Jokichi Takamine Encyclopedia Article

Jokichi Takamine

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Jokichi Takamine

1854-1922

Japanese-American chemist who isolated the chemical adrenaline from the suprarenal gland. Jokichi Takamine graduated from the College of Science and Engineering of the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1879. The university then sent him to Glasgow, Scotland, to complete his postgraduate study. Upon his return to Japan, Takamine took a position with the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and eventually rose to the head of its chemistry division. In 1887, he left the public sector to establish his own factory, the Tokyo Artificial Fertilizer Company, which manufactured superphosphate fertilizers. In his laboratory, Takamine developed a digestive agent, known as diastase, which caught the interest of American brewing companies, who invited him to develop his enzyme in the United States. Takamine found a new home in America, where he patented his new enzyme and began work on isolating adrenaline (now called epinephrine), a hormone used as a cardiovascular stimulant.