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—人生・功績・節宇亀山先生遺蹟の碑—

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A Study of Kameyama Unpei— Life, Achievements, and
the Monument in Setuu Kameyama's Memory

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－ Life, Achievements, and the Monument in Setuu Kameyama's Memory －

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The monument in Setuu Kameyama's memory (known as Unpei) was erected by his followers in Shirahama, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1915, 16 years after Unpei's death. It is 100 years since then and the times have changed. It seems that people have forgotten about him and no one is interested in the monument nowadays. In this paper, we examine his life, his achievements, and whether or not he is worthy of remembrance. In addition we examine the inscription of the monument, which was written in classical Chinese.

Unpei was a great administrator, scholar and educator. In difficult times, he used his learning and cultivated wisdom to serve the Himeji clan. He remained faithful to the lords of this clan for generations, those who lost their lives due to their principles, and also many other people in the Himeji clan. He saved many people from violence. In his later days he devoted himself to education and mentored talented people who served the nation in their own fields. He was a man of virtue. It can be concluded that he is worthy of remembrance.

Key words : the monument in Setuu Kameyama's memory

Kameyama Unpei's achievements and his life

a devoted servant of the Himeji clan

an educator

節宇亀山先生遺蹟の碑、亀山雲平の人生と業績、姫路藩士、教育者

Introduction

The monument in Setuu Kameyama's memory (known as Kameyama Unpei) was erected by his followers in Shirahama, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1915, 16 years after Unpei's death. The inscription was written in classical Chinese. It is 100 years since then and the times have changed. It seems

that no one is visiting the monument nowadays. It is partly because the inscription written in Chinese is too difficult to read and people have forgotten about him due to rapid changes in society. Isn't Setuu Kameyama Unpei worth remembering? In this paper, we examine Kameyama Unpei's life, his achievements, and whether or not he is worthy of remembrance. In addition,

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we examine the inscription itself.

1. Unpei's Life and His Achievements

1) His early age

Kameyama Unpei was born in Himeji in 1822 and passed away in 1899. His family was a stalwart of the Himeji clan and served it for generations. He lost his father at the age of ten. At the age of 22, he lost his only elder brother and became the master of the Kameyama family. Despite these incidents, he continued to study hard and to tend to his mother with filial piety. In the same year, he was awarded a prize (5 Ryou) by the lord of the clan for his devotion. In addition, at the age of 25, he was appointed as an associate professor at the Himeji clan school.

In those days the Tokugawa regime was facing many problems. One of the most serious of them was foreign policy. Although Japan was following a policy of national isolation, it was forced by little by little to open up the country to foreign influence. There wasn't a clear vision for the future of Japan's foreign policy at that time. Japanese opinion was divided into two main camps; one which followed the principle of opening up the country while the other wanted the continued exclusion of foreigners. Therefore it asked clans to send capable men to Shoheiko school in Edo in order to educate them to solve the country's problems. At the age of 29, Unpei was selected and studied hard there under the tuition of Sato Issai with other elites from various clans. He stayed there

for about three years, and worked so hard that he became one of the greatest scholars in Japan. Those who studied with Unpei served Japan in various ways and some of them occupied very important positions in the Meiji government. He kept contact with them throughout his life.

2) "Daikansatu" during the great upheaval

After he returned to Himeji, he was promoted to "Daikansatu" at the age of 40, in 1861.

In those days, the conflict between the Royalists and the Shogunate party was getting more and more violent in Himeji too. In 1864, the "Katsushi no Goku" incident happened in Himeji. More than 70 clan men who were regarded as Royalists were killed or put in prison. When the verdict was announced, Unpei strongly insisted that each should have a different punishment in proportion to his deeds though others insisted that everyone should be killed. It was quite a progressive way of thinking at that time. His idea was accepted. Some lived and worked for the foundation of modern Japan in the Meiji era. Thereafter the Himeji clan was regarded as being the top of the Shogunate party.

In 1867, the Shogunate party restored the reins of government to the Emperor. In 1868 the Himeji clan, which was regarded as an enemy of the Emperor, was attacked by the Okayama Ikeda clan. With the reigning lord having gone to Edo with the last Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the chief retainers in Himeji had a very hard time. They discussed and discussed and

finally made a painful decision to surrender to the Ikeda clan. Unpei and his colleague negotiated with the Ikeda commander and the attack was halted. The next day, a bloodless surrender took place. Both the retainers and the people in the Himeji clan were saved from bloodshed.

Even after the surrender, the Himeji clan was still regarded as an enemy of the Imperial Court. Unpei and his colleagues made every effort to preserve the name and territory of the Himeji clan so that their people would not suffer. As a result, they succeeded in protecting the Himeji clan. In his diary, Unpei wrote that he was relieved and delighted to learn of the survival of the clan, both in name and territory, although it was the same day as he lost his position.

He saved many people from violence and confusion. After that he never returned to the world of politics though he was very capable and many of his fellow students in the Shoheiko school served in the Meiji government.

3) A scholar and educator

After he retired, he accepted an offer from the leaders in the Shirahama area. He decided to dedicate the last half of his life to serve as the guardian of Matubara shrine and as a scholar and educator for the generations to follow.

As the guardian, he rendered remarkable service to the development, prosperity, and popularity of the “Nada Fighting Festival.” However, his primary talent lay in education.

He started the “Kugyousha” school to

instruct the young. With an increasing number of students, the school became crowded. Therefore the “Kankaikoudo” school was constructed in 1884. There were four doctrines of the “Kankaikoudo” school:

1. A Sincere attitude to learning
2. To act for justice
3. To enjoy the world of literature and poetry
4. To serve the country and society

He set great store by the spirit, which he thought was the root of man. He strongly hoped the next generation would be ready to work for the country through difficult times from his experiences. In addition, he encouraged his students to enjoy the world of literature and poetry to free their minds and their imaginations.

Though he was a great scholar, he was very polite to everybody. He lived a humble life. He never wore silk. He gave the money he had to his followers when they had difficulties. His scholarship and temperament endeared him to all. It is said he had 3,000 followers.

They contributed to the foundation of modern Japan in their own fields. One of his senior followers, Yoshida Toyokichi, displayed Unpei’s writing on his wall. He looked at it and braced himself to study hard. So did his son, Yoshida Toyonobu. He grew up and was elected mayor of Himeji city. One of Unpei’s leading followers, Kanai Toshinobu said that he could not thank him enough because he owed Unpei as much as his beloved mother. Okada Shigenari taught at an elementary school in Shirahama and his son Okada Takehiko became a world-

famous scholar in Confucianism.

2. The Monument in Setuu Kameyama's memory

Unpei passed away in 1899. While he was alive, he told his followers not to memorialize him. However, his followers could not respect his wishes, and decided to erect a monument anyway. They asked for an epitaph from Tokyo University professor, Mishima Chushuu, who was a fellow student of Unpei's at Shoheiko school. The monument was erected in 1915, 16 years after his death. The devotion of his followers shows us what profound effect he had on those around him.

This is the epitaph by Mishima Chuushuu.

Setuu Kameyama's Memory



(写真1) The Monument in Setuu Kameyama's Memory
節宇龜山先生遺蹟之碑

This monument was erected at Matubara shrine in Shirahama Himeji.

The spirits of the scenery of nature are wonderful. If the natural scenery does not produce a great man, it lets a great man live within it. Where there is beautiful

nature, there is a great man. For example, east of the Kamo River was a place of great natural beauty, and Ishikawa Jouzan lived there. He never entered the service of any clan and kept his integrity unsullied. The ripples of Lake Biwa were blue as far as one could see, and Nakae Toju lived there. His virtue instructed people, and they called him Saint Oumi. Setuu in Harima was like them. His name was Yoshikazu, and in addition, another of his names was Yoshiyuki. His pen name was Setuu.

The Kameyama Family was a stalwart of the Himeji clan and served it for generations. During the Kaei Era, he went to Shoheiko school and mastered the doctrines of Chu-tzu. However, he did not stick to them. After he completed his studies, he returned to the Himeji clan. Thereafter he was promoted from Jidoku to Daikansatu. He received a fief of 170 koku. Afterwards, he was involved in the great upheaval in the last days of the Tokugawa regime. He worked very hard for the survival of the Himeji clan, and indeed, for the people of Himeji themselves. His deeds were of great merit and worthy of remembrance.

The Meiji Restoration made him give up his intentions to serve the government. He became a guardian of Matsubara shrine. Near the shrine, he started the Kankaikoudou school and instructed the generations to follow. Many people came to study from everywhere, near and far. His temperament by nature was of filial devotion toward his parents, fraternal love, and being respectful and polite to others. Love and

don't despise. His teaching was followed by his deeds of virtue. Consequently people were influenced by him as they caught on, and they called him Saint Harima.

The Kankaidoudou school belonged to Shirahama-mura village in Shikama county. The whole neighborhood was covered with white sand and green pine trees. Across hazy waves, large and small islands were visible. Ships under sail were coming and going. Fishermen's songs were sung and seagulls flew. The scene was like a painting. When he was free, he enjoyed taking a walk, whilst reciting poems from memory with young people and children.

After some thirty years passed, he became sick and died at the age of 78. On his Tomb in Mt. Juishouzan, there are many writings written about his career, family tree, and his wife and children in detail. Therefore I won't write about them now.

Ah! He decided not to serve the New government and kept his integrity intact. He led people by deeds of virtue. They called him Saint Harima. He can be said to be a Jouzan or a Touju of recent times. Recently, his followers celebrated his revered memory and had a meeting. They decided to erect a monument in order to make his achievements immortal and asked me to provide an inscription. The inscription reads:

His integrity is firmer than pine trees

His mind is purer than white sands

He did not acquire virtue naturally

We shall miss him forever

In the morning we respectfully vow to take the lessons he left for us

In the evening we faithfully keep the agreements he left for us

His teaching shall never die

His memory lives on.

Written by doctor of literature, Tuyoshi Mishima, at the age of 85

Calligraphed respectfully by Gosou Tooru Yukawa in December, Taishou 4 (1914)

3. Conclusion

Unpei was a great administrator, scholar and educator. In difficult times, he used his learning and cultivated wisdom to serve. He remained faithful to the lords of the Himeji clan for generations, those who lost their lives due to their principles, and also many other people in the Himeji clan. He saved people from violence. In his later days he devoted himself to education and mentored talented people who served the nation in their won fields. He was a man of virtue. It is concluded that he is worthy of remembrance.

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