

THE CHINESE TEA TRADE IN CENTRAL ASIA IN 18th AND 19th CENTURIES

Ro'zmatova Sharofatkhan Tashmatjanovna

Teacher of the Biology Department
Chirchik State Pedagogical University
Chirchik, Uzbekistan.

Annotation: As the Chinese tea has become a large consumer product among the population of region, Bukhara and Kokand tea traders also acted as translators in the trade relations between the West and the East. Introduction of Chinese tea into Central Asia led to the emergence of tea houses and samovars in many major cities.

Key words: China, Chinese tea, Central Asia, Andijianis, tea trade, translator, teahouses.

Trade and cultural ties between Central Asia and China have begun in ancient times. The Great Silk Road, which crosses Central Asia and connects Europe and China serves a good example of this. This overland connection for supplying various products had strategic importance. One of these products is tea and tea products. Although the Great Silk Road in the 16th century was not important for Europeans, tea trade did not stop between Central Asia and China.

Tea has been a favorite drink of all Central Asian peoples from ancient times to the present. Tea is imported from China to Central Asia and has been widely spread and popular drink among the population of this region. However, there are no clear opinions on how long the tea was consumed among the people of Central Asia. According to sinologist Dr.Ablat Khojaev, "At the beginning and BCE, the so-called

"cha" was known to tea-breeders, but they did not yet know how to prepare a thirst-quenching drink out of its vegetable leaves. In the 3rd century CE intoxicating tea was made of tea leaves in China and it was consumed secretly, while the tradition of drinking tea as a thirst-quenching drink appeared at the beginning of the 4th century. During the next two centuries, tea extracts are widely used among the local population. So tea did not spread in Turkestan before the 5th century"¹.

If tea was historically imported into the country by sea, then it was called "te" and if it was brought overland or from the north of China then it was known as "chai". The whole world is divided into two parts in calling this wonderful drink: as "te" - by southern Chinese, "tea" - English, "thee" - Dutch, "té" - Italians, the "téh" - Javanese; and as "chá" - by northern Chinese, "chai" - Hindus, Turks, Persians, Russians, "shay" - Arabs, "cha" - Koreans, "ocha" - Japanese and "chai" - Uzbeks. Because the northern Chinese language is known as the Mandarin and it is called "chá" while the in the Cantonese it is called "te", e.g. in Fujian Province. Chinese tea had been a popular drink among the peoples of in Central Asia: Kokand Khanate (1709-1876), Bukhara Emirate (1756-1920) and Khiva Khanate (1535-1920). Tea in these khanates was mainly imported from India and China.

Chinese tea was brought by Kokand traders from the Inner China and Xinjiang markets. Kokand traders acted as translators at this trade. The Chinese documents point out that "the annual trade turnover between Kokand and China ranged from 100,000 to 300,000² *chings*"³. In the middle of the 19th century, the annual trade turnover of Kokand

¹Khojaev A. BuyukIpakYo'li: munosabatlavataqdirlar. – Tashkent: "O'zbekistonMilliyEnsiklopediiasi" davlatilmiynashrioti, 2007. P.187

²Saguchi T. The Trade of the Khokand khanate. Charter VI. Memories of the Research department of the Toyo Bunko (The oriental library) – Tokyo, 1965. № 24. – P. 80.

³Ching is 6,144 hectares (Kuznetsov V.S. Ekonomicheskaiapolitikatsinskogopravitel'stva v Sintsziiane. – Moscow.Nauka.1973.P.177)

with only one Kashgar amounted to 5 million rubles and the amount of tea to be brought to Kokand amounted up to 30,000⁴*poods*⁵. The tea species cultivated in Chinese Tebey, Yunan, An-Xou and other regions were brought to Kokand Khanate. In particular, in 1865, Chinese tea was brought to Central Asia via Kabul in 4000 camel loads⁶.

In 1759, Chinese ambassador Daketana, who arrived in Kokand to meet Erdana, presented him with Chinese "silk and tea" as the emperor's gift⁷. At the end of the 18th - beginning of the 19th century, Chinese briquetted tea was very popular in Central Asian towns and cities. In the middle of the 19th century Chinese tea entered Central Asia and Afghanistan via Kokand and Kashgar⁸. Kokand traders have also benefited from China's products at the same time. Tea had a special place among them. In particular, the annual turnover of tea products was 30,000 *poods* and 30,000 horse loads. According to Chinese literature, in the first half of the 19th century about 4 million 500 thousand *fen*⁹ of tea per year was brought in East Turkestan from mainland China. About 200 thousand of *fen* of tea went to Chinese and Manchu military and officials in eastern Turkestan and to the local Muslim population¹⁰. The remaining 4 million 300 thousand *fen* were sold to Central Asia, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, Arab countries, and European and African countries. Kokand traders spread tea products from the Khanate to the Russian empire, Bukhara and Khiva khanates. Chokan Valikhanov said that East Turkestan was mainly in the hands of Kokand and Bukhara

⁴Pood is ca. 16,3 kilograms

⁵Mahkamov A. *Torgovlia Kokanda so sredneaziatskimi vladeniami isopredel'nyh mistranami v pervoi polovine 19 v. // Pozdnefeodal'nyi gorod Srednei Azii.* – Tashkent: Fan, 1990. – P.146

⁶TsGARUz. I-1, op. 16, d.203, ff. 17 reverse & 51

⁷Kuznetsov V.S. *Tsinskaiia imperiia narubezhakh Tsentral'noi Azii (vtoraiapolovina 18 – pervaiapolovina 19 vv.).* – Novosibirsk: Sibirskoe otделение, 1983. P.56

⁸Valikhanov Ch.Ch. *O sostoianie Altys harailishhestvo stochnykh gorodov kitaiskoiprovincsii v 1858-1859 godakh / Sobranie sochinenii v 5 tomakh.* – Alma-Ata, Vol.3. P.72

⁹*Fen* – 0,373 gr. (Kuznetsov V.S. *Ekonomicheskaiapolitikatsinskogopravitel'stva v Sintsiane.* – Moscow. Nauka. 1973. P.177)

¹⁰Pan Chjipin. *Kokondavlativa G'arbii i urtsiisati.* Beijing, 2006. P.218

traders¹¹. Like other Central Asian rulers, Kokand rulers, who were active in international trade, had been profiting from selling tea from China to countries in the West. A chronicler Muhammad Omar Margilani had mentioned in the "TarikhiAziziy" the fact that a large amount of tea was kept in the treasury of the khan¹². Demand for tea was also mentioned in agreements between the Kokand rulers and the Manchu government. In 1830, according to the terms of the cease-fire agreements with the Tsing government the troops of Kokand Khan Muhammad Ali Khan (1822-1842) had brought from China 100 camel loads of green tea, 500 camels loads of "cotton tea" and 99 camel loads of "white paper tea" to Kokand¹³. Another Kokandian chronicler, Tajir Khujandi also mentions the features of Chinese tea in his "Gharaiibi Sipah - The Wonders of the Army"¹⁴. The work mentions about ten peculiarities of Chinese tea when in 1832 Muhammad Ali Khan's Kokandian Ambassador to the Tsing Empire certain A'lamPochcha visited China¹⁵.

In ancient times, tea from China to Central Asia was seasonal and seldom and it was a very simple way to transport it. So the tea was put in the bags like straw and while carried on horses and camels it would absorb the fragrance of every kind of vegetation on the long road and the salty deserts becoming spoilt en route. Kokand traders first used the tea leaves to mix with cow's milk and bull's blood and press them back between wooden boards turning them into briquetted tea. Kokand traders bought five types of tea from Eastern Turkestan markets, such as

¹¹Fiodorov M.N. OtchiotChokanaValikhanova o puteshestvii v Kashgarkakistochnikpotsenamitorgovle v VostochnomTurkestane, KirgiziiiKazakhstane // Izvestiia AN R Kirgizistan. Frunze, 1991.No. 1. P,61

¹²Muhammad Aziz Muhammad Rizaugli. TarikhiAziziMss No. 11108, F. 124 a&b of the Manuscripts collection of the Abu RayhanBiruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences (IOS, UAS)

¹³Damulla Muhammad SalihKhawajawaladidamulla Rahim KhwajaTashkandii. TarikhiJadidaiiToshqand. Mss. No. 7791. F. 430 a&b, 423, 426b

¹⁴Tajir. GharaiibiSipah. IOS, UAS. Mss.No.5408

¹⁵Tajir. GharaiibiSipah. IOS, UAS. Mss.No.5408. FF.20b &21a

black tea, green tea, *sabet* tea, *fu-choi* and *tsyanlun* tea depending on the taste and processing of tea. The population of the Kokand Khanate in Namangan in the Ferghana Valley and Tashkent preferred black tea and Marghilan and Kokand residents liked *sabet* tea. Additionally, milk and salt were added to the tea. Tea was one of the cheapest goods imported from China. In Yarkend its price was 60 dinars and in Bukhara 100 dinars. A sack of indigo brought by Kokand traders was exchanged into one *lyan* tea¹⁶.

Florio Beneveni had mentioned that at the beginning of the 19th century Bukharans consumed simple, but very sweet tea. F. Iefremov who lived in Bukhara for several years witnessed that they drank tea with sugar¹⁷. According to P.I. Demaison that at the beginning of the 19th century in Bukhara, "they had two or three times tea drinking five or six cups a day"¹⁸. E.K. Meiendorf who visited Bukhara from 1820 to 1821 writes that the Bukharan people "drank tea after morning prayers. They add some milk and salt to the tea like soup so that they did not eat for four or five hours. Then they had tea like in Europe ..."¹⁹.

According to the English officer A. Burns, who arrived in Central Asia through India and Afghanistan in the 1930s, "every part of the market is busy preparing tea, which is boiled in large European samovars and is heated by a metal trumpet. The passion for the tea in Bukhara can not be compared to anything. They use tea everywhere and all the time and half of them in different ways: sugar, without sugar, lemon, without lemons, butter, and salt and so on"²⁰. "Day begins with

¹⁶Pan Chjipin. Kokondavlativa G'arbiiurtsiiosati. Beijing, 2006. P.218 (In Chinese)

¹⁷Iefremov F. Deviatiletneiestranstvovanie. Moscow. 1950. P.228

¹⁸Zapiski o Bukharskomkhanstve. (Otchioty P.I. Demezoni I. V. Vitkevicha) Moscow. Nauka. 1983. P.80

¹⁹Meiendorf E.K. Puteshestvie iz Orenburga v Bukharu. Moscow. 1975. PP.128-130

²⁰Puteshestvie v Bukharu: rasskaz o plavanii po Induii s podarkami Velikobritanskogo korol'ia i otchet o puteshestvii v Indii v Kabul, Tatarii i Persii, predpriniatom ... v 1831, 1832 i 1833 godakh leitenantom most-indskoiko kompanieiskois luzhby Aleksandrom Bornsom. Moscow. Universitetskaiatipografia. 1848-1849. Part 2. P.305

... drinking tea; hundreds of boys rush to the market from different parts of the city and sell milk and cream in small bottles in the market. Usually, every boy places his own products in twenty or thirty bottles hung over their shoulders. Despite the larger amount of the milk it vanishes among the tea lovers very soon"²¹.

"After arriving in Bukhara, I went to the caravanserais followed by my companions where I wished to see traders who, disclosing their goods, bragging of them were about to sell tea. They sent men to bring apricots and ice from the market: we sat down and enjoyed eating them. One of the buyers accepted me as a tea trader and offered me to show varieties of my goods"²². "He offered us a cup of an herb tea and he even wanted to slaughter a sheep to please us"²³.

Shops in Bukhara seen by Vamberi had 16 different types of tea and wrote their names in his notebook. Some of them were: *qirqma*, *akhbar*, *aqquyruq*, black tea, *sabet* tea, *ishbaghlu*, *gulboy*, *pashun*, *mushukkuz*, *lonka* and many others²⁴.

Grushin, a Russian writer who lived in Khiva in the beginning of the 19th century, says, "In Khiva, the khans drink tea every day a Kalmyk tea and twice a week tea with sugar"²⁵. According to A.M.Peshchereva, residents of Zarafshan and Kashkadaria Region drink more *shirchai* - tea with milk²⁶. F.D. Liushkevich writes that Bukhara and Kashkadaria Oasis will not go anywhere in the autumn and winter

²¹Ibid. P.383

²²Puteshestvie v Bukharu: rasskaz o plavaniepoInduotmoria s podarkamiVelikobritanskogokorol'iaiotchet o puteshestviiizIndii v Kabul, TatariiuiPersiiu, predpriniamtom ... v 1831, 1832 i 1833 godakhleitenantomost-indskoikompaneiskoisluzhbyAleksandromBornsom. Moscow. Universitetskaia tipografia. 1848-1849. Part 2.P.385

²³Ibid. P.385

²⁴Vamberi H. PuteshestviepoSredneiAzii. Moscow.1967.P.94

²⁵See: Poslannik Petra I naVostoke: Posol'stvo Florio Beneveni v PersiiuiBukharu v 1718-1725 godakh.Moscow.1986.P.85

²⁶Peshchereva E.M. GonchamoeproizvodstvoSredneiAzii. Moscow.1959.P.285

days without *shirchai*²⁷. At the end of 19th V.P. Nalivkin and his wife witnessed that "the nomadic and semi-nomadic inhabitants of the Fergana Valley did not drink shirchai, tea with milk"²⁸. The Russian ethnographer, Sergei Abashin, links the spread of shirchai with the migration of Dzungars, i.e. Kalmyks to Central Asia²⁹. However, this is not true because drinking tea with milk is not a Kalmyk tradition but also was widespread among Uygurs and was known as "etanchai" among the Kazakhs and Uzbeks as "shirchai".

In the 1830's Chinese tea of "tuqtachai (briquetted tea)" and "aqquyruqchai (green tea)" were imported from Yarkend through Kokand to Bukhara in special bags made of horse skin estimated to 200.000 pounds and had been purchased in Bukhara markets³⁰. Chinese tea in horse skins preserved its original taste and quality better than tea shipped by sea. Until 1862 Chinese tea was transferred to Yarkend and Kashgar from the plantations along the Yantszi River and from there to Bukhara through Kokand³¹.

Teahouses in the Central Asian khanates were mainly located in and around markets, on large and small transit routes, on canals or river banks, in the centres of rural areas. In particular, there were dozens of teahouses in Kokand, Tashkent, Namangan, Margilan, Khujand and other big cities of the Khanate of Kokand. Specifically, in the Marghilan market, there were 35 tea houses on the eve of Russian invasion. In the

²⁷Liushkevich F.D. Nekotorye osobennosti pishii u osedlogo naselenia Bukharskoi i Kashkadar'inskoi oblastei // Novoe v etnograficheskikh issledovaniakh: Itogi nauki i tekhn. Seriya "Istoriya i etnografiya". Moscow. 1974. Part I. P. 95

²⁸Nalivkin V.P., Nalivkina M. Ocherk bytazhenshiny osedlogo i tuzemnogogo naselenia Fergany. Kazan. 1886. P. 126

²⁹Abashin S. Chai v Srednei Azii: istoricheskaya zapiska v 18-19 vekakh //

Traditsionnaia pishchakaya vyrazheniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya. Moscow. Nauka. 2001. P. 230

³⁰Zapiski o Bukharskom khanstve. (Otchet P.I. Demezoni I.V. Vitkevicha). Moscow. Nauka. 1983. PP. 80-81

³¹Of Tashkent's goi armachnogokomiteta. Torgovoe obozrenie // Turkestanskii Vedomosti. 1871. No. 31

middle of the 19th century a tea shop built by Yunusbay trader among many teahouses in the Khujand market was well-known³².

In the late Middle Ages, tea was an important trade item in trade relations between Central Asia and China. Although Chinese tea had become a large consumer product among the population of this region, Bukhara and Kokand tea traders also acted as translators in the trade relations between the West and the East. Entering Chinese tea into Central Asia led to the emergence of tea houses and samovars in many major cities.

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3. Ching is 6,144 hectares (Kuznetsov V.S. Ekonomicheskaiapolitikatsinskogopravitel'stva v Sintsziiane. – Moscow.Nauka.1973.P.177)

³²Tursunov N.O. Slozhenieiputirazvitiagorodskogoisel'skogonaseleniasevernogoTajikistana v 18 – nachale 20 vv. Dushanbe.Irfon. 1991.P.61