



FACT SHEET #8: Gutsy Samurai Girls – Tomoe Gozen *

Tomoe was a general in the troops of Kiso Yoshinaka, her husband Minamoto Yoritomo's first attack force. She is described as exceptionally strong and hauntingly beautiful, with the ivory complexion of a noblewoman. She fought not only with a naginata, but with the traditional samurai katana.

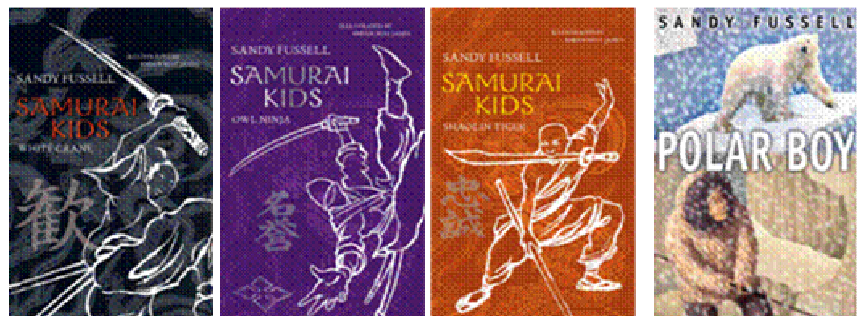
Her final act on the field of battle became the subject of many plays and poems. On the verge of defeat, Yoshinaka ordered her to retreat, stating "It would be a disgrace to have it said that Lord Kiso was accompanied by a woman in his final battle."



Ignoring the command, she rode directly at the enemy, beheading the strongest warrior. Legend says she was taken captive by Wada Yoshimori with whom she would later have a son who would in turn become a famous warrior.

Although she has been a popular subject Tomoe has never been conclusively established as a genuine historical figure.

* Gozen is the traditional suffix used for a wife of a samurai



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