

There is a legendary story about tea; about 5,000 years ago, tea started its history as medicine. The founder of Chinese herbal medicine journeyed over mountains and tasted lots of wild grasses to find whether it was edible or not. Every time he poisoned by wild grasses, he ate tea leaves for detoxification. This story might be just a legend, but it must be true that tea was used as detoxification medicine such a long time ago.



Statue of Eisai

On the retained record, tea could be found over 2,000 years ago in China. From the record, it's estimated that ancients had a tea-drinking custom and there was already tea related business before the century. Since then, tea has changed its style time by time but consistently supported people's healthy life.

In Japan, tea was brought before the 7th century. Around that time, Buddhist monks went to China to study the region, culture, and language, and brought a lot of new customs back to Japan. Tea must be one of them. In the Japanese tea history, Eisai (1141 – 1215) is the most spotlighted Buddhist monk who brought back the tea seeds in the 12th century. He wrote the first book about tea “Kissa Yojoki (means healthy life with drinking tea)” and contributed to the wide-spread of tea custom. In the 16th century, Japanese tea ceremony was matured by Sen no Rikyu (1522 – 1591), and tea was the loyal entertainment for Samurai. It's very famous story that Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537 – 1598), one of the famous Samurai tycoons, held a huge tea party to show his high interest to the tea ceremony.

In 1738, Sen Cha was invented, and tea was finally developed to the modern style which we can see today. Since then, tea consumption got popular little by little, tea became the main article of export for Japan, and as a result, the amount of tea production was dramatically increased. In 2008, about 90,000-ton of green tea is produced in Japan, and over 1,000-ton is exported mainly to the U.S. and European countries.

