

***Camellia sinensis* var. *lasiocalyx* (G. Watt) A.P. Das & C. Ghosh – new combination name for the Cambod variety of tea**

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Abstract

The name of Cambod tea is revised to *Camellia sinensis* (Linnaeus) O. Kuntze var. *lasiocalyx* (G. Watt) A.P. Das & C. Ghosh, *comb. nov.*

Key words: Tea, Cambod variety, *Camellia sinensis* subsp. *lasiocalyx*

Linnaeus named the tea plant as *Thea sinensis* in 1753 in his *Species Plantarum*. However, later on in 1887, Carl Ernst Otto Kuntze transferred the species to the genus *Camellia* and now the accepted combination is *Camellia sinensis* (Linnaeus) O. Kuntze. J.W. Masters named one plant from Assam as *Thea assamica* in *J. Agric. Soc. India* (3: 63) in 1844. Later on, Kitamura treated this plant as a variety of *Camellia sinensis* in *Acta Phytotax. Geobot.* (14: 59. 1950). So, *Thea assamica* and *Camellia assamica* (J.W. Mast.) Hung T. Chang [*Acta Sci. Nat. Univ. Sunyatseni* 23(1): 11. 1984] are no more treated as correct names, including all their infraspecific taxa (i.e. subspecies and variety) in combination.

The details of the revised classification of tea has been prepared by W. Wight in 1962 where he has recognised three basic taxonomic varieties of tea under cultivation.

The name *Camellia thea* was published by Link in 1822 in *Enum. Hort. Berol. Alt. 2: 73*. This species is also treated as a synonym of *C. sinensis* (L.) O.Kuntze [Refer <http://ipni.org/urn:lsid:ipni.org> & www.theplantlist.org]. So, all infraspecific taxa of *C. thea* are to be treated under *C. sinensis*.

For the Cambod variety of tea, Planchon provided the name *Thea lasiocalyx* in manuscript. Later on, G. Watt transferred the epithet to varietal rank and published it as *Camellia thea* Link var. *lasiocalyx* G. Watt [*J. Roy. Hort. Soc. n.s.*, 32: 79, fig. 11. 1907]. However, in 1962, W. Wight treated it as *Camellia assamica* (J.W. Mast.) W. Wight subsp. *lasiocalyx* (G. Watt) W. Wight [*Curr. Sci.* 31(7): 299, fig. 3. 1962]. Now, all the non-taxonomic literature refers this plant as *Camellia assamica* subsp. *lasiocalyx*.

Now, considering the basic truth that *Camellia assamica*, *Camellia thea* and *Thea assamica* – all are synonymous to *Camellia sinensis* (L.) O. Kuntza, we are now transferring *Camellia thea* Link var. *lasiocalyx* G. Watt also to *Camellia sinensis*. But, the differences of this plant from the China and Assam varieties, as mentioned by Wight (1962) and as sometimes the plant is mentioned as a habrid between these two varieties

(Kabir & Das 2015; Kabir & Ghosh 2016), it will not be justified to treat the population as a subspecies. So, using the same set of characters and following Watt's consideration, we treat it at the varietal rank.

So, the new combination will be *Camellia sinensis* (Linnaeus) O. Kuntze var. *lasiocalyx* (G. Watt) A.P. Das & C. Ghosh, *comb. nov.*

Now, scientifically, the correct name for the Cambod variety of tea will be *Camellia sinensis* var. *lasiocalyx*.

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