



茶马古道

Ancient Tea-Horse Trails

中国旅游出版社

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《茶马古道》

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西藏自治区、云南省、四川省、甘肃省、
 青海省在中国的位置
 The Position of Tibet Autonomous Region, Yunnan Province,
 Sichuan Province, Gansu Province and Qinghai Province in China



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前言

茶，又称为茗。

中国是茶的原产地，是世界上最早发现和利用茶的国家，也是茶树资源最丰富的国家。“茗之为饮，发乎神农氏”。中国种茶和饮茶历史悠久，源远流长，可以追溯到神农时代，距今已达数千年之久。今天，世界上有 50 多个国家种茶，有 160 多个国家和地区、20 多亿人饮茶。茶的发现和利用，是中华民族对人类文明的贡献。

据《晏子春秋》载，晏婴食茗为常。陆羽《茶经·七之事》：“婴相齐景公时，食脱粟之饭，炙三弋、五卵、茗菜而已”。当时，“茗”（茶）是作为食物，而不是饮料。这是关于茶的较早的文字记载。

茶进入人们日常生活，按清代顾炎武《日知录》的说法，“自秦人取蜀而后，始有茗饮之事”。指出，秦吞并巴、蜀以后，茶饮才传播开来。而巴、蜀地区饮茶历史则应更为久远了。唐代，茶事大兴。据《茶经》和其他文献记载，唐代茶叶的产区即已遍及今四川、陕西、湖北、云南、广西、贵州、湖南、广东、河南、浙江、江苏、江西、福建、安徽、海南 15 个省区，与近代中国茶区的范围大致相近。宋代的茶叶产量，则以四川为多。清代，由于国内市场及对外贸易的需要，茶树种植范围扩大，面积、产量均急剧增长。

茶叶，是茶树鲜嫩叶芽经过加工的干燥制品。茶叶经热水冲泡后饮用，有提神醒脑、明目、利尿、解毒等功效。

茶的饮法也是多种多样。有古代比较简单、原始的直接将茶叶放入锅中水煮的“煮茶”；有将浓茶煮成表面凝结成一层似粥膜样的“茗粥”，

亦称“茶粥”；有始自唐代并一直延续到清代内廷仍在使用的，将茶加入姜、盐同时煎熬的“熬茶”，等等。今天，六大类别的茶叶在不同的国家、地区，不同的民族之间，其饮用的方法也各不相同，异彩纷呈。其中，所含的精神和文化内涵，更是发展成了“茶艺”和茶文化。



茶叶的嫩叶和新芽
Tender tea leaves and sprouts.

在我国少数民族地区，至今，根据历史传习、民族风俗，以及自然环境、饮食结构的不同，仍保留着多种多样的饮茶习俗。如：云南撒尼族的铜壶茶；傈僳族的油盐茶、雷响茶；彝族的核桃米花茶；白族的三道茶；布朗族的青竹茶；佤族的烧茶、竹筒茶；哈尼族的土锅茶；广西侗族的打油茶；湖北土家族的鸡蛋茶、擂茶；西北回民的三炮台盖碗茶；新疆维吾尔族的奶茶；蒙古族的奶茶；哈萨克族的米砖奶茶；藏族的清茶、酥油茶、奶茶、糌粑茶，等等。

藏族，是我国的少数民族之一。主要分布在

青藏高原及其周边的一些地区。藏族的饮茶历史，据文字记载，已有 1500 年左右。藏族民间传说，在公元 300~400 年间，吐蕃的居民们喝的并不是茶，而是一种用树皮熬煮成的汁。这种树汁，虽不具有清香，但比饮白水要有味道。随着吐蕃王朝的强大，对周边各国的战事也时有发生，其兵马曾在唐王朝的边州夺得许多战利品，其中就有茶叶之类的饮料。虽然吐蕃抢夺到了茶叶，但当时吐蕃人并不知此物的名称。藏族人民养成喝茶的习惯，是公元 7 世纪文成公主入藏和公元 8 世纪金城公主进藏以后的事。相传，唐贞观十五年（公元 641 年），文成公主嫁与第三十二世吐蕃赞普松赞干布，陪嫁礼品中就有茶叶。文成公主喜欢饮茶，并推广唐朝的饮茶方法。据 1388 年版《西藏王统记》载，文成公主创制了奶酪和酥油，并以酥油茶待客。吐蕃时期，青藏高原以牧业为主，饮茶能帮助肉食和奶油的消化、补充维生素类的营养，所以饮茶之风迅起，直到遍及全藏区。自此，内地的茶叶源源不断地进入青藏高原，成为藏族人民的生活必需品之一。运往藏族地区的茶叶，被称为“边茶”或“藏茶”。

藏族的饮茶方式，主要为藏族清茶、藏族奶茶、酥油茶和糌粑茶等几种方式。茶对于居住在高原上的藏族民众来说，如同粮食、水、火一样，每天不能离开，甚至有的藏族人认为“宁可三日无粮，不可一日无茶”。

自从唐代吐蕃兴起饮茶之风，藏族人民对茶叶的需求日益增长，这大大地促进了内地对吐蕃的茶叶贸易。马，对于增强军队战斗力、巩固国

防有极大的作用。但中国的马匹，均产自北部、西部及西南部少数民族地区。以茶易马，这是唐代以来各朝制定及推行的一种以茶和其他货币与边疆少数民族易马的一种方式。大约在唐贞元年间，封演在《封氏闻见记》中称：“茶始自中原，流于塞外，往年回鹘入朝，大驱名马，市茶而归”。据载：武则天万岁通天元年（公元 696 年）、唐玄宗开元十九年（公元 731 年）、唐宪宗元和十年（公元 815 年），吐蕃曾遣使唐朝，分别请求允许在益州（今四川成都）、赤岭（今青海日月山）、陇州（今陕西陇县）进行以茶马贸易为主要内容的互市。唐朝的战马多从边疆外域购入，而内地的茶叶对吐蕃的社会生活也影响极



唐代“昭陵六骏”石刻之一：什伐赤

这是来自西域的一匹名马，为唐太宗李世民坐骑之一。

Stone carving: Shifachi, one of the six steeds of Zhaoqing Mausoleum, Tang Dynasty.

This was a famous horse from the Western Regions, one of the war horses of Emperor Taizong Li Shimin of the Tang Dynasty.

大。实际上，西北少数民族沿丝绸之路向中原市马或献马、“中原按值回赐金帛”，早在唐开元年间便有了。只是当时驱马市茶，并没有形成一种定制。

宋代茶马互市，是在宋朝初期，从向少数民族赐茶，少数民族向宋王朝献马发展而来。宋太宗、真宗时，为交好和羁縻西部少数民族，常遣使“赐茶”；少数民族为了表示友好和臣服，也常驱马至京以献，宋王朝均按值回赐茶叶和其他货币。这样，献马便成了少数民族与中原以马易

物的代名词。开始是几年一次，以后发展到一年一次，或一年多次。宋初所设的马市，在原（今宁夏固原）、渭（今甘肃陇西）、德顺（今甘肃静宁），以后又增加熙州（今甘肃临夏）。南宋时期，又开有黎州（今四川汉源）、雅州（今四川雅安）、碉门（今四川天全）等八处马市。明代，虽然在辽东、大同等地也曾先后设过马市，但从总体上看，明清两代在全国范围内开设的马市，均以西部地区马市为主。

宋真宗咸平元年（公元 998 年），为估算接受献马和回赐货币等物的价值，设立了“估马司”。宋神宗熙宁七年（公元 1074 年），派遣李杞入蜀置买马司，设官茶场，对四川、陕西所产茶实行专卖，用以交换吐蕃马匹。从此，茶马互市，作为一种边疆贸易制度，一直延续到明、清两朝。从宋代至明、清两代，先后在成都、秦州（今甘肃天水）、洮州（今甘肃临潭）、河州（今甘肃临夏）、雅州（今四川雅安）、西宁、庄浪（今甘肃永登）、甘州（今甘肃张掖）、永宁（今四川叙永）、北胜州（今云南永胜）设置过管理茶马互市的茶马司。清代，由于和蒙古族关系密切，马匹紧张的状态大为缓解，茶马互市的政策时行时停。清代乾隆以后，自唐代中期开创的以茶易马的制度便废止了。

北宋时，朝廷每年买马的数量约在 1.5 万匹至 2 万匹左右，最多时一年用于易马的茶达 1000 万斤，占到蜀茶年产量的三分之一。南宋吴曾在《能改斋漫录》中写道：“蜀茶总入诸蕃市，胡马常从万里来。”这是对茶马互市的一种描写。

茶马互市，内地供应藏、蒙、维吾尔、哈萨克等少数民族人民生活所必需的茶叶，边疆少数民族以“善马”供给缺马的中原内地，增强和促进了中国国防、交通和农业的发展。

历史上，藏族和西北少数民族所饮茶叶的来源基本有以下几种方式：一、“贡马易茶”。地方僧俗官员、受皇帝册封的各大法王等前往京城向皇帝朝贡马匹及其他土特产时，所得回赐中的茶叶；二、进京朝贡人员利用朝贡之后，被特许的开市机会购买的茶叶；三、利用茶马互市交换到的茶叶；四、民间私下交易得到的茶叶。史载：明成化二十一年（公元 1485 年），朝廷回赐给西藏如来大宝法王朝贡人员物品中，仅茶叶一项就达 8.82 万斤。明正德十三年（公元 1518 年），朝廷应西藏阐化王使者请求，一次赏给贡者的茶叶就达 8.99 万斤。

新疆昭苏，汉代称乌孙，是产西极马的地方。Zhaosu, located in Xinjiang and called Wusun in the Han Dynasty, was the origin of Xiji Horse.



Ancient Tea Horse Trails

由于茶叶的流通关系到国家的税收，而茶马互市又关系到确保国防上所需用的马匹，为了不影响官方茶马互市，唐、宋、元、明、清代都不同程度地实行过茶叶专卖制度。民间经营茶叶，必须纳税，取得贩茶许可凭证，否则将被视为私茶。对贩私茶者的处罚，有时是极为严厉的。

“茶马古道”，顾名思义，应是指历史上中原和边疆少数民族地区相互进行茶马互市时所形成的商路。从广义上讲，历史上进行过茶马交易的地方遍及我国西北、西南地区，以及辽东、晋北等地。唐代，西北地区的回鹘甚至驱马交易到了长安城；明代，西藏朝贡使者在京城献上贡马后，也被特许在京城开市三天，以金银等换取茶叶等商品后带回西藏。茶马交易的古道可谓广矣，几乎遍及我国北部、西北部和西南部。但是，由于晋北、辽东等地马市开设时间较晚、较短，几乎不太受重视；而西北部的茶马交易道路几乎被融汇在历史更为久远、距离更长、名气更大的古代丝绸之路之中，这使得唐、宋，乃至明、清以来的西北茶马交易，也只作为古丝绸之路上的一个重要商业交易类型；即便是从青海到拉萨这条茶马交易路线，仍由于它的历史悠久，及在政治、军事等方面的重要作用而一直被称作“唐蕃大道”。本书所要重点介绍的，是自唐代以来，一直到20世纪50年代青藏、川藏、滇藏公

度、尼泊尔的茶马交易之路——滇藏茶马古道和川藏茶马古道。

滇藏茶马古道，南起普洱茶产地的云南西双版纳、思茅，经由大理、丽江、迪庆、昌都、林芝等地到达拉萨。

川藏茶马古道，东起四川雅安，经由甘孜、昌都、林芝等地到达拉萨。

从拉萨西行经江孜、亚东至印度；也可以从拉萨向西，经日喀则、定日，再经聂拉木或吉隆至尼泊尔。历史上，拉萨、日喀则、江孜、昌都、亚东等地，都是西藏的商贸中心。

以上所讲，仅是几条茶马古道的大致走向。由于吐蕃与唐朝自公元696年起，开始在益州（今四川成都）、赤岭（今青海日月山）、陇州（今陕西陇县）等地进行以茶马交易为主要内容的互市，直至20世纪50年代，其间跨越了1200余年，历经唐、宋、元、明、清、民国、解放初期等不同朝代和历史时期。由于政治、历史、自然环境变化等等不同原因，用于茶马交易的道路的具体路线会随之发生一些变化。连接着青藏高原和周边省区的官道、贡道、驿道及民间商道的许多区间、甚至全程，在不同时期，都可能被用于不同类型的茶马交易线路。在这漫长的历史时期中，茶马古道一直是联结西藏和内地的纽带。

应该指出的是，自唐代开始的茶马贸易，不但满足了藏族人民日常生活中对茶叶的需求，同时也增进了藏族和内地的汉族等其他民族的友好往来，经济和文化交流，在使西藏和内地融成一个不可分割的整体的漫长历史过程中，发挥了巨大的作用。

抗日战争时期，由于日军封锁滇缅公路，阻断中国西南的陆路国际交通线，造成中国大西南的物资供应短缺。当时虽有盟军开辟的空中驼峰航线，但因气候条件恶劣、航线漫长，而作用有限。此时，从印度经拉萨通往四川、云南的茶马古道却发挥了巨大作用。古道之上，民间马帮运输极其繁忙。有人统计过：“这场马帮运输曾使用了八千匹骡马和两万头牦牛。”茶马古道在抗日战争中后期，成了中国大西南后方的主要国际商道。这也是茶马古道史上光辉的一页。

今天，在青藏高原上，现代化的交通运输工具取代了古老的长途马帮运输，甚至许多偏远的村庄也有了公路。马帮运输只是被用作公路运输的补充和乡村间的短途运输。事实上，许多公路就修在昔日的茶马古道上，茶马古道已成了历史。



青藏高原放牧的马群
Horses grazing on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

随着现代旅游业的发展，“茶马古道游”将是继“丝绸之路游”、“长江三峡游”等知名旅游线路之后，又一极具吸引力、蜚声国内外的旅游线路。

“茶马古道”，涉及西双版纳、大理、丽江、香格里拉、雅安、康定、甘孜、昌都、林芝、拉萨、江孜、日喀则、亚东等地。这里地跨亚热带雨林、横断山脉、高山峡谷、青藏高原，具备多种地貌景观；这里居住着傣、哈尼、佤、拉祜、彝、白、纳西、傈僳、藏等多个少数民族，不同的民族有着自己独特的生活习俗、文化传统、服饰和宗教信仰。横断山脉还是历史上我国西南少数民族大迁徙的通道，这里的名胜古迹不胜枚举，令人目不暇接。

今天，随着我国西部开发步伐的加快，随着川藏、滇藏公路的改建，公路质量的提高，茶马古道旅游的交通状况已有极大的改善。

壮丽的自然风光、多彩的民族风情、众多的名胜古迹，将使茶马古道旅游线路成为21世纪我国最具吸引力的旅游线路之一。



甘肃敦煌渥洼池，相传汉代出天马的地方。
Wowa Lake, in Dunhuang, Gansu Province —
origin of legendary Heavenly Steed in the Han
Dynasty.

路通车前仍在发挥作用的，从四川、云南翻越横断山脉、青藏高原到达拉萨，并一直延伸到印

Preface

Tea (*cha*) is also called “*ming*” in Chinese.

China is the origin of tea production, the earliest country to discover and use tea, and also the country with the richest tea resources. China has a long history of planting and drinking tea, which can be traced back several thousand years to the era of Shennong. Today, tea is planted in more than 50 countries, and more than 2 billion people in 160 countries and regions drink tea. The discovery and utility of tea is a contribution of the Chinese nation to human civilization.

According to *The Spring and Autumn Annals of Yanzi* (*Yanzi Chunqiu*), “*ming*” was a daily food for Yan Ying (*Yanzi*). Lu Yü wrote in his work, *Book of Tea* (*Cha Jing*): “When Yan Ying served as prime minister during the reign of Duke Jing in the State of Qi, he ate only rice, three roasted poultry, five eggs, tea and vegetables.” At that time, “*ming*” (tea) was regarded as food, not as drink. This is the earliest written record of tea.

According to *The Daily Accumulated Knowledge* (*Ri Zhi Lu*) by Gu Yanwu, a well-known scholar of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), “Tea-drinking began only after Qin conquered Shu.” That is to say, drinking tea became popular only after Qin conquered Ba-Shu, so tea-drinking habit in Ba-Shu (present-day Sichuan Province) would be much earlier. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907) tea planting flourished. According to *Book of Tea* and other historical records, in the Tang Dynasty tea producing areas were found in 15 provinces, including Sichuan, Shaanxi, Hubei, Yunnan, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hunan, Guangdong, Henan, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Fujian, Anhui and Hainan, similar to tea-producing areas in contemporary China. In the Song Dynasty (960-1279) Sichuan was the largest tea producer. During the Qing Dynasty, to meet the needs in domestic market and foreign trade, both the tea-planting area and tea output increased sharply.

Tender tealeaves are dried and processed. After being infused in boiling water, tea has the functions of refreshing, improving eyesight, promoting urination and detoxicating.

Tea-drinking methods vary from place to place. In ancient times tealeaves were put into pot and boiled, called “boiled tea.” There was also very strong boiled tea, called “tea porridge.” There was a kind of “simmered tea,” when tealeaves were simmered together with ginger and salt, a method adopted in the inner court of the Tang Dynasty down through to the Qing Dynasty. Today, there are many different tea-

drinking methods in different countries, regions and ethnic groups, and “tea rituals” and tea culture have been developed from them.

In China’s areas inhabited by ethnic minorities many different tea-drinking habits have been preserved owing to different historical background, ethnic customs, natural environment and dietary structure. In Yunnan Province, there are copper kettle tea of the Sani people, oil-salt tea and thunder tea of the Lisu people, walnut and rice tea of the Yi people, three-course tea of the Bai people, green bamboo tea of the Blang people, roast tea and bamboo tube tea of the Wa people, and earthen pot tea of the Hani people. In Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region there is oily tea of the Dong people. In Hubei Province there are egg tea and *lei* tea of the Tujia people. In northwestern China there is lidded cup tea of the Muslims. In Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region there is milk tea of the Uygur and Mongolian people, and milk brick tea of the Kazak people. The Tibetan people drink plain tea, buttered tea, milk tea and *zamba* tea.

Tibetan is one of China’s ethnic minorities, mainly living on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and surrounding areas. According to historical records, tea drinking has a history of 1,500 years among the Tibetan people. According to a legend, in AD 300 to 400, the Tubo people drank a kind of drink made of boiled bark, which was better than plain water. Following the development of the Tubo Kingdom, in the warfare with neighboring states, it captured many trophies, including tea. Although the Tibetans captured tea, they knew nothing about it. Their tea-drinking habit was formed after Princess Wencheng married Tibetan king in the 7th century. In 641, the 15th year of Zhenguan Reign of the Tang Dynasty, Princess Wencheng married Songtsan Gambo, the 32nd king of the Tubo Kingdom, and tea was an item of her dowry. Princess



唐代饮茶用具：银盐台（法门寺出土）
Silver salt container, a tea utensil of the Tang Dynasty unearthed from Famen Temple.

Ancient Tea-Horse Trails

Wencheng liked to drink tea, and spread the tea-drinking method in Tibet. According to the 1388 edition of *A General Record of Tibetan Kings* (*Xizang Wangtong Ji*), it was Princess Wencheng who invented the method of cheese and butter, and used buttered tea to treat guests. During the Tubo era, animal husbandry was dominant on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and drinking tea could help digestion of meat and butter and take vitamins. Therefore, tea-drinking habit was adopted by the local people and spread to all Tibetan-inhabited areas. From that time on, tea was transported to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau from the interior areas, becoming a daily necessity of the Tibetan people. The tea transported to Tibetan areas is called "bian (frontier) tea" or "Tibetan Tea."

The main Tibetan tea varieties include plain tea, milk tea, buttered tea, and *zamba* tea. To Tibetans tea is a daily necessity like grain, water and fire. Some Tibetans say, "I would rather starve for three days than live without tea for one day."

Since the Tang Dynasty (618-907), when tea drinking became popular in Tibet, the Tibetans' demand on tea kept increasing, and this greatly promoted interior areas' tea trade with Tibet. Horses were important to national defense, but most of the horses were produced in northern, western and



甘肃山丹马场的马群

Horses on the Shandan Horse-Breeding Farm, Gansu Province.

southwestern China mainly inhabited by ethnic minorities. To trade tea for horses had been a policy carried out by the Tang Dynasty and following dynasties. According to *What Feng Has Seen and Heard* (*Feng Shi Wen Jian Ji*) by a scholar of the mid-Tang Dynasty named Feng Yan, "Tea originated in the Central Plains area, and was spread beyond the Great Wall. In the past years the Huihu envoys drove horses of famous breed to the interior and traded for tea on the market." In the first year (A.D. 696) of Wansui Tongtian Reign of Empress Wu Zetian, the 19th year (A.D. 731) of Kaiyuan Reign of Emperor Xuanzong, and the 10th year (A.D. 815) of Yuanhe Reign of Emperor Xianzong, respectively, the Tubo Kingdom sent envoys to the Tang Empire, asking for permission to set up markets to barter horses for tea at Yizhou (present-day Chengdu, Sichuan Province), Chiling (present-day Riyue Mountain, Qinghai Province) and Longzhou (present-day Longxian County, Shaanxi Province). Most of war-horses of the Tang Dynasty were purchased from frontier regions, and tea from the interior had great impact on Tubo's social life. As a matter of fact, during the Kaiyuan Reign of the Tang Dynasty, when ethnic minorities in northwestern China contributed horses to the Central Plains, the imperial court would give them back gold or silk according to the values of the horses, although the tea-horse trade was not made an established rule.

In the early Song Dynasty, the imperial court

bestowed tea to ethnic minorities, and the latter contributed horses to the former. Later, this developed to tea-horse trade. During the reign of emperors Taizong and Zhenzong, to befriend ethnic minorities and keep them under control, the emperor often sent envoys and brought with them tea as gifts. The chiefs of the ethnic minorities, to show their friendliness and submission, often contributed horses to the imperial court. The Song Empire gave back tea or other currencies of the same value. Thus contributing horses to the imperial court became a synonym of tea-horse trade between the Central Plain areas and ethnic minorities. The frequency of tea-horse trade quickened from once for several years to once every year and then to several deals per year. The earliest tea-horse trading markets include Yuan (present-day Guyuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region), Wei (present-day Longxi, Gansu Province) and Deshun (present-day Jingning, Gansu Province). Later, Xizhou (present-day Linxia, Gansu Province) was added. During the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), eight more such markets were established, including Lizhou (present-day Hanyuan, Sichuan Province), Yazhou (present-day Ya'an, Sichuan Province) and Diaomen (present-day Tianquan, Sichuan Province). During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), although horse markets were also established in eastern Liaoning and Shanxi's Datong, generally speaking, the main horse markets were in western China.



唐代饮茶用具：金银丝笼（法门寺出土）

Tang Dynasty tea utensil: Basket woven with gold and silver wire (unearthed from Famen Temple).

In 998, the first year of Xianping Reign of Emperor Zhenzong of the Song Dynasty, to evaluate the horses contributed by ethnic minorities and the currencies gave back to them, the Horse Evaluation Office was established in the central government. In 1074, the 7th year of Xining Reign of Emperor Shenzong, the imperial court sent Li Qi to establish the Horse Purchasing Office in Sichuan, and set up official tea plantations, in charge of tea monopoly in Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces, to trade for horses from Tubo. Since then, tea-horse trade became a frontier trade system, which continued to the Ming and Qing dynasties. From the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, Horse Trading Office was established in Chengdu, Qinzhou (present-day Tianshui, Gansu Province), Taozhou (present-day Lintan County, Gansu Province), Hezhou (present-day Linxia, Gansu Province), Yazhou (present-day Ya'an, Sichuan Province), Xining, Zhuanglang (present-day Yongdeng, Gansu Province), Ganzhou (present-day Zhangye, Gansu Province), Yongning (present-day Xuyong, Sichuan Province), and Beishengzhou (present-day Yongsheng, Yunnan Province). During the Qing Dynasty, since the relations between the Qing rulers and the Mongols were close, horse shortage was greatly alleviated, and the policy of tea-horse trade was suspended from time to time. After Emperor Qianlong, the policy of tea-horse trade that started in the mid-Tang Dynasty was abolished.

During the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) the imperial court purchased 15,000-20,000 horses annually, and used 10 million *jin* (2 *jin* = 1 kilogram) of tea at the most, making up one-third of the annual tea output in Sichuan. A line from a poem by Wu Zeng, a well-known scholar of the Southern Song Dynasty, reads, "Tea produced in Sichuan is always found in markets of ethnic minorities, and Hu steeds often come from ten thousand miles away." This is a vivid description of tea-horse trade of the time.

Through these markets, the interior areas supplied tea to ethnic minorities such as Tibetans, Mongols, Uyghurs and Kazaks, while the latter supplied horses of fine breed to the former, strengthening China's national defense and promoting the development of communications and agriculture.

Historically, the sources of tea for Tibetans and ethnic minorities in northwestern China were in the following forms. First, "contributing horses to exchange for tea." When local officials and ruling lamas went to the national capital to contribute horses and other local produce, they were given tea in return

as gifts. Second, the envoys that delivered tributes to the imperial court were allowed to purchase tea and bring back. Third, merchants bartered horses for tea at the tea-horse markets. And fourth, tea traded through private transactions. For instance, in 1485, the 21st year of Chenghua Reign of the Ming Dynasty, among the gifts for envoys sent by the Great Treasure Prince of Dharma of Tibet were 88,200 *jin* of tea. In 1518, the 13th year of Zhengde Reign of the Ming Dynasty, the imperial court bestowed 89,900 *jin* of tea to the envoy sent by the Propagation Prince of Persuasion of Tibet.

The circulation of tea was of vital importance to state revenue, and the tea-horse trade was closely related to national defense. To guarantee the smooth operation of horse trading market, various dynasties (Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing) instituted tea monopoly to varying degrees. All tea venders must apply for permission and pay taxes; otherwise they would be regarded as illegal and severely punished.

"Ancient Tea-Horse Trail" refers to routes formed in the tea-horse trade between the Central Plain areas and ethnic minorities in border regions. In a broader sense, tea-horse trading markets covered northwestern and southwestern regions, eastern Liaoning and northern Shanxi provinces. In the Tang Dynasty, tea-horse trade conducted by the Huihu people in northwestern China extended to the Tang capital Chang'an (present-day Xi'an). In the Ming Dynasty, Tibetan envoys, after contributing horses to the

imperial court, were allowed to trade in the capital for three days, to exchange gold and silver for tea and bring back to Tibet. The tea-horse trails were many, covering China's north, northwest and southwest. Tea-horse markets in northern Shanxi and eastern Liaoning were opened much later, so not much attention was paid to them, but the tea-horse trails in northwestern regions were included in the Old Silk Road, so tea-horse trade was regarded as an important form on the Old Silk Road. Even the Qinghai-Lhasa tea-horse trading road, due to its important roles in politics and military affairs, has been called "Tang-Tubo Road." This book mainly introduces the Yunnan-Tibet Tea-Horse Trail and the Sichuan-Tibet Tea-Horse Trail that stretched further to India and Nepal and that had been in use from the Tang Dynasty to the 1950s before the operation of the Qinghai-Tibet, Sichuan-Tibet and Yunnan-Tibet highways.

The Yunnan-Tibet Tea-Horse Trail started from Yunnan's Xishuangbanna and Simao, producers of Pu'er Tea, in the south, and ended at Lhasa via Dali, Lijiang, Deqen, Qamdo and Nyingchi.

The Sichuan-Tibet Tea-Horse Trail started from Sichuan's Ya'an in the east, and ended at Lhasa via Garze, Qamdo and Nyingchi.

The trail stretched westward from Lhasa to India via Gyangze and Yadong, or from Lhasa to Nepal via Xigaze, Tingri, Nyalam or Gyirong. Historically, Lhasa, Xigaze, Gyangze, Qamdo and Yadong were all

新疆准噶尔盆地是普氏野马的故乡

The Junggar Basin in Xinjiang is the origin of Przewalski's wild horse (*Equus caballus*).



Ancient Tea-Horse Trails

commercial centers of Tibet.

Here mentioned are the general directions of ancient tea-horse trails. From AD 696, when the Tubo Kingdom and the Tang Empire established tea-horse trading markets at Yizhou (present-day Chengdu, Sichuan), Chiling (present-day Riyue Mountain in Qinghai) and Longzhou (present-day Longxian, Shaanxi), to the 1950s, these trails were in use for 1,200 years, covering different dynasties (Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing) and historical periods (the Republic of China between 1912 and 1949, and the People's Republic of China after 1949). Owing to political and historical factors, and changes in natural environment, the routes of these trails might change. Many sections or even the entire courses of the official roads, tribute roads, postal roads and unofficial commercial roads between the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and surrounding regions were used for tea-horse trade. In the long historical course, tea-horse trails served as links connecting Tibet with the interior areas.

It should be pointed out that tea-horse trade, which started from the Tang Dynasty, not only met

Tibetan people's need for tea, but also increased friendly exchange between the Tibetans and the Han and other ethnic groups in the interior. Economic and cultural exchanges between Tibet and the interior played a great role in the formation of the multi-ethnic Chinese nation as an inseparable whole.

During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1937-1945) the Japanese troops blocked the Yunnan-Burmese Highway and cut the international communications line to southwestern China, causing material shortage in the region. Although the Allied Forces opened the "Hump" air route, its roles were limited due to bad climatic conditions and long route. At that time, the tea-horse trails from India to Sichuan and Yunnan via Lhasa played tremendous roles. On these ancient trails, horse caravans were busy transporting materials. Statistics show that the horse caravans used 8,000 horses and mules and 20,000 yaks. In the middle and late periods of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression these trails served as the main international commercial roads to southwestern China. This is a

glorious chapter in the history of tea-horse trails.

Today, on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau modern means of transportation have replaced ancient horse caravans, and highways have reached many remote villages. Horse caravans serve only as a complement to highway transportation and are mainly used in short-distance transportation on rural roads. In fact, many highways have been constructed on the former tea-horse trails. Tea-horse trails have become history.

Following the development of modern tourism industry, Tea-Horse Trail Tour will become another attractive tour product after Old Silk Road Tour and Yangtze Three Gorges Tour.

Tea-horse trails involve Xishuangbanna, Dali, Lijiang, Shangri-la, Ya'an, Kangding, Garze, Qamdo, Nyingchi, Lhasa, Gyangze, Xigaze, and Yadong. These trails traverse subtropical rainforests, the Hengduan Mountains and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, covering a variety of terrain and landforms. These areas are inhabited by many ethnic minorities, such as the Dai, Hani, Wa, Lahu, Yi, Bai, Naxi, Lisu and Tibetan, each having their own unique living habits, cultural tradition, costume, and religious belief. The Hengduan Mountains are a passage through which China's ethnic minorities in southwestern China migrated. Historical sites are many.

Today, following acceleration of western development, renovation of the Sichuan-Tibet and Yunnan-Tibet highways, and improvement in the quality of highways, the communications facilities along the tea-horse trails have greatly improved.

Splendid natural scenery, colorful ethnic folklore and numerous historical sites will make tea-horse trails one of the most attractive tour routes in the 21st century.

西藏阿里海拔 4500 米牧场上的马群

Horses grazing on a pasture 4,500 meters above sea level in Ngari, Tibet.



新疆赛里木湖畔的伊犁马群 ▷

Horses on the shore of Sayram Lake, Xinjiang.



Ancient Tea Horse Trails 茶马古道





云南西双版纳的佛寺
A Buddhist temple in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan
Province.