

ZATOICHI ZATOICHI THE OUTLAW

For more background details on the history of the Shogunate, see our other liner notes, available on our website, www.animeigo.com; we do not have space to present them all here.

The Title: The original Japanese title, “Zatoichi Rooyaburi,” has been known among English-speaking fans for many years as “Zatoichi Breaks Jail.” This is somewhat of a misnomer due to the fact that while the word “rooyaburi” itself uses kanji characters for “jail” and “break,” it actually refers to an escapee, convict or outlaw. And, while “rooyaburi” can work as a pun in this case, we decided to use a title that would be less misleading, hence our translation of the title: “Zatoichi the Outlaw.”

“The peasants are the treasures of our nation! The nation would collapse without their hard labor. I was only thinking of their welfare, and thus of the nation's welfare. In my opinion, the Imperial Throne and the Shogunate don't matter anymore!”

Ohara Shusui, one of the main characters in this movie, is based on a historical figure named Ohara Yugaku (1797 - 1858), a philosopher and agricultural innovator who led a grassroots movement among peasants. Yugaku's beliefs are integral to the story.

O-Shino: Viewers will notice that the names of women in period movies such as this often start with “O-,” yet the same characters may get addressed without it elsewhere in the same movie. “O-” can be considered as one of the many terms of endearment that exist, but in modern times it is hardly used!

Anma, Zato- and Mekura: “Anma” refers to blind men, for whom giving massages was a traditional occupation. Another word for “anma” is “zato,” hence the main character Ichi is called “Zato-no-Ichi” (Ichi the Zato, or Ichi the Masseur), “Zato-Ichi” (or Zatoichi) for short. As in medieval Europe, in feudal Japan, the names of many people were based on their occupations. “Mekura” simply refers to the blind.

“Sure thing, sir. After all, you've traveled 2-ri to be here!”

A “Ri” is a unit of distance; a little less than four thousand meters or almost two and a half miles.

“A gambler's death is not a peaceful one.”

The original line makes a reference to the deathbed being on top of tatami, or a traditional Japanese woven mattress. Peaceful funeral rites were usually performed this way only for the ordinary people.

“No matter what, in the end, you'll lose, because they have the support of the Deputy of Kanto. Regardless of what happens, you'll be forced to sell your land, sir.”

“Kanto” refers to the eastern part of Japan, which consisted (at the time the story took place) of several major provinces.

“Hush, why don't you?! I was born with this big mouth of mine! Women, you see, will get old no

matter what! If you keep on whining... I'm gonna lump you all into a ball and suck you in!"
Kyo Utako, a famous stand-up comedienne, makes a cameo appearance in this scene. These lines are typical of her comedy routines.

"Her breasts, y'know... are, well... as fluffy and soft as Mochi!"

"Mochi" is a soft, rubbery food that is made of pounded rice. It is often consumed at holiday celebrations, and in rare circumstance results in the eater choking to death! This has resulted in a number of classic Japanese newspaper headlines ("Man celebrates 100th birthday, chokes to death on Mochi!")

"Oh? My daifuku got squashed! ...2...3...4... Hey! They're gone! Dammit! Who's the thief?!"
Daifuku" is a snack food made of mochi, with sweet bean paste inside, and is rather fragile.

"Last night I fell seven times... That's what's "eighting" me... La la la..."

Japanese puns are usually impossible to translate, and so we spend hundreds of hours during the translation attempting to come up with English versions that are precisely as lame as the originals. Here, the joke is on the use of numbers "7" and "8."

"I seem to remember that he once served the House of Kujo in the capital..."

Kyoto, the capital city of Japan at the time, was where the Emperor and his Imperial Court resided. The Kujo family was among the most powerful imperialists whose activities were centered around Kyoto.

"An imperialist?"

"They oppose the great Tokugawa Family, who have governed Japan for 300 years. They're insolent fools who want to rule the nation!"

In contrast, the Tokugawa Shogunate centered around the city of Edo.

For further reference, we suggest the following sources:

- 1) "Tokugawa Japan - The Social and Economic Antecedents of Modern Japan" Chie Nakane, Shinzaburoo Ooishi and Conrad Totman, eds. Univ. of Tokyo Press, 1990
- 2) "Japan - A Historical Survey" Mikiso Hane. Scribner, 1972
- 3) "A History of Japan: 1615 - 1867" George Sansom. Stanford Univ. Press, 1963