The Author

Dr D.K. Taknet is a well known business historian. He has undertaken many analytical research studies and been awarded scholarships and fellowships by several premier institutions. The author of a number of books which have been widely reviewed and excerpts from them serialized in sundry daily newspapers, Dr Taknet has in addition contributed extensively to the national and international print media.

Widely travelled, Dr Taknet has visited Europe, France, USA, Canada, the CIS countries, and the Far East, and has participated in several international seminars and conferences. He is also associated with several distinguished professional and social organizations, and is currently working on a post-doctoral research project on Indian business history. He can be reached through e-mail at dk_taknet@hotmail.com.

Some opinions

The history of the Indian tea industry is a glorious record of continuous development of a century old industry which became a valuable national asset ... the industry has also played a significant role in the socio–economic development of the tea-growing areas.

YASHWANT SINHA, *finance minister, Government of India, New Delhi*

This well produced and documented book provides valuable information on various interesting facets of the Indian tea industry.

K.C. PANT, *deputy chairman, Planning Commission, New Delhi*

It is a well researched and illustrated book on our tea industry.... The book fills in many blanks in earlier studies on the industry.

KHUSHWANT SINGH, *noted writer and journalist*

It is undoubtedly a landmark research study which provides an absorbing account of the growth and contribution of the tea industry over a century.... Needless to say, the points brought out are worthy of consideration, particularly those relating to the socio–economic development of the country.

ABID HUSSAIN, *former ambassador to the USA and secretary, commerce, Government of India, New Delhi*

The focus on the unsung heroes of the industry, the socially and economically deprived workers, adds a refreshingly new dimension to the study ... Williamson Magor's innovations, scientific agricultural practices, and multi-dimensional developmental schemes are valuable and inspiring.

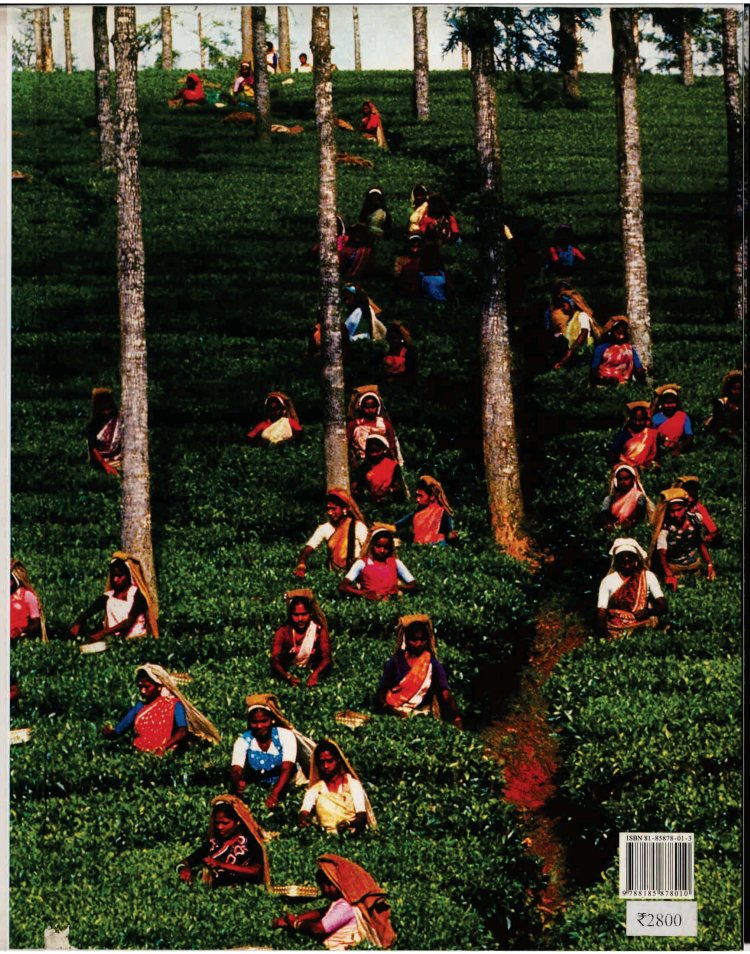
R.A. MASHELKAR, *director general, CSIR & secretary, Department of Scientific & Industrial Research, Government of India, New Delhi*

This pictorial book is thoroughly researched and highly informative, shedding new light on the wide-ranging welfare activities of the industry simply but lucidly. We need more such studies on the corporate world to highlight its socio–economic role in the development of the country.

CHIRAYU R. AMIN, *former president, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, New Delhi*

It's a very well-researched and enlightened scholarly work. Detailed analytical appraisal makes it a unique business history as well.

Prof. M.L. SONDHI, *former chairman, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi*



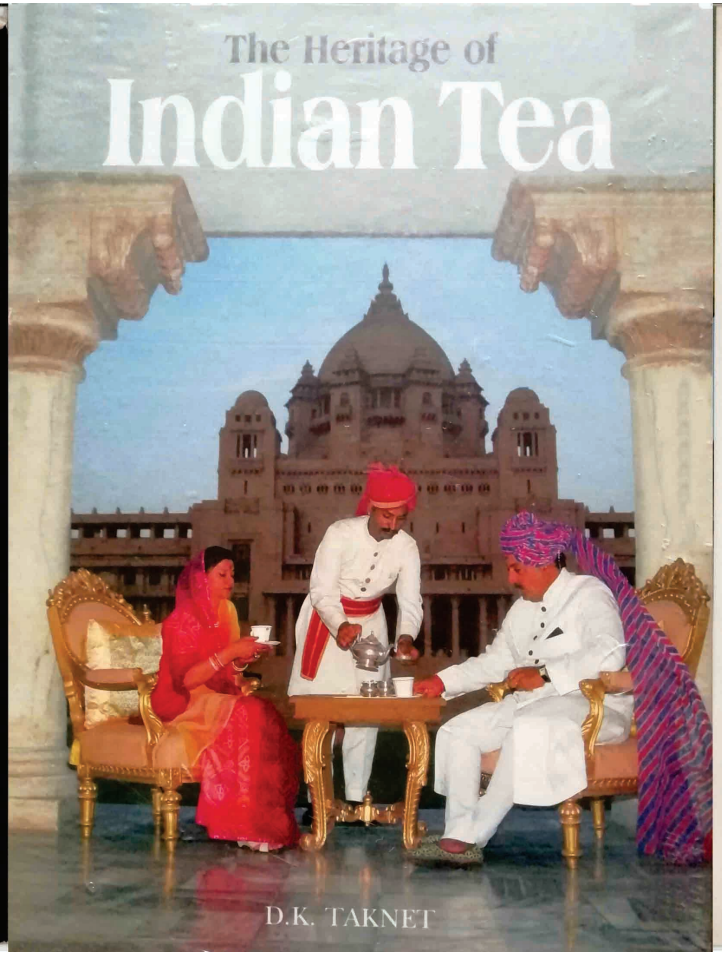
ISBN 81-85878-01-3

₹2800

The Heritage of Indian Tea

D.K. TAKNET

IIME



The Heritage of Indian Tea

D.K. TAKNET

Tea has found a permanent place in the lives and hearts of diverse peoples the world over, and spread cheer and camaraderie for over 4500 years. Poets and philosophers have lavished praise on it, and perhaps no other beverage has been the object of such ritual and ceremony across the planet. Today, over 3 bn cups of tea are consumed every day across the globe, making it the most popular and cheapest drink in the world after water. Its fragrance, flavour, and gentle aroma generate a sense of pleasure, well being, and fellowship across the world, around the clock.

India is the largest producer and consumer of tea in the world. Since the mid-nineteenth century, tea has been one of the largest foreign exchange earners and a major source of state and central taxes. Eco-friendly, it is also a caring industry that generates income and livelihood for nearly 20 m. people in the country.

The Heritage of Indian Tea provides a perspective of the history of the tea industry in India, the role tea plays in our lives and that of our country, and the wide-ranging developmental initiatives that have for decades been undertaken by the Indian tea industry.

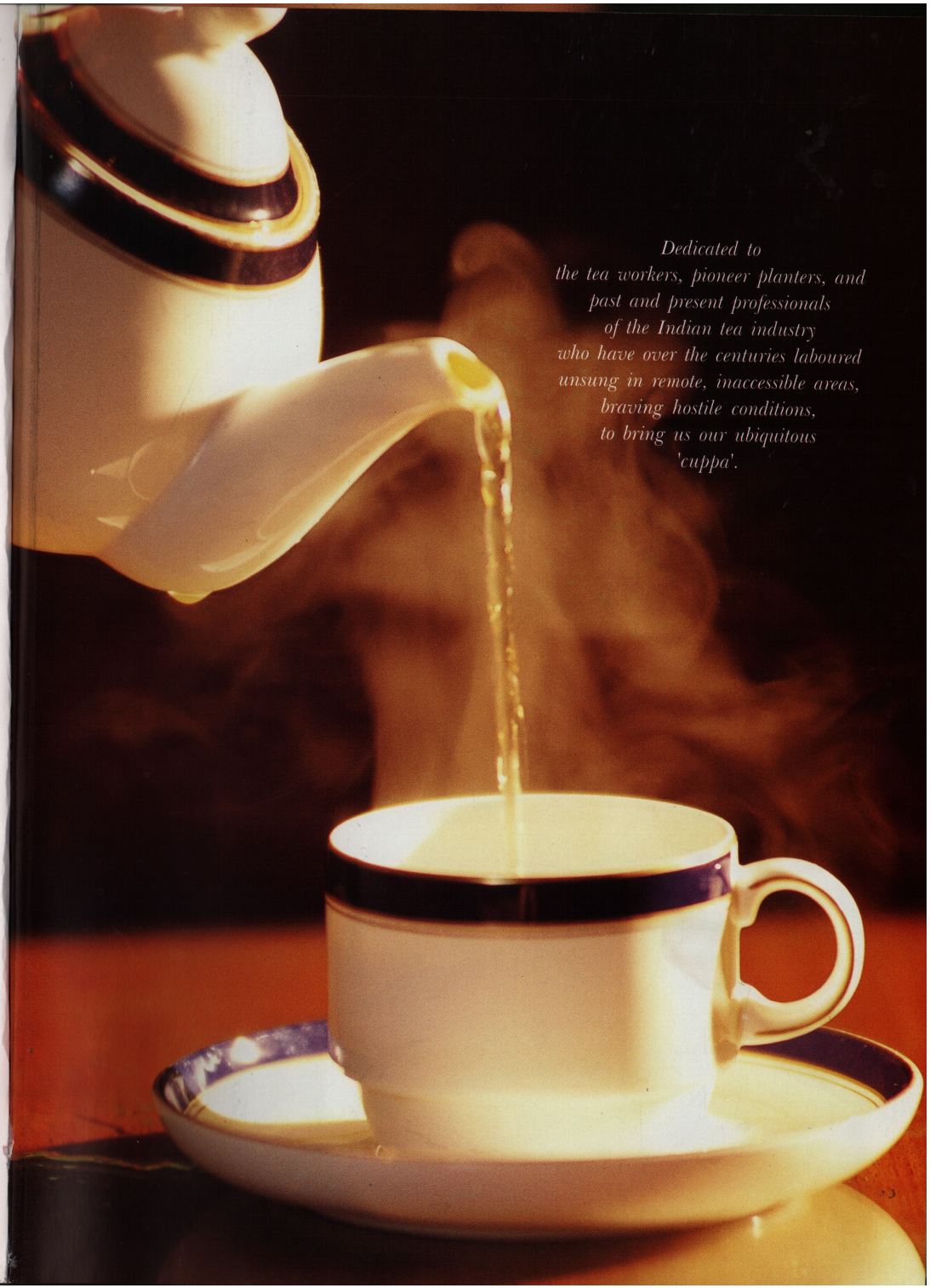
This is a story that needs to be told because few are acquainted with the fascinating process through which the tea that enters their markets and homes passes, and how it beneficially impacts the lives of millions of hitherto marginalized individuals.

A well-researched and carefully documented book, it analyses the problems that are threatening to bring the Indian tea industry to its knees and hampering its ability to invest, modernize, grow, and remain competitive in world markets. It raises important questions that deserve serious attention and, above all, decisive action. The author presents a balanced, scholarly, and comprehensive picture of the industry as a whole bringing many hitherto unexplored facets to light that will interest tea professionals and tea enthusiasts alike.

ISBN 81-85878-01-3

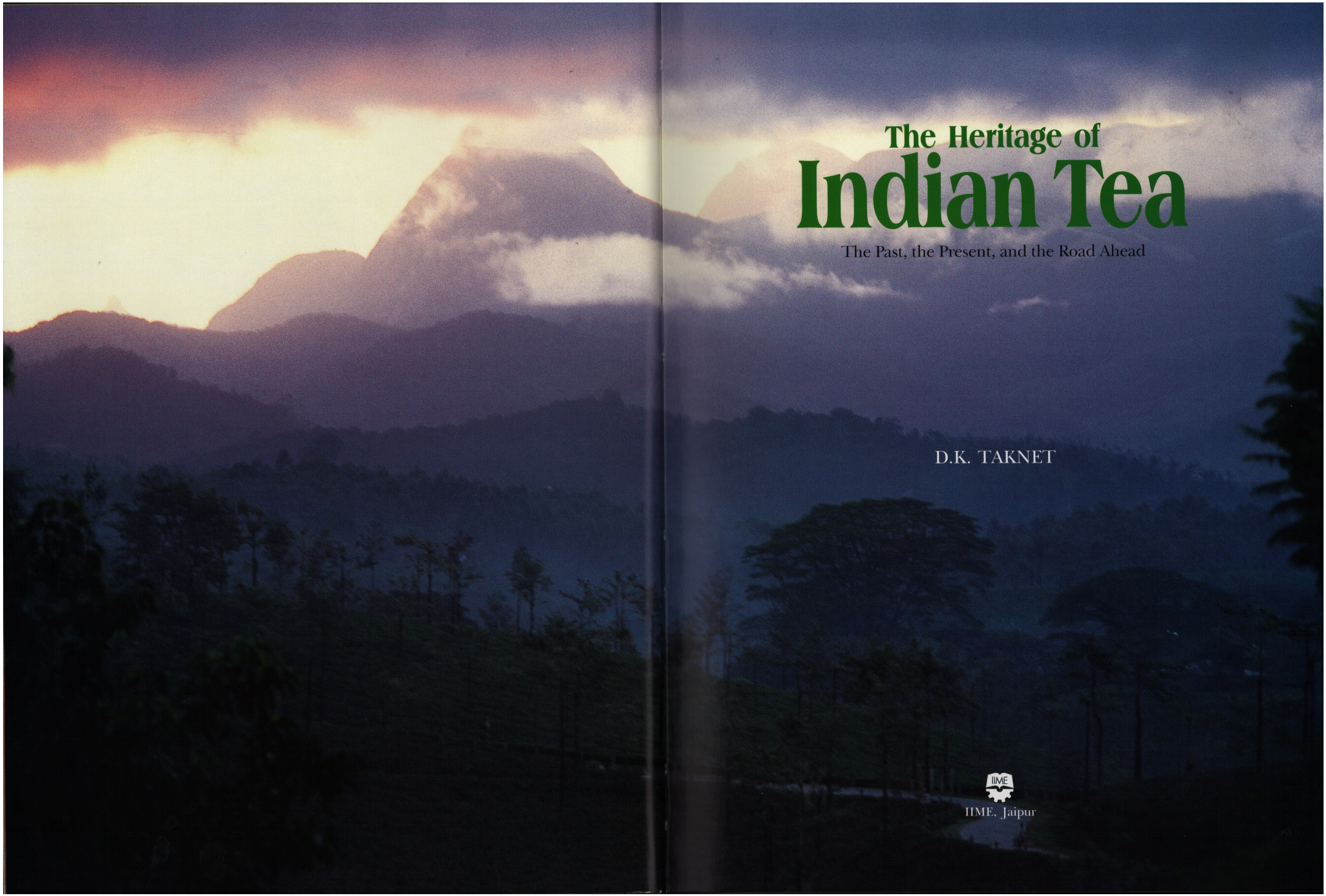
Jacket: (front) Their highnesses Gaj Singh and Hemlata Rajya of Jodhpur partaking of evening tea in regal splendour against the awe-inspiring backdrop of Umaid Bhavan Palace, Jodhpur; *(back)* Tea workers in a south Indian plantation.





Dedicated to
the tea workers, pioneer planters, and
past and present professionals
of the Indian tea industry
who have over the centuries laboured
unsung in remote, inaccessible areas,
braving hostile conditions,
to bring us our ubiquitous
'cuppa'.


The Heritage of
Indian Tea



The Heritage of Indian Tea

The Past, the Present, and the Road Ahead

D.K. TAKNET

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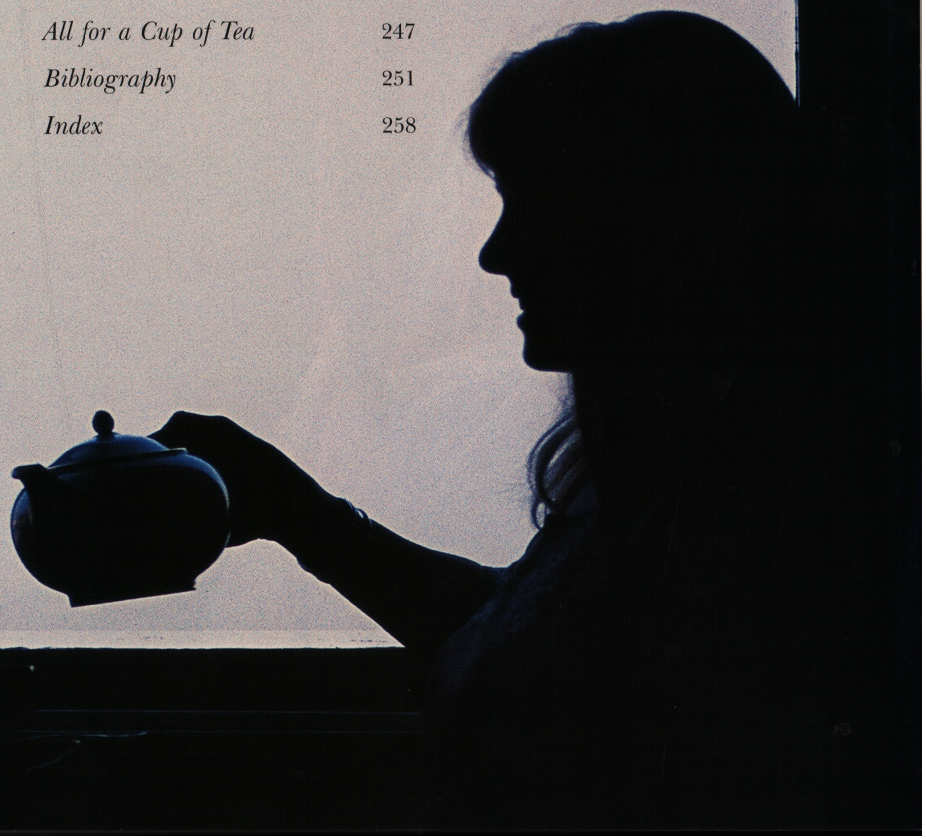
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Foreword

India is the largest producer of tea in the world and among the world's largest exporters. Few people, however, realize the crucial role of tea in the Indian economy. The industry is one of the largest and most enlightened employers in the country, particularly of women and the underprivileged in less developed areas. Few are aware of the enormous scale, depth, and breadth of the developmental role the tea industry has played wherever tea is grown in India, be it in the once inhospitable North-East or the Nilgiris in the South.

The Indian tea industry has long needed a publication to document its traditions and contribution, which are more than a century old. Dr D.K. Taknet's book is a well-researched and insightful effort at providing a holistic perspective of the industry. This research study is extremely interesting because of its style and rare pictures. In addition to a brief survey of the history of Indian tea and vignettes of life on the tea estate, it is concerned, in particular, with the developmental role the Indian tea industry has played.

Overall, the work provides a well-rounded picture of the Indian tea industry: how it came into being, and what it means to India, the Indian economy, and the Indian people. Significant among the questions it raises are what the future holds, and whether the industry will successfully face the challenges ahead and retain its pre-eminent position in the world. The reader will, I am confident, get considerable value from the book's account of the manner in which the Indian tea industry has preserved its values and its rich heritage.

Ratan N. Tata
Chairman
Tata Industries Ltd

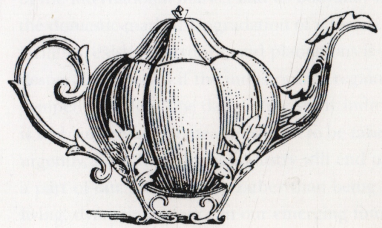
Mumbai
8 May 2002



Top: Tea service sahib style!

Facing page : Intense concentration! A tea worker contemplates a tea twig.

Following spread : An artist's impression of a flowering twig of tea.





Preface

As a nation we can be justifiably proud of the notable achievements of the Indian tea industry. Its significance is immense and its impact multidimensional. The industry has, over the years, been making continuing and conscious efforts to play a constructive social role commensurate with its position as a major player in the Indian economy.

Once a British-dominated industry, it began to gradually change hands after 1947 when doyens of the Indian business community took over its reins and made its functioning transparent and well organized. This book attempts to provide readers with an insight into the history of the Indian tea industry, its major role in the Indian economy, global presence, and its conscious commitment to welfare activities for the benefit of people living in and around the tea estates.

The subject is vast simply because the tea industry is spread over a huge geographical area. Given the range and scope of the welfare programmes undertaken by the industry, it has not been possible to allude to all that the industry has done for the people of tea-growing areas and their respective states. What has been possible, however, is to demonstrate that in tea there is an industry of which we can all be legitimately proud.

The book also brings to the reader a profile of the Williamson Magor group which has not restricted its business philosophy merely to production and profit. Rather, it has actively associated itself with improving the lives of its employees and the wider public, and indeed other tea estates, by consciously allocating resources, skills, and talent with the aim of spreading prosperity. It is deeply committed to the overall development of tea and to see its institutions grow and prosper for the betterment of the industry.

However, notwithstanding its distinctive identity, it represents the values and culture of the tea industry as a whole. What is found in Williamson Magor in a heightened form is also shared by other leading tea companies with some exceptions, ironically, among others, those estates controlled and run by state governments.

The study outlines the dangers lurking on the horizon, and the many challenges facing the Indian tea industry. The rise of militancy in the north-east and the ongoing financial crisis are the twin dangers that are posing a serious threat to its very existence. It is ironical that an industry whose role in the socio–economic development of the country has been much larger than that of any other, is taxed much more than those producing other commodities with much less to show in terms of social awareness.

For a number of years the industry has been unable to generate sufficient resources to plough back into the gardens, undertake long-term developmental investment, and meet the challenges posed by new competitors and new technologies or, for that matter, develop dynamic and new marketing strategies. In consequence, slowly but inexorably, Indian tea is losing ground in the international market and its buoyancy in the domestic market. Upgradation of research facilities, existing factories, and plantations is desperately needed if the industry is to regain its competitive edge. The danger, the study indicates, is real, and remedial measures need to be taken urgently, for otherwise the industry will end up as a part of our glorious past rather than being a living, dynamic presence in our emerging future.

The world of tea with its unique aroma and graceful ethos was completely new and fascinating for me. The colourful history of Indian tea and its wonderful people with their variegated activities is remarkable and endlessly engrossing. To be able to speak in the tea idiom in the course of conducting interviews during the past four years, I had to travel over 400,000 km, a distance equal to travelling nearly five times around the world. I spent 400 days on the road on my way to interviewing over 2000 people directly or indirectly associated with tea, ranging from chairmen emeritus in lofty company boardrooms to the lowly tea pluckers on far-flung tea estates in Assam and south India where tea starts its journey to the world's teacups.

People from diverse backgrounds, with the common thread of tea running through their lives, poured out their hearts. From the old guard and the brown sahibs to today's young and professional tea estate managers, everybody had fascinating tea stories to tell, replete with previously unsuspected facts, anecdotes, opinions, and vignettes, providing dramatic insights into the tea industry. I have benefited immensely from the tea people who have inspired, guided, and taught me. I would like to thank them as they have played an integral role in advancing my understanding and research.

In order to write this book I had, in addition, to pore over approximately 10,000 sheets of interview transcripts and notes from field visits and personal records, and letters running to over 12,000 pages, together with other data including official records, reports, journals, periodicals, company balance sheets, annual reports, previous publications from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries by planters, tea experts, corporate executives, tea companies, associations, and the like. It was a truly mammoth task to distil the essence from my researches to fit into the limited space available to me. All in all, it has been personally a very enriching trip down the tea lane.

This study was undertaken on behalf of and supported by the University Grants Commission, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi. I would like to express a special word of thanks for all the support extended by the Commission.

Sincere thanks are also due to Tarun Gogoi, chief minister of Assam, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, the former chief minister of Assam, and Gunin Hazarika, the former minister of industries, and the officers of the Assam government, P.K. Bora, Jatin Hazarika, H.N. Das, P.R. Doley, and S.S. Hojai, for providing valuable information. I am grateful to Priyaranjan Das Munshi, Paban Singh Ghatowar, and M.C. Khandiat, and also to Aveek Sarkar, Harsh Goenka, Raghu Mody, A. Mazumdar, and A.N. Haksar for interacting and frankly exchanging their views with me.

I am indebted to the Williamson Magor group and its chairman, B.M. Khaitan, and his wife Shanti Khaitan, for their support. I am grateful to their sons Deepak, Aditya, and other executives of the group who spared so much of their valuable time to provide insights into the Williamson Magor saga and the tea industry as a whole.

My warm thanks to the tea people of various tea companies and associations for providing information on various aspects of the industry, although one aspect of the industry on which inadequate data is available is the welfare projects of the tea gardens. Interaction with them proved to be very illuminating. Among them are R.K. Krishna Kumar, R.S. Jhawar, S.M. Kidwai, Homi R. Khusrokhan, P. Siganporia, P.G. Sandys-Lumsdaine, J.M. Trinick, the late Mumtaz Ahmad, Bharat Bajoria, H.P. Barooah, Mahadeo Jalan, G.D. Kothari, C.K. Dhanuka, K.S. David, Ashok Lohia, D. Atal, N.K. Kejriwal, M.D. Kanoi, Y.K. Daga, D.P. Bagrodia, K.K. Saharia, M.L. Jalan, Krishan Katyal, Om Kaul, Dushyant Singh, and S.N. Singh.

The active support of I.L. Lewis, J. Simrany, Nazeeb Arif, D. Chakrabarti, R. Das, P.K. Bhattacharjee, Robin Borthakur, S.P. Verma, D. Bora, Bamin Dutta, Biresh Paul, Gita Narrayani, Chandan Mukherjee, S.P. Dua, S.L. Sharma, R.K. Chandak was of immense help in the completion of this study and has been much appreciated. I wish to acknowledge leading auctioneers like Krishan Katyal, Om Kaul, V. Dudeja, and others for their assistance, and I am specially indebted to planters and others who provided such a wealth of information. I must also record my warm appreciation of the efficient and ungrudging support of Om Arora, Asha Kiran, C.L. Kataria, Priya Sinha, S. Mahadevan, Siddharth Mukherjee, Anjana Chatterjee, Caroline McDermott, Aloka Sen, Subhash Garg, Harekrishna Das, Jagdish Joshi, Leeladhar Sharma, Mahesh Joshi, Akhilesh, Naveen Mathur, Sushil Pasricha, and Milan Bhattacharya for their untiring efforts and timely feedback.

My thanks to Adil Tyabji not only for editing the book and also providing other constructive suggestions. I warmly acknowledge the assistance of Veena Baswani, A.L. Roongta, Inder Sawhney, Umesh Anand, Pramesh Ratnakar, Neeraj Mehrotra, and Tapas Das with the manuscript.

I am grateful to Rajesh who slaved over my PC for the past four years at all hours, ensuring that the thousands of words and figures marched in the desired order and sequence. He conjured up endless printouts without a trace of irritation. I salute his sincere endeavours.

My special thanks to Gopi Gajwani, an artist of eminence, who coordinated the design of this book with a talented team. I am specially indebted to G.P. Todi, chairman and managing director, Ajanta Offset, New Delhi for his invaluable personal and sustained efforts to achieve the highest quality printing standards.

Finally, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my wife Sujata who has been a constant source of strength and encouragement as co-traveller, interviewer, and keen observer. She has been a paragon of patience and dedication, helping in creative development and refining the ideas, concepts, and framework, and scrupulously examining the manuscript to offer valuable critical suggestions. The love and enthusiasm of my son Devashish has always inspired and rejuvenated me. He put up with many long and lonely evenings to enable me to complete this study. They are truly the wind beneath my wings, and I could never have flown without them.

I sincerely hope this book will help in generating a new broad-based understanding and appreciation of the Indian tea industry's proactive developmental role, its triumphs and perils, and at the same time, it will interest all those associated with tea who have the well-being of the industry close at heart.

New Delhi
May 2002

D.K. TAKNET



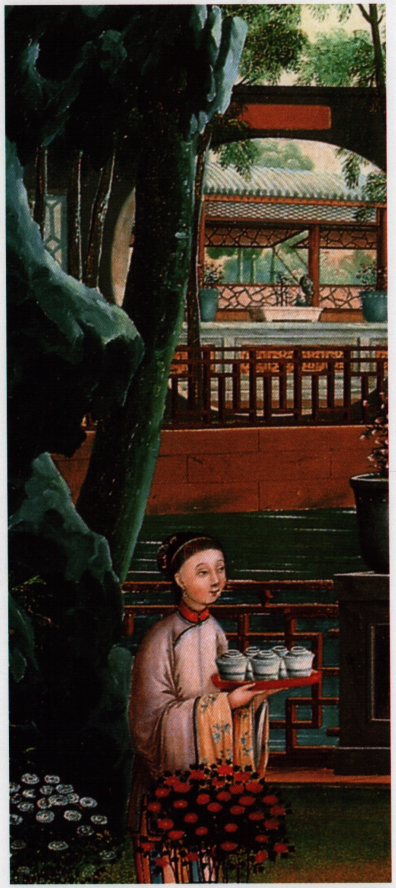
CHAPTER 1

The Pioneering Years









Top left: Utamaro, Courtesan Okita of Naniwa-ya Tea-house. *Top right:* A nineteenth-century painting of a servant carrying tea. *Left below:* Coolies transporting tea to the staging post at Palumpore (c. 1883).

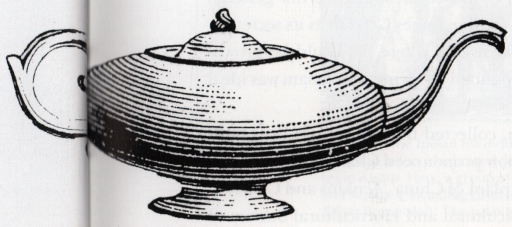
Preceding spread: Tea has been drunk longest in China and Japan where it has played an important role in social life: processing small twisted tea in China (c. 1840). *Inset:* Lu Yu, the author of *Ch'a Ching*.

Tea has brought cheer to people across the world for over 4500 years. The ancient Chinese first drank it for its medicinal value, and later, from the third century onwards, as a refreshing beverage. Japan was the only other country where the growing and drinking of tea took early root, the Japanese raising tea-drinking to a fine art in their tea ceremonies. The popularity of tea spread to other parts of the world after the seventeenth century.

In England, tea received royal patronage when King Charles II married the Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza, who was an inveterate tea-drinker. Britain was engaged in a war with France between 1756 and 1763, and obliged to levy several taxes to maintain its standing army in America. Following protests by the colonists, the British government withdrew all the taxes except that on tea. This did not appease the colonists, who boarded a ship in Boston harbour loaded with chests of tea, and threw them overboard into the sea as a protest to proclaim that there could be no taxation without representation in the British parliament. This event was described then and ever after as the Boston Tea Party.

The Boston Tea Party fracas led to the American Revolution and the declaration of American Independence in 1773. Thus it was that tea played a key role in altering the course of history! Through the centuries, tea has also symbolized warmth, friendship, mutual respect, and caring. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in the eighteenth century, 'There is a great deal of poetry and fine sentiments in a chest of tea'.

Today tea is the reigning beverage in over 45 countries and is consumed in over 115 countries around the globe. The Irish are the world's largest consumers, each person on an average consuming eight cups a day. However, the largest producer and overall the greatest consumer is India, where, at any time and anywhere, *chai* is an essential part of daily life.

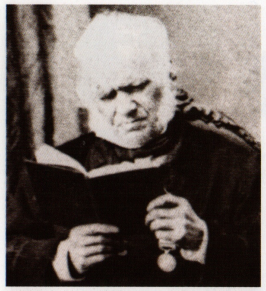








Top: Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza who introduced the English court to the social etiquette of tea drinking. *Middle:* The Boston Tea Party. *Below:* Russian tea drinkers with a samovar.





Top: Charles Alexander Bruce, the Father of Indian tea. *Below:* Darjeeling planter, mid-1860s.

Pioneering Initiatives

The year was 1823. Robert Bruce, a Scottish trader and explorer, visited Rangpur, the Ahom capital in Upper Assam. He had journeyed many times to these frontiers, but this particular foray had a very special purpose. He planned to meet Bessa Gaum, the chief of the Singhpo, one of the principal indigenous tribes of the Indian north-east, in connection with tea.

Bruce had learnt from a native nobleman, Maniram Datta Barua, that the Singhpo grew a variety of tea unknown to the rest of the world. If all that he had wanted was samples of the plants and seeds, he could have obtained them from just about any tribal contact. Bruce, however, wanted much more: the friendship of the Singhpo tribe and long-term access to the areas where the tea grew. If this was good tea, Assam could rival China, and Bruce sensed that he was on the threshold of something really big.

His meeting with the Singhpo chief inspired further hope. The brew from the plant did very closely resemble tea, and Bruce was permitted to carry away plants and seeds. This magnanimous gesture by the tribe opened Assam's doors to an industry that would sustain it for generations to come. Long after that happened—indeed, to this day—growing tea is the mainstay of Assam's economy. Bruce was an adventurous pioneer who sensed that history could be made, though he had no inkling of the remarkable consequences his initiative would have. Other Europeans followed him. He died in 1824 soon after his meeting with the Singhpo chief.

His younger brother, Charles Alexander Bruce, collected the tea plants and despatched them to David Scott, the governor-general's agent in Assam. The plants were then sent to Dr N. Wallich, superintendent of the Calcutta Botanical Garden, who declared they were not genuine tea! The indigenous Assam tea plant had to wait for another decade for recognition.

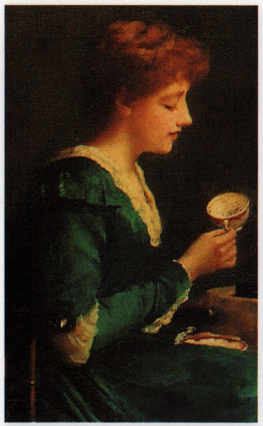
In 1833 the East India Company's monopoly of the Chinese trade came to an end. The British government decided to initiate tea-planting in India on a war footing. On 1 February 1834, Lord Bentinck, as governor general, set up the historic Tea Committee with George James Gordon as its secretary. The Tea Committee sent out a circular asking where tea could be grown. Captain F. Jenkins, based in Assam, responded by saying that Assam was ideal for tea cultivation.

His assistant, Lieutenant Charlton, collected the indigenous tea plants and sent them to Calcutta. Dr Wallich now pronounced Charlton's samples to be genuine tea, 'not different from the plant of China'. Jenkins and Charlton were awarded gold medals by the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of





Top: Today the Indian tea industry owes much to the adventurous spirit of the Scottish, British, and Indian pioneers who braved dense jungles, disease-bearing insects, and prowling beasts of prey to grow tea in Assam. Here, a group of pioneers bivouac in a forest with their boxes of multifarious equipment and supplies, including rifles to protect themselves from the depredations of wild animals.
Below: Borne aloft! The palanquin was frequently used by planters to travel in the foothills.





Top left and below right: The age-old and graceful custom of afternoon tea, generally served at five o'clock, remains an ideal way of entertaining friends and acquaintances. Henry James wrote, 'There are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea.' *Below left:* Drawing of a kettle by Vincent van Gogh.

Bengal while Charles Alexander Bruce was unceremoniously ignored.

In 1835, the Tea Committee appointed a Scientific Commission to select appropriate sites for planting tea, and Assam was again found to be the most suitable. The committee, however, decided that the Chinese plant and not the 'degraded Assam plant' should be used. The Tea Committee's secretary, Gordon, returned from a trip to China armed with tea seeds which were raised in nurseries in Calcutta. Young bushes raised in these nurseries were sent to Charles Alexander Bruce. He dutifully started several plantations with them in Chubwa. The Chinese plants proved to be a terrible disaster because they cross-pollinated with the native plant and produced a hybrid that would torment planters for many years to come.



The Breakthrough

Bruce did not give up. He set up a nursery at Sadiya consisting entirely of native bushes, and these survived. With the help of Chinese workmen, whom Gordon had sent to Assam, he managed to quietly despatch a small sample of manufactured tea grown from the local Assamese plant to the Tea Committee in 1836. The first samples were approved by the viceroy, Lord Auckland. Experts pronounced their verdict: it was of good quality.

In 1837, Bruce despatched another consignment of 46 chests of tea made entirely from the leaves of the Assamese bush to the Tea Committee. After removing a portion that had spoilt in transit, 350 pounds in eight chests were sent to the London auctions on 8 May 1838. This historic consignment was auctioned in London on 10 January 1839 and generated great excitement and patriotic fervour. Bruce had shown the way!

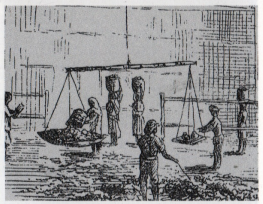
The Assam Company

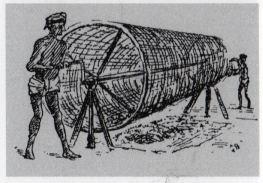
The East India Company was the first to develop plantations in north-east India. In 1839, the Bengal Tea Association was set up in Calcutta. Private enterprise needed no further incentive and stepped into the nascent industry. In 1839, the first company for growing and making tea in India, Assam Company, was set up. Shares worth 500,000 pounds were floated, and such was the euphoria generated that they were immediately snapped up. In 1840, the government handed over almost all its tea holding to the company, and the latter, in addition, leased large tracts of land under the Assam Wasteland Rules of 1838.

From the outset the company was bedevilled by shortage of labour and technical expertise. Despite the poor performance of the Chinese plant, Assam Company still grew it and employed Chinese methods of cultivation and manufacture. The expenses were exorbitant and the actual production insignificant. The company slipped into the red, and by 1843 was facing bankruptcy and liquidation. A saviour, in the form of Henry Burking Young from Calcutta, revived it in 1847, and Stephen Mornay took charge in Assam. Together they improved cultivation, streamlined the company's finances, and within five years they were a success story.

In May 1855, indigenous tea bushes were first discovered in Cachar district of Assam. The very next year proprietary gardens were established there. Tea cultivation spread to Tripura, Sylhet, and Chittagong. Jorehaut Tea Company followed in the footsteps of Assam Company and was incorporated on 29 June 1859. By 1859 there were nearly 50 tea gardens in Assam. Seeds and saplings

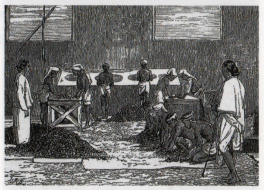






Top: A sketch of Ging Tea Garden, Darjeeling. *Middle:* Weighing the tea leaves for payment of tea workers. *Below:* A country-made revolving sieve to separate the finer tea leaves.







Top: Withering house. *Middle:* The interior of a tea-house. *Below:* The traditional method of rolling the leaf by hand.

were also planted in Kumaon, Dehra Dun, Kangra, Kullu, and Garhwal on an experimental basis.

By 1862, the tea industry in Assam comprised 160 gardens owned by 57 private and five public companies. In 1868 the government appointed a commission to enquire into all aspects of the industry, and expressed the view that it was basically sound. The total amount of capital invested in the industry increased from less than £ 1 m. in 1872 to £ 14 m. within three decades. In 1881, the Indian Tea Association was founded to represent north Indian planters, and in 1893 the United Planters' Association of Southern India was set up to represent those in the south.

Tea Travels

All was not, however, lost for the Chinese tea bush. It was found suitable for Darjeeling. In 1841, Dr A. Campbell brought Chinese tea seeds from Kumaon and planted them in his garden in Darjeeling town. Commercial cultivation began around 1852–3. By 1874, there were 113 tea gardens in Darjeeling district alone. This inspired planters to try out tea cultivation in the Terai region. James White set up the first Terai plantation called Champta in 1862. Planting was then extended to the Dooars, but the Assamese tea bush proved more suited to this region. Gazeldubi was the first Dooars garden, and by 1876 the area boasted 13 plantations, which in 1877 led the British to set up the Dooars Tea Planters' Association.

In the south, the pioneers cleared the forests to grow crops, and following much experimentation, finally settled on tea. In the process they faced much hardship, combating disease, the depredations of wild animals, and a chronic shortage of capital. They were, however, enterprising and determined men who shrugged off these adversities and persevered. James Finlay & Co. was the first to attempt tea cultivation in the high ranges of Kerala. The hills of Kerala, especially Munnar, are now home to the highest teas grown in the world. The specific geographical conditions and the height of the plantations make the tea unique. Tea was planted over the graveyard of coffee. Miles and miles of coffee plantations had been infested with 'leaf rust'. Mann was the first planter to manufacture Nilgiri teas. He started a tea plantation near Coonoor in 1854, which is now known as Coonoor Tea Estate. Around this time, another planter, Rae, set up Dunsandle Estate near Kulhatty. Following their success, other planters in the Nilgiris began to follow suit in 1859.

The Nilgiris or the Blue Mountains, popularly known as the 'Queen of the Hills', are situated at the tri-junction of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala.







Top: A view of a south Darjeeling town with wild tea bushes. Most of the tea gardens are situated slightly below the town, which itself is at 7,400 ft.
Below left: The pioneer planters and tea workers.
Below right: The pioneers who met the Viceroy in Bangalore in November 1895.