

## FACT SHEET #2: Legendary Samurai – Sasaki Kojiro

Sasaki Kojirō (1585 - 1612) was a prominent Japanese swordsman who died in battle against Miyamoto Musashi.

According to legend, Musashi purposefully arrived over three hours late to unnerve and anger his opponent. When Kojirō attacked, his blow almost severed Musashi's topknot.



Kojiro came close to victory several times until, blinded by the sunset behind his opponent, Musashi struck him on the skull with his bokken (wooden sword) which was over 90 centimeters long. Musashi used his wakizashi to fashion the long bokken from the spare hardwood oar of the boat in which he arrived at the duel.

Another version of the legend says when Musashi finally arrived, Kojirō shouted insults at him but Musashi just smiled. Blinded by rage, Kojirō leapt into combat, attempting his famous "swallow cut." Musashi's oversized bokken hit Kojiro first, causing him to fall before he could finish his stroke. Musashi smashed Kojiro's rib, puncturing his lungs and killing him. Musashi wasn't pleased to have killed his opponent and this was his last fatal duel.

