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# *Comprehending the History, Development, and Growth of Tea Factory at Ooty*

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## **ABSTRACT**

**As a part of Study tour program concerning the course HOR 201, this manuscript reveals the History, Growth and Development of Tea Factory at Ooty (Dodabetta). There we had a good exposure to the processing of Tea from the step of harvesting to packaging. There we learned about the History, Growth, and Development of Tea. In addition, we learned about the Origin of Nilgiris Tea and the foundation of railways for the transportation of tea. This manuscript covers briefly the history and development of tea.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The onset of 11 February was marked by our industrial visit to the Tea factory at Dodabetta. The warmth of the sun and the fragrance of the cured tea leaves affected the mind and soul. We were given a warm reception with the delightful treat of chocolates. Following our delightful treat, we had a visual treat about the Orthodox and CTC methods and curing. CTC (Cutting, Tearing, and Crushing) method of curing was followed over there. Old Chinese terms like Tchai, Ch'a, and T'e, which were used to refer to both the beverage and the leaf, are the source of the modern

word "tea." It's also noteworthy that the words "T'e" or "Ch's" were the root words for the origin of tea in every language. Some of the names of Tea derived from the Arnoy dialect of T'e are English (Before the 18<sup>th</sup> Century) (Tay), English (After the 18<sup>th</sup> Century) (Tea), Russian (Tchai), Korean (Tee), Indonesia (The), Latvian (Teja), Sinhalese (Thuy), French (The), Dutch (Thee). Some of the names of Tea are derived from the Cantonese dialect of Ch'a are, Hindi, Japanese, Persian, Portuguese (Cha), Albanian (Chav), Turkish, Czech (Caj), India (Chaya), Arabian (Shai), Vietnamese (Tea), Modern Greek (Tsai).

## **HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Over 5000 years ago, in ancient China, the story of tea was first told. Chinese mythology tells us that Emperor Shen Nung, a talented ruler, inventive scientist, and supporter of the arts, is credited with starting the tale of tea. Among other things, his foresighted philosophy mandated that all drinking water be boiled as a precautionary measure. During a summer visit to a far-off part of his realm, he took a break with the court. The servants started boiling water for everyone to drink as per his order. At that moment, a brownish liquid started to form in the boiling water after some dried leaves from a nearby bush fell into it. The new liquid caught the emperor's attention as a scientist, and he took a sip of it. He thought it was really refreshing and thus the Tea was discovered. The "Father of Tea," "Yeisei," a returning Buddhist priest from China, is credited with bringing the first tea seeds to Japan. Imperial sponsorship of tea arrived almost immediately, and it quickly spread from the royal court and monasteries to other facets of Japanese society. The Japanese tea ceremony known as Cha-no-yu, or "hot water for tea," was created as a result of tea being elevated to the status of an art form. Chaseski created a unique style of architecture specifically for "tea houses." The Geishi, Japan's cultural and artistic hostesses, also started to focus on the tea ceremony. Out of the three maritime nations, Great Britain was the last to penetrate the Chinese and East Indian trade routes. It didn't take long for tea to overtake coffee as England's national beverage. "Tea mania" erupted in England. High tea was considered the "high meal of the day" and low tea was served during the "low part of the afternoon." For the middle and lower classes, it served as their main meal. In the annals of American independence, the Boston Tea Party is a well-known illustration of a rebellion against British rule.

Just off the coast of Boston in December 1733, three to sixty men dressed like Native Americans sailed aboard British East India Company ships. When the tea plant began to be grown commercially in India in the late 1830s, it was growing wild in the Assamese jungles of north-eastern India. After confirming that the tea plant was indeed indigenous to the Assam region between 1823 and 1831, Robert Bruce and his brother Charles Bruce, who worked for the East India Company, sent seeds and specimen plants to the newly formed Botanical Garden in Calcutta. When the company's monopoly vanished overnight, it considered India as a lucrative replacement. Before they were ready to travel a great distance to the freshly prepared gardens of 1833, the seeds were sown in the Botanical Garden. Charles Bruce and other settlers discovered suitable land in Assam in the meantime, where they established plantations and conducted experiments using recently harvested leaves. Bruce had enlisted two Chinese tea makers, and with their assistance, he was able to discover the trade secrets of prosperous tea plantations. The circumstances were extremely difficult. The places were hostile and far away.

The lives of the tea workers were frequently in danger from wolves, tigers, and leopards. The nearby hill tribes also conducted raids against them. The best tracts are grown in the partial shade of the nearby trees, and new seedlings are sown to fill in any gaps and produce authentic tea gardens. Twelve chests of tea, the first to be made from the native Assam leaf, were transported to London in 1838 and auctioned off there. The teas were well received by some "houses of characters," according to a letter from the East India Company to Assam. The response to the subsequent shipments was also positive, with some buyers praising the teas. Indian Tea made its debut on a worldwide scale.



**PROCESSING OF TEA IN TEA FACTORY AT OOTY**

## **ORIGINS OF THE TEA IN NILGIRIS**

The obsession with coffee was the main reason why South Indian tea did not catch on quickly. But when the coffee failed, the planters wavered, and attempts to experiment with tea were made only sometimes. In the Nilgiris, early tea experiments started in 1832. In 1832, a surgeon named Dr. Christie from the Madras establishment was assigned a special task to study the weather and geology of South India. Upon realizing the vast potential of this land, he promptly requested a land grant in the Nilgiris for the purpose of experimenting with tea, coffee, and mulberry. Colonel Crewe started the Nilgiris tea plantation expansion after Dr. Christie passed away. Unaware that the tea plant could be found in Assam, India's Viceroy Lord Bentick sent a commission to China in 1834 to bring skilled tea makers and tea seed back to India. As a result, tea plants were also distributed to south India for experimental purposes. The majority of those sent to the Nilgiris were planted at the Ketti experimental farm. In 1840, French botanists Crewe and Perottet published a description of these plants that caught the attention of the Madras Agri-Horticultural Society, which received samples of Nilgiris tea grown in Ketti and Bilikal from Mr. J. Saravaliion. Mr. Mann is credited with starting the first tea manufacturing. He was encouraged to obtain more seed after he was able to mail fairly good tea from the Nilgiris plant. In 1854, he acquired supplies from the best plantations in China, and he established the "Coonor Tea Estate," a plantation in Connor. The tea plants were well received by London brokers as early as 1856, and Mr. Rae also succeeded in obtaining a grant of land near Sholur, which is now known as the Unsaddle tea estate, for the purpose of growing tea. Thiasola Estate was established in 1859, and the Bishopdown property at Ooty became the state of Belmont in 1863. In due course, tea became the backbone of the Nilgiris' economy. In Britain, tea from the Nilgiris gained fresh praise. In Britain, Nilgiris tea was highly regarded by the general public. In the 1880s, direct support for this emerging industry was provided by Sir William Denison, the governor, who brought tea manufacturers from the Northeast and distributed tea seed stocks. About 200–300 acres had been planted with tea by the end of 1869, and that year saw the holding of the Outcoming Agricultural Exhibition. Some of these, valued between 15.4s and 16s per pound, were sent home by the government at the suggestion of Mr. Breeks, Commissioner of the Nilgiris. Chinese POWs were transported from China to India in 1859 and imprisoned in two campus located in the Nilgiris Reserve Forest: Naduvattam and Thiashola. Small-scale tea plantations were established in the Kothari region by Miss MBL Cockburn with Chinese assistance.

## **RAILWAYS AND TEA**

The essential route connecting the Nilgiris to the outside world was the Nilgiris Mountain Railway. The meter gauge line that ran from Mettupalayam to Coonor was finished in 1898, and it was extended to Ootacamund in 1908 when it became necessary to find more effective ways to ship tea to the mother country. Planters and Nilgiris residents founded the Nilgiris Rigi Railway Company to build a railway line from Ootacamund, Coonor, and Kallar to Mettupalayam, the closest rail junction. A special train called the Tea Garden Express was established to move tea chests from Mettupalayam to Cochin and then on to England. This was a significant turning point in the development of the Nilgiris' tea industry. In India, the first-ever tea auction took place in 1861. Brokers R Thomas & Co. announced and put East India Tea Company and Bengal Tea Company tea up for sale. Product from the Assam Tea Company and the Jorehaut Tea Company

was up for bid at the second auction, held on February 16, 1862, by Messrs. W. Moran & Co. On December 25, 1861, the first East Indian tea auction was held at No. 2 Mission Row in Calcutta, according to the Calcutta Exchange Gazette.

**CONCLUSION**

In this program, we had a good abundant about the processing of tea and different flavours of tea starting from the harvesting of leaves to packaging and loading.