



Tea Goes Global: Patterns of Migration, Trade, and Conquest in the Indian Ocean Over Time

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Overview and Purpose of the Lesson:

While tea has been consumed in China for over 2000 years, it took many centuries before Europeans were introduced to this bitter beverage and learned to enjoy it, thanks to the addition of sugar. This lesson traces the history of tea (and tea-drinking accoutrements) within and beyond Asia, beginning in the Classical Era up through the 20th century. The tea trade changed not only economies but also social rituals. Even as Europeans adopted their own tea-drinking habits, they enjoyed drinking tea from imported Chinese porcelain teacups and teapots typically designed with cobalt blue patterns. Eventually Europeans manufactured their own chinaware with designs that looked Chinese — Chinoiserie— but due to differences in geography, Europeans could never produce tea or sugar in Europe. European dependence on imported tea had world-wide consequences.

In Part I students are introduced to the plant that produces tea, *Camellia sinensis*, and to the geographical regions in which it grows. They analyze a primary source document (a British advertisement for tea), in order to understand that the global distribution of tea affected tea drinking rituals and etiquette. In Part II students access information from the Indian Ocean in World History Website. The class is divided into small groups, each one assigned to study one item from the tea trade (an object, good, or document) and the historical era map on which it can be found. After groups fill out a variety of graphic organizers, the whole class reconvenes in Part III, when students share what they have learned in order to assess the impact of the commodification of tea on global history. The extension assignments in Part IV include staging tea ceremonies from different parts of the world, creating an advertisement for a long-established tea company, and the writing of comparative and critical essays.

Performance Objectives:

- To understand why certain goods can be grown only in some regions of the world (geography).
- To understand how demand for a good can be created where it cannot be produced via cultural exchange and trade (economics).
- To understand how the commodification of a good can have ramifications on world history over time (history).

Materials Needed:

- Access to The Indian Ocean in World History Website.
- One large world map, or the ability to project a large world map.

Time: Two class periods for Part I-III, more time for the optional Extension Activities in Part IV.

Procedure:

Part I: Introduction and Context

1. Start the lesson by posing the following question: What beverage do you think is most consumed worldwide today? Ask for a show of hands for each of the following drinks (or others students may suggest): coffee, carbonated soft drinks, fruit juices, tea. Then tell students that tea is consumed more than any other drink in the world, except for water.
2. What is tea? If you cannot find loose tea, empty a few tea bags into a cup. Add hot water so that students can see that tea is made of whole, crushed or ground leaves that expand in water. Explain that by “tea” we mean the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis*, an evergreen plant. When brewed in hot water it creates a slightly bitter, caffeinated drink. Because tea requires boiled water to brew, it purifies potentially lethal germs, creating healthier populations worldwide.
3. What conditions are needed for the *Camellia sinensis* plant to grow? Explain that in order to grow, tea needs to be planted in a tropical or sub-tropical climate which receives at least 50 inches of rainfall a year. Distribute world atlases or ask students to look at a Website that provides world climate and rainfall maps. Then let students predict where in the world tea can grow. For example, ask students if they think tea is grown anywhere in the United States or Northern Europe. Why or why not? Tell students that today approximately half the world’s tea is grown in India and China.
4. Tell students that *Camellia sinensis* was first cultivated in Yunnan province of China more than 2000 years ago. If tea cultivation started in China, and if tea only grows in certain regions of the world, how did the consumption of tea spread across the globe? Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn how tea became a global commodity through migration, trade, and conquest in the Indian Ocean.
5. Introduce students to the Indian Ocean in World History Website and how it works. Click on the third image (see picture on first page) that accompanies the text for “Tea Advertisement” in the Industrial Era map. Explain that as tea drinking was disseminated, it took on different cultural attributes in different regions: who drank tea, under what circumstances and in what company. Ask students to study this image from the advertisement in order to answer the following questions:

- Based on the clothing and faces of the tea drinkers, when and where do you think they lived? (England in the last decades of the 19th century.)
- What is the social status of the tea drinkers? Are they from the aristocracy or middle classes? (Based on their clothing, the drinkers seem to be middle class. For them, tea drinking looks like an ordinary and daily activity.)
- Why would the advertisement include an old person and a child? (The advertisers might want to convey that tea is a healthy drink for all ages. It also shows that the child is being enculturated into a tea-drinking society at an early age – a good strategy for marketing the tea.)
- Based on the ad, what became essential accoutrements for European tea drinkers? (Blue teapot, cups and saucers, dish with sugar.) Explain that tea drinkers in Asia did not add sugar, but that Europeans found tea too bitter to drink without it. The teapot is essential for the brewing process in which the tea leaves steep in hot water. Students should also note the oriental-looking teapot in cobalt blue.
- Tell students that in the remainder of the lesson they are going to learn about a how a good that is grown in one region of the world became a commodity elsewhere. *What does the commoditization of tea (and tea-drinking accoutrements) reflect about global trends on the Indian Ocean?*

Part II: Small Group Jigsaw Activity

1. Place students into groups of three or fewer, depending on class size. Then assign to each group one of the following ten goods, objects or documents to investigate. Explain that all are related to tea-drinking as it was adapted in Northern Europe, a region of the world that could grow neither tea nor sugar, due to climate.

Below is a list of the ten items to investigate. The number of corresponding images for each item is shown in parentheses.

Classical Era

- Sugar Cane (1)

Medieval Era

- Tea (2)
- Origin of Tea Pot (3)
- Medieval Candy Recipe with Sugar Cane (1)
- Blue and White Porcelain (1)
- Cobalt Blue Dish from Iraq (1)

First Global Era

- Blue and White Porcelain Tea Set from China (2)
- Tea Chest (2)

Industrial and Imperial Era

- Tea Advertisement (3)

Twentieth Century and Globalization

- Tea Bags (2)

Before students start to investigate their assigned item, they should take note of the “big picture” on the Indian Ocean map of their assigned era. What are some of the important dates on the timeline situated below their assigned era map? They can click on the dates to find out. Are students familiar with some of the events on their timeline, and if so what might be the impact of those events on the growth, transportation and sale of tea?

Graphic Organizer A: Analyzing the Assigned Era

Era’s title, start and ending date	
Important political and maritime powers in the Indian Ocean at this time.	
Events that might impact on the planting, transportation, marketing, and sale of tea and tea-drinking accoutrements.	

Graphic Organizer B: Analyzing Goods, Objects and Documents

Students can now locate the icon that corresponds to their assigned item of study. A pop-up card with information will appear. They can also click on the corresponding image cards. By clicking on the icons to the left on their map they can read a background essay on how historians analyze a good, object or document. Finally they should access the Graphic Organizer B they need to further study their item. This can be found by going to the Student Guide and clicking on the image of the book marked “Graphic Organizers for Exploring the Site.” Working in their groups, students should fill in one graphic organizer, depending upon whether the icon for their item is an object, good or document.

Graphic Organizer C: What does the commodification of tea (and tea-dinking accoutrements) reflect about global trends on the Indian Ocean?

1. Answer the following questions as best you can by consulting:
 - a. The information that pops up when you click on your item’s icon.
 - b. Images that pop up when you click on the image icons for your item.
 - c. Events on the timeline of your era’s map.
 - d. The Historical Overview* of your era if your teacher assigns it. It can be accessed by going to “Learning Tools.”

Group Item:	Era Map:
Question:	Answer deduced from what information?
Are tea drinking and its related accoutrements being spread primarily through migration of peoples, trade, or conquest? Explain.	
Are there any new patterns of production (of tea, sugar, cobalt, etc.) being introduced during this era?	
Does the item reflect cultural exchange? If so between or among what societies? What is the evidence?	
Who is dinking tea at this time? In what countries does it remain a luxury? Where has it become a “necessity”?	
Who is profiting at this time from the increasing globalization of tea-drinking?	
Is tea at this time a global commodity or not? Explain your reasons.	
Based on the Historical Overview* of your era, how does your item reflect ongoing trends during this era on the Indian Ocean?	

*For advanced students.

2. Ask each group to create an oral presentation for the whole class drawing on information from all three of their graphic organizers. In this presentation students should:
 - Answer the question: *What does the commodification of tea (and tea-dinking accoutrements) during their era reflect about global trends on the Indian Ocean?*
 - Give supporting evidence for their answer.
 - Post a small image(s) of their item on a world map posted in front of the class.
 - Physically trace on the map the appropriate trading routes and/or flow of cross-cultural influences they learned about.

Part III: Whole Group Discussion

Post a large world map in the classroom. Call up student groups in the order of the era they explored, from the Classical Era through to Twentieth Century and Globalization.

What generalizations can the class make, based on the evidence provided by all ten groups? To help students synthesize what they have learned, pose the following questions:

- In which of the five eras did the habit of drinking tea (and its necessary accoutrements) spread mainly through migration, trade, or conquest? What trends do students notice?
- Europeans could never grow tea (or sugar) in their own habitat, but over time they were able to manufacture their own chinaware for teacups and teapots. What implications did this have for the balance of trade in the Indian Ocean?
- In any given society, what had to happen before tea could be categorized as a necessity rather than a luxury? How did advances in transportation, sale, manufacture and communications play a role in these changes?

Optional: To follow through on this question, ask students to research items like the following found on the Indian Ocean in World History Website:

- Classical Era: Ancient Fishing Crafts, Kamal Navigation Tool
- Medieval Era: Arab Dhow, Astrolabe, Chinese Junk, Lateen Sail, Magnetic Compass, Paper, Stern Rudder for Steering Ships, Longitude and Latitude
- First Global Era: Cannon Bearing Ships, Caravel, Chronometer, Sextant, World Maps 1459-1724
- Industrial and Imperial Era: Clipper Ship Grace of 1866, Gatling Gun, Indo-European Telegraph Line of 1870, Steamship HEIC Nemesis
- 20th Century and Modern Era: Container Ships, Petroleum, Aircraft Carriers

Part IV: Extension Activities

- Tea drinking originated in China from where it spread both east and west. Research the rituals surrounding the consumption of tea in Japan and the serving of “high tea” in Great Britain. Compare what these different rituals reflect about gender roles, social status, and the use of leisure time. What properties of tea are emphasized in each ritual? With a classmate, stage each of the two tea-consuming rituals for the

class. How are they different and similar? What do they reflect about cultural exchange?

- Make an advertisement for an imaginary tea company that was founded before 1860 C.E. and still exists today. Create a title for the company, a seal, a list of teas and tea accoutrements that it markets. Also imagine the founder of the company. How did the founder get started in the business, and how did the business grow? Draw on information that you learned while researching the history of tea using the Indian Ocean in World History Website. (For examples of such companies that still exist today find out about the French company Mariage Frères [accent over the “e”], Twinings Tea of Britain, or Kumsi Tea of Russia.) Now create a large poster for your tea company in which you convey your company’s long history of trade in the Indian Ocean, and its ability to provide its customers with tea from around the world.
- Research and write an essay about the effect of the tea trade on the Boston Tea Party (1773) in Britain and America, or the Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860) in Britain and China. How did a desire for profit and control of the tea market play a role in each of these conflicts?
- Write an essay in which you compare the history of the tea trade in the Indian Ocean to the production, trade and sale of sugar cane via trade on the Atlantic Ocean. What are the geographical parameters in which each plant thrives (climate, rainfall, soil)? What kind of labor is necessary to harvest each type of plant? What mechanical processes are necessary before each is consumable? How did Europeans guarantee that they would have a source of tea and sugar, even though they could grow neither? What was the cost to native populations and those transported and/or enslaved to grow and process tea and sugar?
- India was Britain’s main source of tea, as well as other natural resources. What methods did Britain use to subjugate India in pursuit of these resources? How did Britain justify her rule? Write an essay based on information accessed from the Industrial and Imperial Era map for these items:
 - Painting of the Battle of Plassey 1754.
 - Portrait of EIC official by Dip Chand ca. 1760
 - Royal Decree Shah Abbas to the English
 - Bullet casings and the Sepoy Mutiny 1857
 - Indo-European Telegraph Line
 - Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India
 - Khaki Army Uniforms
 - Gurkha Officer Maharaja Jung Bahdar Rana
 - Tipu Sultan
 - Steam Power