

Farming

New Tools, Methods and Crops in Sotome

The Cultivation of Hendake in Nishi-Shitsu

Cultivator (Sotome Museum of History and Folkore)

Farming Tools Designed by Father de Rotz (Drawn by Miyazaki Sozaburo)

In 1884, Father de Rotz (1840–1914) purchased several farms at Obira, close to Mount Hendake in northern Shitsu. Here he taught people how to farm using new tools and methods from France, and to produce wheat, potatoes, cotton and tea. It is thought that de Rotz had Japanese artists draw pictures that illustrate how to use the tools and how to farm more effectively, and these drawings can still be seen in the De Rotz Memorial Hall.

He also imported strawberries and tomatoes, both of which were rare in Japan. Concerned about the wellness of the villagers, de Rotz planted nutritious watercress, which was called “De Rotz Watercress” in Sotome.