

The Specially Created Exhibition

The Memorial Exhibition of the 150th Anniversary after the Death of Shoin Yoshida

Shoin Yoshida, a person of sincerity

Shoin Yoshida is a person who stands out in history and well known by the name of “Shoin-sensei” in Hagi. He is looked up to by many people. One hundred and fifty years have passed since the great person was sentenced to death and executed. People have appraised him in various ways by calling him “a pioneer of the Meiji Restoration”, “an ideal educator”, and so on. What on earth has continued to appeal to so many people? In this exhibition, we’d like to introduce “Shoin Yoshida, a person of great magnetic charm” who led his short life of 29 years and 2 months in all sincerity.

The constitution of the exhibition

- Chapter 1 The character sketch of Shoin spread abroad now
- Chapter 2 Shoin’s life followed up through materials
- Chapter 3 The teaching of “Shoin-sensei” handed down from generation to generation

April 18 (Saturday) ~ June 21 (Sunday), 2009



**The Hagi Museum
355 Horiuchi, Hagi City, Yamaguchi 758-0057**

Shoin Yoshida (1830~1859)

He was born as the second son of the Sugi family. Known by the name of Torajiro Yoshida, he was adopted by Daisuke Yoshida, a strategist of the Yamaga school. After studying under his uncle, Bunnoshin Tamaki, he became an instructor at the domain's public school Meirinkan.

In 1850, he was given permission to visit other regions of Japan for self-improvement. He walked through much of Japan from Kyushu to the Tohoku district, and absorbed new knowledge from such outstanding teachers as Shozan Sakuma, and Seishisai Aizawa.

He saw "the Black Ships of Commodore Perry at Uruga in 1853, and in 1854 he tried to take a ride on one of the warships to leave Japan illegally. But he failed to be imprisoned. He was later released to house arrest at the Sugi family house, and he opened the Shokasonjuku Academy in 1857. He nurtured individualism in his youthful students. The academy is well known for having produced many political leaders who fought to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogunate and bring about the Meiji Restoration.

His plot to assassinate the chief councilor was exposed later, and after being transferred to Edo, he was executed at the age of 30.



The Introduction of the Main Exhibits

- **Dutch letters which Shoin practiced handwriting**
(in the possession of Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives)

This is the handwriting written by him at the age of 22 when he was studying in Edo. The writing was translated into Japanese. It means “Uniqueness comes first”.

- **Last poem which Shoin composed just before he was executed**
(in the possession of Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives)

Shoin Yoshida was imprisoned at the Tenmacho prison in Edo. Told to go to the execution ground, he began to compose the poem. It means “I’ve been determined to go to the world beyond, and waiting for the coming of the execution day. Though I was told to be executed today, I feel happy now.”

- **Portrait of Shoin painted by Shodo Matsuura**
(in the possession of the Shunan Municipal Art Museum)

When Shoin was 30 years old in the 6th year of Ansei (1859), this portrait was given to Tomitaro Okabe just before Shoin was sent to Edo. It is said that his disciple Shodo painted the picture and Shoin wrote the legend.

- **“Seven Principles of Bushido” which Shoin Yoshida advocated**
(in the possession of Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives)

The writing was given to his disciple Tokiyuki Oginō. The well-known saying “As long as you are born as a human being, you must be different from animals” is carried in the writing.

- “Stanza” hung down from a pillar in the room of the Shokasonjuku Academy (duplicate item, in the possession of the Hagi Museum)

Shoin's writing was inscribed on the bamboo. It says that “If you don't read lots of books to study, how can you be a person of distinction.” Shoin's posture on learning is well expressed in brief.

