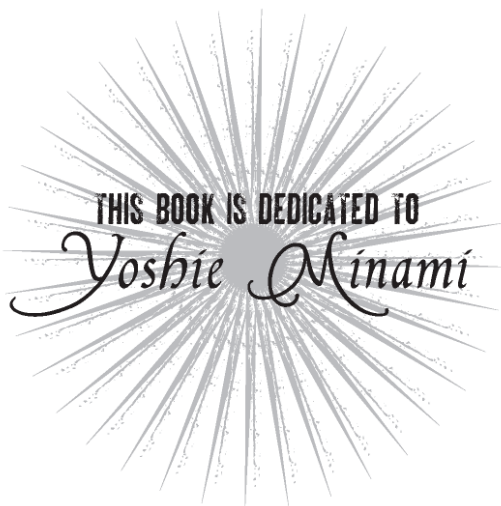




SHINOBI SOLDIERS II
A FURTHER INVESTIGATION INTO THE NINJA

BY

ANTONY CUMMINS



A HISTORICAL NINJUTSU PRODUCT





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WARNING!

UPON HEARING THAT I WAS TRANSLATING THE SHONINKI OTHERS HAVE RUSHED OUT WITH THEIR VERSIONS WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE BEFORE MINE. I WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU THAT WE HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO RUSH OUR VERSION ONTO THE MARKET AS WE WISH THE QUALITY TO BE UNMATCHED. WE TRUST YOU WILL TEST THE QUALITY OF EACH VERSION WITH HONESTY!



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AUTHOR'S NOTES

Welcome to *Shinobi Soldiers volume II: A Further investigation into the Ninja*. The first volume in this series discussed and displayed what was *not* a ninja and how the media and modern or Neo-ninjutsu has deformed the true image of Historical Ninjutsu. This second volume is intended as a basis to understand and re-establish the concept of a ninja from a medieval standpoint and to give the reader an understanding of the dimensions of ninjutsu in a historical context. In short, this book will explain to you what the concept *ninja* meant to a person of medieval Japan and help reshape the image of ninjutsu back to its original form, before the so called “X-Kans” took a hold. The first book met with either, total approval or dire hatred, the reason for this was the nature of the investigation. For those who are considered to be Neo-ninja, *Shinobi Soldiers* poses a threat in one area alone and while it is only a relatively small area in Historical Ninjutsu, it is a massive issue for “X-kans”. That is the issue of martial arts. I have tried and tried to establish a link with the Bujinkan and the Genbukan people with varying outcomes. This is understandable, for to

admit that the ideas inside of *Shinobi Soldiers* are correct is to admit that their training in ninjutsu is false. However, this is not strictly the case at all. Most Neo-ninjas do not understand that what they are doing is quite close to real ninjutsu in certain ways and there are in fact not many things that they are doing wrong in terms of Historical Ninjutsu. For one they are learning a form of Kobudo or old martial arts (admittedly with varying levels of skill) and are studying ninjutsu in a historical context and even in some cases brushing against true ninjutsu. The problem here is in pride and semantics. Historical Ninjutsu is becoming 'fashionable' and of real interest, thus the world of the "X-kans" will soon be left behind and the longer it fails to adjust to the reality of the shinobi the further it will get away from the truth. If only those people could come to terms with the fact that they are practicing martial arts and seldom do any ninjutsu, then they could move on and truly make headway in the search for the ninja. There are many of you out there, searching for the ninja yet trapped by the image you have created. It is time for a new era and time for the truth. Eventually as the generations pass the time of the Neo-ninja will fade and all that will be left is a researchers nightmare, however, if they come forward and look at the plain facts, alter their viewpoints and truly start to study ninjutsu, the benefit for all would be overwhelming. The reason that Historical Ninjutsu needs to be told is the fact that the ninja were far more formidable then image would have them and it is with a great shame

that they are constantly pushed back under a mountain of falsehoods. Thus I implore any “X-kan” out there reading this, what you are doing is a positive thing but it is not ninjutsu as a whole, you should throw away your egos and truly come to terms with this next generation. I was once one of you, believing, trusting, even though the idea of Neo-ninjutsu did not add up. It truly matters which is true and which is false in ninjutsu because ninjutsu represents the perfect human, the peak of where humanity has been to, we can not let image and prestige get in the way of telling such a great history and projecting the future of the Shinobi Soldier.

For those people who are external to the world of ninjutsu and this book is an opening into this mysterious world then welcome. Here you will find the starting point for your research. So often when people investigate something they take a direct path, a direct route which is often the worse case and the worst starting point. This book will take the overall approach and look at the ninja through the world they live in, the religions the practice and the agreements they made, in short, this is the world of the ninja.

ANTONY CUMMINS



CHAPTER 1

CLARIFYING THE NINJA

IS NINJA THE CORRECT WORD TO USE?

All words have different connotations at different times, for example *Bonfire Night*. This is the English festival held on November the 5th. It is a night of fun, fires and fireworks, a joyous occasion for all involved. However, if you go back two hundred years, the meaning of this night takes on a new angle, it is a protestant strike at the Catholic Church and a celebration of the defeat of a catholic attempt to destroy parliament. Also, the word Villain, an ethnic group or even the word peasant, who in essence were 'free' as appose to slaves, all words have history and connotations attached to them. So what do we know about the word ninja? Volume I of *Shinobi Soldiers* explores the words used for shinobi, so then why does the word ninja hold preference over all others, even over the word shinobi, which is the true name for ninja?

The *Bansenshukai* talks in depth about the word shinobi and the kanji used and why they used it. We know that shinobi as a word was well used and it can be constructed of differing kanji, but what made this name stick above all? Dr Nakashima has the theory that the word Shinobi and its derivatives can be understood as an umbrella term that covers all activities used by the shinobi and all other words are

placed under the eaves of the umbrella. This theory does stand up so far as it would appear that the word shinobi is the base route for things covering ninjutsu.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

- The word shinobi is well documented as ancient and long in use.
- The Bansenshukai states that the ninja spread across all Japan and have been called many things.
- Historical documents normally use the word shinobi within it to determine what the document contains and yet at the same time uses other words for ninja to explain individual episodes or contextual meanings. Further to the above, documentation use the base kanji for shinobi and then add a second kanji to explain that the verb is being done in a creeping way. For example, Shinobi-Iru (忍び入る) *to enter in a stealthy way* or Shinobi-Iku (忍び行く) *to go discreetly*.

What does this mean for a western mind and how does it affect our understanding of the shinobi?

The main point here goes back to a very old argument, the issue of whether shinobi is a verb or a name? It would appear that the use of shinobi was primarily a verb and was used to describe an action

before it became a name. This has always been and will be a set in language. First the action, then the description and then the actions name. A simple example of this can be found in the word *Preacher*. A preacher is a person who preachers to others. After time these men and women became known as “preachers” as they were people who preached. This is exactly the same for a shinobi (theoretically). At first there were those who “crept in”, maybe a volunteer or then man best suited for the job. Then it became a skill, a skill that needed a name. So a person was doing the act of shinobi, that is creeping in/stealing, hence the base root word and kanji, shinobu 忍. Then it moves on and we start to see the adoption of a person who deals with this skill, the Shinobi no mono 忍の者 then later the particle ‘の’ is dropped and we see the word change to ninja 忍者. So from a verb, to a name the word ninja has developed (theoretically).

The second section to this discussion falls into the individual names used for shinobi. We know that many names were used throughout history, direct ones that apply to the ninja are vivid and versatile. Also they share a main commonality; they are descriptions of what the shinobi did.

早道の者

Hayamichi No Mono

*Lit. 'quick distance person' implying they could cover
distances at speed*

奸, 蟠, 蟠物見

“Kamari” or “Kagamari Monomi”

'They who walk stooped over in a bush'

歩き巫女

Aruki Miko

Lit. 'Walking shrine maiden'

忍の兵

Shinobi no Tsuwamono¹

'Shinobi Soldiers'

偷組

Nusumigumi

Lit. 'Stealing Group or Troop of Thieves'

As one can see the names correspond to the style of ninjutsu they do or more often refer to the performance they carry out during their operations. In the same light we see that a priest, friar, vicar, padre and bishop are all *preachers* by definition, however

¹ If the particle の is taken out this word changes to
Ninpei

each of the individual names identifies them in a solid way and establishes their function within the world of preaching. Thus, we can see that the world of the shinobi is comparable to this analogy, *shinobu* is the skill needed to perform a job, a *shinobi no mono* is a person who *does* that job, and under the heading of *shinobi no mono* are the multiple names used to refer to the individual shinobi, names that identify what tasks they performed.

This means that we could consider that the word shinobi was well established across Japan during the Sengoku period and that if one used the term shinobi, the automatic reaction would be that the listener would understand you were talking about ninjutsu and they would then understand the conversation in this context. That means that one could use an alternative word for shinobi, such as rappa and yet the connotations and connection to shinobi would be evident and the base word shinobu would form in the persons mind.

In conclusion, we can start to understand how the ninja were viewed and connected. We can no longer imagine that a shinobi in the north of Japan was different to those in the south or that they had zero connection. We can now start to see a nation wide understanding of the term shinobi and the subsidiary terms that represent the differing functions the ninja in a historical and chronological context. This leads us on to the next topic, the reaction to the word ninja.

THE EARLIEST USE OF THE KANJI FOR SHINOBI

The kanji for the route word shinobi and its use to describe the ninja is 忍. There has been much debate about its age and use. *The Historical Ninjutsu Research Team* has been able to identify the use of this kanji back to the late 1300's as it was used in the chronicle Taheki and in context with ninjutsu and the ninja. This manual was written in the late 14th century; however only a select few copies survive. The manual viewed by the research team was the *Seigenin Bon* version at Tokyo University and dates to between 1520 and 1550. The *Kanda Bon* manual is the oldest but only one chapter remains and unfortunately that chapter is one does not use the term shinobi. Therefore, we can conclude that as the kanji for shinobi is used in all of the remaining manuscripts and versions and that the word shinobi has existed for longer then first thought, meaning that it was in common usage at the very end of the 1300's. Interestingly the Kanji used in the Taiheiki was 逸物 忍 which means “excellent shinobi”.



THE REACTION TO THE WORD NINJA

When the word *ninja* is used today we are blasted with about 30 years of stereotypes and beliefs all spawned from the *ninja* craze and boom of the later part of the 20th century. When the word *ninja* is uttered, the *cool factor* issues forth and people run for their lives because any moment the ninjas in black will leap through the doors!!! But what was the reaction to the word *ninja* back in the days of feudal Japan? As discussed above, we know there are many words for the *shinobi* and many names that have different connotations. As most of the western word does not speak Japanese the other names for the *shinobi* have no bearing and nor do they have an effect, people simply learn how to say them. So, as we have developed an image for the word *ninja* we have no image for the other names used. In Japanese each of those words has meaning, strength and connotations, attachments we do not get. Thus, we must put ourselves back into the mind of a medieval

Japanese person when we think of the shinobi and not let our modern image take over.

At first as a student of Bujinkan I used to find ninjutsu as a martial art a difficult concept to understand, as the samurai had similar arts. The second problem I had was the word ninja as we understand it. The discovery of the truth about the real meaning of Jonin-Chunin-Genin brought an even bigger problem. If a Genin was a person who was a low level operative, an *ad hoc* ninja then surely he was not good. One manual goes on to say that a ninja can be made on the spot by bribing a local, thus that local becomes a *ninja*? If he is a ninja what did the people of the time think of that? Therefore, again we have supportive evidence that the term shinobi was simply a generic term. It is more likely that the reaction to each of the differing words connected to the shinobi would change depending on the word itself.

Hypothetically what would be the connotations attached to these statements?

'There is a shinobi around'

'He is only a Genin'

'He is a Jonin!'

'I think that there are some Fushikamari (ambush shinobi) lying in wait'

*'Be careful, there have been reports of Aruki Miko
working in the shines'*

'The army has some Ninpei with them!'

'He really is an Iga no Mono?'

The list could go on, however the point is obvious, for us as researchers and enthusiasts of the ninja; we must start to understand the ninja in his own world and not in the world that we have created for him. The shuriken throwing fighter creeping around behind men to slit their throats is a possibility, but it is only a small image of a larger and much more complex picture. Thus, from this point, do not think shinobi, think *what kind of shinobi?*

CHAPTER 2

ETHICS OF THE NINJA



THE ETHICS OF THE NINJA

A ninja is a person with a set of skills that we class as ninjutsu. However, what makes a person a ninja as appose to someone who also has that skill set yet is not named as shinobi? In the Shoninki Natori says the following about the ninja:

“They [the ninja] are the same as Nusubito, however a Ninja does not steal.”

So, this tells us there are another set of people with the same skills as the ninja. Therefore, what does Natori say about these other unknown ninjas who are not ninja *per say*?

“Nusubito 盗人

They have a natural audacity, have zero reason and lack the power of judgment about future events. They are similar to a hunter who is too absorbed in pursuing a deer, and fails to see the mountains around him. They are not aware of the possibility of ruining themselves through stealing. Alas, how artless and thoughtless they are! We should not talk of their art.”

This leaves a vivid image, as he states the ninja do not steal like the Nusubito but we know through his other chapters and other writings that the art of the ninja is the art of the thief. The questions of; what were the Nusubito like, did they have bands, training, ranks, reputation and so on and so forth are interesting and burning. These figures in the night are equal to the shinobi in all but ethical code. It appears that they would steal for pure gain and have no thought about their future, however this could have been subjective as Natori wishes to differentiate between his skills and that of the Nusubito. The supporting factor for Natori is that his book was said to be kept a secret and his teachings passed on to only a few, thus his words would not have a political advantage at that time, yet they would teach the future ninja the difference between themselves and these thieves. This leads us onto the ethics of the ninja. One would think that the shinobi had no ethics, or so the media would have you think. However, speaking from a fundamental and perhaps a basic angle, the ethics of the shinobi are as follows:

A shinobi is an adept thief, arsonist, tactician and person who ‘steals in’, they do not steal for profit and use their skills to further their mission, clan, ambitions of their lord or other righteous causes.

What are the arguments for and against this hypothesis?

FOR:

- Ninjutsu writings claim this fact in some form.
- Contemporary reports about the ninja seem to be mainly unhappy about the destruction they cause and not centre on their ethics for such an act.
- Ninja turned bandit thieves, gained popularity on the stage in the Edo period. This leads to the fact that they think there is a distinction between the shinobi and the bandit.

AGAINST:

- It is thought that the shinobi wrote their manuals to display that they had honour and status and that the samurai should respect them.
- In the Edo period, the term Yato changes its meaning to *thieves in the night* which could be a reflection on the new way the shinobi acted after the warring period.

Logically it is probable that each and every ninja had his own set of values, however it is not unrealistic to say that most of those that fell into the realm of the shinobi would share a set of values, like that of any

group or culture. It was ok to burn a witch in medieval Europe for their 'crimes' as it is norm to lynch criminals in parts of Africa today. This is a shared set of ethics and is seen repeated throughout history and thus it can be surmised that the ninja had a shared set of ethical values. The question is, where do those values end and where do they start? This leads us to the next chapter, and that is an evaluation of what it meant to be chivalric in Medieval Japan.

DID A NINJA HAVE DISHONOUR?



A major concept when discussing the ninja is the idea of dishonour or un-chivalric behaviour. This has bloomed into the false idea that ninja would creep up behind and stab someone in the back, or attack them in an un-chivalric way. A misnomer like this was started due to factions and 'cults' such as Bujinkan and Genbukan, who perpetuate the idea that ninjutsu is a martial art. Because of this falsification with the addition of Victorian chivalric romanticism, the world now sees the ninja as the stab from the dark and the samurai as a knight in armour, calling out his family honour. However, this is almost laughable and is unrealistic. We know that chivalry existed and we know that Bushido existed but not in the forms that we know them in today. The first thing you need to know is that chivalry has its roots in reality but it was highly theorised, romanticised and distorted during the Victorian period, when romantic notions took hold of a burning industrial world. For instance, a knight was chivalric, he would read poetry, fight in tournament and ransom rather than kill his peers. But at the same time a group of them would sack a

church, hack to death some peasants and kill bishops at cathedral steps. This does not make them un-chivalric, it makes them a product of their time. Chivalry was subjective and from our stand point the knight was not chivalric. From their stand point they were. The only thing in-between these two things is the alteration of ethics as time moves on. That being said, the same problem has happened for the samurai but with a much greater distortion. We added our culture to the story of the Bushi and now they are a vat of fiction and hidden from reason.

In the book *Flashing Steel* which concerns itself with traditional swordsmanship from Japan we get a clear insight into the reality of chivalry in Japan.

QUOTES ON ATTACKS SUCH AS:

“Lurking amid a crowd of innocent bystanders, using them as human shields he prepares to attack.”

The defender is then forced to the act of pushing these bystanders and is explained as being an act of preventing the said bystanders from being hurt.”

“Moniri, is a technique aimed at defending yourself from an ambush upon passing through a gate.”

Also, on my personal interview with Otake Sensei of the Katori Shinto ryu, he demonstrated how to defeat and attack from behind.

The point is that most medieval cultures and their martial arts feature group attacks and assaults from behind. Thus, we know that knights and samurai were not prone to attack from the front at all times. This was a norm, even the Vikings in the Icelandic sagas feature many surprise attacks, from charging and decapitating a sitting man to hiding swords under cloaks. The art of fighting in any wartime period is the art of winning by any means, it is how you take that victory or treat your foe that is considered chivalric.

That leaves us back with the original question, how are ninjas dishonourable? If it was not their method of fighting then we are only left with the only thing real history remembers them for, ninjutsu!

As ninjutsu can be broken into two main sections, In-nin and Yo-nin we can see that the ninja were believed as treacherous for these two main areas. Hints can be found in the historic record, as the ninja were taught to believe that lying and deception were permitted as long as they were in the service of one's lord. Thus, we know that the concept of deception in a social context was deemed as inappropriate. Secondly, ninjas were hated for their ability to infiltrate during In-nin and cause damage and

destruction. This too appears to have been deemed as negative and the samurai go to great lengths to guard against approaching ninja (in all contexts). We see both in deception and in destruction the ninja were thought of as untrustworthy and 'dishonourable'. Be assured that the historical record does point to the ninja being 'un-chivalric' however we have to understand that has nothing to do with combat or assassination but is simply to do with the methods adopted by actual historical ninjutsu.



CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL NINJA GROUPS

PROMINENT HISTORICAL NINJA FAMILIES, NAMES AND GROUPS

Japanese research has so far tuned up a list of schools, families, alternative names and famous people connected with ninjutsu. This chapter will attempt to compile that information as best as possible for each of the prefectures in Japan. Below you will find the name of each prefecture, followed by any alternative names for the shinobi, information on that area and any schools that are connected to the ninja. It must be clear that some of the schools are not ninja schools *per say* but are martial arts schools that have ninjutsu as part of their warfare or tactics teachings. Furthermore, some of the kanji is outdated and unused and the pronunciation is unknown for some. The English versions are mostly 100% correct but a few are the best possible versions that can be extracted. It is possible that some of the kanji in this section could be said in other ways, however rest assured that every attempt has been made to get as close to the original as possible. Also, this is based on information by many researchers and its validity has not been proven, however all information available has been compiled to try to establish a true picture.

PREFECTURE: AOMORI 青森

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Hayamichi No Mono 早道の者. Lit. *quick distance person*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: “Hayamichi No Mono” served the Tsugaru-family and is a name for ninja which developed from the Nakagawa-ryu. Their origin is said to be that of the Koka-ryu.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Nakagawa-ryu 中川流

Kohayato-ryu 小隼人流

Nakagawa Hayato-ryu 中川隼人流

Horikuchi Kohayato-ryu 堀口小隼人流

Koka-ryu 甲賀流



PREFECTURE: IWATE 岩手

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Kantoyaku 間盜役: this appears to be a substitute for the act of doing ninjutsu business, therefore shinobi no jutsu.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Saito Hyobu, the first generation of the To-family, who in turn served the Nanbu-family is said to have mastered ninjutsu. Saito Hyobu was then remembered as “The master of ninjutsu, unmatched to anyone in Japan”. After that, Saito renewed his family name from Saito to Tou, and the Tou-family served as shinobi who were called Shinobi Goyo 忍御用 for generations to come.



PREFECTURE: MIYAGI 宮城

NAMES USED FOR SHINOBI:

Kurohabaki-gumi 黒脛巾組

Kusa 草

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Kurohabaki-gumi (troop) is the group of ninja who served the Date-family. They were named for their black *habaki* leggings.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Ohen-ryu 応変流

Saihojin Buan-ryu 西法院武安流

Yamagata-ryu 山形流



PREFECTURE: TOCHIGI 栃木

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Fukuchi-ryu 福智流 is said to be of Iga and Koka origin

Matsumoto-ryu 松元流 is said to be of the Kimura family of Koka in origin.



PREFECTURE: IBARAKI 茨城

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Shinto-ryu 神道流 is used here to mean Katori Shinto-ryu, which includes ninjutsu within its curriculum.

Matsuda-ryu 松田流 is connected to the Koshu-style military science and adopted by the Mito domain.



PREFECTURE: TOKYO 東京

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: There were 4 troops of gunmen working for Shogunate, These were Iga Gumi, Koka Gumi, Negoro Gumi and Aoyama Gumi and were working as guards in Edo castle.

Onmitsu, Teppo Hyakunin Gumi and Mori-ryu all served the Edo shogunate. Mori-ryu is said to be a school of “Bakufu Onmitsu Mori Gumi”. Yamaga-ryu was founded by Yamaga Soko, a well known strategist and Confucian. Yamaga-ryu originated from the Koka-ryu, the same as Hojo-ryu. Chuko Shingan Ryu is another name for Kobu Jitsuyo-ryu 講武実用

流劍術, developed by Hirayama Kozo平山行藏,
from Iga area which contains ninjutsu within its
curriculum.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Onmitsu 隱密 or secret agents of the shogunate

Teppou Hyakunin Gumi 鉄砲百人組, Lit. 100

Riflemen/Harquebus troops.

Mori-ryu 森流

Chuko Shingan-ryu 忠孝心貫流

Hojo-ryu 北条流

Yamaga-ryu 山鹿流



PREFECTURE: KANAGAWA 神奈川

NAMES USED FOR SHINOBI:

Kusa - 草

Kamari - 奸

Rappa - 乱波

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Kamari is also known as “Kagamari Monomi”, which means *‘they who walk stooped over in a bush’*

Kazama or Fuma To is the group of ninja that served the Odawara Houjou family and Kazama or Fuma Kotaro is the representative figure at the head of this group.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Kazama or Fuma-to 風魔党

Hojo-ryu 北条流

Izu-ryu 伊豆流



PREFECTURE: YAMANASHI 山梨

NAMES USED FOR SHINOBI:

- Suppa 透波
- Aruki Miko 歩き巫女 Lit. ‘Walking shrine maiden’
- Mitsu Mono 三ツ者

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

It is well known that a prestigious warlord Takeda Shingen frequently used Suppa.

“Aruki Miko” were managed by Mochizuki Chiyojo from a famous clan serving Takeda Shingen. She gathered orphaned girls and sent them to every place possible for espionage activities.

Koshu-ryu, Takeda-ryu and Koyo-ryu were founded based on the tactics of Takeda Shingen.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Koshu -ryu - 甲州流

Takeda-ryu - 武田流

Koyo-ryu - 甲陽流

Tengen-ryu - 天幻流

Shinobi Ko -ryu - 忍甲流



PREFECTURE: SHIZUOKA 静岡

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Akiba-ryu is originated from Akiba Shinto Shrine which is known for Shugendo, a ‘religion’ connected to the ninja, and also the god of fire prevention.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Mugyoku Ryojo-ryu - 無極量情流

Akiba-ryu - 秋葉流



PREFECTURE: AICHI 愛知

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Kyo-dan 饗談

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

It is said that the Owari domain employed Koka-ninja who were named “Koka Gonin No Mono 甲賀五人者” until the last days of the Tokugawa government.

Kyo-dan are the *shinobi* which are said to be that Oda Nobunaga used.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Koga Gonin No Mono - 甲賀五人者

Ichizen-ryu - 一全流or Zen-ryu - 全流

Iga-ryu - 伊賀流

Koka-ryu - 甲賀流

Jichi -ryu - 自知流

Nanboku-ryu 南木流



PREFECTURE: YAMAGATA 山形

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Haguro-ryu is a school thought to be created by Shugendo trainees and are associated with Mt. Haguro, who served the Mogami family.

The Mogami family also employed 13 Iga ninja.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Haguro-ryu 羽黒流

PREFECTURE: NIIGATA 新潟

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Nokizaru - 軒猿

Yato Gumi - 夜盜組

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Kaji-ryu originated from a military strategy that was derived from Uesugi Kenshin, a powerful warlord who dominated this area.

It is said that Noki-zaru is named after a legendary emperor of China, emperor Xuan Yuan Huan Di (軒猿黃帝) However, the name also has a duel meaning in Japanese and can be read as ‘monkey in the eyes’. They are well known for have being employed by Uesugi Kenshin.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Uesugi-ryu 上杉流

Kaji-ryu 加治流



PREFECTURE: ISHIKAWA 石川

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Nusumigumi 偷組 Lit. Stealing Group

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Nusumigumi is a shinobi group of Kaga domain. They are a school of Iga ninja, and were famous for their abilities for theft.

Muhyoshi-ryu, a martial art school that passes down a scroll called Mizukagami (水鏡) which is a book about the art of the ninja.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Echizen-ryu 越前流

Muhyoshi-ryu 無拍子流



PREFECTURE: GIFU 岐阜

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Ogaki-ryu is a ninjutsu style of the Toda family, a branch of the Koga-ryu.

Mino-Ryu is a ninjutsu school of the Saito family, and a group of Koka Mono (甲賀者) and Mino Suppa (美濃透波).

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Ogaki-ryu - 大垣流

Mino-ryu - 美濃流



PREFECTURE: TOYAMA 富山

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Iga Mono 伊賀者

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

It is said that a travelling patent-medicine salesman played an important role in information gathering, but Iga no Mono were also employed by the Toyama domain.

PREFECTURE: NAGANO 長野

NAMES USED FOR SHINOBI:

Toppa 突波

Sanada Shu - 真田衆

Izunatsukai - 飯綱使い

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Sanada ninja are said to have served the famous Sanada Masayuki, the father of Sanada Yukimura. They appear to have originated from mountain worship, as are many other groups who are suspected of forming in such ways, such as Ito Ryu 飯綱使い and appear to have been influenced by Shugendo.

Izuna is a name of a mountain infamous for Shugendo and also has connection to the form of sorcery assumingly passed down there. Tsukai means performers.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Togakure-ryu² 戸隠流

Aoki-ryu 青木流

Akutagawa -ryu 芥川流

Ito-ryu 伊藤流

² While the author personally believes that the Togakure in connection to the Bujinkan is a false lineage, *Shinobi Soldiers* is an investigation. Thus, all claims must be inserted and all evidence must be looked at. The inclusion here of this school is not representative of the author's personal beliefs.

PREFECTURE: 福井 FUKUI PREFECTURE

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Shinobi no Shu 忍之衆

Mishima-to 三島党

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Yoshitsune-ryu is a ninjutsu school which includes the military strategy of the Fukui domain which is said to have originated from Minamoto no Yoshitsune, a famous general.

The Mishima-to, served the Maeda family of Kaga and worked within the Echizen area.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Yoshitsune-ryu 義経流



PREFECTURE: 滋賀 SHIGA

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Koka Mono 甲賀者

Koka Shinobi 甲賀忍

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Shiga is a notable place for ninja as a group. Many ninjutsu groups existed within the Koga Goju San Ke, which are the 53 families (甲賀五十三家) who formed the *Gunchuso* or *cooperative system for self protection*.

Shiga had a wide variety of shinobi schools and along with Iga were accepted as the premier land of the ninja.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Koka-ryu 甲賀流

Mochizuki-ryu 望月流

Gamo-ryu 蒲生流

Kimura-ryu 木村流



PREFECTURE: KYOTO 京都

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

It is said that the Tanba Murakumo-to 丹波村雲党 and the Kuwata-to 桑田党 groups including the Koka Mono served as shinobi for the Imperial Family.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Murakumo-ryu 村雲流

Santo-ryu 三刀流

Ogasawara-ryu 小笠原流



PREFECTURE: HYOGO 兵庫

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Murakumo-ryu is a ninjutsu school that descended through the Hatano family. The Mutobe Mizuguchi family who served for the Imperial Family, is also from the Murakumo family lineage.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Murakumo-ryu 村雲流

Or

Hatano-ryu 波多野流



PREFECTURE: TOTTORI 鳥取

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Izumo Shin-ryu tactics of the Yamana family reportedly has ninjutsu in it.

The Musashi Enmei-ryu is a group of martial arts of the Tottori domain, which also is believed to have ninjutsu in it.

The Ikeda family of the Tottori domain employed Iga mono.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Izumo Shin-ryu 出雲神流

Musashi Enmei-ryu 武蔵円明流

PREFECTURE: 岡山 OKAYAMA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Both Bizen-ryu and Kamiizumi-ryu are schools of fencing; Bizen-ryu is of the same stock of Shinto-ryu, Kamiizumi-ryu is of the same stock of Shinkage-ryu, they both appear to have had ninjutsu within their curriculum.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

備前流 (Bizen-ryu)

上泉流 (Kamiizumi-ryu)



PREFECTURE: SHIMANE 島根

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Tomaya Hachiya-shu (苔屋) 鉢屋衆

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The name “Tomaya Hachiya-shu” is said to have originated from a tradition that says a family member

who worked as a thief corrected his conduct after Kuya Shonin (空也上人, a famous Buddhist monk) admonished him. He then lived in a wretched hovel (Tomaya 苦屋 hence the name) and he went about asking for alms beating on a bowl instead of gong (a mendicant usually beats a gong for their religious mendicancy). This ninjutsu school served the Amako family of Izumo and made a spectacular showing in the recapturing of Gassan Toda castle.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:
Zato-shu 座頭衆



PREFECTURE: YAMAGUCHI 山口

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:
Shinobi no tsuwamono 忍の兵

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

It is said that the Mori family employed 25 shinobi/samurai including the Seki family.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Zato-shu 座頭衆



PREFECTURE: FUKUOKA 福岡

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Kuroda-ryu is the ninjutsu of the Kuroda family and belongs to Koka in origin. It is said that the Tachibana family had a secret service which uses the tactics of Shugendo.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Kuroda-ryu 黒田流

Iga-ryu 伊賀流



PREFECTURE: NAGASAKI 長崎

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Nanban-ryu is a school which centres on gunnery.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Nanban-ryu 南蛮流



PREFECTURE: KAGOSHIMA 鹿児島

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Yamamoguri 山潜り

Heido 兵道

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Hei-do is a shugendo-based school which was focused on enchantment. It was employed by the daimyo family of Shimazu.

Yoshin-ryu is a martial art passed down on the island of Koshikijima which centres on Ju-jutsu, and includes ninjutsu-enchantment within its curriculum.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Kurama Yoshin-ryu 鞍馬揚心流

or

Shiota Yoshin-ryu 塩田揚心流



PREFECTURE: HIROSHIMA 広島

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Togiki (Gaibun) 外聞

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Both Fukushima-ryu and Inko-ryu are ninjutsu schools of the Fukushima family and are of the Koka line, however, Inko-ryu is said to be originated from Kumasaka Chohan 熊坂長範, a well known as a thief.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Fukushima-ryu 福島流

Inko-ryu 引光流

PREFECTURE: 熊本 KUMAMOTO

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Seki yaburi 関やぶり (Lit. Person who breaks through a checkpoint)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Both Oe-ryu and Yahata-ryu contain tactics of the Ogasawara-ryu.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Oe-ryu 大江流

Yahata-ryu 八幡流



PREFECTURE: 高知 KOCHI

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Mikumo-ryu is a school of Gungaijutsu 軍貝術, the 'skill of conch shells in an army' and of the Yamauchi family. It sends a signal around a battlefield by blowing a trumpet shell, also known as Iga Gunkai or Fujibayashi-ryu Gunkai.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Mikumo-ryu 三雲流

Iga-ryu 伊賀流



PREFECTURE: WAKAYAMA 和歌山

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Negoro-shu 根来衆

Saika-shu 雑賀衆

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Both Negoro-shu and Saika-shu are famous for their gun techniques. While these two may not have been archetypal shinobi they are well connected to the ninja in a complex way.

Natori-ryu was founded on the basis of the Koshu-ryu and Kusunoki-ryu schools of tactics and is famous for the ninjutsu works entitled *The Shoninki*³.

³ This Document has been translated by the Historical Ninjutsu Research Team and is published by Tuttle *under The True Path of the Ninja* (2011).

Kukishin-ryu Tenshin tactics were originated from Kumano mountaineering asceticism based in shugendō.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Natori-ryu 名取流 or Kishu-ryu 紀州流

Shin Kusunoki-ryu 新楠流

Nabae-ryu 名映流

Kukishin-ryu 九鬼神流



PREFECTURE: NARA 奈良

NAMES USED FOR SHINOBI:

Dakko⁴ 奪口

Ukami 伺見

Suppa 水波

⁴ While a major skill of ninjutsu it appears to have been adopted as a name.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Kusunoki-ryu originates from Kusunoki Masashige.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Kusunoki-ryu 楠木流

Kyusyu-ryu 九州流

Asuka-ryu 飛鳥流

Hidesato-ryu 秀郷流



PREFECTURE: 三重 MIE

NAME USED FOR SHINOBI:

Iga Mono 伊賀者

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

This is a birthplace of the Iga no Mono which is the main representative of the ninja in Japan, equally ranked with Koka. Mie has produced many ninja who have left their name to history; The Fujibayashi family for Fujibayashi Nagatono Kami, the Hattori family for Hattori Hanzo and the Momochi family for Momochi Tanba.

SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH NINJUTSU:

Iga-ryu 伊賀流

Fujibayashi-ryu、藤林流

Momochi-ryu 百地流、

Hattori-ryu 服部流



CHAPTER 4
NINJA SKILLS EXPLAINED

THE SWORD & FAN T-BAR

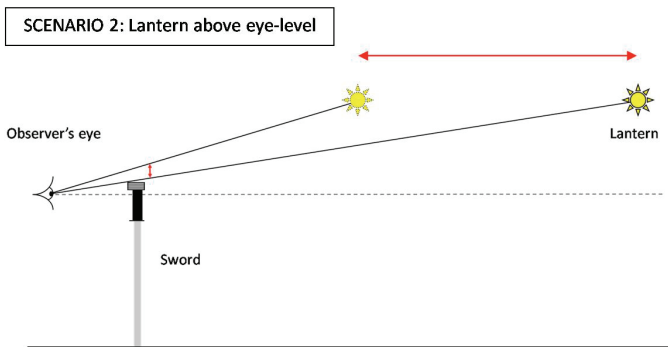
One element that comes under question when one reads the Shoninki by Natori Masatake is that of the sword T-bar. Natori states that if you are out at night, stealing-up and you come across a light you need to perform the following check:

Kneel down, place your sword vertical, one end on the floor the other end near your face. Then take your fan and hold this horizontal on the top of your sword's handle, this creates a T-bar at the top of your sword and that you must place your eyes on line with the T-bar and look at the light, almost like a sniper looking through his sights. The next step is to place your head so that the light of the person travelling at night is in the middle of the 'scope'. Then a shinobi should wait, if the light goes up then the 'enemy' is retreating or if it goes below the T-bar then the enemy is advancing, further to this one can tell if the opponent is going left or right.

When translating the Shoninki the *Historical Ninjutsu Research Team* thought that these instructions were counter to general physics. Surely the light would go

up the closer the enemy got? Or lower the further away they went? After investigation we concluded that first off, this technique would only work on flatland, like a road or highway as any inclination or declination that contained any variables would alter how the line of sight with both the ninja and the enemy. Secondly, we had to realise that this technique was written in an Edo period manual, which meant that while this could be Sengoku period information it could also be information that was invented during the peace period. The reason for this angle of investigation is that during the Sengoku period we believe that most people would carry a torch, a firebrand and one that was held in an upright position. However, in the stable Edo period it was common for a traveller at night to carry a lantern on a stick, this was generally held at the feet as the walker would make their way down the night time paths. Thus, armed with this new information it told us that any traveller in the Edo period who was carrying a light of this fashion would create the appearance that the light was dropping below the T-bar as they approached and vice versa. Furthermore, this technique or at least this version of the technique must have been an Edo period invention and if used in the warring era it must have been reversed.

This Diagram shows the second scenario, or the Sengoku period version. If a torch is held above the head then the light would appear to go above the T-Bar as it approached. However if you can imagine the lantern being held below the T-Bar then the light would come below the eye line of the ninja.



TELLING THE TIME BY BREATHING



The Shoninki states very simply a short passage, a passage that is overlooked by many yet is truly a wonder of the achievement of man. Natori Masatake states that if a ninja needs to tell the time he may do so by observing through which nostril he is breathing! The concept is quite simple yet ingenious. Within the human body there something called the *Nasal Cycle*, which is the action of the nose favouring one or the other nostril which is regulated by time. The nasal cavity swells with blood and its diameter closes, thus allowing the opposite nostril to take over breathing. Then, periodically the closed nostril starts to dilate and the open nostril starts to contract. This is a well documented phenomenon in human biology and only takes the ability to relax and breathe easily to establish which nostril you are using. The trick is to align the hour with each nostril and to understand where your cycle changes. Therefore, if you can time your own nostril cycle or get an approximation you can work out how many hours you have been outside, say on a mission, or if a meeting is in say, 4 standard western hours you can count your cycles. The time for this cycle to change over varies depending on

which source you read and can range from 1 hour to 2.5 hours, evidently this cycle probably depends on the individual themselves. Natori states that with each hour the side of your nostril changes over. The problem here (like so many problems with ninjutsu) is that we adopt a western understanding of the terms. Here Natori is talking about a Japanese hours which are temporal in nature yet which change as the seasons do.

Simply, the Japanese day is divided into 12 hours, 6 hours from sunset to sunrise and 6 hours from sunrise to sunset. That means that on a day when the period of light and dark are the same, each Japanese hour would last 2 standard hours. This aspect changes as the seasons change, thus an hour on the longest day of the year would be at its longest, and an hour at night on the same day would be at its shortest, making the shortest day of the year to hold the longest night time hours and the shortest daytime hours. Therefore, the differences that a Japanese hour could range from is about 1.8hrs to 2.5hrs at their minimum and maximum. That would mean that Natori's cycle would fall roughly into the bracket of the nasal cycle and prove that a ninja could tell the time by breathing!

The only information that remains is the concept of the hours by their name and how they were used to understand the times during the standard day.



THE JAPANESE HOURS

Japanese hours as stated above are divided into 12, 6 for the day time and 6 for the night time. Each has its own name which corresponds to a symbol relating to the Zodiac.

If a student of ninjutsu truly wishes to study the original manuals in their context and to understand the way in which the shinobi worked, they need a basic grasp of the names of the hours. The Shoninki often states the times required for activities by the name of the Japanese hour.

Notice how the hours are not sequential and start at 6, work down to 4 and then start at 9 and work down to 7. The basic reason for working backwards comes from ancient times and is thought to be from the burring of items to tell the passing of hours, thus they would burn *down* and not up. The missing hours represent numerals used in a religious context, this is why some numbers are skipped out.

Zodiac sign	Zodiac symbol	Japanese numeral	Strike	Solar time
Hare	卯	六	6	sunrise
Dragon	辰	五	5	
Serpent	巳	四	4	noon
Horse	午	九	9	
Ram	未	八	8	
Monkey	申	七	7	

Zodiac sign	Zodiac symbol	Japanese numeral	Strike	Solar time
Cock	酉	六	6	sunset
Dog	戌	五	5	
Boar	亥	四	4	midnight
Rat	子	九	9	
Ox	丑	八	8	
Tiger	寅	七	7	





NINJA GHOST SKILL

In ninjutsu circles there is the mythological skill that is said to be Ghost-skilled ninjutsu. While the modern interpretation of this skill is mythical its historical roots are not. The skill in question is called *Bakemonojutsu* 妖者術. In Japanese the word *Bakemono* means *ghost* and of course *jutsu* is *skill*, thus people interpret it as ghost skills. Firstly, lets look at the word, the verb this kanji comes from is *Bakeru* 化ける which means to transform or to mutate, thus, the real interpretation for this skill is not ghost skill but in fact the *skill of transformation*. You could still attach the mythical to it, but instead of the western concept of ghost you should think of it more as entity or something that changes and goes unseen through the world.

WHAT IS BAKEMONOJUTSU:

It is all well and good saying what the etymology of the word was but what actually is the skill used for? The skill is a form of *Yo-nin*, that is *light ninjutsu* and is the method of being in plain sight while doing ninjutsu.

EXAMPLES:

The following are examples of historical references to Bakemonojutsu.

- To disguise yourself as Yamabushi, an official, a street vendor, a monkey or dog trainer etc.
- Pretending to be a horse trainer and entering the enemy camp as such.
- Pretending to be deaf and dumb to gain entrance.
- To spy on the enemy and find out which crest he is using on his night watch lanterns and then reconstruct these lanterns and pretend to be a group of night watchmen.

ORIGINAL SOURCES:

The main source of information for this skill is from the Bansenshukai in Volumes, 1, 7 & 9 among others. Mainly the sources describe the skill in the context it was used for.

PEOPLE WHO WERE RECORDED USING BAKEMONJUTSU:

- Yoshitsune
- Tateoka Dojun
- Onchi Sakon
- Shindo Kotaro

Thus, Bakemonojutsu is a real skill and would have taken an extreme amount of expertise. However, in your minds you should get away from the ghost element and see this as the ability to adopt a character or position that is not yourself and go among the enemy.



THE SHINOBI IROHA

Within the ninja scrolls there is a way of writing that has become known as the *Shinobi Iroha*. Iroha represents the word for Alphabet, while it is not a direct translation it is the closest word to represent this system. Be warned, the Shinobi Iroha is in fact not recorded under this name in a historical context. This name was given to it later as are most “shinobi” prefixes, it is only a theory that this square of kanji is an Iroha, the original “name” is:

當家流ノ隱書

TOKERYU NO INSHO

“HIDDEN WAY OF WRITING OF OUR SCHOOL”

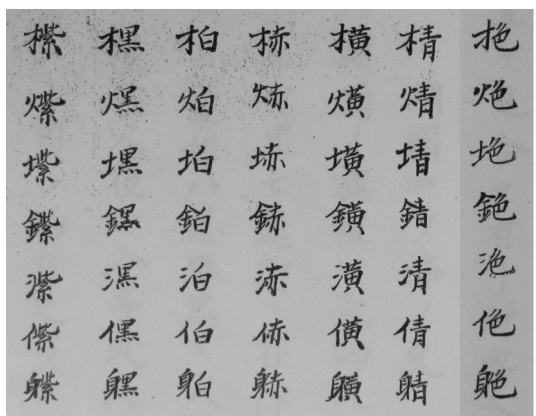
An Iroha is also a pangram, which means that it is a saying (in this case a poem) that repeats every syllable in the Japanese language. The English version would be *the quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog*. The Japanese pangram was used to teach people the sounds in rhyme much like the alphabet song of today.

Thus, to make this clear, an Iroha was a selection of kanji set in a poem that could be read to teach

children the syllables of the language, it is believed that the shinobi version of this system was also a Iroha or pangram, but this is not known.

What makes the shinobi version different is that most of the kanji are unreadable and were unreadable to the people of medieval Japan.

This version of the Shinobi Iroha Is from the Bansenshukai ninja scroll and is possibly the only historical evidence that records the ninja coding system.



STATEMENTS ABOUT THE SYSTEM:

- It has no original name.
- It seems to be a code system.
- Each ninja family or group would have a differing way to use the code.

- It could be a simple substitution code but this is speculation.
- 5 of the kanji are readable to the Japanese today but that does not mean the sound corresponds to the code itself.
- It is thought that differing coding systems did have names, examples include “Mizu no ho - Way of Water” or “Hi no ho - Way of Fire”.

THE KANJI:

While the kanji can not be read you will notice that each kanji in the system can be broken into two halves. The left side and the right side corresponded in lines:

From right to left vertically:

- 色colour
- 青blue
- 黄yellow
- 赤red
- 白white
- 黒black
- 紫purple

From top to bottom horizontally:

- 木wood
- 火fire
- 土earth
- 金metal
- 水water
- 人man
- 身body

That means that the Kanji in the top right corner would read as wood/colour 木色.

TABLE OF THE KANJI IN THEIR CORRESPONDING SECTIONS:

Wood-purple	Wood-black	Wood-white	Wood-red	Wood-yellow	Wood-blue	Wood-colour
Fire-purple	Fire-black	Fire-white	Fire-red	Fire-yellow	Fire-blue	Fire-colour
Earth-purple	Earth-black	Earth-white	Earth-red	Earth-yellow	Earth-blue	Earth-colour
Metal-purple	Metal-black	Metal-white	Metal-red	Metal-yellow	Metal-blue	Metal-colour
Water-purple	Water-black	Water-white	Water-red	Water-yellow	Water-blue	Water-colour
Man-purple	Man-black	Man-white	Man-red	Man-yellow	Man-blue	Man-colour
Body-purple	Body-black	Body-white	Body-red	Body-yellow	Body-blue	Body-colour

This information gives us an insight into the system itself but all attempts to decode the above are speculation, the secret behind this code has been lost to us forever unless a further scroll is identified.

NINJA JARGON

Jargon exists in all walks of life, but it appears that the shinobi had a set of their own. The evidence for this is circumstantial or minimal at best. However it appears that the shinobi would or sometimes did substitute words for others. Two of the main words we believe that they substituted were Iga and Koka. This is believed to be due to the unwanted reaction or interest that such words would provoke outside of the ninja homeland.



CHAPTER 5

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

THE STAGES OF NINJUTSU

We all think of ninjutsu as one permanent form and one continuous skill, from its supposed foundation in china to its fall in the Edo period. So far *Shinobi Soldiers* has investigated the two main periods, the warring states and the Edo period, now in volume II we will attempt to refine that search and look at the process that ninjutsu went through in a chronological context. That being said do not fall into the trap where any shinobi before or after the warring period were less skilled then those of the *Sengoku*. Remember, we do not know how good the original shinobi were, we simply hear a lot about them when Japan went to war, those spies of ancient china may have been most formidable.

BASIC STAGES OF NINJUTSU

ORIGINS

It is unknown where or how ninjutsu originated or more properly when ninjutsu became ninjutsu. Historical records show that medieval shinobi understood that they were the product of earlier Chinese versions of themselves but they still differentiated themselves as shinobi. One of the earliest references to the actual word shinobi came from Shotoku Taishi, a prince who lived in 6th and 7th centuries and founded a system of centralized government based on the *ritsuryo* codes. He is said to have employed a spy called a Shinobi 志能便.

THE FIRST HISTORICAL RECORDS

This is the period running up to the Sengoku period and would be from ancient times until the mid 1400's. There are references to many types of spy and names that we see occurring which we would class as shinobi, however the kanji for shinobi only happens rarely such as in the Taiheki.

THE WARRING PERIOD

From the 1400's to the Edo period we see a massive increase in evidence for the shinobi. This is nothing to do with a change in their abilities but more a change in their political situation. The shinobi can now offer a vast amount of aid to those who need them, because by definition a shinobi is a man of war

and like all other men of war they only come into their own during conflict. The Sengoku was Japan's great war and thus this is where the shinobi we most used.

PRE-1580'S

The early 1580's saw a massive change for the shinobi, Iga and Koka where the base of all things ninja and the heartland of the shinobi arts. At that time Iga and Koka were autonomous collectives with the power to self govern and to become a real threat. Thus, enter the dragon or should we say Oda Nobunaga the scourge of the ninja! In the early 1580's he led a massive army and crushed the power of Iga and Koka in once divisive end game. That was the *straw that broke the camels back* and became the footsteps of doom for the ninja, from this date the world of the ninja started to decline and the shinobi is now passed its peak.

POST 1580'S

The next 20 years sees the shinobi change from a power house into a group of either dead corpses, those that fled the war or those that capitulated and started to serve powerful samurai. This is possibly the most overlooked period in ninja history, you can see a move from shinobi/samurai or Iga no mono who ruled by their own hand, some very powerful castle owners, who then had to join the ranks and served people like the Tokugawa. There are thousands of

untold stories from this time and many war-tales that are lost to us all.

1603 – MID 17TH CENTURY

1603 sees the raise of the Tokugawa and the era of peace, here the ninja are still warring period ninja, but they are left in a world where they are not needed and start to turn bandit, seek a lord or find other work, this is the start of the ninja famine. With only a few battles to attend they start to grow old and die, leaving the memories of the warring times to stories and unused skills passed down through their families.

MID 17TH CENTURY TO 1854

Now that the last of the warring period ninja are dead a new breed of shinobi have arrived, those are the peace period ninja, their skills are not that of the battlefield, the need of the war scout, these are the secret police of their day, castle guards, the spies, internal investigation officers, information gatherers, possibly political assassins (unverifiable) among other elements. The last known ninja attempt was possibly the shinobi sent onboard Commodore Perry's ship and thus it is from here that the ninja disappear.

1854 – 1950's

What happened to the ninja? With the arrival of the new world Japan changed overnight, the shinobi disappeared and nothing more was heard. All that can be surmised is that the ninja turned into people like

the Oniwaban secret police, gunpowder manufacturers, medicine sellers or other such trades.

1950-2010

The 1950's plus saw a spike in ninja interest that made its way over to the states and the UK in the 1970's, figures like Takumatsu, Nawa, Hatsumi among others brought the light back to ninjutsu. Some claim grandmastership, some do not, but what is important is the gap between 1854-1960 a gap where the ninja were forgotten, and disappear and are untraceable. Is it possible that the ninja became the Oniwaban, the Oniwaban become the Japanese intelligence? No one knows, no one can prove a lineage all we have is a mixture of claims and research. However, this Neo-ninjutsu has brought the ninja back from history and allowed research like this to succeed.

2010 – THE FUTURE!

There are two ways that ninjutsu can go, it can be lost and known as a martial art, simply used as a token of interest, or it can return to its true origins, the search for perfection in a human, the forging of an iron heart, immense will and a keen mind...it is up to you, the reader.

SHUGENDO

Shugendō is a word that is thrown around the more academic elements of the ninjutsu community but it is seldom understood or put into context. Before we enter the realm of the ninja and its connection to Shugendō we must first understand what it is. Therefore, you will find highlighted sections of information within this chapter which were kindly submitted by *Mark Schumacher* and taken from his A-Z of Buddhism.

WHAT IS SHUGENDŌ?

Shugendō (Alt. Shugendo) can be loosely translated as "*path of training to achieve spiritual powers.*" Shugendō is an important Kami-Buddha combinatory sect that blends pre-Buddhist mountain worship, Kannabi Shinkō 神奈備信仰 (the idea that mountains are the home of the dead and of agricultural spirits), shamanistic beliefs, Shintō animism, ascetic practices, Chinese Yin-Yang mysticism and Taoist magic, and the rituals and spells of Esoteric (Tantric) Buddhism in the hope of achieving magical skills,

medical powers, and long life. Practitioners are called Shugenja 修験者 or Shugyōsha 修行者 or Keza 験者 (those who have accumulated power) and Yamabushi 山伏 (those who lie down in the mountain). These various terms are typically translated into English as ascetic monk or mountain priest.

As a general rule, this sect stresses physical endurance as the path to enlightenment. Practitioners perform seclusion, fasting, meditation, magical spells, recite sutras, and engage in austere feats of endurance such as standing/sitting under cold mountain waterfalls or in snow. Another particular practice of Shugendō devotees is to set up stone or wood markers (Jp. = Hide 碑伝) along mountain trails, presumably to leave proof of their mystical journeys up the mountain. There are also precise procedures the practitioner must observe when entering into any sacred mountain space (Jp. = Nyūzan 入山 or Sanpai Tozan 参拝登山), with each stage consisting of a specific mudra 確認印, mantra 真言 and waka 和歌 (classical Japanese poem).

Says scholar Paul L. Swanson in *Shugendō and the Yoshino-Kumano Pilgrimage*: states, “Shugendō is a religious practice which took the form of an organized religion about the end of the Heian period (794-1184) when Japan's ancient religious practices in the mountains came under the influence of various

foreign religions. This loosely organized sect includes many types of ascetics, including unofficial monks (ubasoku 優婆塞), peripatetic holy men (hijiri 聖), pilgrimage guides (sendatsu 先達), blind musicians, exorcists, hermits, diviners, wandering holy men, and others.”

With this image now fixed in your mind we have to look at the connection between both the ninja and Shugendō. Firstly, what does this religion have to do with the ninja? While there is not a fantastic amount of evidence to combine the two the two are logically inseparable. It is known that Shugendō was practiced in Iga, & Koka and Kii which were all hotspots for ninja activity and we know that the shinobi would interact with Yamabushi and also learn the religion of the Yamabushi to aid in any Yo-nin activity when under the visage of the mountain monks. While not proven it is generally accepted as logical ‘fact’ that the two must have interacted and thus the shinobi must have been influenced by this religion. So far the main evidence for a connection is as follows:

- A certificate of training was given to a Yamabushi of Iga from the famous Shugendō centre of Handosan in Koka.
- In Koka there is an old saying ‘do not sleep with your feet in the direction of Handosan’ this shows that the people of Koka and thus

the shinobi had respect for the arts of Shugendo.

- Iga is littered with statues of En No Gyoja, the founder of Shugendo.
- Mochizuki Izummonokami was the head of a band of Koka warriors and was given the religious name Mochizuki Honjitubo by the Hondosan.
- The Iga Hattori Clan gave support to the Yamabushi of Kumano.

Any serious student of ninjutsu must try to understand the religious thinking behind the shinobi which will enable them to understand the more esoteric aspects of the ninja (of which there are many). Also, like the concept of ninja itself do not be mistaken into thinking that this religion did not evolve, from its founding member to the highly dogmatized version of today, there have been various versions all of which differ from each other. This means that if you are contemplating the origin of the shinobi you must tie this in with the version of Shugendō at that time, whereas if you are investigating Edo period shinobi you must place them into the context of the changes that had happened at that time. To highlight this, the following information lists some of the external influences on Shugendō.

SHUGENDŌ SCHOOLS – THE INFLUENCE OF TENDAI & SHINGON

Shugendō's development was strongly influenced by the Kami-Buddha religious matrix of the medieval period. During the Heian era (794-1185), shrines were constructed alongside temples on many sacred mountains, epitomized by the powerful Tendai shrine-temple multiplex on Mt. Hiei 比叡 (northeast of Kyoto) and the holy places throughout the nearby Kumano mountain range. The local kami residing on these peaks were considered manifestations of the imported Buddhist divinities, and pilgrimages to these sites were believed to bring double favor from both the kami and the Buddhist deities. Shugendō beliefs were particularly affected by the Tendai 天台 school (then arguably Japan's mainstream Buddhist sect), and by the esoteric beliefs of the Shingon 真言 sect of Buddhism. The Tendai school attempted a synthesis of various Buddhist doctrines, including faith in the Lotus Sutra, esoteric rituals, Amida (Pure Land) worship, and Zen concepts. Tendai gained great court favor, rising to eminence in the late-Heian era. Shingon was introduced to Japan around the same time as Tendai. Both schools played monumental roles in the merger of Kami-Buddha beliefs, but Shingon philosophy (predominantly esoteric, with mystical and occult doctrines and complex practices) did not enjoy the same degree of court patronage and popular appeal as Tendai.

Over time, a complex (albeit loose) web of affiliations developed among Shugendō, Tendai, and Shingon sites. These affiliations were codified by the government in the early Meiji period, with Tendai-affiliated Shugendō designated the Honzan-ha 本山派 branch and Shingon-affiliated Shugendō designated the Tōzan-ha 当山派 branch. However, scholar Gavnor Sekimori states: "Tendai-affiliated Shugendō certainly dates from medieval times, but the emergence of a conscious Tozan-ha and its identification with Shingon can really only be dated from the Edo period onward. Even scholars of Japanese religion from peripheral fields are caught out on this and make erroneous assumptions."

Thus, while the above information does not tell you how to practice Shugendo it allows you to place it into your historical understanding of the ninja themselves and will allow you to explore a side of the shinobi that is seldom understood or even used. Most people look to the ninja for their understanding of Kuji but very few people realise that the arts of Kuji are fundamental concepts in Shugendo itself and thus it is to Shugendo one should look for training in Kuji and not to the ninja. Also, another element people misunderstand is that a Yamabushi is normally not a full time occupation, to be a yamabushi can involve periodic pilgrimages into the mountains, thus a farmer could become a Yamabushi or a samurai if

they so choose. Thus you should understand that the shinobi themselves may have gone on pilgrimage as Yamabushi, interacting with any permanent mountain hermits and sharing knowledge. The one thing that should not be done by a modern student of ninjutsu is to rely on the modern version of the Yamabushi or Shugendo for their understanding, while it still holds core principles and much can be attained, it could be said that it is markedly different to the original practices. It is important that you establish all these factors in your mind to gain a clearer understanding of the ninja and to explore your training in this way and to reveal the truth behind the more esoteric ninjutsu practices, of which often involve ritual magic and spell casting, something no one in the modern ninjutsu boom performs.

To finish this brief introduction to the arts of Shugendo it is only proper that the presumed founding member is given an explanation, his name was En No Gyoja and he is most often connected with the origins of ninjutsu. This connection with ninjutsu is totally unfounded and is likely a misnomer, however, while there is no evidence that he practiced any ninjutsu skills he did develop the religion of Shugendo and thus indirectly formulated sections of the shinobi curriculum.

EN NO GYŌJA, FATHER OF SHUGENDŌ

The sect's most celebrated sage is En no Gyōja 役行者 or 役の行者. Also known as Enno Ozunu 役小角, En no Ozunu, En no Shōkaku, and En no Ubasoku 役優婆塞. Gyōja means ascetic, so En no Gyōja literally means "En the Ascetic." En no Ubasoku is sometimes translated as "En of Gentle-Aged Strength."

He is recognized as the father of Shugendō. His posthumous title is Shinben Daibosatu 神辺大菩薩 (also read Jinben Daibosatsu and meaning Miraculous Great Bodhisattva). Artwork of En no Gyōja dates from the Kamakura period (1185-1332) onward, and is found most frequently among temples of the Shingon 真言 sect of Esoteric (Tantric) Buddhism (Mikkyō 密教), which was strongly influenced by mountain asceticism in Japan's Ōmine 大峰 mountain range in the Yoshino-Ōmine-Kumano region.

This legendary holy man was a mountain ascetic of the late 7th century. Like much about Shintō-Buddhist syncretism, his legend is riddled with folklore. He was a diviner at Mt. Katsuragi 葛木 on the border between Nara and Osaka. Said to possess magical powers, he was unjustly expelled to Izu Prefecture in 699 on trumped-up charges of

“manipulating demons and using sorcery to mislead the people.” Popular lore says he climbed and consecrated numerous sacred mountains. En no Gyōja is mentioned in old Japanese texts such as the Shoku Nihongi 続日本紀 (compiled around 797) and the Nihon Ryōiki 日本靈異記 (compiled around 822).

He was born in the Katsuragi 葛木 mountains of Nara Prefecture, and hailed from the Kamo 加茂 clan and the family Kamo-no-Edachi-no-Kimi 加茂役公. His given name was Asahimaru 朝日丸. The clan had lived in this mountainous region for generations - a verdant region with numerous varieties of medicinal plants. Asahimaru reportedly gained a great knowledge of these medical plants and managed a garden in the area, but for some reason he was forced to give up his plot in 675 AD. But by this time he had already gained a reputation as a healer.

When his father died, Asahimaru changed his name to En no Uzun 役小角. He prayed to heaven to bless his mother with another child, for he hoped to depart to the mountains to pursue his practice. His mother subsequently gave birth to a son named Tsukiwakamaru 月若丸, and then Uzun entered the Katsuragi mountains (at the age of 32 it is said) to begin sustained ascetic practice. Legend claims he

practiced under the protection of mountain animals, and that he discovered valuable deposits of mercury and silver in the mountains.

In 699, according to most Shugendō legends, he was falsely accused of evil sorcery by a jealous disciple named Karakuni-no-Muraji Hirotari 韓国の連広足 and banished to Izu Prefecture during the reign of Emperor Monmu 文武天皇 (who reigned from 697 to 707). Another legend contents that En no Gyōja had angered the god of Mt. Katsuragi (known as Hitokoto-nushi no Kami 一言主神). This deity had tried unsuccessfully to capture Ozunu and vented his heavenly displeasure by possessing Hirotari, who thereafter orchestrated Ozunu's banishment. Others speculate that Ozunu's banishment was caused by disputes over the metal resources in the mountains where he practiced. Yet another legend contents that his mother was falsely accused of having a wicked romance with an elder cousin and was thus arrested. Uzunu comes to her aid and is himself arrested, bound in straw ropes, and exiled to Izu. During these events, Tsukiwakamaru (Uzunu's younger brother) is forced to sell flowers to make a living, but he unexpectedly meets the emperor, tells his story, and gains the emperor's sympathy. Ozunu and his mother are then pardoned, but Ozunu decides to remain in the mountains.

The final years of this holy man are clouded in uncertainty. “Accounts which claim he did not die in 700 say he was pardoned in January 701. He returned to Mt. Katsuragi (where he captured Hitokoto-nushi no Kami, tied him up with an arrowroot vine, and locked him away at the bottom of the valley). Four months later, in May (some give the date as June 7), he either went to the Japanese mountains in Minō and there attained Nirvana, or he crossed to China. Other accounts profess that he was in fact released in 702, after which he either became a Sennin 仙人 (immortal) and flew away into the Great Sky, or he migrated to China with his mother.”

He reportedly traveled widely during his lifetime, establishing Shugendō sanctuaries at numerous locations, including the Ōmine 大峰 mountain range (Nara prefecture), Mt. Kinpusen 金峯山 (Nara prefecture), Mt. Minō 箕面山 (near Osaka), the Ikoma 生駒 mountains on the border of Nara and Osaka Prefectures (where he captured two demons who thereafter served him), and in Japan’s Izu 伊豆 and Tōkai 東海地方 areas.

THE NINJA MASK

In volume I we looked at the ninja “suit” and its reality, we know that the ninja “suit” was basically constructed of traditional and contemporary Japanese street ware with the addition of a facemask. However, it is the facemask that makes it so iconic and it is important for many people around the world to find the truth out about the ninja mask. Therefore, we will have to dissect the evidence we have and try to establish a logical argument for the iconic ninja, if there ever was one?

THE THEORY SO FAR:

There are two main schools of thought on the ninja mask at present:

1. The ninja mask did exist and was part of Japanese culture and was thus a part of the ninja’s infiltration equipment.
2. That it did not exist and was an invention of the Edo period and goes back at least to 1770. Furthermore that the modern concept of the ninja suit was influenced by traditional Japanese theatre who dressed the stage

attendants in black to show that they did not in fact exist in the reality of the story.

These above two arguments are quite simplistic and somewhat unrealistic, here I will try to formulate a new theory based on a reflection on the evidence available.

THE MASK OF WAR & PEACE

The first step in investigating the ninja mask is to look at Japanese art and to see when the iconic ninja appears. It is strikingly evident that pictures of shinobi change drastically between the warring and peace periods. Any image of a shinobi in the warring periods is dressed like any samurai and is in fact prepared for battle. Then, in polar opposite, images in the mid to late Edo period tend to change and adopt the iconic ninja style of mask and clothing, especially the need for black.

This factor gives us a starting point, we know that contemporary people of both times had an image of the ninja and that they represented that image in art. We can postulate that the warring period's shinobi would have a stronger claim to being the truest image as the shinobi were abundant and had less need for identity secrecy. However, it is totally logical that both images of the ninja are indeed correct. When we look at the needs of the shinobi in these two periods we can see that with the era of peace the shinobi would have more need for secrecy and to hide his

identity. For example, in the warring periods shinobi would travel with the army as shinobi (discussed in depth later) and thus be in full view, whereas an Edo period shinobi would have to travel incognito and more than likely be installed in a position within a community, where his identity was secret. The Bansenshukai supports this to an extreme level, informing us that the death penalty was given to anyone who found out the identity of a shinobi. Also, we know that a shinobi sometimes had to be called on to perform In-nin or infiltration, thus it is only logical that they would hide their face in case of mishap or discovery. That being said, we now need to establish what was available as a mask in the Edo period.

THE TWO STYLES OF MASK THAT WERE PROMINENT IN THE EDO PERIOD.

Version 1: THE TENUGUI



The first mask is a section of cloth covering the head and tied beneath the chin or the nose. This is a classic and traditional image of a thief or someone who is 'up to no good'. Also, it should be understood that this was a common way to shield the head from the sun and can still be seen in rural areas of Japan.

Version 2: THE CLASSIC HOOD



Version 2A: The Fukumenzukin –Face Covered Hood



Version 2B: Kidokuzukin –Strange or Free Hood



The second mask is the infamous ‘shinobi facemask’ and is the iconic image of the ninja throughout the world. This mask was used in the time periods in

question but was banned by the Japanese government in the Edo period. The reason for its banning was because it was seen as suspicious and was known to be used by thieves. Therefore, we can state at minimum that the 'ninja style' mask is not a modern invention but was a historical fact, whether it was used by the ninja remains to be seen. Furthermore, we must realise that this mask was quite common and would have been used by many people (including the ninja?) it tended to be used by people who wished to hide their identity, for any reason. However, as we can see from the art included in this chapter that contemporaries felt that shinobi and thieves used this mask during their illegal activities.

SENGOKU PERIOD SHINOBI

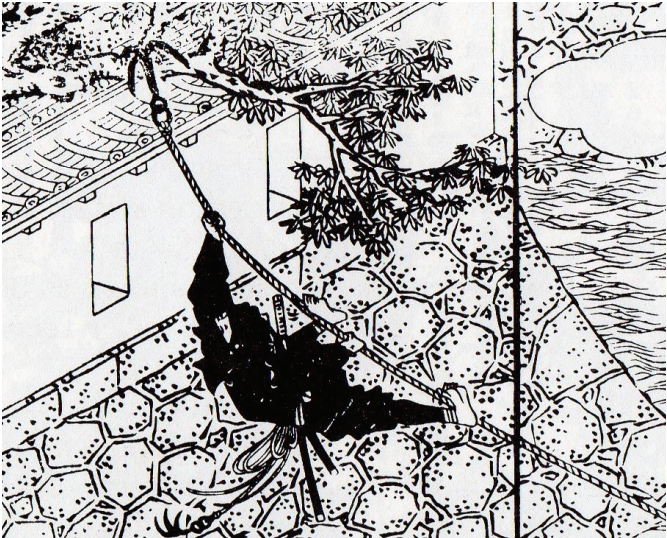
Most Sengoku shinobi tend to represent samurai of the time. That does not mean that they were not different to the samurai. We know that some samurai did indeed practice ninjutsu but any such samurai that did would be considered different to a non-ninjutsu trained samurai or at least more qualified in espionage. The following image is of Fuma Katro, a late Sengoku period shinobi with his band of rappa. He was seen as a demon, hence the demonic face.



EDO PERIOD IMAGES OF SHINOBI⁵

Edo period image of the shinobi are much more plentiful and do come in a verity of contexts. It must be understood that the images of the ninja from the Edo period are sometimes claimed as shinobi and sometimes not.

⁵ For the best look at the ninja in historical art see S. Turnbull's book *Ninja: The True Story of Japan's Secret Warrior Cult*.







Questions About The Art!

BUT THEY ARE DRAWN BY NON-NINJAS AND IN AN ENTERTAINMENT SETTING?

The first argument against this theory is that all the art was drawn by artists and for the purpose of entertainment and curiosity. That is true and is a positive element for this argument. The point is not that these people have drawn ninjas, the point is that they have drawn clothes that would have been available in the period. Thus from these drawings we can understand what an Edo period face mask would have looked like, we do not need to verify if the

people in the pictures are even ninja. The point is that we can now say with conviction that the iconic “ninja style” mask was in use in the Edo period and was accepted by many as the get up of the shinobi.

BUT THEIR DEPICTION IS BASED ON FANTASY?

The second question would be this one, yes their drawings would be based on fantasy, but like other time periods people used what they had around them to create an image of the intended subject. Like medieval English images of lions and other exotic beasts we see that artists get a likeness from what they understand. The result is still a lion, thus have a deeper understanding of the mind of the people.



SO WHAT ABOUT THE JAPANESE THEATRE ATTENDANT THEORY?

In Japanese theatre they have attendants dressed in black to show that they do not appear in the play. Some people claim that the rise of the ninja 'uniform' is in direct connection with this phenomenon. I personally find this theory to border on the ridiculous.



Firstly, this theory says that the theatre propelled the ninja into the media in the late Edo period and gave them their iconic image. If that is so, the grotesquely *obvious* question would be *'if the ninja uniform is based on a Noh theatre attendant then why did they base the said uniform on a person who is not meant*

to be in the play!' Look at it like this, an Edo period Japanese couple 'pop off' to the Noh theatre for a show, it's a new play about a famous ninja bandit. The play starts and on comes a ninja, the wife says:

'Look it's a ninja'

The husband then says

'No, there is the ninja, I think your ninja is the attendant!?'

As you can see this theory is simply a connection made based on no empirical evidence and has meanwhile become mainstream. This simple but fundamental problem seems to have been overlooked by the world?

SO WHY ARE THEY DRESSED IN BLACK? IN SHINOBI SOLDIERS I YOU SAID THAT THEY DRESSED IN A FEW COLOURS?

We know from the first volume of *Shinobi Soldiers* that the ninja wore mainly, dark blue, dark red, brown or black. This is where the artist takes up fantasy, the Shoninki says that a ninja would wear these colours but the artistic trend would be to paint the ninja in black. The only possible reason for this is that the reputation of the shinobi was to stalk around at night in the dark dressed darkly, very quickly that can catch on as black?

THE ARGUMENT SO FAR:

Let us look at the discussion so far and round up what we know to be true.

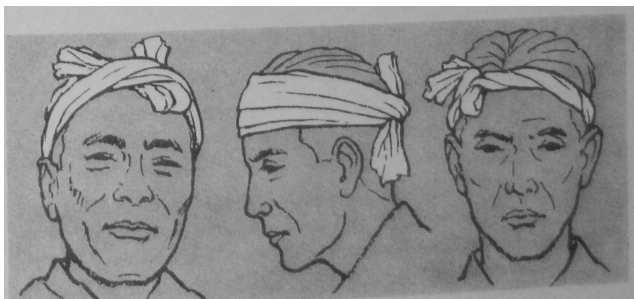
- Sengoku period shinobi did not dress in the fashion of the iconic ninja, this we know through current pictorial evidence.
- Edo period art starts to show the ninja in an iconic way.
- This may be as a result of the shinobi needs changing.
- We now understand that people in the Edo period did have masks and clothing that constitutes the iconic image of the ninja, thus we can historically verify that the iconic ninja ‘outfit’ did exist as early as 1770 (earliest picture of a shinobi style ‘outfit’).
- People as early as the mid Edo period thought of the ninja as dressed in the iconic black outfit.
- The concept of a ninja in black is probably a misnomer based on artist interpretation and popularity.

THE WRITTEN EVIDENCE

As discussed in the last volume, the Shoninki states that the ninja would carry the *Sanjaku Tenugui* cloth which was 90 cm long and used for the following reasons (in reference to the head).

“It is very useful as a *Hachimaki*”

A Hatchimaki is a basic headband and can be used to keep the sweat off your brow as seen below.



A further quote from the Shoninki about the Tengui is thus:

“You can use it to cover your cheeks”

This above quote is one of the most intriguing and difficult. In the Shoninki we translated it as “to cover your head and face” while the actual literal translation is to cover ones cheeks. The issue here is, did Natori Masatake mean, place the cloth over your head and down past the cheeks or did he mean put it across your face and cover your cheeks?

However, there are no current pieces of evidence to show a Tenugui being used across the face, for that style we have to return back to the Fukumenzukin and the Kidokuzukin.

THE SIMPLE FACT THAT NINJA WERE STILL ACTIVE AT THE TIME OF PAINTING AND BEYOND.

The one glaring truth is that the ninja were active up until at least commodore Perry sailed into Japan, we know this through evidence. Thus they were totally contemporary with any Edo period art. I have never seen a fully fledged member of the Yakuza until relatively recently, but I knew what one looked like, I knew this through the media and art, lo and behold when I saw him, exactly the same. I have never seen a real narwhale but I have seen images of contemporary drawings, and yes they look correct when put against the skeletal system. My point is that the ninja were well and active at the time of these images. It can be argued that they were in decline, maybe even their skills were much less (or simply transformed), maybe they were even involved with other professions, and were near the end of their existence but no matter which, they existed and were part of Japanese life.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion is quite simplistic to achieve from a historian's point of view. First extinguish any other theory as false, which has been done with the Noh theatre influence hypothesis. Secondly look at the evidence:

- Images are contemporary
- Images portray a common theme across a time period, even taking diffusion into consideration.

- Written evidence supports the theory to a strong level.
- The appearance appears to have been giving uniformity which can be put down to popularity and standardisation.
- It is well known that people wore cloths over their head within many walks of life in the Edo period.
- A shinobi has a need to hide his face and the equipment (face mask) was there for him to use and was well known.
- The iconic image of a thief was that of a man with a covered face in one of two ways.
- Pragmatically if you carry a piece of cloth, which is ‘ninja fact’ why would you not cover your face?

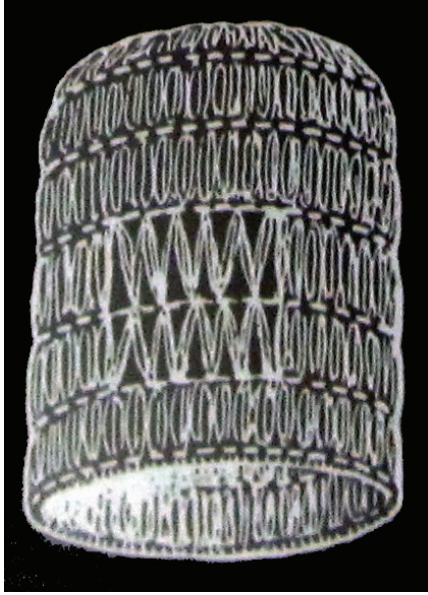
Final Conclusion – It is highly probable that the shinobi adopted the face covering to hide their identity during periods of In-nin or infiltration in the Edo period and this was then standardised and popularised in contemporary art. However, it is evident that the ninja were not the only ones wearing these face coverings and there is as much evidence for thieves and common folk using them. The point is that this image of the ‘ninja mask’ if shown to a Edo period audience would conjure images of thievery, hidden agenda and unease, the shinobi would have only been a small part of that. Furthermore, it is at this point that we see the shinobi decline and some turn to thievery, like Fuma Kotaro, from samurai

ninja to thief, this also has a bearing on the ninja using this mask as a popular image. In Short, it is highly possible that the ninja wore a facemask, but so did other people, therefore, the facemask is a small truth that has exploded through media distortion.

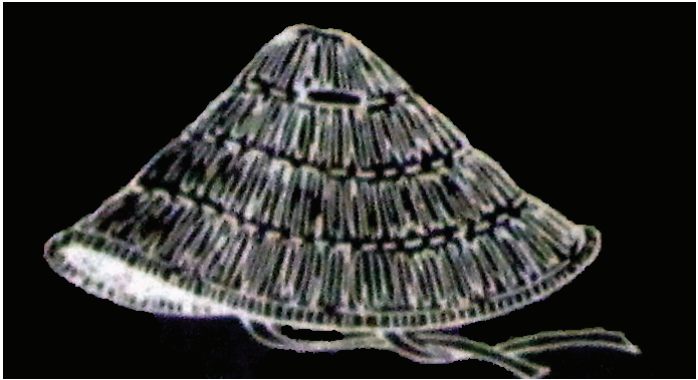
THE STRAW HAT

To further understand the image of the shinobi or the image that they tried to blend in with we can see that the Amigasa or straw hat was part of the ninja get up. This straw hat is listed as an integral part of the shinobi equipment, the reasons for which were to cover your face and make you less conspicuous. We must then remember that hats in medieval Japan were a common site and thus the ninja was using this to blend in with his environment. Therefore, we have to establish the basic forms of straw hat, these are listed below and are what the ninja would have come across and which they would have used. Some hats are generic and for male and female, where some are gender specific and others are occupation specific. As can be seen by the images below, even details as to which hat to wear would be essential for Yo-nin missions and a knowledge of the dress of each area must have been known.

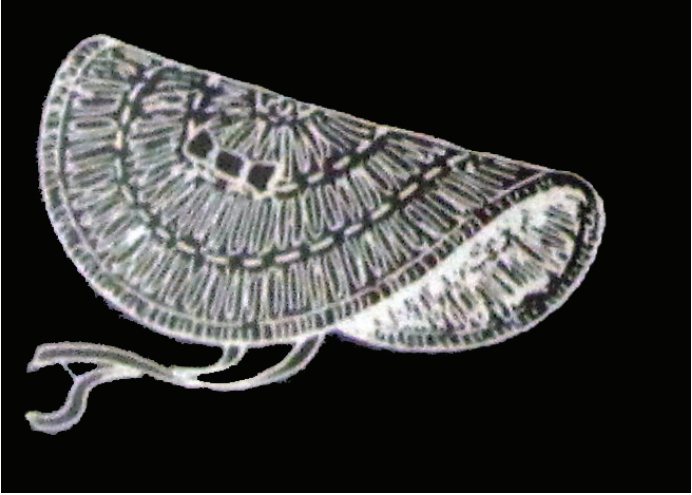
KOMUSOGASA-虚無僧笠



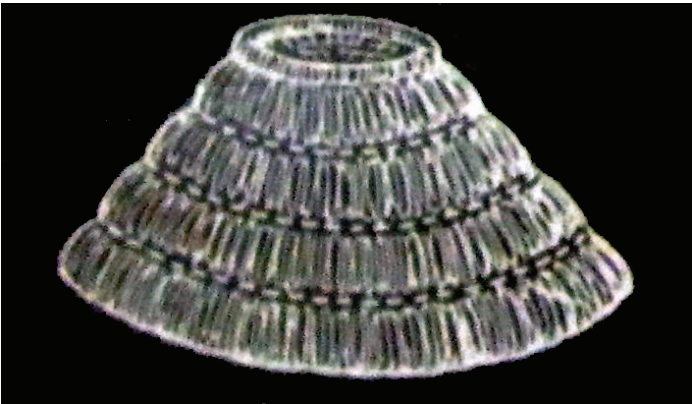
KUMAGAIGAS-熊谷笠



ICHIMONJI- 一文字



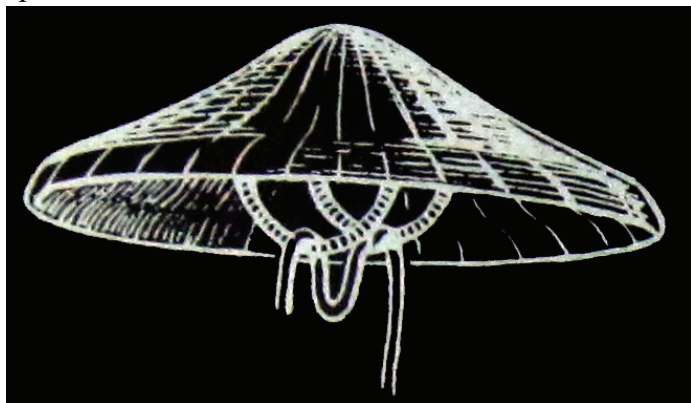
FUKA AMIGASA - 深編笠





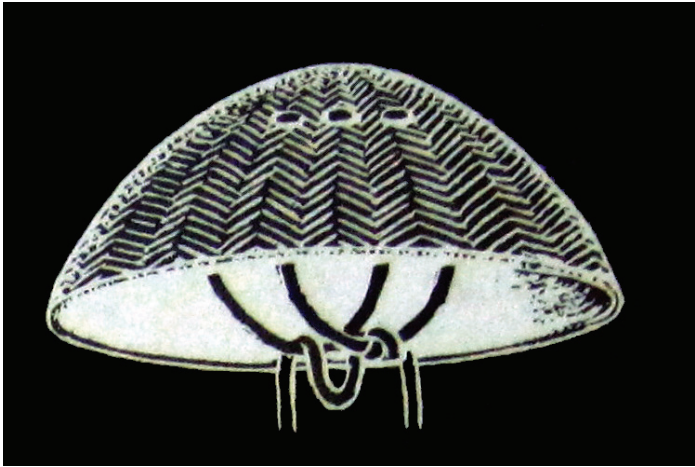
SANDOGASA 三度笠

This version was for both male and female and specific to the merchant class.



AJIROGASA-網代笠

This version of the straw hat was reserved for nuns.



As we can see, the complexities of hat-ware alone make Yo-nin a difficult task, however, like all things this was part of their culture, the main problem for a shinobi was understanding the dress code of each region so that anything they wore would not stand out as unnatural.

TAKEDA SHINGEN



If any name should ring out in the world of ninjutsu it is the name of this man, Takeda Shingen (1521-1573). While he is most famous for his command abilities he was a fundamental figure in the world of ninjutsu. Fujibayashi (1676) writes the following in his works:

Question: Then for what reason is it [ninjutsu] called Mitsumono?

Answer: The Shugo provincial lord of Kai, called Takeda Shingen Harunobu was an excellent warlord. He had a special unit called Mitsumono consisting of 30 loyal brave people who are competent to carry out his tactics very skilfully. He would give them a good stipend, reward them enough, keep them by his side and utilize them as the key to the military. The unit was divided into 3: Espionage, Strategy, and Counterespionage, thus called it Mitsumono - Of Three Men.

If you do not know, this concept of mitsumono is a fundamental step in ninjutsu and Takeda is famed for his use of the shinobi. He was considered a great general and his tactics were studied time and time again, his understanding of the use of the shinobi was paramount and while we know lots about the ninja you must place in your mind as a student of Historical Ninjutsu his concepts or at least have an understanding of his biography and the world he lived

in, for he was at the height of the ninjutsu golden age and he was one of its main contributors.

THE ALLIANCE

The words Iga and Koka ring out anywhere in the ninja world, but what was life like there, what did the people do or how did they govern themselves. As discussed in *Shinobi Soldiers I* both Iga and Koka were independent sates up until the late 16th century. These provinces did not have what we would recognize as provincial lords in a feudal system but were more of a self governing collection of landed gentry. The two areas were made up of clans and families that bonded together for support and as a result of this need for social strength they created two governing bodies that established a law system and regulated social law and general issues. This need for security was founded on the advancing threat of the rest of Japan and the shadow of Nobunaga on his quest for the war against the ninja. In Iga the governing body was called the:

IGA SOKOKU IKKI

And in Koka they were called the:

KOKA GUNCHUSO

These two bodies would hold meetings of representatives in a system called Noyoriai 野寄合, which directly translates as Field Meetings. These meetings were to convene on things such as land disputes, water rights, law setting and generally creating harmony between the people of Iga and Koka.

The reason for such an interest in a social understanding of these regions is to establish an understanding of the people themselves. For while we know that shinobi existed elsewhere and flourished in other parts, people at the time of the Sengoku wars fully understood that if you wanted to find the premier shinobi in the land, then it was from Iga or Koka that you must look.

Understand that when the ninja flourished they were part of a group of clans or families, held together by the above regulatory bodies and enjoyed provincial freedom from what was becoming a very structured and regulated Japan, a Japan that would soon be held in the iron fist of Tokugawa.

THE GODDESS OF WAR



Marishiten 摩利支天, a name that echoes around the misty hills of Iga & Koka, but who is this goddess? Marishiten is the Japanese name for an imported Buddhist deity. The goddess has come under many names before but in Japan is known as the latter or as Buji Marishiten. It has been postulated that this deity was adopted in the 9th century by the warrior culture of Japan and was the main figure in warrior culture

worship. It appears that the samurai would pray and worship this goddess to achieve a state of indifference to life and death and to pray for victory in war. We know that the warriors of Iga and Koka would also pray to this goddess and while most samurai prayed to her we can get an understanding of the ninja spirituality and their concept of religion in connection to warfare. We have the image of a samurai on the eve of battle, praying to the deity for invisibility, hoping the enemy blades will miss them, but on the reverse side we can contemplate that the ninja would pray themselves, just before entering a shinobi mission, maybe for invisibility of a differing kind, but for victory nonetheless. What is of further interest is that this is also a goddess of light and is seen normally as a female on a lotus leaf or as a demon on a charging boar, or even being pulled by boars on a firry chariot. One can only imagine a shinobi, in his family shine, praying to a grotesque boar before slipping into the night to engage in covert activity.



THE TRINITY

The trinity is a universal concept, however in Japan there is a trinity that is used in warfare, a strategy that has diffused into the realm of the ninja. This Trinity is known as Ten-chi-jin and translates as Heaven, Earth and Man. In Japanese warfare it is said that one must have control or fortune of all three and take all three into account to achieve victory. For the shinobi this could be seen as an important aspect of their mission. The Katori Shinto Ryu in their 'defence against a ninja' oral tradition discuss how a shinobi will use, Heaven or astronomy/astrology to be guided by the heavens (both in a secular and supernatural way), by Earth or geography, by understanding topography and nature, medicines and such and lastly my Man, psychology and an understanding of the human condition. With all three in accordance a shinobi should have mastery over the enemy and gain victory at all times.

A different shinobi oral tradition states the following:

“A Shinobi should have three major principles, which are Logic (Talk), Boldness, and then Strategy.”

Be aware that this was a common concept and not only used by the ninja, however we can understand that the ninja would have adapted this understanding to fit their needs and would utilise this Trinity to achieve their needs for espionage.



THE NINJA HOUSE

The ninja house has become a popular gimmick in the world of ninja research and you can visit at least two 'authentic' ninja houses in Japan. But just how authentic are these and what is the history behind them?

THE IGA HOUSE

There is a house within the compounds of the Iga Ueno museum. The museum declares that the house is of 'late Edo period' and was originally situated in Takayama in Iga. It was brought to its current position in the 1960's and since then has suffered from fire damage, which resulted in a partial rebuilding. Thus, we do not know which is historical and which is modern but they claim that all of its attributes are historical.

THE KOKA HOUSE

There is also a less well know Koka house that is connected to the Mochuzuki family and is 300 years old. This obviously predates the above Iga house and allows us to set the reality of the ninja house into possible ninja fact.

FACILITIES:

This list is a compilation of the two houses and what they tend to have as deceptive functions.

HIDDEN STAIRWAY

A stairway that drops from the roof and allows access to an upper floor. The stairway blends into the ceiling when it is stowed.

HIDDEN FLOOR COMPARTMENTS

A series of compartments that are hidden within the floor. These are sometimes disguised as part of the joinery so that their edges can not be detected, or the entire floor space of a cupboard or closet acts in this fashion, so that the seam does not appear out of place.

SECRET DOORS

A door that appears to be a wall but which in fact leads to a hidden room.

HIDDEN ROOMS

A room that is inaccessible without the knowledge of a secret door.

ESCAPE TUNNELS

A tunnel that runs beneath the house to an external area. Used in times of need when one wishes to escape or possibly used one wishes not to be seen leaving.

QUICK EXITS

These are exits from the house or the compound that appear to be part of a wall or that lead to a gap in the house where the ninja may escape.

FALSE CEILINGS

A ceiling that comes away and where a ladder can be dropped down.

REMOVABLE FLOORBOARDS

Single floorboards that can be removed and used as secret compartments.

HOW NINJA WAS A NINJA HOUSE?

The Japanese will tell you it is a ninja house, the sign will tell you it is a ninja house, but did it come with a sale-sign?

For Sale

1 Ninja house

- *Secret escape tunnel and hidden rooms*
- *External Bathroom*
- *Needs repair*

Call estate agent for price

Of course not, so why do we think that they are ninja houses? This is all down to the basic position of the house. One is in Iga and one is in Koka, we know that a warrior of Iga owned one and the other was owned by the Mochuzuki family. By now the word ninja

should be screaming in your ears. While it is a staggeringly high possibility that these houses were owned by ninja we must remember that the functions in the house are defensive and military. Thus it would be good to question if a samurai would not have the same functions? The only reason that we still hold that it is a ninja house is that they are found in “ninja land” We have to remember that secret doors, escape tunnels and hidden rooms are also found all across Europe and at the same time period. Thus these are not ninja inventions, nor may they have only been used by the ninja. The main question to ask is “are there any more houses with this type of defence in Japan, where are they, what social class do these houses belong to” Etc. It is a big leap from secret rooms to ninja house. What is needed is a full study of Japanese architecture in reference to social class to establish if these houses were in fact samurai or farm dwellings? And to identify all other examples in Japan and see if they too are to be found in ninja “hotspots”? If the answer was that all examples were found in “ninja land” maybe the Hojo clan or in the Fuma family, then the case gets stronger, if not then the case gets weaker.

All we can conclude is that these are ingenious houses with great defensive systems and are found within the ninja heartland. However, all this said, it is a high possibility that they were owned and run by the ninja but it is not a fact.

THE ARTS OF WAR NOT THE MARTIAL ARTS

There is a massive misnomer in the world of ninjutsu today about the difference between warfare tactics and martial arts. It must be clear here that the two are separate in our minds but are not quite so separate in the mind of the feudal Japanese. What *we* in today's world consider the arts of war and the martial arts are detailed below.

The Arts of War

For the modern person the arts of war consist of:

- Army movements
- Squads of riflemen
- Squads of archers
- Phalanx movement
- Lancers
- Espionage
- Explosives in any form
- Strategy

The Martial Arts

- For the Modern person the martial arts consist of the following:
- Unarmed combat
- Swordsmanship

- Spearmanship, or single combat with any weapon
- Self protection
- Throwing blades
- Archery

The issue that comes out of this list is that we see the arts of war as anything *en mass* and the martial arts as anything done by physical combatants. This is simply because we think of war from our own experiences, we are children of world wars. Then we see war from a tactical position, great armies on the move, we never see it from the soldiers point of view, what is war for a general and war for a foot soldier are very different. The point of this chapter is to establish that people can not argue semantics when it comes to ninjutsu, many people say that it is an art of war and the arts of war are the martial arts so thus ninjutsu is a martial art? No, we must remember that the English word martial art is what we believe it to be, that is combat between people in a physical form on the small scale. If a person turned on the TV and saw a battle they would say it's a war, if they change channel and see a karate match they would say martial arts, thus, we must keep our own definition.

So how did the ancient Japanese see the difference and was their one? The first step to understanding this is to first understand what ancient man considered as combat. The most important issue is the social background, in medieval Europe even farmers carried

swords and there was a time in Japan where weapons were not banned and a farmer could have carried a sword with as much right as a Bushi. To understand this further lets create three basic social situations.

TOTAL FREEDOM

This is a point in social history where any class or caste could carry any weapon they liked and use it to defend themselves.

RESTRICTED FREEDOM

Only one class is allowed to carry weapons to police the populace and thus the concentration on unarmed combat rises.

TOTAL RESTRAINT

No one in the population is allowed to carry any weapon in public and weapons are not a common site.

As you can see we can match these three elements to Japan in a basic form, we see in the Sengoku period that most carried weapons, then in the Edo period mostly only the samurai carried weapons (there are exceptions) and in modern Japan you will only ever see a weapon on a police man, whereas in England you will not see a gun on a police man apart from at the airport.

Now, we have to ask, what is combat to a person in the first section? The Viking sagas when analysed show that nearly all combat, be it individual or en

mass was with weapons, it is very difficult to find an example where no weapons are included. Thus, that means the concept of martial arts and arts of war are almost the same, he fights one man or one hundred he picks up a spear and a sword and fights, the only thing that would determine a difference would be size. So for him the two are almost the same. For someone in the middle and final of the two above sections there would be a great difference between what we call martial arts and what they consider the arts of war, this is only further compounded in its difficulty by adding social classes. Therefore the argument can go on and on and become too complex.

So how do we handle this issue? First we must remember to keep the meaning of our own English words and to explain the meanings of any Japanese words. If you use the term martial arts we must understand it from our concept, that is that it is combat with medieval weapons between single combatants or a group. The arts of war in English is the ability to move men who do martial arts on a large scale and to engage in tactics and all the other attributes of warfare as we know it. We must never mix the two. The reason for this is first, common sense and the second is to stop people misunderstanding that ninjutsu is a martial art, people often see that ninjutsu is an art of war and then come to the conclusion that it then must be a martial art, this is not so! Do not fall into this trap.

THE JAPANESE TERMINOLOGY

Now, remembering that we are English speakers we must now look at some Japanese terminology to understand the world that the ninja inhabited. However, the first thing you should know about the Japanese words in question is that they are not set in concrete and their meanings may be slightly translational, thus each example that one quotes when dealing with ancient scrolls must be in context with its original setting.

武芸

Bugei

This is War/Martial and then arts. It was considered to be the use of weapons to destroy an enemy and has been in use at least since the Sengoku Period.

武芸四門

Bugei Yon Mon

According to the Koyogunkan 甲陽軍鑑 this concept is considered to be four main areas of war/martial skills:

- Archery
- Marksmanship
- Heiho⁶
- Horse riding

⁶

The concept of Heiho is difficult to narrow down.

軍法

Gunpo

The Arts of the Soldier/War

Gunpo is a term that covers the more strategic elements of Japanese warfare as well as the physical aspect. There are many Gunpo manuals in Japan and you can expect to find meteorology, astrology, siege warfare and all the arts of war in their entirety.

武芸十八般

Bugei Juhappan⁷

18 Skills of War

This is a set of 18 skills that have many variations in Japan and are considered to have been imported from China. They appear to have gained popularity in the Edo period

兵法

Heiho

This is the closest term we can find that directly means Martial Arts. It is normally used to mean the art of combat with weapons and has been used at least since the Sengoku period.

The above selection is only a basic look at how the words we think we know about martial arts generally

⁷ At present there is no real evidence for the Ninjutsu 18 Skills. This appears to have been created by the late Mr Takamatsu?

do not appear in that context in the historical record. However, the main point here is that in the world of the Japanese warrior they would have had a distinction between the arts of war and the martial arts, but maybe it was not so clear cut as ours and/or the blend of words was more subtle. Either way, we can not claim to know what was meant by all these words, we must look at the context of each scroll and each word as it is used. This means that other ninjutsu researchers can not claim use linguistics to prove some of their points without showing each example in context. Alongside this, we see that the word ninjutsu appears as a part of the arts of war and not as the martial arts in historical documents as the context for ninjutsu is normally set alongside breaking and entering and also alongside destruction and spying, it is never set next to warfare from a martial arts point of view.



CHAPTER 6
WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

THEORETICAL DEBATES

There are certain issues that may never be solved in connection to the ninja or the answer may lie in the future when study has allowed us more information. However, these issues are important to the understanding on the ninja and should be investigated and aired out. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to highlight these points for thought and to create discussions that will promote further investigation.

WHAT DID NINJAS WEAR IN WAR?

Often we seem to have an image of the shinobi as uniformed. As discussed in the last *Shinobi Soldiers* a ninja wore nothing out of the ordinary. Logically in battle a shinobi would wear armour, in bed, nightwear but there is one very curious element that comes into play. In Historical army listings we see that a medieval samurai army of around 3000 would have 10 shinobi in their ranks. This one line can throw open a massive debate and it opens the following questions.

- Were the shinobi an open group, did people know that they were a band of ninja?
- If yes to the first question, did they differentiate themselves from the others, by uniform or banner or even by segregation?
- If no was the answer to the first question then did they form a single squad who then in turn kept their identify secret? Or did they integrate throughout the army and meet when needed?
- How were these shinobi viewed by others?
- Were they welcomed or were they shunned?

We know from manuals what their job in the army was, it is quite clear and has been discussed before. Warring period shinobi were night time squad leaders, track finders, scouts, arsonists etc, etc. So what really needs to be identified is how they physically looked, acted and interacted during their campaigns with an army.



SOCIAL RESPECT

Pre-Edo period Japan was called the Sengoku period or warring states period and one of the many misnomers that our society has about this time is that the social classes were set. While social classes were in existence and well established what is not known is that one could move around within those classes. It was only in the Edo period that the rigid 4 tier class system was enforced. Thus, before that people could shift from class to class depending on personal and political situations. Therefore, strike from your mind the need to see Japan in this stereotype. What is hard to understand is the interaction that was had between these classes. Of course the main factors here would be the time period, the local customs and the rule of the elite over the lower castes. If this rule was harsh and contained enforced segregation then the interaction on a social level would be different to an area that had a more liberal feel. To compound this problem we can not ignore the factors of 'city' living versus village life, it must be understood that two social classes at the same time period can act differently depending on their own interaction with other castes around them. Therefore, without a full

discourse on this issue and having it now loaded in our argument we ask the question.

“HOW DID A JONIN INTERACT WITH A SAMURAI?”

Remembering that the concept of Jonin to Genin as a social hierarchy is a *total* misconception and that by Jonin we mean highly skilled ninja, the question would be centred on the interaction between a socially elite samurai and a famed or respected Jonin.

Before we move on with this discussion we must understand the following points.

- It appears that while Chunin and Genin level ninja were used and held some respect, they did not carry the total respect a Jonin would have done.
- As the caste system was fluid would a Jonin have “automatically” become a samurai or have held an elevated place in elite society?

To make this even clearer, let us take a hypothetical situation:

Iga was a farming community and it is thought that many of its subjects were shinobi. We do not know to what percentage but we can be quite sure that many of the farmers in the morning and the samurai at practice were training as shinobi on the side (it is also possible that the distinction between farmer and

samurai was maybe less of an issue then). Therefore, if a farmhand was also a highly skilled shinobi and in fact a Jonin, would he have been highly respected by the community? Then on the other hand, take a samurai by birth that was the same age. When the two met, how did they interact? We see the image of the peasant bowing to the samurai in a very feudal way but what happened between these two men? Did the samurai give him courtesy, did the Jonin give total obedience to the samurai or was the Jonin elevated to samurai status simply because of his abilities as a ninja? There are so many outcomes for this situation and there is no solid answer, but the question does raise a few eyebrows, what was a Jonin worth?

A reference to the attack on Kikyō castle gives a slight insight to this:

“Thousands were killed with one sweep of the sword including the Jonin Hattori”

What does this tell us about this argument? Well first you must understand that Hattori (not the famous one) was a samurai and that vast sections of the thousands killed were also samurai but the only name mentioned at this point and his title scream ninja. A Jonin was a better victory shout than the captain of the castle? What does that tell you about how the Jonin were respected?

Therefore all we can conclude was that a Jonin was a very highly prized person and was maybe elevate to the status of elite, but that does not answer our question of how that interaction played out in a day to day life.



BANDITS, YAMABUSHI & NINJAS!

Iga is a ring of mountains with a collection of highways and entrances through the mountain range with a relative flatland in the centre. This geographical information can help us understand a burning yet unregistered question that is submerged in the understanding of the ninja. That question is *how did the yamabushi, mountain bandits and shinobi interact with each other?* We know that some shinobi became bandits and that some are famous as folk heroes in the guise of banditry, however that tells us firstly that the ninja and the bandit were separate entities, for how could a ninja become a bandit if not? Thus, we now have two groups, mountain bandits and ninjas. Then we add the third group which is the yamabushi or those who are periodically in the mountains. The fourth group known to occupy the same areas as the shinobi were the sohei warrior monks, again different from the ninja. Therefore, we can have four major factions all in the same area and all living in proximity to each other. To add to this you will have those who are classed as common folk and those samurai who do not partake in the arts of ninjutsu (if any?). The burning question is how did these people relate to each other on a social level. We know that the yamabushi and the sohei could be seen

as having a form of standardised dress, depending on the chronological placing, and you would presume that a bandit looks, well...like a bandit? Sword in hand, asking for your money? That only leaves the ninja, now we know that the ninja had no uniform, and it is possible that any yamabushi passing a shinobi would not know that he was a shinobi⁸, or is it possible that a yamabushi would have known? The main section of evidence we have for any understanding of interaction comes from Ieyasu Tokugawa's infamous trek across Iga and is highlighted in the following quotation:

One account of Tokugawa's journey states:

"From here on it was mountain roads and precipices as far as Shigaraki, with many mountain bandits. Yomaoka and Hattori accompanied them, deifying mountain bandits and yamabushi alike...Hattori Sadanobu was praised for the great extent of his loyalty."

The main issue here is that the ninja protecting the future Shogun fight off mountain bandits thus we know that there was conflict between the two groups. But what is even stranger is the fact that the yamabushi appear to have attacked? If this is the case then we must rethink the concept of the yamabushi

⁸ By ninja the author here means Iga no mono or the archetypal ninja, one who was brought up in a ninja village and trained as a fully fledged shinobi.

and see them as a possible violent factor as appose to their identity of religious pilgrims?

Returning to the geographical understanding of Iga and the ninja lands, we know that the ninja clans, such as Mochizuki held castles in the mountains, and that many of the clans and their castles were in the main flatland found in Iga. So on a basic level, we find the ninja in centralised strongholds and villages, the yamabushi as wonderers, the mountain bandits in the mountains and the sohei monks in their stronghold.

Taking this into account, imagine a comical and hypothetical situation, a ninja is walking down the road in Iga, wondering in the hills, maybe he is out for a picnic?

“Good morning yamabushi-san”

“Good morning master shinobi, have you seen Bob the mountain bandit this morning?”

“No I am sorry yamabushi-san, I have not, but here comes Simon the sohei, maybe he knows!!!”

While comical and amusing, it has a real line of questioning, did a ninja go to the mountains and did he interact with bandits, or would the shinobi never go alone into that area as it was dangerous? On the other hand did the bandits stay away from any shinobi travellers as attacking one could incur the wrath of an entire ninja clan? To add to that were

there bands of yamabushi, no better then bandits themselves? The questions are endless and unanswerable without further investigation. However, it is something that one must truly ponder and try to comprehend to understand the world in which the shinobi lived.



CHAPTER 7
HISTORICAL SCROLLS

DECAPITATED HEADS



One strange element that is to be found in the ninja scrolls is the concept of seppuku and the fact that the ninjas need to know its intricacies. The main theory we as a historical research team have formulated is the fact that the ninja were given the task of capturing criminals (remembering the term is subjective). Therefore, to better understand the world of the samurai and the world where the head was seen as a prize we need to understand the ritualistic methods that surround it. For that reason the following document has been included to gain an understanding of the treatment of the dead in respect to head hunting.

THE DOCUMENT:

軍用記

THE GUNYOKI.

BY

ISE SADATAKE (1718-1784)

A SHOGUN'S RETAINER AND WELL VERSED IN THE
ANCIENT COURT AND MILITARY PRACTICES.

The head inspection was conducted for the purpose of distribution of honours among the warriors by inspecting and deciding who they killed and how.

Before the inspection women prepared the heads with make up or blackened the teeth. Warriors were careful about their appearance, prepared to die so that their heads were ready to be inspected. Makeup or the wearing of fragrance or incense was thought to be proper and if it [the head] has scars, conceal them with rice powder.

The head should be placed on a 3-footed stand of Japanese cypress. About 25cm square, 27mm in thickness, with feet of 36mm. The lord should inspect it from inside of the middle gate and the head should not be brought into there but kept outside.

The lord should be dressed in Eboshi⁹ of aventurine lacquer, Hitatare¹⁰ and Yoroï armour, an archers glove, short and long swords, outer sash, a quiver with arrows, a whip put into the quiver, he should also wear Hogan¹¹ with a bow in one hand, a fan in his right hand, sitting on a stool with a fur on it, with his feet on the white part of the fur.

At the time of an inspection, he stands up putting the bow on the ground, holding his sword with his right hand on the hilt and drawing it just a little. Just like when facing the enemy, he turns to the right direction and only gives a sideway glimpse with his left eye. Then he puts the sword back and passes the bow to the right hand, then he opens the fan with the left hand with the side of the sun outside during the daytime and the side of moon during the night time.¹² He should not give a second glimpse to the head and not look directly in front of it but sideways. If the sword is held by an attendant, he should stand on the left of the lord with the sword drawn a little with his hand on the hilt.

⁹ A type of headgear worn by nobles in court dress.

¹⁰ A kind of court dress in olden days.

¹¹ Unknown.

¹² The fan seems to have the sun and the moon drawn on one side respectively.

Everyone present should wear Eboshi, Hitatare and armour and be girdled with a sword. The one who submits the head should be dressed the same. Gaiters or waraji sandals are not allowed and they should carry arrows on the back. These things should be done just as they were done on the battlefield. Be warned, if the head you have is an enemy lord you may get attacked.

On the inspection, the one who got the head holds the topknot with his left hand and the stand with his right hand and comes forward and sit cross-legged, puts down the stand, then puts the left thumb in the head's ear and holds the chin with the other four fingers. Put the right hand from the cheek to the chin, lift it up and show the side of the head to the lord. Then put it back on the stand and leave with it. A master of ceremonies is standing between the lord and the one submitting the head and calls the name of him and the head he has got. In case there is no stand, use paper or a fan.

Once the heads have been inspected, put them on the platform or on the lid of the box with their faces toward the enemy, have 5 bows standing on the ground in a line and raise a shout of triumph. On a tray, put a cup of earthenware on top of another and a piece of Konbu¹³ seaweed. Pour sake in the top cup,

¹³ Konbu is thought to be of good omen, as the pronunciation rhymes with “joy” in Japanese.

pretend to have the head drink it and then put the cup on the tray upside down, “feed” the konbu to the mouth, pour sake into the second cup and again pretend to have it drink the sake. After all these elements, throw the heads to the north.

Informal version: those present may disregard the need to wear armour. Hold the topknot with the right hand, turn it slightly upward and show the left side of it. You should crouch with the knees drawn up, then turn around to the left and stand up. If it is a monk’s head, put your left hand on the cut end, and your thumb on or above the ear. If you are dressed in Kataginubakama ceremonial dress, you need to hold your sword when looking at the head. When at a private mansion, you should wear armour.

The inspected heads were then:

- Thrown away
- Gibbeted
- Sent back to the enemy.

The container for the head is 54 cm in height, it has a radius of 24 cm with a lid. Draw a swastika on the lid. Cross tie the box with a leather or silk string. If the head is of a high rank, wrap it with silk cloth and put it with its face toward the seam of the box.

A tag of 5.4cm x 3cm should be put on a head. Write the name of the person who killed them and when the name of the victim is known write that as well. If it is

of the enemy's lord, tag it on the left side of the hair.
If a monk, put a tag through the ear.

According to the rank of the victim, some offerings were prepared. For example, to the lord's head, sake or konbu were offered.

The inspection was referred to in three ways.

Kubitaimen – “meeting with the head”, in the case of a lord of high rank.

Kenchi— “identification”, in case of important warriors.

Misiri — “recognition” In case of lower soldiers

THE IGA RULES

This next document is a set of commandments or rules established between some of the clans of Iga to help stop invasion from foreign powers. The document was found among those passed down in the Yamanaka family in Koka so it was at first thought to have been the commandment of Koka. However, Prof. Ishida Yoshihito discussed the possibility that the title “Sokoku Ikki” means the *self-governing organization of the Iga district*.

The document itself doesn't have any signatures at the end so it seems to be a draft and along side this there is no year given for its compilation. Prof Ishida speculates that it was written at some point between 1552 and 1568, his major points for this set of dates are as follows:

- (a) In Article 7 it prohibits servitude to the Miyoshi clan, however, before 1552 the Miyoshi was only a retainer clan to the more powerful Hosokawa clan and thus would not have been referred to without the name of Hosokawa. In 1552 the Miyoshi succeeded in

leaving the service of the Hosokawa and took hold of independent power within the shogunate.

- (b) The document does not mention anything about Oda Nobunaga. If it had been written later than 1568, when Rokkaku Jotei the Shugo of Omi province had fled to Koga his name and attack would have been known.

If this document is in fact from Iga, of which researchers are almost certain, then it is the only document left concerning the Iga Sokoku Ikki as any other documents were destroyed in the Iga Tensho no Ran wars of 1579. To add to this there are supporting documents for the meetings held between Iga and Koka left among the documents left in other Koka clans.

Overall the document was an agreement made between the 10 Bugyo administrators from Iga and Koka to settle a conflict between the warrior families. Contemporary documents support this and state that 12 representatives were selected to make decisions for the land. Also, it is speculated that there was an equivalent organization in Koka called Gun-Chuso which is thought to have consisted of many of Domyoso which was a unit consisting of the families that shared the same name as *Domyo* literally means “of the same name”. There are two documents by this organization left in the Ohara family (1560 and 1570). According to them, within the Domyoso, each

family had equal rights and decision making was done by discussion and a majority vote. Alongside this some of the Domyoso seem to have formed a larger regional group. One of them is the *Kashiwagi Three families*, this consisted of the Yamanaka, the Minobe and the Kashiwagi. Two sets of the commandment made among the 3 families have been left to us (1522 and 1556). Therefore, it can be said that the Gunchuso, Koka collective consisted of those Domyo & Chuso or those other larger regional groups. The meetings held between Iga and Koga as discussed before were called “Noyoriai”, which means “field meeting”. The 10 Bugyo from each region met at the border of their lands and discussed issues of interest concerning Iga & Koka.

Iga was a self-governing system without a dominant controlling daimyo clan, while in most other provinces across Japan warlords were gathering more and more strength which meant that a more centralized power was being formed, why did Iga become an isolated system?

- (a) Through the 8th to 16th century, they didn't have a Shugo military governor because Iga belonged to the Todaiji temple, a very influential temple in Nara and not to the Imperial Court. As the decrease of the temple's strength continued Iga became more and more independent and thus self governing. While In most provinces, a Shugo

or Shugodai (a chief retainer to a Shugo) had dominant power over all. As a result they fought to take the power from each other, or with someone who wanted to overthrow those above, but it seems it was not the case with Iga.

- (b) Iga did not have to pay “land tax” because they were out of the control of the shogunate or the imperial house.
- (c) It is said that there were more than 500 castles or fortresses, or fortified mansions in Iga, which means they were always prepared for war or invasion, a difficult target.
- (d) The terrain of Iga was a difficult place to overwhelm. As it is surrounded by mountains, thus they could focus on the 6 major gateways into Iga.

Having understood the above information we can start to see a more realistic picture of the Iga & Koka Shu or group. While the following document does not mention the ninja directly, the people and clans it is talking about are the people we all know as the shinobi of Iga and Koka. While we do not know to what percentage of these men and women were ninja, we do know that this document was written at the extreme height of the golden age of ninjutsu and this was only a few years before the fall of the Iga no Mono and the attack of Oda Nobunaga.

THE DOCUMENT:

惣国一揆

THE SOKOKU IKKI¹⁴ THE COMMANDMENT OF IGA

1. When any other domain's army is intruding on our province, the collective of the Sokoku should fight to defend against them together, with each other as one.
2. Upon the alert sent from the gateway when the enemy are spotted, all the bells in every village should be struck and everyone should take up a position immediately. Everyone should prepare himself with food, weapons and shields and set up an encampment so as not to allow them to enter the gateways of our realm.
3. All people of the ages 17 to 50 should be stationed for war. If a battle is a prolonged one, and they have to be stationed for a long period, they should

¹⁴ Iga Sokoku Ikki is a term designated the alliance formed among the Jizamurai (land owing samurai of Iga). Also referred to as the Sokoku. Lit. So惣 means self-governing village, Koku 国 means country or land. Ikki 一揆 means a military unit formed as a means of resisting an increasing powers of regional migrates or a Shugo military governor which was often cemented through oaths. They oversaw matters of a local nature, such as self-defence, irrigation, water control and land management.

rotate on a system. In every village and every area commanders should be appointed so all the men in the “So惣” can follow the orders of those said commanders. As for the temples in the Sokoku, the elders should carry out a devotional service for the prosperity of our province, while the young should take part in the camp.

4. All the Hikan¹⁵ of the Sokoku should write a solemn oath, stating that they will follow their lord whatever be the situation of our land.

5. Ashigaru of our land may even capture a castle of another domain. Therefore, those who serve as ashigaru during a siege and go beyond the borders and attack a castle in another land and succeeded in capturing it, they should be rewarded liberally for their loyalty and promoted to samurai.

6. Anyone who intentionally lets an army of another domain in, the combined Sokoku will subjugate him and his clan and annihilate them without leaving any trace and the land will be put under the use of a temple or shrine. Similarly, anyone who communicates with the enemy secretly and gives them any inside information about our land will be treated just as the same as those who let the enemy army in. If someone brings information of anyone's treason in the above manner, he will

¹⁵

Hikan are lower level people who serve the elite.

be highly valued.

7. Any samurai or ashigaru foot soldiers of our land, should not serve the Miyoshi clan¹⁶.

8. If there is someone who does not accept Yumiya Hanjo Tax¹⁷, he, his father, sons or brothers will not be eligible for the benefit from the fund for 10 years. Neither should they be allowed to take charge of Yado Okuri or Mukae Transportation System¹⁸.

9. When positioned in village or camp, any disorderly behaviour or violence should be prohibited within our alliance.

10. As the Yamato province has unjustly attacked our province over a prolonged period of time, you

¹⁶ The Miyoshi were in league with the enemies of Koka and Iga.

¹⁷ Lit. Yumiya means 'bow and arrow' and Hanjo 'signed document'. It is unknown exactly what this means. However, there is another word in use at that time which was Yasen, lit. "Money for Arrows" which means war funds. So by analogy, it seems to be a likely speculation that Yumiya Hanjo means a request to pay a share of the war funds for the province. This is how the Historical Ninjutsu Research Team has come to such a conclusion.

¹⁸ Yado Okuri (or Mukae) means "transportation system". It was often conducted by local leaders who could provide a number of men in that area and probably yielded some profit for them.

should not employ any ronin who once served the generals of the Yamato province.

11. As we have controlled our province without any problems, it is of utmost importance for us to obtain cooperation from Koka. Thus, we should have a meeting with Koka at the border between Iga and Koka at an early date.

The above commandment should be in effect with the signatures of all who are concerned.

16th day of November

AMENDMENTS

Shinobi Soldiers is and always will be an investigation into a period of history that is hard to establish to any great level. Thus, like promised there will be amendments to any information that has been published in the past that has now been further investigated and has been found to be outdated.

- In *Shinobi Soldiers* volume I page 69 there is a reference to a type of foot claw in the *Bansenshukai* manual. It has been revealed that this was an addition by the late Mr Nawa, a ninjutsu researcher. It has not been established if this claw was from another manual or an invention of his own. Either way it does not appear in the original manuscript and the search for a claw of the foot in connection to ninjutsu goes on.
- Page 47 shows some claws for the back of the hands. These have now been identified as a farming tool used to thresh straw and such grasses and were a common agricultural tool.

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