed tea drinking and did not form art works showing the special essence of tea. In The Book of Tea by Lu Yu , there were tea paintings, but they mainly displayed the process of brewing tea so that people could know more about tea. In a sense, they were simply like advertisements of new food. But many poets and calligraphers among tea drinkers, headed by Lu Yu, made many beautifully conceived between art and tea made later painters and calligraphers meditate on art works more deeply.

Xiao Yi Wrangles Over the Masterpiece of Calligraphy Lan Ting by Strategy by Yan Liben in the Tang Dynasty is the earliest tea painting in the world. It shows one Confucianist and two monks drinking tea together. On the right, the monks and Confucianist are talking about Buddhism and Confucianism as they wait for the tea. On the left, two servants, one old and the other young, are brewing tea single-mindedly. The old servant is putting the teapot on the stove and brewing tea elaborately, while the young one is holding a bowl, waiting to present the brewed tea to his master. With the expressions of the characters being true to life, the painting is meticulously

drawn, reflecting the simple way that the lower-level Confucianists and monks drank tea. It set a good precedent in it that tea paintings should not only displayed the materials life of tea brewing and drinking, but should mainly express some thought. The painting is **pregnant** with the meaning that the Confucianist and Buddhists talked about **doctrine** as they drank tea. It shows that talking about tea was more important than brewing it.

The painting *Auspiciousness and Happiness* by Zhang Xuan displayed Emperor Minghuang of the Tang Dynasty drinking tea. In the painting, the emperor lies on his bed, with three **maids of honor** standing beside it. Another maid of honor is holding a teaset containing tea and fruit, and it appears that the emperor has just finished drinking tea and has ordered her to clear away the teaset. Judging from the teaset, some specialists in tea drinking that this painting shows the way of making tea with **loose tea** in the early Tang Dynasty. But culturally, we pay more attention to the two words "Auspiciousness and Happiness," which was what the painter tried to express. The anonymous painting, *Palace Music*, shows the grand scene of imperial ladies drinking tea. In the palace is a luxury table, displaying liquor, a large **utensil** holding the tea, and a ladle to **scoop out** tea. The maids of honor are all holding musical instruments, their foreheads broad and their **jaws** wide, their clothes beautiful, and their **buns** high. They sit on refined **embroidered** seats, some holding a bowl with both hands and drinking tea, others playing the four-stringed Chinese Lute, Xiao (a **vertical** bamboo **flute**)

or other ancient musical instruments. Some maids of honor are standing in attendance, while a cat is lying under the table. It can be seen from the viewpoint of tea culture that tea and liquor did not **interfere with** each other, but the main content of the the painting is the combination of tea with recreation. Other tea paintings of the Yang Dynasty, according to documents, include the paintigns Brewing Tea and the painting Figures of Ladies Brewing Tea, but unfortunately they have been lost.

Overall, during the Yanf Dynasty, which was the pioneering stage of tea paintings, painters **depicted** the details and scenes of tea brewing and drinking **concretely** and minutely, but they did not show the spiritual **connotation** of tea in any depth. After all ,this opened up a new field for tea culture. By visible artistic means, people not only realized the effects of tea, but also began to **heed** its spiritual experience.

From the Five Dynasties to the Song Dynasty, tea paintings were rich in content. They displayed either large tea banquets of palace and officialdom, or scholars drinking tea in their studies, or the common people apprasing and drinking tea. As most were painted by famous painters, the artistry of tea painting was further raised. Among them are many rare works of a high order, and more than ten of them are used for **textual** research.

The painting Han Xizai Attending an Evening Banquet, painted by Gu Hongzhong during the Five Dynasties, depicts a large tea banquet. In it there are many vivid fugures, who are drinking as women are dancing . two

maidservants are holding plates, on which the utensils look much like those in the painting *Auspiciousness and Happiness*. Therefore, some people think that at the banquet people drank both tea and liquor.

Zhao Ji, Emperor Huizong of the Northern Song Dynasty, though not good at ruling his state, was a rare artist. He had a good knowledge of chess, calligraphy, paintings and Qin(a seven-stringed **plucked** instrument in some ways similar to the **zither**). He specially liked tea art. His painting *Scholars' Gathering* is universally thought to depict a tea banquet. In a noble garden with a pool, mountain stones and willows, there is a big square table, on which are fruit, refreshments , and tea. Around the table are more than ten scholars. At the lower corner on the left some servants are brewing tea, with teaset, the stove, and the big basket for storing teaset for future use, clear and **recognizable**. Behind the tea table , between flowers and trees , is another table, on which there are an **incense burner** and a Qin. This showed that scholars had made tea drinking elegant, not excluding music on the lute and the fragrance of flowers.

In terms of achievement in art, the tea paintings by Liu Songnian in the Southern Song Dynasty take the first place. His paintings handed down to us include **Rumpling** Tea(showing the tea art of the Song Dynasty), *Gambling Market in the Tea Plantation*, and *Lu Tong Brewing Tea*. The last two paintings, in particular, have both profound **implications** and are great achievements in art, setting an example to later generations.

The painting *Gambling Market in the Tea plantation* depicts the appraisal of tea among common people. In it all the people, old and young, including women and children, have vivid expressions. The scene of appraisal of tea in a tea producing area is full of life. On the left a woman with a child is selling tea in her basket; in the middle a pedlar, with two baskets of tea on his shoulder pole, is also selling tea; on the right gamblers are appraising tea, which is the main theme of the painting. On either basket containing tea and teaset on an old man's **shoulder pole** is a **tag**, on which is written, "First-Class River Tea." Old men, women and children all focus their attention on those appraising tea on the right, a detail which makes the theme "appraising tea" more prominent. The people appraising tea all have teaset. They match each other for good tea, showing great concern for the result. This painting shows the appraisal of tea among common people in the Song Dynasty. Vivid, detailed, and true to life, it is both a masterpiece of art and a precious reference material for the study of the history of tea drinking.

The painting *Lu Tong Brewing Tea*, another tea painting by Liu Songnian, is vividly painted according to a poem on drinking tea written by Lu Tong, a poet during the Tang Dynasty. The painting depicted some scholars, who are drinking tea under the moon by mountain stones and bamboo bushes in the field. It mainly reflects the experience and happiness of people drinking tea. It deserves to be particularly noted, for it is a **portrayal** of tea art which approaches nature. It can be seen from the tea paintings by Liu

Songnian that in the scholars drinking tea in their studies. For example, in the anonymous painting *Characters*, a scholar sits up straight in his study, where qin, books and paintings are placed on the desk, flowers are arranged in the middle, and a stove is put on the right. With the charcoal fire roaring, a child servant is working on the boiling tea. It is truly a leisure and elegant scene.

The painting *Children Playing in Spring* by Su Hangchen of the Song Dynasty, shows many children **tuning** the Qin, practicing calligraphy, playing games, and tasting tea. It has the rich flavor of life and implies the children's friendship.

In all, the Song Dynasty **ushered** in an **epoch** of tea paintings of great achievement.

In the Ming and Yuan dynasties, tea culture had two characteristics. One was that it had deeper philosophic thinking, advocating agreement with nature and blending with mountains and waters, heaven and earth, and the **cosmos**. The other was that tea drinkign among common people was developed, and that the friendship and harmony of tea drinkers deeply influenced all manner of people . excellent tea paintings in the Yuan and Ming dynasties also reflected these two aspects. However, in contrast, painters at that time, paid more attention to the connotation of tea paintings than to techniques of tea culture. This conforms with the overall trend in the development of Chinese feudal culture became mature, and social and ideological conflicts became sharper, making tea paintings at that time more

profound.

Zhao Mengfu, a famous painter in the Yuan Dynasty, painted the painting Appraising Tea after the painting Gambling Market in the Tea plantation by Liu Songnian in the Song Dynasty. The former attached more important to the theme of appraising tea, deleted other figures, and displayed the psychology of the four central figures in the latter by painting them in minute detail. In the painting, Lu Yu Tasting Tea, by Zhao Yuan, we see that unlike people in the Tang and Song dynasties who drank tea in studies, courtyards or palaces, people drank tea in mountains fields, which reflected their broad minds. The anonymous painting Compatriots with One Mind in the Yuan Dynasty shows some lovely children drinking tea and baking stuffed buns, and is full of meanings.

In the Ming Dynasty, Zhu Quan, the 17th son of Zhu Yuanzhang, Emperor Taizu, developed Chinese tea art, and became a main representative of naturalistic tea drinkers. Owing to political frustration and complicated conflicts, he became a hermit and devoted himself to founding the naturalistic tea ceremony. Since then, many frustrated scholars have followed him. Among them were poets and painters. For example, the painting Brewing Tea in Yuchuan by Ding Yunpeng depicts the scene of tasting tea on a mountain stone beside banana trees under bamboos. Wen Zhengming and Tan Yin (Bohu) of the “four outstanding people in Wuzhou” during the reign of Emperor Jiajing, all painted high-level tea paintings. Wen Zhengming’s

paintings—Lu Yu Brewing Tea, Tasting Tea, and Tea Gathering in the Huishan Mountain—all stress hiding in high mountains and jungles, while Tang Yin's painting Qin Player and Two paintings entitled Tasting Tea are clear , **grandiose** and varied. All these are rare works in the history of tea paintings.

In the Ming Dynasty , many scholars painted tea paintings, tasted tea in their studies, or drank tea together in **bridal chambers**. All these reflected certain living conditions and the wide use of tea among common scholars, but ,compared with Tang Yin, Wen Zhengming and other master-hande, they are not worth mantioning ideologically or artistically. However, many illustrations in the collected works and novels of the Ming Dynasty, such as the painting of tasting tea in the courtyard, the painting of a lady tasting tea in her boudoir, the painting of tasting tea on a Boat in a river with green lotus leaves, reflect the vivid tea culture and the broad social walks of life who engaged in it. The painting Sweeping Away Snow and Brewing Tea in the novel the Plum in the Golden Vase depicts figures and the scene vividly.

In the Qing Dynasty there were also many tea paintings. Since the ways of making tea were then popular, tea paintings at that time attached importance to teacups and teapots and scenes with a view to reflecting social life rather than the details of brewing tea. In particular, tea paintigns at the height of the period, when Kangxi and Qianlong were on the throne, mainly reflected harmony and liveliness. For example, the painting Spring Market at Peace by Ding Guanpeng during the reign of Qianlong depicts some even-

tempered scholars, who are tasting fragrant tea on nice teasetts by pine and plum trees on a broad and beautiful carpet of green grass, and an old man selling tea and fruit passing by with two baskets on his shoulder pole. The painting Enjoying the Moon by Leng Mei in the Qing Dynasty shows enjoying the moon and tasting tea in the garden. Tea drinking among common people in the Qing Dynasty was also very popular, a fact reflected in paintings by common people . foe example, Yangliuqing woodcuts portray ladies playing cards while tasting tea. Besides this type of work, paintings on appraising tea after Liu Songnian's works and books on the art of tea painting by Mr. Yu Chuan (Lu Tong) were often seen.

In the period of the Republic of China(1912-1949). Civic tea culture was practiced on a large scale, and art works on teahouses naturally followed. Tea paintings in books on the art of painting, as well as tea illustrations in novels, were nothing new.

Generally, since the Yang Dynasty, tea was a major subject of painters, who produced many noteworthy works. The special character of tea made it an important way for painters to express their thoughts and feelings . these tea paintings **simultaneously** inspired tea culture itself, reflecting tea art and tea ceremony in visible forms and deepening people's understanding of its inner secret.

Calligraphy on Tea

The artistic writing of words is called calligraphy. It is not only a technique, but also contains the essence of life, vital energy and spirit. Many calligraphers feel that good calligraphic works are not only a skill gained through long-term cultivation of thought, but also have a lot to do with the state of mind at the time of writing. Tea can keep people sober-minded and make them feel as if they are filling the cosmos. Perhaps just because of this special relationship between tea and calligraphy, many calligraphers like drinking tea. So tea calligraphy which took poems about tea or the word "tea" as its subject became a special reference of painters and calligraphers. Many famous calligraphers had "tea copybooks," or wrote poems on tea in calligraphic form as a way of expressing their art and thoughts.

Tea formed ties with calligraphy very early. Early in the period when Lu Yu created the primary system of Chinese tea culture and compiled the Book of Tea, calligraphers took an active part in tea culture activities. Yan Zhengqing, Lu Yu's good friend despite their great difference in age, was well-known as the originator of Yan-style calligraphy. Quite a lot of people knew that Yan was a famous calligrapher, but Confucianist Yan Zhengqing made friends with hermit Lu Yu and monk Jiao Ran in Huzhou, they cooperated with each other in many respects, and advocated the combination of tea with calligraphy for the first time. Take the famous **Three-Gui Pavilion** for example. The pavilion was named for its building on the date, month and

year of gui, the last of ten Heavenly Stems. In Taoism the word “three” implies “bearing everything on earth,” while Lu , Jiao and Yan were three persons. According to investigations, Lu Yu designed the pavilion, Jiao Ran wrote a poem for it as a **memento**, and Yan Zhengqing engraved its history on a **stone tablet**. These were called three superb works of art. Thus , from Tang Dynasty, calligraphy on tea officially became an important part of tea culture.

In the Song Dynasty, Emperor Huizong liked tea, poems and calligraphy. He wrote **An Exposition On Tea** and some essays on tea, painted tea paintings, or **inscribed** poems on tea paintings with the special artistic **temperament** of a calligrapher. His calligraphy was called **thin tendon style**. From his painting Scholar’s Gathering , a superb work of art combining paintings, poems, calligraphy, and tea banquets, we can see his and his ministers’ inscribed poems and calligraphy.

In the Ming Dynasty, Tang Yin and Wen Zhengming had a good command of tea art, poems and paintings. Here Zheng Banqiao , one of the “eight strange of Yangzhou ” in the Qing Dynasty, is noteworthy. He was Zheng Xie , and he styled himself **Kerou**. Born in Xinghua, Jiangsu Province, he was famous calligrapher, painter and poet, and was , therefore , called a superb person in three aspects. He was especially expert at painting orchids, black bamboo, and strange stones, and his stroke were beautiful and **vigorous**. His poems strived for realism, freedom and generosity, while his calligraphy blended **official script**, regular script, **cursive script**, and **grass**

script. Also, he liked tea. In his poem *Prefecture Chief Presenting Tea to Me When I lived in Yanzhou*, he wrote: "The quality tea was given to you by the late ministers Cai Xiang and Ding Wei in Heaven; How should I have thought that you would present it to me?" from this we can see that Zheng Banqiao, as an artist expert at tea, poems and paintings, knew the history of tea very well.

Owing to the special relationship between tea and calligraphy, many great calligraphers wrote special books on calligraphy models of "tea" for appreciation. Some people collected calligraphy models of "tea" to comply a book for comparative study. For example, they put the calligraphy models of "tea," taken from Xuanmi Tower, Explanation and study of Principles of Composition of Characters and works written by such famous calligraphers as Yan Zhengming, Mi Fu, Xu Wei, Su Guo, Dong Qichang, Zhang Ruitu, Wang Tingjun, Wu Changshuo, Zhao Mengfu, and Zheng Banqiao together in a book on calligraphy models. Although regular script, official script, grass script, seal script, and cursive script were put together on a page, they did not look rigid at all.

Tales about Tea

There were many tales about tea in different parts of China. Some of these tales told of the origin of famous teas with a view to both adding romance to the teas to make them more exalted and publicizing the beauty and prosperity of their hometowns. China was vast in territory and rich in

resources, but almost nothing was liked by everyone and eulogized in different tales except tea and liquor. There were tales about grains and plants, such as the tales about the Godness of Flowers, and the Silkworm Lady Meeting Qiu Hu in the Mulberry Garden. Tea stories, however, were more specific. All famous teas had their own graceful and romantic legends, through which people eulogized famous mountains and rivers, thus making them yearn for and admire famous teas all the more. Tea planters were good at making advertisements for their fine teas through legends. The origin of famous teas accounted for a large proportion of the legends about tea, and every famous tea seemed to have a wonderful history.

Maofeng Tea of Huangshan, Anhui Province, is one famous kind of tea in China, and its Tunxi green tea is praised as "green gold." The first-class Tunxi green tea is also called the treasure of teas, about which there is beautiful love story. Once there was an orphan named Luo Xiang who lived at the foot of the Huangshan Mountain. The girl, tender as tea and beautiful as flower, picked delicious tea and sang beautiful songs. High officials, noble lords, scholars, sons of wealthy men, and rich businessmen all proposed marriage to her. Troubled by them, Luo Xiang told her fellow countrymen that she would be engaged through the treasure of teas she had picked. On March 8, at the foot of the Huangshan Mountain, the countrymen, among whom were many rich people and poor people unwilling to be left behind, gathered. Luo Xiang put a table in front of her door, and placed a cup of treasure of teas before each

person who proposed marriage to her. She said, "I will choose my husband today, and I hope God will bless me. I have put my vital energy to the tea. The one in whose cup reveals my figure will be my husband." Hearing this, those who proposed marriage to her all watched the tea in the cups before them. But only in the cup set before the **woodcutter**, Shi Yong, did the fragrant **vapors** of the tea **curl up**, in the **initial form** of a green tea leaf unfolding and later turning into a tea tree. People could see Luo Xiang picking tea under the tree, with the girl inside and outside the cup, as well as the tea in the cup and in the mountain, all becoming an **integral** whole. As a result, Luo Xiang married the woodcutter. Then the news spread to local authorities. The **county magistrate** grabbed the treasure of teas from Luo Xiang and presented it to the imperial court. It was fragrant but no soul could be seen in the teacup. So the county magistrate arrested Shi Yong and tortured him to death. However, LuoXiang saved his life with spring water from the Huangshan Mountain and the treasure of teas, which had a miraculous effect of saving one's life but only with the help of the spring water from the Huangshan Mountain.

Another legend about Maofeng tea of Huangshan Mountain is also thought-provoking. During the reign of Tian Qi in the Ming Dynasty there was a learned refined and incorruptible county magistrate named Xiong Kaiyuan. Once he went to Yungu Temple in the Huangshan Mountain with his **page boy** during a spring outing. The elder of the Temple presented him

with a kind of fine tea which had sprout on yellow leaves which looked like white hair. He made tea with the boiling water from a Huangshan Mountain spring, and found that not only did the tea have unparalleled color, fragrance and taste, but when it changed and rose, the wonder of a white lotus appeared in the air. According to the elder, when the Holy Farmer got poisoned after tasting herbs, the Tea Fairy and Huangshan Mountain God saved his life with the tea. Out of gratitude, the Holy Farmer left them a holy seat of lotus; so drinking this kind of tea naturally promised good health and **longevity**. Later, a county magistrate who madly desired an official position secretly presented the tea to the emperor so his **meritorious deeds** could be recorded. But since he did not know that the white lotus would not appear without the spring water from the Huangshan Mountain, he harmed himself in his greed for recognition. Seeing through the corruption of officials, Xiong Kaiyuan resigned and became a monk at the Yungu Temple, accompanied all day by Maofeng tea, spring water and his roommates. Superficially, there seems to be no difference between this story and ordinary folktales, but a careful study proves that it is not the case. First, included in it is the story of the Holy Farmer's tasting herbs, which repeats the lore tea was used early in the Holy Farmer's time. Second, the legend that the white lotus would appear if tea was made with the spring water reflects the relationship between Buddhism, which revered the lotus, and tea. Elder Huineng and Xiong Kaiyuan, an elegant Confucianist, practised tea ceremony together at the

Yungu Temple, which demonstrates that a real tea connoisseur must be a **detached** and **virtuous** man. As for the county magistrate who was always flattering the emperor, he had nothing to do with the graceful moral character of Maofeng tea of Huangshan. This ordinary folktale reflects many problems and shows the **implications** and depth of folk art.

However, in the legends about tea there is more a flavor of fairies than of Buddhism. Fairies impress the Chinese people more than Buddhism does, for fairies, who are alive, stand for beauty and wisdom, qualities which are pursued by the Chinese people, especially laborers. Taiping Houkui tea in Anhui Province was, according to a folktale, given by two old monkeys which had attained the Way. But some people say that it was cultivated by a beautiful girl named Hou Kui with all her energy. Making tea with the Hou Kui tea leaves, one can see smoke curling up out of the teapot, and the figures of his family members in the smoke. There are also many legends about the **Red Robe tea** of the Wuyi Mountain. According to some, in a year with poor harvest in the Wuyi Mountain, an old and kind-hearted Lady Qin saved an old immortal man, who who later inserted a stick into the earth and the stick became a tea tree. Afterwards, the emperor dug up the tea tree and planted it in his palace. But the fairy-like tea tree rose sharply from the ground and flew to the Wuyi Mountain. Its red leaves were the flowing colored clouds, as well as the robe of the tea fairy. Some people, however, say that the emperor bestowed red robes on three tea trees, for the tea cured the queen of a disease.

It should be noted here that many legends about famous tea include moving love stories about the treatment of disease. This theme stressed the medical value of tea and its pure moral character. An interesting legend about Junshan tea of the Dongting Lake tells of an old Taoist priest who gave advice to the queen mother of the State of Chu. The old queen mother was always falling ill, and the filial devotion of her son, king of the State, moved heaven. An old Taoist priest with a white beard came to treat her. But he said that nothing was wrong with her except that she ate so many delicacies from land and sea that she was suffering from stomach trouble. Before taking his leave, he left a gourd of divine water, along with the following true sentences:

Two decoctions a day, and more vegetables each meal;

If you want a long life, walk a hundred paces after supper.

The queen mother recovered; but a high official of the state wanted to remove the divine water of the Junshan Mountain to the royal palace. Angered at this, the old Taoist priest sprayed the Junshan Mountain with a pond of divine water, which turned into thousands of tea trees as effectual as the divine water. The king of the State of Chu blamed the old Taoist priest for the crime of “deception on the King,” but the priest said that if the King had cleaned out the divine water, he had committed the crime of “deception on the people,” for each place had its own way of supporting its own inhabitants. The king had to give in. From then on, he sent a hundred girls in red to pick tea in the Junshan Mountain every year. The girls, twenty in each

group, were like flowers dotted on the **rippling** green mountain. Seeing the beautiful scenery, the king was in an **exalted**, poetic mood. "In the vast expanse of green bushes, the girls in rows are picking tea leaves..." **Chanting** at this, he suddenly realized that in the Chinese character "tea," the symbol for "person" is between those for "grass" and "wood," and the original complex form of the stroke "grass" could also be written as a simplified form of the word "twenty," which was the way that the girls were organized into teams. Why did the King insist on removing the divine spring of the Junshan Mountain, since everything has its natural reason? Cleverly **contrived**, the story **satirized** and gave advice to the rulers, and brought out the theme in the end with a maxim: After drinking a cup of tea, the King should be **sober-minded**, not taking too much or troubling the people too much.

That good tea is made with good water is the basic requirement of tea art. On this point the common people are the most qualified to speak, for they often live beside famous waters rather than **assiduously** seeking after them. Many stories exist about the discovery and protection of famous springs and waters. For example, the Hupao Spring in Hangzhou is said to have been dug out with superhuman strength by two brothers called Dahu and Erhu, who became tigers in order to save the local people.

In Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, there is a tale about the **White Dragon Spring and Liu Xianyan tea**. It is said that the tea made with the water from the White Dragon Spring was fragrant, and out of the vapor

flew a white dragon. So the water was treated as a tribute specially paid to Emperor. The Liu Xinyan tea is said to have been planted by an immortal called Liu Jing in the Song Dynasty. In fact, the so-called immortal was simply a living human being who had **attained** the Way. We can see from these examples that legends about tea and springs are simply twists on real life.

Some stories reproduce historical facts in a way people love to hear and talk about. Here is the story about an exchange of a horse for the Book of Tea. In the last years of the Tang Dynasty, monarchs set up separate regimes by force of arms and rebelled against the imperial court. The Emperor was badly in need of horses to put down these rebellions, so the imperial court exchanged tea for horses with the State of Huihe. In the autumn of that year, messengers from both the Tang Dynasty and the State of Huihe met again at the border. This time the messenger from the State of Huihe wanted to exchange a thousand strong horses for the Book of Tea. The author of the book, Lu Yu, however, had died, and the book was not yet universally known. So the Emperor ordered his messengers to use all possible means to search for the book in Tiaoxi, Huzhou, where the author wrote the book, and his home county Jingling (today's Tianmen County, Hubei Province). At last the great poet Pi Rixiu took out a manuscript, which was later exchanged for the horses. From then on The Book of Tea was spread abroad. **Irrespective** of whether the story **derived from** the common people or from scholars, it was cleverly invented, for it linked the exchange of tea for horses with the spread

of the Book of Tea. In fact, the Tang Government kept in frequent contact with the State of Huihe, for it was in the northwest part of our country. This story gives us an important clue for the study of the history of tea culture in the northwest.

According to one legend, there is a big camellia in the Luliang County, Yunnan Province. It was more than two zhang (6.6 meters) tall and one arm span around, and each of its flowers had nine **stamens** and eighteen **petals**. People called it the King of Camellias. The legend about the tree, however, is linked with the history of Wu Sangui's governing of Yunnan. It is said that because Wu Sangui **plotted** to be Emperor after having **dominated** Yunnan, he built a palace in the Wuhua Mountain and the Axinag Garden by the Lotus Pool, and searched everywhere for exotic flowers and rare herbs. Then he forced the transplantation of King of Camellias in Luliang County to his palace. It turned out that the tree had an iron will, growing leaves but not coming in to flowers, in spite of scars of the wounds **inflicted on** it by Wu Sangui's **whip**. Three years later, Wu Sangui wanted to kill the gardener **in a fury**. Then the tea fairy came into his dream, singing:

“Don't be drunk, Sangui,

The gardener is innocent,

But you are mistaken.

As a girl from a peasant family,

I don't seek wealth and rank.

I only wish to go home

And spend the rest of my life."

Hearing this, Wu Sangui **wielded** his sword , but instead of killing the tea fairy, he cut off the dragon's head of a dragon chair. Then he heard the tea fairy singing:

"mean, low and notorious,

You have **betrayed** your master for glory.

Your **disreputable gang** is completely absorbed in

Building your palace,

With your throne **stained** with blood.

Since what you did has caused

Widespread **indignation** and **discontent**,

Ghosts will haunt you and punish you."

Hearing this, Wu Sangui was dizzy, and broke out **in a cold sweat** all over from fear. Suddenly he woke up and found that he was having a dream in Nanke. Fearing of the haunting of ghosts, his adviser suggested that he "**relegate**" the King of Camellias to Luliang County. This story mainly illustrates the inflexible character of tea by cleverly quoting the historical fact

that Wu Sangui rose in rebellion and declared himself Emperor. Actually there are many such historical stories in Yunnan. For example, many stories tell of Zhuge Liang, who taught people how to plant and use tea, directly stressing the blending of foreign culture with Chinese culture. Zhuge Liang was also known as Kong Ming, so in many places in Yunnan Province, people call some big tea trees "Kong Ming Trees." We do not know whether people in Yunnan learned to plant and use tea only after Kong Ming reached Yunnan. But spiritually, people of different nationalities value historical figures for different reasons.

Some stories, whether made up by scholars or by common people, sound interesting. For example, the story about "serving tea according to loneliness and nobleness" is of great interest. Zheng Banqiao, a great painter and calligrapher, as well as one of the "Eight Strange Persons" in the Qing Dynasty, always pursued his studies in Zhenjiang. One day he went to the **abbot's** room in the Jingshan Temple to enjoy calligraphy. At first, the **snobbish** abbot did not even glance at Zheng Banqiao, who was in plain clothes. He reluctantly told Zheng to sit down. Then he said to the little monk attending, "Tea!" during their talk, the abbot learned that Zheng and he were from the same town, so he said, "please sit down!" then he cried to the little monk, "Serve tea!" but when he learned that the visitor was the well-known Zheng Banqiao, he was so delighted that he said quickly, "Please take the seat of honor!" and he hurriedly ordered the little monk, "Serve fragrant tea!"

Having drunk tea, Zheng stood up and was about to take his leave. Then the old monk asked Zheng to **bestow on** him some couplets or treasured **scrolls** of calligraphy or paintings. Zheng waved his hand and wrote the first line, "Sit down, please sit down, please take the seat of honor!" And the second line was, "Tea, serve tea, serve fragrant tea!" This pair of couplets fitted wonderfully, the words matching well, and had a strong ironical flavor. Another story tells of Zhu Yuanzhang, who bestowed a cap and belt on a waiter in a teahouse. Once, the founder of Ming Dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang, was **inspecting** the **state institution of higher learning** after an evening banquet. A cook presented him with a cup of scented tea. It happened that Zhu was thirsty at that time. The more he drank the tea, the more fragrant he felt the tea was. So he granted the cook a cap and belt on a sudden impulse. Unimpressed by this, a **tribute** student in the yard sang loudly, "Ten years of studies in spite of hardships is no match for a small cup tea." All were surprised at the tribute student's offending the Emperor. But Zhu said the second line with a smile, "He had less knowledge than you, but you have a worse fate than he." The story showed Zhu's liking for tea. Also, it is consistent with history. Being of low origin, Zhu **was considerate of** laborers. And since he almost had no schooling, he laid stress only on practice to the neglect of knowledge.

