A Brief Bibliography of Tea

Children’s Titles

*From School Library Journal:*
Tashi’s mother labors on a tea plantation in the shadow of the Himalayas. One day she is too ill to get out of bed. Tashi knows that without her day’s wages, they won’t have money for a doctor, but without medical care her mother won’t get well enough to work. “The problem went around and around. It was like a snake with its tail in its mouth, and Tashi was frightened by it.” The child tries to pick tea herself, but she is too small to reach the tops of the plants where the tender new leaves grow. She retreats in tears, only to be comforted by a troop of monkeys she has befriended. And then the magical element of the story emerges: the monkeys climb into the mountains and pick the rarest and most sought-after tea leaves in the world. The Royal Tea Taster samples the leaves in Tashi’s basket and pays her a handsome sum, with the promise of more in the future. This story, inspired by tales of tea-picking monkeys of the Himalayas, would be merely pleasant were it not for Wijngaard’s expressive, richly detailed ink-and-gouache illustrations. Tashi’s solemn face as she comforts her bedridden mother, the dynamic depictions of the Tea Taster swishing tea and spitting out a mouthful, the play of light through the branches under which the monkeys eat fruit, and even the delicate tracery of a decorative pattern on the bottom of each page all contribute to the thoughtful bookmaking.—*Miriam Lang Budin, Chappaqua Public Library, NY*

*From School Library Journal:*
Kindergarten-Grade 6—Continuing the story he started in Grandfather’s Journey (Houghton, 1993), Say explores familiar themes of cultural connection and disconnection. He focuses on his mother Masako, or May, as she prefers to be called, who, after graduating from high school in California, unwillingly moves with her parents to their native Japan. She is homesick for her native country and misses American food. She rebels against her parents, who force her to repeat high school so that she can learn “her own language”; the other students tease her for being “gaijin” or a foreigner. Masako leaves home and obtains a job in a department store in Osaka, a city that reminds her of her beloved San Francisco. Her knowledge of English quickly makes her a valued employee and brings her into contact with her future husband, Joseph, a Japanese man who was educated at an English boarding school in Shanghai. They decide that together they can make a life anywhere, and choose to remain in Japan. Say’s many fans will be thrilled to have another episode in his family saga, which he relates with customary grace and elegance. The pages are filled with detailed drawings featuring Japanese architecture and clothing, and because of the artist's mastery at drawing figures, the people come to life as authentic and sympathetic characters. This is a thoughtful and poignant book that will appeal to a wide range of readers, particularly our nation’s many immigrants who grapple with some of the same challenges as May and Joseph, including feeling at home in a place that is not their own. *Ellen Fader, Multnomah County Library, Portland, OR*

Adult Titles

Kakuzo, Okakura and Bruce Richardson. **The Book of Tea.** 2015

The Book of Tea was written by Okakura Kakuzo in the early 20th century. It was first published in 1906, and has since been republished many times. In the book, Kakuzo introduces the term Teaism and how Tea has affected nearly every aspect of Japanese culture, thought, and life. The book is accessible to Western audiences because Kakuzo was taught at a young age to speak English; and spoke it all his life, becoming proficient at communicating his thoughts to the Western Mind. In his book, he discusses such
topics as Zen and Taoism, but also the secular aspects of Tea and Japanese life. The book emphasises how Teaism taught the Japanese many things; most importantly, simplicity. Kakuzo argues that this tea-induced simplicity affected art and architecture, and he was a long-time student of the visual arts. He ends the book with a chapter on Tea Masters, and spends some time talking about Sen no Rikyu and his contribution to the Japanese Tea Ceremony. From [http://www.amazon.com/Book-Tea-Okakura-Kakuzo/dp/1507552947/ref=sr_1_15?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1423065311&sr=1-15&keywords=tea+asia](http://www.amazon.com/Book-Tea-Okakura-Kakuzo/dp/1507552947/ref=sr_1_15?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1423065311&sr=1-15&keywords=tea+asia)


*From Publishers Weekly: “Starred Review.” Some failures lead to phenomenal successes, and this American nurse’s unsuccessful attempt to climb K2, the world’s second tallest mountain, is one of them. Dangerously ill when he finished his climb in 1993, Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the impoverished town’s first school, a project that grew into the Central Asia Institute, which has since constructed more than 50 schools across rural Pakistan and Afghanistan. Coauthor Relin recounts Mortenson’s efforts in fascinating detail, presenting compelling portraits of the village elders, con artists, philanthropists, mujahideen, Taliban officials, ambitious school girls and upright Muslims Mortenson met along the way. As the book moves into the post-9/11 world, Mortenson and Relin argue that the United States must fight Islamic extremism in the region through collaborative efforts to alleviate poverty and improve access to education, especially for girls. (Mar.)* Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

*Note: While some of the facts in this book have been challenged, the importance of tea to the society is still evident.*


*From Booklist: “Starred Review” Through the adventures of Robert Fortune, a nineteenth-century plant hunter, the reader learns a delicious brew of information on the history of tea cultivation and consumption in the Western world. Rose’s book is certain to draw the attention of history buffs, foodies, avid travel-literature fans, followers of popular science, and perhaps even business-interest book consumers as she reconstructs what she posits as the “greatest theft of trade secrets in the history of mankind.” Tea was grown in China. Great Britain wanted tea. But trying to trade with the Celestial Empire was like pulling teeth. So the East India Company sent hunter Fortune, undercover (dressed in mandarin robes), to penetrate the depths of China and surreptitiously gather—steal, in other words—seeds and young plants and send them to India, where they would flourish in soil that was part of the British Empire. The author’s bold conclusion to this remarkably riveting tale is that Fortune’s “actions would today be described as industrial espionage,” but nevertheless he “changed the fate of nations.” —Brad Hooper*