
Fabled Child Prodigy, Kikuchi Hiroshi!

There once was a fabled child genius in Takamatsu. His name was Kikuchi Hiroshi. He was born on December 26, 1888 (Meiji 21). His family was descended from a distinguished academic family of the Takamatsu domain's scholars.

Kikuchi Hiroshi was good at English and History and said to have had an incredible memory; he learned once, he remembered forever. Here are some episodes to illustrate his genius:

Kikuchi Hiroshi attended Yobancho Elementary School, Takamatsu Higher Elementary School, and Takamatsu Middle School (today's Takamatsu Senior High School). During the fourth year in Takamatsu Middle School, he was at the top of the class. He loved reading books and read almost all the books, about 20,000 of them, in a library. Isn't that amazing?

Kikuchi Hiroshi not only devoted himself to studying but also enjoyed playing outside: catching dragonflies and fish. Especially he was good at catching *mozu*, bull-headed shrike, and called "Professor Mozu" by his friends. He loved sports including baseball, swimming, and tennis, too.

Kikuchi Hiroshi was an avid reader as well as a good writer. He won second place for his essay and received a pair of binoculars as a prize. He also won a prize for another essay competition and received a trip to Tokyo.



Young Kikuchi Hiroshi catching goby fish in Koto River.

As you can see, young Kikuchi Hiroshi's future looked promising, but his family was so poor that they didn't have enough money for him to study further. Needless to say, he was apprehensive about it. When he was younger, his family could not afford textbooks for him. So, he made his own by copying his friend's textbooks by hand.

Hiroshi went on to Tokyo Higher Normal School (today's teachers college) as it didn't cost much to attend. He was unfortunately accused of selfish behavior and expelled from the school. Then he wanted to pursue a career in literature, so young Kikuchi Hiroshi studied hard in order to get into the First Higher School (today's University of Tokyo). Hang in there, young Kikuchi Hiroshi!



Young Kikuchi Hiroshi answering an interview question:

My first name reads "Hi-ro-shi", but many people call me "Kan" for different readings of the *kanji* character.

The Kikuchi Kan Chronicle is published every other month and chronicles the life of Kikuchi Kan. You can also read it on the website.
