

The Ancient Tea Tree of Ureshino

The giant tea tree known as Daichanoki is estimated to be at least 340 years old. Amid tea plantations in the hills west of the Ureshino resort area, it stands 4.6 meters high, with branches spreading up to 12 meters.

The tree is said to have been planted by Yoshimura Shinbei (1603–1657), a samurai who lived in the nearby village of Shiroishi before moving to Sarayadani, where the tree is located, upon his appointment to guard duty in Ureshino by the daimyo Nabeshima Katsushige (1580–1657). Shinbei is known as the father of Ureshino tea because he cleared extensive areas in the nearby hills for tea plantations and popularized the trading of local tea along with Yoshimura Tojuro, a local tea merchant. Tea plants cultivated by Shinbei can still be found in area plantations today.

The life of Daichanoki dates back to the time when Shinbei lived in this area. His legacy is honored by local residents, and the tree has become a symbol of Ureshino tea. Every April, residents and tea farmers in the Sarayadani area hold a festival in honor of Shinbei as they pray for a prosperous harvest in the upcoming year.

The Daichanoki tea tree was designated a National Natural Monument on October 20, 1926.