

Taki Rentaro

Taki Rentaro (1879–1903) is noted as among the influential composers of modern Japanese music. He was the first to write music in Japan using Western techniques, and his most prominent works are still cherished today.

Taki Rentaro was born in Tokyo and moved around the country several times in his childhood due to his father's job with the government. One of the most influential periods of his life started when his father was appointed governor of what is now Taketa. Rentaro lived in the town for two and half years between the ages of 12 and 15 and learned how to play the piano in school. This school was near the Oka Castle Ruins, the site said to have inspired *Kojo no tsuki* (The Moon over the Ruined Castle), one of Taki's best-known compositions.

Taki graduated from the Tokyo Music School in 1901 and soon after traveled to Leipzig, Germany to continue his studies. However, he contracted tuberculosis in Leipzig and fell seriously ill. He returned to Japan and spent his final years in the city of Oita, where he passed away at only 23 years of age.

Taki's adoption of Western techniques sparked a revolution in Japanese music. *Kojo no tsuki* has been featured in school textbooks for more than a century, and pieces such as *Oshogatsu* (New Year's Celebration) and *Hana* (Flower) also remain popular to this day.