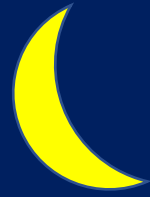


## Sakutaro and Music



“Ever since I was a child, I have been obsessed with music, to the point of it being nearly pathological. When I was very young, I used to only play a music box toy every day.... When I was a young man, I spent my days playing nothing but the accordion and the harmonica.” (*About Music*)

When he was in junior high school under the old system\*<sup>1</sup>, Sakutaro Hagiwara, who had even considered taking university entrance exams for music school, picked up the mandolin, a new Western instrument at the time. Then, shortly after moving to Tokyo, he began to study its performance under Kenpachi Hiruma\*<sup>2</sup> and others. After returning home to Maebashi, he continued to enjoy music throughout his life, including organizing a mandolin performance group.

“I use the rhythm of my poetry to express the sadness, joy, loneliness, and fear in my heart, as well as other complex, special kinds of emotion that cannot be expressed in words or sentences.” (*Howling at the Moon / Tsuki ni Hoeru: Preface*) The sense of rhythm in Sakutaro’s poetry may have also been cultivated through his musical experience.

\*1 Junior high school under the old system (a school which provided education equivalent to the level of today’s high schools, which existed before the educational system reforms following World War II.)

\*2 Kenpachi Hiruma (1867-1936. Musician who lived during the Meiji and Taisho periods. Pioneer of Japanese mandolin music)



Photo courtesy of Maebashi City Museum of Literature