

DAGGER OF KAMUI

Song Notes: “Arororo” and “Hoochippu” are but two of the smattering of words from the language of the Ainu, the aboriginal peoples of Japan, that are used in the course of the film. According to the lyricist, Aji Yooko, the words were given to her to work into the song, and mainly for that reason, we cannot provide definitive meanings. However, more or less, “Arororo” is sort of sound one would make when one is singing a lullaby and “Hoo-chippu” is a kind of cadence, of the sort that one would use when rowing a boat. These explanations seem to fit the words as they are used in the song.

Many of the characters in *The Dagger of Kamui* are fictionalized versions of actual figures who lived during the period in which the film took place. For example, Andou Shouzan actually existed, and had a famous grandfather; one Andou Shoueki, with whom he shared many beliefs. We know much more about the older Andou; he was an ideologist and doctor, believed to have lived in the mid-Edo Period (exact dates unavailable). Born in Akita, he studied medicine and botany. He worked as a regional doctor at Hachi-nohei, a town in present-day Akita Prefecture. He was believed to have traveled to Nagasaki in order to learn about the situation in the world beyond Japan. He wrote a series of books called *Jinen Shin'eidoo*, running to some 100 volumes in all, of which only about 15 still exist today. He was highly critical of the ruling class, the bushi, or samurai, because they did nothing productive, and said in his works that those who don't do anything useful shouldn't eat. *Toodooshinden*, another of his works, ran five volumes, and was critical of the Chinese sages Confucius and Mencius, saying that they, too, produced nothing useful. He was vehemently opposed to Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism, and denied both the existence of ghosts and the validity of superstitions. He also made (for the time) extremist claims: for example, he maintained that the bushi (samurai), sages, and the like were thieves, because they ate without doing anything to earn their keep, and that everyone should be responsible for their own support, and thus should do their own farming, individually. Andou Shouzan also travelled to Nagasaki to study foreign languages, but that may not have been the only thing he was up to, because he was arrested and banished to Ezo (present-day Hokkaido).

Ooguri Koozukenosuke may be based on Ooguri Koozukenosuke Tadamasa (1827-1868). Together with one Shinmi Masaoki, he travelled to the U.S. in 1860 as a member of the Bakufu mission for ratification of the U.S.-Japan Friendship and Trade treaty. After his return from Japan, he took the position of Magistrate of Foreign Affairs, which had only recently been established, as well as Chief of the Navy. He worked hard to get French financial assistance in rebuilding the Tokugawa Government. A consistent advocate of fighting the rebels during the Booshin War, he was captured and beheaded by rebel forces.

(The term “bakufu” literally means “curtained government,” and refers to the Tokugawa Shogun's policy of conducting political business from behind a curtain. It eventually came to refer to the Tokugawa Government in general.

Amami Island is located between Kyuushuu and Okinawa.

Satsuma is present-day Kagoshima Prefecture, the southernmost prefecture in Kyuushuu.

Chooshuu, also known as Hagi-han, Moori-han, or Yamaguchi-han, is present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture, in the Chuugoku region of Japan.

It isn't explicitly mentioned in the film, but the background material specifies Virginia City, Nevada as the place where Jiro met Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain). Also, when Mark Twain explains the legend of Santa Catalina Island, he gives a distance of some 370 miles, in the subtitles. But in the original dialogue, he gives the distance as "some 600 kilometers." Since the metric system did not exist at this time, we took it upon ourselves to correct the anachronism, which was itself done for ease of understanding on the part of the original audience.

Iga, in present-day Mie Prefecture, was a major ninja stronghold during the Edo Period. The people of Iga were supporters of the Bakufu, and their ninja did a lot of work for the Government, as Shogunate spies and bodyguards. They were also involved in the Government's Teppotai, or riflemen unit.

The Booshin War is the general name given to a series of civil wars between the new Meiji Government and the old Tokugawa Shogunate, between 1868-1869. The name comes from a Chinese method of calendar nomenclature, one using a combination of a ten and a twelve-year cycle of specific Chinese characters. The characters from each cycle that meet in a given year make up that year's name. Matched alongside the Gregorian calendar, the result is that, among other things, every sixtieth year ending in eight is called "Booshin," because it so happens that that is when those two characters, read "Boo" and "Shin" in Japanese, meet in their cycles.

The Record of the Booshin War: At the Kogoshokaigi (a meeting in the Kyoto Imperial Palace) in December, 1867, the Anti-Shogunate forces decided to call for the resignation of the Tokugawa Shogun, and the restoration of his lands to the new government. The Bakufu's servants and two hans (fiefs), Aizu and Kuwana, became very upset upon hearing this, and attempted to attack Satsuma. However, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the 15th Tokugawa Shogun, tried to avoid battle, and told his people to do the same. But this did not sit well with the Satsuma leader, Saigo Takamori (a.k.a. Saigo Kichinosuke), who tried to find another excuse to go to war. He took many prisoners, to stir up riots in various parts of Japan, and thus incite the Tokugawa. This was the trigger that finally started the war, which began with the Battle of Toba-Fushimi, in January, 1868, ending in the Bakufu's defeat. The Chootei ("Imperial" - in this case, the Meiji government) troops, which consisted mainly of the forces of Satsuma and Chooshuu (hereinafter "Sat-Choo"), proceeded to Edo. Meanwhile, the French and English were choosing which sides to support, with France backing the Bakufu, and England providing arms to Sat-Choo. A French diplomat named Leon Roches tried to sell arms to the Bakufu, but here again, Tokugawa Yoshinobu declined. This action of Yoshinobu's is notable because it prevented Japan's eventual colonization by the Western powers. When Chootei forces reached Edo, the Bakufu avoided fighting by sacrificing Edo Castle, a decision reached in a famous meeting in the castle itself between Saigo Takamori and Katsu Kaishuu, a politician who had the respect of the Bakufu, and would later serve within the Meiji Government.

However, some Bakufu servants, as well as two additional hans, Sendai and Yonezawa, were not happy with this outcome. They still opposed the Imperial forces in the Toohoku and Hokuetsu

regions (the northern regions of Honshuu), in a part of the conflict which became known as the Toohoku War. After severe fighting, they were defeated by the Imperialists at the end of Sept., 1868. The final stand took place at Goryookaku Fortress, in Hakodate, Hokkaidoo, by Enomoto Takeaki, Vice-Chief of the Former Navy of the Bakufu. With its fall, the Booshin War came to an end, on May 18, 1869.

One legacy of the Booshin War is that because the British backed the winning side, they had the inside track on later commerce; thus, for example, Japanese trains use the same gauge as British ones.

Saigo Takamori (1827-77) was born in Satsuma-han. He was the leader of Sonnoujooiundoo (the Emperor-Worship and Exclusion of Foreigners Movement), and the Toobakuundoo (The Anti-Bakufu Movement). He strived for the alliance between Satsuma and Chooshuu, and the restoration of the Emperor as ruler of Japan. He was a staff officer during the Booshin War. After the Meiji Restoration, he became a leader in the New Government, and enacted such new laws as the one which abolished han (fiefs) and replaced them with ken (prefectures). In 1873, he put forth the Seikanron, the Theory that Japan should conquer Korea, in order to keep the samurai, who had been stripped of much of their power and hereditary privileges in the Restoration, distracted and non-threatening to the homeland. However, the idea was opposed by other leaders, such as Iwakura Tomomi and Ookubo Toshimichi. Having returned from their missions to the West, they argued that Japan had to put its domestic concerns first. Saigo lost the conflict, and returned to his home, which was now called Kagoshima Prefecture. There, he established a private school, and devoted himself to children's education. However, the aforementioned samurai soon began to riot all over Japan. Massing a force of some 15,000, they chose Saigo as their leader, and in February, 1877, marched in armed revolt, in what became known as the Seinan War, the last and largest of the samurai revolts against the Meiji Government. But after they failed to take Kumamoto Castle, and surrendered to Government forces in Joozan, Kagoshima Prefecture in September of that same year, Saigo committed seppuku (ritual suicide).

The following books were of great help to us in preparing these notes.

Nihonshi Jiten (Dictionary of Japanese History). Copyright Oobunsha 1968. Second Edition, 1992.

Shookai Nihonshi (Detailed Japanese History). Copyright Oobunsha 1988. 1992 Edition.

Kamui no Komoriuta (Kamui's Lullaby)

Lyrics by Agi Yooko

Music by Uzaki Ryuudoo

Arranged by Hagita Michiteru

Performed by Watanabe Noriko

Arororo... Call his name
I too bring about trouble.
Arororo... If you call his name
your heart will be upset,
and you won't be able to sleep.

Arororo... Aitsu no na o yonde.
Watashi mo komarimono.
Arororo... Aitsu no na o yobeba
kokoro ga sawaide
nemurenai.

Hoochippu... I feel as if I'm drowning in tears.
Hoochippu... Put this love to sleep.
Hoochippu... Even my being able to see him...
Hoochippu... was in a momentary dream.

Hoochippu... Namida de oboresoo sa.
Hoochippu... Kono koi nekasetasukete yo.
Hoochippu... Aitsu ni aeru no sae...
Hoochippu... tsuka no ma yume no naka da yo.

Hoochippu... Now paddle, put out your canoe.
Hoochippu... Go on, paddle,
to the land of sleep.

Hoochippu... Sore koge canoe dashite.
Hoochippu... Yare koge nemuri no kuni e.

Theme: Kamui no Ken (The Dagger of Kamui)

Lyrics by Agi Yooko

Music by Uzaki Ryuudoo

Arranged by Hagita Michiteru

Performed by Watanabe Noriko

It's not as if we made a promise
but it's the same as if we did.
When I was touched by his heat
I felt I could risk
even tomorrow.

Yakuosoku shita wake ja nai keredo
yakusoku shita no to onaji koto sa.
Aitsu no atsusa ni fureta toki
ashita o kakete mo
ii to omotta yo.

"God of the forest,
god of the wind"
Bring him back, bring him back...
"God of the forest
god of the wind"
...that man who made me crazy.

Shiranba kamui (Mori no kami)
Rera kamui (Kaze no kami)
Aitsu o aitsu o tsuremodoshite.
Shiranba kamui
Rera kamui
Watashi o kuruwaseta otoko.

Don't cause me embarrassment.
At least, at least,
kiss me goodbye...
You who became the wind.
You who became the wind.

Though it would normally be women
who can recolor history
in the places where he ran through
even the grasses and trees
line up and bow.

“God of the forest,
god of the wind”
I'm too sweet on him...
“God of the forest
god of the wind”
...that man who captivated me.

I'll be longing for that first sheath
no matter, no matter
how far apart we may be...
You who became the wind.
You who became the wind.

Haji o kakaseru mon ja nai wa.
Semete semete
wakare no kuchizuke o...
Kaze ni natta aitsu.
Kaze ni natte aitsu.

Rekishi o nurikaerareru no wa
hontoo wa onna no hazu na no ni
aitsu ga hashitta ato ni wa
kusaki mo narande
ojigi o shiteru.

Shiranba kamui
Rera kamui
Aitsu ni aitsu ni amasugiru wa.
Shiranba kamui
Rera kamui
Watashi o madowaseta otoko.

Moto no saya ga koishikunaru wa
donna donna
tooku ni hanarete mo...
Kaze ni natta aitsu.
Kaze ni natta aitsu.