

[Forever, Robbie Robertson]

On August 9th, when the 78th atomic bomb memorial service was held in Nagasaki as Typhoon No. 6 approached western Kyushu, shocking news was broadcast from Los Angeles to the world. Robbie Robertson passed away at the age of 80. Although the base of his activities for more than half a century has been the United States, Robertson, who was born in Toronto and his mother is an indigenous Canadian of Mohawk descent, is Canadian. Upon hearing the news of his death, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took to Twitter to offer his condolences. He was the pride of the Canadian people.

Robertson's life journey overlaps with the evolution of rock music. During his childhood, he lost his father and grew up in a difficult environment, where he discovered music. His uncle taught him how to play the guitar on his mother's homestead indigenous reserve, and he progressed quickly. At 15, the Toronto prodigy started playing professionally and leading a band. American rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins saw Robertson as a genius the moment he heard him play guitar, and formed the five-piece Hawks as his backing band. In fact, these members became The Band.

In 1965 when Bob Dylan went from anti-war folk to electric, Robertson was selected as a guitarist for a concert tour. At that time, the 22-year-old and unknown Robertson is said to have urged Dylan to hire all of the Hawks as a condition of hiring him. Dylan accepted this condition. It is proof that Robertson's guitar skills were highly evaluated, and Hawks' playing ability was also of a high standard, but it clearly shows that he was a man who can be trusted with friendship. It's a beautiful anecdote in the ordinary entertainment industry it's usually said to aim for the top even if you knock others down.

The Band, led by Robertson, sprinted through the stormy 1960s while supporting Dylan. On the UK tour, he performed "Like a Rolling Stone" despite the jeering of traitor from the folk fanatics and anti-electric audience.

The Band's first album "Music from Big Pink" is an American music that blends rock, folk, blues, jazz and country. The sound is a return to organic nature and aspires to create a new sound. It was never a commercial success, but it had a big impact on many musicians who were tired of psychedelic and experimental music. The fifth track, "The Weight", was used as an insert song for the movie "Easy Rider", and is the band's signature song. It showed off not only Robertson's talent as a guitarist, but also his songwriting abilities.

The 1975 release of The Band's "Northern Lights - Southern Cross" is composed and written by Robertson, and is full of masterpieces. "Acadian Driftwood" depicts the sorrow of the French people who were defeated by the British in the French and Indian War of the 18th century. It's a manifestation of Canadian identity. The Band's farewell concert, with guest appearances by Dylan, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell and many others, was Robertson's initiative. The documentary film "The Last Waltz," directed by Martin Scorsese, traces The Band's 16-year trajectory and rock history itself. The soundtrack is a must-listen.

After the dissolution of The Band, Robertson continued various solo activities. "How To Become Clairvoyant" features Eric Clapton and BB King. The silver smoke guitar and vocals are proof that Robertson aged beautifully.

And in the midst of COVID-19, as part of the Playing for Change project, Robertson played "The Weight" while connecting artists from around the world, with Ringo Starr at the forefront. Char and other musicians participated from Japan. The 77-year-old Robertson gave a youthful performance while being mature and calm, showing the song's powerful vitality and encouraging power.

Long live Robbie Robertson.