India has been well known for its rule in the development and trade of tea. One area in particular plays a large role in the origins and production of tea in India. That area is Assam. The region of Assam produces a dark looking herb that is known as Assam Tea.

This herb was first discovered by a Scottish merchant named Robert Bruce. Robert Bruce had voyaged to India for the particular purposes of meeting with the Singhpo chief to discuss the teas grown in that area. Robert Bruce discovered that Assam produced several teas that could not be found anywhere else in the world. After befriending the chief, Bruce was given permission to take some samples to study. Unfortunately, Robert Bruce would die shortly after in 1824, but not before telling his brother Charles of the potential of this Indian Tea.

Charles Bruce carried on his brother’s dream. It would not be for another decade, however, before the tea was tested and discovered to be different than that made in China. The British government in an attempt to take away the control of the Tea trade from China looked to India to become their new producer. In 1834 the “Tea Committee” decided that Assam was the best location to produce the tea. However, they ignored Charles Bruce’s tea and decided to take Chinese tea and grow it in Assam. Due to the different climate conditions, the Chinese tea did not survive in India. Bruce took it open himself to open a tea garden in Assam that produced their own tea which they sent to the British Tea Committee. The Committee was impressed with the tea and approved it.

By 1839, the Assamese tea was put in auction in the London Market. Due to the strong approval from the Brattish consumers, the East India Company realized the potential that the Assam Tea had. A number of companies were formed to acquire the profits of this tea. The Assam Company was formed directly by congress and was the first to receive the Royal Charter. Within 10 years the Assam Company had become successful. In 1862 that Assam region was producing 1.5 million pounds of tea a year. In 1888 Britain was importing more tea from India than from China. Finally, China’s monopoly over tea was at an end thanks to the quality of Assam tea and the persistence of the Bruce brothers.