Lecture 35
Horticulture, Politics, and World Affairs: Tea and Colonialism

Tea: *Camellia* (syn. *Thea*) *sinensis*, Theaceae

One of the most inexpensive beverages
Consumed as an infusion
Arabs drink tea with mint
English consume it with milk
Ice tea popular in the US South
Stimulating due to the alkaloid theobromine
(very similar but less physiological reactive than caffeine from coffee)

Evergreen or semi-evergreen tree, 15 m tall
Adapted between 13°– 30°N & S, subtropics and mountainous areas of tropics,
Will withstand frost when dormant
Commercial production on pruned hedges; bud and leaf sequentially harvested
History of Horticulture

Major Tea Producing Regions of the World (tonnes)

Tea plant showing flowers and fruits

Tea on the road to Bandung
Tea estate, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), 1968

Tea pluckers, Sri Lanka, 1968

Tea fields
### History of Horticulture

#### Types of Tea

Chinese (var. *sinensis*): tolerant to cold  
Assam (var. *assamica*): fast growing tall trees  
Require high temperatures  
Djarling: Hybrids between the above  
(from Djarling, India)

#### Processing

- Withering and drying  
- Rolling and sorting  
- Fermentation  
- Drying, sorting, grading, and packing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black: Fermented</th>
<th>Green: Unfermented</th>
<th>Oolong: Partially fermented</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Black Tea" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Green Tea" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Oolong Tea" /></td>
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#### Tea History

- **Long Grown in China**  
- Tea ceremony important in Japan  
- Brought to Europe in 16th century  
- Reached Eastern Europe after 1650  
  (after coffee well established)  
- Became general in Europe in 18th century  
- Replace coffee in Britain who spread the habit to Empire
A woman wearing kimono performs a tea ceremony. Visible in the image are the kettle, the hearth (ro), and the tea bowl.

Tea and Politics: England & American Colonies

Boston Tea Party an incident precipitating American War of Independence
Rebellious colonists in Indian disguise destroy shipment of tea protesting tax
May have been responsible for reducing tea consumption in US
US since committed to coffee; now soft drinks

England and China

Increasing usage in England based on importations of tea from China
British East India Company granted monopoly to control the trade in tea between England and China
Great publicity followed first shipments of tea by sailing ships
Trade favored China who demanded payment in gold
England sought to leverage position in India by trading opium grown in India. English considered opium a minor vice perhaps similar to our feeling concerning alcohol and tobacco.

The opium habit had entered China from India, but the Chinese grew concerned (similar to our concern over South American cocaine and Afghanistan heroin).

Emperor found the habit reprehensible and prohibited importation in 1729 and 1800 and the habit was in decline. However, China had not the power to prevent importation by British.

They insisted British traders put up bond to ensure compliance with prohibition on opium imports, and destroy stocks. English found these measures arbitrary, dictatorial, and unacceptable!!

Armed conflict began from 1839 to 1844, known as the Opium Wars. China lost and ceded Hong Kong to British control. The Opium Wars strengthened English claims on China followed by other western countries. Led to other revolts such as the Boxer Rebellion. The story of tea is not dissimilar to the story of oil in the 20th century.