娘子隊 Joshitai (Women’s Troop)

Next come the Joshitai, (or Fujinbui) who were a group of Aizu female fighters. The most famous member was Takeko Nakano (1846-1868) who wanted to participate in the Boshin Civil War. She was given information about a princess (Teruhime) who needed protection in the town of Bange in the north. In an attempt to prove her worth she went to Bange to offer Teruhime her protection. After a couple of days, she realized that she had been lied to about the princess, so she rushed back to Aizu, but unfortunately, she was killed in battle on the way back. Other women heard this story and were inspired to begin fighting for the Aizu Clan.

姫刀隊 Naginata-tai (Long Sword Troop)

The final group in the parade is the Naginata-tai. The naginata is a sword with a long handle used by the female warriors during the Boshin Civil War. Girls in local schools still study the use of this weapon today.

攻武隊 / 会津新選組 Genbu-tai & Aizu Shinsengumi

Members of the Genbu-tai, and Aizu-shinsengumi are the final groups featured. The Aizu Shinsengumi were disbanded soldiers of the Shinsengumi (stationed in Kyoto) who returned to Aizu to fight.

ヘンリースネル / おけい Henry Schnell & Okei

Henry Schnell, a Prussian merchant, worked in Aizu selling weapons to the Clan. However, these weapons were old-fashioned relics left over from the American Civil War and various wars in Europe and they were no match for the new rifles used by the Emperor’s forces. He was allotted a residence, and a Japanese name: Hiramatsu Buhe. He also led a group of Aizu people in a failed attempt to set up the Wakamatsu Colony at Gold Hill, Eldorado, California. Accompanying this group was the Schnell family nanny, Okei (17), who consequently became the first Japanese woman to emigrate. Sadly, she died in 1871, only two years after arriving in the United States.

斗南藩 Tonamihan (Tonami Clan)

The next group in the parade is the Tonami Clan from Aomori, with their leader, also named Matsudaira. After the war, the people of Aizu were forced to give up the clan system and follow the orders of the Meiji government. The ruling class was given two options: either to stay in Aizu and work as farmers (the lowest class under the shogun system) or they could move north to try to regain influence. About 4000 of these people decided to move north. The Aizu Shinsengumi were disbanded soldiers of the Shinsengumi (stationed in Kyoto) who returned to Aizu to fight.

八重とその家族 Yae Niijima (Yamamoto) and Her Family

The main character of the 2013 Taiga Historical Drama “Yae no Sakura,” Yae Niijima (Yamamoto) and her family and related characters. Yae Niijima fought for the Aizu Clan nearly 145 years ago during the Boshin Civil War at the last stronghold of the Aizu Clan, Tsuruga-jo Castle.
the task of policing Kyoto. In Kyoto there were several people from the same Matsudaira family as the Aizu Clan. 

His allies had a stronghold. The Shinsengumi had units from Hino & Aizu and the soldiers all came from the work-
in the official bureau of the Aizu Clan.

Defended the castle. A government officially headed by the Emperor was finally established after the Aizu Clan, 

Northern clans all fought hard against combined western and imperial armies, but Aizu refused to fall. The castle

Tsurugajo

1803, which trained the Aizu clan’s Samurai. The Matsudairas led Wakamatsu and the Aizu Clan to join with the

Minami Aizu area by the Shogunate. Following Hoshina is his elder advisor and his daughter,

The Hoshina family was later given the title of

Ashina, Date, Gamō, Uesugi, Katō, Hoshina, and Matsudaira.

These colorful characters were the servants of the samurai, and accompanied them for entertainment as well as protection. They carried spears and weapons, and chanted as they walked. They were always bearded!

In front of each group are flags bearing the names of the Daimyo (Feudal Lord) families who led the region and manned Aizu’s castle. Tsurugajo, through the ages… Ashina, Date, Gamō, Uesugi, Katō, Hoshina, and Matsudaira.

The Matsumoto family was in power in Aizu at the time.

The Shinsengumi was also given the task of protecting the Miura Peninsula at the entrance of Edo (Tokyo) Bay along with this group, the Yokosuka Kaikoku Katchutai.

After 1810, the Aizu Clan was also given the task of protecting the entrance to the Miura Peninsula. At the entrance to Edo (Tokyo) Bay along with this group, the Yokosuka Kaikoku Katchutai.

Following Hoshina is his elder advisor and his daughter, Kikuhime (Princess Kikus), accompanied by her ladies in waiting. The rest of the parade is devoted to people connected with the Byakkotai and the Boshin Civil War (1868). The Matsudaira family was in power in Aizu at the time.

The Hoshina family was later given the title of Matsudaira by the Shogun, marking a strengthening of ties between the Aizu and the Shogun. The Matsudaira family led the Nishinshikan school in 1803, which trained the Aizu clan’s Samurai. The Matsudairas led Wakamatsu and the Aizu Clan to join with the Shogun’s forces in the Boshin Civil War that broke out in 1868. Two southern forces supporting the Emperor attacked the Shogun, the Choshu from Yamaguchi Prefecture, and the Satsuma from Kagoshima Prefecture. The Northern clans all fought hard against combined western and imperial armies, but Aizu refused to fall. The castle—

Tsurugajo—was under siege for an entire month starting in August of 1868, during which it was bombarded heavily with cannon fire. It is said that there were 20,000 soldiers in the invading army, while just 3,000 Aizu soldiers defended the castle. A government officially headed by the Emperor was finally established after the Aizu Clan, lead by Lord Matsudaira, surrendered on Sept. 23, 1868. Featured at this point in the parade are the public servants in the official bureau of the Aizu Clan.

The Shinsengumi was stationed in Kyoto and was given the role of policing the city where the Emperor and his allies had a stronghold. The Shinsengumi had units from Hino & Aizu and the soldiers all came from the working classes. After the opposition gained strength, the Shinsengumi disbanded, and many of the soldiers came to assist with the war in Aizu.

The troops in the Aizu armies were organized by age. Members of the Suzakutai were between the ages of 18 and 35, and members of the Seiriuyu-tai were between 36 and 49 years old.

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