江戸時代の天草では島原・天草一揆のため, 田畑は荒れ果て, 人々は日々の暮らしにも困っていました。心もすさび, あちこちで争いが絶えませんでした。その天草の復興に全力を尽くしたのが初代代官, 鈴木重成です。

23年の時をかけ, 天草を復興に導き民衆の命を救った鈴木重成とは, どんな人だったのでしょう。

◀鈴木重成の銅像(苓北町)

About 370 years ago, in 1637, *Shimabara-Amakusa-ikki* broke out. A lot of people in Amakusa lost their families, their farms and their will to live.

In 1641, Suzuki Shigenari came to Amakusa as the first officer after *Shimabara-Amakusa-ikki*. He planned many things and worked very hard to help people, but the lives of the people didn't get better.

In those days, people had to pay *nengu*, an annual tribute to the government, with rice, but in Amakusa they didn't have a lot of land to grow rice. They had to grow it on the mountainside, so it was not easy for them to get enough rice. But *nengu* in Amakusa was two times their actual harvest. They had nothing to eat after they paid it. Shigenari really worried about that. He thought, "People in Amakusa work very hard, but their lives will not get better because *nengu* is too high for them."

·break out　発生する

·farm　農地
·will　意志

·officer　代官

·lives　生活(lifeの複数形)

·in those days　当時
·pay　〜を払う
·annual tribute　年貢
·government　幕府

·two times　2倍
·actual　実際の
·harvest　収穫高
·nothing　何も〜ない
·paid　pay(払う)の過去形
·worry　心配する

Shigenari asked the government to reduce *nengu* again and again, but the government always said no. Even so, he never gave up until he died.

After Shigenari, his nephew Shigetoki came to Amakusa as an officer. He also tried hard to reduce *nengu* for Amakusa. Finally, the government reduced *nengu*, and the lives of the people in Amakusa got better.

·reduce　〜を引き下げる

·even so
　たとえそうであっても
·give up　あきらめる

·nephew　甥(おい)

·finally ついに

こうして, 天草は長い間の苦しみから救われることになりました。天草では, 今でも鈴木重成の功績をたたえて, お祭りをしている所がいくつもあります。

◀左から重辰, 重成, 正三和尚(重成の兄)(天草市)

After Reading

熊本にはゆかりのある人がたくさんいるモン

● (例)を参考にして, 熊本県やあなたが住んでいる地域にゆかりのある人を, 関係代名詞を使って説明しましょう。

(例) Suzuki Shigenari was a man who came to Amakusa as the first officer after *Shimabara-Amakusa-ikki*.