

Story of Ryukyu Koucha

Distinctive Black Tea in Okinawa

In recorded history, the attempts of Assam plant cultivation and black tea production were made in Okinawa, Japan, in 1958. Okinawa has the environmental conditions best fit for black tea plantation, such as reddish acidic soil which is considered to be created only by God in Sri Lanka and strong ultraviolet radiation from the sun. There is also historical record that the black tea produced in Okinawa was exported across the ocean to London in that period.

In the year of 2000, we started black tea production using the leaves picked from the tea plantation created about 40 years ago. During that challenge, we have encountered a tea plant that was thought to be a non-existent tea variety "Beni Homare". It carries "Cha-Norin No1" - which represents a registered number authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan as proof of a domestic superior tea variety and is the only domestic tea variety which has won a prize abroad. We have revived the nursery plant of "Beni Homare" on suitable soil for tea cultivation with the help of the people of Okinawa and are working on higher-quality tea production.

In the Age of Exploration, the Ryukyu Dynasty has traded with foreign countries without weapons and established a unique sailing technique. People of Ryukyu have sailed across the world oceans with wisdom and courage. We named our tea product "Ryukyu Koucha" after those Ryukyu people, hoping the black tea product will be able to take root in Okinawa and could seduce people around the world with rich taste and flavor along with comfort.



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Ryukyu Koucha

琉球紅茶

Japanese black tea realizes a new dream in Okinawa



■ Tea leaf

茶葉



The Assam variety is suitable for fully oxidized tea - i.e. black tea, because of its leaf size. Its large-sized leaf absorbs much sun radiation and, as a consequence, increases the bitterness which gives more flavor after fermentation process.

In Sri Lanka, a country renowned for its tea production globally, people believe “Tea plantation is a fortune down to posterity”, as those tea plants can provide flushes for about every 100 years. Ryukyu black tea is made from a domestic superior tea variety.



〈Differences between the tea plant varieties〉

- The plant on the left in the picture belongs to the Assamese variety suit for black tea, the leaves of which are large and fleshy. It grows into a large tree.
- The plant on the right belongs to the Chinese variety suit for green tea, its leaves are small and overlapped. It grows into a bushy tree.

■ Sun

太陽



Okinawa is the area where ultraviolet radiation is strongest in Japan. Large leaves of well-maintained Assam plants absorb the strongest ultraviolet radiation from the sun, and as a consequence, those tea plants contain high levels of tannin.

■ Soil

土



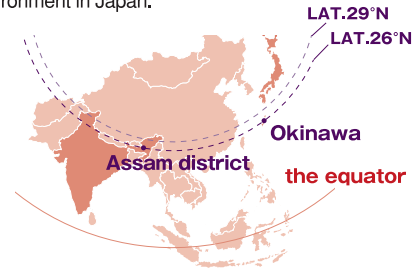
Red acidic soil is very suitable for tea plantation - in fact, people say “Only God can create red soil” in Sri Lanka, whilst it is said to be unfit for crops because of its acidity.

As the tea plants on less fertile red soil grow slowly and absorb plenty of ultraviolet radiation accordingly, it can produce indispensable ingredients for fine aromatic tea.

■ Latitude

緯度

The Assam variety plants can be cultivated up to northern latitude of 29 degrees. Okinawa is located at northern latitude of 26 degrees and is the only region preferred for the Assam tea plantation under the natural environment in Japan.



Black tea is made from safe harmless tea plants cultivated in Okinawa, Japan. Handpicked flushes of the plants containing plenty of “Golden Tips” offer you the best taste and flavor ever.

Taste, Color and Flavor of the Black Tea, “Ryukyu Koucha”

味色香

This black tea offers you strong color, deep well-rounded flavor, mellow astringency, and brisk aftertaste. Even after drinking it, the aromatic flavor returns. The leaves after steeping are fleshy, so you can enjoy the second and third servings. It can be served with milk in the style of British afternoon tea, as it goes well with sugar and milk.

