

Exhibition Room of the Biological Collection at Mt. Hikosan, Fukuoka Prefecture of the Regional Cooperation Project of Kyushu University

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Exhibition Room of the Biological Collection at Mt. Hikosan, Fukuoka Prefecture of the Regional Cooperation Project of Kyushu University

Hikosan Biological Laboratory is situated halfway up the road along the Mt. Hikosan line in Soeda Town, Fukuoka Prefecture. The laboratory was established in 1936 through the donation to Kyushu Imperial University of land and biological specimens by Baron Nobumaro Takachiho, the chief priest of Hikosan Shrine, and of a building with a set of subsidiary works by Mr. Etsuzi Nakayama, the president of Nakayama Steel Company. Baron Takachiho was deeply interested in natural history from childhood and collected various creatures, the collections of which were previously kept and displayed in his private laboratory. He later wanted his collections to be preserved for the next generation and for use in academic studies, and therefore offered them to Kyushu Imperial University. The late Prof. Teiso Esaki and the subsequent staffs of the laboratory have continued to exhibit the collection for social education in accordance with one of the policies of Baron Takachiho.

This Biological Laboratory is situated 650–700 m above sea level on Mt. Hikosan, and is mostly surrounded by forests. The climate in this area is cool with a lot of rain, and a grove of beech trees is located on top of the mountain. The mountain has a rich fauna of insects, and many insects have been described from this region as either new species or new records from Japan, or those showing interesting distributions with northern- or southern-most limits in Japan. Staff of the Biological Laboratory in collaboration with staff and students of the

Entomological Laboratory, Kyushu University have accumulated a huge amount of insect specimens and have studied insects using the collection since the establishment of the laboratory. Some of these insects were exhibited in the laboratory building, but this was impossible in 1998 because of the absence of full-time staff in the laboratory.

Several years later, Soeda Town planned to build a slope car up to the Hikosan Shrine with a relay station, “Fleur” that used the closed Hikosan Elementary School near the Biological Laboratory. The educational committee of the town planned to make exhibition rooms using the former school rooms, and requested that our laboratory exhibit some specimens from the Biological Laboratory. The Kyushu University Regional Cooperation Project (Head investigator: O. Tadauchi) was established with the cooperation of Soeda Town in 2005. One of the school rooms was remodeled and biological specimens have been exhibited since April, 2006 (Figs. 1 and 2). We also provided visitors with explanatory panels of Hikosan Biological Laboratory and publications, and a corner of the room included some panels detailing environmental problems related to insects such as the global warming, the threatened insects in Fukuoka Prefecture, etc.

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Fig. 1. A relay station of a slope car, Fleur at Mt. Hikosan.



Fig. 2. Exhibition room of the Biological Collection at Mt. Hikosan.