

## NINJAS FAMOSOS

**Sasuke Sarutobi: Sarutobi** (Monkey Jump) was a ninja renowned for his acrobatic abilities and absolute loyalty. It was said that he lived in the trees with monkeys, and his athletic ability was such that he could dodge the fastest warrior, ducking and jumping around a sword slash.

One famous story was when he was sent by his master to spy on the shogun, who had declared his master a rebel.

Sarutobi made a successful entry into the Shoguns castle, and overheard discussions regarding an attack on his master. Unfortunately, as he attempted to slip out of the castle, he was spotted by guards. Sarutobi was a master of evasion, and had experienced similar situations before. he used a springboard to leap a very high wall, but unfortunately, he leapt straight into a bear trap. In order to escape, he is reputed to have amputated his own foot, and hobbled off. He realised that in this state, escape was impossible, so took his life in front of the guards, who disposed of his body in the Castle moat.

This story takes another twist; Hattori Hanzou Masashige, who was a ninja loyal to the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu saw the death of Sarutobi, and then disguised himself as the ninja. A second ninja, sent to check on Sarutobi's progress found it difficult, but not impossible to enter the castle - unaware that Hanzou had allowed this to happen. Hanzou then crept around the castle in the same fashion as Sarutobi, and even attacked and disabled two guards to make his ruse more convincing. The second ninja saw this, and also overheard a conversation between two guards concerning the remarkable escape of Sarutobi. The ninja returned to his master, and reported that since Sarutobi was still at large, the Shogun would not have time to launch a campaign against him. Very shortly after the ninja had delivered his report, the Shogun's warriors surrounded the rebels castle, and held them under siege.

**Hattori Hanzou Masashige:** Arguably the most famous ninja in history, the tales of **Hattori Hanzou** are still told in Japanese History books, although Hanzou is described as a *bushi* (warrior) from Iga Province instead of a ninja.

He was born in 1541 as the son of Hattori Nazo Yasunaga, a vassal to the Tokugawa family, and was raised in the martial ways. A master of the spear (he is still known in Japan as the "great lancer"), his first battle was in 1557 when Tokugawa Ieyasu (the Shogun) attacked Uzichijo. He showed remarkable fighting skill, and was involved in many more battles including (but not limited to) the battle at Kanagawa in 1570 and at Mikatagahara in 1572. After the murder of **Oda Nobunaga** (A famous Samurai warlord), he and a Koga ninja by the name of **Taro Shiro** helped the shogun escape by using Goton-Jutsu (The skills of escape by use of the five elements *chi, sui, fu, moku* and *kin*)

Hanzou eventually died during a battle against the Fuma ninja, in 1596. Their leader **Fuma Kotaro** was an expert in striking Tokugawa's installations and causing great damage, so Hanzou was ordered to kill him. Hanzou ordered the construction of a fleet of large boats, armed with heavy cannon, as he knew the Fuma ninja had only a few light boats with little or no arms. When the fleet was completed, Hanzou led the fleet around the seas to scour the Fuma ninja. Off the Suo coast, the fleet came across a small group of Fuma boats. The fleet manoeuvred to get within range, and then laid down a steady barrage of fire. All of the Fuma ships was destroyed except two which had stayed out of range. One boat was on fire, and appeared to be disabled. Hanzou ordered his gunboats to move towards the boat slowly so that a concerted barrage could finish off the ship. As they were manoeuvring, the tide changed, drawing all the boats into a narrow channel. Hanzou gave the command to begin evasive action, but then it was discovered that all the gunship's had had their rudders destroyed by Fuma Ninja using underwater techniques. Hanzou ordered the gunpowder to be dumped into the ocean, but there was insufficient time for this, so the men abandoned ship to find the water saturated with oil. When the ships collided, the ocean was turned into an inferno, killing Hanzou and his men. Fuma Kotaro stood on the deck of his command ship, the remaining one which had stayed well out of range and watched the death of the greatest ninja who ever lived.

**Momochi Sandayu: *Momochi Sandayu*** (also believed to be known as **Fujibayashi Nagato** - the third most famous ninja Jonin: see below.) descended from Otomo family in the Iga province. It is said that Iga was controlled by three ninja families; Hattori controlled the middle, Fujibayashi the north, and Momochi the south. Sandayu was *soke* (head of family) of three ninjutsu schools; **Momochi ryu**, **Gyokko ryu** and **Koto ryu**. His main home during the 1570's was in Ryugu Sanbonmatsu, however he is believed to have had three homes (and three families) and if the pressure became too extreme on one of his homes, he would switch to one of the others, and assume a new identity. After Nobunagas invasion, he is believed to have gone east, and settled as a farmer in Kii province. His grave was recently discovered close to one of his homes 15 miles south of Iga-Ueno (where the museum of ninjutsu is situated). The ancestors of Sandayu still reside in one of his houses, but they no longer have any ninjutsu connection, apart from a family tree containing the name of the legendary Sandayu.

**Fujibayashi Nagato: *Fujibayashi Nagato*** was a ninja jonin active around the same period as Momochi Sandayu. He worked quite a distance away from the main area of Momochi Sandayu's activities (North Iga as opposed to Momochi at the South), and was feared almost as much. However, it is believed that Momochi Sandayu and Fujibayahi Nagato were in fact the same person, as Momochi Sandayu was mentioned in a journal describing Oda Nobunagas invasion of Iga province in 1581 for his courage and gallantry, but there is no mention of Fujibayashi Nagato.

**Fuma Kotaro:** *Fuma Kotaro* was the fifth generation jonin head of Fuma Ryu Ninjutsu. His ryu worked in support of Odawara's Hojo family, specialising in Guerilla tactics. Fuma Kotaro's most famous battle was in March 1581, when troops of Takeda set up their fortress in Ukishimagahara, and the Hojo set up camp across the Osegawa river from them. The Fuma group crossed the river and attacked the Takeda group several times at night, and drove the Takeda camp into disorder with ninja tactics. By the time of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Fuma Ryu had degenerated into a gang of pirates operating in the Inland Sea. Fuma Kotaro and his followers are believed to have been responsible for the death of Hattori Hanzou in 1596.

Iga province ninjutsu