

Taki Rentaro Memorial Museum

Taki Rentaro (1879–1903) lived to be only 23 years old but remains among the important composers in the history of modern Japanese music. He spent two and a half years of his short life in Taketa, and this museum seeks to recreate the environment that inspired his work.

Taki was born in Tokyo and moved around the country several times in his childhood due to his father's job with the government. When Rentaro was 12 years old, his father became governor of what is now Taketa, and the family moved into a house assigned to the district governor. This building has been reconstructed as the Taki Rentaro Memorial Museum.

The house provides a glimpse into life during the Meiji era (1868–1912), with Western items displayed in traditional-style rooms with tatami flooring, shoji sliding panels, and a traditional Japanese garden. Display panels tell the story of Taki Rentaro and the history behind many of his compositions. During his time in Taketa, Taki learned how to play the piano in a local school not far from the Oka Castle Ruins. It was this site that inspired what is perhaps his most famous piece of music, *Kojo no tsuki* (The Moon over the Ruined Castle). Handwritten sheet music for several of Taki's compositions are exhibited at the museum.

Taki graduated from the Tokyo Music School in 1901 and in the same year moved to Leipzig, Germany, to continue his studies. There, he fell seriously ill with tuberculosis, and he returned to Japan after only one year. The museum displays include letters written by Taki during his final years in the city of Oita, where he died.