

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEA CULTIVATION ON THE TEA ROAD
(for example Georgia)**

Mamatova Mahfuza

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2984-7155

PhD of Karshi state University, Uzbekistan

maxfuzamamatova@gmail.com

Annotation

This article presents the history of the study of tea cultivation in Georgia, and examines these historical sources based on the reviews of various critical comparative sources. Also, various articles and monographs of O.Tatishvili, T.Sosesvili, B.Chkadua, Y.Stalinskii, Yersov, P.Gugushvili and K.Gabunii, who studied the history of tea cultivation in Georgia at the end of the 19th century, were analyzed.

Key words and phrases

The Tea Road, tea culture, tea industry, Georgia, technology, Chakva, botanic garden, Sukhumi, Zugdidi, Ozurgeti.

A comprehensive study of the issue of the introduction of the tea bush, the introduction of its culture and the development of the tea industry in general in Georgia is a very necessary and important matter. It was the subject of wide discussion and heated debate in the second half of the last century, especially in the last decade. This topic has retained its relevance to this day. The scientific study of the development of tea culture and tea production in the republic has recently unfolded with renewed vigor. Many scientists of various specialties take part in it, shedding more and more light on the historical course of development of this important branch of the national economy of Georgia.

Unfortunately, along with specialists in the history of the national economy, non-specialists, so to speak, "volunteer historians" are also taking on this task. These latter begin their work, no matter what branch of tea production (agrotechnics, technology, biochemistry, biology, etc.) it belongs to, necessarily from the history of its occurrence. There is nothing surprising in the fact that such "stories" are written, for the most part, by hearsay, without deep study and careful verification of historical facts.

"In Georgia", writes O.Tatishvili, "the tea plant was first brought in 1842 from the Nikitsky Botanical Garden and planted in the Sukhum Military Botanical Garden. In 1848, from the same Nikitsky garden, the tea importants brought and planted in the Ozurgeti state nursery, in the former Gurieli garden, and in Zugdidi, in the Dadiani garden" [Татишвили О. – P. 142]. The author, apparently, considers his "statement" to be such a well-known fact that he did not even find it necessary to refer to any source.

"They have known the tea plant in Russia since 1833, when the ordered tea seeds and seedlings were planted in the Nikitsky Botanical Garden (Crimea)... In 1848, tea bushes from the Crimea were transported to Sukhumi, Zugdidi and Ozurgeti, where they were well accepted... For experimental purposes, in 1872, several different forms (!) of a tea plant were planted", – T.Soselia writes [Соселия Т. – P. 8]. He not only does not refer to the source, but he did not even indicate where the tea plants were planted for experimental purposes in 1872.

New discoveries are presented by B. Chkadua. It turns out that they were planted in 1849-1950. in the Sukhum Botanical Garden, tea bushes died only in 1942, and in the city of Makharadze, the bushes planted in 1847 are still in good condition.

Everyone believed that the Salibaur tea state farm (the former estate of K.Popov) was founded in 1893, and Chakvinsky (the former specific estate) - in 1895. Turns out there was a "mistake"! According to B. Chkadua, "established in Saliba by the lesson of the tea state farm in 1843-1850. Tea bushes today are characterized by an abundant yield. Even older Chakvin tea bushes" [«Сакартвелос

экономисти», 1966, No 4]. Therefore, it must be assumed that the Chakva plantations were established earlier than the Salibaur ones. It is surprising that for almost 50 years no one noticed these plantations, and, most importantly, they were planted on lands that did not yet belong to the Russian state.

O. Tatishvili, T. Soselia or B. Chkadua are not specialists in tea production or its history. Therefore, it would be possible to ignore their statements. But one cannot ignore the fact that, unfortunately, tea growers, under the guise of the "history" of the tea industry, present in their works erroneous, contradictory statements, based on also sometimes unreliable, unverified sources.

So, for example, one of the scientists writes that "tea bushes, prescribed in 1833, were sent partly to the Crimea, partly to Sukhum to Professor Bagryanovsky, who was in charge of the botanical garden ... Therefore, the prescription of the tea plant in Georgia should be calculated from 1833" .

Individual periodicals often sin too. For the reader's information, sometimes unverified reports appear in these publications about the importation of the tea bush to Georgia, about its introduction into culture, etc. More recently, one of the Tbilisi newspapers published information "From the history of Georgian tea." The information says: "The first tea bushes were brought to the Sukhum Botanical Garden and the Ozurgeti (Makharadzevsky) acclimatization nursery from the Nikitsky Botanical Garden in 1833 [Карчава Г.З. – P. 7]. Tea bushes are well received on Georgian soil."

If the authors of this information had in the slightest degree taken an interest and checked their authenticity, they would have made sure that in 1833 the Sukhum Botanical Garden did not exist at all, not to mention the Ozurgeti acclimatization nursery.

Not so long ago, excessively laudatory articles and essays appeared in the press about the Chinese citizen Lau John-jau, who worked since 1893, first at the estate of K. S. Popov in Salibauri, and then at the Chakva specific estate as the head of a tea factory. It seemed that if it were not for Lau John-jau, then tea production in Georgia might not have originated at all or would not have received its further development. Meanwhile, it was enough to take an interest in his (Lau's) past activities in these estates to be convinced of the groundlessness of such praises.

Some authors even today persistently assert that the former editor of the newspaper "Kavkaz" E. Stalin, in 1872, with the permission of the governor, formed a partnership with a capital of one million rubles in order to organize tea production in Transcaucasia. If any of these authors would try to delve into the essence of the matter, it would become clear that in 1872 no partnership was formed, that it was only in 1875 that Stalinsky spoke on the pages of his newspaper about the possibility of tea culture in the western Transcaucasus (in Georgia).

Such absurd "statements", such "hearsay information" today are not even worthy of refutation, but this is necessary to establish the historical truth.

It is known that in 1875 a certain Yeritsov on the pages of the newspaper "Caucasus" published his version of the importation of the tea bush to Georgia in 1833. After some time, Begichev made a lot of efforts to give it a shade of truth. Over time, the falsehood composed by Yeritsov and Begichev received the right of a literary source, and some ignorant authors still use it as a reliable source. It is possible that a similar story will not repeat itself in the future. Unverified reports, unreliable information, appearing from time to time in our publications, will certainly disorientate the new generation of researchers, complicate their further scientific work in this direction.

We have important scientific research on the introduction of the tea bush in Georgia and the history of its culture. Among them, first of all, it is necessary to point out the works of Prof. P. Gugushvili [Гугушвили П.], prof. K. Gabunia [Габуня К.] and others.

In the mentioned works, a number of issues of tea production in Georgia are scientifically developed and, most importantly, the far-fetched statements of Yeritsov-Begichev about the introduction of the tea bush in Georgia in 1833 are exposed [Карчава Г.З. – P. 8].

It is surprising that some authors stubbornly bypass the above scientific works and use dubious sources. As a result, science has to fight against such fabrications until today. It is necessary to continue, along with painstaking research work, to consistently expose unscientific conclusions based on unverified, dubious sources of assertion.

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