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
- Iced 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

Tea estate, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), 1968

Tea pluckers, Sri Lanka, 1968

Tea fields
History of Horticulture

Types of Tea

Chinese (var. <i>sinensis</i>): tolerant to cold
Assam (var. <i>assamica</i>): 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>
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<th>Black: Fermented</th>
<th>Green: Unfermented</th>
<th>Oolong: Partially fermented</th>
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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.