

# Life, the Gift of the Heavens

## Playwright & Music Composition : Rintaro Dainichi

(Summary) An authentic Japanese historical drama, utilizing elements from Noh and Kabuki. (about 2 hrs & 20mins) The music is Occidental music, so it could be referred to as a contemporary Japanese operetta. It is a contemporary drama, that provides enjoyment of old Japan.

Performers: 1 tenor, 1 baritone, 1 sopranos, 9 male and 2 female chorus members

Instrumental Performers: 1 Kagura Taiko drummer, 1 flutist, 1 cellist, 1 pianist

**Staff Members:** 1 director, 1 assistant director, 2 sound technicians, 2 lighting technicians, 1 stage director, 1 assistant stage director

1 costumer, 1 wigmaker, 2 producers

**Accompanying Staff and Cast: total of 32 members**

Size of Stage: minimum of width 10m x depth 9m

## Synopsis

The Eastern Forces won the Battle of Sekigahara, and, for the most part, the nation came under the rule of the Tokugawas.

Hidemune Date (childhood name was Heigoro), who was raised by the Toyotomi Family, was taken hostage and incarcerated in the mansion of Hideie Ukita.

The lives of the remnants of the defeated Western Forces were in danger. The guardian Sir Shuri Nose and his ward the lady-in-waiting Ota-a (adopted daughter, a Korean from Korai, of Yukinaga Konishi), thanks to a spur-of-the-moment quick-witted decision, are able to escape their predicament,

But Hidemune, who heard the misery of the conquest of Korea from Ota-a, swears to her never again to go into battle, and to spend the remainder of his life in a humanitarian activities.

Ten years later, Hidemune, who was put under the protection of the Tokagawas, is ordered to participate in the Osaka Winter Campaign. But since he was deeply indebted to the Toyotomi family, it would have been intensely painful for him to draw his bow against them, and there was also the pledge his had made to Ota-a weighing on his mind.

On the night before he was to go to the battlefield, he rejected the advice of Kiyobei Yamaya, a retainer who was aware of Hidemune's dilemma, who said, "In the midst of something that seems at a glance to be contrary to reason, lies irrevocable truth."

Since Kiyobei was a retainer in service to his father Masamune, he is unable to revolt against his advice, so Hidemune groans alone.

Two months later, in reward for his meritorious service in the Winter Campaign, Hidemune is granted the Wajima Fife of an annual yield of one-hundred thousand bales of rice. But along with his jealousy toward his younger brother who inherited the Sendai Fife of an annual yield of six-hundred and twenty-thousand bales of rice, his enmity toward his father intensified further.

From his childhood, Hidemune had grown up far away from his father's love.

At that time, Kiyobei had been appointed as general magistrate by Masamune, but he hurtled back Hidemune's animosity under shield of fidelity, and rampantly attempted to invade Wajima.

Kiyobei's firm sense of fidelity, that was superior even to a black sea bream, conversely brought the opposition of other retainers down upon his head, giving rise to prediction of the eventual breaking out of the tragic "Yamaya Uprising" (an assassination incident).

During the same time, Ota-a, who was in service at the Sunpu Castle, was thrown in to contact with the persecution of Christians, and was exiled to an island. But because she requested a "rosary as a memento of her adopted father," matters developed in an unexpected direction.

Several days later, on the day that 57 mounted Date warriors set sail for Wajima, a group of women were just about to pass by the wharf, but they stopped and performed a deer dance in celebration of Hidemune's departure.

Ota-a was hidden among that group. During the dance, Ota-a worked her way close to Hidemune and attempt to steal the rosary that hung around his neck.

Since rosaries were forbidden at that time, she attempted to steal it due to her anxiety over the fate of Hidemune. But her action did not escape the notice of the Tokugawa family retainer Yagyu, as a result of which the wharf was instantly converted into court of law.

When it became obvious that this put Hidemune at a disadvantage, Ota-a's mistress, the Lady Acha, took action that left Hidemune unharmed. But still, Hidemune remained reluctant to part with his rosary. And strange to relate, it was Ota-a's comrade Okura who admonished Hidemune.

Hidemune recognized Okura's fragrance as the same sandalwood that his mother had worn when he was when he was a little child.

But just when he had questioned Okura about her ancestry, it came time for him to set sail. And the ship bearing the women sailed out alongside of Hidemune's ship as Ota-a sang the "Agnus Dei."

When her song ends, the scene shifts to twenty years later, and finds Masamune sick abed with very little time left to live.

Hidemune who was granted permission to accompany Shogun Iemitsu on a visit to his father's mansion, feels irritation about the weight of the sin that he had committed, causing him to end up confessing that he assassinated Kiyobei.

So he breaks his promise to Ota-a, suddenly falling into the action of a wild beast, expressing intense regret for his very own life. Masamune presents the sandalwood prayers beads, his memento of his mother, to Hidemune, and apologizes for his lack of filial love for his parents up to this time. But then the final words that Masamune encourage him to live a positive life from this time forward in repentance for his crimes. Thus Hidemune feels relief from his long period of psychological suffering and loneliness and gains the confidence and hope to spend the remainder of his life as a truly upright human being.

