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FREE

MAY

The fifth month of the 18th year of the Heisei period.

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平成 18 年
(Satsuki)

The rainiest month of the lunar calendar is known as "the swamp month".

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新茶 Shincha by Daisuke Sugihara

this season, we drink the most delicious tea.

Why is it the most delicious? *Shincha* buds stock nourishments during the winter and grows at a burst by using them in the spring, so they are fresh. Also, *Shincha* contains less bitter and astringent tannin and caffeine than other seasons. By contrast, it contains more amino acid. Another specific characteristic of *Shincha* is its refreshing smell.

Why don't you drink delicious *Shincha* and refresh yourself?

The Japanese drink "Nihoncha (日本茶 Japanese Tea)" on many occasions, for example, with meals and at teatime. When visitors call, it is often served.

There are many kinds of *Nihoncha* but "煎茶 Sencha" is drunk most often. "ほうじ茶 Hojicha" is made by toasting "番茶 Bancha", which is made from large tea leaves picked in August, after the young leaves for *Sencha* have been taken. *Hojicha* and *Bancha* are cheaper than *Sencha*. "玄米茶 Genmaicha" is mixed *Bancha* and roasted brown rice. It is aromatic tea. *Sencha* is made from soft, young tea leaves, picked in May or June, which are steamed and dried. It has an excellent fragrance. "抹茶 Matcha" is a top-quality tea, and mainly used in the tea ceremony by pounding sprouts of tea leaves into powder.

"新茶 Shincha" season comes from the end of April to the middle of May. *Shincha* is "Hatsumono (初物)". In other words, *Shincha* is first new buds of tea which are harvest. In

◆◆How to make Sencha◆◆

※Except for Matcha

1) Put the *Nihoncha* (about 2 spoons per person) into a pot that has been warmed. Then, pour hot water into the pot. Replace the lid and leave it for a while.

For *Sencha*, please use hot water (about 70 degrees C.). For *Hojicha* and *Bancha*, please use boiled water.

2) Warm the teacups and pour the tea. If you make several cups of tea, you should pour it little by little, alternating cup to cup, so that all cups have equal strength.