



FACT SHEET #7: Gutsy Samurai Girls – Nakano Takeko

Nakano Takeko was highly skilled with the naginata. The naginata is a long staff with a curved blade at one end.

Samurai of the Aizu clan, supporters of the shogunate, were left to defend their stronghold of Wakamatsu Castle without any hope of outside assistance. Heavily outnumbered by an army of 20,000 men, the 3,000 Aizu samurai mobilized anyone who could use a weapon. A small band of approx 20 women of the castle organized a unit to fight on the front line of this battle.

Nakano Takeko charged into enemy lines, cutting down many men. She was only stopped by being shot in the chest. In order to avoid being taken by the enemy, her sister Yuko removed Nakano's head, as they had previously agreed upon, and Yuko took the head home in honor. Today there is a monument erected to Nakano Takeko at in the Hokai temple in Aizu Bangemachi, Fukushima province.

