



茶

TEA:

A Horticultural and
Ethnobotanical
Perspective

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According to legend,
servants of the Chinese
emperor Shen Nong were
boiling water to cleanse it,
but dried leaves from a
nearby bush fell into it.
Tea resulted.



The famous
philosopher Lao Tze
(604-520 B.C.E.)
proclaimed tea to be
the elixir of immortality



Buddhist philosopher
Lu Yu wrote Ch'a
Ching, "The Classic
of Tea" between 760
and 780 A.D.



Names of Tea
Botany
Culture, Tradition & Ceremony
Horticulture
Flavor
Health
Herbal Teas/Tisanes

Names of Tea

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Tea

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*Root of tea and cha from
two different Chinese dialects:*

*“Te” from Hokkien dialect,
Fujian Province (yellow)*

*“Cha” from Mandarin
& Cantonese dialects,
Guangdong Province (green) *et al.**



*The Botany
of Tea*

Camellia sinensis

(formerly *Thea sinensis*)

Family Theaceae

Camellia

- Genus name after Rev. George Kamel a Jesuit brother, pharmacist and missionary to the Philippines
- Originally not named *Camellia*, but *Thea*, the Latin name for tea

sinensis

Latin for "from China"

Originally native to China, Tibet and northern India



Family Theaceae

Genus *Camellia*

Section *Thea* (3 spp.)

C. sinensis, taliensis,
irrawadiensis

- Evergreen shrubs
- Simple, alternate, serrate leaves with **Theoid** teeth
- Parts generally in fives: five or more petals, five sepals, many stamens
- Fruit a loculicidal capsule

Four varieties

(*two widely used for tea):

Camellia sinensis var. *assamica**

C. sinensis var. *pubilimba*

C. sinensis var. *sinensis**

C. sinensis var. *dehungensis*









*Culture,
Tradition &
Ceremony*

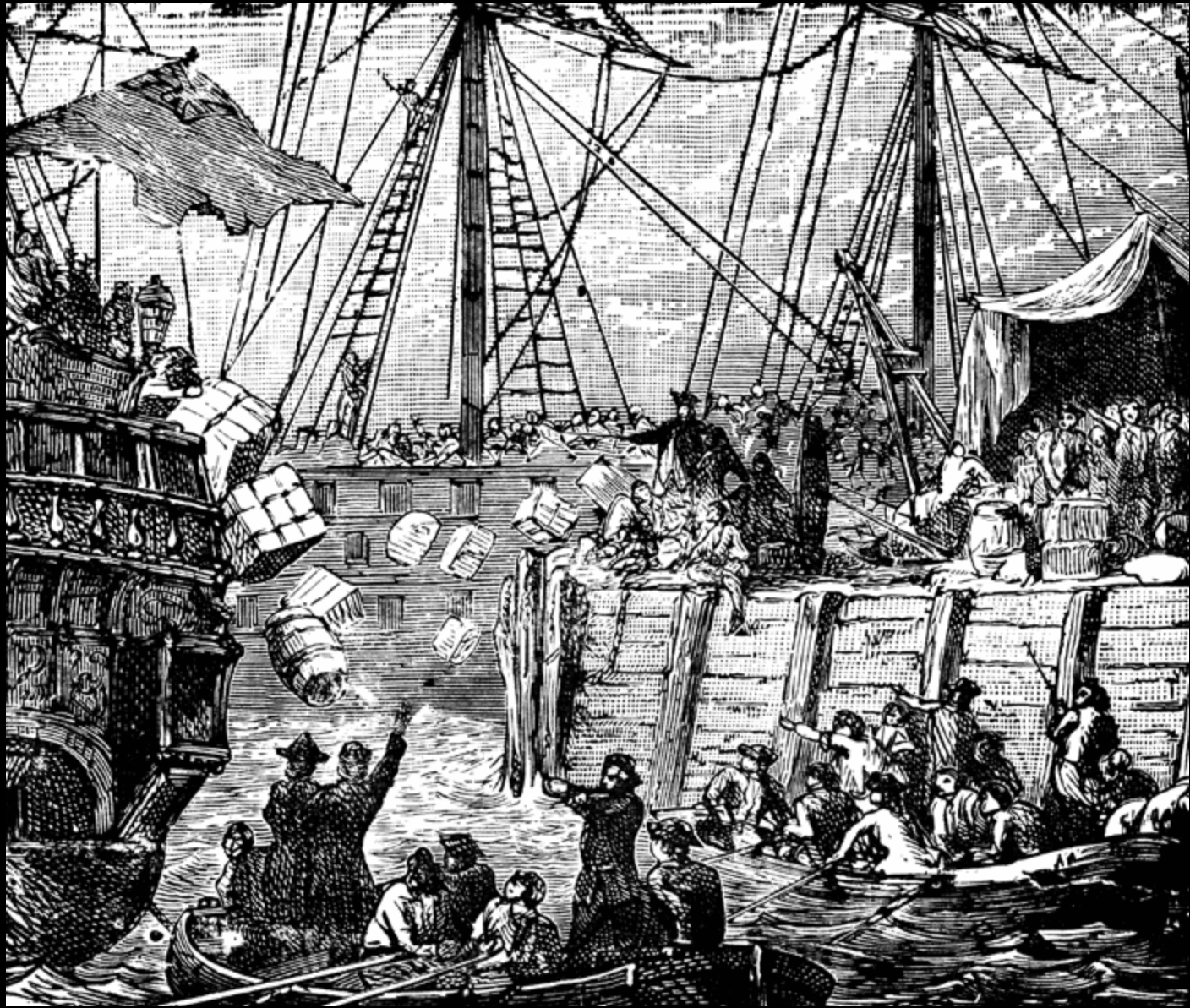
Tea making accessories from Tang Dynasty (618-907AD)

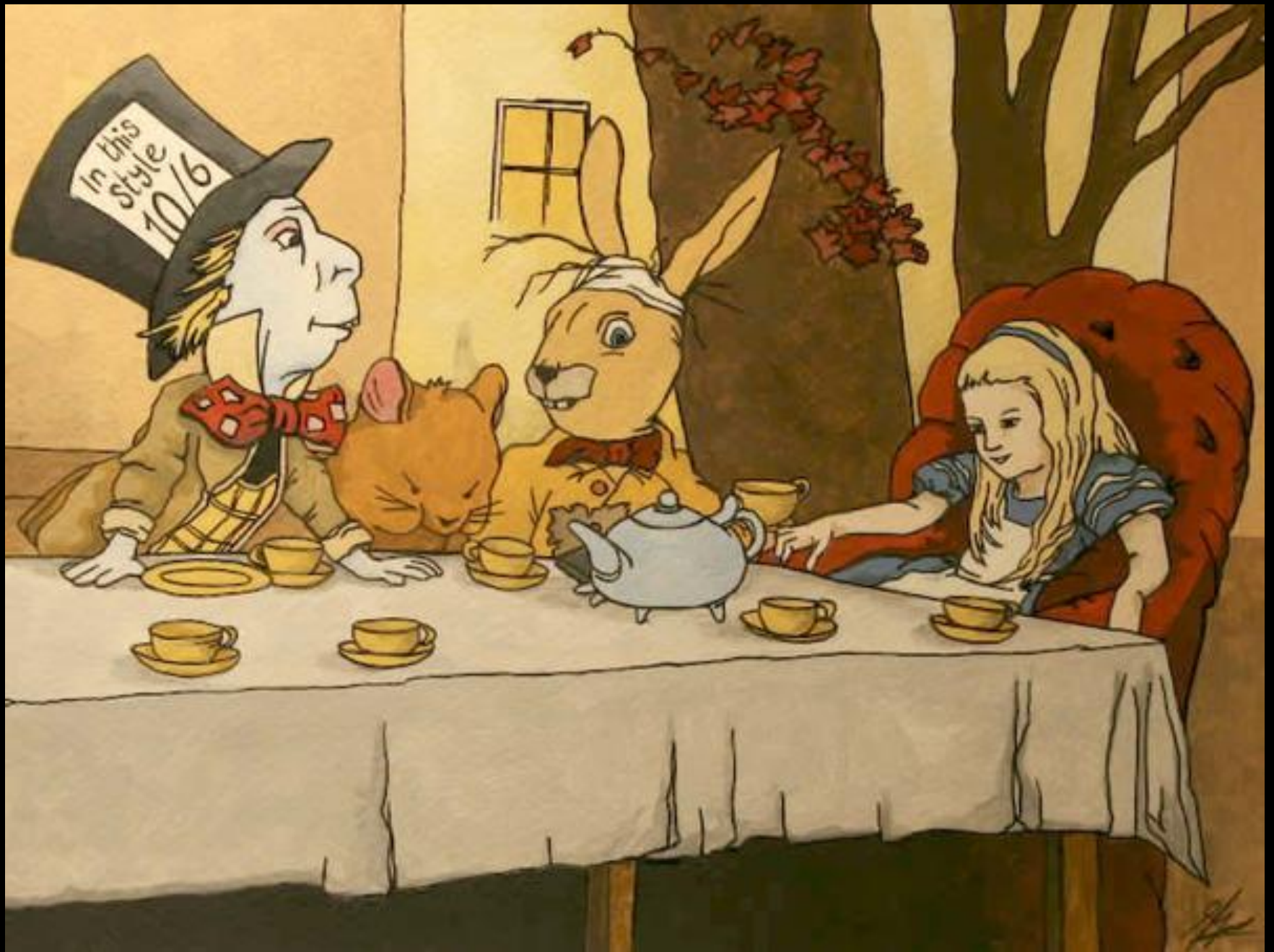






















Japanese Furo and Kama (Brazier and Kettle)

Horticulture



Tea Growing Facts

Plant grows 3-6 ft tall or taller if unpruned

Cold-hardy to USDA Zone 8 and can be grown in most of the southeastern USA.

Cooler temperatures at higher altitudes may allow leaves to develop better flavors, but we can still grow the plants here

Plants like well-drained, fertile, acidic, sandy, moist soils



Terraced Tea in China



Hangzhou, China



Darjeeling, India



Malaysian Tea Plantation



Flavor

Variety/Cultivar

Provenance ~ soil, altitude

Age at harvest

How dried ~ additives

How prepared

Types of tea

*Degree of
oxidation*

Green (& White)

Oolong

Black



Health

Help to normalize blood pressure

*Germicidal activities & improving beneficial
intestinal flora*

Enhance the immune system

Lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol

Lower lipids to help prevent diabetes

Fluorides benefit tooth enamel

Reduce cognitive decline in aging



Herbal Teas, or Tisanes





Kava Kava
Piper
methysticum



Kava kava is known for its sedative and anesthetic properties. The root of this plant is traditionally used by the South Pacific cultures for its sedating effect, achieved without the loss of mental clarity. There has been some controversy about liver toxicity, but this is only when leaves and stems were used to prepare the infusion.

Mint
Mentha spp.



Consumed for centuries in the middle east, mint tea is credited with relieving gastric distress, stimulating digestion, and acting as a sedative.

Mint Juleps DO NOT count!



Chamomile
Matricaria
chamomilla





Chamomile tea is said to have anticancer and antibacterial properties, to be helpful in halting the progression of diabetes, aiding with menstrual cramps, hemorrhoids, and fighting colds.



Ginger *Zingiber officinale*



Ginger tea is said to aid in the digestion process, reduce flatulence, help battle nausea and vomiting, help to combat cold, flu and act as a remedy for migraines. Other ailments ginger “tea” is said to help include heartburn, dizziness, asthma, inflammation, chronic pain and bad breath.

Yerba Mate

Ilex paraguariensis



Supposedly more nutritious than green tea, yerba mate was found by the Pasteur Institute in 1964 to be packed with vitamins and minerals and concluded that “it is difficult to find a plant in any area of the world equal to mate in nutritional value.”

Kombucha

A symbiotic combination of algae and yeast acts on sweetened black tea to produce several acids, making a vinegar-like drink



Mother
"Fungus"

Touted as nature's detoxifier, Kombucha has not been properly studied. It is credited with prevention and treatment of some cancers, detoxifying the liver and battling anxiety and depression, though none of this has been tested scientifically, but the reputation as a curative has been around since before 200BC. Recorded history of Kombucha dates to the 19th century.

There are many other tisanes that we don't have time to mention and discuss. Nature's pharmacopoeia is certainly available to us in the form of teas and tisanes; infusions of health-giving secondary plant compounds have been consumed for thousands of years and we are only beginning to understand their effects and benefits.