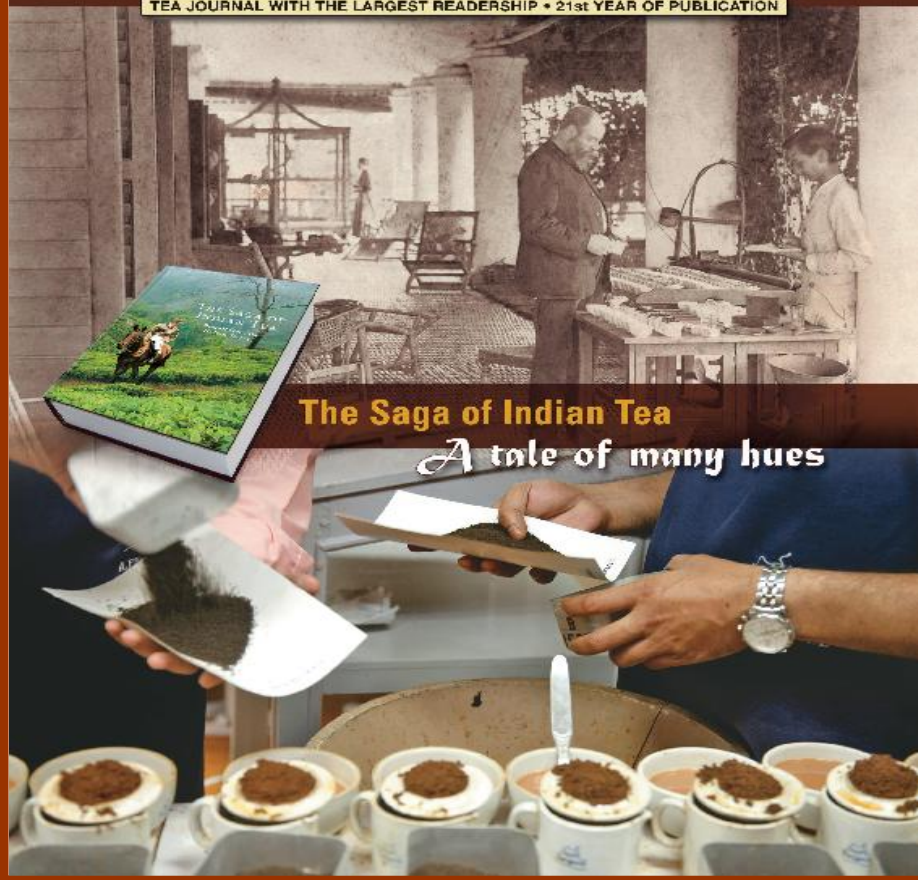


CONTEMPORARY

# TEA TIME

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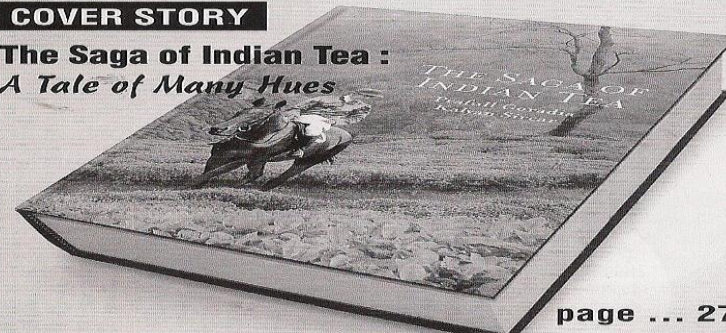
TEA JOURNAL WITH THE LARGEST READERSHIP • 21st YEAR OF PUBLICATION



## The Saga of Indian Tea A tale of many hues

### COVER STORY

#### The Saga of Indian Tea : A Tale of Many Hues



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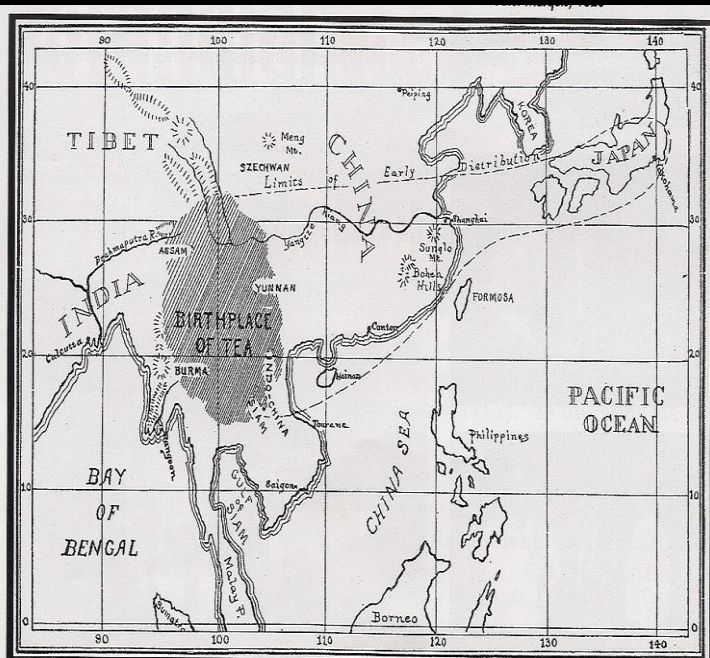


## Small Tea Growers bring BIG Changes :-

Panbari Small Tea Grower's Society in Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal is Playing a stellar role in the empowerment of small tea holders in the region, observes *Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty*



Small growers' meet



Mother Nature's Tea Garden in the Monsoon District of Southeastern Asia

## **TEA TALK :- *Thus Wrote William H Ukers in 1935***

Tea had its genesis in China. There is ample corroboration of this view as far as the creation of the industry and the adoption of tea as a beverage are concerned. Speaking from a botanical point of view, however, the subject presents other aspects, and for many years controversies raged among scientific men and scholars as to whether the tea plant originated in China or in India. Plants of the China variety had been painstakingly carried to India for a long time after the native Assamica was found there in 1823, and there are ancient stories of how tea came to China from India. Indeed there are today those who believe the Chinese must have obtained the plant for cultivation from a source outside of China. Samuel Baidon, who wrote extensively on the tea industry of India in the seventies, was an active proponent of the idea that tea was indigeneous only to India; his theory being that the plant was introduced into China and Japan from India some twelve hundred years ago. He argued there was but one species of tea - the Indian - and that the inferior growth and smaller leaves of the China tea were the result of the transportation of the plant far from home into an uncongenial climate and into unfavorable conditions of soil and treatment.



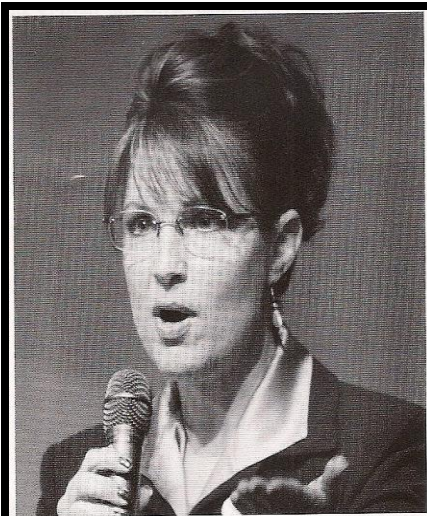
## TEA IN JAPAN

In August 1902, Mr. Bonar, the British Consul at Yokohama, reported that 'the competition from India and Ceylon teas has not proved as dangerous as was expected last year. The efforts made by these growers have not met with much success in the United States and it is now doubted if they will make any serious inroads into the trade'. A Calcutta response to this report was 'this is an opinion from Japan, our rival. Let us try to prove that, just for once, it is the Japanese and not the Briton who has underestimated the power of his rival'.....

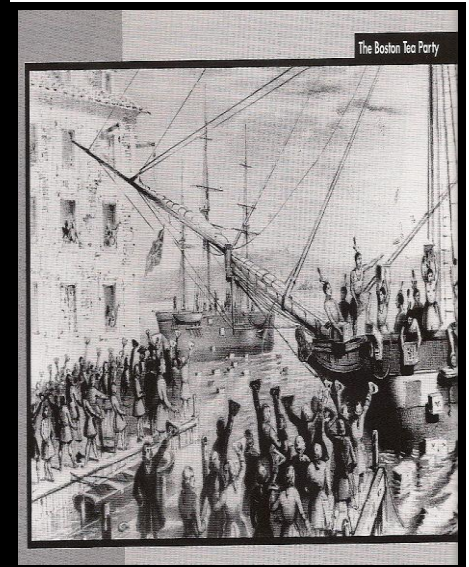
## IN THE NAME OF TEA

One Day in 1773, a group of people in Boston, Massachusetts, refused to return three shiploads of taxed tea to Britain. Their demand was : " No taxation without representation". Some boarded the ships and destroyed the tea by throwing it into Boston harbor. The event is known as the Boston Tea Party. At that moment a new chapter in American history was opened, which inspired political protest in different parts of the world through the ages. The Boston Tea Party was the key event in the growth of the American Revolution of 1776. More British ships were destroyed in other ports, and anger of the people took a more violent turn. The crisis escalated and the American Revolutionary War began in Boston in 1776. Chinese tea carried in British ships brought war and independence to America.

That was then. Now another war, a civil war within a political party, is in the air of the United States of America. The instigators have named it The Tea Party Movement. Their inspiration is the other Tea Party of the past. The protest now is against the big government in Washington that taxed the little men and women of the country with no benefit to them. Recently, the defeat of the "Establishment" candidate of the Republican Party by one from the Tea Party has caused one of the unlikeliest upsets of the Year. The so-called anti-establishment party is not only against the big government, they are against abortion; they object to the expression AIDS "victims", saying they had brought it upon themselves. They are for the right to own and carry guns. Their leader is Sarah Palin, the former Alaska Governor.....



SARAH PALIN : Big Mama Grizzly





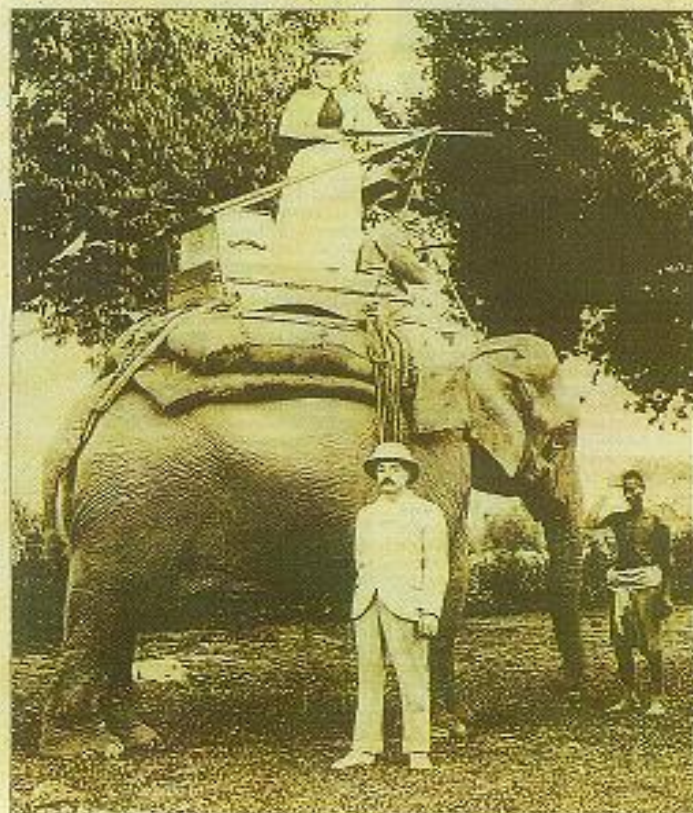
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STORIES IN PICTURES

# MADE IN INDIA

**THOSE DAYS** In the 19th century, the British began growing tea in India. A connoisseur captures the brew's potted history



A membership step an elephant poses with a pug. She is dressed in a formal gown — the high fashion of 19th century London — never mind India's tropical climate

Panarita Ghosh

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**T**he story of 'blackberries' is the story of China. And so it goes with tea — in India. In 1838, the East India Company, sour at the smell of monopoly over Chinese trade, was looking for alternate sources. The plant was found growing in the wild in Assam.

"Chabwa in Dibrugarh was India's first tea garden. Our leaf was found to be longer than the Chinese variety, but tea is tea," says the 78-year-old connoisseur and former parliamentarian Prafulla Goradia, twice a member of the Tea Board. With academic Kalyan Sengupta, he has just published a voluminous book, *The Saga of Tea*.

The first lot of Indian tea was auctioned in London in 1858. Goradia joined the Kolkata office of J. Thomas and Company, the single largest tea auctioneer in the world in his twenties.

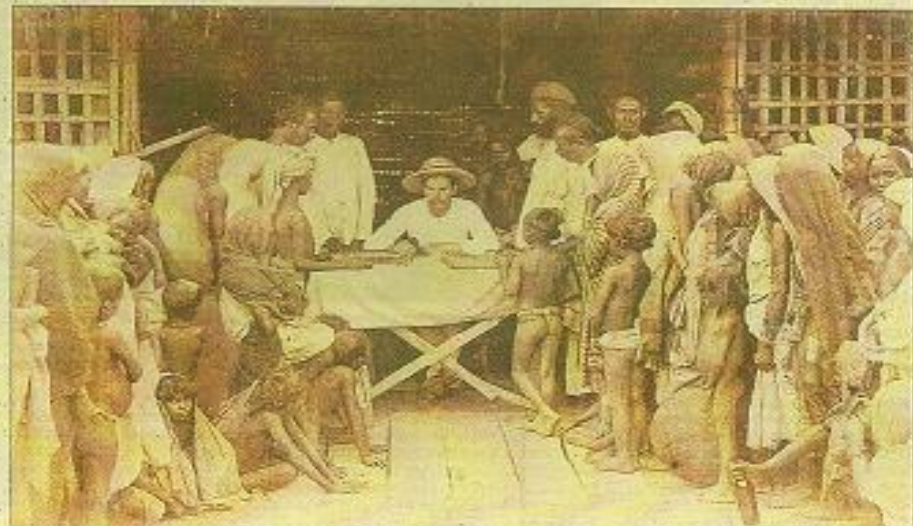
Goradia's book is both a photographic record — there is plenty of text as well — of his time in tea and of a certain professional class of 19th-century Englishmen who as planters, botanists, managers and agents were making a living in the east and south of pre-independence India. Despite the climate change, for their moustaches, it was a push life. Ponies, elephant rides, bird-shoots — and all this while tramped up in crinolines, bonnets and lace.

The black and white photographs also include hard-up workers in various stages of toil. Men and women, many of them tribals, are shown waiting for the day's wages at the table of the Burma Club, the boss.

*The Saga of Tea*, says Goradia, will be followed by a second volume, autobiographies of tea companies. "In Europe and in the US, tea is drunk as a health drink. Russian scientists say it prevents cancer. Let's talk about it."



A young Prafulla Goradia (right) at an auction house in Kolkata. The auction provides every buyer, regardless of his location or level of influence, full information about the teas offered and prices obtained at various world centres. PHOTO: TONY JAYAS



Even in the 1970s, the relations between workers and planters were strained. The former complained of low and irregular pay. A manager of a tea estate was of the opinion that "if hogging were introduced, it would stop a great deal of their faults."