

Sakon's Haunted Helmet



Losing the Boshin war led to the fall of the Edo Bakufu, which had lasted nearly 300 years. One of the battles was at Toriitai in Noheji.

The top General, Kimura Hanshiro, was in charge of the

Tsugaru Army. General Kimura attacked at Toriitai with 180 soldiers by his side. They struck at the old government, Nambu, and its general, Tochinai Yohei. General Tochinai had an army of 200 soldiers. Although the Nambu Army was greater in size, the Tsugaru soldiers pushed the Nambu soldiers back from Makado to Daikansho. As much as the Nambu Army tried to push back, the Tsugaru Army was closing in on them. In a blazing show of strength, the Nambu Army was able to push the Tsugaru Army back to Toriitai. At last, after being exhausted from the tug of war in battle, the time for victory or defeat to be decided had come. The two armies glared daggers at each other, but no man would step forward.

Then, a brave Samurai with an eye-catching helmet took a step forward. "I", he shouted, "am Kojima Sakon Sadakuni. I am a soldier of the Tsugaru Army! Who will fight me?"



From the Nambu side, a young, gallant soldier stepped forward. "I" he shouted, " am Obara Suezou from Shichinohe! Let's fight!"

Racing forward, the two soldiers clashed their swords together. The swords sparked with every fierce strike and blow. The two soldiers were evenly matched. They fought on and on.

From the distance, both the Generals and many of their fellow soldiers felt they could do nothing but watch. However, one soldier from the Nambu Army decided to step forward. He picked up a heavy log and came closer the battle. With both Sakon and Suezou fighting so desperately, the Nambu soldier was unsure of how to strike Sakon. But when Sakon turned his back to Makado, the Nambu soldier gathered up his strength and he struck Sakon on the using all of his might. Sakon fell to the ground.



Suezou, seeing his chance, he delivered a killing blow to Sakon. Sakon heaved a painful breath and stared angrily at the Nambu soldier who had interfered in his battle. "You coward!" he wheezed, "I curse you and your family. It will

be seven generations before you are free of me!"With his curse laid upon the Nambu soldier, Sakon died. After the loss of Kojima Sakon Sadakuni, the Tsugaru Army was pushed back to Hiranai.

Obara Suezou gave Sakon's helmet to the soldier who had helped him as a reward. The soldier took the helmet back to his home as a souvenir. He proudly showed off Sakon's helmet, and told his family how he had helped defeat Sakon. Everyone in the house was proud of the victory and happy that the soldier safely came back.



At the end of the war, the soldier began building his business, and the family grew in prosperity. Sadly, it was not to last, and the soldier was suddenly struck down with a sickness and quickly passed away.

With the passing of her husband, the wife quickly took hold of the business and worked hard to keep it going. Unfortunately, with more bad fortune, the wife's parent became sick. While helping her parent get better, her child got into an accident and passed away. Soon the wife and the rest of her family were thrown into poverty.

No longer able to watch their misfortune silently, a business owner lent the family money to help them. With thanks the wife gave him her family's treasure, Sakon's helmet. He was overcome with joy and soon left with the helmet.

After two or three days, the business owner fell sick. The doctors could not explain the sudden illness. They could find no cause for the strange disease or prescribe no medicine to make him better. In desperation, his wife went to a local shaman to find some way to make her husband better. That day, the Shaman prayed frantically searching for an answer. When he returned to the business owner's wife, he told her, "The helmet has a curse, you must return it."

The wife was surprised that the answer was so simple. She quickly went to her



husband's bedside and took the helmet away, back to the soldier's wife. She told the soldier's wife that Sakon had been so angry that he put a terrible curse on the helmet. With the helmet far away, her husband's condition grew better day by day.

The soldier's wife brought Sakon's helmet to the Hachiman shrine and asked for them to pray for Sakon's forgiveness and disappeared. No one knew where the soldier's remaining family went.

To this day, Sakon's helmet resides at the Hachiman Shrine, and watches over life in Noheji.