

**Taira no Tokuko (Kenreimon-in)**

Taira no Tokuko (1155–1214) was the daughter of Chancellor Taira no Kiyomori (1118–1181). At the age of 17, she became the adopted daughter of Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192), the 77th emperor of Japan. At the time of her adoption, Go-Shirakawa had already abdicated the throne and entered the Buddhist priesthood, taking the Buddhist name Gyoshin.

In an arranged marriage in 1172, Taira no Tokuko wed Go-Shirakawa's fourth son, Emperor Takakura (1161–1181), with whom she had a son, Prince Tokihito (1178–1185). Two years later, in a period of fierce clashes between the Taira and Minamoto clans, Emperor Takakura was forced to abdicate. Prince Tokihito, despite being only two years old, assumed the throne as Emperor Antoku.

On April 25, 1185, the Taira and Minamoto clashed in the sea battle of Dan no Ura, near present-day Shimonoseki in Yamaguchi Prefecture. The Taira were decisively defeated, and many of the warriors threw themselves into the sea rather than surrender. This included Taira no Tokuko who dove in holding the young emperor in her arms. According to legend, Taira no Tokuko also tried to drown herself, but was pulled from the water by a rake that caught her long hair.

In May of 1185, 29-year-old Taira no Tokuko became a nun and in September of the same year she entered Jakko-in Temple and took the Buddhist name Kenreimon-in. She spent the rest of her life there, praying for the soul of her son and the other members of the Taira clan. She died in the year 1213 at the age of 36 and was interred on the temple grounds.