

Teaching about Tea: PowerPoint Text

This text accompanies the PowerPoint images of the tea industry in Sri Lanka. It is meant to visually describe the growth of the tea industry, which began when the British Empire found it economically unfeasible to continue purchasing tea from China in the large quantities its public demanded. While the specific imagery details Sri Lanka's involvement in the worldwide growth and trade in tea, it provides an important case study for some larger issues which can be addressed through the follow-up activities detailed elsewhere in this unit.

1.	<p>Who are these groups of women? What do we know about them from their appearance? What do you assume their moods are? Why? On the left, Tamil tea pluckers on a plantation in Sri Lanka. On the right, a typical garden tea party in Europe. Note differences in expression, lifestyle, clothing, work and leisure. There are a variety of ways to experience tea, and we're going to examine some of them.</p>																																																					
2.	<p>Answers: Turkey; China; China, India, Kenya, Sri Lanka</p> <p>Consumption per person:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;">Rank</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Country</th> <th style="width: 45%;">Annual tea consumption per person</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Turkey</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6.96 lb</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Ireland</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4.83 lb</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">United Kingdom</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4.28 lb</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Russia</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3.05 lb</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total annual consumption (2015):</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;">Rank</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Country</th> <th style="width: 45%;">Annual total consumption (in tons)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">China</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1,433,700</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">India</td> <td style="text-align: center;">976,400</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Kenya</td> <td style="text-align: center;">217,900</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Turkey</td> <td style="text-align: center;">212,600</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(US is 10th)</p> <p>Tea-producing countries</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;">Rank</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Country</th> <th style="width: 45%;">Annual production (in tons)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">China</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1,000,130</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">India</td> <td style="text-align: center;">900,094</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Kenya</td> <td style="text-align: center;">303,308</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Sri Lanka</td> <td style="text-align: center;">295,830</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Tea Exporting Countries (2016)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;">Rank</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Country</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Annual exports (in tons)</th> <th style="width: 35%;">% of world total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rank	Country	Annual tea consumption per person	1	Turkey	6.96 lb	2	Ireland	4.83 lb	3	United Kingdom	4.28 lb	4	Russia	3.05 lb	Rank	Country	Annual total consumption (in tons)	1	China	1,433,700	2	India	976,400	3	Kenya	217,900	4	Turkey	212,600	Rank	Country	Annual production (in tons)	1	China	1,000,130	2	India	900,094	3	Kenya	303,308	4	Sri Lanka	295,830	Rank	Country	Annual exports (in tons)	% of world total				
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3.	An island of a little more than 25,000 square miles (about the size of West Virginia) off the coast of India, Sri Lanka has a tropical climate, suitable for tea at higher elevations. At present, the population is around 21 million people. The World Bank classifies it as a “lower middle-income country”. It has high rate of literacy and a democratic form of government. The recent civil war (1983-2009) has meant that economic growth has somewhat stagnated, but there are signs of recovery.																
4.	This is a view of “downtown” Colombo, the major city of Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon, at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the time it was part of the British empire, a fact seen in the architecture and naming of the buildings and streets. This section of the city is still referred to as “Fort,” since in earlier Dutch times it was the location of fortifications, since demolished. On the left the large building is the general post office, the entrance to Queen’s House is on the right, beyond the shrubbery, and the clock tower is directly ahead. Queen’s House was the home of the governor of Ceylon, as representative of the Queen of England. After Independence the name of Queen Street was changed to Janadhipathi Mawatha, meaning “President Street.” The clock tower was built in 1857 and served as a lighthouse. This was no longer feasible after all buildings were constructed nearby, so that its beam could not be viewed from the sea.																
5.	Most Sri Lankans lived in villages. Scenes such as this would have been common when traveling through the country at the beginning of the twentieth century, with lush vegetation surrounding homes. People often chose to live near streams and rivers, providing irrigation for small gardens and farms.																
6.	Population and economic growth led to expanded cultivation, for both subsistence agriculture and the development of plantations.																
7.	Originally coffee was the major export crop. Coffee plants, like tea, can grow to tree-size, but on plantations were kept short to increase yields of the coffee berries, which have the seeds inside.																
8.	This etching was made at a time of transition, when coffee was on the decline because of a leaf disease, and cinchona and tea were being tested as possible replacements. Young plants were grown in nurseries before being set out on a large scale. Cinchona is native to South America. Its bark is used in the manufacture of quinine, an important medication for the treatment of malaria. (It’s used as the flavoring in tonic water, often mixed with gin to disguise its taste.) However, its profitability was limited, and it soon lost out to tea as the crop of choice.																

9.	<p>In what years would you have liked to be a coffee plantation owner? If you had a crystal ball, what was the best time to sell? And if you wanted to grow tea, what would have been your best moves? This chart examines the relationship between growing coffee and tea in the area of greatest production, the central highlands. 1869 was the first year of a blight that began to attack coffee plants. For the next decade, coffee production was still so profitable that plantation acreage increased. But with the spread of the coffee blight, which could not be contained because there were so few buffering forests left between plantations, production of coffee eventually began its steep decline. At the same time, it was demonstrated that tea crops could be successful at these elevations, and coffee fields transitioned to tea.</p>
10.	<p>The topography of the island resembles a tear-drop-shaped, off-kilter pyramid, with sea-level coastal areas rising to highlands skewed to the southern, “fatter” portion of the island. Much of the highest quality tea growing is done in the higher elevations, although tea can be, and is, grown at other elevations as well. There are many micro-climates on the island, each of which contributes its unique characteristics to the tea produced. About half a million acres are devoted to tea production.</p>
11.	<p>Tea factories were located on the plantations themselves, since it’s necessary to process the tea leaves as soon as possible after they’re picked.</p>
12.	<p>This view of a tea plucker shows a worker in an uncommon pose. Usually, tea baskets for collecting tea are strapped to the back or supported by a strap across the head. What can we glean (pun intended?) from this woman’s pose? What about her facial expression? Why is she dressed as she is? Why do you suppose the basket is by her side? Could a filled basket be held in this position?</p>
13.	<p>This postcard provides a more accurate sense of the tea plucking process. The women were not provocatively posed, but were often covered to protect themselves from the blazing sun, and had their baskets strapped so they could be carried when full. The women are Tamil, speaking the Tamil language and they, or their parents, came from India to work on the plantations. They left India for better opportunities, but the journey was difficult, and they often arrived with a large debt. They worked long and hard, confined to the plantations, with few political rights.</p>
14.	<p>Tea pluckers are paid based on how much tea they pluck, determined by weighing the tea leaves, an activity that may occur twice a day, based on morning and afternoon plucking. The amount each plucker brings in from the fields is measured on a scale. You can see the man bending over to move the weights, like on a scale you may be weighed on in a doctor’s office, and it is recorded in a record book, as the man next to him is doing. You can see the women waiting their turn on the left have filled their baskets.</p>
15.	<p>Marshall, Sons & Co. was a British firm that built agricultural machinery, established in 1848. What does this image show? How difficult would it have been to get the machinery necessary to make tea from Britain to the central highlands of Ceylon? What other difficulties would early planters have had to overcome?</p>

16.	Examine this slide and the next one together. They both show the inside of a tea factory. Tea leaves are dried or “withered,” and then rolled, using this machine, which has two ridged plates which rub the tea leaves between them. This part of the process dries the tea leaves further and breaks them down so oxidation can occur. After this, tea is separated by grade and packed for shipment. What differences do you see between the machinery used in 1900 and that used in 2010? What does this say about the modernization of tea processing? In what ways do you think this contributes to the cost of processing and constrains profitability? Originally the machine was run by water or steam power; that has since changed, but it is not much more sophisticated than in the early years of the industry.
17.	[see previous slide]
18.	After rolling, the tea is oxidized, changing its color, and then fired, at which time it is dried. After this, tea leaves are sifted, using sieves with different size openings, to sort it into grades. Tea “dust” is used to make the least expensive teas, while the whole leaves usually create the premium teas.
19.	What does the clothing and tasks of these men tell you about their relative status? The man with the scale is from the majority Sinhalaethnic group, and is the supervisor of the two Tamil men in the background performing the more menial task of packing. This postcard provides a sense of the hierarchy on tea plantations. The back of the card states, “The amount of tea exported annually from Ceylon exceeds 150,000,000 lbs., and about 100,000 coolies [plantation workers] from Southern India are employed in the tea-gardens. The greatest tea-districts are Dickoya and Dimbula, where a large number of coolies are employed under the skilled charge of such men as the Cingalese[Sinhalese] overseer here shown.” How does the language of the postcard support this ethnic differentiation? They are packing tea into crates labeled from the Gorthie tea estate, which was established in 1909. The “pekoe” on the crate is the name for the grade or quality of tea being packed.
20.	Here the tea from the Eadella Plantation, which was established in 1887, is being loaded onto the backs of elephants. Thomas Lipton bought the estate in 1904, so that’s the reason his corporate name appears on the crates of tea, which are being loaded to be taken to market. The elephants would not have carried the tea all the way from the highlands to Colombo. By this time they may have carried it along “feeder roads” to the train station for shipment.
21.	While the postcards of palm-thatched carts make it appear that bullocks carried tea from the plantations all the way to the docks in Colombo, that was only true in the early years of tea production. As noted in the previous view, a railroad system was built to more efficiently convey the tea to international markets.
22.	Describe the playful elements of the scene. Note the background buildings, etc. How does this scene differ from your understanding of conditions for workers on tea plantations?

23.	This postcard gives some sense of the line houses built on the plantations for Tamil workers. Most likely all these families would have lived in the building behind them, each family assigned just one room. The workers lived on the plantations, receiving mostly substandard housing, rice, healthcare and education for their children. How do you think the plantation owners would have viewed these expenses?
24.	This is a recent photo of line houses. The passage of time has obviously not been kind to them, and many have deteriorated over the decades since they were built. What does this say about current conditions for plantation workers?
25.	If you look carefully, you can see the Lipton name on the front of this building, the headquarters of the Lipton Limited tea company in Colombo. Tea plantations were located in many parts of the country, particularly the central highlands, but business offices were located in Colombo as the country's commercial center.
26.	This scene provides a view of the breakwater that was constructed in 1875. The city of Colombo, although located along the shore, did not have a natural harbor. A rock breakwater was constructed as an artificial jetty to allow ships to dock and to load and unload cargoes and passengers. The rock formation provides protection in the case of storms, as seen here. You can tell that this photo was taken in the 1870s or thereabouts, since the ships seen here are sailing ships, in contrast to the following image of the port. Sailing ships were used prior to the development of long-distance steamships.
27.	This is the port of Colombo, the location from which tea was shipped around the world. This postcard was from 1908. How can you determine the approximate period? We can see that tea was still at least partially being transported by bullock cart (a bullock is a male cow), with the Lipton name on the side, and tea chests loaded inside. Large ships for transporting goods beyond Ceylon's borders are seen in the background just offshore. Straight ahead is the Customs House, the building used to verify the paperwork, collect duties, etc. for shipping overseas. On the right is a large white statue. Who is this? It's Queen Victoria, the great monarch of the British Empire. The statue was erected here to commemorate her Diamond Jubilee, in 1897, celebrating her sixty years on the throne of England. The statue has been moved to a less prominent location, since Sri Lanka's independence created a much-altered relationship to the British monarchy, as the country is no longer a subservient colony. The statue is now located in a park that used to be named Victoria Park, after the queen, but has been renamed Viharamahadevi Park, after an early Sri Lankan queen, a more relevant person for national pride in an independent country. People in this scene are dressed in clothing that would be worn by the various ethnic groups and social classes.
28.	The Lion Logo can only be used on consumer packs of 100% pure Ceylon teapacked in Sri Lanka, not overseas, and need to meet the quality standards of the Sri Lanka Tea Board. You can see its relationship to the national flag.
29.	This juxtaposition of behavior on a pirate ship (who knows if that's what it was really like, at least in part?) and a popular song from a film of the 1930s makes fun, in both

	<p>instances, of the ubiquity of tea in British culture. The song, Everything Stops for Tea, was featured in a 1935 comedy film, "Come Out of The Pantry," set in New York. It was composed by the New York-born Maurice Sigler, with lyrics by Al Goodheart (also a New Yorker) and Al Hoffman, an American born in Russia. It was performed first by Jack Buchanan, a Scotsman, which is fitting, since so many of the early planters in Ceylon were from Scotland.</p>
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