

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

17–19 September 2026

Tea Cultivation in 19th-Century India and Beyond

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Empire, Science, Labor, and Landscape



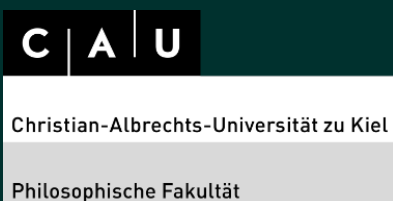
This workshop seeks to initiate an interdisciplinary debate on the beginnings of tea cultivation in India, focusing on early experiments during the first half of the nineteenth century and beyond. Bringing together scholars of botany, social and science history, travel, and knowledge exchange, it will examine past and recent approaches to plant transfer, adaptation, cultivation, and trade in colonial and local contexts. Through presentations and discussion, the workshop will explore the entangled histories of empire, botany, ecology, and human agency, while reflecting on the legacies of colonial tea production in a globalized world.



Venue:

Internationales Begegnungszentrum
der Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiellinie 5,
24105 Kiel

Registration via Email:
gollasch@histosem.uni-kiel.de or
liu@histosem.uni-kiel.de



For the program, see
<https://www.indiateahistory.histsem.uni-kiel.de/de/ankuendigungen-und-termine/international-workshop-the-beginnings-of-tea-cultivation-in-india> or
scan here:



Thursday, 17th of September 2026

14:00–14:30 Arrival & Registration

14:30–14:45 Welcome Note & Introduction

Panel I: Plant collecting and botanical networks

14:45–15:15 Thomas Ruhland (Halle): Botany and Pietist Missions in India from the 18th to the Mid-19th Century

15:15–15:45 Tobias Delfs (Berlin): German Naturalists and the British Empire: Towards a Typology

15:45–16:15 Discussion

16:15–16:45 Tea/Coffee Break

16:45–17:15 Henry Noltie (Edinburgh)/Mark Watson (Edinburgh): Nathaniel Wallich's network of Collectors

17:15–17:45 Maria Will (Oldenburg): The botanical network of Carl Ludwig Blume (1796–1862)

17:45–18:15 Discussion

Panel II: Tea in a globalizing world

18:15–18:45 Leos Müller (Stockholm): The Swedish East India Company and trade in tea, 1731–1784

18:45–19:15 Jayeeta Sharma (Toronto): Leaves & Bricks. Borderland and mobile forms of tea

19:15–19:30 Discussion

19:30 Dinner

Friday, 18th of September 2026

Panel III: Assam

09:00–09:30 Isabel Liu (Kiel): Assam tea beyond a cup. A political history (1800–1850)

09:30–10:00 Lipokmar Dzuwichu (New Delhi): Empire and Tea: Travel, Knowledge and Connections on the Tea Frontier of British Assam

10:00–10:30 Discussion

10:30–11:00 Ute Kemmerling (Hagen): Cultivating Sickness: Tea Plantations as Pathological Spaces in colonial Assam

11:00–11:30 Bengt G. Karlsson (Stockholm), Tea in the “wild”: Indigenous Tea Agroecology in the Eastern Himalaya

11:30–12:00 Discussion

12:00–13:00 Lunch Break

Panel IV: Tea in the Western Himalayas and

South India

13:00–13:30 Benjamin Gollasch (Kiel): Collecting, Conquering, Cultivating: The origins of tea in the Western Himalayas, c. 1800–1860

13:30–14:00 Arik Moran (Haifa): Trade, Tea, and the Himalayan frontier: Kangra society and Empire, c. 1850–1900

14:00–14:30 Martin Krieger (Kiel): Early tea-enterprise in the Nilgiris

14:30–15:00 Discussion

15:00–15:30 Tea/Coffee Break

Panel V: Tea and beyond

15:30–16:00 Kim Sebastian Todzi (Hamburg): Plants on the Move: Cinchona, Empire and the Pharmaceutical Commodity Frontier

16:00–16:30 Celia Aceae (Edinburgh): Exploring crop wild relatives in the speciality Tea Industry

16:30–17:00 Aurora Prehn (London): Reading the tea leaves in, via, and at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

17:00–17:30 Discussion

17:30–18:00 Tea/Coffee Break

Panel VI: Poster presentation

18:00–18:30 Hendian Oritza Anugrah Nastiti (Oldenburg): Colonial official, german botanist, friend? Traces of Carl Ludwig Blume in Indonesia

18:30–19:00 Jeewaani Damsara Mohottige (Oldenburg): How can we decolonize herbaria? A literature review

19:00–19:45 Discussion and Final Remarks

19:45 Dinner (at one's own expense)

Saturday, 19th of September 2026

09:30 Train to Hamburg

11:00–13:00 Excursion and guided tour to the Hamburg Art Gallery (Kunsthalle Hamburg)

c. 14:00 End of Workshop