

The Story of Gyokuro "Chiisana Ocha no Ki"

ちいさなお茶の木

ぎよくろのおはなし



Grandfather



Maiko



Chataro

With gratitude to all the people involved in the cultivation and production of green tea.

Idea: Dr. Ralph Faerber

Pictures: Akishige Chatani

Editing: Maiko no Cha Honpo



We are in the rural city of Kyotanabe, Kyoto.

Various flowers are in bloom, saluting the arrival of spring.

As usual, Maiko and her grandfather are on a walk toward the nearby tea fields.



Grandfather is a skillful tea master.

Maiko and her cat, Chataro, love to come to the tea fields with grandfather.

"Grandfather, what kind of tea do these tea bushes make?"

"These tea bushes produce a tea called Gyokuro."

"Does this tea taste good?"

"Yes, it is very delicious!"



In the tea fields is a little tea bush Maiko particularly likes.
This young tea bush is round and cute and just about Maiko's height.
Will this little tea bush make delicious Gyokuro too?



One pleasant morning, Grandfather says to Maiko,

"Today is a very important day for Gyokuro!"

As Grandfather said this, he began to put a black shade over the tea bushes.

Is he going to cover the little bush as well? Maiko wondered.

I feel sorry for the little bush because it is so small...



However, the little tea bush was covered with a shade as well.
When Maiko thought about how the little tea bush must feel,
her heart was afraid and she became very sad.



That night, Maiko dreamt of the little tea bush.

"Why does Grandfather block us from the sun?

How can he be so cruel?"

As the little tea bush said this, it began to cry.

After about a month had passed,

Grandfather came to Maiko and said,

"I have something very special to show you!"



"Today I took off all the black shades just for you!"

"Wow! The tea bushes look so beautiful!" said Maiko.

Although they were the same tea bushes, bright green leaves had grown onto them and it made the bushes look as if they were sparkling.



Maiko and her grandfather went to look at the little tea bush.

"Look, even the little bush has bright green leaves!!"

"You see, Maiko, just as your body grows while you are sleeping, the Gyokuro, when it is covered, gains vitamins and becomes tastier as it grows new leaves. And even this cute little bush can produce delicious Gyokuro."

As Grandfather said this, the little bush looked as if it nodded happily.

"Let's go! The time for the harvest has come and we will soon become very busy."



In a very short while, through the hands of many helpers, baskets became filled with the new leaves.

"This will make delicious Gyokuro, won't it?!"

Grandfather, I can't wait to taste it."



Note: After the Gyokuro leaves were harvested, they pass several stages of production
For more information please refer to 「Chako's Tea Exploration Adventure」
<http://www.maiko.ne.jp/english/chako.htm>



"Is the Gyokuro tea I made delicious?"

"Oh, yes, very delicious!! Inside this tea, there must be leaves from the little bush too. Grandfather, please never stop making this delicious Gyokuro!"



Note: For the brewing of Gyokuro leaves it is important to let the boiled water cool off first.
For more details please refer to 「How to prepare delicious Gyokuro」
<http://www.maiko.ne.jp/english/gyokuro.htm>



The inside a shaded Gyokuro tea garden



The outside of a shaded Gyokuro tea garden

About the King of Japanese Green Tea (Gyokuro)



Maiko no Cha headquarters is located in Kyotanbe city which is known throughout Japan as the capital of high-class Gyokuro. Gyokuro is produced from fields (oishita-en) that are shaded from mid-April. After the buds are picked, they are steamed, dried and kneaded. Gyokuro is the highest grade of Japanese tea available and is characterized by its fine green color, rich aroma and mellow sweet flavor.

Please use boiled water cooled to 50 - 60 °C, to enjoy the delicious balance of mellow astringency blended with the typical sweet Gyokuro flavor.



Chako's Tea Exploration Adventure

Similar to the story of Gyokuro, our animation movies called `Chako's Tea Exploration Adventure` teach facts about Japanese green tea. Please visit these informative web pages that even children will enjoy.

<http://www.maiko.ne.jp/english/chako.htm>

Thank you for reading the story of our little Gyokuro tree

For your purchase of delicious green tea: MAIKO TEA SHOP

京都
舞妓の茶本舗

2-1 Kamidaimon Fugenji Kyotanabe Kyoto Japan
<http://www.maiko.ne.jp/english>