

## 64. In a Chinese Tea House

Eimsbüttel (Rotherbaum), the Chinese Tea House (Chinesisches Teehaus) at Binderstrasse 67  
U1 Hallerstrasse; Bus 34 Museum für Völkerkunde, 115 Hallerstrasse,  
109 Böttgerstrasse

Hamburg in the early years of the twentieth century was home to shipping companies servicing America, Africa, India, and East Asia, transforming the city into a cosmopolitan metropolis based on worldwide trade (see nos. 29 & 64). Not only was the port used by Germans and East Europeans departing for the New World but it also became home to trading communities arriving into Hamburg. One of the most colourful of these was the Chinese community, two thousand of whom settled in St. Pauli in the early 1920s. Most were employed in the German merchant shipping business, with others working in laundries and restaurants.

The focus of Hamburg's Chinatown was Schmuckstrasse, although a visit there today will prove disappointing since only two rundown buildings (numbers 5 and 9) remain from the period. On 13th May 1944 the Gestapo dispersed the community, forcing many to flee to Britain. One hundred and sixty five Chinese were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy and sent to a forced labour camp in Wilhelmsburg, where seventeen of them died.

Following the end of the Second World War the Chinese trickled back very slowly into Hamburg, which they called *Hanbao*, or 'Chinese Fort'. In 1986 a formal trading relationship was forged between Hamburg and its sister city, Shanghai. From just three Chinese companies registered in Hamburg in 1985 there are now well over three hundred, employing more than 10 000 ethnic Chinese. By 2003 seven hundred Hamburg companies

had established commercial relations with China, which is now the city's fourth largest foreign trade partner.

In 2008 this highly lucrative relationship was made tangible by the unveiling of a magnificent Chinese-style building constructed at Binderstrasse 67, alongside Hamburg's Museum für Völkerkunde (Ethnology Mu-



Several Hamburg street names reflect the city's trade with Asia

The Chinese Tea House (Chinesisches Teehaus) in Rotherbaum is surrounded by a water garden



seum) (see no. 65). Dubbed the Chinese Tea House (Chinesisches Teehaus, *Chá Lóu* in Mandarin) it is surrounded by a reduced-scale replica of the renowned Yuyuan Garden in Shanghai, featuring a classic Chinese garden landscape dotted with ponds, traversed by zigzag-shaped stone bridges. Despite the building's name only a part of the Chinese Tea House is actually given over to traditional tea ceremonies, namely the HuXinTing Teehaus; the rest is occupied by the LüBoLang Restaurant, as well as a Chinese cultural centre. The latter is used to stage events aimed at strengthening economic ties and furthering cultural exchange between the two cities and their respective countries.

*Other places of interest nearby: 15, 62, 63, 65, 66*