



# Japanese Way of Tea: From Its Origin in China to Sen Rikyu

*Sen XV Soshitsu*

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The author follows tea drinking practices from their arrival in Japan to the time of Rikyu, considering at each stage the relevant historical changes and their significance for the Way of Tea. Shortly after its arrival during the Heian era (794-1185), tea was celebrated by Japanese poets, who attributed the same spiritual qualities to the beverage as had their Chinese contemporaries. During the medieval era, however, tea began to take on a distinctively Japanese character. Eisai (1141-1215), the founder of the Rinzai sect of Japanese Zen Buddhism, accentuated the medicinal aspect of tea and saw it as a means of salvation in a spiritually degenerate age (mappo).

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