



## Historical Chaikhana – Dialogue of Uzbek Tea Culture

**Mamatova Mahfuza**

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2984-7155  
PhD of Karshi state University, Uzbekistan  
maxfuzamamatova@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

In the middle ages chaikhana – local teahouses was located next to the caravanserai and sardoba in the main cities of Central Asia, where they served green tea, sherbet and other soft drinks, as well as pilaf, fruits and other treats. Due to the high cost of tea, people went to special teahouses to drink and enjoy it. The chaikhana usually had light lattice walls and was located in the shade of trees, above the canal. The clients sat around the dastarkhan on carpets. They rested in the chaikhana, indulged in conversations and games.

### Keywords:

Tea culture, chaikhana, chainy, teahouses, piala, dastarkhan, Uzbeks, Central Asia, green tea, black tea, caravanserai, sardoba

### Introduction

In the early middle ages, tea was transported from China to Central Asia, especially in an economical important and central cities of Uzbekistan, such as: Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Fergana and others, by Central Asian merchants' caravans. There were build the caravanserai for serving traders other countries, which was look like modern hotels. Also sardoba was supplied water to the caravans in the deserts of Mirzachul, Karshi. And the first chaikhanas were been in that caravanserai and sardoba.

After the protectorate of the Russian Empire, Russian trading establishments, usually located in the new part of the cities, which called the chainy – Russian teahouses, these were public catering establishments serving tea, bagels, rolls, dryers, pretzels. Strong drinks were not consumed in the chainy. In Central Asia, the chainies served as a place of leisure for a simple urban Russian resident. Like chaikhana, they were also served by waiters. By tradition, the client was served a couple of tea, although at the counter it was possible to hastily

drink a glass of tea from a huge, several buckets, constantly boiling samovar [1; 857-858].

The chaikhana when and how exactly chaikhanas appeared has not yet been reliably clarified. But it is believed that they first appeared in Iran. Perhaps this is due to the etymology of the word. "Chaikhane" in Persian means "chai" - "tea" and "khane" - "room".

If we assume that the first chaikhanas appeared in Iran, then in Central Asia they were borrowed from the Iranians. This happened after the conquest of the Bukhara Khanate in the middle of the 18th century by the Iranian ruler Nadirshah Afshar, who resettled many of his subjects here. It is clear that the relocated Iranians brought with them their own traditions of tea drinking.

But according to Karim Makhmudov, who wrote "Choinoma", the chaikhana first appeared in India in the 16th-17th centuries. Having studied the written sources of the 16th-17th centuries, we consider this statement to be the most plausible. Although in the written sources of India neither the word "tea" nor the word "chaikhana" is found, nevertheless, the

very existence of a semblance of a chaikhana in India existed [2; 42-43]. It seems to us that chaikhanas penetrated into Central Asia earlier than into Iran, and the first chaikhanas were arranged in caravanserais during the Middle Ages, and then, relying on the data of A. Olearius, the Uzbeks spread chaikhanas in Iran [3; 726-788].

Chaikhanas in the khanates of Central Asia were mainly located in and around markets, on large and small transit routes, along canals or river banks, in the centers of rural areas. Summer heat, in the absence of cold water, and winter cold, in the absence of premises adapted to combat it, rooted the historical habit of the population for tea, and the owners of chaikhanas never complained about the lack of customers.

### Materials and Methods

My methodology is mostly text-based, as I rely on books on Central Asian trade with other countries, as well as statistics, articles in books and magazines that reflect the daily life and customs of a Central Asian. It follows an interdisciplinary approach as my sources are archival, geographic, socio-cultural, statistical, economic and political. This article is devoted to the history of teahouses in Central Asia, studying the culture of Uzbek tea. Studying these data, we can say that tea was the most favorite drink in Uzbekistan, people went to teahouses to drink a cup of tea.

### Discussion

The famous traveler Arminius Vamberi said that when he was in the city of Bukhara, he asked his guide to take him to a place where he could rest and refresh himself. They led him through Tim chai furushi (Tea Bazaar) to the famous Lyabi Hauz Divanbegi square, which

Vamberi considered the most beautiful place in Bukhara. There they were invited to drink tea in tea shops (chaikhanas) with colossal samovars, which were made in Russia specifically for Bukhara [5; 152].

Evgeny Markov, who traveled through Transcaucasia, Turkmenistan, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent and Ferghana regions, the Caspian Sea and the Volga at the end of the 19th century, described the chaikhanas of Tashkent Shaikhantaur in his historical essay. "Among the people of Tashkent, with the onset of night, the fun of breaking the fast began. All their "ash-khane" (taverns) and "chaikhana" (tea houses), bazaars and gardens were filled with crowds of dressed-up men and women and children who had dinner, drank tea and treated themselves to various sweets right in the open air, under the shade of trees and sheds [6; 481].

According to E. Markov, the Shayhantaur mosque served as a sacred center for a whole quarter of bazaars. A large garden surrounded him. Along long alleys, in the shade of very tall trees, at the foot of which there were stalls with all kinds of dishes, sweets and drinks, and at almost every step one could see a brightly lit chaikhana, teeming with local people's dressing gowns, turbans and skullcaps. The folk tamasha (show) was in full swing. Simple Asian music was heard in different places, with the monotonous boom-boom of a Turkish drum and the piercing, pitiful whine of the pipes. Yellow-bellied Tula samovars of enormous size sparkled in countless numbers among the striped robes that had sown over them, four and five in each chaikhana. Asians sat importantly, legs crossed, on lockers and low wooden scaffolding, like beds, and for hours on end blew their cheap "kok-chai" (green tea) from huge earthenware cups without saucers (piala), the size of Russian rinsing cups [6; 481].



Pic. 1. Chaikhana in Old city of Tashkent. 19<sup>th</sup> century.

[www.mytashkent.uz](http://www.mytashkent.uz)

A. Vamberi, describing the public life of Bukhara, speaks, first of all, about tea shops, which serve as a place for all classes. "A Bukharian, or in general any resident of Central Asia, if he is not particularly busy with anything, cannot walk past two or three tea shops so as not to go into one of them. As Vambery remarked, everyone has their own tea bag. Entering the shop, he pours out a piece of tea to the owner who sells, therefore, mainly warm water, not tea. During the day, especially in tea houses, they usually drink liquid tea, without sugar, and at the same time eat one or two gulcha - small cakes made from flour and mutton fat, in the preparation of which Bukhara is distinguished [4; 160].

In such a tea society, a Bukharian can chat for several hours, since he does not get tired of talking, and he will never get sick of endless tea drinking and it is always known in advance how much time he needs to sweat under a certain sort of tea [4; 161].

I.I. Geyer spoke about the architectural features of chaikhanas. According to him, chaikhanas were very simple, and they were

arranged in the same way as shops, i.e. in the form of canopies open on the street. A narrow terrace also separated the tearoom from the street. The chaikhana could be recognized by the huge Tula samovar, which usually flaunts in the most prominent place and thus plays the role of a signboard. According to I.I. Geyer, the local population was not content with brewing tea, but certainly demanded that it boil after that [8; 38].

In the opinion of P. Maev, who described Asian Tashkent, a chaikhana is nothing more than a rather spacious, empty shop, with a hearth at the entrance, on which kumgans with tea are heated. And this copper, often silver-plated jug with patterns embossed on it. Tea was usually served in these kumgans [9; 276].

The floor of the chaikhana is covered with felt and, depending on the volume of the room, an appropriate number of sandals are arranged. A stove is placed in the corner, in which tea brewed in teapots is boiled on coals. Near the stove, a huge earthen vessel breaks into the ground - a trough, where ditch water is poured for settling. Boiling water for brewing

tea is taken from a samovar, which is constantly topped up from a korchaga [8; 38].

And the walls and ceiling are painted with Asian patterns, consisting of a combination of the brightest colors and not devoid of some peculiar beauty. In the evening, the whole chaikhana is lit with glass and paper lanterns, and then the regulars actually gather in it [9; 276].

Sometimes the back of the chaikhana, with windows overlooking a large tree-lined canal, is reserved for privileged visitors from a Russian city (new city). There were even several tables with chairs and not too soft sofas.

In front of the chaikhana there were several huge square beds covered with felt mats (aivans). Visitors settle here in the summer and in good weather. On ordinary days, visitors to chaikhanas were travelers.

Usually the local population drank green tea (kok-tea). As I.I. Geyer noted, his lovers assure that the use of coc-tea makes it easier to endure the summer heat. Each visitor for 2 kopecks. they served a teapot and a cup of a special size, like Russian rinses, only of a smaller volume. The local population called these cups - a bowl. At will, for a special fee, a handful of raisins and one wheat cake were placed on the tray. There was a special fee for raisins and flatbread. Also in the chaikhanas, you can order any meat dish if you wish [7; 8].

According to the sources, the way of drinking tea is subject to etiquette and is the most consistent with the direct goal of its task - to while away as pleasant as possible long hours of leisure. If a company of visitors came to the chaikhana, then only one bowl is served for all those who came. The attendant in the chaikhana, usually a young man - samovarchi, pours it halfway with tea and serves it to the one who ordered tea. This one passes the cup to the most honorable of the interlocutors, who takes it by the bottom and takes a small sip from it, begins to splash it lightly in some special way, after which he already takes a second sip [8; 38]. As A.Vamberi notes, since blowing on tea, no matter how hot it is, is considered extremely indecent and even a sin, the Asian tries to splash his favorite drink in a cup until he gets cold enough to was to drink. In order to seem like a

decent person, one must be able to, resting the right elbow with the left hand, swing the cup with special grace and, of course, not spill a single drop [4; 161].

After that, the cup is passed to another guest, and so on. During this tea drinking and conversations, visitors are surrounded several times with a kalyan - chilim, which is an indispensable accessory of every chaikhana. Also, in chaikhanas, visitors drank tea from poppy heads.

According to P.Maev, people gather in chaikhanas to chat, smoke, drink tea, and listen to some singer or music in the evening [9; 276]. When visiting a chaikhana, local residents, first of all, expected to get a certain comfort here and satisfy petty ambition: they are pleased and dear that they importantly sit with guests in front of the people who hustled in the bazaar, everyone sees this and many envy the fact that he can enjoy such benefits of the whole world. Therefore, the local population, when they worked out, were sure to retire either home or to the nearest chaikhana, and parted with it no earlier than emptying their pockets [7; 8].

As A.Vamberi noted, sometimes carters and peasants talked about politics in front of tea shops (chaikhanas), poor people enthusiastically talked about the exploits of their emir; they said that from Kokand the emir allegedly reached China and that, having extended his sovereign power to the whole East, he would also capture other neighboring countries, and thus the whole world would be divided between the sultan and the emir [4; 175].

The researcher A.I. Dobrosmyslov collected information about all types of crafts and trade in the city of Tashkent, and in this information for 1910 the number of chaikhanas in the old part of the city was 391, and the approximate turnover of these trading establishments was 700 thousand rubles. And there were 192 chaikhanas in the new part of the city, and the approximate turnover of these trading establishments turned out to be 300 thousand rubles [10; 398-402].

In the 70s of the XIX century. in the Asian (old city) part of Samarkand, the number of chaikhanas was 30 [11; 119]. In particular, there

were dozens of chaikhanas in Kokand, Tashkent, Namangan, Margilan, Khujand and other large cities of the Kokand Khanate. In particular, there were 35 chaikhanas on the market in Margilan on the eve of the Russian invasion [12; 459-463].

After the conquest of Russian power, in the Ferghana Valley they began to call the tea house a samovar, and this name has been preserved to this day. All this can be explained by the fact that Russian samovars were widely distributed in chaikhanas, and they squeezed out local copper kumgans.

It should be noted that already at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries. chaikhanas with samovars spread so widely in Central Asia that an attempt was made to formalize the work of chaikhana workers into a special profession with all its inherent attributes - a charter (risolya), a social hierarchy and training procedure, special rituals for initiating students into masters and commemorating saints, etc. One of the elements of "professionalization" was the choice of the spiritual patron of chaikhana workers and the creation of a legend about the ancient origin of the craft [13; 204-230]



Pic. 2. Kokand in 1925. Red Chaikhana in the house of the farmer (former palace of Kokand khan).  
"Chaikhanshik" – tea keeper. [www.mytashkent.uz](http://www.mytashkent.uz)

According to the charter of the "tea-keepers", the story looked like this: once the Prophet Muhammad went with an army of companions to war against the infidels. In the desert, people were tormented by thirst and Allah, through the prayer of the prophet, gave water, but it was unusable. Then another prophet, Davud, appeared to Muhammad and showed him a stone that had the shape of a samovar. And thanks to the samovar stone, the warriors boiled water and quenched their thirst [14; 13-20].

## Results

Today more scientists of Uzbekistan wrote history of Central Asia. For instant, Matluba Turayeva [17], Nigora Urakova [22], Nodira Kuvvatova [21], Mamlakat Kodirova [18; 19; 20], Shukhrat Turaev [23; 24], Jamshid Kucharov [25; 26; 27], Aksana Raimkulova [28; 29], Sarvar Botirov [30], Feruz Samatova [31], Usmon Muminov [32] and others.

However, in the period of Soviet Union chaikhana was called "Red chaikhana" and it had

become not only a source for agronomical knowhow but a major venue for agitation and propaganda – that is, for conveying party ideology and promoting state projects [15; 491]. It was in Red chaikhanas that newspapers,

posters and pamphlets popularized the latest slogans [15; 491]. In 1934 their numbers increased to 3324, but in 1937 it the Red chaikhanas decreased to 3107 [16].



Pic.3. Red Chaikhan for agitation and propagandas in Tashkent. 20s century. [www.mytashkent.uz](http://www.mytashkent.uz)

Since the beginning of the 20 century chaikhanas were built in urban and rural centers and served as a gathering place for locals for propaganda. From that moment on, all chaikhanas in the country were turned into red chaikhanas. Beginning in the 1950s, chaikhanas began to build in luxury and monumental form, like restaurants. In the Uzbek square at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition of the USSR and Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy of the USSR, which consisted of the

Uzbek pavilion, the cafe "Uzbekkino" ("Sadko") and the "Uzbek chaikhana" (in Tashkent), which was the most beautiful and monumental catering building at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition of the USSR. Until the middle of 1970s there was a luxurious restaurant "Uzbek chaikhana" (since 1959 it was "Tashkent"), which attracted attention with a decorative colonnade and large terraces. In the center, surrounded by columns, visitors were greeted by a pool with a cascade of fountains.



Pic. 4. Restaurant "Uzbek chaikhana" in the Uzbek square at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition of the USSR. 1959-1970. [www.mytashkent.uz](http://www.mytashkent.uz)

## Conclusion

Today, each community has its own tea house, which serves guests on major holidays, tourists from different countries. Oriental traditional tea cultures like brewing tea, pouring tea and serving tea can be found in

Uzbek teahouses, you can also meet such teahouses as above the trees.

Today, each community has its own chaikhana man, who serves guests at major holidays and keeps a chaikhana, but, as a rule, the inhabitants of a particular village choose

him from among the members of the community.

### Referenses:

1. Belovinskiy A.V. Ensiklopedicheskiy slovar rossiyskoy jizni i istorii (XVIII - nachalo XX v.). – M.: «OLMA PRESS», 2003.
2. Maxmudov K. Choynoma. – T.: «Kamalak», 1993.
3. Podrobnoye opisaniye puteshestviya golshtinskogo posolstva v Moskoviyu i Persiyu v 1633, 1636 i 1639 godax, sostavlennoye sekretarem posolstva Adamom Oleariyem / Per. P. Barsova. – M.: Izd. Imper. ob-va. istorii i drevnostey. rossiyskix pri Mosk. un-te, 1870.
4. Vamberi A. Ocherki Sredney Azii. – M.: Tipografiya A.I.Mamontova i K0, 1868.
5. Vamberi A. Puteshestviye po Sredney Azii. – M.: Izd. A.I.Mamontova, 1874.
6. Markov YE.L. Rossiya v Sredney Azii. T. 1. – SP.: Tip. M.M.Stasyulevicha, 1901.
7. Geyyer I.I. Putevoditel po Turkestanu. – T.: Tipo-litografiya V.M.Ilina 1901.
8. Geyyer I.I. Ves Russkiy Turkestan. – T.: Izd. Kanopka, 1908.
9. Mayev P. Aziatskiy Tashkent. Materiali dlya statistiki Turkestanskogo kraya. Vip. IV. – SPb.: Tipografiya i xromolitografiya A.Transhelya, 1876.
10. Dobrosmislov A.I. Tashkent v proshlom i nastoyashem. Istoricheskiy ocherk. – T.: tipo-let. A.O.Perseva, 1912.
11. Virskiy N. Chislo fabrik, lavok i drugix promishlennix i trgovix zavedeniy v aziatskoy chasti g. Samarkand. Materiali dlya statistiki Turkestanskogo kraya. Vip. IV. – SPb, 1876.
12. T.Kuldashev Sh. The Chinese tea trade in Central Asia in 18th and 19th centuries. // Akademicheskiy seminar «Odin poyas, odin put i otkritiye Shansi dlya vneshnego mira». Datung, 21-22 iyun 2019.
13. Abashin S.N. Chay v Sredney Azii: istoriya napitka v XVIII-XIX vekax // Traditsionnaya pisha kak virajeniye etnicheskogo samosoznaniya. – M.: «Nauka», 2001.
14. Gavrilov M. Risolya sartovskix remeslennikov. – T.: Tip. pri kans. Gen.-Gubernat, 1912.
15. Clarie Roosien. “Not Just Tea Drinking”: The Red Teahouses and the Soviet State Public in Interwar Uzbekistan. // Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, Volume 22, Number 3, Summer 2021, pp. 479-510.
16. National State Archive of Uzbekistan, f. 94, op. 5, d. 1257; f. 94, op. 1, d. 65. l. 93.
17. Matluba, T. (2021). HISTORY OF ORIGIN OF THE UZBEK TERM. *Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, 9(9), 71-76.
18. Muminovna, K. M. (2022). Issues of the Ethnogenesis of the Uzbek People in Ethnographic Studies of Uzbekistan During the Years of Independence. *Eurasian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7, 116-118.
19. Muminovna, K. M. (2022). DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY LIVESTOCK DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE ON THE EXAMPLE OF KASHKADARE AND SURKHANDARE. *Academicia Globe: Inderscience Research*, 3(04), 455-457.
20. Muminovna, K. M. (2022). KHUDAYAR KHAN'S RULE OF KOKAND KHANATE. *Web of Scientist: International Scientific Research Journal*, 3(02), 182-185.
21. Nodira, K. (2022). INNOVATIVE APPROACH IN FORMATION OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE CONDITIONS OF GLOBALIZATION. *Web of Scientist: International Scientific Research Journal*, 3(02), 77-81.
22. Salomovna, U. N. (2020). Introduction of problem historical issues to young people in the comprehensive study of the history of Uzbek statehood. *Middle European Scientific Bulletin*, 3, 29-31.
23. Turaev, S. R. (2020). DESCRIPTION OF THE KHIVA KHANATE IN THE DIARY OF THE MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN TRAVELER, AMBASSADOR ANTHONY



- JENKINSON. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, (1), 736-739.
24. Тураев, Ш. Р. (2022). ВИЗАНТИЯ МАНБАЛАРИДА ТУРК ХОҚОНЛИГИНИНГ СОСОНИЙЛАР ДАВЛАТИ ВА ВИЗАНТИЯ БИЛАН МУНОСАБАТЛАРИГА ОИД МАЪЛУМОТЛАР ТАҲЛИЛИ. *ВЗГЛЯД В ПРОШЛОЕ*, 5(2).
25. Kucharov, J. Q. (2022). XIV-XV asrlarda Vuxoroning ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy va siyosiy taraqqiyoti. *Science and Education*, 3(5), 1293-1298.
26. Кучаров, Ж. К. (2021). АМИР ТЕМУР ВА ТЕМУРИЙЛАР ҲУКМРОНЛИГИ ДАВРИДА БУХОРОНИНГ ИЧКИ ВА ТАШҚИ САВДОДА ТУТГАН ЎРНИ. *ВЗГЛЯД В ПРОШЛОЕ*, 4(5).
27. Кучаров, Ж. К. (2021). АМИР ТЕМУР ВА ТЕМУРИЙЛАР ДАВРИДА БУХОРОДА ДЕҲҚОНЧИЛИК ХЎЖАЛИГИНИНГ РИВОЖЛАНИШ ТАРИХИДАН. *ВЗГЛЯД В ПРОШЛОЕ*, 4(3).
28. Alikulovna, R. O. (2021). Development of carpet weaving in Uzbekistan. *TRANS Asian Journal of Marketing & Management Research*, 10(9and10), 36-41.
29. Темирова, Ч., & Раҳмонқулова, О. (2021). ТАЪЛИМ ТИЗИМИДА АМАЛГА ОШИРИЛГАН КЕНГ ҚАМРОВЛИ ВА ТИЗИМЛИ ЎЗГАРИШЛАР. *Academic research in educational sciences*, 2(3), 840-847.
30. Ixomovich, B. S. (2022). Socio-political processes in Uzbekistan at the sight of british scholars. *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 12(4), 90-98.
31. Samatova, F. (2021). CHRONICLE OF COURAGE: KASHKADARYA PEOPLE. *EPRA International Journal of Research & Development (IJRD)*, 6(5), 1-1.
32. Muminov, U. (2021). Historical Gates of Karshi. *International Journal of Development and Public Policy*, 1(6), 73-76.