

Nikko - The Birthplace of Botanical Study in Japan

Prior to the Meiji period (1868–1912), Oku-Nikko was famous in Japan for the collection of medicinal herbs. When modern botanical studies began in the Meiji period, botanists both Japanese and from overseas, including the botanist Takeda Hisayoshi (1883–1972), son of British diplomat Ernest Satow (1843–1929), came to Nikko to research and to collect plants. Many new species were discovered in Nikko, including the Nikko azami (*Cirsium tanakae* subsp. *nikkoense*), Nantai shida (*Dryopteris maximowiczii*), and Shirane aoi (*Glaucidium palmatum* Siebold & Zucc.). This provenance is reflected in the names of many plants which are prefixed by Nikko, and in the scientific names which include the suffix “-nikoensis.” This research continues to this day.