

Grand Master Masaaki Hatsumi



Hatsumi Yoshiaki was born 2'nd December 1931 in Noda (Just North of Tokyo), he later changed his first given name to Masaaki. His father introduced him to Kendo when he was 7 years old, he also studied Judo and Karate. In Junior High School he was a gymnast, boxer and the Captain in the Junior High School soccer team. He also studied social dancing which he believes helped him with the footwork in his Budo training. In his College years he continued to practice Boxing and Judo, he belonged to the Judo and Drama clubs and studied Theater Arts.

During his studies in Medical School, he received 4th Dan in Judo. He was asked to teach Judo to the American soldiers at the Yokota Army Base, which he accepted. He was in his early 20's and found that the big Americans seemed to have size and natural ability and Hatsumi found that they were learning in months what took the typical Japanese years. He began to question his training... What good is a martial art if a bigger or stronger person could easily defeat you? Hatsumi began searching for a true warrior tradition. He paid a teacher of Kobudo 300.000 Yen each month to come to the Dojo at his home to teach him Kobujutsu Juuhappan (the 18 categories of Kobujutsu). He completed this training in three years.

When he was 26 years old he met [Takamatsu Toshitsugu](#) in Kashiwabara City west of the Iga region in Japan. He traveled across Honshu Island every weekend for fifteen years to study with his teacher. The train ride took him over a half day from his home in Noda to Takamatsu's home in Kashiwabara.

Takamatsu wrote a poem to Hatsumi, which reads...

*"In the days of the Tenei era
there was a great master of Koppo. He
was calm and peaceful like the flowers of
spring time. Yet he was so brave that not
even 10,000
enemies could make him show fear. He
could even strike down a wild animal with
but a single blow."*



After 15 years of studying, Takamatsu Toshitsugu died 83 years old in his home in Nara (just East of Osaka) in 1972. A few years earlier Takamatsu had already decided that Hatsumi would be the next sole inheritor and "Soke" (Family head) of...

- 1) Togakure-ryu Ninpo Happo Biken, 34th Soke
- 2) Gyokko-ryu Kosshijutsu Happo Biken, 28th Soke
- 3) Kukishin ryu Taijutsu Happo Biken, 28th Soke
- 4) Shindenfudo-ryu Dakentaijutsu Happo Biken, 26th Soke
- 5) Gyokushin-ryu Ninpo Happo Biken, 21th Soke
- 6) Koto-ryu Koppojutsu Happo Biken, 18th Soke
- 7) Takagi-yoshin-ryu Jutaijutsu Happo Biken, 17th Soke
- 8) Gikan-ryu Koppojutsu Happo Biken, 15th Soke
- 9) Kumogakure-ryu Ninpo Happo Biken, 14th Soke



Since Hatsumi Sensei created the [Bujinkan dojo](#) and elevated the art to new levels. He changed the grading qualifications from Bujinkan Ninpo Taijutsu to Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu. It was done to reflect growing ability of students to train in a wider range of the Bujinkan arts. Sensei was awarded the title Todo Hanshi (Master teacher of the way of the sword) on February 11th by Nakazawa Toshi, President of Zen Nippon Todo Renmei (Japan Sword Federation).

Since Hatsumi Sensei initiation he had traveled around the world spreading his art and philosophy. He wrote many books and made a wide variety of instructional Videos. He received many awards and gratification from the highest people in power. To list them all will be a heavy task. Just by reading his short biography you truly begin to feel what wonderful human being and martial artist he is.