



## Samurai Shifters

引っ越し大名！

2019/120min/Colour/English Subtitles

Distributor: Shochiku

Director: INUDO Isshin

Cast: HOSHINO Gen, TAKAHASHI Issey, TAKAHATA Mitsuki

### Online screening information:

**Tue 23 Feb** 48 hour rental window from 6.00pm

**Sat 6 Mar** 48 hour rental window from 10.00am

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**28 February from 12:00pm**

Celebrating: Cultural Partners:



The film *Samurai Shifters!* (*Hikkoshi Daimyō!*) is set during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). At that time, Japan consisted of a patchwork of feudal domains of various sizes, ruled by around 240 feudal lords known as *daimyō*. Within the borders of their domains, the *daimyō* possessed a great deal of independent power. They owned their own castles and retained their own armies and bureaucracies of loyal samurai retainers, they could set their own laws and punishments, and they possessed the power to collect taxes from the farmers and merchants who lived in their domains. However, the *daimyō* should not be thought of as being all powerful, since they were required to swear allegiance to the greatest *daimyō* in Japan, the Tokugawa shogun. The founder of the Tokugawa line, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) had won the right to govern Japan as a whole after defeating his enemies in battle in 1600 and being named as shogun (military ruler) by the Emperor three years later.

Throughout the 250 years of their rule, the Tokugawa kept a very watchful eye over the *daimyō*. Some they kept close as allies and invited to serve on their ruling council, but others they had a much more uneasy relationship with. The Tokugawa devised many policies to keep the power of *daimyō* in check. They were forbidden to marry, form alliances, or build new castles (or even repair old ones) without Tokugawa approval. The question of which son would inherit a *daimyō's* domain required Tokugawa consent, and all *daimyō* were required to spend alternate years living in the shogun's capital city of Edo. If the Tokugawa suspected any *daimyō* of plotting against them, they also had the power to confiscate a *daimyō's* territory entirely, to disinherit the lord, and force him to disband his retainers.

The Tokugawa also possessed the power to require a *daimyō* to move to an entirely different fief, which is the topic dealt with in this film. This process, known as *kunigae* or *tenpō*, could require the *daimyō*, his retainers and their families to move perhaps hundreds of miles across Japan, bringing all of their possessions with them. As the film depicts, it was a logistical and financial nightmare for any domain ordered to do it. *Kunigae* could take place for various reasons including punishment for breaking any of the many rules imposed on *daimyō*, but sometimes a change to a larger, more productive, or better located fief was bestowed to reward a *daimyō* who had served the Tokugawa well.

The *daimyō* depicted in the film, Matsudaira Naonori (1642-1695) was a real historical figure who was virtually bankrupted by the number of times he was required to move fief by the Tokugawa. His father was ordered to move twice and died during one of the moves. Naonori was required to move fief an unprecedented three times between 1682 and 1692, and became known as the *hikkoshi* (housemoving) *daimyō*.

**Dr. Alan Cummings**

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