

The te form used in coastal-Chinese languages spread to Europe via the Dutch, who became the primary traders of tea between Europe and Asia in the 17th century. The main Dutch ports in east Asia were in Fujian and Taiwan, both places where people used the te pronunciation. The Dutch East India Company's expansive tea importation into Europe gave us the French thé, the German Tee, and the English tea.

????????????te????????????17????????????te????????????
????????????thé?????Tee?????tea?

Yet the Dutch were not the first to Asia. That honor belongs to the Portuguese. And the Portuguese traded not through Fujian but Macao, where chá is used. That's why Portugal is a pink dot in a sea of blue.

????????????chá????????????

A few languages have their own way of talking about tea. These languages are generally in places where tea grows naturally, which led locals to develop their own way to refer to it. In Burmese, for example, tea leaves are lakphak.

????????????lakphak?

