

Christian / Taki Rentaro

“Taki Rentaro” is a musician who did young, and the story about his talent and fate has been passed down by word of mouth. However, it is not common knowledge that he was a baptized Christian.

In 1891, 18 years after liberalization of Christianity, the genius Taki Rentaro came to the town of Christians when he was twelve years old. It was probably a time in Taketa when people had begun revealing their secrets to one another, saying “We were Christian in the old times,” and when secretly hidden relics were emerging everywhere. At the time, his best friends had come from a Christian family, so Rentaro had first-hand knowledge about the great mystery, romanticism and sorrow of Christians in Taketa during his boyhood. He started his career as a genius musician in Tokyo after spending two and half years in the Christian town.

He moved to Koji-machi, Tokyo, and was baptized (Christian name unknown) at “Saint Grace Episcopal church (Hakuai Church)” (which later become the Seiai Church) when he was 20 years old, by Motoda Sakunoshin. Sakunoshin was a Christian minister who later became the president of Rikkyo University (Photo 1). Rentaro had decided to get baptized because the proximity between his home and the church meant that there were many Christians among both the teachers and friends at the music school in Tokyo that he was attending. After becoming a devout Christian, he became fascinated by hymns. The song published in the year after his baptism was “Kojo no Tsuki”. He had composed this song while playing the organ at church every day. There is no doubt that the background to the composition of this song is related to the church, hymns, and the mystery of Taketa Christians.

Coincidentally, the hospital where he had been hospitalized was the “St. Jacques (Santiago) Hospital.” We feel a strong link with Taketa Christians.

Moreover, Doi Bansui, the lyricist, exists as a common point linking “Kojo no Tsuki” and Christianity. He had not been a Christian, but his wife and eldest daughter were devout Christians. Thus, there is a hypothesis that the lyrics of “Kojo no Tsuki,” such as “The shadow of heaven never changes” or “For whom the eternal lights shine” refer to “The never changing light of heaven” from Christianity.

I would like you to listen to one song. It is a carol called “Cherubim Carol” (the text is Slavic) recorded in the album “All about Kojo no Tsuki” (Note 1). It is “Kojo no Tsuki” arranged at the Monastere de Chevetogne in Belgium. It is believed that “Kojo no Tsuki” was created in the home countries in Europe a long time ago, and this becomes clear when one listens to this glorious and gorgeous carol. Everyone who has heard this song is moved to goose bumps, and realizes the strong potential of the power behind this song. There is no doubt that Taki Rentaro is a true genius, but Taketa Christians deserve recognition as the catalyst behind the composition of this song and the birth of the genius of Taki Rentaro himself.

The genius passed away in 1903 when he was 23 years old, but the greatest piece of music “Kojo no Tsuki” was created in Japan and became a carol in Europe as well as a gospel (Note 2), which became a piece of sacred music when it arrived at the United States. The gospel “Kojo no Tsuki” will be sung at Oka castle in August this year for the first time as an imported European piece. It is a silent message for us that transcends the time from the Christian Taki Rentaro, to the present time, bringing mystery with it. Perhaps we will be surprised at how significant an impact this song may bring. It would be just the same as when the missionaries had crossed the ocean to Japan, bringing European culture with them.

(NANBAN Culture Promotion Division GOTO Atsumi)

(Note 1) Album “All about Kojo no Tsuki” released in 2003 by King Records

(Note 2) It is a genre of music sung in Protestant churches, and is a blend of joyous African rhythms and European hymns.

List of Confirmations.

| No. | Date. | Place. | Name. | Age. | Clergyman. | Remarks. |
|-----|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------|--------------|---|
| 番 号 | 年 月 日 | 場 所 | 氏 名 | 年 齢 | 部 職 | 備 考 |
| 5 | 1900 Oct 25 | Grace Church Tokyo | Rentaro Taki | 21 | J. S. Motoda | Baptized Grace Church Oct 25 1900 |
| 6 | " | " | Yutaro Horiya | 33 | " | Baptized 1888 Presbyterian |
| 7 | " | Kateu Horiya | Kateu Horiya | 29 | " | Baptized 1894 By Rev. B. Best |
| " | " | " | Yoshiro Kurahiki | 19 | " | Baptized Oct 1900 daughter of home |

Photo 1: A copy of the name list for receivers of confirmation. It contains the name “Taki Rentaro”



↑ Taki Rentaro had been a Christian, but he is buried at Manjuji temple in Kanaike-machi, Oita City, that his father Yoshihiro had strong links with and had stood guard over for 110 years.



↑ Taki Rentaro Museum



↑ Hiji town Ryusen-ji temple possession