



A Sourcebook for Sengoku: Chanbara Roleplaying in Feudal Japan™

“All warfare is based on deception.”

—Sun Tzu

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Stock No. 1001-E, ISBN 1-890305-31-6

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FOREWORD

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Darren-Jon Ashmore

Darren-Jon Ashmore is a writer and researcher with the University of Sheffield's School of Japanese studies (specializing in early Japanese theater, fiction and folk religious traditions). Together with his partner, Keiko Maeda, he is currently researching a project concerning the inseparable nature of fact and fiction in Japanese *shinobi* folk legends (much to the consternation of his Dean of Faculty, who is of the belief that Darren should be researching Japanese theater). Darren divides his time as evenly as possible between his Sheffield home and his research in Mie prefecture (much to the anger of his family who think he should be settling down). This is his first role-playing game project and—as always with his work—he is not happy with it (believing that it requires about another 200,000 words and another 6 months to do the subject justice).

Darren plays far too many CCGs, far, far too many RPGs, collects Japanese theater puppets and *shuriken* (though he usually has a hard time with British Customs Officers when he brings them into England).

Mark Arsenault

Mark Arsenault is an amateur Japanese historian, author and publisher. He has a fondness for all things chanbara and, among his writing credits, co-authored the award-winning *SENGOKU: CHANBARA ROLE-PLAYING IN FEUDAL JAPAN* with Anthony J. Bryant.

His love of *chanbara* began with his first viewing of the *Shōgun* mini-series and his introduction to the *Bushidō* RPG. His *chanbara* and *jidai-geki* video collection has grown to immense proportions, thanks to the growing popularity and availability of such films in the U.S. (and the blessing and support of his wife, Margaret).

The publication of *SENGOKU* was the realization of his dream to see a thoroughly researched, historical *samurai* and *chanbara* role-playing game.

Keiko Maeda

Keiko Maeda was born in Ueno City, Mie Prefecture, Japan, into one of the few remaining families which can trace a blood link (however tenuous it may be) to the Iga *shinobi* who worked for the Tokugawa government—well that's her story and she's sticking to it. Her family tree aside, there can be no doubt that Keiko is a marvelous source of erudite knowledge and insight when it comes to the lore of the *shinobi*, especially related to the Iga *ryū* and its allies. She has breathed *shinobi* history almost her whole life and while being—as far as her physical skills are concerned—something of a “Complete Book of Ninja,” her understanding of the myths, legends and the more obscure facts about the “Shadow Warriors” has been of immeasurable aid in the writing of this book.

Keiko is the only person she knows to have been excluded from a Japanese live-action role-playing (or LARP) session for getting over excited and executing *Ninpō Taijutsu* maneuvers on an NPC Dark Elf.

“...a skilled commander seeks victory from the situation and does not demand it of his subordinates.”

—Sun Tzu

INTRODUCTION

Dark forms moving silently in the night, scaling walls and cliffs with ease. Black-clad assassins who kill without fear or honor. Masters of unarmed combat and deception. Practitioners of black magic, able to beguile their adversaries and devour them with their own nightmares. These are but some of the common stereotypes held of the shinobi.

Fiction? Certainly. But to what degree is the question which this book has been written (within the context of the *SENGOKU* roleplaying game) to answer. Inside these covers we hope to show you the truth, or at least a version of the cracked mirror which is the truth, behind the most feared and misunderstood of the *SENGOKU* professions. The Shadow Warrior.

The *shinobi*.

We have tried to create a work which is as close to the historical “truth” of the shinobi in Japan as we can, but we cannot claim to have succeeded in any sense of the word. However, neither do we admit to failing in our task, for the simple reason that no-one, not living scholar, not practicing shinobi nor long dead writer has ever had it in their power to encapsulate the true histories of these incredible people.

For that is not possible.

Any serious study of the traditions of the shinobi has to fight its way past so much modern invention, Edo period fiction and early historical exaggeration that it has become impossible for even the most skilled anthropologists (both Japanese and Western) to separate much of the truth from the legend. While something of the history of the shinobi as a group can be divined, there will always be certain aspects of their lives which are going to remain unknown, partly because modern deconstruction of the “ninja”—even in Japan—has left the world too little empirical evidence to work on, but mostly because the historical shinobi themselves did such an excellent job of obfuscating their own role in Japan.

As folklorists and anthropological historians (as well as game writers), we appreciate the irony of this situation and hope you will too.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

SHINOBI: SHADOWS OF NIHON details the shinobi, from birth to death. Within these pages you will learn the secrets of these obscure organizations of professional spies, espionage agents and assassins.

WHAT'S INSIDE

The first chapter, **Shinobi**, covers the history of *ninjutsu*, *shinobi* philosophy and religious beliefs, the role of the *kunoichi* (female shinobi), and the general attitudes of shinobi toward members of the four castes of feudal Japan.

Chapter two, **Families and Clans**, addresses the shinobi's place in Japanese society and the typical upbringing of a shinobi youth. Also provided is information on shinobi families, clans and clan groups, including the hierarchy and traditions of these groups.

Chapter three, **Shinobi Training**, covers unique applications of existing skills, including suggestions for uses of these skills during game play, which are designed to assist players in roleplaying shinobi characters. Also in this chapter are a number of new skills, talents and perks for shinobi characters, as well as optional Ki Powers, and a number of new *Ninpō Taijutsu* maneuvers. This chapter also details the shinobi's legendary *Shinobi-mikkyō*, their unique system of magic, culled from Buddhist and Shintō rituals of harmony, universal balance and the order of the natural world.

Chapter four, **Shinobi Clans in Sengoku**, details two shinobi clans in Sengoku Japan. Each clan write-up includes the notes about the clan's background, myths and history, and the names of some of the families within the clan. Also provided are new character templates, information about the clan's sphere of influence and primary area of operations, the clan's political involvement and influences, and the clan's allies and enemies. Also included are write-ups of several shinobi of note for each clan (historical, legendary and fictional). This section also provides a list of dozens of other known *ninjutsu ryū*.

Chapter five, **Operations**, provides information about various mission archetypes, including detailed notes on the preparation for and execution of such missions. This chapter also describes the various types of bases of operations and the resources available to shinobi characters.

Chapter six, **Equipment & Gimmicks**, provides a detailed look at the devices, gadgets and weapons available to the shinobi. This chapter includes a rundown of the many weapons in the shinobi arsenal, as well as clothing, garb and common disguises utilized by shinobi. Also provided are descriptions and game stats for a variety of tools, including: firearms and explosives,

“Seize something he cherishes and he will conform to your desires.”

—Sun Tzu

ropes and ladders, metal tools, water equipment, and poisons and chemicals. At the end of the chapter is a complete equipment list.

Chapter seven, **Shinobi and the Campaign**, provides tips for both GMs and players for incorporating shinobi in a *SENGOKU* campaign, including tips on running shinobi characters (both PCs and NPCs), patrons and suggestions on how the GM can keep things interesting in the campaign, including adventure ideas and mission suggestions for shinobi characters.

Finally in the back of the book is a glossary of terms and words associated with shinobi

Note From the Publisher

Though some of the facts contained in this work are historical (having been culled from several historical texts, reference books and scholastic and/or professional experts in the field of Shinobi arts) we have also added additional information which may not be considered “authentic” and while this data may be factually inaccurate, we have tried to remain as true to the spirit of each item whenever possible.

CONVENTIONS

ITALICS

Throughout the book you will note most Japanese words appear in italics, while others do not. Those words which do not appear frequently in this book or in the *SENGOKU* rule book or may cause confusion (looking like English words) have been presented in italics the first time they appears in a paragraph or section. Such words include *sake*, *yamabushi* and *bashigo*. Generally, the first appearance of these words will be followed by a translation in parenthesis.

A few common words which should be familiar to *SENGOKU* players and fans of the genre, such as Shōgun and samurai, have not been italicized. Proper names, likewise, are not italicized, as a rule.

This methodology may seem inconsistent or grammatically incorrect to some readers, but consider our intent to present uncommon Japanese words in italics as a convenience to our readers, especially those who may be encountering such words for the first time.

NINJA & SHINOBI

The terms “ninja” and “shinobi” are synonymous. They both

refer to one who practices the secret arts of *ninjutsu*. The terms *ninja* (“one who endures”) and *shinobi no mono* (“one who steals in” or “one who hides”) are, in fact, different pronunciations of the same *kanji* characters, which also appear on the cover of this book. Though the exact translated meanings are somewhat different, their common use refers to the same thing.

In *SENGOKU*, we use the term “shinobi” when referring to the profession. It is the more “historic” term and is used more often than “ninja” in the many *chanbara* films from which we also draw inspiration. If you watch a *chanbara* film in which these secret practitioners of *ninjutsu* are mentioned, the subtitles will often say “ninja” but if you listen to the actual spoken dialogue you will almost invariably hear the word “shinobi.” Thus, we use *shinobi* throughout our products.

NINJUTSU & NINPŌ

Strictly speaking, *ninjutsu* is a catch-all term that encompasses all of the secret arts studied by shinobi. It is that and much more. *Ninjutsu* is also the collection of skills and philosophies practiced by a particular clan.

In the West, *ninjutsu* is often thought of today as being the art of stealth or the unarmed combat style used by *ninja* in Hollywood films. This is inaccurate. In fact, the unarmed combat style is called *taijutsu*—specifically, *ninpō taijutsu*. Which leads us to yet another term.

Ninpō is a term that basically refers to a philosophy; the philosophy of *ninjutsu*. Specifically, it refers to the *shinobi* way of approaching things. In one sense, it is synonymous with *ninjutsu*, but on a higher level. Thus, though not an exact translation, *ninpō taijutsu* can be considered “the *shinobi* way of approaching *taijutsu*.” *Ninpō* permeates the entire life of a *shinobi*, not just martial applications. *Ninpō* governs the *shinobi*’s outlook on life as well as death. From *ninpō*, the *shinobi* draws spiritual and moral guidance as well as their philosophical direction. Thus, *ninpō* is not just a practice or belief system, but a “way of life” for the *shinobi*.

Whereas the *buke* have *bushidō*, the *shinobi* have *ninpō*.

RYŪ AND CLAN

The collection of skills and philosophies of a particular clan is also called a *ryū*. In this case *ryū* does not mean “school,” per se, but is rather a familial tradition or methodology, of sorts. Thus, when talking about the various *shinobi* factions throughout Japan, one refers to *Iga ryū ninjutsu* and *Kōga ryū ninjutsu*.

The collection of families which follow and teach the same *ryū* traditions is called a clan, much in the same way that a collection of allied samurai families makes up a clan. In *SENGOKU*, the terms “clan” and “*ryū*,” when referring to *shinobi*, are synonymous. One can be an *Iga ryū shinobi* (or *Iga no shinobi*), or an *Iga* clan *shinobi*. They are essentially the same.

“...there are five matters which give rise to military operations. First, the struggle for fame; second, the struggle for advantage; third, the accumulation of animosity; fourth, internal disorder; and fifth, famine.”

—Wu Tzu

SHINOBI

In an era over eight centuries ago, when Japan was composed of many han (independent feudal states) and war was frequent, Daisuke of the Togakure family once suffered heavy losses in battle. Retreating into the mountains, he came upon the teachings of the sohei (warrior-priest) Kain Doshi. There in the fog-shrouded peaks of Iga province, Daisuke studied long and hard a new art of combat, new ways to use the body and spirit, a new vision. From this mystic teaching he learned to move freely without being perceived and how to work his will without action. With the knowledge of these secrets, Daisuke emerged from the mists of Iga the master of a new concept of accomplishment. Thus was born the legend of the kage-no-gundan (shadow army) of Togakure.

— From a tale of the origin of the Togakure ryū ninja

HISTORY OF NINJUTSU

The origins of ninjutsu are clouded in myth and legend. There are several theories as to the exact origins of ninjutsu. Some historians believe one theory to the exclusion of others. Some believe the truth lies somewhere amidst each of the theories.

Some even contend that multiple origins exist simply in order to keep the truth from the general population. Misinformation and obfuscation is, after all, the hallmark of the way of the shinobi.

We present each of the better known theories here (for there are several more, some lost to time, some so obscure that few even in Japan acknowledge them). Each has been culled from historical texts and research. Each can be considered as “authentic,” as any research into shinobi history can be (though some would argue that is “not at all”), just as each can be considered fiction. Ultimately it is up to the GM to determine the true origin of shinobi in his campaign, if there needs to be one “truth” at all. A campaign can be run just as well leaving the origins of ninja traditions obscured by the mists of time and legend. In fact, a campaign might well be better off *not* delineating the exact origins of ninjutsu.

For GMs desiring a “realistic” origin, however, we have provided a lengthier explanation of the most accepted origins—at least as far as the Japanese themselves are concerned—being that of descending from Sino-Japanese esoteric teachers, the *doshi* (moralists).

ORIGINS OF NINJUTSU

Looking at well over 1,000 years of history, it’s difficult to discern fact from fiction when it comes to the origins of ninjutsu. Indeed, there are few existent documents (and none of accepted provenance) to confirm the true origins of ninjutsu. The “true” origins of ninjutsu, however, as well as the myths, in *SENGOKU* are presented here for the reader.

Descendants of Tengu

One popular myth among the superstitious is that the shinobi are descended from the *tengu*, those legendary, long-nosed woodland beings (some would call them demons), who are half-man and half-crow. The *tengu* are said to be master swordsmen and practitioners of the mystic arts. The *tengu* are also rumored to be able to influence their surrounding as well as men’s minds, which leads to the conclusion that shinobi, who are also endowed with similar powers, are descended from *tengu*.

This superstitious belief has, like many myths, its roots in fact. The *tengu* are strongly associated with mountain forests and their neighbors, the *yamabushi*. The *yamabushi* (as we will see) do play a role in the history of ninjutsu.

Chinese Immigration

Much more probable is the recounting in historical scrolls which tell of the fall of T’ang China around 900 AD. A number of military commanders and monks, such as Ikai Yanban, Cho Busho and Yo Gyokko, found themselves unemployed and worse, hunted by their enemies. They fled the continent to seek sanctuary and a new life in Japan. These men brought with them not only Chinese tactics but esoteric teachings from Tibet and India as well.

These men came to live in the caves and mountains of the Kii peninsula, around 1024 AD. They found the local populace receptive to their teachings, especially the *sohei* (mountain warrior-monks) and *yamabushi* (adherents of Shugendō and followers of the Tendai sect of Buddhism).

Chinese esoteric priests and practitioners of Taoist mysticism and *mikkyō* or esoteric Buddhist mysticism (such as Kain Doshi, Kasumikage Doshi and Gamon Doshi, along with their Japanese disciples) are believed to be the teachers of the original shinobi families. This mixture of Chinese and native Japanese elements continued to grow and coalesce.

Unlike most forms of religion or *bugei* (martial arts), ninjutsu was not founded at any one specific point in history. The body of knowledge that would later come to be called ninjutsu was, at this time, merely an unconventional way of approaching things

“The rules of the ninja are not cruel or overly demanding. They are merely rules for the expert of stealth to follow in order to discover and protect the truth.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

and accomplishing goals. A counter-culture, of sorts, had by this time developed in response to the mainstream Japanese politic and social traditions. Japanese culture demands adherence to a rigid social order. These esoteric cults remained outside of the mainstream social order, and sometimes didn't even recognize the authority of the ruling samurai clans.

The Remnants of the Taira Family

When the final Genpei War broke out in Miyako in 1183, nobody would have thought that the massive and ancient Taira clan (also called the Heike) would lose it. However, lose it they did—their armies being scattered South of Miyako by the first Kamakura Shōgun, Minamoto Yoritomo and their fleets smashed by his half-brother, the legendary hero Yoshitsune.

If Yoritomo had not been so keen to destroy the Taira completely and had not expended so many resources in hunting the tired, half starved remnants of the Heike down, no shinobi would ever have raised his face to the night and history would have been poorer for the absence of the Shadow Warriors, strange as that may seem. But pursue the Taira armies he did, driving them up into the mountains of Shikoku and old Iga *han* (province) to scratch a living as best they could, whilst avoiding the purges of the victorious Minamoto.

One Taira scion who chose not to follow his lords into the void was called Taira Rikimaru. One morning while climbing up a steep, wooded pass with a small company of men—to get away from an approaching Minamoto patrol—he saw a most unusual sight.

An old man, easily 80 years of age or more, was quickly leaping from rock to rock up the slope, carrying what appeared to be a pair of children under his arms. Barely believing his senses he climbed on, but when the company reached the top of the cliff, much fatigued by their climb, Rikimaru again saw the old man and children quietly enjoying rice cakes on a rock.

“Who are you, old graybeard, that can leap like a mountain goat and climb like a spider?” demanded Rikimaru, rather put out by the humor the threesome seemed to find in the state of his men.

“Why, but a simple old man who wished to show his grandchildren the wonder of the dawn. And without the bellowing of a great ox like you I might add!” cackled the ancient ojii-san whilst his young charges sniggered into their breakfasts.

Ashamed of his own arrogance and tired beyond belief, Rikimaru knelt in front of the old man and bowed low.

“Forgive me Ojii-sama,” he said. “My name is Taira Rikimaru and I have seen much evil in the last few months and, beset by foes on all sides, I could not help but wonder what might have happened to our cause if we had but known that men such as you lived in these hills.”

“Nothing more than did happen would have occurred I think” replied the ancient, “for the time was not right and I do not busy myself with things which do not concern me. But come, let us both be civil. I am Kain Doshi and these are my grandchildren, Shinbe and Ayame. I am something of a newcomer to these mountains and am not altogether conversant with the outcome of the latest little skirmish at court, but I do know that both you and I have a purpose in being here today and if you will dare to tread

off that so noble path which warriors walk, then maybe I can show you a thing or two to your advantage.”

Rikimaru, recognizing the fate of the meeting and the power in the old man's words, broke his sword there and then on a nearby rock and led his surviving men deeper into the mountains with Kain Doshi. There they learned his many secrets, threw off their redundant warriors code and put on a cloak of shadow, to be a thorn forever in the side of the villains who had thrown down the honor of the Imperial house by shedding blood in the hallows.

The Heike had fallen, Biwa Hōshi the length and breadth of the land sang their souls to repose, paid in Minamoto coin, yet little did Yoritomo know what he, in his wrath, had let loose on his realm when fate and his army drove Taira Rikimaru and Kain Doshi together on the slopes of mount Kame.

Togakure Daisuke

In the mid-12th century, Nishina Daisuke, a samurai born in Nagano, was allied to another clan which resisted the attempts of the Heike (a powerful samurai clan) to destroy the shugendō sect of Buddhism in the region. The Togakure mountain *shugenja* and their ascetic mountain traditions were not politically popular at the time, and in the early 1160's the Heike moved against the sect. Nishina Daisuke fought against the Heike in an attempt to preserve the way of life he grew to admire. But Daisuke's side lost a series of battles against the superior Heike forces. Nishina-san was forced to flee his homeland of Nagano. He lost everything, including his samurai status—his very identity.

Now a rōnin, Daisuke fled to the mountains southeast of Miyako (Kyōto), and wandered amidst the marshes and pine forests of the Kii peninsula (~1162). There he met the *yamabushi* Kain Doshi, a mystic warrior-priest and Taoist sage who had fled there from China years earlier.

There in the mountainous caves of Iga province, Nishina Daisuke studied with Kain Doshi, learning new concepts of warfare and philosophy based on Chinese and Taoist concepts about the order of the universe. He learned practical applications of *gogyō* and *gung fu*, the balance of the elements in diet, combat, emotion and thought. He further learned the balance of the elements in the utilization of the forces and cycles of nature to great advantage.

Removed from the rigid philosophy and social constrictions of the samurai, which he had never before thought to question, Nishina Daisuke discovered a completely new way to set his will to motion and achieve his goals. To represent his origins with the Togakure mountain *yamabushi* and his “rebirth” into these new, Taoist traditions, he took the name of Togakure Daisuke. Togakure Daisuke's *musha shugyō*, or “warriors path of enlightenment,” was now complete.

The descendants of Daisuke later developed and refined these ideas into what became the Togakure ryū of ninjutsu, and came to be called by the name of ninja—shinobi.

Development of the Shinobi Clans (1300–1400s)

Most of the *ryū* of ninjutsu developed in the mountainous region of south central Honshū, including the two largest ryū:

“When near, appear far. When far away, appear near.”

—Sun Tzu

the Iga ryū and Kōga ryū. By the 14th century, the existent ninjutsu ryū (shinobi clans or “traditions”) had grown into significant powers in the regions of Iga and Kōga.

The once solitary mountain ascetics began to stress the development of their unique martial arts and military tactics. No longer were the shinobi content to stay hidden in their secret villages, watching the political landscape change around them. The shinobi began taking an active role in the shaping the political landscape, performing assassinations of hostile *daimyō* and harassing and attacking their troops.

During this period the shinobi were trained in as many as 18 areas of expertise, including the use of many different weapons and fighting techniques, espionage, strategy, stealth, explosives, geography, meteorology and disguise.

During the split of the Northern and Southern Imperial courts (1332–1382), shinobi loyal to the Southern court of Yoshino raised an army in its support, eventually joining the armies of Nawa, Kusunoki and Kitabataki (1334–1335).

Among the activities of the various shinobi clans were solidification of their own power base and influence, protection of the local *mikkyō* (specifically Tendai and Shingon) temples, and hiring themselves out to those select patrons who were sympathetic to their unorthodox methods and beliefs.

A number of new shinobi clans were formed during this period, each drawing on the principles of the founding families. Over time, several clans, or *ryū* (traditions), splintered off of established clans. Many of these new, splinter, clans remained allied to their former relatives and traditions. One example of such ties exists between the Iga and Togakure clans, both of Iga province. Others became bitter rivals and, in some cases, mortal enemies.

Historical Note

While it is likely that historical shinobi ryū began to fragment and separate in this period, many legends and stories speak of earlier splits (as shown in the time line) often citing the same conditions for their birth as do their parent clans. This is a common historical conceit—a written record, no matter how implausible, lending credibility to an obviously inaccurate or falsified account (the political fiction that is the *Kojiki* is a good example). For the sake of the stories which the individual clan legends represent, we have taken each ryū as being founded at the time they claim and in the form they state, partly as the tales in themselves are so appealing, but partly as they most often represent the only datum on which to base our work.

After the Ōnin War in 1467, the opportunities for employment for the shinobi increased dramatically. The stunning abilities and deadly skills of the shadow warriors came to the attention of the military leaders of the day. The shinobi were employed by many *daimyō*, and even Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshihisa, to great effect.

In 1487–1488, for example, shinobi were used against the army of the Ashikaga Shōgunate, putting the forces into confusion.



The Shinobi's Heyday (1500s)

By the 16th century, the shinobi's reputation blossomed. Accounts of dark-clad assassins walking through walls, disappearing into thin air, walking on water, reading minds, knowing the future, and changing into wolves or crows began to permeate the folklore of the day. The shinobi of the 16th century seemed (according to legend, anyway) to be invincible.

As the *Sengoku-jidai* (period of civil wars) continued, the shinobi clans found continued work and were able to continue to hone their deadly skills.

It is during this period that the shinobi are arguably at their most active and influential. Early in the 16th century, however, most ninjutsu clans were not formal ryū. Instead, the shinobi families took the names of the places where they lived.

Shinobi living in Iga and Kōga provinces were royalists; that is, the families were sympathetic to and aligned themselves with the Imperial Court, recognizing its authority as rulers of Japan over that of the shōgunate.

Over a period of time (1504–1520), shinobi were hired to harass and attack forces loyal to the Shōgun, joining the army of Sekita. The Sekita forces, along with the shinobi, pursued the large army of Hosokawa Takakuni, which was under the command of the Ashikaga Shōgunate.

In the spring of 1556, Ashikaga Yoshitane sent his troops to Omi province to subdue Ashikaga Yoshizumi. The shinobi of Kōga took sides with Yoshitane. The Iga shinobi, however, would not follow suit, refusing to support the Shōgun. This caused a rift between the two groups, a deadly rivalry which would last for centuries.

“...the enemy who stands against the laws of nature has lost his battle before he begins the fight. The first priority to the ninja was to win without fighting.”

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

In 1561, shortly after the battle of Kawanakajima and the death of lord Mochizuki Moritoki, Mochizuki Chiyome (a *kunoichi*—female shinobi) Jōnin and wife of the late lord, establishes a huge network of kunoichi, at the request of Takeda Shingen. This network is one of the largest to be seen during the period of warring states. Many (if not most) of her agents took the roles of *miko* (Shintō shrine maidens), so that they could move about their communities freely and gather intelligence without attracting attention.

These kunoichi were trained in an underground academy, of sorts, appearing to outsiders as nothing more than a home for young, unmarried girls, orphaned and homeless as a result of the tumultuous fighting during this period. The girls were trained in the skills required for their roles (Shintō ceremonies, specifically those performed by *miko*), as well as those skills needed to gather information, analyze it—perhaps even memorize it—and ensure that it reached its destination. In short, they became highly trained espionage agents.

In 1579, Oda Nobunaga had all but secured control of Japan. In his war against Buddhism, he ran afoul of several shinobi ryū, who view Nobunaga as a hated enemy of both Buddhism and ninpō practitioners alike. During this year, Nobunaga's son, Oda Katsuyori, led Nobunaga's army into combat against several Iga families at the battle of Tenshō Iga no Ran. The samurai were soundly defeated by the Iga shinobi, led by Momochi Sandayu. Another jōnin, Nagato Fujibayashi, also played an important role in this battle.

In retaliation for his army's defeat two years earlier, Oda Nobunaga led a massive invasion of Iga province in 1581. In this battle, the Iga clan and several others were all but eliminated by the samurai, who vastly outnumbered the shinobi (by ten to one) this time. The few Iga survivors scattered and went even deeper into hiding than before, including the Iga forces led by Momochi Sandayu, who fled to Sanbonmatsu. Also during this year, Fuma Kotaro rose to fame for his exploits against Takeda Shingen's forces, supporting Odawara Hōjō's samurai clan by conducting night raids against Takeda's troops.

About a year later, in 1582, despite several failed assassination attempts against him, Oda Nobunaga is killed by his right-hand man, Akechi Mitsuhide. As a result, Tokugawa Ieyasu is promoted and must travel north to Edo, but his journey will take him through Iga province, hostile and shinobi-plagued territory. Seeing wisdom in peace (for the moment), Ieyasu contacts Iga Jōnin Hattori Hanzō, and convinces Hanzō to provide safe passage for Ieyasu in exchange for later favor. Hanzō, almost miraculously, galvanizes the Iga and Kōga clans (which, at the time were bitter rivals) and arranges for the safe passage of Ieyasu through the territories. In later years this would help the Iga clan significantly.

The Decline of Ninjutsu

After Tokugawa Ieyasu became Shōgun in 1603, the shinobi began a steady decline in activity and prominence. The Tokugawa *bakufu* (military government) kept a number of shinobi on retainer for use as private guards, spies and secret police. These shinobi were led by Hattori Hanzō, who was himself appointed their leader and attained a position similar to

hatamoto for Ieyasu. The Iga and Kōga ryū became associated with the *bakufu*, as the majority of those shinobi now serving Tokugawa were families from those ryū.

Over time, however, as peace settled across the Empire, the role of the shinobi changed. Those shinobi hired by the Tokugawa government had assumed the roles of gardeners and caretakers on the grounds of the estates of the Shōgun and his close retainers. They were posted both to the Shōgun's personal guard and to the fiefs of vassal daimyō, as much to observe as to aid them. Without the threat of war that was rampant in the *Sengoku-jidai* (period of civil war), however, the role of these shinobi declined significantly until the once legendary shinobi had become little more than glorified *yojinbo* (bodyguards). By the mid to late 17th century their stipends were ridiculously low. Their positions were often considered degrading, their official duties limited to activities such as opening doors, gardening and even posing as targets for snowballs thrown by young samurai girls.

Other ninjutsu ryū, or shinobi clans, stayed hidden in the mountainous forests around Miyako (now Kyōto), however. While there was a collective appreciation for the destruction of their long time enemy, Nobunaga, many shinobi clans had little trust for any samurai leadership. Most chose to remain completely secretive and outside of the reach and notice of the samurai, especially Tokugawa. Some clans elected to neither help nor hinder the government. Others actively opposed the Tokugawa government, some becoming rivals and even enemies of their former allies.

During the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637–1638, in which a number of *bonge* families (many of them Christians) near Nagasaki rioted and rebelled against their oppressive daimyō, the shinobi were pressed back into service. Ten of the Shōgun's shinobi, all formerly of the Iga clan and the oldest one 63, were sent to the area to gather intelligence. The shinobi managed to steal food supplies for the government troops, but otherwise had little effect on the course of the rebellion. This was due in large part because none of the shinobi were linguists, and were unable to emulate the Kyūshū dialect sufficiently to infiltrate the rebels' fortress and collect important intelligence.

Though the government troops did put down the rebellion (killing over 30,000 people in the process), the spies' mission overall was not considered successful.

One of the last significant activities of the shinobi (as far as history relates) was during the visit by Commodore Perry and his “black ships” to Japan in 1853. Sawamura Yasusuke, a shinobi working for the bakufu, was ordered to sneak aboard Perry's flagship and look for information regarding the intentions of the *nanbanjin* (barbarians). The shinobi returned with two documents—two letters containing a Dutch sea chantey praising the delights of French women in the bedroom and English women in the kitchen.

In the period following this incident (1854–59), Iga ryū shinobi cooperate with the Imperial army, continuing their royalist support. The shinobi join an Imperial patrol squad and harass the Shinsengumi, a unit organized by the Tokugawa bakufu to protect the bakufu from Imperial attack.

An extremist group loyal to the Imperial Court, known as Tenchengumi, had been organized with the goal of overthrow-

“Even when you are faced with certain death, die laughing.”

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

ing the Tokugawa bakufu. The group was headed by Yoshimura Torataro, Fujimoto Tesseki and others. In 1863, some shinobi join the group, bent on destroying the Shōgunate. They raise arms against the government, but they are defeated by government forces and many of the shinobi are killed in battle.

In 1886 the Emperor issues the decree of the Restoration of Royal Rule, disbanding the Tokugawa bakufu and restoring the Emperor as ultimate ruler of Japan. The Tokugawa do not step down, however, and the war continues. More shinobi join the royalist party, in support of the Emperor's claim to power. During the Battle of Toba Fushimi, between the Imperial army and loyalists of the Tokugawa government, many shinobi distinguish themselves in combat.

SHINOBI MYTH AND REPUTATION

To the average Japanese man and woman the shinobi is a mysterious figure with supernatural powers. For all but the shinobi themselves, there can be no doubt that the shinobi possess all of the mystic abilities that have been attributed to them within the text of this book. That is, the average Japanese person in the Sengoku-jidai earnestly believes that shinobi can change into crows or wolves, walk through walls, practices black magic, and so on.

This is not to say that everyone believes the common folklore. Surely there are some people who view the shinobi as merely highly skilled covert warriors, but these are the exception rather than the rule. The likelihood is that those who have personally encountered shinobi, especially those who have crossed swords with them and lived, are more likely to disbelieve the mystique. But as we know, those people are rare, indeed, which only serves to reinforce the legends.



NINPŌ HISTORY TIMELINE

- ca. 900 The government of T'ang China falls. Military commanders, Imperial family members and monks, such as Ikai Yanban, Princess Zhiqiao and Cho Busho flee China to seek sanctuary and a new life in Japan, bringing with them Chinese tactics but esoteric teachings as well.
- ca. 930 The Omi clan are granted the province of Kōga by imperial decree (in recognition of their part in the uprising led by Minamoto Shigeyori).
- 946 The son of Lord Kōga begins ninpō training under the guidance of a mysterious Buddhist monk named Tatsumaki.
- 958 The Kōga shinobi ryū is formed.
- ca. 1010 Ikai Yanban Travels to Japan, but is expelled from Miyako, finding his way to Iga province.
- 1024 More exiles from China and Korea arrive in Iga and Kōga, living in the caves and mountains of the Kii peninsula, finding the local populace receptive to their teachings, especially the sohei and yamabushi. Chinese esoteric priests and Mikkyō practitioners (like Kain Doshi, Kasumikage Doshi and Gamon Doshi) along with their Japanese disciples are believed to be the teachers of the original shinobi families.
- 1032 Upset that Ikai Yanban might be teaching peasants martial skills the Fujiwara attempt to destroy his settlement, but are defeated in battle by his shinobi. The "Iga no Eikyō" announce their presence to the world for the first time.
- 1068 The Iga shinobi ryū is consolidated under the leadership of Gamon Doji—the pupil of Ikai Yanban.
- ca. 1085 The master Yo Gyokkyo encounters the young Tozawa Hakunsai and agrees to teach him his version of Ninpō.
- 1104 Ishimura Goyobe expelled from Miyako after the death of Emperor Horikawa, the victim of a Fujiwara clan plot.
- 1107 Ishimura Goyobe establishes the Fukushima ryū.
- ca. 1140 Tozawa Hakunsai arrives to study at the Iga ryū.
- ca. 1145 The scrolls of Garyū Doji are discovered, revealing the Kensō Akuma techniques (but they are kept secret).
- 1156 Tozawa Hakunsai leaves the Iga ryū to found the Gyokkyo school of ninpō. While still in Iga province he helps establish the Hakūn shinobi ryū by accurately translating the writings of Garyū Doji for an Iga shinobi.
- ca. 1160 Nishina Daisuke becomes a rōnin and begins wandering the Kii peninsula region of Japan
- 1161 Nishina-e Daisuke meets Kain Doshi (aka Kagakure Doshi) in the province of Iga. Daisuke studies with Kain Doshi, learning new concepts of warfare and philosophy, changing his name to Togakure Daisuke to represent his transition from

"...we cannot understand the essence of ninjutsu without talking through body and mind."

—Hatsumi Masaaki

	samurai to pupil. The descendants of Togakure Daisuke would later develop and refine these ideas into what became the Togakure ryū of ninjutsu.	1579	Oda Nobunaga's army, led by his son, Katsuyori, are defeated by Iga shinobi led by Sandayu Momochi at the battle of Tenshō Iga no Ran.
1172	Moriyoshi Kanai, a trainee from the Kōga ryū flees his cruel master and establishes a base of operations in the Gikan Forest on Kyūshū.	1580	Kōga shinobi raid several Iga ryū settlements, killing all whom they find, in a desperate attempt to force the Iga shinobi from the campaign to protect their holding.
1185	Taira Rikimaru meets with Kain Doshi on the slopes of Mt. Kame, learning from him the basis of what would be come the Fūdo school of ninjutsu.	1581	The Ōkami yo (the Night of the Wolf), perhaps the darkest hour in shinobi history. Enraged by the attack on their noncombatants, the Iga ryū launch a strike against the Kōga Training Cadres in the heart of Kii Peninsula, killing all but a very few of the children who were studying in them.
ca. 1185	Togakure Daisuke studies with the Hakūn ryū.		
ca. 1205	Toda Kenjirō meets with a Gikan ryū shinobi and becomes his pupil, forming the Kumogakure shinobi ryū as an allied body under Gikan guidance.		
1207	Togakure Daisuke takes up the position of Jōnin with the Iga ryū for a period of three years.	1581	Sensing the shinobi weakness and in retaliation for his army's defeat two years earlier, Oda Nobunaga leads a massive invasion of Iga and Kōga provinces. The Iga clan and several others are badly depleted but enough shinobi make it to safety in the mountains to ensure that no clan actually dies out.
1331–33	Shinobi loyal to the Southern court of Yoshino raise an army in its support.		
1334–35	Shinobi loyal to the Southern Court join the armies of Nawa, Kusunoki and Kitabataki.		
1394	Fuma Horikawa and his clan are ordered to settle Musashi province, in the North of Honshū in order to remove them from court politics.	1581	Fuma Kotaro, head of the Fuma ryū, becomes known for his nighttime forays against Takeda's troops.
1395	The Fuma are wiped out in Shōgunate orders. The Goton Juppu ryū shinobi, Goda Aeka, trains the Fuma children in Ninpō.	1582	Oda Nobunaga is killed by his right-hand man, Akechi Mitsuhide. Hattori Hanzō, the Iga Jōnin, arranges a truce between the Iga and Kōga ryū, and arranges for safe passage of Tokugawa Ieyasu through Iga province.
1411	Fuma Rikyū establishes the Fuma Shinobi ryū and vows to avenge his clan's disgrace.		
1467	Ōnin War; After this time, shinobi were employed frequently by many daimyō, including the Shōgun. The shinobi become more active.	ca. 1603	The Tokugawa bakufu hires engages the Iga and Kōga ryū appointing the Hattori family as governors of the semi-unified clans and organizers of the bakufu's new "secret police."
1469–86	Kōga ryū shinobi Kōga Saburo II, Mochizuki Yajiro, Ukai Chiaki, Naiki Gohei and Akutagawa Tenpei led the Sasaki army to victory against the Shōgun's (Ashikaga Yoshihisa) troops.	1637–38	During the Shimabara Rebellion, 10 of the Shōgun's shinobi (the oldest 63 years old) are brought out of retirement and sent to gather intelligence. They manage to steal food supplies for the government troops, but were unable to infiltrate the rebel fortress or gather crucial intelligence due to their inability to emulate the Kyūshū dialect.
1487–88	Shinobi are used against the Ashikaga army.		
ca. 1500	By this time the shinobi's reputation as mystic warriors has blossomed.		
1504–20	Shinobi are retained by the Sekita against Hosokawa Takakuni's army, which was under the command of the Ashikaga shōgun.	1853	Sawamura Yasusuke, a shinobi working for the bakufu, sneaks aboard Commodore Perry's ship looking for evidence of the barbarians' intentions. He steals two documents containing nothing more than a Dutch sailor's song.
ca. 1556	Ashikaga Yoshitsune moves against Ashikaga Yoshizume. The Kōga shinobi side with Yoshitsune, but the Iga refuse to follow suit, resulting in war between the two groups.	1854–59	Iga ryū shinobi cooperate with the Imperial army, joining an Imperial patrol squad and harassing the Shinsengumi, a recently organized bodyguard unit of the Tokugawa bakufu.
1561	Mochizuki Chiyome establishes a huge network of kunoichi, at the request of Takeda Shingen,		
1575	Oda Nobunaga attacks and razes the <i>ikkō-ikki</i> (a Buddhist led peasant uprising) headquarters on Mount Hiei. The whole compound is walled in and torched. Every man woman, child and monk is shot—except 200 young girls who are crucified on the wall of the old camp as a dire warning to others.	1863	Some shinobi join the Tenchugumi, a group of extremists bent on overthrowing the Tokugawa bakufu. The group fails and many of them are killed in the fighting.
1576	Several ryū, including the Iga and the Kumogakure, execute attacks on Nobunaga's forces in retaliation for striking at the Ikki.	1886	After the decree of Restoration of Royal Rule, many shinobi join the Imperial army and participate in the battle of Toba Fushimi against the loyalists of the Tokugawa bakufu.

"The base of the shinobi's beliefs lies within an obedience to the laws of nature."

– Shinobi saying

SHINOBI PHILOSOPHY

As mentioned earlier, the shinobi's philosophy is based on the concepts of *ninpō* as well as the strong influences of Buddhism, particularly Tendai Buddhism. The shinobi's guiding philosophy is to choose the shadowed, quiet, subtle method of accomplishing a task over the bold, active and forceful way. This is accomplished by taking guidance from the *gogyō*, or five elements philosophy (see **Shinobi-mikkyō**, page 40). In this way, the natural order of things is disturbed as little as possible. Direct conflict causes great disruption of harmony. When conflicts arise, nature often suffers. The ninja way is less overt, and yet often as effective, if not more so, in accomplishing the goal.

For the shinobi, suggestion replaces force. Deception replaces confrontation. The shinobi's opponent is guided into unknowingly doing the shinobi's bidding, as opposed to being destroyed in a humiliating defeat. This approach characterizes ninjutsu, and allows the shinobi to obtain the maximum effect while expending a minimal amount of energy and exposing himself to the least amount of risk.

IN-YO

The concepts of *in* (*yin*) and *yo* (*yang*) are embraced by the shinobi, though not entirely in the same way as by other, more common belief systems in Japan.

To the shinobi, *in* is the cloudy or "dark" aspect (see **The Shadow**, below), the receptive, the tendency or capacity to yield or the sense of withdrawing. *In* symbolically represents coolness, wetness and darkness. *In* is associated with the material world, and it represents inward movement. It corresponds to nature, not to spirit; the "dark womb," or that which gives birth.

The shinobi does not reject or flee from the *in*, from the "dark" side of things. The shinobi instead cultivates it, becoming complete in it. Most of Japanese society fears the *in*, and because of this are in an unbalanced state.

Yo is the brightness in things; the universal element of creation. It is "heaven" and "spirit." *Yo* symbolizes dynamic energy, outward movement; it represents the aggressive or assertive nature of things. Some common representations of *yo* include light, heat, stimulation, the sword and spear. It is penetrating or shattering energy.

Yo is not the opposite of *in*, but rather the complement to it. Every mountain has a dark side and a light side, but it is still one mountain. So is the shinobi one person. The shinobi strives to be in harmony, to have *in* and *yo* in balance.

Through *in-yo*, the shinobi is able to grasp the "greater picture," understanding the working of the universe in a way that most cannot. Where most people fear the shadows, live in the moment and tend to categorize things in terms of "good" and "evil," "fair" and "unfair," and "right" and "wrong," the shinobi looks at the larger universal picture. He understands his role as a part of the universe rather than one lonely person being tossed about by life's hardships, like a small boat in a storm (a view more common in society). To the shinobi, "good" and "evil" are

relative, and he is free to judge his own actions on a larger scale, basing his decisions and actions on the necessity of the moment as opposed to basing them on an absolute set of rules. The shinobi is one part of the universe and at the same time he is the universe.

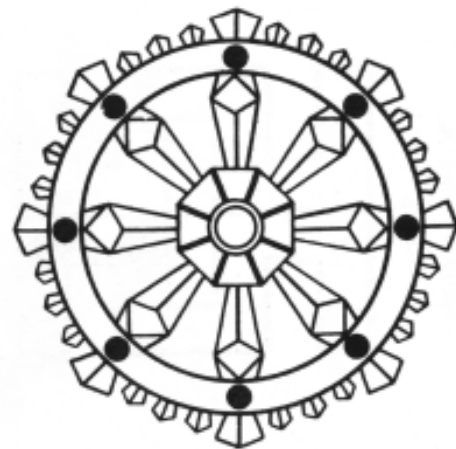
For example, a shinobi is on a mission, and he encounters a samurai sentry blocking his only escape route. Society proclaims that killing an innocent person, especially one doing their duty, is "wrong." It is a criminal act. But to the shinobi, the sentry's dispatch is a necessity. Without killing the guard, the ninja cannot report back to his master and complete his mission. Thus, in the "great picture," the shinobi knows that he must kill the guard, and he does so without hesitation. The shinobi does not feel regret or remorse. There is no need. The shinobi has performed his role in the universe and things continue to play out as they should.

HONOR AND ETHICS

Just as the shinobi is flexible in the physical realm (see **Ninpō Taijutsu**, page 39), the shinobi is also flexible in the realm of so-called ethics. This flexibility of mind and heart allows the shinobi to view events in a broader sense (i.e., looking at the "big picture") and not merely in relation to Confucian moral standards, which are the foundation of Japanese society.

By embracing rather than rejecting parts of themselves that the buke regard as dishonorable, cowardly, dangerous or too superstitious, the shinobi is able to access as much of his psychic energy as possible.

The shinobi's code of honor does not require direct confrontation to avenge or maintain one's honor. Thus the shinobi is free to flee from a confrontation, use poisons or trickery to overcome their foe, strike from behind or from concealment, or any number of "dishonorable" (from a samurai's point of view) acts without the risk of losing honor. The shinobi's code, though based on the codes of behavior embraced by the warrior class and society at large, is different. Though different, it is no less strict. The penalty for violating most behavioral rules is death.



The Karmic Wheel

"The tree that cannot bend in a fierce wind breaks."

– Shinobi proverb

THE SHADOW

The shinobi have long been associated with shadows. This is not an inaccurate perception. In fact, shinobi do live a shadowy, secret double life, concealing their true identities and motives from the rest of society. In a physical sense, the shinobi move amidst the shadows in order to aid in concealment from their enemies, moving between the gaps in perception.

On a spiritual level, the shinobi embody the shadows of Japanese society. To the rest of society, the shinobi represent social rebellion; not just resistance but outright contempt for the accepted norms of social conduct. Their use of violence and rejection of *bushidō* (the Way of the Warrior)—thus, their lack of honor by society’s standards—allow Japanese society to place the shinobi in a position of being both feared and hated. If the shinobi operate outside of all accepted principles of a “civilized” society, how can they be trusted at all? In fact, the shinobi represent to the samurai the very worst aspects of their own repressed traits—violence, savage conviction, freedom of thought and movement. It’s no wonder that the samurai consider the shinobi deadly enemies to be extinguished. The shinobi are dark reflections of the shadows within the samurai themselves.

SEISHIN (PURITY OF HEART)

While shinobi owe much to each other as members of a persecuted and reviled *hinin* underclass in feudal Japan, their prime responsibility is to what is known as *seishin*. Seishin is, simply put, the pure state of mind and emotion that can only come out of a deep understanding of one’s place in the natural world.

Many, if not all, of the shinobi’s laws and codes of conduct derive from maintaining and protecting seishin within them-



selves. It is the fact that a shinobi will always tend to look to himself—to his or her seishin—for the answer to a question. Feudal Japanese society is based on Confucian concepts and beliefs, which teaches of the folly of trusting to one’s own feelings, which explains (at least in part) why society as a whole hates and fears the shinobi so much; the shinobi, moreso than any group, are able and willing to act on their own and in a manner which the establishment cannot predict...nor control.

However, seishin is not as simple a concept as free thought and free action. Better to say that it represents the state one’s heart is in as a result of the actions one takes. To the shinobi this means living and acting within the bounds of the natural law they follow so fervently, taking no action without dread purpose, balancing all they do with the consequences of their actions, but ultimately learning to live with the violence and terror they sometimes inflict on others. Samurai choose to see this as an example of the way in which shinobi cover their “evil” deeds in a cloak of righteousness. The shinobi maintain that in a world which is violent and half mad anyway, a deed can only be truly considered evil if the heart of he that carries it out is polluted.

HOW THEY VIEW THE WORLD

Shinobi view the world through a largely Buddhist philosophy. The universe, in all its myriad forms, is but an illusion. The cosmic energies ebb and flow, creating both chaos and harmony at once. *Karma* is very real to the shinobi, as they constantly strive to achieve balance, both in themselves and in their surroundings. Harmony with nature is a common theme in shinobi philosophy, for if one is not in balance with nature, then the world (for the shinobi) is not in balance. Without balance, one cannot master oneself. And if one cannot master oneself, how can one master one’s enemy?

The shinobi sees all things as potential resources to meet their ends. The tall grass of the field conceals him. The trees provide a place to hide, above the view of casual observers and pursuers. The earth provides concealment below the view of observers and shelter from the inclement weather. The flowing stream provides refreshing water to hydrate the body. The air fills the shinobi’s lungs and carries sounds to warn of danger and give the shinobi knowledge of his surroundings. Fire keeps the shinobi warm, ignites his explosive tools and weapons and creates smoke to hide the shinobi from his prey.

All things are tools to the shinobi, the elements included. More specifically, the shinobi views all things in the universe as a potential resource for his use, allowing the shinobi to survive and work in almost any environment.

But the shinobi is not reckless in their use. He is not gratuitous in their exploitation. The shinobi takes only what he needs. He uses only what is necessary. He moves carefully and gracefully through the grass and tree, so as not to disturb its pattern or break its blades or branches. The earth is moved but only so that it appears natural; holes that are dug are filled in again and the shinobi walks softly, on leaves or with lightness of body, so that the earth is not left in an unnatural state. He drinks the water not

“Only a heart unburdened by temporal loyalties can see what is right and what is wrong. All else is conceit”

- Shinobi proverb

so much that the stream suffers from the loss, and new water comes from upstream. The air is used to carry smoke or poisonous mists, but they do not endure; the air carries these things away, replenishing the space with clean air once again. Fire is used sparingly so as not to endanger the forest; once the fire consumes itself, the remaining ash returns to the earth. The void is both the source and the end of all things.

In all things the shinobi strives for balance. The fact that by achieving this balance the shinobi also achieves a near state of invisibility is a secondary thought. That such precautions and consideration of nature helps the shinobi to complete his objective—indeed, to survive—is an afterthought, if they are considered at all.

The shinobi, himself, is part of the great cosmic being. The shinobi is composed of each of the five elements—wood, earth, water, metal and fire; not in their literal form, *per se*, but in a more cosmic (a modern term could be “atomic”) and spiritual sense. According to the Chinese esoteric beliefs, from which the shinobi draws much of their belief system, various aspects of the human body correspond to the five elements. For any of these elements to be out of balance causes illness, fatigue, distraction, etc. The success of the shinobi’s given task, or even his very life, depends on having all of his faculties and wits about him, being in good health, having energy to move as needed, and so on. Once again, balance is not the goal, but the necessity. It is The Way.

KYOMON: SHINOBI AND RELIGION

As much as shinobi respect Buddhist philosophy, much like many Japanese they also have a deep and very powerful connection to the worlds of the *kami* (supernatural beings), particularly to Ame-no-uzume-no-kami, the guardian of the natural world and the calming force which balances the all encompassing compassion of Amaterasu-opo-mi-kami and the all consuming violence of her brother Susano-o.

Though tacitly Buddhist, many shinobi practice an archaic form of possession kami worship known as *kugutsu* (puppet)—a form of Shintō founded by shrines built around the islands of Shikoku and Awaji in the Nara period. Partly influenced by early Buddhist principles, the Kugutsu faith teaches that all living things are, to a greater or lesser degree, merely the puppets of greater forces which direct and observe the course of the natural world.

Kugutsu teaches that when one is in harmony with oneself and in accord with nature, it is possible to perceive the ways in which the spirits of the world possess and direct one’s life and make use of that knowledge. Such feats as divination, spiritual possession, summoning of elemental forces and translocation have all been ascribed to practitioners of Kugutsu who had become one with the world and it is no wonder that shinobi have found much to admire in this form of religion.

Where Japanese society in general has always attempted to impose a sense of structure and order on all things related to

religious practice (primarily out of a desire or need on the part of the authorities to better direct the lives of the people), religion to the shinobi is less formalized and more personal.

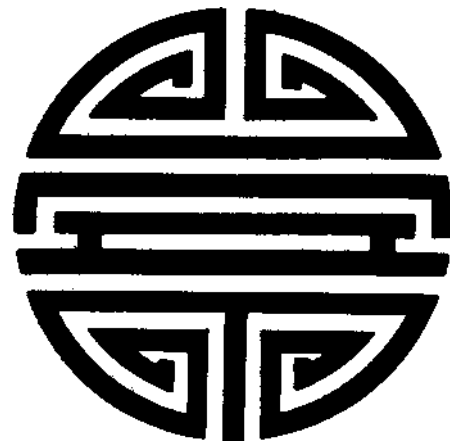
A shinobi knows that his life is directed towards reaching a point of temporal perfection in readiness for both the physical demands of this world and the spiritual tasks of the Karmic Wheel and it is to the latter element of their training that the pursuit of an understanding of the forces which underpin natural world is directed.

No priest can mediate between a shinobi and the world in an exchange such as this and, indeed, there would be little point in it, for just as each man ultimately makes his own life for himself, so, too, does each shinobi find spiritual guidance in a unique guise.

TIES TO BUDDHISM AND THE TENDAI SECT

Because of the large role that mystic Buddhism plays in the origins of ninjutsu, it’s no surprise that the bonds between ninpō and Bukkyō are strong and lasting. All shinobi are Buddhist—not because they have compared doctrines and dogmas and found Buddhism to their liking, but because the philosophies of ninpō are borne from Buddhist and Taoist origins. Shinobi, therefore, are Buddhist by default.

Some shinobi families coexist with Buddhist temples, deep in the forests or mountains of Japan, aiding each other in an unspoken pact of mutual protection. Others have dedicated themselves completely to the protection and preservation of a particular sect. Still others acknowledge their common roots, but treat the Buddhist clergy as no different than any other non-shinobi.



“The shinobi’s legacy is one of service to those in need, protection to those in distress, and strength to those who are overpowered.”

– Shinobi proverb



KUNOICHI

Kunoichi often specializes in conducting espionage by infiltrating the objective's organization or structure. Disguising herself as a courtesan, being hired on as a servant or even being "sold" into servitude are all but tools for the kunoichi to achieve her goal of infiltration. A kunoichi may conduct daring nighttime raids and assassinations as competently as any of her male counterparts (perhaps even better), but these were not her forte.

The kunoichi, because of her gender, is able to seduce those in positions of authority unlike any man (with the possible exception of young *bishonen*). Her charm and sexuality can be put to good use, maneuvering past the walls put up in the name of *machismo* and honor.

The kunoichi's training stressed one-on-one techniques over commando-style tactics, in addition to psychology, manipulation and intuitive means of survival. But make no mistake; the ninja methods of combat, including *ninpō taijutsu*, make the kunoichi well-prepared to handle confrontations against larger and often stronger male opponents.

Though a woman might appear to be at a disadvantage because she is smaller and often not as physically strong as a man, it is this very thinking that the kunoichi turns to her advantage. Sometimes being thought of as weak and harmless is the best advantage an espionage agent can have.

In *SENGOKU*, kunoichi aren't expected to be subservient to their male counterparts. They are peers. They are equals, both in terms of privileges and responsibilities.

Historical Note

Historically, the female shinobi, called *kunoichi*, were seldom used for what were considered "masculine" (in the Taoist sense) duties, although the tasks and missions carried out by the kunoichi were certainly no less dangerous. Being exposed as a shinobi meant certain death regardless of one's gender.

HOW THEY VIEW OTHER CASTES

Shinobi are raised with great respect for the Japanese culture, including the caste system. They are very aware of their place in society. But whereas the rest of society sees the hinin (and especially the eta) as the lowest form of human existence, the shinobi see their caste as a benefit. It is yet another resource to be used in their journey on the path of balance and harmony.

Without the burden of great expectation placed on them by the rest of society, the shinobi is freer dedicate himself to *ninpō*. Because they are beneath the notice of the "upper" classes, the shinobi can move about society invisibly, working and living among the *bonge*, and to some degree *buke*, without the fear of attracting attention that might otherwise hinder them. Because they look no different than *bonge*, they *are* *bonge*, until such time as they show themselves to be something else.

The shinobi views the rest of society, as a whole, as fellows. Through *ninjō* (compassion for one's fellow man) and *ninpō* beliefs, the shinobi think of themselves as spiritual equals to everyone else; perhaps even superior. But this doesn't mean that a shinobi walks around town acting equal to everyone else. The shinobi's outward behavior is dependent almost entirely on his appearance, or guise. If a shinobi is carrying on his daily routine in an *eta* village and encounters a samurai, then the shinobi *is* eta and he acts appropriately. If the shinobi is dressed like a merchant, then he *is* a merchant. If the shinobi is dressed as a *bonze* (wandering priest), he *is* a bonze. Inside, the shinobi knows he is inferior only to his Chūnin and Jōnin. But to the rest of the world, he is what he appears to be, both in visage and behavior.

BONGE

Bonge are essentially the same as the shinobi, on the surface. Socially speaking, the *bonge* are of a higher status but each person is born into their life—and their caste—and nothing can change it. What is important is that each person works hard and maintains the essence of duty and honor, from the oft despised merchant to the essential farmer. Everyone has their place in the way of things. The *bonge*, like the shinobi, are but temporary travelers in this world.

"Know the enemy, know yourself; your victory will never be endangered.
Know the ground, know the weather; your victory will then be total."

—Sun Tzu



What's more, the bonge are the most numerous of all the castes. As such, bonge professions are some of the most common guises for shinobi. A shinobi in a town full of bonge is, for all intents and purposes (you guessed it) a bonge.

Farmers

Hyakushō (farmers) are the backbone of the empire. Their labor produces the rice (and other foods) that are the basis of every meal, are used to pay taxes, made into paper and any a myriad other uses. Farming is an honorable and essential profession.

By the same token the farmers are cowards. They work under the thumb of the *buke*, toiling and sweating to provide for the upper class and the country as a whole. And yet they content themselves with nothing more than whatever is left after sending their *koku* of rice to the tax collector. They live their lives in fear; fear of death from the samurai's blade, from starvation, from working... Though the farmers have the numbers to overcome their buke oppressors, they choose to accept their fate, toil all day and sit around complaining about their lot in life behind closed doors.

Artisans

The *shokunin* (artisan) is, unlike any other class, the crafter of goods and tools. Though not as valued by society as the farmer, who gives life to the nation through his hard work, the artisan uses his skill to create those things that are desired—tools, clothes, artworks, and so on. Whether an artifact of beauty or utility, the

artisan shapes the metal (or stone, or wood or what have you) into something of value. In this way the artisan is most like the shinobi, who also craft needed tools and alter their environment to achieve their ends.

But the artisan is still a bonge, willingly subjecting himself to the strictures of society and living under the thumb of the buke. The artisan's skill makes him of use and thus, by his very nature, attracts the notice of the rulers who require his services to maintain their luxurious lifestyles and to create their weapons and tools of war.

Merchants

Akindo (merchants) are viewed with contempt by the rest of society because they profit from the sweat of others. But they provide a needed service, transporting goods from the craftsmen or farmers to willing buyers in the marketplace.

Though lacking respect on a certain level, the merchant also commands respect for the same reasons. The merchant has what others want or need. He negotiates a price for something that his customer desires, analyzing the customer's psyche, evaluating their needs. The merchant plays to his customer's weaknesses, manipulating his emotions and tugging on the strings of temptation to make the sale. In this way, the merchant is not unlike the shinobi, who specialize in manipulation.

BUKE

The *buke* are the ruling class, usurping power from the Emperor and ruling in his name. Though the buke are the acknowledged masters of Japan, they must maintain their power through use of arms, putting down occasional *ikki* (peasant uprisings),



"Unless one knows his own weak point, he can never be certain that the weak point of his opponent is not a decoy."

—Hakūnsai Tozawa



but more often warring among themselves for pieces of land to add to their domain. In truth, the buke live in a world of illusion, controlling nothing save those who submit to their control.

Rōnin

Rōnin (masterless samurai) wander Japan, distrusted by all because they serve no master—or perhaps because they are not controlled. The *rōnin* operates on the periphery of society, sometimes adhering to his superficial warrior's code, sometimes abandoning it for a false sense of freedom of action and thought.

But this freedom almost always results in the release of his own shadows, which he cannot control. As a result, there is no harmony; the *rōnin* who unleashes his shadows abuses his power, victimizing the weak and acting in all ways contradictory to the rules of his birth caste.

Samurai

Temporal power is the samurai's goal, though they hide behind a curtain of "honor," justifying their superficial ways by adhering to *bushidō*.

In truth, the samurai are puppets of their own false ideals. Their adherence to their concept of honor forces them to operate on a lower level. They can never see the truth or greatness of the universe, as can the shinobi. Because the shinobi are free to move and act as they will, and can see with eyes of truth, the samurai despise them. The samurai will not—cannot—allow the shinobi to live, because the shinobi threaten the very existence of the samurai. The two cannot coexist peacefully, and yet the samurai can never destroy the shinobi.

By projecting their fear on the shinobi, the samurai give up this energy and allow the shinobi to manipulate it. In a sense, the samurai themselves make their enemy, the shinobi, all the more powerful.

Jizamurai

Jizamurai (landed samurai), those who work the fields and answer the occasional call to arms for their lords, are at the same time little more than samurai and little less than peasants. They have all the worst traits of their violent natures and all the pretensions of their masters, making them all the more base for their increased temporal power.

KUGE

From years long past the majority of Shinobi have considered themselves royalists, loyal to the Imperial family and the power (descended from the stuff of the heavens), which the Emperor represents. A man can love the Emperor and not the *kuge*, however, who the shinobi perceive as responsible for the fall of the Imperial household in the Heian period (by bringing warriors, in the shape of the Minamoto and Taira clans, to court to fuel their own political ends). Even after their power to direct the court openly was swept away in the Genpei Wars, the leech-like *kuge* families, such as the Fujiwara, managed to keep a greater portion of their former influence by selling themselves to succeeding shōgunates as tools to control the Emperor.

Precepts for Shinobi

- Forget your sadness, anger, grudges and hatred. Let them pass like smoke in a breeze. Do not indulge yourself in such feelings.
- Do not deviate from the path of righteousness. Lead a life worthy of man.
- Don't be possessed by greed, luxury or your own ego. They destroy not just martial arts but humanity itself.
- When facing death, there are two ways of doing so: joy, in a heavenly sense, and suffering. Once this stage in life is reached, one will know one's real mission in life.
- Accept sorrows, sadness or hared as they are and consider them a chance for trial from Heaven. It is the most noble spirit in *ninpō* to take everything as a blessing from nature.
- Have both your time and mind fully engaged in *budō* and have your mind deeply set in *bujutsu*.

—Hatsumi Matsuaki

"What matters in a text is read between the lines—in the spaces between the words."

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

CLANS AND FAMILIES

THE SHINOBI'S PLACE IN SOCIETY

Shinobi families are predominantly of the *hinin* caste. History tells us that the shinobi come from the group of people called *eta*, the pariahs or untouchables. Some shinobi families may be of the *bonge* caste, if the GM wishes. Although not supported by historical texts, it doesn't seem outside the realm of possibility. Indeed, some of the popular cover stories for these families (such as farmers) would seem to make them *bonge*, while other disguises (entertainers, gardeners, and the like) belie their *hinin* roots.

Whether *hinin* or *bonge*, the shinobi families maintain a place low on the social ladder. By remaining in these lower social strata, the families keep a low profile, beneath the notice of their *buke* masters and well beneath consideration of the Imperial *kuge*. The shinobi live and work among the *bonge*. For all intents and purposes they are “normal people,” albeit normal people with a double life.

As a profession, the shinobi live in the shadows. Their existence is known by the rest of society, but never are they mentioned in polite conversation. They are treated as “bogey men,” of sorts. The shinobi represent an element of Japanese society which does not conform to its rigid rules. Because of this, shinobi are thought of as having no honor. In fact, the shinobi *do* have honor, but they follow a different code than does the rest of society.

Ironically, some of the most powerful *daimyō* have gained and subsequently maintained their positions of power due, in no small part, to the use of shinobi. Shinobi have participated in almost every major battle from the 14th century onward, as shock troops, spies, scouts and demolition experts used to breach enemy fortifications. But these same *daimyō*, while acknowledging the effectiveness and critical role that the shinobi have played, still cannot publicly recognize the shinobi without losing great face. There are exceptions (such as the contingent of Iga shinobi openly retained by Tokugawa Ieyasu and marching with his army) but as a rule, the shinobi work behind the scenes and without great fanfare.

Throughout history, the shinobi has influenced the political landscape of Japan, whether as assassins or simply as espionage agents, passing crucial information about one faction to another.

Although the shinobi live a shadow life, they play a very influential role in society. Sometimes they are a subtle force behind the underdog, working to even the odds of a seemingly insignificant conflict, and sometimes they are an overt force working to destroy some power that threatens their way of life or conflicts with their ideology.

For instance, when Oda Nobunaga, who harbored much hatred for Buddhism, attacked the Buddhist temples in and around Iga province, it was the shinobi clans who retaliated. This led to a great conflict between Oda and the shinobi ryū of the region, until his eventual assassination.

CLAN ORGANIZATION

The shinobi clan is the largest organizational group. Each clan follows the philosophical and martial training of a particular *ryū*. A *ryū* is founded by a single man, with credentials making him an established master of ninjutsu. Each *ryū* maintains a set of traditions, a particular philosophy and way of doing things. Although they have different definitions, strictly speaking, within the context of *SENGOKU* the terms *ryū* and clan can be used interchangeably. One can refer to the Iga *ryū* or the Iga clan; for all intents and purposes they are the same.

Jōnin

At the head of each *ryū* is the *Jōnin* (high man). The *Jōnin* functions as a supreme commander and leader of the *ryū*, and it is the *Jōnin* who controls its activities, deciding whom his shinobi will aid and at what price.

In the larger, more established *ryū* (such as the Iga and *Kōga*), the *Jōnin* is a wise man. He is well-cultured and trained in the arts of strategy, and is extremely knowledgeable about his area of responsibility. The *Jōnin* is well informed on all events occurring within his *ryū*'s sphere of influence, often thanks to an effective and widespread network of spies, many of whom might be contacts in important positions and strategic locations (such as the tea house which sits on the main road outside a castle town, or a craftsman who works next to the reed house which is frequented by local samurai, or the local horse dealer, and so on).

The *Jōnin*'s decisions are based on the philosophical understanding of the totality of things; the *Jōnin* sees the “big picture” and makes his decisions accordingly. The true *jōnin* is a master of harmony and more often than not will aid the underdog who is faced with hopeless odds and has no honorable recourse. In the political upheaval of the Sengoku-jidai, there can be no vacuum; it is better to maintain a weaker but morally superior force than to allow it to be destroyed and replaced by a stronger one whose ideology threatens the *ryū*.

The *Jōnin* all but eliminates his vulnerability by maintaining anonymity among his many agents; if they don't know who the *Jōnin* is, they cannot reveal his identity under torture or to a rival or enemy clan, should they defect. That a *Jōnin*'s field agents do not know his identity helps him to run the *ryū* more smoothly, no doubt, but in order to facilitate this invisible command he needed go-betweens.

“In gaining success at an early age, there is every probability that you will ultimately fail, because of the desire for yondoku—women, liquor, money and power.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

Soke

While some ryū use the term *soke* (grand/great master) to refer to the head of the ryū, in reality the Soke of a clan is usually something of a “front man,” dealing with the day-to-day running of both the group as a shinobi ryū and acting as the headman for whatever disguise the group takes. In all matters relating to finances, teaching, running the legitimate business aspects of the ryū and dealing with the authorities the Soke can only be overruled by the Jōnin, but the Soke traditionally has no power at all to direct the clan’s primary, shinobi-related work.

In most cases the Soke will be a high-ranking, retired or otherwise sedentary shinobi or one whose skills lie in communication or negotiation rather than in conflict and historically, it was often the case that a clan would elect one of the Kunoichi to serve as Soke, as a recognition that the ryū’s female members were every inch as important to the clan as the male.

Examples of shinobi Jōnin include the characters Hattori Hanzō from *Kage-no-Gundan II (Shadow Warriors II)* and Hattori Tarao from *Kage-no-Gundan III (Shadow Warriors III)* TV series.

Chūnin

Working for the Jōnin are a group of officers called *chūnin* (middle men). The chūnin’s responsibilities include the actual organization of operations decided upon by the Jōnin. The chūnin know best how to get a particular mission accomplished and which agents to assign to particular tasks.

The chūnin also serves as the necessary go-between, carrying instructions and orders from the Jōnin to the *genin*, (low man; shinobi field agents). This system ensured the ryū leader’s safety and anonymity. Because of the insulated, cell-like structure of the clan, two chūnin and their subordinate genin often have no idea that they were working for the same jōnin.

The chūnin rarely take an active role on missions, preferring to stay behind and managing resources, as is their specialty. While the chūnin’s training often included some of the shinobi’s martial arts, strategy and “resource management” remain their primary responsibilities and specialties.

Examples of shinobi chūnin include the male and female ninja “leaders” from the films *Lone Wolf and Cub: Baby Cart at the River Styx* and *Shōgun Assassin*.

Genin

The primary operative within a shinobi ryū is the genin (low man). The genin has the responsibility of carrying out the missions and plans of his superiors, as issued by the Jōnin and delivered by the chūnin. Genin are the most active and numerous members of the ryū. They are also the figures that most inspire the fantastic legends concerning the exploits and abilities of the shinobi.

FAMILY ORGANIZATION

Shinobi clans are made up of a number of families. Each family has a family head, or Soke. In general family matters (not shinobi-related) the Soke has ultimate authority. His decisions can only be overruled by the clan Jōnin. In a village setting, the various family heads form the “elder council,” answering to the village headman, himself chosen from among the family heads.

The Soke does not participate in any “professional” business. This responsibility falls on the various chūnin. In fact, the head of a shinobi family himself may or may not be a trained shinobi. He will be aware of the family’s secret activities, however, and has contact with each of the chūnin in his family.

The family heads do not, however, know the identity of the Jōnin; any communication with the Jōnin, if any, (including messages, reports, protests, and the like) are delivered through the chūnin.

Each family will typically have no more than a few dozen members. About one third to one half of the family will be trained shinobi agents (this may include the 65-year-old grandfather who is the head of his family).

For example, if a shinobi family consists of 30 members, at least 10 of them, but no more than 15, will be shinobi genin.

There are exceptions, of course, such as the larger families of the Iga and Kōga clans which have some families consisting of a hundred or more members.

The rest of the family consists of wives, children and perhaps a few lesser trained members of the ryū. These lesser trained members are generally those unable to function as full-fledged genin, such as those suffering from a debilitating sickness, low mental faculties or other disability. They can often fulfill non-combat roles, however, including working as accountants, craftsmen (making equipment for their shinobi brethren) or working in any number of “cover” jobs as required by the family and the clan.

For example, Chunai suffered an injury as a child. He has a limp and cannot run, therefore he can’t participate in shinobi missions. He can make items such as grenades and shuriken, however. In fact, he is the most skilled grenade maker in his family. He also works as a gardener, raking the various gravel paths and maintaining the gardens in his community.

When considering the size of a shinobi family, it is easy to see why each clan consists of multiple families. This allows the ryū to maintain a cell-like organization, which not only allows the clan to operate over a larger area but also helps to ensure its survival.

For instance, if one family is destroyed, the rest of the families can continue to operate safely.

“A single mind may lead one to a wrong judgement. In contrast, an attempt at enlightenment with three minds will be one of the surest ways of attaining it.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

UPBRINGING

The shinobi profession is traditionally inherited at birth. To become a shinobi one must be born into a shinobi family. As expected, there is the occasional exception. Occasionally a shinobi family will adopt an infant into the family and raise it as their own. Only in this way can a person not originally born into the shinobi life ever become a shinobi.

Campaign Tip

This could be an interesting character background, as a child of buke birth is found by a shinobi family and raised as one of them. Years later, as a full fledged shinobi, the character learns of his true parents and heritage. Perhaps the character has a special calling, such as the secret, rightful heir to the position of Daimyō within his former clan or even Shōgun.

TRAINING BEGINS AT INFANCY

The responsibility for training a shinobi falls primarily upon his immediate family, although various members of the shinobi's extended family all have a hand in his training throughout his life.

From infancy the shinobi is conditioned to be constantly aware of their surroundings. Their perception is sharpened over time through a series of games (such as "Hide and Seek" and other memory games) as they get older. The child is gradually introduced to the secrets and traditions of the ryū through these games and stories.

PHYSICAL TRAINING BEGINS

By age six, the children begin playing games stressing balance and agility, which take on the appearance of training exercises. One such game involves walking on top of narrow poles laid horizontally, running up inclined boards and leaping over low shrubs and walls.

At the age of nine, the shinobi youths are introduced to activities stressing limberness and flexibility. These activities may include rolling, jumping and stretching exercises. Training to increase balance and agility are also continued.

As the children mature, they begin practicing striking and kicking techniques, using bundled straw targets initially and graduating to more solid targets. As their skill increases they progress to learning the basics of *ninpō taijutsu* (lit. "art of using the body"), the shinobi's unarmed self-defense and combat techniques. Eventually the children learn the fundamental techniques of using the *katana* and *bō*.



Exercises begin to take on a more serious tone, and takes the form of actual training rather than simple games. Moral lessons are taught along with physical conditioning, and all training is imbued with the shinobi philosophy.

THE TEEN YEARS

In their early teens, shinobi youths are introduced to the special weapons used by their ryū. *Shurikenjutsu*, the concealment of weapons, chain weapon skills, as well as waterborne skills (swimming and underwater tactics) may be taught.

They also begin to study nature and learn to use nature to gather information about their surroundings and to conceal themselves. A shinobi teen might spend hours in some confined space or hanging from a tree limb to develop patience and stamina. Exercises involving silent movement and long-distance running become more common, along with leaping skills, in order to build up his strength and endurance.

THE YOUNG ADULT

Acting and psychology become topics of instruction for the shinobi approaching adulthood. By examining the actions, emotions and reactions of themselves and others, they come to understand how to predict human behavior as well as how to capitalize on the weaknesses and limitations (mental and physical) of others in order to manipulate or overcome them.

Lessons in herbalism, creating medicines and poisons are introduced, as are climbing and infiltration techniques, binding

"If sensation is considered to be perception through one's senses, then intuition can be considered perception through the unconscious."

– Ninpō saying



and cord tying, and escape techniques. The shinobi also practice sketching maps, observing and recording landmarks, routes and even faces.

THE FIRST MISSION

By the time the shinobi reaches the age of 15 (the age of majority), he is under the tutelage of a particular *genin* and is ready to undertake his first assignment. This first assignment is usually something simple and relatively low-risk, such as observing troop movements or the comings and goings of people to a certain building.

This first mission is also something of a final test for the shinobi trainees. It is common for the *genin* who is instructing them to prepare several unpleasant surprises for his or her pupils, such as traps, natural hazards, enemy soldiers or other shinobi.

These tests are not designed simply to weed out unsuitable candidates, however (though casualties are not uncommon), but to practically demonstrate to the student the theoretical lessons they studied as children. The new shinobi is required to bring together a decade and more of education in the blinking of an eye as the conditions of the test turn a jumble of lessons and doctrine into a seamless reality.

Trust in the *ryū*, faith in one's self; these are the tools that a student shinobi fashions on their "graduation exercise" and become the only ones he will ever need.

"There can be no substitute for ninjutsu except ninjutsu. There is likewise no substitute for wholeness and totality but wholeness and totality. Simply thinking of oneself as a shinobi is not enough. You are not shinobi until you are shinobi."

– Ninpō saying

SHINOBI TRAINING

Each of the skills taught to members of a ryū have the unique feel or mark of the ryū. While all skills learned and practiced by shinobi have common game effects, there are sometimes subtle, sometime obvious, differences between the ways the various skills are performed.

These differences won't be apparent to untrained observers but a shinobi may be able to determine the ryū of another shinobi if he observes the other shinobi use a skill taught by the ryū.

The observer may make a skill check using his **INT + Ninjutsu + 3d6** (DN 18; 14 if they are of the same ryū). If successful, the observer can identify the ryū of the other shinobi.

EXISTING SKILLS

ASTRONOMY (TENMON)

Tenmon (Astronomy) actually covers both astronomy and meteorology. Reading the stars is an excellent way to determine location and heading. It requires a very special set of skills and equipment, however, on the part of the observer. This skill covers these techniques for the shinobi admirably.

While not containing as complete a study of the stars as would a formal education in classical (i.e., Chinese) astrology, the study of *Tenmon* gives the shinobi enough knowledge of the major constellations and their yearly procession, to be able to navigate by them, on land or sea, with a successful Astronomy skill roll (DN 18). Astronomy may also be used as a complementary skill for Navigation skill rolls.

Weather is an important consideration in Japan and being able to take advantage of the weather (or at least not be taken advantage of by it) is a great benefit to a shinobi. While not an exact science, the patterns of the weather are readable with care. The skilled shinobi can accurately predict the weather with a successful Astronomy roll up to one month in advance (see the table below).

A shinobi can take great advantage of changes in the weather. For example, by predicting a change in the direction of the wind, a shinobi may set fire in a camp, knowing that the wind will shortly change, fueling the fire and fanning the flames toward the center of the camp. Imagine the chaos and panic among an army as flames make their way through their camp. By taking advantage of the weather, a lone shinobi can be as effective as an entire legion.

Predict weather...

DN

one day in advance	14
one week in advance	18
one month in advance	22
one season in advance	26
one year in advance	30

CHEMISTRY (YÔGEN)

A basic form of chemistry which allows the practiced shinobi to create all kinds of chemical compounds for use with other skill groups (explosives, poisons, antivenin, various gasses and so on). A shinobi proficient with this skill is an expert at preparing, refining and using all many of esoteric chemicals (animal parts, dung and true inorganic compounds) and, even though the skill is not considered a form of herbalism, he can exploit all manner of plant compounds into this work if located for him by an herbalist.

Dokuenjutsu (Use of poison smoke)

Shinobi can traditionally create all manner of poisons, medicines and esoteric chemicals when required. The Iga archives, for example, record over three dozen forms of smokes and vapors. These smokes and vapors can be used to kill, drug, stun, heal or even arouse victims to action.

The chemicals can be divided into two basic categories: combustion chemicals and liquid vapors.

Combustion chemicals: These are the easiest to manufacture and the safest to transport, being little more than dried pellets or combustible liquids mixed with a fuel (often from a poppy derivative). These are introduced to a source of combustion near the target and left until the smoke does its work. The pellets are often coated with a thin layer of clay, to ensure that they don't take effect right away, allowing the shinobi a few moments to retreat from the area of effect.

Liquid Vapors: Many spirit-based chemicals evaporate readily even at room temperature and this fact is the basis for this category of "poison smoke." Distilled narcotic or poisonous substances are mixed with raw spirit and either left in a vaporizer in the presence of the victim or splashed around or on them to achieve the desired effect.

These chemicals are dangerous to employ safely in the field. The vapor given off by the evaporation of the liquid base is invisible. While these chemicals are inherently more effective than smoke-borne drugs, they are also much more difficult to make and store safely (+2 DN; see **Making Poisons** in *SENGOKU*, page 222).

*"To distinguish between the sun and moon is no test of vision;
to hear the thunderclap is no indication of acute hearing."*

—Sun Tzu

Shinobi chemists can also use this skill to create a variety of chemical bombs and mines, from simple ones like pepper-filled eggs, to deadly cluster mines filled with Tiger Beetle venom. The latter consist of a main charge surrounded by many small bamboo tubes containing both gunpowder and venom sacks, which are vaporized as each explodes a few meters from the main blast.

To create a poison smoke device, the player must agree with the GM the sort of effect the player wishes the device to have, then succeed in a Chemistry roll against a DN set by the GM.

GMs may wish to restrict the manufacture of explosive smoke bombs to those PCs who possess the Demolitions (*Ka-ton-jutsu*) skill.

Iburi-dashi

Historically, this is a subsidiary technique of *dokuenjutsu*, which teaches how to place smoke and vapor devices to cause a building or cave to quickly fill with smoke, forcing the inhabitants out (in a state of shock).

Shinobi students are taught how to spot vents (natural or man-made) and how to determine the air-flow through such a structure so as to conduct a smoke or gas attack properly.

The skill can also be used to make a dwelling secure from such an attack (allowing a contested Chemistry roll), or at the very least inform the shinobi if he is in a place that is vulnerable to *iburi-dashi* techniques.

To assess a site requires a successful INT + Chemistry roll against a DN based on the size and type of the structure (see table below). Demolitions may be used as a complementary skill for this roll. Success means that the shinobi has marked all the ventilation points and they can now proceed to set up smoke sources as required.

Structure	DN
Hut	10
Farmhouse	14
Inn	18
Small castle	22
Huge castle	26

DEMOLITIONS

Ha-jutsu

Ha-jutsu (also known as *ka-ton-jutsu* and *kayakujutsu*) encompasses the fire and explosive techniques taught to shinobi.

Fire is a great terror in feudal Japan, and with good reason. In a country that reels regularly under the wrath of the kami of the earth, building wholly in stone and wood (even in castles), is almost universally impossible. Along with the ease of construction and tremor resistance, however, comes a vulnerability to fire. A vulnerability that the shinobi are all too happy to take advantage of.

Gunpowder first came to Japan from China through Korea, via the members of the royal household who fled to Japan around

680 A.D., where it had been used as an engineering tool and crude weapon for many years.

Much as the Chinese and Koreans have not recognized the full potential of explosive powder (the Chinese won't recognize the full potential of cannon until well into the 17th century), so have the Japanese as a society overlooked the true effectiveness of black powder. Not so the shinobi.

The Demolitions (*ha-jutsu*) skill allows for the making, placing, detonating and defusing of all manner of explosive devices by a shinobi. A shinobi attempting to disarm one of his own devices is automatically successful (assuming it's not been tampered with by another shinobi). Attempts to defuse a device created by someone else requires a contested Demolitions skill roll.

Training in black powder and fire-handling begins for most shinobi around the age of 12. Beginning with crude "pipe bombs" (made from a length of bamboo, filled with a mixture of black powder and iron fragments) the student goes on to learn how to manufacture and disarm a wide variety of lethal bombs, grenades, mines and projectiles. Most are fairly simple affairs, being little more than metal or ceramic containers filled with blasting powder and capped off with a incendiary fuse. Some devices, however, can be very complex.

Training involves the use of explosives as weapons of war and subterfuge, enabling the shinobi to carefully yet effectively incorporate explosives into the small unit actions, which shinobi favor in combat. Small stun grenades (designed to deafen rather than kill) or flash bombs, used to mask retreats or sudden attacks, are the common currency of the practitioner of *Ha-jutsu*. (A full list of explosive devices may be found in the **Equipment** section.)

While the study of black powder weapons manufacture and use are the main foci of *Ha-jutsu*, it must be pointed out that the art goes beyond explosives into the realms of understanding how fire itself can be used as a weapon. A shinobi knowledgeable in the arts of *Ha-jutsu* has an understanding of materials, how they burn, and what can be used to inhibit or accelerate the spread of fire. This not only makes a shinobi a lethal arsonist but also an effective fire-fighter as well. As a result, shinobi may use Demolitions as a complementary skill for any actions involving fighting fires.

A Demolitions roll will give a shinobi all the information required to destroy a structures with fire.

Structure	DN
Hut	10
Farmhouse	14
Inn	18
Small castle	22
Huge castle	26

If a shinobi is consulted during the planning or construction phase of a building, a Demolitions roll provides effective countermeasures against future fire and explosive damage. The total of the skill roll becomes the DN for any Demolition skills rolls against the structure (except for the consultant, who retain the base DN of 14, because he has intimate knowledge of the building's defenses).

"When fire breaks out in the enemy's camp immediately coordinate your action from without. But if his troops remain calm, bide your time and do not attack."

—Sun Tzu

When creating an explosive or incendiary device, the shinobi must decide (and the player must declare) the manner in which the device is triggered (pressure/contact, fuse or both) as well as the damage caused by the device. This information should be recorded for each such device.

Setting an explosive or incendiary device requires an average Demolitions skill roll (DN 14). A critical failure indicates an explosion. The shinobi suffers the full damage listed for the device.

To conceal a device requires a separate Concealment roll, with the total of the roll becoming the DN for anyone attempting to spot (using Perception) the device in the future (except, of course, the shinobi who set the device).

For example, Ritsushi, a shinobi, has a TECH of 4, a Demolitions score of 4 and a Concealment score of 4. He wants to set and hide an explosive device just under the surface of a well-traveled road. He makes a Demolitions roll, with a total of 23—a success. (He needn't make a Concealment roll to hide the device; anyone attempting to spot it needs to make a Perception roll of 18 or better.) With his task completed he heads into the woods to await his prey. Along comes Taro, a samurai and Ritsushi's intended victim, riding on horseback. Taro suspects a shinobi attack and is carefully watching the woods and road, so the GM allows him a Perception roll to spot the device. Taro's player makes a Perception roll with a total of 19. He has spotted the device in the road (though he may not recognize it for what it is) and stops his horse. Ritsushi, cursing under his breath, must decide whether to attack Taro directly or remain hidden...

Defusing an explosive device requires a Demolitions roll with a DN equal to the creator's Demolitions + Tech + 10. Defusing one's own device is automatic (unless it's been tampered with).

Onibi-no-jutsu

In fictional sources, especially modern shinobi tales, the *onibi* has been transformed into weapon of almost cataclysmic proportions. Shinobi in the more esoteric and wilder stories are seen to spout liquid fire from blowguns or from bladders strapped to their sides, while bombs containing Onibi are seen to burst open into the shapes of fiery demons, possessed of an crude intellect and bent of chasing down and consuming the enemies of their masters.

In a historical campaign, therefore, GMs may wish to limit the ways in which this knowledge can be used. In a Chanbara or Anime-level game (especially one in which magic is common), it may be proper to permit the Onibi-no-jutsu-trained PC to make and use such devices as flame throwers or animated naphtha filled automata.

To make a charge of Onibi, the shinobi is required to make a successful Demolitions roll (DN 18). A critical failure means the shinobi he has ignited himself.

A normal charge of Onibi will burn for 5 minutes if left unchecked, doing damage as per a small fire (see *SENGOKU*, page 219), with 2 to 3 meter blast radius if used in a bomb.



Historical Note

Oni-bi-jutsu (demon's fire) is another example of a "skill" which has been blown out of proportion by the fiction surrounding shinobi. While *onibi*—a naphtha like flammable liquid—certainly existed, many of the devices used to deliver it to targets are products of the writer's imagination.

The Iga Archives, for example, contain only one reference to this sort of weapon, "as a type of burning oil, found near volcanoes, which can be used to set fires on water and is difficult to put out." The Iga Shinobi evidently did not use this material very often, possibly as it was so volatile and difficult to transport, but when they did it was almost exclusively as a means to set fire to boats.

Playing Ha-jutsu

Fire is a willful spirit and not one to be treated lightly, lest it punish you with great pain. Marry that violent nature with the strength of the earth spirits in the making of bakuyaku (explosives) and even the slightest slip can cost a shinobi his life. You are a cautious agent who treats the whole of life as if it were an unexploded device waiting to detonate. And, in truth you must be. Only by ensuring that there are no flaws in your life as a whole can you be certain that your work will suffer no distractions. You cannot allow your concentration to waver for an instant when preparing a bomb, or setting a fire, for a slip of any sort could easily kill and, which is worse, betray your ryū to the enemy.

"If equally matched you may engage [the enemy]. If weaker numerically, be capable of withdrawing. And if in all respects unequal, be capable of eluding him..."

—Sun Tzu

At all times, be calm and collected, never allow a plan to go through without being sure in your own mind that you or your team have addressed all eventualities and prepared all the countermeasures you may require should chance go against you. You are, more than most shinobi, prepared for your own death and, while not actually being a death-seeker, you are resigned to the fact that is likely that one day your hands will slip and your will have only a blinding flash and searing pain to take with you into void.

DISGUISE (HENSO-JUTSU)

The life of a shinobi is a life of disguise and obfuscation. As part of the shinobi's *henso-jutsu* (disguise) training, each shinobi develops one or more alternate personalities into which he can drop with little or no preparation. One of these is their "front," the role in which they play out everyday life—farmer, courtesan, samurai or whatever.

The strictures of a shinobi's life dictate that he should be able to don any number of disguises at any time. In practice, however, only a shinobi skilled in *henso-jutsu* will have any more options available to him or her. Only a few options are generally available to a shinobi because they are perfectionists; it is better to know a handful of skills well than to be a novice in many.

It's difficult, if not impossible, to carry around the necessary material to prepare a large number of good disguises in the field. Indeed, a genin on a mission will typically carry only one or two possible "covers" and if the shinobi in question is a deep cover agent (as most *kunoichi* are) they will rarely bother with any but their primary disguise.

To represent the nature of a shinobi's primary disguise—the one under which they live their normal life—the DN to assume the disguise is 10; a PC should not generally be required to make a skill when assuming it. Also, unless being observed by another shinobi, they will remain undetected in most situations.

A shinobi can create one additional disguise for each point of Disguise skill above 2 that he possesses. Thus, a shinobi with a Disguise score of 4 may add two additional disguises to his repertoire.

These alternate disguises will not be as set in the mind of the shinobi as his primary disguise, however. Donning such a disguise requires the shinobi to make a Disguise skill roll (DN 14) to put on properly. Haste, or lack of proper equipment and/or clothing, both increase the DN by +4; a shinobi who lacks the proper garb and is *also* in a hurry rolls against a DN of 22.

These disguises will be almost as hard to perceive as the shinobi's primary cover, but at times of stress—such as interrogation—observers are permitted to make a contested Perception roll against the shinobi's Disguise skill roll.

A shinobi can also, with care and preparation, take on any other disguise not in his repertoire. The correct clothing (and perhaps makeup) are still needed, as is a successful Disguise skill roll (DN 18). Once set, however, they are only as detectable as the secondary disguises—allowing a contested Perception roll for a suspicious observer to spot them as a fraud.

Disguises can also be improvised in the spur of the moment—using minimal clothing or makeup, relying on posture and changes to bearing etc.—on a Disguise roll with a DN of 22.

Disguise

Primary disguise	10
Secondary disguise(s)	14
Unfamiliar disguise	18
Improvised disguise	22
Donned in haste	+4
Lack of necessary garb or gear	+4

DN

HYPNOTISM (SAIMIN-JUTSU)

Imagine a dark shape sliding across a bedroom floor towards a sleeping form. Imagine also that you hear strange and dreadful commands being whispered into the ears of that unfortunate victim; dark and bitter orders of blood and violence. This is *saimin-jutsu* as it is known to the world of *manga* and *Kabuki*.

Deep and lasting commands can be inserted into a victim's head; commands that might lie dormant for years till the right moment arrives and the victim is forced into action.

For example, in the manga Shōgun no kage (Shōgun's Shadow) an innocent maid is transformed at night into a fairly effective assassin in order to strike at a well protected Chinese diplomat, while in the book Muyūbyōsha (sleepwalkers) a shinobi "programs" an Imperial Palace guard to open the Water Gates of the Miyako palace every month on the same night. Such is the stuff of legends.

In reality, *Saimin-jutsu* plays a relatively small part in a shinobi's repertoire of mission-based skills. On few occasions will an agent be required (or be in a position) to spend the amount of time needed to submerge a victim into a trance during an assignment in the field. It is notoriously difficult to hypnotize those who are aware of the deed and who do not wish to be so manipulated.

This does not mean to say that *Saimin-jutsu* is a useless art, for records of hypnotism, combined with the application of drugs to cloud the mind, as an interrogation tool are not uncommon.

The technique is far more readily used among the shinobi themselves as something of a training aid and as a way to help improve the all-too-human mental capacities of their agents. In some instances, before a mission, shinobi would be put into a trance and instructed not to feel pain or fear heights, or even to help them resist interrogation (in the unlikely event that they are captured).

To use this skill the shinobi must be alone with subject, undisturbed. There must be relative calm and preferably both are seated. The shinobi must spend a number of minutes applying the techniques equal to the subject's WILL, if he is cooperative, or the subject's RES, if he is uncooperative.

At the end of this time period, the shinobi makes a *Saimin-jutsu* roll against the subject's WILL + Concentration + 10. The shinobi may take extra time to receive a bonus to the roll (see *SENGOKU*, page 203), and he may also modify his attempt (and his skill roll) using the table below.

"Invincibility depends on one's self; the enemy's vulnerability on him."

—Sun Tzu

Circumstance**DV Mod**

Subject trusts the shinobi	+1
Subject has Light Sleeper talent	+2
Subject is asleep	-2
Shinobi has Beautiful Voice talent	-1
Shinobi has Empathic talent	-1
Shinobi attempts multiple suggestions	+2 ea
Shinobi attempts moderate suggestion (one that triggers a Major Psychological complication)	+4
Shinobi attempts major suggestion (one (one that triggers an Extreme Psychological complication)	+8

A failed roll indicates the subject has regained his composure, and is immune from any future hypnotism attempts by that shinobi for a period of time equal to the next step down the Time Chart from the time closest (in size) to the time the shinobi spent on the first attempt.

For example, a shinobi spends 6 minutes trying to hypnotize a subject, and fails. Because 6 minutes is closest to “5 Minutes” on the Time Chart, the next step down would be “20 Minutes.” The shinobi must wait a minimum of 20 minutes before another attempt has any chance of success on the same subject.

If the shinobi succeeds, the subject is hypnotized and the suggestion(s) are planted in the subject’s mind.

A suggestion may be of long duration (e.g., you dislike the color blue) or one of short duration (e.g., the next time you hear the word ‘leave’ you will cry uncontrollably). The suggestion may have a trigger or begin immediately upon the subject waking. The duration and any trigger(s) must be declared by the player before the Hypnotism roll is made.

The only way to remove the effects of this form of suggestion is by having the effects removed via another hypnotism, or by having a *Blessing*, *Purification* or *The Open Eye* prayer cast upon the subject by a mystic who is specifically attempting to purge the influence of the hypnotist’s mind on the subject (i.e., a generic *Blessing* won’t do). Any of these means will remove the effects instantly, and the subject will remember being hypnotized (unless he is told not to remember as part of a second application of *Saimin-jutsu*).

GMs may wish to limit the effects that can be achieved with this skill. While it might be reasonable to program someone to kill, it should not be possible to order a person to commit suicide against their will.

Historical Note

The use of *Saimin-jutsu* and drugs as interrogation tools is documented in the records of the Iga ryū, especially during the time in which they worked for the Tokugawa *bakufu*.

**Playing Saimin-jutsu**

You work through others, you always have. Why risk yourself when you have any number of potential pawns who can carry out any sort of mission for you? And while your ryū colleagues sometimes view you as being cold and even by their own pragmatic standards, the master knows the true worth of your arts, allowing you to practice freely.

You are often called on to prepare agents for missions, debrief them on their return and interrogate enemies through your arts, so clearly you are not a squeamish person. Be detached and removed from the events around you as befits a puppet master and never let anyone forget that the next ear you could be whispering into is theirs.

NETS (TAOAMI-JUTSU)

The art of using a finely-woven, weighted net in combat. Shinobi *taoami*, much like shinobi ropes, are made from human hair (usually cut from children of the *ryū*) for its strength and light weight. The shinobi *taoami* is weighted much like a traditional Japanese fishing net, around the circumference of the net.

They can be bundled and packed very tightly. A shinobi skilled at *taoami-jutsu* is able to release his net from its pouch and cast it onto a victim in the twinkling of an eye (this is possible if the shinobi also has the talent *Fastdraw: Nets*).

While the original technique was chiefly concerned with employing the peasant *taoami* as a weapon, over the years, enterprising shinobi added their own special techniques to the art as a whole.

“Nothing is so uncertain as one’s own common sense or knowledge. Regardless of one’s fragile knowledge one must single-mindedly devote oneself to training, especially in times of doubt.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki



A PC proficient with *taoami-jutsu* can use a net to set up net traps of various sorts, string tripwires and nets across roads (in rivers, through passageways, and so on) and can even employ his or her grappling iron as an effective weapon to confine a foe.

In combat, treat nets as thrown weapons (see *SENGOKU*, page 151 for a description of the Net skill).

Common Shinobi Remedies

Below are a number of common remedies used by shinobi of feudal Japan. *Note: they are presented for historical reference and role-playing use only.*

To Stave thirst: peppermint powder, arrowroot starch and salted plum mixed together into a powder then pressed into a small ball; eat 30 sesame seeds.

Sword wounds: paint mixture of charred goosefoot (an herb root) and black cowpea on the wound; mashed narcissus or daffodil roots.

For bamboo cuts: a paste made from *mugiko* (wheat flour) mixed with water (especially good for relieving the pain).

For gunshot wounds: mashed *niranegi* (leeks).

To stop bleeding from cuts & scratches: mixture of *kiri* (paulownia) and *sencha* (tea leaves), mashed with the teeth, then placed on the wound; smoke from slow-burning rags.

For scaldings and light burns: Put a mixture of tannin and India ink on the wound.

For risk of lockjaw or Rose's disease: place the skin of a mudfish onto wound, changed often.

For sprains & contusions: mashed *fhellodindron amurense* mixed with vinegar smeared on the injury site.

For food poisoning: eat charred version of whatever caused the food poisoning (e.g., if poisoned by bonito, eat charred bonito).

PHYSICIAN (IGAKU)

Shinobi are able to create herbal home remedies for common illnesses and injuries using the Chemistry or Herbalist skills. But only those shinobi with the Physician skill are able to diagnose and treat more serious injuries.

The shinobi physician is able to set broken bones, diagnose illnesses (as well as poisoning), and treat patients. Doctors in feudal Japan prescribe medicines to their patients, but as often as not they create those medicines themselves. Traditional doctors may have a small garden for growing the required herbs.

STEALTH (SHINOBI-IRI)

Stealth is a matter of balance. One of the first things an apprentice shinobi learns is how to walk properly; more specifically, how to keep the body balanced so that one's weight is evenly distributed across both feet, even when moving quickly.

Being silent is only so much use, however, if no attempt is made to remain unseen. Shinobi are made aware at a very young age that their surroundings are as important to them as their ability to walk softly when wishing to move unnoticed. Walls, bushes, shadows, people—indeed, almost anything that breaks up the outline of the shinobi can be employed to make them so much harder to see. This is *Shinobi-iri*, the art of invisibility.

Training in *shinobi-iri* begins as soon as a child is able to play simple games. A version of the western "Mr. Wolf" game, called *Oni ba* (grandma demon), helps the young shadow warriors gain an understanding of the basic principles of stealthy movement, as well as the harsh necessity of it. Those caught by "oni ba" are denied the *okashi* (sweets) reward given to the successful children.

When the older children begin their true training, *Shinobi-iri* is passed on using a series of practical lessons that both teach and test their knowledge of silent movement and concealment.

Along with this come lessons in improving balance, such as tightrope walking (another useful skill in itself) and pole-standing. This latter technique (imported from China, it is thought) involves the shinobi learning to fight from the top of very tall, thin poles, each no thicker in diameter than a spear shaft. Until the student can run through their various *kata* (techniques) while atop the *bōshin* (the forest of staves), they are not considered balanced enough to master *shinobi-iri*.

Intimate knowledge of *Shinobi-iri* provides the shinobi the ability to virtually vanish from plain sight and move at great speed while remaining in that "invisible" state, unmarked by all but the most alert.

In game terms, many of the balance-related feats can be achieved with an Acrobatics skill roll. Shinobi may use Stealth as a complementary skill with Acrobatics, and vice versa, in appropriate circumstances and with the GM's permission. Other professions do not receive this concession.

Playing Shinobi-iri

When playing a character skilled in *Shinobi-iri*, the player should always try to keep in mind that their character has a near perfect sense of balance. The shinobi is unafraid of even the

"When you have bad people around you, your attitude should be that Heaven has sent them to you for as trial...to give you a chance to prove yourself."

—Hatsumi Masaaki

greatest high (shinobi should obviously not take an acrophobia complication), simply because they know they can trust themselves on even the shakiest of ground.

Even when not trying to move quietly or remain unseen, a master of Shinobi-iri oozes self confidence when he walks. They are graceful and composed in everything they do, almost as if they are being guided by an external agency.

This external “balance” is only a reflection of the shinobi’s internal harmony—with nature, with themselves, and so on.

STRATEGY (SENJO-JUTSU)

Shinobi have always been strategic thinkers. This is drawn, in part, from their heritage as displaced members of the warrior class, but mostly it derives from the fact that shinobi groups are, though made up of skilled and determined agents, relatively small and in many ways vulnerable.

A practitioner of senjojutsu can not only assess and interpret battlefield data quickly and effectively, but can—from his or her understanding of the shinobi as a class—plan effective counter-measures, which will save valuable lives by exploiting the unique skills which the shadow warriors possess.

This attitude to strategy runs against the accepted military thinking of the time in Japan, where lives are not seen as important and generals spend men like a decadent merchant spends money in order to achieve his ends. The shinobi approach to military strategy is concerned chiefly in avoiding mass combat, in which the shinobi were (not surprisingly) quite vulnerable, and, if caught in an open battle, dealing as much damage as possible without wasting life unnecessarily.

A shinobi with an understanding of senjo-jutsu will employ this skill to help him make an assessment of his enemy’s strengths and weaknesses before going on to plan his own measures. The shinobi doesn’t need much to work with—a single guard can tell him or her much about the unit they are from and, through that, the force behind it.

The shinobi who understands senjojutsu understands people and how they react in situations of conflict. With a successful Strategy roll a shinobi can directly assess a combat situation (DN 18). The shinobi may also use Strategy as a complementary skill to other observational skills, such as spotting an ambush before it is launched (Perception), observing and reporting critical events (Scouting) or assessing the psychological state of troops before or after a battle.

Historical note

The best place to look to get an idea of how important *senjojutsu* was to the shinobi mind is to the Iga Shinobi Museum, where, among the archived texts of nearly 400 years, can be found ancient and much used copies of Chinese classics such as Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* and Emperor Chin Shi’s *The Sword*. The teachings of these texts and others like them were added to the arts and strictures of ninpō to create a method of teaching not only small unit tactics for use in combat but a level of strategic thinking that made best use of the shinobi’s talents.

Playing Senjojutsu

Nobody thinks quite like you do. You have become so attuned to the actions of man and beast that you can almost tell what a person or animal will do before they do it. However, you are not so foolish as to believe that even your training has made you infallible, so rather than being complacent and arrogant about your abilities, you tend towards introspection and maybe being a little too conservative with your thoughts and ideas lest you have to revise them quickly as events conspire to turn your plans to nothing.

Play your doubts aloud to the group, always try to be ready with a plan of action—or counter-plan, should events go against you—and, above all, be conscious of the fact that your fellows look to you for the guidance only you can give them.

SURVIVAL

A shinobi carries enough rations, such as *tofu* (bean curd), *tsune no mizu* (plum juice) and *genmai* juice (juice from unpolished rice), to sustain him for the duration of his mission under ideal conditions. If things go bad, however, the shinobi may be required to live off the land for a time.

For example, a shinobi performs an assassination and the victim is discovered prematurely, raising the alarm. The shinobi finds himself sought after and all obvious routes are now being watched carefully, so the shinobi must travel out of his way, through woods and hills, to get back to his base.

Fortunately the shinobi can find plenty to sustain him in the wild. *Daikon* (large white radishes) are common, and mushrooms, nuts, roots, mountain grasses and other edible plants can be easily found. The shinobi can easily locate sources of water, such as springs and creeks. The shinobi is also skilled at building shelters, as well, using tree limbs as frames for tents (in fair weather) or makeshift igloos (in winter).

THROWING (SHURIKEN-JUTSU)

Shuriken-jutsu is perhaps the art most associated with the shinobi and is just as misunderstood as the shinobi themselves. While shinobi possess a wide variety of darts and needles, the “classic” *shuriken* and the initial focus of the art was designed with a different purpose in mind—distraction.

The shape of the shuriken—a four-, eight- or twelve-pointed star—lends itself better to cutting than to sticking into things, scything by an opponent, cutting into the flesh of his vulnerable *atemi* (vital points) and causing enough damage to incapacitate or, at the very least, stun the foe and discourage pursuit of the shinobi.

Shinobi with the Throwing skill can throw darts, needles, coins, stars and other *shaken* (small throwing blades) effectively as missile weapons.

“It is important for a ninja to eat uncooked food; one should not take food that is cooked. People begin losing stamina and energy and their sixth sense as a result of eating cooked food.”

—Toda sensei

NEW SKILLS

ESCAPE (TONPO)

Shinobi have devised many ways to get themselves out of trouble should bad luck put them into bonds.

Shinobi are taught a wide variety of contortionist techniques—forming the heart of *tonpo*—which could be employed to help slip past most bonds. Learning how to expand and contract the wrists helps get an agent clear of hand cuffs, while dislocating (and relocating) joints at will make it so much easier to escape from even the tightest of knots.

In addition to their own superb physical training, practitioners of tonpo can call on a variety of special equipment to aid in their escapes. Ropes can be dealt with using small slivers of steel glued under the fingernails or sewn into the sides of gloves (*nekote*), or they can be worn down using abrasive rods or strips, which can be secreted in the arms of a shinobi's clothing.

Harder bonds, such as chains, may call for tiny lock-picks for dealing with locks behind the back. Small vials of acid can also be used to destroy the mechanisms of such locks.

To escape bonds, a shinobi must make a successful Escape skill roll against a DN based on the toughness of the medium used to bind them (24 for chain and 18 for rope). The use of appropriate tools provide a +1 to +3 AV bonus (GM's discretion).

PUPPETEERING : KUGUTSU MAWASHI

Kugutsu Mawashi (also known as *Ningyō Jōruri* on the mainland after 1400). This skill is a variation of the Puppeteer skill and is only available to PCs from Awaji Island (1100—1400) or Kansai region (1400—1600).

Originally created as a form of cleansing ritual using one half scale *ningyō* (glove-type puppets) in the Nara period, this art stayed fairly close to Awaji island for several centuries before passing into the popular culture of the mainland during the Ashikaga Shōgunate. Employing elements of Heikyoku (singing the tale of the Heike) and *Nō*, this later form of the art became the most popular form of entertainment in Japan in the 1500s, supplanting even *Nō* (and later, Kabuki).

Shinobi in the Sengoku era often travel as *Kugutsu Mawashi* or *Ningyō Jōruri* puppeteers, as entertainers are one of the only classes permitted to travel openly without papers. This freedom is due, in part, to the popularity of the art among the *buke*, but moreso because it is commonly held that the puppets of a master of this art can animate themselves and will strike down anyone who harms their puppeteer!

Characters with this skill may apply half of their score to the alternate puppet skill, *Tekugutsu*, and vice versa. (DEX)

NEW TALENTS

DO-TON-JUTSU

It is said that shinobi walk in the earth when it suits their purposes. Indeed, those with powerful affiliations to the realms of magic or friendship with the spirits may just do so.

Those not blessed with such supernatural powers supplement their training with this remarkable talent. *Do-ton-jutsu* effectively covers the many uses to which a shinobi can put the earth, leaves, grass and other cover to be found in the natural setting and encompasses two distinct skills. Shinobi possessing the Do-ton-jutsu Talent are particularly well trained in the art and receive a +2 to any Stealth rolls involving the use of the earth—soil, sand, rocks, and so on.

The first is the ability to vanish into the earth, which is to say that the shinobi simply is able to move with remarkable speed and, while taking advantage of the natural cover around them, remain hidden as long as they wish to. In practice an opposed Stealth vs. Perception roll is made against the observer to remain hidden (each observer may roll separately).

The second skill associated with Do-ton-jutsu is the ability to make oneself part of the ground itself. This can involve digging into the soil and camouflaging oneself (or another object, such as gear or a person), but often simply relies on the shinobi being able to correctly mimic—with clothing and natural debris—the “look” of the earth.

A well-trained shinobi can create such a hiding spot in all but the barest terrain in mere moments and either remain unseen—contested Perception rolls versus the shinobi's Stealth roll are allowed for other shinobi or observers who suspect a threat—or can use this vantage as a point from which to launch an ambush. To create a hiding spot requires a Stealth roll using TECH as the governing stat (i.e., TECH + Stealth + 3d6). The time required and DN of the roll are show in the table below.

Terrain	Time	DN
Sand, soft earth	2 Phases	10
Medium earth	1 Round	14
Hard dirt, clay	1 Minute	18

Do-ton-jutsu doesn't just teach concealment methods in the earth. In addition to learning about the qualities of soils, the shape and form of rocks or the consistency of sands, the shinobi also gains what we might call a basic understanding of geological processes. A shinobi skilled in Do-ton-jutsu can recognize loose or unstable ground easily (Perception roll, DN 14), know when an earthquake is imminent, or possibly know where to walk in a swamp to avoid disaster, or might not be fooled by pit traps in the wild (unless manufactured by another shinobi with the Do-ton-jutsu Talent, of course), and even knows how to start

“How difficult is life when one is not surprised by anything and laughing every day?”

—from illustration by Takamatsu Toshitsugu



avalanches. Shinobi with the Do-ton-jutsu Talent may apply their +2 bonus to Perception or Danger Sense rolls to detect such things.

A number of chanbara films involve people leaping out of the ground to assail some poor samurai or other (examples can be seen in the *Lone Wolf and Cub* series, among others).

Historical Note

The extent to which historical shinobi made use of this skill is evidenced in the fact that it is one of the techniques that is still recorded in the archives of the Iga Shinobi Museum (in modern day Mie Prefecture, close to Ueno City).

While the historical skill is, perhaps, less ebullient than the technique as presented here, it is certainly still a remarkable method of camouflage.

Students learned, in effect, to mimic the earth, using special clothing and other special equipment (such as an unusual wicker frame into which earth is forced so that grass can grow on it) and shinobi master of Do-ton-jutsu—often employing techniques from *Fudo-jutsu* (see below)—were required to learn to remain totally still, becoming one with the soil until their senses informed them of the moment to strike.

This skill is not just about ambush but also about escape into the earth, or effective concealment on the ground. Historically, this part of the technique was called *Moku-ton-jutsu*, but this has been separated into its own distinct Talent for the purpose of this supplement, referring only to camouflage techniques in more verdant environments, while Do-ton-jutsu covers techniques on the ground itself—even being effective in otherwise featureless terrain.

Playing Do-ton-jutsu

The earth is your greatest friend. Soil, rocks, twigs, roots and sands, all give up their secrets to you at the asking and no-one can master you when in your element.

When in the wild, constantly stoop, finger the soil, talk to it and thank it when it has helped you successfully complete an ambush or escape.

No matter what else you are, when in the wild, close to the ground, you are a master of Do-ton-jutsu and should act like one: brooding, steady as a rock, slow to stir as a volcano and just as deadly when unleashed in anger. (3 OP)

IMMOBILITY (FUDO-JUTSU)

Standing truly still is far more difficult than one might suppose is possible. Shinobi often have need of statuesque levels of immobility, however, when working in the field—when concealed, or waiting in ambush perhaps.

This Talent not only teaches the shinobi to remain totally immobile, but also helps him or her achieve a level of inner tranquility in which the agent can wait for many days at a time—without ill effect—for the moment to strike. In practical terms the meditative techniques that underlie *Fudo-jutsu* suppress the body's bio-functions (slowing the heartbeat, cooling the blood and suppressing the appetite) without affecting the senses.

This technique is taught as a meditation exercise in the *Tendai-sho* (Tendai sect) of Buddhism. The priests of that sect employ the way in which the body's functions slowed down as a method of gaining access (so they thought) to levels of their mind and senses which are barred when the body is required to spend resources caring for itself.

The technique can be employed in many ways to aid the skilled shinobi. If simple immobility is required—such as when hiding in a confined space close to an enemy—it is useful. Sharp agents, however, recognize that the ability to lower one's body temperature and suppress appetite can be a useful trick to know if stranded in the open or if required to rest or wait in the open.

A successful Meditation roll (DN 14) is required to set the technique in motion. Shinobi utilizing this talent will suffer no ill effects from inclement weather, no matter how cold or miserable. In addition, the shinobi remains fully aware of his body and surroundings, though he will remain in a deep meditative trance, appearing to be asleep (or dead) at a cursory glance, and unable to act or move. The shinobi may come out of this state at will. (5 OP)

Historical Note

Kōga ryū legend states that in the early Kamakura period, a time during which many small shinobi groups were struggling to establish themselves throughout Japan, even to the wild and untamed lands of the North (modern-day northern *Honshū* and *Hokkaido*). It was the leader of one of these groups, Shinbe of the Aube Ryū, who accidentally discovered the link between the meditative trance he had learned as a follower of Tendai and its survival.

While on a mission for an unnamed employer Shinbe was forced to cross a frozen lake, much to his anxiety, by the approach of a wild bear which had taken his scent in the pursuit of a meal. As Shinbe had feared, the ice began to break and, already tired, he decided to wait out the end of his life in a fashion fitting to his early lessons. Shinbe's master had taught him that if one were to die while in the midst of a deep meditation, a glimpse of the true nature of the universe would be one's to take into the next turn of the Karmic Wheel.

Seated on the cracking ice of the lake he cast his mind into the void and stilled his body. Much to his surprise that act not only stilled the ice—which had been breaking up at even the rise and fall of his breath—but brought him a warmth and his body cooled to the temperature of the air. It is said that he waited there for three days in contemplation of the world before colleagues from his ryū, scouting along his trail, discovered him.



movement, hiding in the open or, as the legend says, *kaze ni shinondeiru* (hiding in the wind).

A shinobi with the Inpo talent receive a +2 bonus to their Stealth roll in circumstances involving movement in or around buildings or other man-made structures (GM's discretion).

INPO (ART OF HIDING)

In the same way that *Do-ton-jutsu* covers concealing oneself in natural surroundings, *Inpo* is considered to be the art of hiding in more unnatural, man-made environs.

Training in Inpo is a very unusual affair in shinobi ryū, comprising a great deal of slow and methodical work on the quality of light and sound. Outside (even the urban environment) the world is a jumble of irregular shapes, strange noises and confused light patterns into which a Shinobi-iri practitioner can easily vanish. Inside a building, however, the quality of light changes, shadows become harder and more recognizable and the transmission of sound becomes that much easier.

Shinobi students of inpo learn first how to judge their own shadow and how it will fall in any given situation. This is critical as most buildings use many *shoji* (paper screens) to separate internal rooms and a poorly placed shadow could easily bring guards down upon the shinobi's head. Moreover, Students carefully study the different qualities of sounds, close to and inside buildings, in order to learn how to judge distance and direction from sources of sounds, and to move to avoid visible contact with anyone.

Imagine, if you will, a shinobi scouting around the grounds of a castle compound, constantly shifting from place to place to avoid the eyes of the patrolling guards, always knowing which shadow to step into and when to move to another when danger threatens to reveal him. This is the heart of inpo—hiding in

Legend tells us that the skill came into being to help shinobi of the Iga *han* conceal themselves for ambushes in their infamous *shinobi yashiki* (shinobi houses, also known as *karakuri-ie* or “trapped/mechanical houses”).

While this may be an apocryphal tale, the recorded historical technique was considered a branch art of shinobi-iri, but one designed to allow both movement and concealment when working close up to a target—especially when inside buildings, where the dynamics of light and shade cannot always allow for the subtle movements of Shinobi-iri to be used.

Playing Inpo

You are careful and unbelievably watchful at all times. Even when you are relaxing and secure you cannot help but marking and reacting to any sound you find unusual, if only subtly. Keep pausing and listening, even if half way through a conversation with someone. Always follow through on a GM's hints as fully as you can, even if they ultimately prove unfounded. Even you can never wholly know whether a soft footfall is truly just the serving maid bringing you your meal or a deadly kunoichi bent on sending you to the Great Void.

“Appear at places to which [the enemy] must hasten; move swiftly where he does not expect you.”

—Sun Tzu

JOEION-JUTSU (ERASING SOUND AND SHADOW)

Another aspect of *Shinobi-iri*, this technique is taught to shinobi as a way of becoming aware of their own physical presence and the way in which they intrude on the natural world, both physically and audibly.

Students of *Joeion-jutsu* are taught how to breathe without making a sound. Small strips of rice paper are hung about a hand's span from the student's face. Until the student can breathe comfortably without disturbing the paper their breathing is not silent.

Moreover, the student is taught (much as in *inpo*) that the length of a shadow can be altered and greatly reduced by knowing which aspect of one's body to present to the light—crouching, kneeling, lying flat etc. Shinobi learn how to bind up their clothing in such a way that it reduces both the sound made when moving and minimizes any shadow cast by it.

Shinobi with the *Joeion-jutsu* talent receive a +2 bonus to any Stealth roll. This talent may be used in addition to other Stealth-related talents, such as *Do-ton-jutsu* and *Inpo*.

Playing Joein-jutsu

You are forever conscious of your own physical presence and the way in which you interact with the world. You always strive to minimize your impact. Keep your character's speech quiet and to an absolute minimum, just enough to make your point and no more. Don't attract attention to yourself, either through expansive gestures, shouting or even overt acts (either of kindness or malice) that will be remembered by others. You are the archetypal shadow—unremarkable, easily forgotten and just as easily overlooked. (3 OP)

JUDGE DEPTH OF SLEEP (MINKA-DŌ)

A very simple sounding skill, but one which is considered essential enough to be taken seriously by shinobi. Characters with this talent can determine how deeply asleep (or otherwise unconscious) a subject is with a Perception roll.

Sleep is not a state of total unconsciousness and each person rests in several different states of awareness while asleep. It is essential for a shinobi to be able to tell, from a distance, exactly how deeply asleep a target is before risking moving closer to them to carry out whatever task they are tasked with.

To gain the knowledge required, shinobi students are taught to watch and listen for the visible and audible signs that will inform them of a person's state of sleep.

When the shinobi gets within a few meters of a sleeper he must make a Perception roll (DN 18). Success means the shinobi determines what sort of stimuli will wake the sleeper (as determined by the GM) or if the person under observation is feigning sleep. (3 OP)

MISSILE REFLECTION (TOTOKU HIYOSHI)

Missiles, such as arrows and spears, can travel very quickly. Their flight is also predictable, however. Using a weapon or even his bare hands, a shinobi can mentally plot the incoming path of a missile and, at the last instant, step out of harm's way or bring the missile down with a well-placed strike to its side.

Shinobi with the Arrow Cutting skill (*yadome-jutsu*) can attempt to "cut" missiles as small as coins and as large as *yari* out of the air with a successful skill roll.

Shinobi who also possess the *totoku-hiyoshi* talent can avoid or deflect missiles as large as large rocks and as small and fast as *teppō* shot. In addition, shinobi with this talent may also deflect missiles passing nearby (within 2 meters of the shinobi), which are intended for other targets.

The DN of the Arrow Cutting attempt depends on whether the missile was cast at the shinobi (e.g., by an opponent in combat) or is a "non-aggressive" projectile (such as a falling stone or an inanimate booby trap).

For missiles aimed at the shinobi, the DN is equal to the attacker's AV (the total of their attack roll) minus the range modifier; the longer a missile is in flight the easier it is to avoid. Shinobi may also attempt to cut or deflect missiles aimed at other targets (such as allies or one's mount) if the missile travels within 2 meters of the shinobi (i.e., through a hex adjacent to or up to 1 hex away from the shinobi). Such attempts suffer an additional penalty of -4.

For "dumb" missiles, use the table below, which takes into account the missile's size and speed.

Missile	DN
Tossed/falling body (human)	10
Tossed/falling body (horse)	14
Tossed/falling bale of rice	14
Tossed/falling stone or coin	18

A failed attempt means the shinobi has still taken the hit. Obviously, *teppō* rounds and huge flying boulders cannot be so treated without the aid of spiritual or magical means. (10 OP)

MOKU-TON-JUTSU

A cousin to *Do-ton-jutsu* (and historically an aspect of it), *Moku-ton-jutsu* represents the skills required to conceal oneself in, or by using, foliage, leaves and plant material.

Shinobi students of this talent are taught dozens of ways to make use of plant matter as camouflage, from tying down a bush's branches to make a natural-looking but difficult-to-spot hiding place, to creating an odd-looking but effective *hawagi* (flower coat), covered in branches, leaves and other foliage that helps break up the shinobi's outline in a verdant environs.



The skills acquired in learning Moku-ton-jutsu are not limited to hiding in bushes. Practitioners of this discipline are considered to be one with all growing things and have few peers when it comes to woodcraft.

Historical Note

Historically, Moku-ton-jutsu—when taught as part of Doton-jutsu—covered where to find which plants in what season, how to locate and identify edible plants, manufacturing crude toxins or medicines from plant matter, and even simple meteorology.

Shinobi with the Moku-ton-jutsu talent receive a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls in circumstances involving trees and plants. In addition, the shinobi gains a +1 bonus on other plant- and wood-related skills such as Carpentry, Craft: Carving, Demolitions (when used against wooden structures), Herbalist and Survival (in rural conditions), with GM's the permission.

Playing Moku-ton-jutsu

The forest can shelter you, provide food, water, healing and rest when you require it. You can fashion clothes and tools from its body and take refuge in its arms when danger threatens.

There are many lessons to be learned from the wild woods of Japan which you are always open to, being woodcrafty beyond

the ways of civilized man and unmatched when encountered in the heart of your realm. You are as strong as the tallest trees, as flexible as grass in the winds and as vigorous as young bamboo. You are never more content or sure of yourself than when in the forest. This does not mean that you are at a disadvantage in other situations, but you might want to add “verdant” metaphors to your language to add that woody feel to your role-playing. (3 OP)

SHOTEN-NO-JUTSU (WALKING VERTICAL PLANES)

Shoten-no-jutsu is an improved form of the “Ceiling-walking” (*Chikuzenjutsu*) talent from *SENGOKU* (page 114).

Legend speaks of shinobi being able to crawl like spiders or fly like birds up the most severe of surfaces to reach their goals and though a few of these shadow soldier certainly are able, by magical means, to do pretty much that, the majority of shinobi employ far more mundane, but equally ingenious methods to scale seemingly impossible walls.

Very few surfaces are actually impossible to climb and practitioners of *shoten-no-jutsu* are trained not only to locate the smallest of holds in a surface but how to exploit them with the minimum of effort. A master of the art can move so quickly and effortlessly up almost any vertical surface that it might, indeed, almost look as if he or she were simply walking up the wall.

Along with years of strength and agility training (such as climbing using only the tips of the fingers) the shinobi can call on a variety of climbing aids, such as *nekote*, grappling irons, human hair ropes (small enough to fit into a large pocket) and other gadgets.

GM Tip

For a more fantastic *chanbara* or *anime*-based campaign setting, the only really extravagant thing a GM may also wish to add is equipment that removes the need to make climbing checks, such as *kumosō no tebukoro* (spider silk gloves), a pair of specially prepared gauntlets (and shoes) which permit a shinobi to climb just as a spider, over any surface.

A shinobi must make a successful Climbing roll every minute out of combat, or every Phase in combat. The shinobi is able to travel at normal Movement rates (up to and including Sprint) both up walls and across ceilings, and is able to exert up to his normal STR while so climbing. Normal Knockback or a successful STR versus STR contest will knock the shinobi from the surface, causing him to fall. (15 OP)

“The true essence of ninjutsu and the secrets contained within can only be realized when one studies between the words of the teaching scroll”

– Ninpō proverb

SUI-TON-JUTSU (WATER TECHNIQUES)

Being able to swim is not just a matter of pride to shinobi in the Sengoku-jidai, it is a tool just as necessary as a sharp blade or a strong rope. In a world where few people can swim at all some, like the *bonge*, feel that swimming is actively dangerous while others, particularly ocean-going sailors, prefer to drown quickly in the event of going overboard in unfriendly waters.

The shinobi, however, embraces the water in the same way he embraces other aspects of nature. The water is but one of many elements in and with which the shinobi operates. Being able to swim, therefore gives a shinobi an immediate advantage when performing certain missions.

When boats, even ones at sea anchor, are not safe or when a castle's moat could not guarantee that an assassin would not get through, no-one can sleep soundly in their beds who fears the wrath of a shinobi ryū.

Historically, shinobi groups often work their mastery of water up to an almost supernatural level, taking on to themselves the personas of hideous water monsters to better strike fear into the hearts of their foes. Indeed, in the province of Omi, the shinobi who work for Oda Nobunaga out of Azuchi castle are nicknamed *suima kappa* (evil water goblins) by Niwa Nagahide, lord Oda's Master of Assassins. They were so named because they always entered or left the castle by the water gate and for often took their victims from the water itself.

Legends of the incredible feats for which shinobi are attributed when in water abound. Most of these are based, at least in part, on fact. A shinobi, for example, *can* actually walk on water very easily, employing a pair of canoe- or bucket-shaped, waterproof shoes. Large groups of shinobi can quickly cross even large bodies of water using collapsing boats. Moreover, a determined shinobi can stay under water for incredible periods of time by simply using a snorkel or a very impressive "aqua lung," which holds enough air for a half hour of careful breathing.

Shinobi are also taught to hold their breath for an extended period of time. A shinobi can hold his breath for one Phase for each point of Endurance (i.e., twice as long as a normal person is able; see **Asphyxiation and Drowning** in *SENGOKU*, page 220).

Swimming and the holding of one's breath are not the only skills taught under *Sui-ton-jutsu*. Shinobi are taught first how to enter and leave the water quietly before they are allowed to learn to swim. There is, of course, a deadly purpose to this as moving into and out of a body of water stealthily was often critically important to the success of a mission. There is no point being able to swim three miles out to a passing ship only to be shot by a sentry as you climbed up the side.

The test for this *seinyu* (quiet entry) is the ability to enter or leave a body of water without leaving so much as a ripple behind. This feat can be managed if the shinobi makes a successful Stealth roll (DN of 22; DN 18 if the water is running at all, and 14 if the water is being disturbed by other people or boats).

Shinobi possessing this talent receive a +2 bonus to the following skills when used in circumstances involving deep water: Stealth, Swimming.



In addition, shinobi practitioners of Sui-ton-jutsu may fight at no penalties while swimming or submerge. Missile weapons can not be used, however, unless specifically designed for underwater use. (A full list of equipment for use on water missions can be found in the **Equipment** section, page 69).

Characters must first purchase the Swimming skill before they can purchase this talent. (3 OP)

NEW PERKS

CONTACTS

"Sympathetic" people may be assumed to have some vague understanding of the existence of the shinobi and assist the PC's ryū out of a sense of true loyalty.

"Fearful" people may or may not know about the ryū's existence but will render assistance to the players out of fear of reprisal. The trust of these individuals is not guaranteed, however. Available to Shinobi PCs only.

Member of neutral or enemy ryū:

Jōnin (7), Soke (6), Chūnin (4 or 5, depending on ML), Genin (3), Sempai (a closer relationship with a shinobi) (+1 to usual cost)

Authority figures:

Patron/employer (9), Friendly agent (innkeeper, shop owner etc.) (2), Sympathetic Buddhist priest (4), Sympathetic shugenja (5), Sympathetic machi-bugyō (town magistrate) (6),

Note: Any of these may be taken as "fearful" patrons at half the cost (round down), but the GM will determine just how far

"Take advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness; attack him when he does not expect it; avoid his strength and strike his emptiness, and like water, none can oppose you."

—Chang Yü

their loyalty can be maintained by fear alone.

Underworld figures::

Minor bandit leader (1), Major criminal gang or boss (2). Friendly shinobi ryū member (3). Friendly shinobi ryū chūnin/supervisor (5).

Commoners:

Wealthy merchant (5), Sympathetic shop-keeper or craftsman (3), Fearful shop owner of craftsman (1).

For non-shinobi PCs only:

Shinobi sympathizer (4), Shinobi genin (5), Shinobi Chūnin (7), Shinobi Soke (9), Shinobi Jōnin (10).

MEMBERSHIP

The following is a modified ML table for ninjutsu ryū, replacing the one in the *SENGOKU* core rule book (page 85).

Shinobi Ryū ML (2 OP per level)

10	Jōnin (clan head)
9	Headman (shinobi village headman)
8	Soke (shinobi family head)
5	Chūnin (manager/go-between)
2	Genin (field operative)
1	Genin apprentice/trainee, non-genin family member

NEW KI POWERS

CLAIRVOYANCE

Shinobi clairvoyance is the power to perceive the future and events or things not normally open to the perception of mortals.

When this power is activated the player must elect to view “within” (the future) or “without” (remote viewing). If viewing within, the shinobi can view the immediate future of one person or place. How far the shinobi can see into the future is determined by the number of Ki points spent when the power is activated.

Ki	Time in future
1	1 Minute
2	5 Minutes
3	20 Minutes
4	1 Hour (½ toki)
5	6 Hours
6	1 Day
7	5 Days
8	1 Week (10 days)
9	1 Month
10	1 Season (3 months)

If the shinobi elects to view without, the shinobi may view the current events transpiring at a distant location of the shinobi’s choosing. The location may be any specific place to which the PC has some connection (GM’s discretion). Some examples of a “connection” to a place include possessing an item from the place being viewed (such as a cup from a porcelain shop), having visited the place before. The maximum distance of the location is determined by the number of Ki points put into the power when it is activated.

Ki	Max distance	Example
1	10 m (5 ken)	width of wide road
2	50 m (25 ken; 17 jō)	width of small river
3	100 m (50 ken; 33 jō)	width of wide river
4	500 m (167 jō)	Ht. of Asosan (mtn.)
5	1 km (.25 ri)	
6	5 km (1.28 ri)	
7	10 km (2.5 ri)	2x ht. of Mt. Fuji
8	50 km (12.5 ri)	Kyōto to Kobe
9	100 km (25 ri)	3 day’s walk; Ōsaka to Nogoya
10	500 km (128 ri)	Fukuoka to Ōsaka.
10	1,000 km (250 ri)	Edo to Nagasaki

The power remains active until the viewer cancels it or runs out of Ki points.

(5 OP per point of Ki usable with the power).

GENJUTSU (ILLUSION)

Historically, Genjutsu does not exist and, as such the skill has no place in a realistic setting. A little harsh you may think, especially as the more widely read may have seen the term before. Just so. Most shinobi ryū which have left us accurate records note Genjutsu as one of their arts, but also note (either implicitly or explicitly) that the term refers simply to the way in which a shinobi used his or her established skills and talents in order to make the seemingly impossible happen (vanish from sight, strike from nowhere etc.).

Only one “real” Genjutsu form has been discovered—in the Iga archives—called *senbonken* (the thousand swords), in which a group of shinobi clad in the same garb seem to appear and vanish at will so quickly as to make the targets believe that a single warrior is creating magical duplicates of himself.

In Chanbara or Anime-level games, however, the more mystical form of Genjutsu becomes wholly appropriate and the player can trawl any number of books, plays and films for examples of the art in action to help form his own character’s approach to the technique.

If the campaign includes a great deal of magic use on the part of the players, then this skill might also be a little unsuitable, as it is primarily designed to provide the “average” PC shinobi with a magical “edge” they wouldn’t normally have.

“Act as intuition dictates and you will see the secrets of ninjutsu there.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

The first thing to do is to decide exactly what your character wishes to do with his or her illusion. Bear in mind that each shinobi will only have a small number of “effects” that can be used under this skill, partly as the technique borders on magic use and partly as these illusions serve a very limited purpose in Japanese shinobi fiction—to confuse and distract an opponent in combat. The three most common “classical” effects are listed below, but you should feel free to create other types.

Historical Note

Even in the legendary Japan of *Nō*, *Kabuki*, *Ningyō Jōruri* (puppet theater) and the other theater arts, Genjutsu-skilled shinobi were few and far between. The technique was first recorded in a *Sekkyō* play by the name of *Yoshitsune Senbonken* (*Minamoto Yoshitsune and the Thousand Blades*), wherein the legendary hero Yoshitsune is forced into conflict with a group of shinobi. The leader of this ryū, known alternatively as Rikimaru (a common name for shinobi heroes and villains) or Shinichi—depending on which version of the play one sees—is possessed of Genjutsu and uses it at a critical moment to confuse Yoshitsune with an exact double of himself in order to best the great general in a fight.

In most of the plays which followed, especially when *Sekkyō* was replaced by *Jōruri* (chanting) related theater styles like *Ningyō Jōruri* and *Kabuki*, the art of Genjutsu became almost entirely the sole prerogative of the main antagonists of a story, who used the technique very effectively in the early parts of the narrative, but have it turned against them in the final act.

Few heroes in the classical sense ever possessed the skill, partly because, in Japanese folk culture, to have contact with or command over the spirit world is both polluting and indicative of an evil soul, but mostly from the fact that a protagonist in a play is meant to be able to best the villains using his own ingenuity and strength, without relying on external forces. In the few cases where a hero has, or acquires any magical knowledge, he or she will never employ it against the ultimate villain of the piece, often citing—as Jurobe, the hero of *Yochichō* (*Night Diary*) does—that “a man, who is confident in himself, needs no crutches to overcome a mountain even be he otherwise crippled!”

As shinobi myths and stories passed into the 20th century, however (especially after the Second World War), more and more writers began throwing off the conventions of the Edo period with regard to the sort of powers which a true hero could possess. Mostly as influenced by European and particularly American heroic fiction. With *manga* and *anime* characters such as *Tetsuwan Atom* (*Mighty Atom* or *Astro Boy*) possessing the most incredible skills, writers of more “historical” fiction no longer felt constrained to lock their personalities into the conservative traditions of the past. Shinobi fiction in particular became immensely popular at that time as writers were able to both create stories in a believable historical setting while including the most spectacular magical elements. As any Japanese child can tell you today, “all ninja used magic.”

Senbonken (Thousand Swords)

A shinobi employing the “thousand forms” type of illusion creates in the minds of his assailants the impression that he is surrounded by a number of duplicates of the shinobi equal to the Shinobi’s WILL x2.

These false images (seen only in the victim’s mind) cause confusion, and the victim must make a successful Perception roll (DN 22 on the first attempt, DN 18 on all subsequent attempts) to distinguish the real shinobi from the false images.

Unless and until the target is able to tell which “shinobi” is real and which are false, the shinobi gains a +5 on his first attack roll against the victim and all attacks against the shinobi are at +5 DV.

If the shinobi attacks the victim directly, whether the attack roll succeeds or fails, the illusions instantly become recognizable as such by the victim and all modifiers for the illusions cease.

Nimanzakura (Twenty Thousand Cherry Blossoms)

When using this type of illusion a swirling mass of small objects (blossom, leaves, snowflakes etc.) surrounds the target and makes it impossible for them to see clearly more than a few feet. While close combat modifiers are not affected by this illusion it’s use can conceal a shinobi’s retreat or advance and protect them from missile fire coming from the target.

Akuma fu (Devil Formed)

In this illusion the shinobi seems to grow in size and ferocity, assuming the form of a great demon, complete in every detail, from the worst nightmares of the target’s mind.

To invoke this illusion the shinobi must make a successful roll using WILL + Ninjutsu + 3d6; record this number. If successful, anyone other than another shinobi, priest or true spiritual being (demons, *kami*, etc.) is subject to a feeling of fear and dread. The shinobi rolls a number of 6-sided dice equal to his PRE + 4 and compares the total to the victim’s RES. Use the following table to determine the effect.

Exceeds victim’s	Effect
RES + 20	Victim is unable to do anything other than flee from the sight of the illusory monster.
RES + 10	Victim frightened; loses one Action.
RES	Victim is shaken and can only perform a defensive or movement Action that Phase.
<RES	No effect on victim and the illusion is diprayered.

The illusion can affect a number of victims equal to half the shinobi’s WILL (rounded up). A person must see or hear the illusion to be affected by it. No-one other than the intended victims will see or hear anything while the illusion is in place.

“Offer the enemy a bait to lure him; feign disorder and strike him.”

—Sun Tzu

If a potential victim is another shinobi or has been made aware of the fact that the shinobi possess illusory powers, they are permitted to make a Concentration roll with a DN equal to the shinobi's initial WILL + Ninjutsu roll total. If successful, the illusion is broken up as it is summoned.

This illusory power cannot be used against a victim who has broken or seen through its effect until at least one full day has passed.

Playing Genjutsu

This is a close as most shinobi get to magic, so play it up as if it were a great spiritual gift, inspiring awe, certainly not to be overused (lest its effects become weakened by complacency), but as a grand gesture at a critical moment to confuse and overbear your enemies. This Ki Power works best in a magic-poor Chanbara or Anime-level campaign and it should be treated as if it were a great and powerful prayer. As the key to this technique is secrecy, keep the possession of it as closely guarded a secret as you may.

KUJI-IN (ENERGY-FOCUSING)

Using this Ki Power a PC is able to add part of his or her internal power to any action which they take, calling on their Ki to

still their nerves, ease their spirit and sharpen their skills for the crucial moment.

The power remains active only as long as the shinobi is solely engaged in the action being focused (climbing, fighting, swimming etc.).

The shinobi gains a +1 bonus to his WILL, INT and DEX for the duration of the task for every point of Ki spent on this power when it is activated. At the conclusion of the activity (whether it is successful or not), the shinobi loses the bonus points and then suffers a loss of 1 point from each of the affected stats for one day, regardless of how many Ki points were spent.

Example: Shinichi is a shinobi, with WILL 4, INT 3, DEX 6, Climbing 4 and Evade 4. He has just stolen an important letter from a daimyō's home and is getting ready to make his escape when the fusuma slide open suddenly, leaving Shinichi face-to-face with five samurai guards! Desperately to escape, he focuses his ki and invokes the Kuji-in power, with the intent of climbing into the rafters and escaping. Shinichi's player decides to use 4 points of Ki, which boosts the aforementioned stats by +4 each. Shinichi now has the following scores: WILL 8, INT 7 and DEX 10! The temporary boost also increases his base AV with Climbing from his normal 10 (DEX+Climbing) to an impressive 14, and his DV in melee combat (DEX+Evade+10) has jumped from 20 to 24. Shinichi is going to be very difficult to hit and stands an excellent chance of getting away, thanks to his use of Kuji-in.

(5 OP for each +1 bonus)

RESTORE KI

Employing their intimate knowledge of the natural world and their place in it, masters of this power can use *kuji kiri* to draw Ki energy from the world around to restore themselves to equilibrium. With this Ki Power, a shinobi can regain spent Ki points during a game session, whereas Ki is normally only regained at the beginning of each game session (see *SENGOKU*, page 224).

A PC can only activate this power when at complete rest and in a state of mediation, requiring a serene setting and a successful Meditation roll (DN 14).

If successfully activated, this Ki Power transfers 1 point of Ki to the character from the environment around him for every 5 OP spent on this power. The effects are draining on the environment, however, and stressful to the character, as well.

The shinobi must be careful where he practices this Ki Power. If it is activated in a place not accustomed to the ebb and flow of Ki (GM's discretion) or the shinobi attempts to use it more than once in any one day, then the land around will begin to wither and die as its life essence is stolen to feed the PC's. This is considered an evil act and having done this the PC will suffer a Major Transgression and permanently lose a number of Ki equal to his PIE.

(5 OP for each +1 point of Ki restored; once/day).



"I'm not telling you to defeat the enemy, but be a man who can live. Never be enslaved by martial arts—take pleasure in them."

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

NINPŌ TAIJUTSU

NINPŌ TAIJUTSU AND OTHER MARTIAL ARTS

Ninpō taijutsu (lit. “the art of using the body”), the shinobi’s method of unarmed combat, is far less regimented and “stiff” than other martial arts of the period. *Sumai*, *jujutsu* and *atemi-waza* all teach a very specific method of performing maneuvers. In addition, the approach of each art differs.

For example, *Sumai* involves massive combatants trying to overpower each other with a combination of skill and brute strength, whereas *Atemi-waza* developed from a style used by farmers on the Ryūkyū islands (later known as Okinawa) as a way of delivering single powerful blows designed to overcome armored samurai and pirates.

In *Ninpō taijutsu*, natural movement and fluidity of motion is stressed. If you are not present when a blow of strike arrives, you are not there to receive it. Thus, the shinobi fighting style (with weapons as well as in unarmed combat) incorporates a lot of dodging, rolling and other similar maneuvers designed to evade attacks, rather than merely countering them with force.

Distance

Ma-ai, or distance, is also of importance to the shinobi in combat. A shinobi does not stay close to an opponent who is skilled at in-fighting but keeps a safe distance from them and harasses his foe with missile weapons (poisoned or otherwise), *tetsubishi* (caltrops), smoke or blinding powder, or a simple flash grenade. Nor does the shinobi maintain distance from an opponent who requires distance for his techniques.

For example, if faced with an adversary using a *yari* (spear), the shinobi should close rapidly with his opponent, so as to make the *yari* virtually useless.

Once the shinobi gains the upper hand, he can then dispatch his foe with a quick hand strike to a vulnerable area or cut his throat with a secreted small knife or poisoned *shuriken*.

Timing

Ninpō taijutsu stresses quick, decisive strikes intended to incapacitate the enemy as quickly as possible. This allows the shinobi to make good his escape rather than spending precious time battling an opponent. The longer a fight is drawn out, the greater the chance of capture, as the enemy’s reinforcements may arrive or the opponent may be a better skilled fighter and overcome the shinobi through skill or even sheer luck.

A large number of different strikes are taught, each utilizing a certain shape of the hand and designed to strike at various parts of the opponent’s body, causing the maximum damage possible with the least effort and simplest maneuvers.

NINPŌ TAIJUTSU MANEUVERS

Characters purchasing the *Ninpō Taijutsu* skill may select 12 maneuvers at no additional cost (i.e., they are “free” with the purchase of the *Ninpō Taijutsu* skill). Additional maneuvers may be purchased by shinobi who already possess the basic *Ninpō Taijutsu* skill, at a cost of 2 OP each. These may only be purchased.

Revised *Ninpō Taijutsu* Maneuvers

Dakentaijutsu (Striking, kicking and blocking)

Maneuver	AV	DV	Effect
Block (<i>Naya-shi</i>)	+2	+2	Block maneuver
Elbow strike (<i>Shuki-ken</i>)	+1	+3	STR damage
Extended knuckle strike (<i>Shikan-ken</i>)	-2	+1	STR+2d6 damage
Flying Kick (<i>Tobi-keri</i>)	-1	-1	STR+1d6 damage; Full Move maneuver
Foot strike (<i>Suko-yaku</i>)	-1	+0	STR+2d6 damage
Head Strike (<i>Kikaku-ken</i>)	-2	+2	STR+1d6 damage
Immovable fist (<i>Fudo-ken</i>)	-2	+1	STR+2d6 damage
Knee strike (<i>Sokki-ken</i>)	+0	+2	STR+1d6 damage
Open hand strike (<i>Kitan-ken</i>)	-2	+0	STR-2d6 Killing damage (to break bone)
Thumb s strike (<i>Shitan-ken</i>)	-2	+0	2d6 damage vs no Defense; 1 extra Round
Thumb strike (<i>Shito-ken</i>)	-2	+0	2d6 damage vs. no DEF; 1 extra Round
Toe strike (<i>Soku-gyaku</i>)	-2	+1	STR damage

Jutai-jutsu (Grappling, choking and escaping)

Maneuver	AV	DV	Effect
Avoid (<i>Kaiten</i>)	+0	+5	Dodge maneuver
Disarm	+0	+0	Disarm maneuver
Takedown (<i>Tomoe-nage</i>)	+1	+0	Grab; both fall
Throw (<i>Nagare</i>)	+0	+0	Grab and throw

Koshijutsu (Killing Strikes)

Maneuver	AV	DV	Effect
Claw strike (<i>Shako ken</i>)	-1	-1	STR-2d6 Killing dmg
Finger needle strike (<i>Shishin ken</i>)	-1	-2	STR-2d6 Killing dmg

Available only to *Gyokkyo ryū* shinobi.

Taihenjutsu (Silent movement, Rolling, Leaping and Tumbling)

Maneuver	AV	DV	Effect
Leap	+0	+5	Dodge; Move
Roll (<i>Ukemi</i>)	+0	+0	Breakfall; roll out of Throws/ Knockdowns

“For taijutsu, the flexibility of the legs is the most important factor, not the strength of the legs.”

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

SHINOBI-MIKKYŌ (SHINOBI MAGIC)

Shinobi-mikkyō is the culmination of ninpō mysticism into what can be called (for lack of a better term) ninpō “magic.” In this section we will discuss the foundations of Shinobi-mikkyō (which is restricted to shinobi characters) and its effects in game terms.

Whereas the teachings of mikkyō among the Tendai and Shingon sects of Buddhism are part of an elaborate religion, complete with complex rituals and other ornate trappings, Shinobi-mikkyō teachings are far more fundamentalist and connected with the flow of the natural world in their views and practices, which is to say that shinobi concern themselves more with a working set of principles, or laws, which chart and delineate the original universal of cause and effect.

The genuine shinobi mystic realizes his oneness with the universe. It is not that he, himself, is great, but rather, it is the universe itself, which the mystic a part of, that is supreme.

The focusing of energies to effect the “magic” of Shinobi-mikkyō involves the intertwining of the fingers into spiritually powerful mystic symbols. These symbols will be discussed later. First, we shall delve into the theories behind Shinobi-mikkyō.

Is Shinobi-mikkyō Real?

It should be understood, however, that (much like Genjutsu and Ki Powers) Shinobi-mikkyō is presented as an optional “shinobi school of magic,” and its inclusion in the game is entirely the GM’s decision. The descriptions of Shinobi-mikkyō traditions and “prayers” should not be taken as historically accurate, though we have tried to remain as true to the concepts of Shinobi-mikkyō as possible. Rather, Shinobi-mikkyō magic in *SENGOKU* is our interpretation of the ancient traditions into game terms.

ELEMENTS OF SHINOBI-MIKKYŌ

To better understand the concepts and functioning of Ninpō-mikkyō we must explore its root concepts.

Tantra

At the heart of Shinobi-mikkyō is the *Tantra*. A concept transferred from Tibetan Buddhism, the Tantra is an expression of one’s ability to work with energy by spiritual means. It takes years of preparation, meditation and practice to attain this level of ability. Thus, only shinobi characters, having been born into the ninpō way of life, are allowed to be practitioners of Shinobi-mikkyō.

Entering Tantra is a form of enlightenment, a period in which one moves from *knowing* wisdom to *being* wisdom. In (or through) Tantra, the shinobi does not suppress or destroy en-

ergy, but rather he transforms or transmutes it. The practitioner of Tantra sees things as they are. There is no longer any duality or division. The “one” is no longer split into the “ten thousand things” that the unenlightened perceive. The shinobi sees through the complicated fabric of “reality” to the basest of things; he sees the stoneness of stones and the wateriness of water. Form itself does not exist; only truth exists.

Within Tantra there are five basic categories of energy. Not unlike Chinese concepts of *feng shui*, each type of tantric energy is associated with a particular aspect of the awakened mind, geography, color, season and direction. The types of energy are listed below. Simply stated, Tantra is about taking facts of everyday life, such as anger or jealousy, and releasing the energy inherent in them. Rather than being taken in and becoming a part of the emotion or repressing it, the shinobi learns to transmute it.

Vajra: *Vajra* is associated with anger and is transmuted into mirror-like wisdom. Vajra is also associated with water, the color white, the East, dawn and Winter. When water flows over a smooth surface, completely covering the surface, the surface can yet still be seen because the water is transparent. In the same way, Vajra intelligence is complete, thorough, yet almost invisible. This can also describe the shinobi’s intelligence-gathering techniques, neh? This is not mere coincidence.

Prayers associated with Vajra deal with clarity of thought and perception, wisdom, death and renewal.

Ratna: *Ratna* energy is associated with pride and is transmuted into the “wisdom of equanimity.” Ratna is also associated with earth, the colors gold, amber and saffron, South, mid-morning and Autumn. With Ratna energy comes chi (earth) awareness, or the awareness of the stability or solidity of earth. It is an awareness that is so strong that there is no fear of it being lost; thus, Ratna embodies fearlessness and the ability to neutralize the negative energy in an attacker.

Padma: *Padma* energy is associated with passion, or the desire to obtain. It is transmuted into “discriminating awareness.” Padma is also associated with fire, the color red, the West, and early Spring. Discarding desire is a fundamental aspect of ninpō, and it allows the shinobi to more clearly see things around him.

Prayers associated with Padma deal with perception of differences between things, encouragement and directing of the dynamic forces of received stimuli.

Karma: *Karma* energy is associated with jealousy and envy. Karma energy is transmuted into the “wisdom of all-accomplishing action.” Karma is further associated with wind, the color green, the North, dusk and Summer. In a sense, through karma energy the shinobi is able to view a situation, immediately see what may result in the future because of the present, and be guided to appropriate action. Karma energy allows the shinobi to “fulfill the purpose,” so to speak.

Buddha: *Buddha* energy is associated with dullness, and it is transmuted into “all-encompassing space.” It is also associated with the “foundation” of things (i.e., void), the color blue, and the spacious quality of the sky. This form of energy is the “elusive elements” which gives rise to all other elements. It is the ocean that exists in all waves; Buddha energy activates all other forms of energy.

“Supernatural power is not a skill or trick. It exists in your heart, in your sincerity. Religion is the same, too.”

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

Tantric Energy Associations

Energy	Mind	Element	Direction	Season	Colors
Vajra	Anger	Water	East	Winter, dawn	White
Ratna	Pride	Earth	South	Autumn, mid-morn	Gold, amber, saffron
Padma	Passion	Fire	West	Spring	Red
Karma	Jealousy, envy	Wind	North	Summer, dusk	Green
Buddha	Dullness	Void	Open sky	—	Blue

In-Yo

The shinobi's concept of *in* and *yo* ("yin and yang" in Chinese) are not in terms of "positive" and "negative," but in terms of two different but complimentary parts of the whole. By understanding to totality of the universe and every situation in which the shinobi finds himself, he is able to effect the transmutations of the cosmic energy to effect his will. This is the understanding with which the shinobi "causes" magic to happen.

The Five Elements

As we have seen, Shinobi-mikkyō borrows theories from several different philosophies. Among them is the five universal elements theory. The elements to which this theory are attributed are *Chi* (Earth), *Sui* (Water), *Ka* (Fire), *Fu* (Wind) and *Ku* (Void, or emptiness). The universal elements are listed below

Chi: Chi represents the earth and corresponds to the bones, teeth, muscles and other "solid" parts of the body.

Sui: Sui represents water, and corresponds to bodily fluids and the parts of the body that enhance flexibility.

Ka: Ka represents fire and corresponds to one's metabolism; it symbolizes the ability to transform (or transmute) elements into an energy-releasing state.

Fu: Fu represents wind and corresponds to breathing.

Ku: Ku represents the void or emptiness, and corresponds to one's ability to communicate.

Another five element theory, found in Chinese healing and medicine, is *gogyo*—five elements transformation. Go-gyo incorporates a different set of elements, namely: Earth, Water, Wood, Fire and Metal.

Go-gyo has two processes inherent in the theory: the creative process and the destructive process. Each element consists of a constructive quality and a destructive one. Thus, each process follows a different, though cyclical, "path" through the elements. Each element's constructive and destructive aspect is listed below.

Earth: Earth represents solidifying energy (ashes return to the earth). *Constructive:* Earth gives rise to metal (hardness), as ash and earth compress to form rock. *Destructive:* Earth cancels water (sinking energy), like a dam stopping up water.

Water: Water represents sinking energy. *Constructive:* Water gives rise to wood (rising energy). *Destructive:* Water cancels evasive, free-moving energy, thus destroying fire.

Wood: Wood represents growing, swelling, rising or upward-moving energy. *Constructive:* Wood gives rise to or "feeds" fire



(free dissipated energy). *Destructive:* Wood destroys or breaks up the earth (like seedlings sprouting and breaking through the ground).

Fire: Fire represents dissipated energy. *Constructive:* Dissipated energy comes together to form earth (solidifying energy). *Destructive:* Fire melts metal, rendering hard energies ineffective.

Metal: Metal symbolizes hardness (earth compresses to form rock). *Constructive:* Metal or hardness cracks and gives rise to sinking energy (Water), much like erosion eventually breaks down the hardest of rocks. *Destructive:* Metal destroys wood (like an ax chopping down a tree), thus stopping growing energy.

These theories form the foundation of Chinese "elemental magic," which is partially incorporated into Shinobi-mikkyō. In both elemental theories, each element refers to both a "state" and a "process." It is important to understand, however, that the elements are symbolic or metaphoric representation of the aspects of things; the elements should not be taken literally.

Taizokai and Kongokai

Another way to divide the "one" of things is to categorize things into *Taizokai* (material) and *Kongokai* (cosmic) aspects. It is a fundamental way of viewing things and, whereas the in-yo philosophy is closer to the "ten thousand things" in its view, this view is philosophically closer to the "one." The shinobi is able to view things as the material, human being, with his feet firmly rooted in the physical realm. At the same time, the shinobi is able to view reality with the "mind and eyes of god" (*shin-shin shin-gan*).

"The winds of shinobi mold me. They disappear after shaping my body and leave me like a wreck on a wild ocean."
—Hatsumi Masaaki

SANMITSU

Sanmitsu is the concept of empowering thought, word and deed (in a psychic or mystic sense) in order to effect the realization of one's intentions. The ability to effect one's intentions upon the "real" world is manifest in seemingly coincidental occurrences; no outward manifestation of magic is evident—no fireworks, glowing energy, or the like. Instead, the thought, or intention, occurs within the shinobi's mind at the same time that the (apparently coincidental effect) occurs outwardly.

Of course, it *seems* coincidental to the casual or untrained observer, because the events occur simultaneously in two realms—the psychic or spiritual realm and the material realm. In fact, the two realms are one, being part of the same universe; they only *appear* to be separated by time, space and ether because that is the way most people are trained to see them. The shinobi knows this is not the case and, as we mentioned before, is able to see the totality of things.

To generate power in Shinobi-mikkyō, the shinobi incorporates three elements, which are used in combination. These are: *Jumon*, *Nenriki* and *Ketsu-in*. Each is described below.

Jumon

Jumon ("mantra" in Chinese) are sacred or "charged" words. These "power words" symbolize intellect, and when spoken aloud transform the shinobi's thought into word.

Some readers may recognize "mantra" as a term for chanting during Buddhist meditation. The meaning is similar, except that the shinobi need recite only a single word one time to achieve the desired effect, unlike the Buddhist in meditation, who repeats a sutra over and over again.

The following Jumon contains the "nine power words of ninpō" (and may be well known to fans of ninja films and anime): *Rin*, *Pyo*, *Tō*, *Sha*, *Kai*, *Jin*, *Retsu*, *Sai*, *Zen* (these will be discussed in more detail below). It should be noted that there are other Jumon in the shinobi repertoire, as well, and that all of these jumon are highly guarded secrets.

Nenriki

Nenriki ("mandala" in Chinese) is a pictorial representation of the structure of the universe, usually in the form of a painting or similar illustration. The *Nenriki* is a symbolic expression of totality, and serves as an aid to the shinobi's concentrated intention. Thus, the *Nenriki* symbolizes the will, and corresponds to the "thought" aspect of *Sanmitsu*.

There are two important *Nenriki* in ninpō: the left-hand or "material womb realm" *Nenriki* (*Taizokai Nenriki*) and the right-hand or "diamond spiritual realm" *Nenriki* (*Kongokai Nenriki*). Though seemingly different, like *in-yo*, they compliment each other. The shinobi seeks a view of the universe in its totality (the *Kongokai Nenriki*) as well as awareness in the "real" world (*Taizokai Nenriki*).

Ketsu-in

Ketsu-in ("mudra" in Chinese) are the special hand posturing of Shinobi-mikkyō that each contain wisdom teachings and rep-

resent the channeling of subtle psychic energies. The *Ketsu-in* of Shinobi-mikkyō evolved from the *Ketsu-in* of esoteric Indian, Tibetan and Chinese *mikkyō* (Buddhist spiritual traditions).

The hands are powerful symbols, as they represent the ability to create tools as well as the ability to "reach out." In addition, Chinese (and Japanese) medicine teaches that the 12 meridians, or "energy channels," all run through the hands.

The *Ketsu-in* symbolize the physical action and are associated with "deed" in *Sanmitsu*. There is a separate *Ketsu-in* hand posture for each *Jumon*, or power word, known to the Shinobi-mikkyō practitioner.

Each hand represents one of the two aspects in each of the following complimentary pairings, with the left hand representing the first and the right hand the second: *Taizokai Kongokai*; *in-yo*; negative-positive; inner-outer; Moon-Sun; temporal reality-ultimate (or cosmic) reality; sentient beings-kami; healing-power; arresting the active mind-realization of pure knowledge; and receiving-coming forth.

Clasping the hands in any one of the *Ketsu-in* symbolizes unification, wholeness and totality.

Each of the five fingers on the hand further represents one of the elements (see **The Five Elements**, above); the finger on the left hand representing the inner aspect of the element and the finger on the right hand representing the outer aspect.

Little finger: The little finger symbolizes *chi*, or earth. Its quality is stability, and is represented by the physical body, rocks, and so on.

Ring finger: The ring finger symbolizes *sui* (water). Its quality is adaptability, and it is represented by emotions, plants and the like.

Middle finger: The middle finger symbolizes *ka* (fire). Its quality is aggression or assertion, and it is represented by animals and intellect.

Index finger: The index finger symbolizes *fu* (wind). Its quality is benevolence, and is represented by mankind and wisdom.

Thumb: The thumb symbolizes *ku* (void or nothingness). Its quality is creativity, and it is represented by the ether (from which all things are created) and communication.

Each of the *ketsu-in* has its own *Jumon* sequence; that is, each hand posture has its own power word (or words) which are used in conjunction to achieve the desired effect.

Nine

The number nine is a symbol of great power to the shinobi. Nine represents the nine levels of growth or advancement in ninpō training and awareness. In addition (and possibly of more importance), the number nine represents completion—completion of task, realization of knowledge or fulfillment of intent.

Kuji Goshin Ho

The "nine syllable method of protection," known as *kuji goshin ho*, is one method of realizing *Sanmitsu*. The nine *Jumon* and nine *Ketsu-in* (*kuji-in*, or "nine syllable seals") of *kuji goshin ho* are described here, along with their general aspects.

Rin: This *Ketsu-in* (hand form) represents the Vajra thunderbolt of Tibetan Buddhism. The thunderbolt symbolizes the de-

"If one mistakes spiritual enlightenment for self-satisfaction, one unconsciously starts adhering to one's desires, playing by turns the parts of a beast and human being in life."

—Hatsumi Masaaki

struction of ignorance and the creation of an inner state which manifests the power of wisdom and pure knowledge. A shinobi often uses this Ketsu-in when facing a threatening and possibly overpowering force in order to increase his strength and summon energy required for the shinobi's success.

Pyo: The hand posture utilized with this power word is known as *daikongo-in* (“the great diamond”). The diamond is considered the most precious of jewels, spiritually speaking. The diamond symbolizes the knowledge that reaches beyond the mundane realm, and it allows the shinobi to realize personal power by tapping the level of consciousness needed to allow them to succeed.

Tō: The Ketsu-in accompanying this *Jumon* (power word) is called *shotojishi-in* (“sign of the outer lion”). This hand posture helps the shinobi to evoke the ability to connect with and follow the cosmic patterns of the universe; i.e., knowledge is evoked and channeled.

Sha: The hand posture associated with this power word is called *Uchijishi-in* (“Sign of the Inner Lion”). The “inner lion” is associated with our physical bodies; in particular it is associated with the various chemical processes and one's “aura” of energy. It brings the shinobi into a greater, more positive relationship with the physical body. Through *tō*, the shinobi is able to fully actualize his body's potential and gain inner alignment; thus this is most often used for healing.

Kai: The *gebakuken-in* (“Sign of the Outer Bonds Fist”) is the hand posture that symbolizes the breaking of the bonds of passion which bind (and blind) us. When used with this power word, it heightens the shinobi's awareness and raises his conscious state, making the shinobi more sensitive to the approach or presence of danger.

Jin: The *naibakuken-in* (“Sign of the Inner Bonds Fist”) is the hand posture that symbolizes the shattering of the bonds of our disbelief in anything beyond the physical realm. It helps the shinobi to realize cosmic consciousness and true intuition. This translates into the shinobi “seeing with the eyes of god” and knowing intuitively what others—especially adversaries—are thinking, as well as opening the shinobi's mind to thought projection.

Retsu: With *chiken-in* (“Sign of the Wisdom Fist”) the shinobi holds the index finger of his left hand with his right hand, symbolically enveloping and protecting the qualities of mankind, wisdom, wind and benevolence. This gesture stresses man's oneness with the spiritual realm. When used with this power word, the shinobi is able to astrally project himself and draw upon knowledge from distant places and times to aid in the present.

Zai: Together with the *Nichirin-in Jumon*, *zai* symbolizes the final oneness with the universe, the point at which the shinobi's mind fully realizes that the Taizokai and Kongokai realms are truly one. Through *zai*, the shinobi is able to control and alter matter through sheer force of will.

Zen: The last of a progressive series of nine power words, *zen* symbolizes protection of the wisdom imparted to the Shinobimikkyō practitioner from those of lesser mind, as well as from those who might attack the holder of such wisdom. When coupled with the proper *Jumon*, *zen* allows the shinobi to become invisible to his enemies, in a spiritual sense; the shinobi

sheds any appearance of possessing spiritual knowledge, specifically ninpō teachings. This is so that the shinobi may maintain and impart that knowledge to others without hindrance from the “unenlightened.”

USING PRAYERS

Practitioners of Shinobimikkyō must purchase the Mystic talent (see *SENGOKU*, page 113) in order to make use of any Shinobimikkyō prayers.

Using or uttering a prayer requires the incorporation of all three aspects of Sanmitsu: *Jumon* (a power word), *Nenriki* (an illustration or visualization of the universe) and a *Ketsu-in* (hand posture).

If a Shinobimikkyō practitioner is unable to accomplish the *Jumon* (spoken words) and *Ketsu-in* (gestures), they are unable to effect the realization of their intent. In other words, the shinobi must speak, think and gesture successfully for the prayer to be effective. Thus, if a shinobi is gagged and bound, they are powerless (mystically speaking).

The power words and hand postures work only for the Shinobimikkyō practitioner. Their use by the uninitiated (if they were ever to learn of them) would have no benefit whatsoever. The kind of knowledge and wisdom contained in Shinobimikkyō is such that it can only be transmitted from teacher to student; the best written or illustrated teaching manual can serve to reveal the word or action, but not the “true wisdom” necessary to channel the mystic energies.

Special Bonuses

Activity or Item	Modifier
Gikan-ryū shinobi	+1 AV
Performing shinobi-specific prayer	+1 AV
Performing while not in a state of seishin	-2 AV
Performing within ryū holdings	+1 level of effect

SHINOBI-MIKKYŌ PRAYERS

Some of the prayers available to shinobi mystics are included in the *SENGOKU* core rule book. They are listed on the prayer list at the end of each section, but they are not described here.

Those prayers which are new or available exclusively to Shinobimikkyō practitioners are described below. There are very few Shinobimikkyō-specific prayers, indeed. This is partly to reflect that Shinobimikkyō is simply an alternate way of securing aid from the powers of creation (Shinobimikkyō itself derives from a combination of Buddhist and native power centers), but partly because most ryū (with the exception of the Gikan) have very little need of, or access to, Shinobimikkyō.

GMs should feel free to create their own specific prayers, but we ask them to remember a couple of things.

First, shinobi are already very potent characters and to give them as much access to magic as other mystic PCs not only

“Ninja live in a protected wind. The wind runs directly into the flames, fans them, climbs to the heavens, and gathers great skills. The wind kami bestows honor and good fortune.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

devalues the roles of those archetypes (*shugenja*, *onmyōji* etc.), but risks unbalancing the shinobi themselves. Secondly, care should be taken not to duplicate the effects of an established shinobi ability with a prayers. This may sound silly, but—if only from a historical perspective—the skills are what the shinobi are all about and the Shinobi-mikkyō elements are only icing on the cake.

VAJRA

The Cries of the Dead

Casting Time: 1 hour

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

The violent death of a person leaves an almost indelible stain on the Whole around it affecting the nature of the world and causing minor disturbances in the flow of energy around the site (even if the body has been removed).

A shinobi who successfully casts this prayer can either use the disturbances he or she perceives to locate the sight of even a buried body (if less than a week dead) or can attempt to read the information present at a site of violent death, viewing the incident as if from the point of view of a detached, ghostly, observer.

Each level of the prayer gives the shinobi 100 feet of range. When used to read the information at the scene of death, each level will extend the amount of information (visible, audible etc.) received by the shinobi—the GM should tell the player one pertinent fact for each level of skill with Shinobi-mikkyō (with a critical success revealing an amount of extra information points equal to caster's PIE and critical failure revealing misleading information).

Example: Keiko knows the Mama-san Ito was killed before for some information she possessed, but wishes to find out more about the slaying. As she has a level of 3 with this prayer, when she casts it successfully, the GM tells her three facts: that she was slain by a foreign hand; the deceased saw long flowing blonde hair and the image of a lion wearing a crown.

Harmonious Mind, Directed Body

Casting Time: 5 minutes

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

Placing the shinobi into a state of guided meditation, this prayer attunes the shinobi's thoughts to the demands of the physical world to such a degree that, while the prayer is active, the shinobi's skills are enhanced incredibly. The Shinobi selects one primary stat and increases it by +1 for every two levels (round up) he has in that prayer.

The duration is one Round per level in the prayer. A critical success results in the duration of the prayer becoming one minute per level in the prayer. A critical failure results in half the prayer level being reduced from the stat in question, with any stat reduced to 0 meaning the shinobi is totally unable to act—lost in a world of his own—for the duration of the prayer.

The Wings of Thought

Casting Time: 1 minute

Level: 4

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

When invoking this prayer, a shinobi doesn't actually sprout wings nor does he gain the ability to fly in any great degree. The shinobi is able to manipulate his body weight, however, to the point of becoming almost as light as air.

It can be used to aid climbing even the sheerest of surfaces (reducing the DN), it can assist jumping (extending any leap by x10; but watch out for strong winds) and even in walking silently (a lighter step is quieter one). While in this state, however, the shinobi lacks mass, causing his STR to be temporarily reduced to 1.

Vajra-type prayers from the *SENGOKU* rules book: *Detect Enchantment, Empathy for the Dead, Form of Smoke, Heal Wounds, The Open Eye, Oracle.*

RATNA

The Pillars of the World / The Hand of Amitaba:

Casting Time: 5 minutes

Level: Varies (5 Maximum)

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

The hand of Buddha is everywhere, encompassing every aspect, form, shape, concept and thought in creation and no-one is without its protection—not even the great Monkey King, Son Goku. A shinobi who accepts this universal truth can gain protective power from knowing that they stand firmly in Amitaba's hand, employing that strength to fend off forces which would otherwise harm them.

While the prayer is in effect all sources of damage are reduced by a number of dice equal to the level at which the prayer is cast. A critical success means that damage is reduced by two dice per level, while a critical failure means the shinobi has attracted the disfavor of Amitaba, receiving one extra dice of damage in each attack against them until an *Atonement* is made. Duration is one minute per level of prayer.

1000 Eyes

Casting Time: 10 Minutes

Level: 3

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

This incantation enhances the awareness of a shinobi to such a degree that it makes them, in effect impossible to surprise and give them the ability to move and fight effectively in environments where they would normally be at a disadvantage (in blinding smoke, total darkness etc.).

Once cast, anyone attempting to surprise or ambush the shinobi will have the DN increased by two times the level of the prayer cast, while an attempt to ambush someone by the shinobi who

“When [the enemy] concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him.”

—Sun Tzu

has cast the prayer will have their DN reduced by the prayer level.

Moreover, a successful use of the prayer will result in all negative sight modifiers for darkness, blindness and so on being negated as long as the shinobi can still hear (deafening sound will negate this effect and poison, irritant or other effects of chemical based blindness will not be countered with this prayer).

Walk as the Air

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Level: 3

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

With a successful casting of this prayer the shinobi is able to exploit their “oneness” with the natural world to such a degree that they become functionally invisible to everyone around them who is not so attuned.

They are not actually in a state of true invisibility, but have become so much an ordinary part of the surroundings that no-one will react to their presence. No-one, that is, except possibly another shinobi (allow a Perception roll, DN 26) or others who know this prayer (Perception roll, DN 18).

The duration is the prayer’s level in minutes. Any damage suffered by a shinobi in this state will be doubled. The duration of the effect is one Round per level of the prayer.

Ratna-type prayers from the SENGOKU rules book: *Exorcism, Fire Armor, Protection from Poison, Purification, Purify Water, Winds from Heaven.*

PADMA

Living Dreams

Casting Time: 5 minutes.

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

Working within a shinobi’s mind, this prayer is capable of drawing out thoughts, dreams and desires and making them whole and solid of form. The prayer can effectively create any item of average quality with which the shinobi is familiar enough to visualize correctly. Even a complex item can be drawn out of the shinobi’s dreams if he is sufficiently aware of its nature. Reactive chemicals, poisons, explosives, and so on, cannot be so conjured, however.

For example, while a shinobi might be able to summon up a Teppō, he certainly would not be able to conjure black powder for it.

Items summoned by this prayer are not considered magical or enchanted in any way, insofar as their use or effects. Copied items are identical to the originals in every way and require a Perception roll (DN 22) to spot the difference between the two items (DN 26 if the original item is not available for comparison).

Note: People and animals cannot be fashioned in this way, other than as life-like mannequins.

Duration is one hour per level of prayer.

To See Beyond

Casting Time: 5 Minutes.

Level: Varies (2 Min)

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

All that is seen and unseen are part of the Whole. When successfully intoned, this prayer allows the shinobi to see things as they truly are. The shinobi to see through illusions and physical disguises to the true nature of things beneath. It does not allow the detection of secret doors, traps or other inanimate objects, but will allow the shinobi to see the invisible, detect spirits and all other sentient beings which walk the earth in a form other than their true self.

The duration of the prayer is 1 minute at level two, moving one rank down the Time Chart (see *SENGOKU*, page 232) for each level of prayer.

The Mountain is No Barrier

Casting Time: 5 minutes

Level: 4

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

When a shinobi accepts that all in the world are one and exist in the same moment in time and space, they are able, with the use of this prayer, to execute a basic form of translocation, moving through solid objects, over empty spaces and the like.

When this prayer is cast the shinobi can “walk” to their desired destination as if they were moving normally and cannot be harmed physically (though they can be seen) while under the effects of this prayer.

They can attack mentally or magically while translocating. Should they lose control of their power at that time they will become lost to the mundane world until another shinobi casts the same prayer to draw them out.

Duration is a number of Rounds equal to the level of prayer.

Padma-type prayers from the SENGOKU rules book: *Know Language, Know the Flow of Time, Sense Disruption of Wa, Write Scroll.*

KARMA

The Judgment of Naija

Casting Time: 30 Minutes

Level: 4

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

This prayer summons to the shinobi’s aid one of the Seven Buddhist Guardians of Heaven, *Naija* (pr. “nai-YA”) the son of General Kwan and the guardian of the Karmic Wheel itself.

If successful, the shinobi is permitted to put one question to *Naija* regarding a potential path which the shinobi wishes to take (an action, a journey etc.) and the Bodhisatva will attempt to answer the question based on all the facts presented to him.

This is not a divination prayer, but simply a request by the shinobi of a power, known for his insight and wisdom, on an issue of choice.

“What is difficult about maneuver is to make the devious route the most direct and to turn misfortune to advantage.”

—Sun Tzu

Shinobi should be wary of Najja, however. His advice is always sound but never perfect (for he will never know all the variables of a given situation). But failure to heed his admonitions will result in the shinobi who cast the prayer becoming polluted and requiring an atonement ritual to appease him.

Center of the Whirlwind

Casting Time: 5 Minutes

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

Becoming totally still and centered on themselves, shinobi who have mastered this prayer can call expand their senses many times over, tying them into the world around to receive information of all that walks in the area of effect. Seeing through eyes of animals, listening to the voices of the wind the shinobi will know of anything that is out of place in the natural environment while in this state—artifacts lying discarded (though not buried), people, damage to the environment and so on.

On a successful casting the shinobi is exposed to a number of stimuli (knowing direction and distance from them) equal to his level in the prayer—at a range of 100 feet per prayer level. Unless the shinobi makes a request to locate a specific object or person, which the shinobi must have had some contact with (raising the DN to 24), the GM should determine how many “random” events will show up before the item being sought (1d6). The shinobi may well come up with no useful information.

Example: Keiko is certain that an enemy shinobi she has been pursuing and an unknown accomplice are hiding somewhere in the system of caves she is in. Focusing on their location she attempts to specifically locate the shinobi, hoping that she will also find the other person (being unable to fix on them directly) in the process. With her Mikkyō being at 6 and her prayer level at 5 she decides to attempt a level 5 search and, succeeding her roll, the GM notes that she has pinned down the Shinobi's location but (after rolling 1d6—counting the shinobi as the first piece of information—and getting a 5) he judges that Keiko could not filter the location of the other person out of the background stimuli.

Minds in Harmony

Casting Time: 5 Minutes per Shinobi involved in the prayer

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

Using this prayer a shinobi Mikkyō may connect his or her mind with that of a number of other shinobi (up to his or her prayer level) in a web of telepathic communication and sharing of skills. Under its influence any shinobi may not only communicate freely with the other members in the group but also—with the permission of another—act through the body of another agent to accomplish a skill check (but at a -1 AV).

The duration of the prayer is 5 minutes per level of prayer.

Example: Keiko Shinbe and Junko plan to infiltrate the base of the evil merchant Gorobe, but intend to do it individually. So

Keiko casts a level 3 Minds in Harmony (not only to give them communication, but because Junko's lock smithing skills might be useful for all concerned). Having succeeded, the group know that they have 15 minutes of free action together, which will be more than enough to get inside.

Karma-type prayers from the SENGOKU rules book: *Chant, Light From Heaven*

BUDDHA

Ride the Flowing Stream

Casting Time: 5 minutes

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

When a person is, as most shinobi are, perfectly centered in the world, they possess the power not only employ the energy which binds the Whole together, but also are so aware of how that energy flows to be able to counter its effects, to some degree, when it is directed at them in a violent way.

While this prayer is in effect, all prayers, Ki powers and other spiritual energy attacks have their DN raised by a number equal to twice the level of the shinobi's prayer skill.

Moreover, if the shinobi selects a single source when the prayer is cast (e.g. fire elemental, ghostly touch etc.) then the DN to affect the Shinobi is raised by two times the prayer level. The duration of the prayer is one round per level of prayer.

Kannon's Golden Embrace

Casting Time: 5 Minutes

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō

Calling on the *Boddhisatva* of Mercy, the shinobi who successfully casts this prayer will cause his target to become totally peaceful, forgetting all aggressive thoughts and—until the prayer effect ends—be content to do nothing (unless physically touched, robbed, attacked etc.) to hinder the caster of the prayer.

After the prayer has been cast, a second contested roll is made using the shinobi's prayer level as a stat vs. The victim's WILL, with success resulting in the target becoming passive for the duration of the prayer and coming round from his or her reverie with no knowledge of what has happened (unless evidence is still present to remind them).

Duration is one Round per level of prayer.

Example: Keiko wants to get past a single guard with her rescued kidnap victim, but does not wish to harm him or give any sign to others that she has passed this way. Casting Kannon's Golden Embrace as level 3 successfully, she has just enough time to scurry past the enraptured sentry and hide her charge beyond the post before the guardian comes round not realizing that a shinobi has just carried his lord's prisoner under his very nose.

“An army without secret agents is exactly like a man without eyes or ears.”

—Chia Lin

Invitation to the Mighty

Casting Time: 15 Minutes

Level: Varies

Available to: Shinobi-mikkyō, Shugendō and Shintō

Spirits, Bodhisattva and the ancestors all provide a degree of comfort and power to any who revere them, but this prayer allows a practitioner to summon aid directly from one or more of the great beings which inhabit the various heavens and hells.

If the prayer is successfully intoned, any skill (even ones which the caster does not possess), stats and talents can be called into being through the “possession” of a spirit. Though more than one skill, stat or talent may be increased in this way, each requested increase makes the practitioner more like the spirit they are being possessed by and will often act as the spirit would if physically present.

Example: Keiko wishes to open a lock, but has lost her tools. She decides that the aid of Son Goku—The monkey King— is called for and decides to cast an Invitation to him at level 3, to increase her TECH by 2 and her Lockpicking skill by 1. Succeeding in the roll she quickly picks the the lock but quickly

loses interest in it afterwards and decides to take a quick nap. Duration is equal to the level of prayer in rounds.

Example Spirits

Son Goku—The Monkey King. Can increase physical stats and fighting / subterfuge skills. Prone to laziness, drinking, womanizing and petulance.

Emperor Chin Shi—The first Chinese Emperor. Can increase mental stats and any military or strategy skills. Arrogant, willful, boorish and bigoted.

Kannon—The Bodhisattva of mercy. Can increase mental stats, healing skills and magical powers. Totally pacifistic and compassionate. Will not kill.

Ame no Uzume no Mikoto no Kami—The Heavenly Dancing Maid of Amaterasu. Will increase only DEX and craft skills (at 2 points per prayer level). High spirited, prone to singing and loves to dance.

Buddha-type prayers from the SENGOKU rules book: *Atonement, Breath Life.*

SHINOBI PRAYER LIST

Spells from this book are listed in italics.

Vajra

The Cries of the Dead

Detect Enchantment

Empathy for the Dead

Form of Smoke

Harmonious Mind, Directed Body

Heal Wounds

The Open Eye

Oracle

The Wings of Thought

Ratna

1,000 Eyes

Exorcism

Fire Armor

The Pillars of the World / The Hand of Amitaba

Protection from Poison

Purification

Purify Water

Walk As the Air

Padma

Know Language

Know the Flow of Time

Living Dreams

The Mountain is No Barrier

To See Beyond

Sense Disruption of Wa

Write Scroll

Karma

Chant

Center of the Whirlwind

The Judgment of Naija

Light from Heaven

Minds in Harmony

Buddha

Atonement

Breathe Life

Invitation to the Mighty

Kannon's Golden Embrace

Ride the Flowing Stream

SHINOBI CLANS



Records show there have been 73 ninjutsu ryū throughout history.

In this section we present two ninjutsu ryū—the Iga and Kōga. Each entry includes background information about the ryū, its families, political and geographical sphere of influence, and its allies and enemies.

Also included for each ryū is a character template, for those who wish to create a shinobi character from that ryū. The template should be used in lieu of the caste and profession templates presented in the *SENGOKU* core rule book.

Lastly, under each ryū description we present several notable personalities associated with that ryū. Note that these personalities are presented in historical context, although their abilities and skills are designed for Chanbara-level games.

This template has been built with a base of 40 CP in characteristics and 40 OP in skills, and includes the Hinin Caste Package and Everyman skills. Additional OP for complications have also been spent. To customize this character, simply spend the additional points listed below, depending on the level of the campaign you are playing in. You may also take up to 50 OP worth of additional complications to spend on perks, talents, skills or okuden.

Campaign

Level	Char	Skills*
Historic	5	5
Chanbara	20	20
Anime	35	35

*(may also be spent on okuden, perks or talents)

We have printed two ready-to-play Historic-level characters and two Chanbara-level characters in the back of this book (one each from the Iga and Kōga ryū).

GMs desiring Historic-level NPCs should reduce the stats and skills by 2 points each (minimum of 1). Characters marked with an asterisk (*) represent historical figures.

NPCs marked with a “†” represent shinobi from the clan’s own mythology and those marked with a “‡” are invented NPCs with no historical or legendary connections at all.

Within each ryū description, the GM will find a genealogy for the clan (called a *kazu*) and as much accurate historical data as can be located on the group. Also, where appropriate or required, can be found a section concerning the myths and legends associated with the clan as well as a fictionalized account of the ryū’s development combining elements from both histories.

Finally, though as much care as possible has been taken in researching the history of each ryū, very little is known about shinobi ryū—with the possible exception of Iga, Kōga and Togakure—prior to the beginning of the Tokugawa period.

Wherever possible, names, dates (which must all be considered approximate) and deeds have been taken from extant Japanese sources. Because most groups either possess no history or many conflicting ones, it has sometimes been necessary to make a selection based on content and accessibility of sources.

We feel that this rather ironic state of affairs would not displease the great masters to whom we pay homage with this work; those who spent their waking lives misleading and confusing their opponents have, in death, become a legend so distorted by tradition and myth that none (not even their own descendants) can now accurately separate the fact of them from the fiction.

Throughout this section, the baseline for all the shinobi ryū is considered to be 1603.

“...only the enlightened sovereign and the worthy general who are able to use the most intelligent people as agents are certain to achieve great things.”

—Sun Tzu

IGA RYŪ

BACKGROUND

Clan Legend: The Founding

The province of Iga, a small mountainous region of steep sides valleys, dark caves and deep forests, has been the home and based of operations for the Iga shinobi ryū since the early 11th century, when a group of mountain warriors banded together under the leadership of a Chinese Neo Taoist General, named Ikai Yanban (though he may have been Korean—from Shilla or Paekche—as the term *yanban* was commonly used at that period to address noblemen of those kingdoms) who had been forced out of the capital of Miyako in one of the purges which characterized Japanese politics in the Heian period.

Having made a home with a small community of Iga province woodsmen, Ikai and his followers offered to teach those families their traditions (meditation, unarmed fighting, herbalism and so on) in exchange for knowledge they needed to survive in the hostile mountains of Iga. Their intent was not to create a martial organization, but simply to establish a mountain temple school, much like the famed Chinese Shaolin Temple (where martial techniques and spiritual awareness guided students to an understanding of the world), wherein the outcast monks could practice their arts and prepare themselves in quiet contemplation for the next turn of the Karmic Wheel.

News of the group slowly but surely trickled out of the province back to the capital. There Fujiwara Shokan, the Minister of the Right to Emperor Go-Ichijō (ca. 956–1036) was convinced that these monks were attempting to stir up trouble in the countryside by teaching martial skills to peasants and ordered the temple crushed by his Taira family warriors in the year 1032. By the time the Taira army had penetrated to the site of the supposed temple, all the monks, trainees and the peasants supporting them had vanished further into the mountains—seemingly taking everything of value with them. Puzzled and unsure what to do, the commander of the army is said to have challenged the endless forests, calling the monks who had fled into them cowards and unworthy foes.

Laughter, seemingly from all around, answered his cries and a single old but clear voice rang out across the deserted temple.

“And are you not a coward, that came seeking to kill simple monks and peasants with your great army? You and your master’s twisted sense of honor is of no concern to us, lackey. Yet, if you would take back to them a message they would understand, then take this and know that as we are, we do not seek a fight, but as we are, we say we will not shun one.”

With that the trees themselves came to life, erupting hundreds of glittering steel stars, knives, arrows and darts all directed with deadly purpose at the men and their mounts. In but a twinkling of an eye, every officer, every noble and every standard bearer had been both unhorsed and killed without a single enemy ever coming into view, an act so shocking and so against the law of arms that the rest of the army turned to flee.

Down the slope a little ways they encountered a great *yari* driven into the ground with a message attached.

“Know this,” the message read. “These mountains are no longer subject to the hand of the Fujiwara or their Taira dogs. We the Iga, hold this land now for the Emperor, who is chained under the baseless politics of a corrupt regency. All may come and go as they please here now, acknowledging that they do so only at our sufferance.”

The letter was addressed to Fujiwara Shokan and was signed in the name of *Iga no Eikyō* (the Shadow of Iga).

The Historical Iga ryū

The first recorded grandmaster of Iga ryū, taking the title *Soke* in this case, is recorded as being called *Gamon-Doji* (d. 1068). A Chinese monk and purported pupil of the legendary master, *Ikai Yanban*, he took up his office in 1064 and was the master of the clan who devised the ryū’s now famous method of hiding in plain sight.

This credit in large part is due to his order that a village be built, as if by settlers, and petition to the local magistrate for permission to begin farming operations under the protection of the local Taira lord. The petition was granted in spring 1065, and *Gamon-Doji* constructed his first secret base on the slopes of Mount Kame, near what is now the town of Iga. The village was little more than that, with a few false wells for storing items, and not the warren of tunnels and *karakuri ie* (mechanical houses) common to such villages later.

The second master of the school and *Gamon-Doji*’s senior pupil was given the title *Garyū Doji* (ca. 1038-1076) when he took over the ryū. His real name was never recorded. Little is known about *Garyū Doji*’s time as *Jōnin* of Iga, perhaps because he remained in the position for only two years before being replaced by *Unryū Doji* (ca. 1045–1096), who himself gave way to one of the more remarkable characters in Iga history, *Iga Heinan Yasukiyo* (1062–1141).

Iga Heinan Yasukiyo was not an Iga shinobi, per se, but a bushi vassal of the Minamoto clan. He was wealthy enough to build a castle for his people, from where the Iga shinobi operated until after his death. Several sources claim that *Yasukiyo* was a sworn vassal of Minamoto *Yoritomo*. Because *Yoritomo* was not born until 1147, however, it’s possible that *Yasukiyo* actually swore fealty to *Yoritomo*’s father, *Tameyoshi*, or his grandfather, *Yoshiie*, and that later Iga scholars intentionally or mistakenly associated *Yasukiyo* with the first *Kamakura Shōgun*.

No records exist of the names of the Iga masters from the *Yasukiyo*’s death until the year 1156, when *Tozawa Hakunsai* (1077–1159), the eventual founder of the *Gyokkyo shinobi ryū*, is recorded as taking the vacant title of *Jōnin* for the Iga clan.

The fact that an outsider was allowed to take the senior position in the ryū is odd enough, but when added to the fact that he held the position for less than six months—giving way to *Ise Sabuno Yoshimori* (1110-1207), who was also known by his *Tendai* title of *Kagakure Doshi*—his rule of the Iga becomes a great mystery indeed. Nothing exists in the Iga archives to explain why he was made master of the ryū, but recently it has been suggested that, as the most skilled shinobi present, he was made *Jōnin* so that he could officially instruct the younger *Yoshimori*

in the duties of the position. This theory is not supported by any evidence, however; even though it does fit all the known facts, must be taken as pure supposition. Whatever the reason, when Hakunsai resigned, he took with him a number of Iga shinobi and left behind him a stronger clan than when he had arrived.

The successor to Yoshimori also carried a name that has great significance to the history of the Shinobi and perhaps speaks of yet another connection between the Iga ryū and the shinobi clans surrounding it.

In the history of the Iga clan, Nishina (later, Togakure) Daisuke (ca. 1145–1240) is noted as being both the founder of the Togakure shinobi ryū (learning the art from his father who was taught by the legendary Kain Doshi) as well as a successful leader of the Iga themselves. The archives also tell us that Daisuke stayed with the ryū for only three years before returning “to his people,” raising a similar question as with the promotion of Hakunsai to the position of grand master.

When one examines the fragmentary Togakure chronicles that remain, it’s possible to see that between 1206 and 1211 Daisuke was not in active charge of his Togakure shinobi, instead leaving the control of the clan with one of his *chūnin*. This fits with the evidence from the Iga school. Neither document offers any reason for Daisuke’s presence with the Iga nor why he should forsake his recently established group for so long a period of time.

Game Note

For the purposes of the game it has been assumed that Daisuke’s group is, in effect, a break-away ryū from the Iga clan—if only by default, in that Daisuke was taught by Kain Doshi—and that by 1207 their skills had been recognized by the larger group, who took them as allies and made Daisuke their joint leader at a time when no suitable candidate was to be found in the Iga.

After Daisuke stepped down in 1210, no single shinobi is recorded as taking the lead of the school until 1239, when Kumogakure Gen-an (1203–1275) accepted the position. Little is known about Kumogakure Gen-an other than that he stepped down as leader of Iga in 1255. It’s believed by some that Gen-an, whose name suggests that he may have a connection with the Kumogakure shinobi ryū, either joined or founded that clan.

His replacement, Katsuya Tenjin (1212–1288) is an almost unknown quantity, as is Tozawa Seiun (1240–1292), though the latter’s name suggests he may have been related to Tozawa Hakunsai.

The next Jōnin of the clan, Iga Sanjō (lit. “an outcast of Iga”; probably an alias) (d. 1334) is said to have been originally trained in the Kōga school. No more of his life is known than that.

By contrast, Sanjō’s successor, Tozawayudo Gen-eisai (1303–1369), is quite a well-documented personality. He chose his family name (Tozawayudo—lit. “The Entering Way of Tozawa,

likely a reference to Tozawa’s *koshi-jutsu* technique) as an homage to the Gyokkyo shinobi master who served as Iga Jōnin for a while. Sanjō tried to revise the Iga school’s teachings to reflect his appreciation for the Gyokkyo techniques. His attempted changes were resisted by the other members of the ryū, however, and eventually he left the group in 1335 to seek out the descendants of Hakunsai. No one knows if he ever found them.

Little is known of Gen-eisai’s successor—not even his name. What is known is that he stepped down in 1379 because of illness and was replaced by Hachimon Hyoūn, (1332–1401).

When Hyoūn retired in 1394 the position was filled by Kuryuzu Hakūn, (d. 1439), upon whose death the clan offered the title to the young Tozawa Ryutarō (1463–1532). The lineal descendent of Hakunsai didn’t feel he was ready for the honor, however, and didn’t take up the title until 1487, holding it until his death.

The next Jōnin, Momochi Sandayu I (1511–1583), held the title for two years, stepping down for unknown reasons in 1554.

Sandayu was replaced by Iga Saemon no Jō Ienaga (d. 1573), an unusual figure who, though resigning the position of Jōnin less than a year after accepting it, effectively ran the Iga ryū until his mysterious death in 1573. Ienaga attempted to take the Iga into the Ashikaga civil war on the side of the Kōga ryū in 1556, but was forced to back down by the entire clan, so much did his suggestion enrage the Iga Shinobi. Ironically enough though, Ienaga also ordered the clan’s secret war with Oda Nobunaga, after the daimyō fired the mountain temple of Enryaku-ji on Mount Hiei.

Following Ienaga as Jōnin was Momochi Sandayu II (1547–1623), who is infamous for being the Jōnin who ordered the Ōkami yo (the night of the wolf) in 1581. He is also remembered as the Jōnin who saved the clan following Oda Nobunaga’s purge of Iga and Omi provinces, taking the majority of his people deep into the forests and caves of the region. It was Sandayu II, too, who ordered Hattori Hanzō (1573–1644) to arrange a truce with the Kōga upon learning that the Tokugawa wished to employ what remained of both clans.

As the clan was still at war when a wounded Sandayu retired in 1591, no Jōnin was selected to replace him until 1603, when Hattori Hanzō was “hired” by the Tokugawa *bakufu* to administer the semi-United Kōga-Iga clan as a form of secret agency.

Historical Note

Some scholars claim that, because of connections between the Iga ryū proper and such groups as the Hakūn, the Gyokkyo and the Togakure, all these groups and many more like them can also be known as Iga ryū. This may well be true, for if a group was founded in Iga *han*, or had a founder from Iga, then logically there must exist justification for such an argument. For simplicity we have separated all these groups into their own clan structures and have allowed the core Iga school to claim all honor from that name.

“When an advancing enemy crosses water do not meet him at the water’s edge. It is advantageous to allow half his force to cross and then strike.”

—Sun Tzu

The Iga-Kōga Enmity

The Iga and Kōga ryū are the largest shinobi clans in Japan. There has always been a very close friendship between them, sharing, as they did, a deeper understanding of the nature of the world than most. As the Iga tell it, the Kōga were founded by the son of a landed bushi and thus had a more aristocratic foundation. Because of this the Kōga eventually turned towards the political arena, allying themselves with the Ashikaga family, who controlled the Shōgunate and the Imperial family, in the mid-1400s.

This act alone did not cause the Iga to react violently against their old friends. The Iga had themselves carried out work for the Shōgunate for many years (especially during the Kamakura period, when they were sworn to the Minamoto family). When the Ashikaga civil war broke out in the mid-1500s, however, the Iga were forced to declare against the Kōga. The Iga had always been staunch royalists. When the Kōga declared for Ashikaga Yoshitsune, a general who sought to replace Imperial with Shōgunate rule of Japan, the Iga ryū was declared open war not only on the rebel Ashikaga but their one-time friends in the Kōga clan.

“Once friends become enemies, a hatred builds that will outlast the world” goes an Ii family saying. This certainly proved true in the case of the Iga-Kōga war. From 1556 to 1582, no Iga clansman met a shinobi from Kōga without bloodshed. Though much bitterness existed between the clans from the start of the war, the engagements were strictly confined to their employers holdings and on the battlefield. That is, until the Kōga decided to try to turn the tide in their favor.

In the Winter of 1580, when most of the Iga shinobi were in winter quarters with Tokugawa Ieyasu (who had replaced Ashikaga Yoshizune as the Iga’s employer), a strike force of Kōga shinobi attacked and burned several of the Iga’s bases. The Kōga killed every Iga member they encountered, regardless of age.

The attack was intended to cause the Iga to abandon the war and flee back to their homes, for fear of further attacks of such a nature. The Iga response to the slaughter was anything but that, however. The Iga shinobi were spurred to greater violence, leading to the 1581 massacre of the *Ōkami yo*, in which more than 100 Kōga trainees and 40 Iga warriors died. Ironically, the now-infamous event left both clans vulnerable to an attack by Oda Nobunaga, which broke the strength of both clans, effectively ending the war.

After the truce was declared the Kōga more-or-less stepped aside from politics and the Iga returned to aiding the Tokugawa forces. Between 1582 and 1603, they fought in all the major campaigns and most of the larger battles, including the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600.

Since that time, the clans have been at an uneasy peace, bound by their oaths to the Tokugawa and their respect for Hattori Hanzō (who risked his own life many times to make the peace stick).

FAMILIES

There are 45 families that make up the Iga ryū. The ryū is under the control of the Momochi, Hattori and Fujibayashi families.

The remaining families include: the Abe, Arima, Fujiwara, Fuki, Hanbe, Hata, Hisahara, Ibuki, Iga (not the original Iga family, but those that adopted the name), Igasaki, Iida, Ise, Ishikawa, Ishitani, Izumo, Kanbe, Kaneko, Kashiwabara, Kataoka, Kazama, Kimata, Kimura, Kotani, Kuriyama, Mizuhara, Mori, Nagata, Narita, Ōyama, Oda, Okuni, Otsuka, Sakagami, Sawada, Shima, Shindo, Sugino, Suzuki, Taira, Toda, Togakure (Daisuke being accepted as the founder of this group), Toyota, Tozawa, Tsutsumi, and Ueno.

Members

Jōnin: Hattori Hanzō

Soke: Toda Masao

Chūnin: 34

Genin: 179

Sympathetic non-shinobi: 57

Iga ryū Shinobi Template

INT	3	WILL	4	PRE	3	AES	3	PIE	3	KAO	2
STR	3	CON	2	BOD	3	TECH	3	REF	4	DEX	4
MOVE	3	END	20	SD	4	STUN	15	HITS	15	REC	5
RES	12	HON	20								

Complications: Oppressed: hinin (Constant, Minor) (3), Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor) (2), Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Enemy: Kōga ryū (15), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Perks: Contact: Buddhist temple abbot (4), ML 2 in Iga ryū (4)

Talents: Night Vision (3), Ambidexterity (3)

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Athletics 2, Binding 4, Buddhism 2, Chains 4, Climbing 3, Concentration 2, Confucianism 2, Conversation 2, Craft: (player’s choice) 3, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Deduction 2, Demolition 3, Disguise 3, Evade 2, Folklore 2, Forced March 3, General Knowledge 2, Knives 4, Language: Japanese 2, Language: Iga clan dialect 2, Local Expert: Iga province 2, Meditation 3, Navigation 3, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Perception 2, Scouting 3, Shintō 2, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Swimming 3, Swords 4, Teaching 2, Throwing 4, Tracking 3.

Equipment: ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*), sword (*shinobigatana*), 9 *happō-shuriken* (8-bladed), *kyotetsu-shoge*, poor-quality peasant garb (*kimono* and *kobakama*, *obi*, *fundoshi*, 1 pair *tabi*, *waraji*).

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Though Iga is a small region, the fact that the Iga clan have always been at the heart of “shinobi culture” means that their agents can exercise a great deal of influence in all areas (except,

“...the expert at controlling his enemy frustrates him and then moves against him. He aggravates him and harasses him to make him fearful. Thus he robs his enemy of his heart and of his ability to plan.”

—Chang Yü

of course with those groups, such as the Kōga) which still feel enmity towards them.

This level of influence has only increased (in shinobi circles) since the clan was put more or less at the head of the new Tokugawa government's own ryū, under the Hattori family.

Physically, the clan still only directly controls a very small area of land (smaller than some other ryū and very much smaller than their large size, of about 200 agents, would suggest), being the masters of Iga only. They do have a controlling interest in some other areas (such as Yokohama, Omihachiman, Ōsaka and Mito), but these areas are administered by "vassal" ryū and the Iga cannot easily direct affairs there without offending their allies overmuch.

In these days of terror, most Iga shinobi know that their affiliation alone is their best affidavit of the clan's influence.

POLITICS

Violently royalist in their leanings originally, the Iga have become more used to the idea of a Shōgun directing the political life of the country and it is whispered that the clan made peace with the Tokugawa both (or either) because Ieyasu himself can trace his ancestry back in direct lineal succession from Emperor Seiwa, and (or) because he has vowed to maintain the Imperial line unbroken and unstained if allowed to rule without let or hindrance

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

The Iga ryū is deeply allied with the Togakure ryū, with whom they share common roots and techniques (as well as a shared Jōnin in Togakure Daisuke). Iga shinobi can always expect aid, no matter on what grounds, from any Togakure shinobi or Togakure ryū base, and vice versa.

The clan is also allied with the Fūdo, Gyokkyo and Hakūn ryū's, which either work for the Tokugawa through the mediation of the Iga clan (the Fūdo and the Hakūn) or simply make their homes in Iga controlled areas (the Gyokkyo).

Game Note

In a historical campaign set in the early 17th century, it is suggested that GMs make the Iga ryū something like a central agency for handling shinobi affairs and place the PCs in smaller subject ryū such as Fūdo, Togakure or Gyokkyo.

The Iga ryū are the long time enemies of the Kōga ryū shinobi, who they blame for stretching out the Ashikaga civil war and ruining several smaller ryū with their politicking. Though, since the peace of 1582 and the joint declaration of ends in 1603, they will not attack each other on sight and it will usually take quite a little provocation to get shinobi from these clans to join in combat. Even though the ryū are officially "allied" under Tokugawa employ, Iga shinobi are expected to refuse all offers of aid from Kōga agents and are required to extend no support to the shinobi of that clan.

IGA SHINOBI OF NOTE

Hattori Hanzō*

Iga ryū Jōnin, Soke of Iga-Kōga ryū for Tokugawa bakufu

Age: 30 (in 1603) **Caste:** Hinin **Faith:** Buddhist (Tendai)
INT 4 **WILL** 6 **PRE** 7 **AES** 4 **PIE** 4 **KAO** 5
STR 4 **CON** 4 **BOD** 4 **TECH** 5 **REF** 7 **DEX** 8
MOVE 5 **END** 40 **SD** 8 **STUN** 20 **HITS** 20 **REC** 8
RES 18 **HON** 56

Complications: Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (-25), Enemy: Kōga ryū (-15), Oppressed: hinin (Constant, Minor) (-3), Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor) (-2), Secret Identity: Tokugawa clan Metsuke (Constant, Extreme) (-15).

Perks: Contact: Tokugawa Ietasu (9; 7 in the Sengoku-jidai), Contact: Fūdo ryū Jōnin (9), Contact: Gyokkyo ryū Jōnin (9), Contact: Togakure ryū Jōnin (9), Contact: Kōga ryū Jōnin (9), ML 10 in Iga ryū (20), Renown: Tokugawa metsuke/famous shinobi (7).

Talents: Ambidexterity (3), Blade Trapping (3), Chakuzen-jutsu (10), Danger Sense (base 12) (30), Do-ton-jutsu (3), Genjutsu (3), Inpo (3), Knack with Leadership (3), Knack with Stealth (3), Moku-ton-jutsu (3), Night Vision (3).

Ki Powers: Deaden Sense—sight & hearing (15)

Skills*: Acrobatics 6, Acting 4, Arrow Cutting 6, Athletics 4, Binding 4, Bribery 4, Buddhism 3, Bureaucracy 4, Calligraphy 3, Chains 6, Climbing 5, Concentration 4, Confucianism 3, Conversation 4, Craft: Sandal-making 3, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Deduction 5, Demolition 3, Diplomacy 5, Disguise 7, Escape 4, Expert: Tokugawa law 4, Evade 3, Firearms 4, Focus Ki 6, Folklore 4, Forced March 6, General Knowledge 2, Go 4, Iaijutsu 4, Knives 5, Language: Chinese 2, Language: English 1, Language: Iga clan dialect 2, Language: Japanese 2, Language: Portuguese 1, Leadership* 5, Local Expert: Iga province 6, Local Expert: Musashi province 3, Meditation 5, Navigation 5, Ninjutsu 9, Ninpō Taijutsu 7, Perception 6, Riding 3, Scouting 5, Shintō 2, Sleight of Hand 5, Stealth* 9, Survival 5, Swimming 4, Swords 7, Teaching 4, Throwing 6, Tracking 6.

* Bonus for knack included in skill score.

Equipment: Ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*), above-average quality *daishō*, 9 *happō-shuriken* (8-bladed), good-quality samurai garb (*kimono* and *hakama*, *obi*, *fundoshi*, 1 pair *tabi*, *waraji*), travel pass with Tokugawa seal.

Background: Hattori Hanzō has always been a more diplomatic person than most. He was born the son of Hattori Hanape, a chūnin of the Iga clan and considered the finest field agent the ryū possessed (with the possible exception of the infamous Ishikawa Goemon).

His training was harder and longer than any other child of his generation, for he not only was required to satisfy the ryū's training masters, but his own father as well (who was even more of a perfectionist than the very skilled clan teachers). As a result, when Hanzō graduated to genin status he swiftly became something of a key figure in the clan and was ever included in any mission of worth.

"Birds rising in flight is a sign that the enemy is lying in ambush; when the wild animals are startled and flee he is trying to take you unaware."

—Sun Tzu

Though he possessed a most incredible sense of balance and is recorded as the most adept master of *shinobi-iri* which the ryū ever employed, his real skill was always in his diplomatic nature and the way he was always able to calm almost any situation into which he was introduced. Indeed, in 1581—having been promoted to *chūnin*—he demonstrated his diplomatic skills during the infamous *Ōkami Yo*, persuading his company of Iga men that, despite their losses to the Kōga the year before, they had no right to slaughter the Kōga children they came across. His men were swayed by his words and so the Iga were saved even more conflict. Though more than 100 Kōga died that night in other camps, the Kōga were not driven to the state of fury they would have been had their offspring been murdered.

His work that night saw him, less than a year later, brokering a truce between the Kōga and his master—as word of his compassion had spread to the Iga’s foes—as the only shinobi both sides would trust. Following that he led Tokugawa Ieyasu himself through shinobi haunted Iga province as a way to avoid assassin’s blades while he traveled to rejoin one of his army groups.

The time he spent with the Tokugawa family head clearly left some mark on the general, for in 1600 he invited Hanzō to command not only the Iga Shinobi at the battle of Sekigahara, but a good number of troops which had been assigned to take advantage of the confusion which the Iga shinobi visited upon the Loyalist forces.

Currently, Hanzō holds the position of *Metsuke* (clan censor) to the Tokugawa family and administers both the Iga and Kōga (plus allied forces) shinobi ryū as something of a counter espionage agency for the fledgling government. It is his current task to gather as much information as possible concerning all the feudal domains currently sworn to the Tokugawa to determine if any of their lords are prone to side with the remaining Loyalist factions (for though the Tokugawa have seized power by dint of their controlling the Emperor, the wars are far from over).

He is also particularly interested in the Fuma shinobi ryū and has assigned his cousin, the head of Hakūn ryū, to investigate matters there.

Personality: Taciturn and generally quiet, Hanzō is the epitome of a shinobi agent. He is ever thoughtful of the Whole and always strives to be aware of every given fact before committing himself, or his shinobi (Iga or Kōga) to an action. He cannot be thought of as being over cautious, however, and when decisive action is required he can move faster and more determinedly than anyone in his employ.

He does not hold grudges at all beyond professional duties and is very aware of his clan’s position as champion of the underdog, thus he often does not involve himself in arguments between his Iga and Kōga employees as long as he is certain that the Iga shinobi are entering the fray to restore balance or assist those who would have no other recourse against their foes.

Though he is content to allow his shinobi (and those of other ryū) to carry on their petty wars for their feudal masters, he brooks no conflict with the Tokugawa and will crush, swiftly and surely, any who threaten the power he has sworn fealty to.

Quote: “If you wish to keep a secret from me, take it to your pyre. That is the one place I’m not inclined to look.”

Historical Note

The Hattori family have something of a two faced reputation with shinobi scholars in Japan today (especially among the descendants of the Iga). On the one side he is viewed as a great diplomat, who was able to bring to an end the bitter war between the Kōga and the Iga and took the (semi) unified clans into an era of prosperity with the Tokugawa. On the other hand though he can be viewed as a betrayer of Shinobi ideals, who sold both the Kōga and the Iga to the Tokugawa government to become political pawns of the Edo period government until such time as their purpose had been served and they were allowed to fade into myth.

Whichever side of the historical debate you hold to, there can be no doubting the fact that Hanzō himself was, without a doubt, the most consummate exponent of ninjutsu that has ever been.

Ishikawa Goemon *†

Iga ryū shinobi genin-turned-bandit

Age: 52 (in 1603) **Caste:** Hinin **Faith:** Buddhist

INT	3	WILL	4	PRE	3	AES	4	PIE	4	KAO	1
STR	4	CON	4	BOD	4	TECH	5	REF	6	DEX	6
MOVE	5	END	40	SD	8	STUN	20	HITS	20	REC	8
RES	12	HON	18								

Complications: Bad Reputation: as bandit (frequent) (5), Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Enemy: Authorities, to capture (10), Oppressed: hinin (Constant, Minor) (3), Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor) (2).

Perks: Contact: Bandit chief (4). Contact: Iga ryū Jōnin—Hattori Hanzō (10).

Talents: Ambidexterity (3), Danger Sense (base 10) (20), Doton-jutsu (3), Genjutsu (3), Knack with Iaijutsu (3), Night Vision (3).

Skills: Acrobatics 5, Athletics 5, Binding 4, Buddhism 3, Chains 6, Climbing 5, Concentration 2, Confucianism 2, Conversation 2, Craft: Traps 3, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Deduction 3, Demolition 4, Disguise 4, Evade 3, Focus Ki 3, Folklore 2, Forced March 3, General Knowledge 2, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu* 5, Knives 4, Language: Iga clan dialect 2, Language: Japanese 2, Local Expert: Iga province 4, Meditation 3, Navigation 5, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 5, Perception 4, Scouting 4, Shintō 2, Sleight of Hand 3, Stealth 5, Survival 4, Swimming 4, Swords 5, Teaching 2, Throwing 4, Tracking 3.

* *Bonus for knack included in skill score.*

Equipment: ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*), *daishō* (in *shirasaya*—plain wood *saya*), 9 *happō-shuriken* (8-bladed), knife (*tantō*), rope (*kawa*), average-quality peasant garb (*kimono* and *kobakama*, *obi*, *fundoshi*, 1 pair *tabi*, *waraji*).

Background: A member of the Iga shinobi ryū from being a child, Goemon was always something of a rebel in the ordered clan. At first, his indiscretions (especially among the *kunoichi*) were thought to stem from the fact that the lad had been adopted by the Ishikawa family and had not had been fully trained from

being a baby as other Iga shinobi were. However, the extra attention “lavished” on him only drove Goemon further away from his family and his clan until on day (shortly before the battle of Nagashino, in 1575, in which he was supposed to fight for the first time) he simply left, taking with him the daishō his natural father (an unknown samurai of the Ashikaga) had left behind.

The Iga hunted him for a while, losing many genin and not a few chūnin to the young man, until they realized that he was not intent on betraying the Iga or their bases either to the Kōga or their bushi foes, but seemed simply to wish to eke out his own existence in as best a way as he could.

However as this path quickly turned towards a form of Robin Hood style banditry—Goemon gathering to him a group of ex bushi and shinobi raiders, who made it their business to hunt, rob and kill those they felt were guilty of oppressing the peasant population of the Kansai (mostly Oda Nobunaga’s men)—the leaders of Iga felt that he would be better off dead than bringing continual shame to them.

Under orders from the Iga Jōnin Goemon’s force was betrayed to the command of Oda Nobunaga, who brought the villain in (with the aid of his own pet Shinobi from the Koto ryū—also historically linked with Goemon, in that he is supposed to have studied there).

Though sentenced to death by boiling in a cauldron of oil, several stories have come down through history concerning the ultimate fate of Ishikawa Goemon.

First (told among the Iga), is that he was secretly reprieved by order of the young Tokugawa Ieyasu (by the then Iga Genin, Hattori Hanzō) and during a daring raid Goemon was switched for another villain who then died in his place.

Second (told by the Ishikawa family) is that he employed his own shinobi training to escape his bonds and placed one of Nobunaga’s own guards in his clothing to be boiled in his stead.

Third (told by the Koto ryū) is that his son freed him from his bindings only to be disabled himself by the old shinobi and tied up in Goemon’s place (with suitable makeup we presume).

Whichever of the myths you follow, there is a great deal of evidence (though mostly circumstantial) that while Goemon’s son died at the hands of lord Oda, the old shinobi himself survived to be involved with the successful assassination attempt (led either by Goemon, or—as history tells us—by General Akechi the traitor) on Nobunaga in 1582.

After that deed he vanished from public sight altogether and only Hattori Hanzō is said to have seen him since the death of Nobunaga, though he has not spoken a word openly to anyone—save maybe lord Ieyasu—since.

Who knows what Goemon is doing now?

Personality: Despite what many of his ex-Iga shinobi brethren think of him, Goemon is actually a very honorable and dedicated man, as far as his own code goes. He believes firmly in the fact that the shinobi should be a universal force for balance in Japan and no the political tool of Emperors, nobles or warriors.

His own code, derived in great part from his Iga teachings and the words of the great defender of the masses, Tomoe (ca. 835–ca. 915)—*Samurai-ko* sister of Emperor Daigo (ca. 850–930), holds that each person provides a set and worthy service to the nation as a whole and that no man should be allowed to perse-

cute another using their “position” as justification.

Of course, this should not be take as an indication that Goemon survived his execution. Oh no, that would never do.

Quote: “A bath? I haven’t had a bath since the last time I visited with Nobunaga, and I’ll not be taking another one of those very soon!”

Historical Note

Up to his execution for banditry the life of Ishikawa Goemon is actually quite dull, with the one exception that both the Iga and Koto shinobi ryū claim him as a student (though, as we have seen this is not uncommon in shinobi history and it is possible that Goemon actually trained with both—though politically unlikely as the Koto and Iga were always on separate sides of the Sengoku period Shōgun / Emperor divide). Only after his “death” do we find him becoming an important character as, like perceived martyrs everywhere, he was both lionized as a defender of the people by theater writers and applauded by the Tokugawa government as an early supporter of the Tokugawa’s cause. Throughout the Edo period his name never became bad currency and even when a play was removed from Goemon’s time period, by the simple expediency of becoming his own ancestor or descendent the brash Shinobi / bandit was able to “tread the boards” from the end of the Heian period to 1970’s Tokyo (Ishikawa Goemon XIII was written into the Japanese artist, Monkey Punch’s long running and wickedly satirical *Lupin III* comic/anime/film series as something of a dig at this odd artistic convention).

Kidoya Yazaemon*†

Iga ryū Chūnin and Firearms/Explosives Expert

Age: 48 (in 1603) **Caste:** Hinin **Faith:** Buddhist (Tendai)
INT 3 WILL 5 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 3
SIR 4 CON 3 BOD 3 TECH 5 REF 5 DEX 6
MOVE 3 END 30 SD 6 STUN 15 HITS 15 REC 7
RES 15 HON 34

Complications: Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (frequent, extreme) (-25), Enemy: Kōga ryū (-15), Depression: Has little to live for (Frequent, Strong, Major) (10), Obsessed with firearms & explosives, talks about them all the time (2), Oppressed: hinin (Constant, Minor) (-3), Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor) (-2), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (-15), Works to forget his loss & pain (Frequent, Strong, Major) (10).

Perks: Contact: Buddhist temple abbot (4), ML 5 in Iga ryū (10), Renown (among shinobi): Master gunsmith (7)

Talents: Ambidexterity (3), Knack with Firearms (3), Knack with Demolitions (3), Natural with Firearms (3), Night Vision (3).

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Athletics 3, Binding 3, Buddhism 2, Chains 4, Chemistry 6, Climbing 3, Concentration 3, Confucianism 2, Conversation 2, Craft: Gunsmith 8, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Deduction 3, Demolition* 8, Disguise 3, Escape 3, Evade 2,

“Secret operations are essential in war; upon them the army relies to make its every move.”

—Sun Tzu

Firearms* 8, Folklore 2, Forced March 3, General Knowledge 2, Knives 3, Language: Iga clan dialect 2, Language: Japanese 2, Local Expert: Iga province 3, Meditation 3, Navigation 3, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Perception 3, Scouting 3, Shintō 2, Sleight of Hand 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Swimming 3, Swords 4, Teaching 5, Throwing 4, Tracking 3.

* Bonus for knack included in skill score.

Equipment: Ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*), various *teppō* (plus a variety of explosive devices if encountered on mission), 9 *happō-shuriken* (8-bladed), knife (*tantō*), average-quality peasant garb (*kimono* and *kobakama*, *obi*, *fundoshi*, 1 pair *tabi waraji*).

Background: The Iga ryū took to firearms very well indeed, much like most other ryū which could afford to buy (or steal) them. However, the Iga is recorded as being the first ryū to establish a school dedicated to teaching the use of various types of *teppō* (from pocket pistols to small cannon) as part of their instruction of fire related techniques such as *Ha-jutsu* and *Oni-bi-jutsu*.

Kiyoda Yazaemon is the current holder of the title of Iga Ryū's *Bakuyaku Shujin* (Explosives Master) and it is his responsibility not only to teach the use of grenades, *teppō* and fire to the young agents of the ryū, but to plan and execute all manner of demolition missions for the clan.

Though he is a consummate master with fire and blasting powders, his greatest love is for the *teppō*, which he sees (rather prophetically) as the future of warfare.

He is particularly fond of the very small mechanical lock (flint snaphaunce and iron pyrites wheel locks), that have found their way in small numbers into Japan, and has acquired a small collection of such weapons, as well as a large armory of home grown matchlock weapons for use by his ryū.

Historical Note

Mechanical lock weapons were never popular in Japanese armies as they were difficult to manufacture and maintain (and few *daimyō* ever thought to equip any troops but *ashigaru* with *teppō* anyway). Because of that inexperience (or disdain for) mechanical locks, however, the Japanese continued making matchlock weapons until the Meiji period, allowing European scholars of the age a glimpse of an aspect weapons manufacture which was impossible to study effectively in their own countries due to lack of specimens.

He is also a great inventor and has contributed many explosives or firearm related devices to the Iga armories, such as his pitch covered fuse wire (a thin paper tube, filled with powder and coated in pitch to render it weather-proof), his fuse box (a water-proof metal container with a built-in snaphaunce pistol from which up to a dozen of his fuses can be ignited simultaneously—predating a similar British device by more than 100 years) and his famous *kame baku*, or “Turtle Bomb,” (a small, spiked, cast-iron shell with black powder packed in it—designed to be used to blow locks from doors or boxes).

Personality: A very practical man is Yazaemon, not given to bandying words with people unnecessarily and prone to long fits of gloom between missions.

He has not always been like this, however.

Before the treaty with the Kōga and the Tokugawa was signed, he had been in the forefront of the war with their shinobi neighbors—losing his children in the winter raids of 1580 and his brother in during the *Ōkami Yo*—and was determined that, by the time he had finished, not a single Kōga shinobi would draw breath. He particularly liked to drop among a group of Kōga agents, casting off grenades and deploying a huge pair of European horse pistols, watching the shinobi scatter and die with great satisfaction.

In these days of “cooperation,” however, he feels as if he has little left to live for, that the blood price paid by the Kōga during the massacres of 1581 was not enough to compensate him for his loss.

Now, more than ever, he needs his work to divert him away from morbid feelings and his Jōnin knows it, allowing him to take on the most daring or violent of missions, possibly to help Yazaemon take his mind off things, but possibly in the hopes that the moody shinobi will meet with an unfortunate accident and save the ryū potential trouble in the future.

Quote: “It might take forever to reload, but one shot is all I usually need anyway.”

Historical Note

Very little is known about the historical Yazaemon and indeed the records that have come down to us today of the Iga shinobi with that title, covering as they do his work from c. 1520 to 1616, seem to imply that more than one shinobi carried the name Kiyoda Yazaemon.

However, though not named in any source as Yazaemon, in several plays of the Edo period—mostly poor *Kabuki* and *Ningyō Jōruri* offerings—an Iga shinobi with a skill in firearms is often included to demonstrate the special effects of the theater more than anything else (explosions were simulated with many colored strings and the rolling of drums, while *teppō* shots were created using powder blown through the barrel of the gun by a stage hand or puppeteer).

Other Iga Shinobi of Note

The following names are recorded as being distinguished members of the Iga ryū: Akimoto Kassai, Fukunokami Teisainyudo, Hanchi Hansuke, Hattori Gensuke, Hattori Denjiro, Hattori Jinroku, Hattori Shichikuro, Hattori Shinkuro, Naruto Iga, Otsuka Bansaku, Sera Genroku, Tsuge Ichinosuke, Tsuge Jintaro, Tsuge Sannojo, Yamaguchi Jinsuke, Yamanaka Kakubei, Yamanouchi Keitaro, Yamaoka Sobei, and Yamaoka Suketaro.

Igasaki Dojun (founder “49 ninjutsu ryū,” master of *bakemonojutsu*)

“When drawers of water drink before carrying it to camp, his troops are suffering from thirst. When the enemy sees an advantage but does not advance to seize it, he is fatigued.”

—Sun Tzu

KŌGA RYŪ

BACKGROUND

The Historical Kōga Ryū

The Kōga shinobi ryū was founded by Mochizuki Saburo Kaneie (ca. 895–ca. 960), a warrior from the court. Saburo proved his worth during the revolution led by Suwa Saemon Minamoto Shigeyori (lord of Shinano province), and was awarded the fief of Kōga (in Omi province). There he built his residence, Kōga-jō, on the defensible headland of the Kii peninsula. Changing his name to Kōga Ōmi no Kami Kaneie, he married and formed a Buddhist military order in his fief, to which all his soldiers belonged. Membership in his order required swearing fealty and loyalty to the faith before the Emperor.

He later closed off the region to traffic, claiming it was the best way to reduce the risk of bandit raids. Though an unorthodox move, the court did not question the clan deeply on their odd security measures, in part because few ever traveled to the inhospitable region and (perhaps more importantly) because his levy always performed well in their duties and his taxes were never late.

The birth of an heir to the castle helped turn the Kōga clan towards the shinobi path. When the youth, named Ōmi no Kami no Iechika (940-1025), was six years old, a Buddhist monk by the name of Tatsumaki arrived at the fortress. But the priest arrived not to work or worship at the temple there, but expressly to teach the son of the lord in the ways of his future. The monk confided to both the lord and the heir that he was, in fact, a student of a Chinese ascetic. His master, the priest told them, ordered Tatsumaki to go to the Kii peninsula to teach all that he could about the ways of the Shadow.

Accepting the monk as teacher, lord Kōga began teaching his son all that he could of martial endeavors while Tatsumaki instructed the youth in the more esoteric arts, including the ancient disciplines of *Mikkyō*. The boy proved to be an exceptional student and by his 18th birthday he had acquired enough knowledge for both his father and Tatsumaki to declare him the first Grand Master of the Kōga Shinobi ryū.

Iechika led his shinobi, in secret (from within the legitimate Kōga family), for more than 40 years before being replaced by his greatest pupil, Kōga Ienari (970-1045), in 999.

Ienari was replaced in turn by Kōga Iesada (d. 1080). Iesada was a great *Mikkyō* practitioner who, after his retirement in 1077, spent much time drafting a list of all the prayers which he had created during his lifetime of study.

His successor, Kōga no Ienaga (1050-1130), however, was a shinobi of more practical skills. He led the clan's drive to improve their martial training by approaching the (then) friendly Iga ryū for aid.

Ienaga vanished in 1130 and was replaced by Kōga Ikeyo (1095–1173), known as “Hidoii” (the cruel). Ikeyo was, like Iesada, a *Mikkyō* of great power. But he was also as bitter as he was skilled. The angry Ikeyo drove his apprentice, Moriyoshi

Kanzai (d. 1211), into exile in 1172 when he deemed the younger shinobi a threat to his own leadership of the ryū.

Less than a year later, Ikeyo was deemed by the Soke of the clan—a position traditionally held by the lord of Kōga castle—as unfit to rule.

A short time later Ikeyo was assassinated by his own son, Kōga Iekuni (1140-1230), the only person who could get close enough to him and survive the encounter. Little is known about this young man aside from his successful assassination attempt on his father.

Iekuni's successor, Kōga Ietō (d. 1290) is recorded as being the first Kōga leader to openly declare an allegiance to a *shōgun*. This move caused some bad blood between the otherwise friendly Iga and Kōga ryū.

When Iekuni stepped down in 1285, he was replaced by Kōga Ieyoshi (1250-1325), the last direct blood relative of the founder of the ryū. Ieyoshi re-established the Kōga's loyalty to the throne, reassuring the Iga and averted a potentially bloody war.

Several clan heads, of which history says little, followed Ieyoshi, including: Mochizuki Iesuke (1283–1356), Ugai Mineo (1311–1376), Kōga Saburo I (1340-1410) and Akutagawa Shinbe (1380-1470).

Kōga Saburo II (1430-1469) is known for leading the Kōga once again into the political arena, by siding with the Sasaki clan against the Ashikaga Shōgunate. Saburo II was killed in battle, however, while leading Sasaki family forces in a minor skirmish. A number of other Kōga *chūnin* distinguished themselves in combat, but none of them would take the place of their fallen lord. As a result, between the years 1469 and 1486, Mochizuki Yajiro, Ukai Chiaki, Naiki Gohei and Akutagawa Tenpei (d. 1486) were all considered *jōnin* of the Kōga ryū.

With the death of Akutagawa Tenpei, the Kōga archives enter a dark period, a time in which the clan was not only desperately fighting alongside their *samurai* allies, but at the same time attempting to placate the increasingly enraged royalist shinobi ryū, who felt the Kōga's political stance betrayed all that the shinobi stood for.

Though history does not give us the name of the Kōga leader who eventually broke the Kōga as a shinobi clan and made them a pawn of the samurai (perhaps this is intentional), the Kōga ryū, to a man, threw their weight behind Ashikaga Yoshitsune (against Yoshizune) in 1556. The protracted Ashikaga Civil War led to the bloodiest period of the Sengoku-jidai (thanks, in part, to the Kōga's actions) as every other half-way powerful clan joined in the conflict, either for or against the Shōgunate.

The Iga refused to back the Kōga in this war, claiming that the Kōga ryū's political interference would only prolong the conflict, and when the Kōga would not relent the Kōga openly joined battle against them.

From 1556 to 1582, the Kōga waged a bloody war of attrition with the Iga ryū, their powerful *Mikkyō* making up somewhat for their lack of numbers compared with the larger Iga clan. For a while they were able to hold their own. But as their mystics began to fall to Iga assassinations, it became obvious that the clan would eventually be pushed back into Omi province, so, in 1580, Akutagawa Tenpei hatched a most daring and foul plot to send the Iga shinobi scurrying back home.

“There are five methods of attacking with fire. The first is to burn personnel; the second to burn stores; the third, to burn equipment; the fourth, to burn arsenals; and the fifth, to use incendiary missiles.”

—Sun Tzu

Taking all the shinobi he could spare, he pushed past the few Iga guards on the border and made for the nearest settlements with the intent of burning them to the ground and killing everyone who dwelt there. By the time he and his company crossed back into Kōga han, three villages—left relatively unprotected, as most Iga shinobi had joined the war—had been torched and over 150 Iga men, women and children, were killed, their throats cut as a message to the Iga.

But the intended effect of the attack backfired on the Kōga. Instead of retreating to Iga to protect their remaining people, the Iga Shinobi turned aside from the war to exact revenge on the Kōga. For almost a year, Iga ryū agents hunted Kōga shinobi, sympathizers and contacts wherever they went. The Iga completed their acts of revenge with an attack on the three Kōga training battalions in 1581, killing nearly all of the trainees in a night that has come to be known as *Ōkami Yu*. The devastation of that night brought both clans to their knees and made them easy picking for Oda Nobunaga's army, which tore through Kōga and Iga provinces nearly a year later, burning and butchering all he could find. When Nobunaga was killed, the Kōga were offered a truce by the notable Iga warrior Hattori Hanzō and both sides finally called the (open) war off.

The shame of the war lay heavily on Tenpei and when he vanished into the night in the summer of 1586, it was whispered that he had killed himself in remorse for the loss of life he had visited on his people. No-one has had the will to take his place as Jōnin so the chair remains empty. The Kōga clan is effectively ruled from Edo by the Shōgun's man, Hattori Hanzō, who brought the shattered remnants of the Kōga into the *bakufu's* pay in 1603.

As to the Iga, few in the Kōga can bring themselves to speak anything but hate of them still. No matter that Kōga politicking started the war in the first place and that their brutality deepened it further. What the average Kōga shinobi cannot forgive is that, despite all their rhetoric about the sanctity of the Imperial family, the chief servants of Tokugawa Ieyasu—the most violent and brutal Shōgun to have ruled—are the Iga.

The Kōga may be forced to work with them, they may even be required to openly praise them, but deep inside no Kōga ryū member wishes anything for an Iga shinobi but death and waits only for a chance to deliver it to one.

FAMILIES

There are a total of 53 families which make up the Kōga ryū. The eight largest families, sometimes referred to as “the strong eight,” are: Akutagawa, Ban, Kōga, Mochizuki, Nagano, Naiki, Ueno and Ugai.

Other families within the Kōga ryū include: the Aiba, Akimoto, Aoki, Endo, Fujiwara, Hakaryu, Hatta, Hiryu, Honda, Ikeda, Iwamuro, Iwane, Kamiyama, Katuragi, Kawachi, Kido, Kiyama, Kōga (some families have simply taken the name Kōga, even though they are not direct descendants of the original Kōga family), Koizumi, Kokawa, Kōnishi, Koremune, Kumawaka, Makimura, Minobe, Nagano, Naiki, Nakayama, Natsumi, Noda, Ohara, Okawara, Oki, Okubo, Ono, Saji, Sekiguchi, Shinjo, Shinno, Shinpo, Sugawara, Sugitani, Tachibana, Taira, Takamatsu, Takamine, Takano, Takayama, Taki, Tanba, Tarao, Tataru, Tatsumi, Tongu, Uda, Ueno, Wada, Yamagami.

Members

Jōnin: None (effectively Hattori Hanzō)

Soke: Nagano Jinnosuke

Chūnin: 36

Genin: 121

Sympathetic non shinobi: 24

KŌGA RYŪ SHINOBI TEMPLATE

INT	3	WILL	4	PRE	3	AES	4	PIE	3	KAO	3
SIR	2	CON	2	BOD	3	TECH	4	REF	3	DEX	3
MOVE	3	END	20	SD	4	STUN	15	HITS	15	REC	4
RES	12	HON	30								

Complications: Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (25), Enemy: Iga ryū (15), Oppressed: hinin (Const, Minor) (3), Poverty: dead broke (Const, Minor) (2), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extreme) (15).

Perks: Contact: Buddhist abbot (4), ML 2 in Kōga ryū (4)

Talents: Night Vision (3), Ambidexterity (3)

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Athletics 2, Binding 4, Buddhism 2, Chains 4, Climbing 3, Concentration 2, Confucianism 2, Conversation 2, Craft: (player's choice) 3, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Deduction 2, Demolition 3, Disguise 3, Evade 2, Folklore 2, Forced March 3, General Knowledge 2, Language: Japanese 2, Language: Kōga clan dialect 2, Local Expert: Iga province 2, Meditation 3, Navigation 3, Ninjutsu 4, Ninpō Taijutsu 4, Perception 2, Polearms: Lances 4, Scouting 3, Shintō 2, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Swimming 3, Swords 4, Teaching 2, Throwing 4, Tracking 3.

Equipment: ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*), sword (*shinobigatana*), 9 *juji-shuriken* (4-bladed), chain (*manrikigusari*), spear (*yari*), poor-quality peasant garb (*kimono* and *kobakama*, *obi*, *fundoshi*, 1 pair *tabi*, *waraji*).

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Kōga han, a small region of Omi province hemmed in between the sea, Iga and Omi proper. It is a region sporting few roads, tall mountains and many places for a shinobi to hide. While the Kōga hold to no peers in this province (especially in the area of Kōga castle—still held by the legitimate arm of the clan), their conduct in the civil war period has cost them much respect.

Their only political power at the moment comes from their association with the Tokugawa government and, as such, those Kōga ryū agents on “official business” will be treated with as much respect as is required (but no more). Moreover, may the gods help a Kōga shinobi caught out of his or her own territory without official leave...

POLITICS

Though at one time both a Royalist and a Loyalist ryū, the clan currently has no real political affiliation. They work for the Tokugawa only because it is more attractive than the alternative—being hunted into extinction by the Iga and their allies.

ALLIANCES AND ENEMIES

The Kōga ryū are enemies of the Iga ryū of ninjutsu, and often manage to support or become retainers of the faction opposing the Iga patrons. If the Iga are hired by a samurai clan during a conflict, for example, the Kōga are, more often than not, retained by the other samurai clan.

There are few direct conflicts between the Kōga and Iga, but it takes little provocation for hostilities to break out between them. Why Hanzō (or the Tokugawa bakufu) allows this sort of affair is unknown, but it may be that this is part of Hanzō's overall scheme to test each and every feudal lord's security for their new Shōgun.

KŌGA SHINOBI OF NOTE

Kōga Kumawaka*

Kōga ryū shinobi genin

Age: 38 (in 1603) **Caste:** Hinin **Faith:** Buddhist (Shingon)

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 2
STR 3 CON 3 BOD 4 TECH 4 REF 6 DEX 5
MOVE 4 END 30 SD 6 STUN 20 HTS 20 REC 6
RES 12 HON 22

Complications: Oppressed: hinin (Constant, Minor) (-3), Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor) (-2), Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (-25), Enemy: Iga ryū (-15), Hatred of Iga shinobi (Constant, Severe, Major) (-15), Secret: holder of hypnotic order planted by Hanzō, would cause loss of face (-5), Secret Identity: Scribe (Frequent, Extreme) (-15).

Perks: Contact: Iga Ryū Jōnin, Hattori Hanzō (10), Contact: Bandit Chief (4), ML 4 in Kōga ryū (8).

Talents: High Pain Threshold (3), Inpo (3), Knack with Stealth (3), Night Vision (3)

Ki Powers: Genjutsu: +3 (15)

Skills: Acrobatics 5, Acting 4, Athletics 2, Binding 4, Buddhism 2, Calligraphy 5, Chains 6, Climbing 3, Concentration 2, Confucianism 2, Conversation 2, Craft: 3, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Deduction 3, Demolition 3, Disguise 6, Escape 4, Espionage 7, Evade 3, Focus Ki 5, Folklore 2, Forced March 3, General Knowledge 2, Knives 3, Language: Chinese 2, Language: Iga clan dialect 2, Language: Japanese 2, Local Expert: Iga province 2, Meditation 5, Navigation 3, Ninjutsu 6, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Perception 2, Polearms: Lances 4, Scouting 7, Shintō 2, Sleight of Hand 5, Stealth* 8, Survival 5, Swimming 3, Swords 5, Teaching 3, Throwing 4, Tracking 5.

Equipment: Ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*), sword (*shinobigatana*), 9 *happō-shuriken* (8-bladed), knife (*tantō*), rope (*kawa*), poor-quality peasant garb (*kimono* and *kobakama*, *obi*, *fundoshi*, 1 pair *tabi*, *waraji*), access to appropriate garb for 3 disguises/roles.

Background: Wounded during the *Ōkami Yo*, Kumawaka has always held a deep and abiding hatred of all things Iga related. Through the years since that fateful night, he has made it a point of honor to make as many Iga genin mysteriously vanish as pos-

sible (though this is a secret known only to him) and has been able to deal with over twenty enemy agents so far.

He is recognized in the Kōga clan as being their greatest living exponent of Shinobi-iri. While his training lacks the subtleties that the arts of *Do-ton-jutsu* and *Moku-ton-jutsu* could bring to his skill base, he is still counted as one of the most capable spies the clan possesses.

He is currently living in a world of fear, however.

Several months ago, while staying at Kōga castle, he received a visit from Hattori Hanzō himself. The Shinobi master had circumvented all of the Kōga security measures and held Kumawaka captive—through one of his shinobi guards—in a hypnotic trance. He can recall very little of the experience, other than that of Hanzō instructing him not to slay Iga shinobi out of hand again and he cannot recall anything of the commands given to him after that other than they were “buried deep, until such time as they become required.”

Half torn by guilt and unable to confess his failing to anyone, Kumawaka seeks out any dangerous mission which is offered to the Kōga, partly to see if he can break his prohibition on killing Iga ryū agents (which he has not been able to) and partly to find a quick death for himself before whatever programmed commands which Hanzō's man placed in him come to the fore and he becomes a danger to his clan.

Personality: Depressed and confused by his inability to communicate his condition to his Kōga brethren, Kumawaka thinks of himself as a land-mine in a crowded street. He takes little joy from anything and less from the fact that he is unable to execute the one thing which kept him sane inside—the murder of Iga shinobi. However, he does appreciate the cruelty of Hanzō—for it would have been possible to program Kumawaka without him knowing about it—and, with no real malice, has promised himself that the first shinobi to die once he has managed to break his conditioning will be the Iga spy-master himself.

Quote: “*To what end does the water flow? Does it know what awaits it in the sea? And if it did would it still flow?*”

Kawachi Iefuji †

Kōga ryū Chūnin

Age: 48 (in 1603) **Caste:** Hinin **Faith:** Buddhist (Shingon)

INT 3 WILL 4 PRE 3 AES 4 PIE 4 KAO 6
STR 3 CON 5 BOD 4 TECH 5 REF 6 DEX 5
MOVE 5 END 50 SD 10 STUN 20 HTS 20 REC 8
RES 12 HON 67

Complications: Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor) (-2), Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme) (-25), Enemy: Iga ryū (-15), Oppressed: hinin (Constant, Minor) (-3), Secret Identity: Living a normal life (Frequent, Extr) (-15).

Perks: Contact: Buddhist temple abbot (4), ML 6 in Kōga ryū (12)

Talents: Ambidexterity (3), Genjutsu (3), Inpo (3), Moku-ton-jutsu (3), Night Vision (3)

Skills: Acrobatics 4, Athletics 2, Binding 4, Buddhism 2, Chains 6, Chemistry 3, Climbing 3, Concentration 4, Confucianism 2, Conversation 2, Craft: 3, Dance: Popular Dance 2, Deduction 4,

“If a mouse is backed into a corner, he may even bite a cat.”

– Japanese proverb

Demolition 3, Disguise 3, Escape 3, Evade 3, Folklore 2, Forced March 3, General Knowledge 2, Knives 3, Language: Chinese 2, Language: Kōga clan dialect 3, Language: Japanese 3, Local Expert: Omi province 2, Meditation 4, Navigation 4, Ninjutsu 5, Ninpō Taijutsu 6, Perception 4, Polearms: Lances 4, Scouting 3, Shintō 2, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 5, Survival 3, Swimming 3, Swords 4, Teaching 2, Throwing 4, Tracking 5.

Equipment: ninja garb (*shinobi shojoku*), *shinobi-zue*, above-average quality *katana*, 9 *jyūji-shuriken* (cross-shaped shuriken), average-quality peasant garb (*kimono* and *kobakama*, *obi*, *fundoshi*, 1 pair *tabi*, *waraji*), straw hat, appropriate garb for two disguises.

Background: Effectively in charge of many aspects of the clan since the signing of the recent employment treaty with the Tokugawa, Iefuji finds himself increasingly aware that the Kōga ryū are being slowly destroyed through inactivity as surely as if they were being wiped out in combat.

Though most Kōga ryū members think themselves fortunate to have a chance to repay the Iga (if only in part) for the wrongs—both real and imagined—they visiting upon the Kōga, Iefuji has eyes enough to see that the work Hanzō assigns the Kōga is aimed more at drawing out his young guns in combat with his own Iga troops and in such conflict the Kōga always seem to come off worse.

Iefuji estimates that his ryū has less than 20 years before it becomes too small to be able to challenge anyone openly. Iefuji has taken a desperate gamble to preserve his people. While on a mission to Fuma and Fukushima clan territory, just weeks after the signing on with the Tokugawa, Iefuji came across some information which would destroy the Fuma clan but might save his own—a plot to kill Emperor Goyōzei!

Iefuji hasn't made his intent to help the Fuma known to anyone yet, but he knows enough to realize that, even though the Fuma have several spies in the new summer palace (though their identities are unknown to him), their efforts will be for naught if the new Tokugawa learn of their plots before the time is right. Iefuji plans to help the Fuma with this plot.

He has stationed as many Kōga shinobi on the Fuma-Fukushima border as possible to intercept both Iga and Fuma agents in order to convince the Fuma that they are being observed by someone other than their old Fukushima foes.



Iefuji doesn't yet know how to best take advantage of the situation, but he is sure that *something* can be made of it. If he can just hold off the Iga for a time (until 1605), then he may be able to work the death of Goyōzei to his advantage.

Personality: Iefuji is that most dangerous of individuals and an enlightened madman. He has the cunning and skill to be able to carry through the plans he has concerning the secrecy of the Fuma plot, but lacks the good sense to realize that the Kōga wouldn't just be facing a disgraced Iga ryū in combat after the murder, but every other ryū that isn't already trying to eliminate the Fuma clan, as well.

Quote: *"They who love him so much shall watch him die and know that their own hatred and cruelty has brought this about!"*

"When the enemy's envoys speak in humble terms, yet continues its preparations, he will advance. When their language is deceptive yet the enemy pretentiously advances, he will retreat. When he speaks in apologetic terms, he wishes a respite. When, without a previous understanding, the enemy asks for a truce, he is plotting."

—Sun Tzu

OTHER RYŪ OF NOTE

Other ninjutsu ryū that have been mentioned in historical texts include the following. GMs can use these names for other shinobi clans in their campaign.

Ryū	Size**	Main Base /Province	Political affiliation
Aube ryū	74	Mutsu	Pro Tokugawa
Fudo ryū	123	Awaji	Anti Tokugawa
Fukushima ryū	98	Kai	Anti Tokugawa
Fuma ryū	134	Musashi	Neutral
Genjitsu ryū	69	Dewa	Anti Tokugawa
Gikan ryū	116	Kyūshū/Suwo	Neutral
Goton Juppo ryū	45	Iwashiro	Anti Tokugawa
Gyokoshin ryū	48	Awa	Pro Tokugawa
Gyoku ryū	38	Musashi†	Pro Tokugawa
Hakūn ryū	20	Iga	As per Iga ryū
Izumo ryū	34	Izumo	Pro Tokugawa
Kashihara ryū	50	Nagato	Anti Tokugawa
Kishu ryū	45	‡	Pro Tokugawa
Koto ryū	80	‡	Anti Tokugawa
Kōshu ryū	78	Echizen	Pro Tokugawa
Kukishinden ryū	57	Shimosa	Pro Tokugawa

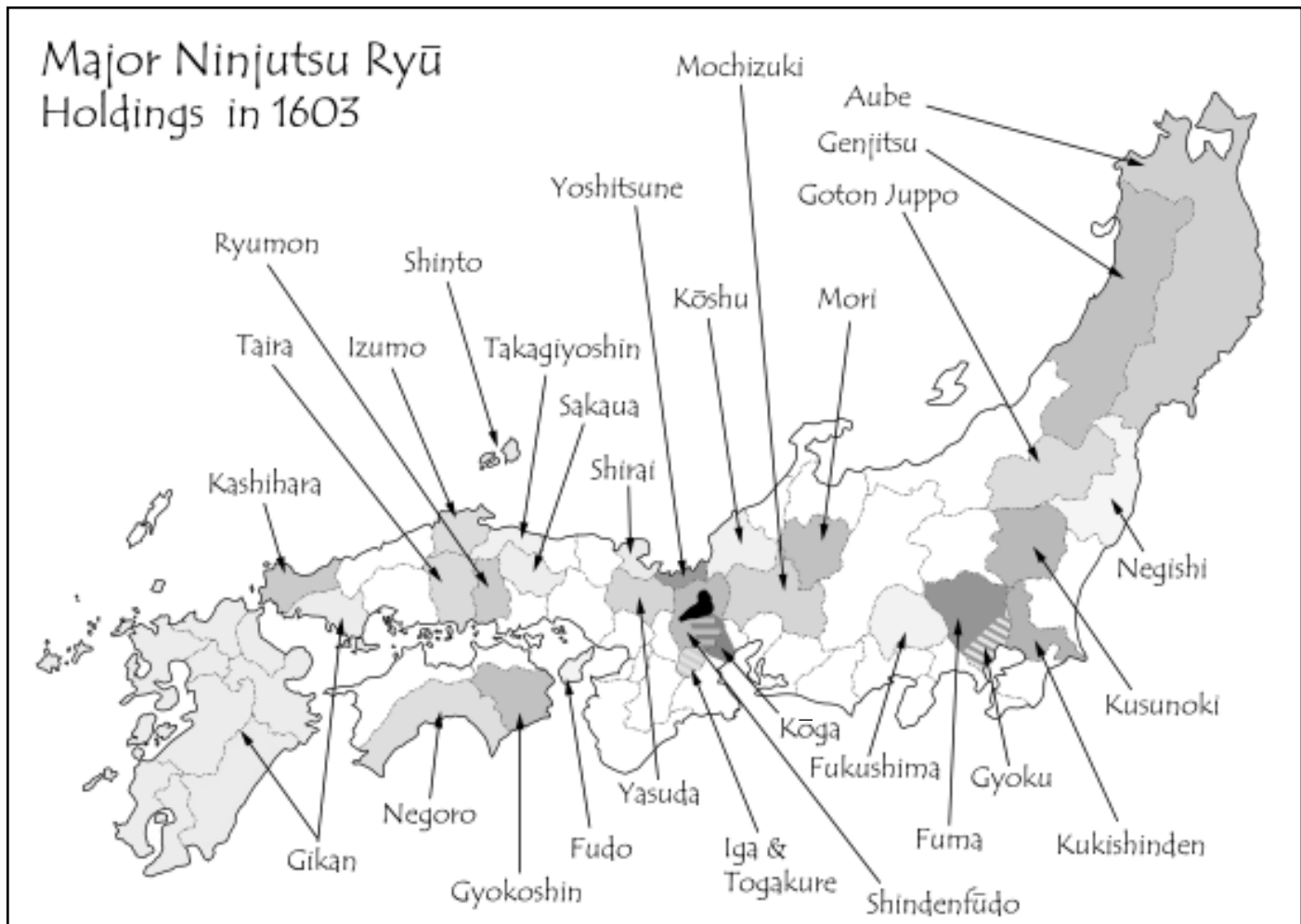
Kumogakure ryū	61	Tokuyama	
Kusunoki ryū	49	Shimotsuke	Anti Tokugawa
Minamoto ryū	40	‡	Neutral
Mochizuki ryū*	43	Mino	Neutral
Mori ryū	68	Hida	Pro Tokugawa
Negishi ryū	64	Iwami	Neutral
Negoro ryū	100	Tosa	Pro Tokugawa
Oshin ryū	80	‡	Neutral
Ryumon ryū	79	Bitchū	Neutral
Saiga ryū	72	‡	Anti Tokugawa
Sakaua ryū	42	Mimasaka	Pro Tokugawa
Shindenfūdo ryū	69	Omi	Neutral
Shinto ryū	74	Okai	Neutral
Shirai ryū	60	Tango	Neutral
Takagi-yoshin ryū	71	Hoki	Pro Tokugawa
Tenton Happon ryū	81	‡	Neutral
Toda ryū	83	‡	Anti Tokugawa
Togakure	83	Iga (primarily)	As per Iga ryū
Taira ryū	70	Bingo	Neutral
Yasuda ryū	68	Tanba	Pro Tokugawa
Yoshitsune ryū	69	Wakasa	Neutral

* A kunoichi ryū

** Represents the number of members in the ryū

† Primarily the Kanto plain and Yokohama.

‡ The location of the main base as of 1603 is unknown.



“If you have endurance and carefully plan your defense, the path to victory will naturally appear before you.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

OPERATIONS

What is a “typical” shinobi mission? The answer is, there isn’t one. Missions of any kind, incorporating a number of elements and goals, can be assigned to the genin. Within this chapter we will discuss the typical mission archetypes that a shinobi is expected to be able to carry out, as well as present some notes on the preparation, execution and completion of such missions.

MISSION ARCHETYPES

While shinobi genin can be used in a multitude of roles in the field, and components of an average shinobi mission can be categorized into a fairly small handful of archetypes. It’s important to remember that any single mission may incorporate aspects from each, every or none of the following mission archetypes. The GM may find it convenient to employ the descriptions below to assist in the creation of shinobi missions (and adventures), as well as to help him formulate missions that NPC shinobi may be undertaking against the PCs.

KŌI (ESPIONAGE)

Espionage is the gathering of information about an enemy from within. That is, a shinobi must infiltrate the enemy’s infrastructure or organization undetected, remain undetected (or unexposed), gather information or materials, and escape in order to return them to their master or employer.

Espionage missions can require a number of skills, including Stealth and Disguise (to aid in infiltration), Acting (to keep one’s cover), and Local Expert (knowing the area in which one is operating). Other skills can also come in handy, including Navigation, to find one’s way into and out of the target area or area of operation, Survival, and so on. And of course, the Espionage skill itself.

While on an espionage mission (or any mission calling for them), shinobi would draw on one or more of the five categories of “spies”: local, internal, converts, doomed and survivors.

Local spies are those local inhabitants of an area (village, town ward, and so on) whom the shinobi recruits or manipulates into acting for him.

Inward (or internal) spies are those people who are in the employ of the shinobi’s target or enemy. Officials and those in positions of authority are especially useful.

Converted spies are those working for the other side whom the shinobi turns, taking advantage of whatever weakness of temptation necessary in order to gain the other spy’s services. Essentially a double agent. Loyalty is not an issue. Only the actual actions or services gained are important.



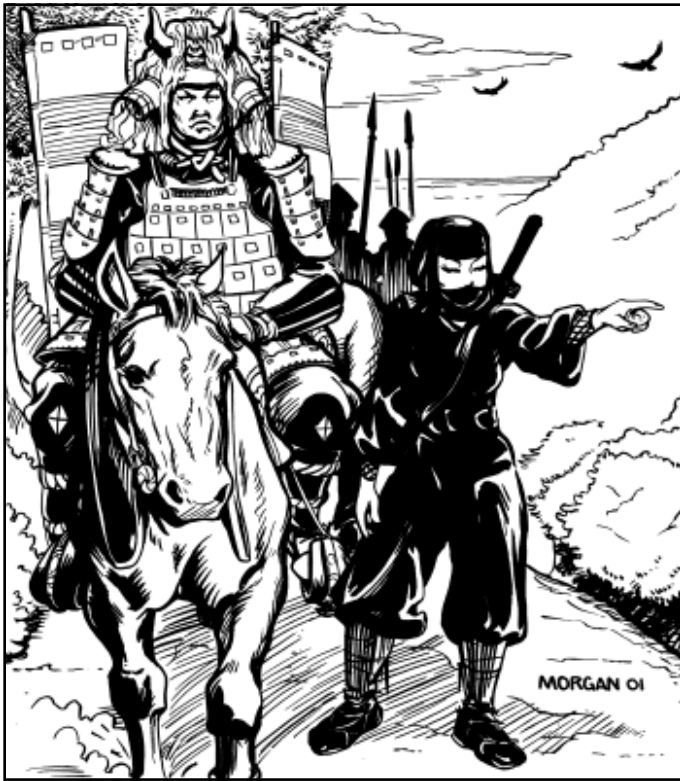
Doomed spies are those people who are coerced or fooled into working for the shinobi, often put into a position of being captured by the enemy. Believing the prisoner to be a real shinobi, the enemy may well be lulled into a false sense of security. Once the doomed spy is executed, the true shinobi can then continue with his espionage activities with little or no threat of meeting the same fate as the captured “spy.”

NAIRAN KADŌ (COUNTER-ESPIONAGE)

Counter-espionage is the act of preventing acts of espionage by other forces. A counter-espionage mission may be short or long term in nature, lasting hours, months or even years (though in the latter cases agents are generally rotated).

MACHIGA JŌHŌ (MISINFORMATION)

Misinformation or counter-intelligence missions consist of providing false information to the enemy (or other designated recipient) in order to manipulate them into a false sense of security or spur them to take some desired action (or not take an



undesired action). Misinformation can range from false reports of troop movements, the report of someone's death, an inaccurate report of the size of an enemy army, intercepting and altering messages in official mail, carrying false reports to 2 parties to stir up trouble or even to pacify a situation through false reporting.

ANSATSU (ASSASSINATION)

People can be inconvenient at times and this is a job that no-one can do better than a shinobi. While the motive for such a mission might be for political reasons, such as in the death of the pirate lord Kwangdo (killed by Iga ryū shinobi in 1480 in retaliation for raiding sections of the Shikoku coastline), assassinations might also be for what shinobi consider “personal” or “righteous” reasons. Such was the case of the cruel, petty lord Mizune Mineo, who was executed while on his toilet (from beneath, if the story can be believed) by a Togakure ryū shinobi, simply to prove that his assertion of being “totally secure from the vile assassins in Ieyasu's pay” was not quite as water-tight as he believed.

Though these sort of missions occupy a great deal of space in shinobi fiction, they are few and far between—even during war.

YŪKAI (KIDNAPPING)

In a world where loyalty in the ranks of the *kuge* or *buke* is often guaranteed by exchanging valued family members, kidnapping (and rescuing kidnap victims) could be a common mis-

sion for a shinobi, especially if in the employ of a powerful daimyō. Indeed, it is said that the simple presence of a beloved maid in Ōsaka-jo (Ōsaka castle) during the siege of 1616 prevented Ieyasu from shelling the place (with guns borrowed from the English) as he wanted until his shinobi had managed to recover her from her quarters in the main keep.

KYŌYŌ (EXTORTION)

Even shinobi ryū need money and extorting those with more resources (and fewer morals) than most men is an excellent way to get it. The Gyokkyo ryū maintain close connections with a number of quite corrupt merchants, from whom they squeezed money on threat of exposing their activities to the authorities (or simply killing them themselves). This form of extortion is, according to Iga books of lore, done so that “only the wicked suffer and only in the correct measure to offset their nefarious deeds, for a time.” A good shinobi should always be on the lookout for potential sources of such revenue.

TAISATSU (RECONNAISSANCE)

A common use of a shinobi at time of war. No-one can move about as quickly and quietly as a well-trained shinobi and, therefore, no-one can make a better scout. Army commanders often employ shinobi to patrol along the route of a march, or clear the flanks of a battlefield, or simply count the heads of an enemy force at closer range than might normally be possible. Indeed, so in demand are shinobi as scouting forces during the Sengoku-jidai that some ryū simultaneously hire out their genin to opposing armies, arguing that the scouts will not fight each other and will give accurate and quick reports to their masters, thus ensuring that neither can claim an unfair advantage.

PREPARING FOR THE MISSION

Preparation is the most important part of the mission for a shinobi and even the smallest of ryū will go to great lengths to make sure that as much intelligence-gathering and preparation as possible has been done before their agents enter the field.

The Cramming talent comes in useful for shinobi who need to retain new skills for their mission, such as Expert: Target (to know patterns of behavior, personality, and so on), Local Expert: Target area (to recall local customs, *matsuri*, and the like) or other skills to aid in perpetrating some disguise.

The following basic descriptions might be helpful to the GM (or the players) in devising and executing shinobi missions in a campaign. They do not themselves cover all eventualities but should provide some idea of how the average shinobi might go about preparing his or her groundwork.

“...as water has no constant form, there are in war no constant conditions. Thus, one able to gain victory by modifying his tactics in accordance with the enemy situation may be said to be divine.”

—Sun Tzu

INTELLIGENCE

An uninformed shinobi is a dead shinobi, it is as simple as that. No agent will ever commit to a mission without first having collected every as much information about the target as possible. Both players and GMs should be aware that having a well-understood plan—with all the necessary contingencies—will not only make the execution of the mission go more smoothly, but should ensure the team has a greater chance of success than if they simply “played it by ear.”

Gathering

Before a mission can begin the shinobi (or team) reviews all the currently held information on their intended target. Over the years, most shinobi ryū have gathered together a great deal of intelligence on a great many things. It is possible for their members (and allied shinobi) to access this data with permission. While this will never be a wholly accurate source of information, remembering that there might be someone in the ryū who can help can often save a great deal of work for the average group.

Gathering data in the field is a time-consuming affair of observation, recording and questioning, but it cannot be overlooked in its importance. Some pieces of information cannot be obtained by any other means than patience.

What a shinobi team needs to learn are such details as the lay of the land around a target, or the sort of settlements which are close by and what sort of shinobi presence can be expected. This sort of knowledge is relatively easy to acquire and valuable beyond measure to a skilled team.

Contacts (the “network of spies”)

In the planning stages of a mission as well as in the field, the shinobi’s network of contacts—sympathetic peasants in their areas of influence, paid informers or even unwitting members of the community who believe that they are speaking with an old friend from the *sake* brewery and not a shinobi—will provide most of the information that he or she needs to put their operation into motion. Anybody will tell you anything if you handle them in the right way. As has been said, “loose lips sink ships” (a fact that the shinobi rely on to a great degree).

Each agent in a team will probably have a few contacts, or enough experience with handling a particular group (*bushi*, peasants, sailors etc.) to get them to talk more freely than they would to others and this is what a clever group should be ready to exploit—for between a well put together shinobi band there should be a wealth of different social knowledge to call on. The Conversation skill comes in handy for these situations.

Contacts can provide the team with all sorts of interesting pieces of gossip concerning their target, which cannot be had via direct observation or archival study, such as what time the target retires, or where his meals are prepared or even how to enter his house. Always remember though that the information will have a price attached—even if it is only the suspicions of the person questioned—and clever shinobi should know enough to know when they have exhausted a source of intelligence.



SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT

Selecting Equipment

Shinobi travel light and while they have an impressive array of weapons and equipment at their disposal, it should be remembered that an agent’s watch word in the field should be “purpose.” Never select an item of equipment unless you are certain that it will be of use. Even the strongest PC can only carry so much and still perform as he should in a crisis.

Think ahead, use your gathered intelligence to assess what threats you might meet and plan to either avoid them or confront them with the minimum force required to neutralize them (though also remember that in many missions open combat will automatically mean failure. Shinobi are agents of secrecy, not *bushi*, after all).

Finally, though chains, breathing tubes, trick swords and bombs are all very attractive and fun to use, a shinobi’s most important weapon is his training. A good shinobi can usually get by in any situation without a cart-load of gadgets trailing behind. Use your wits, your training and your imagination and you will find that you won’t need a great deal of technology to complete most missions.

Rations

Of course shinobi must eat. Shinobi carry enough rations to sustain them for the duration of the mission, as a rule. This may not be necessary if the shinobi will be moving about in the open in an urban setting, with food aplenty. But if the shinobi is oper-

“Someone who does not lend a hand to justice is a coward and one who does not save a dying man goes against the way of nature.”

—Ri Hotei

ating in a covert role, avoiding contact with people, he will carry rations of some kind.

Common rations carried by shinobi include of *seimai* (polished rice), *mugiko* (wheat flour), *katsuiboshi* (dried bonito), *hoshimasu* (dried trout), *umeboshi* (dried plum) and *konamatsu* (tender pine powder). All of these foods are high in protein and provide crucial energy to the shinobi without the negative effects that fatty, “heavy” foods tend to have on the body.

Of course, if a mission goes longer than expected and a shinobi’s rations run out, he may have to rely on his wits to survive. This is when the Survival skill comes in handy...

DISGUISE (HENSOJUTSU)

In many situations a cover will be required for the agents and it is vital that at least one of the team be skilled at Disguise (*hensojutsu*). A great deal of time, effort and bloodshed can be saved on a mission if one or more of the shinobi can quickly and effectively impersonate their way into or out of any given situation.

Moreover, while shinobi are generally good actors, having an expert of Disguise on the team will help ensure that the group always presents the correct “face” to people. Masters of this skill are experts not only in the makeup of disguise but in the cultural aspects of assuming another personality (using the Acting skill) and can give critical advise in the field to less skilled shinobi.

TRANSPORTATION

The mode of a team’s transport will depend very much on what sort of cover they have chosen to go under. In feudal Japan, horses and *kago* (palanquins) are the province of nobles, war-

riors or the wealthy. Unless the team wishes to travel as high profile characters for some reason (such as a decoy mission), most forms of transportation will be barred to them anyway.

Should a mission call for a quick getaway or a long journey it may be necessary to arrange and exploit even high-profile methods of transport, such as ships. If the party is able to prepare for these sorts of eventualities it will save time, expense and minimize the team’s exposure to danger in the execution of the task.

EXECUTING THE MISSION

Having gathered, collated and interpreted all the available data from their various contacts and other sources, the shinobi can enter the field in an attempt to bring their mission to a successful conclusion.

Possessing all the data one could wish for is not going to help in the slightest unless the shinobi on the team are aware of the basic rules of execution. These are described (or rather, summarized) below.

Communication

Every shinobi in the team needs to know who is in charge and how they can communicate with him. During preparation this information might be communicated through disguised or coded letters (with the codes agreed upon well in advance by the team members).

In the field, communication might be through a series of coded gestures or sounds. In all cases, an accurate and well-understood system of communication is vital to the success of a mission. Agents will often be working out of sight of each other and yet still need to be aware of what is going on around them, in case trouble starts.

The skill Language: Gestures comes in handy, allowing shinobi to communicate simple messages to each other using subtle hand motions, a form of sign language or “hand-and-arm signals” used by modern day military forces (though more complex).

Getting In

This is where most missions are made and broken and shinobi should make doubly certain that their insertion is flawless as, while leaving a few bodies behind in exiting might be considered sloppy (unless the mission calls for it), starting a fight as one is attempting to enter a location is downright unprofessional.

First, the team need to be aware of what sort of insertion is going to be required—total (the whole team), partial (key specialists) or single (one operative)—and what level of disruption will be permitted in the entry. In most cases, obfuscation will be the order of the day, but it is possible that a diversion-covered entry might require a certain amount of “violence” on the part of the team.

The team next must decide where (across roof-tops, under floors, and so on) and when they will make their entry and how they will deal with anyone they meet along the way. This is especially important if members of the team are working out of contact from each other).



“To rely on rustics and not prepare is the greatest of crimes. To be prepared beforehand for any contingency is the greatest of virtues.”

—Anonymous

Dealing With Sentries

What to do with sentries may occupy a great deal of time in the planning stages. Killing them without great need is usually out from the start. A dead sentry can tell as much (by his broken body, or even by his absence) as can a live, loud-lunged guard. In addition, killing a guard on a mission which does not require it can stir up a veritable hornet's nest among his colleagues; with vengeance to fuel him, your average sentry can search very thoroughly when required.

Each guard will need to be approached in a different way. Only in researching the target can a shinobi know what sort of action will be required to neutralize a particular sentry. Some will need to be avoided, some impersonated, some bribed, others drugged, yet others lured away or even stirred into inappropriate action and premature pursuit.

No two situations are ever the same. Be ready for the unexpected.

Dealing With Capture

This is a tricky situation to be in on a mission. Being in the company of a group of people who want you to start singing like a *Hototogitsu* (Cuckoo) before they are obliged to break, burn or cut bits of you off, is not the best way for a shinobi to end a day.

Capture is a very real danger. The well-prepared shinobi team will be ready to respond quickly should one or more of its members fall into enemy hands.

Will a rescue be attempted, and if so, how (and will the enemy be aware of that fact)? Will the shinobi attempt to free himself (under cover of diversion maybe)? Would suicide be preferable to torture, and if so how will this be achieved?

It is vital that plans for dealing with capture be made long before the shinobi enter the field, perhaps on a standing order basis. This is especially true if it's learned in the intelligence-gathering stage that a target has peculiar habits concerning spies, shinobi and other interlopers.

Dealing With the Unexpected

No-one can prepare for every eventuality, not even the brightest of shinobi. The good shinobi will try to be as broad-minded in their plans as possible in case something should go wrong.

For example, it is common practice in the Iga clan to pull out of a mission location entirely should some unexpected variable enter the equation. The clan's shinobi prefer to deal as much as possible in absolutes and would rather pull out and re-plan their mission than risk proceeding in a state of potential confusion.

Try to be ready with contingencies for all foreseeable events, but recognize that—save from supernatural intervention—no-one can know the future. Prepare standing orders on what to do in case of an unexpected disaster (e.g., roof collapse, a team member dying, and so on)—and be sure that the team is aware of them. Above all be ready to act swiftly, for if a team is betrayed by an accident to the target it will have very little time to escape or otherwise repair the situation.



Getting Out

In most cases getting out of a mission location is easier than getting in but that doesn't mean that great care shouldn't be taken in doing so. In some cases (spying, reconnaissance and other covert missions) the method of extraction will be similar to that of entry. In more overt operations (those that have a direct and immediate impact on a target, such as bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and the like) it is necessary to move quickly and securely out of the area, and it might not be possible to get out the same way one got in.

For example, standing orders at Himeji Castle when lord Hideyoshi was in residence included dropping all water gates, closing all doors, barring all wells and doubling all guard posts should even a fire cracker go off without leave.

A good reconnaissance will tell the shinobi where the weak points in the target area's defenses are and reveal likely entry points are. Sensible questioning of contacts will give a good idea as to the movement of people, but the team would do well to plan for several methods of egress, in case a problem arises.

AFTER THE MISSION

The mission is not over until the team is home, but in many cases simply retreating by the most direct route to one's base may not be possible or correct. In fact, it is seldom advisable. The target may give chase (perhaps with his own shinobi) and it may be required to lose such pursuit before turning for home.

The team will also have to decide how to removing themselves from the area of operation without attracting attention to the

"Ninja must become familiar with eating natural food. We can also eat food without cooking it. First we need water. But drinking water is not enough. You can fill your chest with fresh mountain air."

—Toda sensei

group (if they have stirred up the target with their work at all). This may require ditching all their shinobi equipment and simply traveling in plain sight (dangerous but practical), lying low and waiting for the commotion to die down (difficult, especially if the mission involves kidnap, rescue or protection), or risking a fighting retreat.

Debriefing

Shinobi operatives should be thoroughly debriefed on their return to base by the Soke (or Chūnin) of their ryū. The employer may wish a report of the action, which the Chūnin will prepare based on the reports from the returning agents.

Every piece of information that the team can bring back to the ryū expands the clan's store of knowledge, potentially helping their fellow shinobi on future missions. Such information may include invalid intelligence, useful contacts, strengths and weaknesses of foes, bribes paid, layouts of buildings, unexpected happenings, and so on.

What's more, it allows the team a chance to talk through the events of the mission with one of their teachers and learn not only from their experiences, but also from their teacher's wisdom via feedback. If roleplayed, mission debriefings are also a good opportunity for GMs to award commendations, rewards and hand out Experience Points (see *SENGOKU*, page 226).

Follow-up

An important aspect of any operation is the follow-up mission, in order to provide an "after-action report."

In some cases the shinobi who performed the mission will remain in the area until they determine the exact effects of their mission. Some ryū maintain the philosophy that the mission is not considered "done" until the shinobi performing it can *verify* that they have, indeed, accomplished their objective.

In other cases, the shinobi performing the mission will return home, only to have another team perform a reconnaissance mission. In such instances, the team that carried out the original mission may not be consulted for the follow-up, due to the potential risk of reinserting the agents into the area of operation and exposing them to discovery.

In the follow-up, shinobi from the ryū will infiltrate the target location and attempt to discover exactly how the mission impacted it, if at all. Intelligence gathered from follow-up missions is important to the ryū; sometimes more so than the original mission.

The follow-up mission may even be conducted as a means of reminding the target that what happened once could just as easily happen again. For example, in 1582 Hattori Hanzō (allegedly) left a sinister black arrow on Toyotomi Hideyoshi's personal *kago*, resting outside his command tent to let the great lord know that even he was not invulnerable.

SHINOBI BASES

When not engaged in some mission for the ryū, the genin typically lives with his (or her) family in remote and typically secret communities. These communities can take one of several forms, though all are almost always located in hard to reach mountainous locales, appearing to be harmless villages or work stations to the casual observer. The secretive nature of the shinobi's "base" allows the shinobi to live and train without the need be constantly on guard.

TYPES

Shinobi bases are designed to mimic some other benign, socially acceptable institution, be it a farming village, temple, or some other front. The idea is to make the base appear to be an innocent "community" of some sort, with the whole population—from children to graybeards—engaged in the deception. This allows the base to escape the attention of the clan's enemies, whether they be the local *samurai* clan, another ninjutsu ryū, or even inquisitive travelers.

Interestingly, shinobi will often include an inn, of sorts, within their village, if the situation warrants it. The throughput of daily business not only profits the community but adds to the air of ordinariness about the base.

The Village

The farming village is one of the more common guises of a shinobi base. In the village, the shinobi live with their families, appearing for all the world like simple farmers. They may even maintain fields, planting and harvesting rice for taxes. Within this village, however, the shinobi operate, train and craft their special tools.

Shinobi villages are almost always located in the mountains, and are often located near temples, particularly Tendai or Shingon Buddhist temples, with which they are often associated.

The size of a shinobi village varies, depending in part on the size of the ryū itself. A common shinobi village consists of one to three families. The Chūnin likely resides there, as well (4 in 6 chance). Otherwise, the Chūnin will live nearby, in another village or town (or perhaps in that nearby temple).

Any special weapons or gadgets will be stored in secret areas. Each home will have a few secret alcoves, in which these items can be kept until needed. Common hiding places include beneath floors, behind stairs, secret compartments under the hearth, in the rafters, and so on.

In addition, each building in a shinobi village will have at least one secret escape route, through which the residents can escape should the village or building be invaded.

A Perception roll (DN 22) is needed to spot one of these hiding places or escape routes, and then only if they are being actively sought.

"The village that shines in the moonlight leaves a different impression in the souls of different people."

—Japanese saying

The Temple

Less common than the village is the shinobi temple. These temples are typically of the Tendai or Shingon sect, and they may have one or more bonafide Buddhist priests living there. More likely, however, any priests in the temple will simply be shinobi who are merely disguised as priests. Depending on whether or not the GM has allowed shinobi to possess mystic powers, these faux priests may be very convincing, indeed, casting prayers of healing and blessing to those who seek them out!

Living within the temple grounds will be a number (2d6 x5) of shinobi. There will generally be no women or children working in the temple itself, but in the *sanjo* (“outcast place”) which surrounds the base, the families of the shinobi will make their homes, disguising themselves as *onmyōji*, puppeteers and other polluted ritual specialists.

Training goes on within the temple’s various halls and courtyards. As with villages, the special weapons and gadgets are stored in a secret cache.



Historical Note: Sanjo Districts

Until the late 1800’s, wherever organized religion set roots in Japan, *sanjo*, or “outcast communities,” also sprang up to accompany it.

Only smaller temples and shrines developed attached sanjo districts, as a rule, but some notable exceptions did occur, such as the Ebisu Shrine on Awaji and the Honno-ji in Kyōto—both national centers of worship.

From the Heian period until well into the Meiji period, the areas around religious institutions (both Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples) were often designated (much as river margins also were) as free land, not taxed by the state.

As a result, it was open to use of hinin and other outcast peoples who provided those polluted but necessary services—such as waste disposal, midwifery and tanning—which society couldn’t function without.

While the riverbanks were declared sanjo because they flooded too often to be of use to farmers—and tended to be open to people connected with more powerful, physical pollution—the areas round temples and shrines were occupied by ritual specialists in spiritual pollution (such as *onmyōji*, Kagura dancers and puppeteers) very much because the temples needed their services in cleansing the sick and ritually contaminated.

This sort of place made an ideal base for a shinobi unit. Though temple and shrine sanjo areas were functionally no different from the average Japanese *mura* (village), few sensible people would risk entering such a place due to the perceived spiritual contamination which was said to exist in the districts.

Kakurega (The Safe House)

Often sited on the approach to a shinobi base or in areas not directly controlled by the ryū, these buildings are places where a

friendly shinobi can divest himself or herself of equipment, take on a new disguise, seek aid in avoiding capture, find rest and healing and even report his or her work.

Examples of fronts for *kakurega* (safe houses) include inns, bath houses and brothels. A ryū may maintain a number of safe houses in different areas (perhaps even in enemy-controlled territory). The Iga ryū, for example, possessed safe houses in Ōsaka, Miyako, Omihachiman, Himeji, Ueno and Kobe among other places.

Each can serve as a local nexus for ryū operational command. The larger and wealthier the ryū, the more resources a shinobi will be able to find in any safe house, but even the most simple will be able to offer basic medicine, food and escape (via tunnel, water or disguise) from danger.

There will commonly be 1 to 4 shinobi working in a safe house, with 2 to 6 other members of the community (young and old, as well as genin trainees).

Shinobi are expected to make use of these sanctuaries only at dire need, as even a single visit could break the house’s cover. Secrecy for the shinobi is paramount.

Fushōmen (The Shop/Storefront)

Many ryū maintained shops both in their own communities and in urban communities, often run as profitable enterprises. These shops can act as supply bases for field agents, supplying all manner of ryū equipment.

A shinobi-run shop might be located in sanjo districts or near a safe house (from which equipment could be borrowed and from whom supplies could be taken at need).

“...to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

—Sun Tzu



These stores tend to operate as general establishments, selling everything from cloth to rice. The size and nature of each business will be determined by the wealth and status of the ryū which owns it. Any given shinobi-run shop has a chance (determined by the GM) of possessing almost any shinobi item that might be needed by a team stuck in the field.

Much like safe houses (but to a much lesser degree), shinobi are under general orders not to over exploit their availability in the field.

BASE RESOURCES

Depending on the size and wealth of a ryū its home base could be supplied with all manner of equipment for use by its shinobi. Even the poorest will be supplied with an armorer with a small amount of equipment at his disposal, herbalist or physician, priest (in magic-rich environments), toolsmith, scribe and one or more teachers.

What a base might be able to provide in the way of material and support to its shinobi depends on its focus and cover.

For example, the Gyokkyo ryū, being a small clan based in Yokohama itself, might not be expected to possess a massive specialist armory, for the simple fact that it cannot spare the room to house it. But it may be well-supplied with everyday items such as food, medicine and clothing, as it can readily mix this sort of commodity with the items it sells in its front businesses.

Use the size, import and location of a ryū as a guide to what each base might possess, but always remember that while there

should be a chance of any shinobi related item or service being offered by any given base, they are not convenience stores for lazy players.

Training

From childhood to death a shinobi never stops learning. The careful ryū will always have masters on hand to serve the needs of their colleagues. The ryū's basic school (especially if situated in temples) might not be secret and used as part of the overall front of the place, but the actual *dojo*, the martial and professional school, will be well hidden (if in the base at all).

Each base can offer training in most general shinobi skills such as Ninpō-taijutsu, but not all ryū (nor even every base in that ryū) will or can teach every shinobi skill. It is up to the GM which skills can be taught at any given time.

As a rule, any shinobi can be taught at any base owned by his ryū, though certain restrictions do sometimes apply, which limit access to key personnel, usually to a single base.

The Hakūn ryū, for example, only teach hand-picked members of the Iga ryū's main base.

Equipment

All the equipment of a ryū belongs to that group and is doled out to shinobi as required for missions. This is done partly because the base might not have enough resources to equip all its troops (especially in poorer ryū), but moreso that it can keep a close watch over the equipment.

Shinobi should not be discouraged from owning their own weapons, but should be aware that while in base they are to be kept by the store master (or armorer). What's more, should mission-bound shinobi require a piece of equipment, the base will issue anything that it holds if needed—including a PC's equipment.

Employment

In addition to offering security, training, equipment and lodgings, the base is also the place from which work is assigned from the Jōnin, Soke or higher-placed Chūnin of the ryū. The leaders of the clan know where their bases are located and what sort of skills are represented by the shinobi at each, allowing them to assign work accordingly.

The bases' Chūnin can also assign more mundane sorts of work, the type of which a shinobi would do on a day-to-day, routine basis. These menial tasks maintain the shinobi's cover and also keep the base running. These tasks may include planting, harvesting, cutting trees for lumber, tanning or animal-related chores. While the shinobi can expect to eat as well as anyone in the base, they will be expected to surrender any money taken in such labor.

A ryū may hire out its shinobi as manual workers in a local town if there is something more to be gained than just money, such as making contact with useful individuals, catching up on local gossip, or even spreading misinformation.

"The ninja should dedicate themselves to sincerity and justice."

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

EQUIPMENT & GIMMICKS

CLOTHING AND GARB

While the average shinobi will make use of any sort of clothing required, there is one particularly famous item of attire which needs special mention, if only to clear up the misconceptions that surround it.

SHOJOKU

“Ninja always wear black clothes, everyone knows that. Hoods, and cloaks and masks too!”

—11-year-old Japanese martial arts student in Mie prefecture.

Origins of the Shojoku

Records, especially from the Iga han museum, show that though shinobi of the Sengoku-jidai certainly wore dark clothing when the situation required it, they did not have the same fascination with “black” that the modern world has imposed on them.

Indeed, the “uniform” of the shinobi—the black *shojoku*—is not mentioned with any regularity until the middle of the 19th century, when ninjutsu was making something of a comeback, surrounded by a cloud of misinformation and myth, which no doubt affected the way that the traditions were rebuilt by the new schools. It was during this period that the shojoku was adopted as the standard garb of the shinobi, not because of its camouflage properties but because it was associated with fictional shinobi in the Tokugawa-jidai (Edo period).

To find the first appearance of the shojoku in print we have to look to some of the “seedier” Kabuki and puppet theater plays of the early 17th century. One in particular, called *Rakudatsu Karasu* (*Pillaging Crows*, ca. 1610), depicts a shinobi entering the room of a character and assassinating him.

In many plays before this, when shinobi were required on stage, they usually came disguised as other members of the cast to obfuscate themselves. But in scenes where there were no other people present it was wholly impossible to hide the agent and his purpose. Therefore theater troupes started to “insert” their assassin shinobi into sets in increasingly outrageous ways (down ropes, on wires, up through the floor and so on). This reinforced the idea that they were masters of esoteric powers, and not until the opening of *Rakudatsu Karasu* did anyone think to use nothing. That is to say, nobody thought of using the stage hands themselves.

From the time of the first “theaters” in Japan (particularly the first puppet theaters and shrines on Awaji island in the Heian-jidai) black has always been associated with void—with nothingness. Scene shifters (especially puppeteers) took to wearing black robes with full-face hoods to better allow their audiences to ignore them when on stage.

By the 17th Century, with the rise in popularity of Ningyō Jōruri and Kabuki, the stagehand had taken on a wide variety of roles during performances, from helping actors lift heavy props to creating “waves” in paper oceans and mimicking the effects of wind on-stage. The average audience paid not the least attention to them, for, in truth, they were not there.

Even so, it is difficult to imagine the shock of the audience of *Rakudatsu Karasu* when one of these scene shifters, while supposedly making the drapes of a sleeping character move in the wind, pulled out a sword and assassinated his target! The commotion didn’t die down for weeks and, though the play was, by all accounts, wholly execrable, it drew full houses. It’s even been said that actual shinobi came to see this awful invisible assassin.

The concept stuck and after that play had died out of the popular consciousness the motif it had given to the theatrical world—the black-clad shinobi killer—remained firm in the minds of both theater-goers and playwrights, till it was passed down to the very people who were reforming shinobi arts in the 19th century. The museum tells that the masters who re-founded the ryū in the early 1800s were so taken with the notion of the black clad assassin that they adopted the shojoku more or less as their official uniform (as they still worked for the Tokugawa at the time) believing that the reputation which 200 years of popular fiction had given their profession was worth exploiting.

Colors in History

Shinobi garb is produced in a variety of colors. The color of garb worn for any given mission is selected for its ability to aid the shinobi in blending into the environment. Of course, if the most ideal color is unavailable, another will have to be selected. The default color is black, as a shinobi perform missions under the cover of darkness whenever possible and will always attempt to move in the shadows.

Shinobi shojoku may be purchased (or created, if the shinobi has the Craft: Tailor or other appropriate skill) as reversible, with one color on each side of the garb. Switching colors requires merely undressing, turning the garb inside out and then putting the garb back on.

“...the black color of the ninja’s [shojoku] really represents forbearance and the concealed righteousness of man. Forbearance means being able to maintain concealment no matter what insults and oppression exist.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

Below are the common colors in which shinobi shojoku may be found. Note that all bonuses and penalties listed are cumulative; that is, they may be combined with other modifiers, such as those provided by talents and other modifiers in the *SENGOKU* rule book or determined by the GM.

Black: This is the most common color encountered in shinobi fiction and theater, and is the color that most people associate with the garb. Black garb is used at night, and it gives the wearer a +1 to all Stealth rolls at night or when moving in dark shadows. It provides a -2 when worn in predominantly white environments (such as light-colored smoke or snow).

Brown: Brown is the color of autumn and the earth. Brown garb is used when moving or operating primarily in the day time, allowing the shinobi to blend more easily with the earth, hiding in dirt or within foliage (trees and bushes), in mountainous terrain, and even when outdoors in urban areas, in which one finds mostly earth tones (dirt roads, wooden buildings, and so on). A brown shojoku provides the wearer a +1 to all Stealth rolls when hiding in such environments. It provides a -1 when worn in predominantly white environments (such as light-colored smoke or snow).

Gray: Gray garb is used when moving about over or near large stones, in quarries and so on. Gray garb gives the wearer a +1 to all Stealth rolls when moving on or near stone (including boulders, castle stone walls, natural cliffs, and the like) and in smoke-filled environments. It provides a -1 when worn in predominantly white environments (such as light-colored smoke or snow).

White: White is the color of the snow and is most effective when used outdoors in a snowy environment, regardless of the natural terrain. White garb gives the wearer a +1 to all Stealth rolls in snow-covered and some smoke-filled environments. It provides a -2 when worn at night or in any other environment, except smoke-filled ones (there is no bonus nor penalty when wearing white and hiding within smoke).

Theater Colors

In shinobi theater (even early Edo period writing) one sees some unusual conceits being employed by writers to get their messages across to the audience. The most unusual of these are the ways in which shinobi are “color coded.” This came out of the necessity of an audience to be able to distinguish between heroes and villains in *shinobi taishen* (shinobi war) dramas.

The colors were, like many elements of Japanese theater, fixed and became so much a part of the culture of the theater that they still make the occasional appearance in shinobi film and television today.

While the descriptions below are drawn from shinobi fiction (the theater, really) they represent an interesting and unusual aspect of shinobi culture which might find a good home in your campaign world. While not historically accurate, the campaign is yours and whatever the GM and players enjoy is what should be used.

Blue: It is thought that the blue shinobi shojoku started life as a simple dying expedience with theaters. Black cloth, dyed with charcoal based inks, decayed faster than did other clothes (as the

dye was mildly acidic). Often when black was required, it was replaced by a very dark indigo, which appeared black when fresh and under poor lighting. In the Tokugawa period being dressed in blue had no special meaning. Today—in such TV series as the parody *Nintama Rantarō* (*Ninja Kid* or *Egg Rantarō*) the feeling is that blue clad shinobi are somehow, poor, incapable or clumsy with their work.

Red: As in many cultures, red is a violent and angry color in Japan. When a shinobi dresses in red it is to denote that not only is he on the wrong side, but that he is to be considered an important villain. Some TV series, such as *Kage no gundan* (*Shadow Warriors*), portray rogue shinobi and, at times, well-organized gangs of thieves or assassins, in red or orange shojoku.

Gray: Theatrically, gray represents neutrality to the Japanese and it was often the case that shinobi who were not directly involved in a story (on either side) would be dressed in gray to allow the lead characters to stand out more. In some modern TV shinobi dramas, such as *Kage no gundan* (*Shadow Warriors*), where the “star” shinobi wear black, the rival Kōga ryū shinobi wear gray shojoku, ostensibly to allow the viewers to distinguish between the two.

White: The white shinobi is quite a long standing myth in Japan, dating from the time of Togakure Daisuke, who is said to have encountered a blind, white-clad shinobi while on a mission. Theatrically, white shinobi are commonly presented as villains who have rebelled against their evil ways and are attempting to atone for their crimes. In these cases, the white represents that the shinobi considers himself both dead to their past evils and in a state of purity. Alternately, white may represent ghostly shinobi who have returned from Jigoku to carry out some great service (such as the one who meets Daisuke).

No color: Or no costume at all. This does not mean that the character is dressed as any other person, for they invariably openly carry around signs that they are shinobi (masks, shinobigatana, shuriken etc.), but it is to give the impression to the audience that these are people who are beyond the group and are powerful personalities which cannot be defined by a simple uniform. Only the most powerful or infamous shinobi ever appear dressed in this fashion (with the evil ones sporting more red clothing than any other color after the tradition above) and their appearance on stage is usually a cue for a very nasty fight.

DISGUISES

Akindo (Merchant)

Shinobi disguised as merchants will usually portray themselves as one of the Omi Merchants, famous for traveling on foot with large loads carried in a pair of crates suspended by a long pole. The crates can easily hide any number of items while the pole itself can be used as a *bō* or, with chains and/or blades concealed inside the shaft, as a *shinobi-zue*.

The only real difference between a wealthy peasant and a traveling merchant’s clothes is in regard to footwear; merchants wear shoes designed for long walking with heavy loads rather than

“When capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity.”

—Sun Tzu

geta or other simple footwear. The merchant will typically have some form of *jingasa* (conical helmet) or *kasa* (straw hat), and a straw *mino* (rain cloak).

Because Omi Merchants are a common site around Iga, Omi, Yamato and other nearby provinces, this makes for a particularly effective disguise in the Kansai region. It is also an excellent cover for a group of traveling shinobi, as Omi Merchants often moved about in fairly large groups.

Equipment required: *Soroban* (abacus), *uchi-bukuro* (purse), *chōchin* (lantern), *hanko* (seal), *wakizashi*, above-average quality peasant garb. Omi Merchants will also have: *jingasa*, a *mino* (straw raincoat—a trademark of sorts among them) and a pair of porter's chests with a poles.

Hokashi (Musician)

Traveling musicians—usually skilled in the *yokobue* or *shakuhachi* (both flutes), *biwa* or *shamisen*—tend to travel light. Commons items carried include a small amount of food and money (to obviate the risk of being robbed), their performing clothes and musical instruments.

This disguise is one of the most effective for shinobi, as musicians need no travel papers when moving around, as long as they carry no weapons, and can demonstrate their skills sufficiently.

Moreover, like priests, musicians are considered somewhat “sacred” and attacking one is believed to have an adverse effect on one's *karma* (a hold-over from the days when itinerant players performed cleansing rituals and entertained the local kami).

Unlike priests, however, musicians will rarely be called on to give more than a song or three if they are accosted by passers-by.

Equipment required: Instrument (as above), colorful clothing.

Ishi (Doctor)

Doctors are a universal archetype that is well-respected and often sought after by everyone. No matter where a doctor travels, his services are sure to be needed by someone.

Shinobi traveling disguised as doctors (whether they are a true doctor or not) can mix with all strata of society, from the lowliest peasant to high-ranking *buke*, without rebuke. This doesn't mean the doctor can literally enter any building or area considered off limits, but his presence will not be suspect if he is encountered in any common area.

Doctors also carry herbs and medicines, as a rule. Anyone lacking the proper skills (Herbalist or Physician, for instance) will be unable to determine if powders or elixirs carried by a “doctor” are truly medicinal or lethal in nature. Thus, a shinobi disguised as a doctor can usually carry all manner of poisons without raising suspicion.

This “disguise” is especially suitable to shinobi possessing the requisite skills and who are true physicians (either as a cover profession or as their position within the *ryū*).

Equipment required: Above-average peasant garb (*kimono*, *kobakama*, etc.), physician's kit (with appropriate herbal rem-



edies, drugs and/or poisons), *chōchin* (lantern), *hanko* (seal, for prescriptions and letters).

Komusō or Shukke (Buddhist Monk)

Both of these are rather difficult disguises to maintain, but a relatively profitable and safe one in these post-Nobunaga days. Assuming the shinobi can execute all the basic rituals of the priest or monk he is impersonating (requires the Buddhism skill with a score of 3 or better), he will more often than not be left in peace by even the worst villains and bandits. After all, everyone knows that holy men carry no wealth and that harming one can badly affect one's next turn of the Karmic Wheel.

For a shinobi, however, priestly attire and equipment can disguise a multitude of sins. A priest's staff makes an excellent *bō*, Buddhist rosaries can hide a length of chain, and even the ubiquitous straw hat can be a place of concealment.

When disguised as a priest, who are well-known as bringers of news and predictors of future events, the shinobi can easily spread misinformation in news-hungry villages and towns. Thus the shinobi can stir dissension, cause unrest and confusion among the populace while walking invisibly among them.

Equipment Required (Komusō): Straw “basket” (face-covering) hat, *shakuhachi* (flute),

Equipment Required (Buddhist Monk): Buddhist priest's robes, rosary, *bō*, *kasa* (large straw hat), begging bowl, and a “walking staff.”



Mawashi (Actor/entertainer)

Like musicians, actors (puppeteers and the like) may travel without let or hindrance in feudal Japan. This is because their work has always been associated with aspects of ritual purity and cleansing, but mostly because few can bring themselves to harm poor and potentially entertaining actors.

Important skills for this disguise include *ningyō jōruri* (Puppeteer), *sekkyō* (storytelling—Oratory), *sarugaku* (comic arts, acrobatics and simple legerdemain—Juggling and Sleight of Hand) *sangaku* (musical dance—Dance: Popular).

As long as shinobi can perform their parts well, this disguise not only allows them to travel openly as a group, but might even gain them access to any number of potential targets—even the Son of Heaven and the Shōgun hire wandering players from time to time.

Equipment required (Ningyō Jōruri): Puppets, portable scenery and carrying box, dark clothing (with hood).

Equipment required (Sekkyō): Script books, gong (bell or *shamisen*), small sitting cushion (for telling stories from), dark clothing, *ogi* (folding fan).

Equipment required (Sarugaku, as a company): Colorful

clothing, gongs, bells, whistles, *biwa*, *bō*, juggling props, various costumes and traveling cases.

Equipment required (Sangaku, as a company): Court-style robes, *ogi* (folding fan), various masks, gong, *shakuhachi*, *biwa* and script books.

Rōnin

A simple disguise for a shinobi, for few will ever even acknowledge the presence of one of these masterless warriors, even if they are dragging around a huge arsenal with them.

Most Japanese ignore those things (and people) they don't wish to come into contact. There are far too many rōnin wandering around the country (with all the retainers of lords killed or dispossessed in the civil wars) attempting to make their way in society with their swords for a few more to attract notice.

The disguise will not allow a shinobi to get as close to certain higher sections of society as they might like (unless, as part of the cover, they sign on with a new lord), but it will allow them to bear arms openly without suspicion.

Equipment required: Poor-quality *buke garb* (*kimono*, *hakama*, etc.), partial samurai mid-level armor (see *SENGOKU*, page 162), Average-quality (or worse) *dai-shō*, other weapons (as appropriate, such as a *yari* or *yumi*), *uchi-bukuro* (purse), and a bad attitude.

Yamabushi

The *yamabushi* (or *shugenja*) is another specialized disguise which, while having some very specific risks attached to it, allow an armed shinobi to wander where he wishes without let. Few are bold (or foolish) enough to willingly antagonize *yamabushi*, for they have reputations as superb warriors and masters of mystical powers.

Ironically, the sect which gave birth to so many shinobi ryū—the mysterious Shugendō—now serves as one of their best covers for wandering the country.

The irony is not lost on the *shugenja*. Of all the disguises a shinobi can adopt, that of the *yamabushi*, though among the safest for moving among the populace, is also the most dangerous if one encounters another *yamabushi*. No matter how good an actor a shinobi may be, most true *yamabushi* will instantly recognize a person so disguised as a fraud (Perception roll, DN 14), and if not of a group allied to the shinobi then trouble will not be far off.

Equipment required: *Bō* or walking staff, *katana* (or *masakari* or *ono*), *yaseuma* (backpack), *yamabushi garb* (*kimono*, *hakama*, *haori*, *wagesa* (long cloth ribbon hung around the neck), conch shell horn, and *tokin* (small peak cap).

“When campaigning, be swift as the wind; in leisurely march, majestic as the forest; in raiding and plundering, like fire; in standing, firm as the mountains. As unfathomable as the clouds, move like a thunderbolt.”

—Sun Tzu

THE SHINOBI ARSENAL

Below is a listing of weapons commonly employed by shinobi. Not all of the weapons described below are necessarily associated solely with shinobi. Others, however, would *never* be used by anyone other than a shinobi, such as blowguns, *ninjatō*, *kyotetsushoge*, and the like).

Some of the weapons listed here are reprinted from the *SENGOKU* core rule book for convenience.

BAKUHATSUGAMA

The *bakuhatsugama* is a *kusarigama* with an explosive charge attached to the end of the weighted chain. The explosive charge is contained within a ceramic shell coated with cloth. It is lit just prior to being used.

On a successful strike, the shell breaks and the charge ignites, exploding violently. The explosive charge does damage as per a *nagedeppō* (grenade), but with only a 0.5 ken (1m) blast radius.

Requires the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill.

BISENTŌ

A large glaive, originating in China. Blows are delivered with a cutting motion. Due to its weight and length, great power can be developed in a good swing, though this also makes the weapon more cumbersome and difficult to use effectively.

Requires the Polearms: Glaives (*naginata-jutsu*), or any other Polearms skill at -2.

BŌ

A 6-*shaku*-long hickory wood staff. A common item among traveler, including priests and *yamabushi*.

Requires the Polearm: Staves (*bō-jutsu*) skill, or any other Polearms skill at -1.

CHIIRIKI

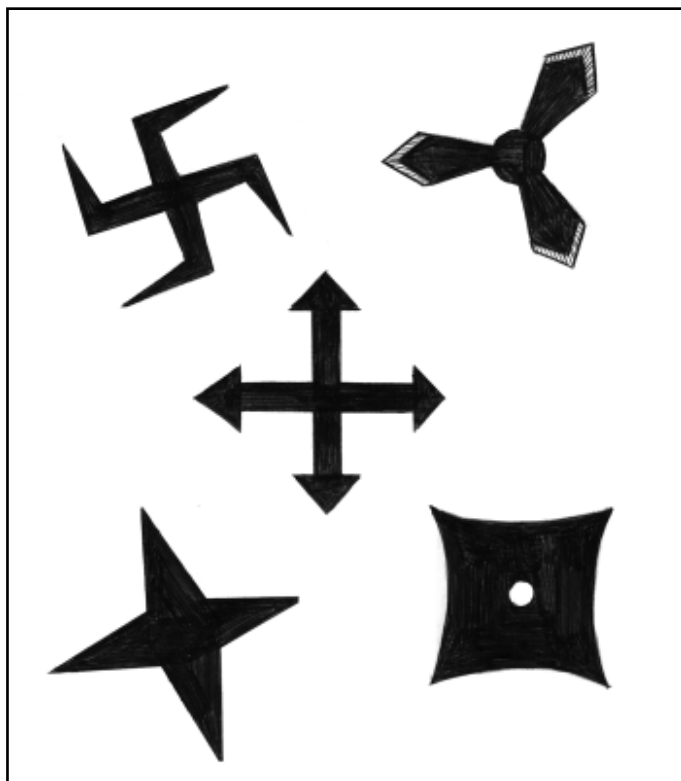
A flail-like weapon comprised of a short staff with a spiked ball or spear head attached to it by a length of chain. A very awkward weapon to use, but it delivers nasty wounds.

Requires the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) and Polearms: Staves skills (or any other Polearms skill at -2) to use properly.

FERUZUE

A *bō*-length staff with a chain concealed within the lower quarter. The chain can be extended by twisting off the base, turning the seemingly simple staff into a powerful flail.

Requires both the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) and Polearms: Staves (*bō-jutsu*) skills in order to be used effectively.



FUKIYA

Fukiya are blowguns and blowpipes. While many types of basic blowguns exist in Japan, they can be grouped into three categories (described below).

All forms of *fukiya* require the Blowgun (*fukiburi-jutsu*) skill to use.

Dart Blowguns

Simple blowpipes of varying length. The longest (over 6 *shaku*) can easily project a dart over 20 meters, while the smallest, the *zetsukan* (tongue pipe) is short enough to be carried comfortably in the mouth for extended periods.

Powder Blowguns

Funkan (powder pipes), also known as *metsubishi*, are typically constructed as boxes from which clouds of powder can be blown. Ground peppers, ash or more lethal chemicals can be loaded in a chamber in the top of the small device, and are usually targeted at a victim's eyes.

Water Blowguns

Similar in basic design to *funkan* (powder blowguns), *suikan* (water pipes) use a small bladder attached beneath the blowpipe to contain the liquid (irritant, drug or poison). The shinobi squeezes this sack as he blows through the pipe, delivering a fine spray onto the desired target.



JŌ

The *jō* is a short, 3-*shaku*-long staff favored by many *budoka*, as well as shinobi. Four-*shaku*-long versions are called *hanbō* (half staff).

Requires the Polearms: Staves (*jō-jutsu*) skill, or any other Polearms skill at -2.

KAGINAWA

The *kaginawa* consists of a rope, usually made of human hair, attached to a small 2- or 3-hook grapple. Very light and easy to heft, it is not unknown for shinobi to turn this tool into an effective weapon at need.

Requires the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill to use as a weapon (treat damage as per *manrikigusari*).

KAMA

The ubiquitous peasant's harvesting tool, the *kama* consists of a short, one-*shaku*-long wooden handle with a slightly curved blade set at right angle at one end. This weapon is favored by rural shinobi as carrying a *kama* openly is not forbidden to peasants, even on the Ryūkyū islands, where the population have been forbidden any sort of weapon.

Requires Kama (*kama-jutsu*), or Axes at -1.

KAMAYARI

A *yari* (spear) with a horizontal, *kama*-type blade attached just below the main, vertical blade.

Requires Polearms: Lance/Spear (*sō-jutsu*), or any other Polearms skill at -1.

KAWANAGA

The *kawanaga* is a weighted rope, used both as a climbing aid and as a crude club. As a climbing aid it adds +1 to the user's Climbing roll.

Requires Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) at -1 AV.

KISERU

A fully functional iron pipe which can be turned into an effective short club. Requires Pipes (*kiseru-jutsu*) or Swords (*ken-jutsu*), Axes (*ono-jutsu*) or Kama (*kama-jutsu*) at -2.

KUMADE

The *kumade* is a rake, another agricultural tool that can be turned to martial ends. The *kumade* consists of a bamboo shaft, to which is attached a horizontal piece, with six to eight narrow bamboo tines, at one end.

A variation of the *kumade* that is favored by shinobi is one with metal tines instead of bamboo. A shinobi-made *kumade* allows the tines to be folded and concealed within the hollow bamboo shaft, which can also be collapsed into a length of tube only two or three *shaku* in length (this version costs twice the listed price).

Requires Polearms: Glaive (*naginata-jutsu*), any other Polearms skill at -2 or Axes (*ono-jutsu*) at -1.

Historical Note

While inside a building, Nightingale Floors—wooden surfaces designed to squeak when trod upon—are often employed to defeat shinobi. Outside it is common to place important buildings (such as armories) in a relatively isolated location on the grounds, surrounded by surfaces of white sand, fine gravel or loose soil so that footprints would easily show up in them. A *kumade* is often taken by a member of a shinobi team specifically to erase any trace of their passage across such surfaces.

KUSARI-FUNDO (SHORT CHAIN)

A short, 3-*shaku*-long heavy chain with small iron weights at both ends. While it cannot be used to grapple, it can be employed as a flail in confined spaces and used to block bladed weapons. Requires the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill.

“The ninja [uses] his skills to avoid being hit by the bullets fired from guns but also to avoid confrontation if that was the wisest decision.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

KUSARI-GAMA

A *kusari-gama* is a kama with a length of thin chain attached to the butt of the handle. The chain is 9- to 12-*shaku*-long, with a small weight attached to the loose end.

Users with the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill can perform Grab and Entangle maneuvers with the chain portion of this weapon. A common technique with this weapon is to bind the opponent's weapon or arm with the chain, thereby enabling the user to draw the opponent in and finish him off with the blade.

Some versions store the chain inside the handle (add 50 percent to the listed cost), which can be drawn out of the bottom.

Requires both the Kama (*kama-jutsu*) skill (or Axes at -1), to use the bladed portion, and Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) to use the chain portion.

KUWA

Yet another farming implement, the *kuwa* is a broad-bladed hoe. Used very much like a glaive in an attack, it can develop great force and is especially useful against armored foes, with its narrow pointed blade.

It is another weapon popular with rural shinobi as it can legally be carried by anyone (in its role as a hoe, of course). Requires Polearms: Glaive (*naginata-jutsu*) or Polearms: Staves (*bō-jutsu*) at -1.

KYOTETSU-SHOGE

The *kyotetsu-shoge* is a weapon used exclusively by the shinobi. Anyone observed using a *kyotetsu-shoge* may automatically be assumed to be a shinobi, and justifiably so.

The *kyotetsu-shoge* consists of a 12-*shaku*-long cord made of hair, silk or hemp. Attached to one end of the cord is a steel ring, about 4 inches in diameter. To the other is a specially-shaped knife, with one straight blade and a second, curved blade set at a 90 degree angle at the base of the main blade. The cord itself is very strong, able to support a grown man while climbing.

The ring can be thrown over the ends of roof beams, tree limbs or other protruding items to be used as an anchor as the shinobi climbs up the rope. Use of the *kyotetsu-shoge* allows a bonus of +1 to any Climbing roll in which it can be employed (GM's discretion).

The blade can be held in one hand and used as a knife, thrown at targets or swung at the end of the cord. The cord can be used to ensnare the limbs or a weapon of an opponent (with a Grab maneuver), or swung with the heavy metal ring at the end of the cord to deliver a nasty blow.

Using the blade in melee combat requires the Knives (*tantō-jutsu*) skill, or the Kama (*kama-jutsu*) skill at -1. The knife can also be thrown using the Throwing (*shuriken-jutsu*) skill. Both the blade and the ring can be swung at the end of the cord, using the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill. Throwing the ring requires either the Chains or Throwing (*shuriken-jutsu*) skill.



MAMUKIGAMA

Similar in design to the *kusarigama*, the *mamukigama* consists of a *kama* with a 9- to 12-*shaku*-long cord attached to the butt of the weapon. At the other end of the cord the shinobi ties a small but extremely deadly poison snake.

On any successful attack with the cord, the GM rolls 1d6. On a roll of 1 to 4, the snake bites the victim, delivering its deadly venom (**Mode:** Blood; **Speed:** 1 Round; **DC3;** **Duration:** 1 Min.). The victim must make a CON + 3d6 roll (DN 18) to avoid the effects of the poison. The damage rolled for the poison is subtracted from the victim's Hits, and one-fifth of the number rolled (cumulative) is subtracted from REF and DEX. When both REF and DEX reach zero, the victim is paralyzed. Excess damage continues to subtract from Hits.

At the GM's option, any critical failure rolled by the shinobi employing this weapon results in a "strike" by the snake. Roll to see if the snake bit them, as for strikes against an opponent.

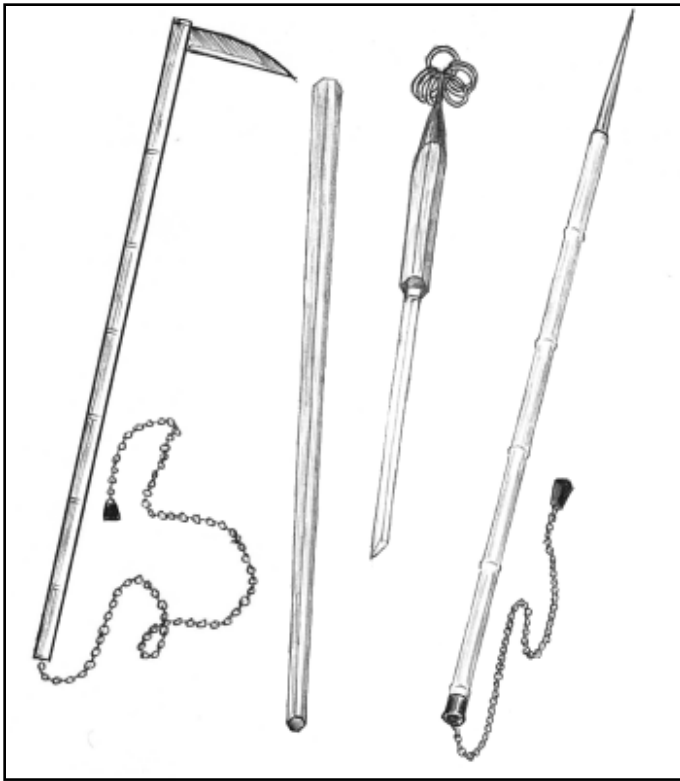
Requires the Kama (*kama-jutsu*) skill for the blade and the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill to use the cord (including throwing the snake at an opponent).

MANRIKIGUSARI

The *manrikigusari*, or "thousand power chain," is a long, 9-*shaku*-long (or longer) weighted chain. It can be used to aid in climbing (+1 to Climbing rolls), as well as striking and entangling a foe in combat. Users with the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill can perform Grab and Entangle maneuvers with one end of the chain and still have enough length left to perform repeated Strike maneuvers against the disabled opponent.

"You'll be a failure unless you know how to defend your weak point, even if you know the unguarded point of your opponent. The secret of defense in martial arts is to always be alert."

—Hakūnsai Tozawa



METSUBISHI

See **Fukiya**.

NAGEGAMA

The *nagegama* (also known as a *rokushakugama*) is a *bō*-length staff with both a *kama* blade and a long, 9- to 12-*shaku*-long weighted chain, attached to opposite ends of the pole.

Users with the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill can perform Grab and Entangle maneuvers with the chain portion of this weapon. The user attempts to bind his opponent's weapon or arms by whirling the chain and flinging it, thereby enabling him to draw the opponent into range and finish him off with the blade. The length of the shaft of a *nagegama* allows strikes to be employed against mounted opponents without penalty.

Requires both the Kama (*kama-jutsu*) skill (or Axes at -1), to use the bladed portion, and Chains (*kusari-jutsu*), to use the chain portion.

NEKOTE (SHUKO)

There are many types of *nekote*, or *shuko*, from simple steel fingernails (*nekote*) used for clawing and delivering poisons, to full claw-type gloves (*tekage*) and footgear (*ashiko*). *Nekote* do no extra damage, but allow for the introduction of poison to a victim in a strike to unarmored flesh, while *tekage* allow killing damage to be delivered from a normal strike, at -2 AV.

Requires Ninpō Taijutsu to use effectively in hand-to-hand combat.

NUNCHAKU

The *nunchaku* is a weapon originally developed in China and employed to great effect by Japanese (and especially *Ryūkyū-jin*) peasant budoka. The *nunchaku* is based on the short grain flail, consisting of two lengths of wood (or metal) joined by a length of rope or chain. While *nunchaku* are difficult to use effectively, the potential energy which can be developed in an attack is enough to damage even armored foes.

Requires the Flails (*nunchaku-te*) skill.

O-GAMA

The *o-gama* is a huge two-handed, *kama* and is used very much in the same way as a great *ono* (battle-ax).

Considered a battlefield weapon by the shinobi, the *o-gama* was purportedly developed in the 1500s by the Iga ryū as something of a symbol of authority and a not-so-subtle dig at the *buke* with their stylized battlefield command tokens—iron fans and the like.

By no stretch of the imagination could this weapon be carried openly by anyone not wishing to be thought of as a shinobi; it is more of a badge than even the *shinobigatana* and *kyotetsu-shoge*.

Requires the Axes (*ono-jutsu*) skill, or Kama (*kama-jutsu*) at -2).

ROKUSHAKU-BŌ

The *rokushaku-bō* (lit. “Six-*shaku* staff”) is, for all intents and purposes, a *bō*.

Requires the Polearms: Staves (*bō-jutsu*) skill, or any other Polearm skill at -1.

SHIKOMI-ZUE

The *shikomi-zue* is a *bō*-length staff with a hook at one end and a 6- to 9-*shaku*-long weighted chain attached to the other.

Users with the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill can perform Grab and Entangle maneuvers with the chain portion of this weapon. The user attempts to bind his opponent's weapon or arms by whirling the chain and flinging it, thereby enabling him to draw the opponent into range and finish him off with the hook.

Alternately, the hook can be used to pull a foe off balance, allowing those with the Polearms: Man-catchers (*sodegarami-jutsu*) skill to perform both Grab and Throw maneuvers, as per the *sodegarami* (see *SENGOKU*, page 173). The weapon is especially useful against mounted opponents.

Requires both the Polearms: Man-Catchers (*sodegarami-jutsu*) skill (or Kama at -2), to use the hook portion, and the Chains (*kusari-jutsu*) skill to use the chain portion.

SHINOBIGATANA

The *shinobigatana*, also known as the *ninja-tō*, is the classic sword of the shinobi. It is a short, relatively straight-bladed sword with a *saya* (scabbard) several inches longer than the blade it

“Move like wind into the opponent's space.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki

holds, and a length of black cord tied to the saya. The shinobigatana can be turned to many uses.

The saya can be employed both as a breathing tube and a blowgun, the handle contains several compartments which can store small tools, the *tsuba* (hand-guard) may be made of several classic, four-pointed *shuriken*, which can be removed for emergency use.

The sword and saya can be used as a climbing pole, granting a +2 to Climbing rolls, the shinobi using a long cord attached to the scabbard to draw it up after him.

By using the cord (held by the teeth) to balance the open end of the saya on the tip of the blade, the weapon can be used as a kind of probing tool when moving down darkened corridors. If suddenly faced with an opponent, the shinobi simply opens his mouth, releasing the cord and discarding the saya, leaving the shinobi with a free sword which can be thrust into the opponent. Readying the weapon in this circumstance is a Free Action, and may qualify for a +1 to +3 AV bonus for surprise.

The shinobigatana is so much related to their masters that to carry one openly (unless one is of great import) is an open invitation to be arrested on the spot. When employed by shinobi it is typically for covert missions where disguise is not called for and the weapon's obvious advantages can be exploited by the shinobi.

Requires Swords (*kenjutsu*), or Knives (*tantō-jutsu*) at -2.

SHINOBI-HANKYŪ

The *shinobi-hankyū* is a short, compact bow of exceptional design. They are sometimes made from steel, but most often formed of horn and wood composites. The hankyū can project an arrow over short distances with impressive power. The shinobi-hankyū can be folded in half once it is unstrung, making it easy to conceal.

Requires Archery (*kyū-jutsu*).

Historical Note

While most shinobi-hankyū currently in private collections or museums around Japan share many features in common with the classic Asian horse bow (of Mongolian or Altaic origins), the oldest examples have more in common with Alano Sarmation or Osset bows of the late 2nd century AD (which is about the time these nomadic horsemen came into contact with Korean and Japanese people).

SHINOBI-ZUE

A generic term for staves with retractable devices, such as chains, blades, and so on. Examples of shinobi-zue include concealable versions of polearms such as the *chijiriki*, *feruzue* and *nagegama*.



SHURIKEN

The term *shuriken* (lit. “back hand sword/blade”), though originally thought only to describe the classic star-shaped throwing disks, refers to just about any sort of weapon designed exclusively for throwing.

They are very small, easily concealed and—with the exception of the *bō-shuriken*—not the sort of weapon to be used by any but shinobi.

The various forms of shuriken are described below.

All shuriken require Throwing (*shuriken-jutsu*) or Athletics at -3.

Bō-shuriken

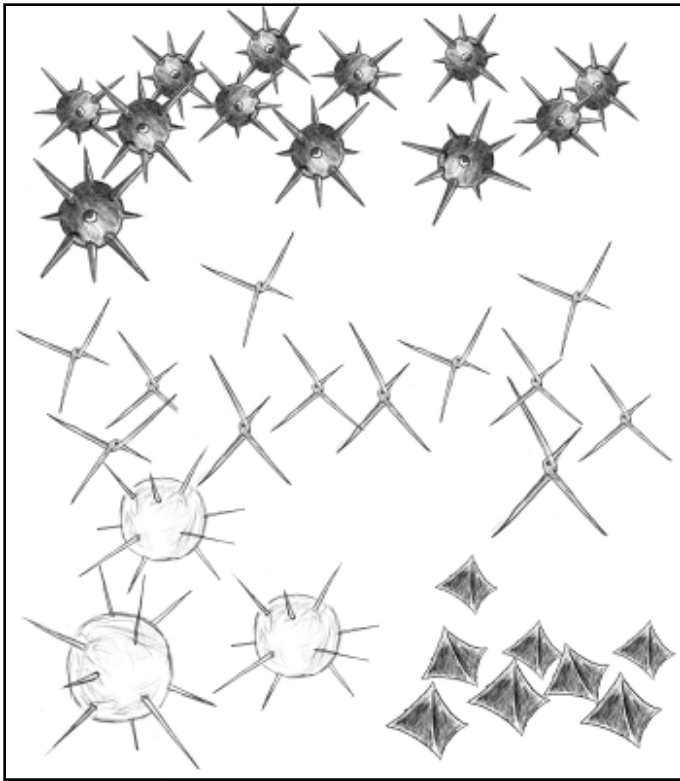
Bō-shuriken are slim shuriken which resemble *o-hashhi* (chopsticks) or thin throwing knives. Designed to be thrown singly or in clusters, and often carried by samurai (as part of their *katana saya*, or scabbard) as a last defense.

Endokuken

The *endokuken* is a shuriken with a hollow center, into which a vial of a reactive chemical is placed. On impact the vial shatters, allowing the liquid or vapor to escape and begin its own work. Very fragile, easy to break and hard to throw (-2 AV).

“A shinobi must be aware that violence is self-destructive, and realize the finality of the gates of Heaven and gates of Earth. The base of the shinobi beliefs lies in an obedience to the laws of nature.”

—Hatsumi Masaaki



Fukumi-bari

Fukumi-bari or “spitting darts” can be stored in the mouth and blown out of a *zetsukan* (mouth blowgun) or simply through the shinobi’s tongue rolled into a tube. Requires the Blowgun skill (without a *zetsukan*, any attempt to hit is –2 AV).

Hira-shuriken

The generic term for flat “star” type shuriken, with 3 to 8 points. There are several types of *hira-shuriken*, categorized by the number of points or “blades” each possesses: *shankō-shuriken* (3-leaf-bladed shuriken), *juuji-shuriken* (cross-shaped shuriken—trademarks of Iga and Kōga Shinobi), *shihō-shuriken* (a cross-shaped shuriken with blades resembling arrowheads), *gohō-shuriken* (the classic “star” shaped, 5-bladed shuriken), *happō-shuriken* (an 8-bladed shuriken and another trade mark of Iga and Kōga shinobi), *manji-shuriken* (swastika-shaped shuriken—the manji is a symbol of rebirth and the manji-shuriken is favored by deeply religious or deeply ironic Buddhist shinobi) and *tantō-shuriken* (knife-shaped shuriken).

Senban-shuriken

Another 4-pointed shuriken, but one on which the blades are little more than slightly concave, giving larger cutting edges rather than points. This shuriken may be used to cut ropes and cords using the Throwing skill.

Tsubute

Tsubute are blunt shuriken, made of iron, stone or hard wood. They are not designed to cut or pierce, but rather to bludgeon an opponent.

TANTŌ

The *tantō* is a long knife with a small *tsuba* (handguard). It may be used in close combat or thrown. Such a knife with no *tsuba* is called an *aiguchi*.

Requires Knives (*tantō-jutsu*), or Jitte or Fans (both at –3). Requires the Throwing (*shuriken-jutsu*) skill to hurl at a target.

TAOMI

Taomi are fine, weighted fishing nets made from human hair (for its strength) which can be employed by a shinobi to entangle an opponents in close combat. Nets can also be rigged as traps in the woods or inside buildings (given the proper time).

Requires the Nets (*taomi-jutsu*) skill. Also can be used to catch fish (+1 to Fishing skill rolls).

TEKO

Iron or brass knuckle-dusters. They can either be worn directly on the hand to augment a punch attached to a soft glove.

Requires any unarmed combat skill that allows hand strikes (such as Ninpō Taijutsu or Atemi-waza).

TETSUBISHI

Tetsubishi are caltrops. The most common form consists of two pieces of iron twisted together and welded so that no matter how it falls, one barb will always point up.

Though they cause no serious damage, per se, they are very effective for dissuading those wearing only soft footwear from pursuit. *Tetsubishi* are manufactured by shinobi ryū in several sizes to affect both horses and men.

When employing *tetsubishi*, the shinobi scatters a handful over a small (2x2 meter) area. Anyone without hard-soled foot gear, such as *geta*, passing through the area who does not first make a Perception roll (DN 18) suffers one Hit of damage. In addition, the victim may move no faster than a walk (Basic Move) unless they spend one Action removing the *tetsubishi* from their feet. Victims may (and probably should) fear the possibility of the *tetsubishi* they stepped on being poisoned, as well.

Tetsubishi may also be thrown using the Throwing skill at –1. A successful hit inflicts 1 Hit of damage if they strike an unarmored location.

Tetsubishi can also be used to introduce poison to a victim, though this is not a practical use for the devices.

Other variations of *tetsubishi* are described below.

“The fish which covets bait is caught; troops who covet bait are defeated.”

—Mei Yao-ch’en

Dokubari

A most unusual weapon indeed. *Dokubari* are made of pulped young bamboo and grass, rolled into a ball with one or more drugs or poisons. Various needles are inserted into the mass before the whole thing is left to dry out.

Dokubari are used mainly as a bur, under a horse's saddle or bridle, to drive beasts into a fury. Placed when the horse is at rest, it can take several hours for the needles and their drugs to make their way into the animal, but once there the beast will rapidly become impossible to control (-5 to all Riding and Animal Handling skill rolls).

Hishi

Hishi are a form of chestnut, which can be fire-dried and hardened, and employed as *tetsubishi*. Though not as effective as iron *tetsubishi*, *hishi* have the advantage of not raising as much suspicion if they are discovered in a shinobi's possession.

Idagama

Idagama are cast iron balls with many sharp, barbed spikes. They can be thrown or cast as a weapon—as effective for the weight of the ball as for the spikes—or they can be scattered around as *tetsubishi*, though not as effectively. When cast, they will often be coated in a paste poison or rotting dung to obviate their otherwise poor damage potential.

UCHI-NE

The *uchi-ne* is a heavy, dart-like weapon. It can be thrown with great force, over a better range and with greater accuracy than can a shuriken. However, they can be difficult to conceal.

Requires the Knives (*tantō-jutsu*) skill, or Swords (*ken-jutsu*) at -2.

WAKIZASHI

A short sword similar in design to the katana. It is a weapon associated with both the *buke*, who wear it as part of the *daishō*, and the common man for whom it is a primary arm.

Requires Swords (*kenjutsu*) skill or Knives at -2.

YARI

Spears and lances. A great many variations of the common *yari* exist, including *kamayari*, *yarinage* and *hashigo-yari* (ladder *yari*).



OTHER TOOLS

KA-KI

Ka-ki are firearms, landmines and other fire- or demolition-related devices. These devices are described below.

Doka

The *doka* is a pocket heater. The *doka* typically consists of a metal case, covered with soft leather and many layers of cloth, into which a smoldering piece of charcoal is placed. The device provides heat for many hours (as long as the cover remains closed to restrict air-flow). The device can also be opened and used to ignite fuses, or light slow match without giving out too much light (no modifier to Perception rolls to spot the shinobi).

Futokoro teppō

The *futokoro teppō*, or bronze pistol, is a small and discreet *teppō*, the size of a *tantō* or smaller. It can be used to deliver a powerful attack at very close range.

While the majority of these weapons are made as matchlock *teppō*, because of the need for secrecy when carrying one, more affluent shinobi *ryū* may have versions utilizing a mechanical lock, taken from a European piece and grafted on in order to better contain the loaded weapon until required.

“Those expert in attack consider it fundamental to rely on the seasons and the advantages of the ground; they use inundations and fire according to the situation. They make it impossible for an enemy to know where to prepare. They release the attack like a lightning bolt from above the nine-layered heavens.”

—Tu Yu



In all respects this weapon counts as a standard *teppō* except that R = 10m and, if a mechanical lock is used, there is a 1-in-6 chance of failure, which rises by 1 for each hour the lock is held in the cocked position (Up to 1 hour = safe, up to 2 hours = 6, Up to 3 hours = 5, 6, up to 4 hours 4, 5, or 6 etc.).

Requires the Firearms (*teppō-jutsu*) skill.

Gando

The *gando* is a portable lighting tool; a form of crude but functional lantern. It looks like a drum-shaped container, about 1 *shaku* in diameter, with a handle on one end. The other end is open, and inside is a candle resting on another, thinner cylinder inside the drum. The cylinder inside allows the candle to remain upright regardless of the angle the drum is held.

Hyakurai-ju

The *hyakurai-ju* is a 7- to 12-barreled gun designed for use in assaults, to kill horses and sink small boats. Hyakurai-ju can fire up to 12 *teppō* rounds in a single discharge, though 7-barreled versions are more common.

A target must check to see how many rounds have struck them when the gun is fired—closer than 10 m = 1d6, 10 to 20 m = 1d3, 20 to 30 m = 1. The shot spreads very quickly and the frontage of the attack increases with range—treat as an attack with a 60 degree cone are of effect.

These guns are incredibly dangerous and prone to misfiring. As well as the usual chance of failing in bad weather, these guns have will fail to fire on a roll of a 6 on 1d6.

Requires Firearms (*teppō-jutsu*) at -2.

Kame Baku

The *kame baku* (turtle bomb) is a small cast iron shell with spikes all around the rim, into which black powder is packed tight, before being hammered onto a door frame to act as a small petard-type charge to blow it down. The cast iron shell helps to direct much of the blast inwards and, as such, these types of bomb will do increased damage to whatever they are attached when detonated.

Mizu-taimatsu

The *mizu-taimatsu* (water torch) is a “waterproof” torch of sorts. Not that it will not actually burn under water of course, but these torches, fueled with phosphor and bituminous oils will continue to burn even in a fairly strong shower (though exposure to heavy rain or a real downpour will still dowse them).

Nagedeppō

Nagedeppō are crude hand grenades, being ceramic or cast iron containers filled with black powder and other compounds (phosphor to blind, iron fragments to maim, or small vials of oil to burn). They are detonated using a short length of fuse. They can be or placed by the shinobi or thrown (though generally only iron *nagedeppō* are deployed in this way).

Ninshokudai

A small “L”-shaped candle on the end of a fairly long (up to 2-*shaku*-long) pole. The candle can illuminate a small area ahead of the shinobi without providing excess light for others to actually see the agent by (Perception roll at -3). Attackers are forced to make their attacks without knowing exactly where the intruder is (-3 to -5 AV; GM’s discretion).

Ōdeppō

Also known as *sodezutsu* (hand cannon), the *ōdeppō* is designed as something of a siege weapon for dealing with doors and other barricades, but is also used on the battlefield as a counter-battery gun for destroying other cannon. While *ōdeppō* vary in caliber, the most common variety fires a roughly 2-inch ball and, as a result, requires considerable strength to wield effectively.

Requires the Firearms (*teppō-jutsu*) at -2.

Ōzutsu (wooden mortar)

A crude mortar, the *ōzutsu* is a short, broad-barreled wooden “tub” of a weapon designed to launch grenades and incendiary devices.

Requires Firearms (*teppō-jutsu*) at -3.

Sodeteppō

Bamboo is incredibly strong and when treated properly it can be used as a crude *teppō* barrel.

Sodeteppō are manufactured by wrapping a dry hollow tube of bamboo with several layers of thick, cured hide before heating

“In planning, never a useless move; in strategy, no step taken in vain.”

—Chen Hao

up a dozen or so iron rings (to expand them) and fixing them to the barrel by cooling them back to their original size (this puts great pressure on the bamboo and helps counteract the expansion forces of firing).

They are nowhere near as accurate as a well-forged gun (with R = 20) and easily burst when fired (Roll 1d6 each time the weapon is fired; on a roll of 6 the gun bursts). Sodetepō are very cheap, light and easy to make, however, and a simple alternative for shinobi ryū without the sort of smithies required to forge, bore and temper iron teppō barrels.

Requires Firearms (*teppō-jutsu*) at -3.

Historical Note

The *sodetepō* idea was based on the early 16th century European model of a so-called “Leather Gun”—a thin, brass barrel wrapped about with a dozen or so layers of leather and shrunk to fit Iron hoops. Neither were very popular, because of their greater chances of bursting.

Tanagatoro-taimatsu (Palm torch)

The *tanagatoro-taimatsu* is a device similar in design to the *doka*, containing a oil-soaked wick and coal, contained within a small iron container. When a cap is removed from the bottom and the wick exposed to air, it ignites, providing a small open flame for the shinobi to use.

Teppō

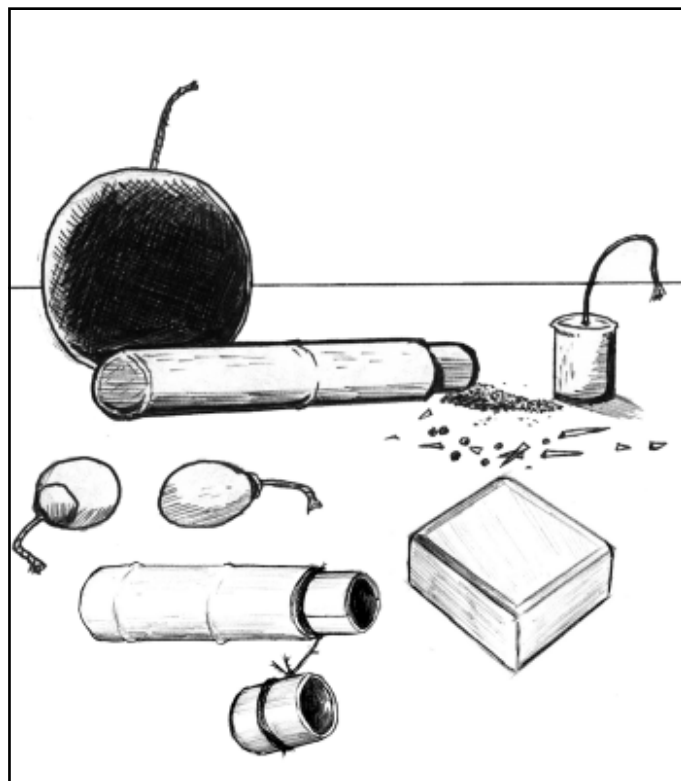
The *teppō*, or *tanegashima* (named after the island), is a muzzle-loading matchlock arquebus based on Portuguese models introduced to Japan in 1542.

Though vulnerable to the weather and more easily damaged than a bow, the effective use of a *teppō* can be taught to a peasant soldier in the space of an afternoon. Soldiers (usually *ashigaru*) trained with it do not require the regular practice of trained archers. Though pistols are made (actually cut down full bore weapons and only slightly lighter) a full *teppō* can weigh as much as 4 kilograms (about 9 pounds).

Shinobi rarely use the standard *teppō*, as it is noisy, inaccurate and prone to misfiring in bad weather. But for the shinobi even big, noisy, inaccurate weapons have their uses, such as disrupting military units, spooking cavalry horses, and so on.

Torinoko

The *torinoko*, or firecracker egg, is a small explosive that makes a huge noise when it explodes, though it does no appreciable damage. A small, empty egg shell is filled with the explosive compound through a small hole in the shell, a fuse inserted, then sealed with wax. The eggs are fragile, so care must be taken when carrying them. The egg may be placed or thrown. The time taken until the egg explodes depends on the length of the fuse (normally 3 to 30 seconds).



Uchidake

Like the *doka*, the *uchidake* is a stout bamboo tube into which a piece of charcoal has been inserted to be used as a pocket heater, a source of ignition for pyrotechnic weapons and as a fire starter. As bamboo is dense and burns very slowly, the charcoal in the tube (if kept correctly and starved of oxygen) will keep hot and safe for over 5 hours.

Umebi

While naval mines (essentially large floating bombs) are used by shinobi, the *umebi* (or *jirai*) is an antipersonnel land mine. These devices are designed to deter pursuit or aid in an ambush rather than for use as bury-and-forget devices.

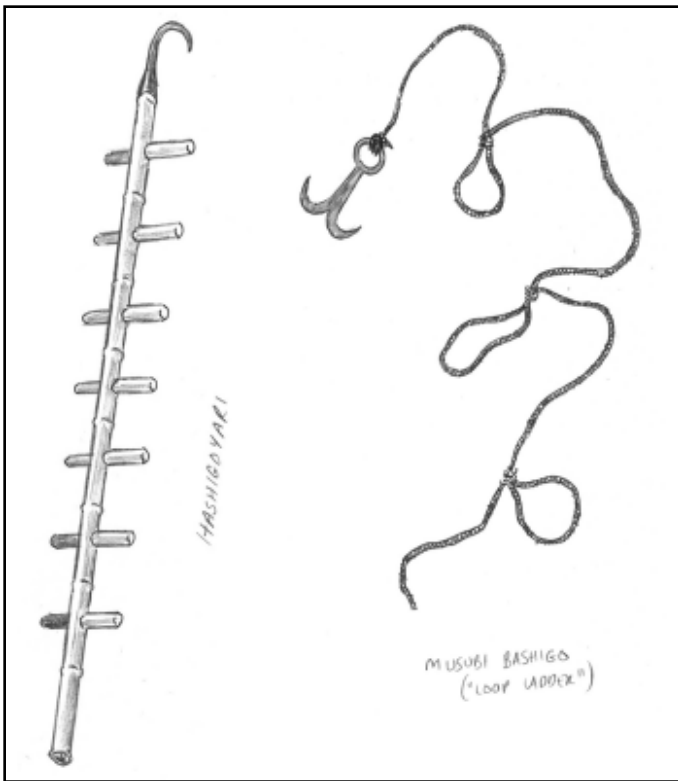
A double-layered ceramic jar or box is filled with black powder and another container—effectively a *doka* with a charcoal piece inside—is placed on top. When stood upon, the fragile ceramic case above shatters, driving down the charcoal to the powder and setting off the charge.

Small mines are often used in the same way as *tetsubishi*, but larger ones can be placed by a shinobi in advance of a planned ambush, because the charcoal detonator will burn happily for several hours.

Wakizashi-teppō

The term *wakizashi-teppō* actually refers to two types of pistol. The first is a gun designed to look like a sheathed *wakizashi* (given away only by the rather straight *saya*), but is otherwise

“The musical notes are only five in number but their melodies are so numerous that one cannot hear them all. The primary colors are only five in number but their combinations are so infinite that one cannot visualize them all.”



exactly the same as a standard pistol. The other (using the stats for a *futokoro teppō*) is built into the handle of the sword, being design to fire down past the blade or out through the butt of the weapon.

TO-KI (ROPES AND LADDERS)

Hashigo-yari

The *hashigo-yari* (ladder spear) is similar in design to a *shikomizue*. The *hashigo-yari* looks like a typical *yari* shaft with a metal hook in place of a blade and holes drilled through the shaft at one-*shaku* intervals. Small wooden or bamboo pegs can be inserted through the holes, turning it into a ladder proper.

Kuda-bashigo

The *kuda-bashigo* (tube ladder) looks like a simple 6- to 12-*shaku*-long piece of bamboo, but actually contains a series of folding steps which can be drawn out and back by the use of a wire attached at the base and top. The ladder greatly aids the climbing of walls and other steep surfaces, and can be easily broken down and concealed for transport.

Kumo-bashigo

Looking very much like a net, the *kumo-bashigo* (spider ladder) is actually a form of *tsuri-bashigo*, a hanging ladder with anchor spikes. The ladder relatively sturdy, allowing several shinobi to climb it at once. Like the *tsuri-bashigo*, the kumo-

bashigo must be firmly fixed to the top of whatever structure is to be climbed by a shinobi who can scale the wall without such assistance.

Musubi-bashigo

The *musubi-bashigo* (single-cord loop ladder) consists of a single length of rope tied into a series of loops so that a climbing shinobi can set into each in succession to reach the top (or base) of a surface. Lighter than conventional rope ladders, in that only one piece of rope (and no wood) is used. Provides +1 to Climbing skill rolls.

Taka-bashigo

The *taka-bashigo* ("high ladder") is an extendible ladder made of bamboo sections and rope. Though light-weight, it can extend up to 30 feet in length. They require a firm footing and cannot support more than a single person at one time, unless reinforced in the center with an optional ring suspended by another rope. This device can be used to gain access to hard-to-reach structures behind high walls, tall windows, high open spaces and the like, as long as there are nearby trees or other item to which the ladder can be attached.

Tobi-bashigo

The *tobi-bashigo* (leaping ladder) A rope and bamboo ladder, similar in design to the *taka-bashigo*, but with hooks on each end of the ladder and no hooks along the side.

Tsuri-bashigo

The *tsuri-bashigo* (hanging ladder) is a rope ladder with anchoring hooks along either side and two rope supports with heavy chord or bamboo cross-pieces. It is anchored onto the top of an obstacle (usually by a shinobi team's leader), allowing the rest of the group to climb up. In most cases the ladder is then drawn up afterwards, to descend the other side, or concealed in readiness for the team's escape.

KAI KI (METAL TOOLS)

Ashiko

Metal climbing spikes worn on the feet. (See *Nekote*.)

Kasha

The *kasha* is a rope-and-pulley escape device, similar to a modern abseiling rig. The device allows a shinobi to make a fast yet controlled descent down a rope without risking friction burns.

Characters using this device may move at "Run" or "Sprint" speed down the rope.

Kasugai

The *kasugai* is a series of spikes and bars which can be used to quickly seal off a door. Barbed spikes are hammered into both the door and frame and, once in place, connected together with

"Of the five elements, none is always predominant; of the four seasons, none lasts forever; of the days, some are long and some short, and the moon waxes and wanes."

—Sun Tzu

an iron bar. This tool can be used to wedge both sliding (*fusuma*, *shoji*, etc.) and conventional doors. It requires a great deal of strength to break any door so closed (treat such doors as walls).

Kiri

Kiri are small drills and picks designed to make tiny holes in wood, paper and plaster walls. Skilled shinobi employing these tools can quickly and quietly make themselves an unobtrusive spy hole (requires a Perception roll, DN 22, to spot).

Kunai

Like a modern entrenching tool in design, the *kunai* features a short haft which can have a number of different heads (pick, rake, spade and fork) placed on top of it.

Kunashi

A small spade, or spade attachment for the *kunai*. It is useful for digging in soft or hard earth to create hiding places, fire pits, bury one's gear (or what have you), and so on.

Nekode

Nekode, also called *tegake* or *shuko*, are gauntlets, strapped onto the wrists as well, with 3 curving spikes firmly attached to the palms of the hands (there are also version for the feet called *ashiko*) which assist in climbing sheer, but soft, surfaces like wood (trees, walls, pillars etc.).

Nekode can be employed as weapons by a shinobi skilled in hand to hand combat—the Togakure ryū are particularly adept in their use—but are not very effective. Fighting with *nekote* is only taught to shinobi in the event that they are attacked while wearing the difficult-to-remove gauntlets; it is impossible to wield another weapon effectively while wearing them.

Shikoro

Shikoro are thin-bladed saws designed to cut both wood and metal. *Shikoro* are most often used to cut the bolts from a barred door from the outside.

Shuko & Tegake

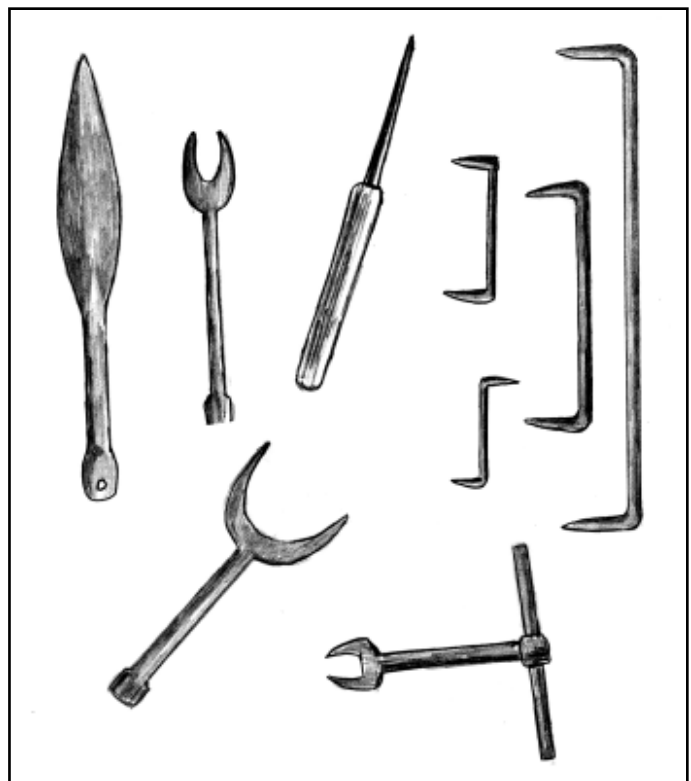
See *Nekote*.

Tobi-kunai

Tobi-kunai are tools used for gaining access through barred gates. A wedge-like tool which is gradually worked into the gap between a door and its frame (or pair of doors), creating enough space to insert a *shikoro* (thin-bladed saw) to cut any bolts holding everything shut.

Tsubo-giri (Bore)

Used to create fairly large holes in walls, floors and similar surfaces so that a *shikoro* (thin-bladed saw) can be inserted to cut out a section.



Yajiri

Yajiri are heavy-bladed saws. They are used primarily for wood cutting and are rarely employed in the field due to their size. *Yajiri* are often employed by shinobi on demolition jobs, in place of a noisier ax, to cut large posts or supports.

SUI-KI (WATER EQUIPMENT)

Breathing tubes

Either disguised (as water fowl, reeds or flowers) or plain, these tubes are simple snorkels which allow a shinobi to remain underwater for indefinite periods.

Hasami-bune

Hasami-bune are collapsible wooden floats, shaped like a shallow wooden boxes about 2 *shaku* to a side. These devices were used as small rafts, often pulled behind the shinobi (who was either swimming or himself in a small boat or raft), to carry supplies when traveling on water.

Kama-ikada

The *kama-ikada* is little more than a small, one-man raft assembled from tree branches or bundles of straw bound with twine or thin rope. It can be created by any shinobi with the Survival skill (takes 10 minutes to assemble once the materials are gathered).



Kōkitai

Kōkitai are air bags made from the treated stomach and intestine of a dog. The sack is worn around the waist and air stored inside is taken in through a leather mouthpiece. A *kōkitai* holds enough air for five minutes' worth of normal, relaxed breathing.

Mizugumo

Mizugumo, or “spider’s feet,” look like a pair of small canoes, joined at the prows by a short rope. These “boots” allow a shinobi to walk on even rough waters at great speed (up to a Run). By placing one canoe on each foot and treading in the water, paddles at the rear of each of the boots act as flippers, propelling the shinobi across the water. Steering is provided by a paddle held between the prows of the boots.

Mizukaki

Mizukaki are stiff leather, wooden-framed fins worn on the hands and feet by a shinobi when swimming. Their combined use increases the effective speed of a swimmer (allows movement equal to 2x Swim in meters per Phase).

Shinobi-kai

The *shinobi-kai* is a collapsible bamboo oar. When compact it looks like an inconspicuous 3-*shaku*-long bamboo tube, but one that secretly conceals a collapsible bamboo “fan” at one end. When extended from and fixed at one end, the “fan” allows the device to be used as an oar. Often used with *hasami-bune*.

Taru-ikada

Taru-ikada, also known as *ukidaru*, are stiff, sealed leather “flotation pots” worn by shinobi (usually in pairs) to aid buoyancy when swimming long distances.

They can also be used to store light- and water-sensitive items while swimming. A shinobi wearing these devices can also “walk” across water at their basic Movement rate in meters per Phase.

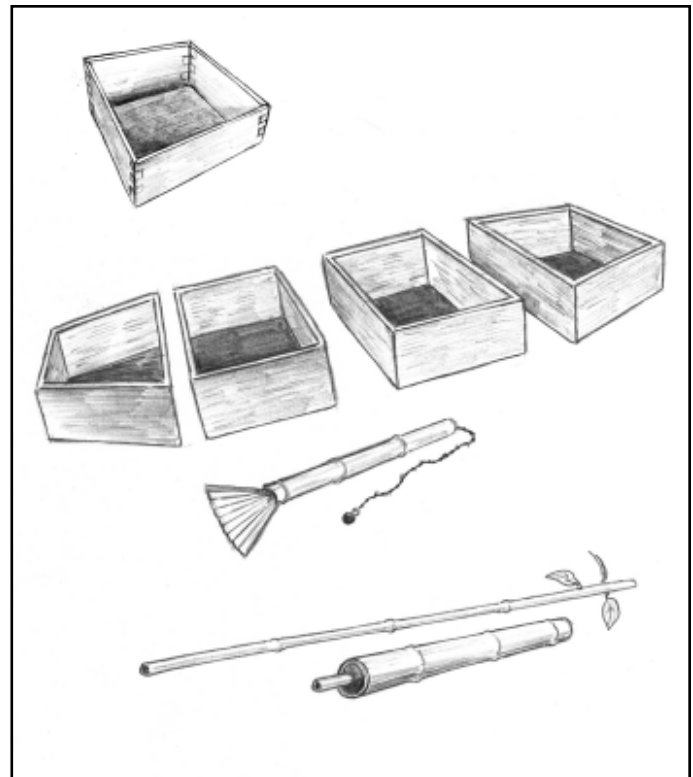
Tsugi-bune

Tsugi-bune are small, collapsible wooden boats. It consists of four box-like sections of wood which can be joined together with waxed cloth and treated leather.

When disassembled, each of the four sections can be carried by a single man as a cube no larger than .75 m³, looking like simple storage boxes. When assembled it can carry four men and a small amount of equipment.

Historical Note

The *tsugi-bune* is another product of the Iga ryū. Though it did not enter into use until the late 18th century, it has been included in this late Sengoku period supplement as a mark of respect to the Iga and the inspiration they have given us in the writing of this book.



“When the enemy is at ease, be able to weary him; when well fed, starve him; when at rest, to make him move.”

POISONS AND CHEMICALS

Many shinobi are well trained in the art of *yōgen* (Chemistry). With this skill, a shinobi is able to create gunpowder, medicines, antivenin, and, of course, poisons.

The shinobi is able to create a variety of toxins, from the instantly lethal *zagarashi-yoku* to the simplest itching powder. Shinobi with Chemistry (*yōgen*) have a working knowledge of poisons, including all of the poisons (lethal or otherwise) described in this section.

A successful Chemistry skill roll using INT + Chemistry allows the shinobi to tell if a person has been poisoned (DN 18) and also to identify the specific poison used on the victim simply by observing the symptoms (DN 22).

In *SENGOKU*, drugs fall into one of several categories: **Depressants, Hallucinogens, Healing & Medicinal Drugs and Poisons.** We have introduced a new category for this book, as well: **Other Chemicals.**

For sake of convenience, those drugs from *SENGOKU* that the shinobi is likely to create or use have been listed here along with a number of new poisons. For rules on the use of poison and creating poisons see *SENGOKU*, pages 220-222)

DEPRESSANTS

Death is not always the best way of dealing with opponents. Most often evasion is preferred to slaying everyone the shinobi encounters. One way of removing “obstacles” is to simply render them unconscious. The following are several *suiminyaku*, or sleep-inducing drugs, available to the shinobi.

Ketsushi

Ketsushi (“blood paper”) is made from the mixed blood of a newt, mole and snake, sometimes with Wolfsbane or Hemp leaves added. The mixture is then soaked into rice paper and dried. When the paper is burned, the smoke it releases puts anyone who inhales it into a deep slumber.

Ketsushi is commonly used by shinobi in their victims’ bedrooms, ensuring that those inside would fall into an even deeper sleep before the shinobi enter and is especially useful in making a victim more receptive to hypnosis.

Treat damage as stunning damage, not lethal. When the victim’s Hits equal zero the victim is in a deep, almost coma-like sleep lasting 10 minus CON hours.

Mode: Inhaled; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 10 Min.

Koyashi-tama

A powder made from dried, ground rats, paulownia leaves, yellow *mukade* (centipede), cotton seeds and yellow cattle dung. The mixture is then rolled into a ball and dried. When shavings from the ball are burned, the fumes are guaranteed to put the victim into a deep sleep.

A shinobi can be rendered immune from the affects of the smoke by slowly building up a resistance to the smoke over a period of



days (treat immunity as a 2 OP Perk)—though this is dangerous, as the smoke can do damage to the lungs if inhaled over a long time.

Mode: Inhaled; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 10 Min.

Suiminko

Suiminko is a plant-based sleep-inducing drug, dried and stored in powder form. It can be mixed with wax or incense and burned to release the drug, or it can be inhaled directly. Damage rolled is subtracted from Stun. Characters who succumb to the poison will sleep for 10 minus CON hours.

Mode: Inhaled; **Speed:** 1 Minute; **DC2;** **Duration:** 10 Min.

Taima-yaku

Taima-yaku is a liquid made from a mixture of hemp and tea. Hemp leaves are dried and ground, then mixed with tea. The effects are similar to heavy drinking, with the victim rapidly becoming delirious and, in turns, hyperactive and heavily drowsy.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 5 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Hour

HALLUCINOGENS

Chin-doku

A hallucinogenic drug made from the feathers of the rare mountain bird, *Chin tori* (or *chindori*). The feathers are boiled in *shochu*, until a thick, resin-like substance is left. Ingestion of this poison causes hallucinations and can result in death. Damage rolled is

“One defends when his strength is inadequate; he attacks when it is abundant.”

—Sun Tzu



cumulative. If damage exceeds the victim's Resistance, the victim suffers hallucinations. Any excess damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 10 Min.

Genkaku-kinoko

The *genkaku-kinoko* is one of several types of hallucinogenic mushrooms that grows wild in Japan. Ingestion causes hallucinations and can result in death. Damage rolled is cumulative. If damage exceeds the victim's Resistance, the victim suffers from hallucinations. Any excess damage is subtracted from the victim's Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 10 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Toki

Seishin-doku

Seishin-doku is an insanity-inducing poison. Five to ten seeds of a particular plant are ground and put into the victim's food. The result is temporary insanity, lasting a period of hours or even days. Damage rolled is cumulative. If damage exceeds the victim's Resistance, the character suffers from madness; yelling, laughing maniacally and otherwise acting uncontrollably crazy. Common observers will likely believe the character to be possessed by mischievous spirits.

The insanity lasts for a base of five minutes, plus a number of steps down the Time Table equal to 10 minus the victim's CON score. For instance, if the victim's CON score is 4, you would move the duration (10-4=6) six steps down the Time Table. Look-

ing at the Time Table, moving six steps down from "5 Minutes" puts us at "1 Month." Our victim's insanity will last for one month.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Hour; **DC3;** **Duration:** Varies.

Warakinoko

Waraniko is one of several types of hallucinogenic mushrooms that grows wild in Japan. Ingestion causes a sense of euphoria and much laughter. The mushrooms are typically sliced thin or ground and put in food.

Damage rolled is cumulative. If damage exceeds the victim's Resistance, the victim begins laughing outrageously and uncontrollably, unable to do anything else until the effects wear off. The laughter cannot be suppressed, no matter how inappropriate a situation the character finds themselves in. Most observers may well believe the character to be insane, possessed by mischievous spirits.

The laughing lasts for a base of 1 Round, plus a number of steps down the time chart equal to 10 minus the victim's CON.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Minute; **DC2;** **Duration:** 5 Min.

HEALING & MEDICINAL DRUGS

The following new drugs are available to shinobi characters and physicians.

Kakuseizai

Kakuseizai (stimulant drug) is a plant-based drug, usually taken in herb or powder form. It is mixed with food or drink, and may also be mixed with animal fat or vegetable oil to make a topical ointment. The number rolled is added to Stun, and one fifth of the number rolled (cumulative) is added to DEX.

More than one dose may be taken, up to three doses; the effects are cumulative. The effects last for one hour per dose. After the effects expire, the character loses 2d6 Stun per dose taken, with one fifth of those points subtracted from the character's Hits.

Mode: Ingested or Topical; **Speed:** 1 Round; **DC1;** **Duration:** Instant.

Kanpōyaku

Kanpōyaku (medicinal herbs) are added to food or made into a medicinal tea called *mizugusuri* (liquid medicine) to aid in healing and recovery. The number rolled is added to Hits.

Only one dose may be used per Healing period; any extra doses have no effect. This salve only aids in healing up to the victim's original Hits score; excess "healed" Hits are lost. Can only be used to help heal internal injuries and illnesses (except plague). Healing herbs are not effective against poisons.

May be used in conjunction with *nankōyaku* (medicinal salve) when appropriate.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Healing period; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Healing period

"If wise, a commander is able to recognize changing circumstances and to act expeditiously. If courageous, he gains victory by seizing opportunity without hesitation."

—Tu Mu

Konasumi

Konasumi (powdered charcoal) is usually carried in folded paper. A shinobi will often keep a small amount on hand should he need to counter the effects of an ingested poison. If the charcoal powder is swallowed, the effects of any ingested poison or drug are halved. It is ineffective against other modes of drugs (e.g., it is ineffective against inhaled toxins).

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** Immediate; **DC Special;** **Duration:** Immediate.

Nankōyaku

Nankōyaku (medicinal salve or ointment) is made from healing herbs. It is effective against burns, cuts, scrapes and rashes. The number rolled is added to Hits. Only one dose may be used per Healing period; any extra doses have no effect. This salve only aids in healing up to the victim's original Hits score (excess "healed" Hits are lost) and can only be used to heal external injuries. The salve is ineffective against broken bones, deep punctures, and other internal injuries.

May be used in conjunction with *konpōyaku* (medicinal herbs), when appropriate.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Healing period; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Healing period

Ijōzai

Ijōzai is a kind of hard lozenge-like candy made from dried peppermint leaves, arrowroot starch and salted plum. The mixture is pressed together into a ball and dried. When sucked on, it temporarily alleviates thirst, allowing the shinobi to concentrate on his task at hand (or locating water).

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC Special;** **Duration:** 1 Hour.

Gedokuyaku

Gedokuyaku (poison antidotes and antivenin) nullify a specific poison. Once applied, the victim will not suffer any further effects from the poison, although existing damage must be healed normally. An antidote must be bought (or made) for a specific type of poison and is ineffective against other types.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC Special;** **Duration:** Instant.

Bōkataka

Bōkataka (puffball fungus) grows naturally in the mountainous regions of Japan (requires an Herbalist skill roll, DN 14, or a Survival skill roll, DN 18, to locate). When squeezed, this fungus emits a dust-like spore, which has antibiotic properties not unlike penicillin. When the dust is applied to an open wound it eliminates any infection present (after the appropriate time, indicated by the drug's Speed).

Mode: Topical; **Speed:** 10 Min.; **DC Special;** **Duration:** Immediate.

POISONS

A number of lethal poisons available to the shinobi are described below.

Akibana-dokuyaku

Akibana-dokuyaku (Autumn flower poison) is made from the autumn flower (*Lycorie Radiate*), which grows wild in Japan. The petals and pistils are dried and ground into a powder, which is then introduced directly into food or drink. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Hour; **DC1;** **Duration:** 4 Hours

Dokukiku

Dokukiku is a lethal poison made from the pistils of the chrysanthemum flower. The pistils are dried and ground into a powder. It may then be mixed with a liquid, such as unfiltered *sake*, boiled and reduced to a syrupy consistency, or mixed directly into food or drink. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Hour; **DC2;** **Duration:** 4 Hours

Dokutake

Dokutake (toadstool) is one of several poisonous types of mushrooms that grow wild in Japan. To determine if a mushroom is poisonous requires a successful skill check using Survival (DN 10), Local Expert (DN 14) or Cooking (DN 18). Damage rolled is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 10 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Toki

Dōsanka

Dōsanka is the green rust (patina) from copper. It is scraped and ground into a fine powder. When introduced into the victim's blood or airways, it poisons the blood, causes sickness and ultimately death. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Blood, Inhaled ; **Speed:** 1 Hr; **DC2;** **Duration:** 6 Hrs

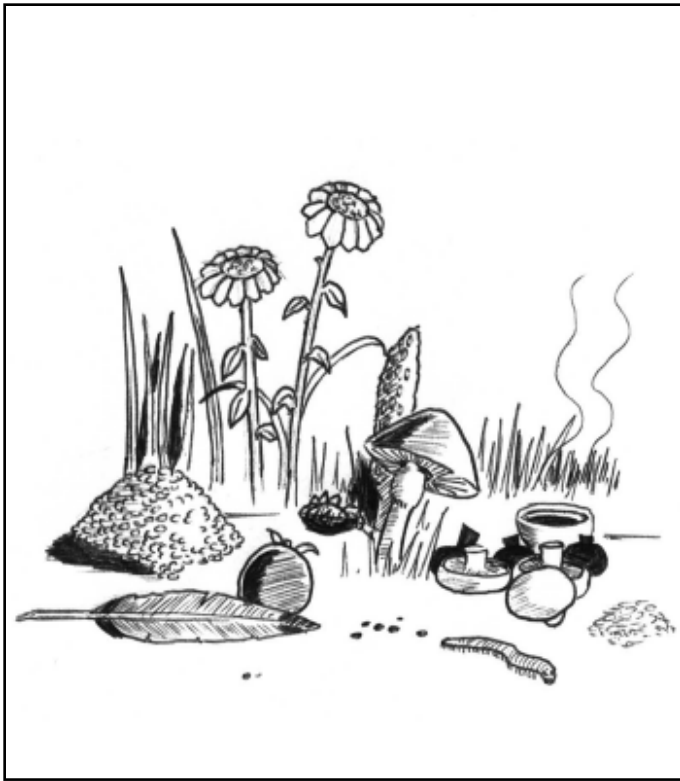
Fugu-no-doku

A fatal paralytic poison extracted from the ovaries and liver of the *fugu* (blowfish). The active ingredient is tetrodotoxin, which is a very fast-acting neurotoxin that affects the respiratory system, paralyzing the respiratory muscles, killing the victim when consumed.

One-fifth of the damage rolled (cumulative) is subtracted from both REF and DEX. When both REF and DEX reach zero the character is fully paralyzed; any additional damage is subtracted from Hits.

The poison may be applied to a victim's lips in order to slow the poison's effects. This is particularly useful when one needs to eliminate a target but also needs to be far from the target when they die. If used in this manner, change the listed Speed of the poison from 1 Minute to 1 Hour.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC2;** **Duration:** 10 Min.



Gyokuro

Gyokuro is a toxin made from (of all things) tea. Brewed green tea (*ō-cha*) is sealed in a container and buried for 3 to 4 weeks. The liquid is then taken and then mixed with *miso-shiru* (soybean paste used for making *miso* soup), fresh tea or water. The mixture is then given to the victim.

The poison is relatively weak compared to other lethal poisons, but is potent enough to kill a sick or weakened victim in a couple of days. If ingested by a healthy person, it will make them sick in about a month, and may kill them in about two months (if given regularly). It is normally reserved for weakened victims, however.

Damage is subtracted from Hits; in addition, every 5 full Hits of damage results in a loss of 1 point each from CON and STR.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 6 Toki; **DC1;** **Duration:** 3 Days

Han-myō

Han-myō is a poison extracted from the toxic Tiger Beetle, which lives in the mountainous forests of Japan. The poison causes convulsions, stomach cramping and ultimately death. Damage is subtracted from Hits, and one-fifth of the damage rolled (cumulative) is subtracted from both REF and DEX.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 10 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Toki

Hiki-no-doku

Hiki-no-doku is a poison made from the fluid extracted from the projection over the eyes of toads. The toxin causes temporary paralysis. Damage is subtracted from Stun. If the victim's Stun is reduced to 0, he is partially paralyzed and cannot move, though he may still be aware of his surroundings.

Excess damage is taken from Hits, making this a lethal poison if given in too large a dose.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 10 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Toki

Hisen

Hisen (arsenic) is a rare but extremely deadly powder. It can be administered in a single lethal dose or given to the victim in small quantities over a long period of time. It accumulates in the body and is not purged, so that over time the amount of arsenic continues to increase until a lethal quantity is reached and the victim dies.

Damage is subtracted from Hits. One dose (a few grams of powder) of arsenic has the listed effects, below; multiple doses are needed to achieve a quick death.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Hour; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Hour

Koyashi-akuchi

Koyashi-akuchi (horse dung and blood) is usually used on arrows and *teppō* shot, though the mixture could also be used on blades. Causes severe infection, tetanus, lockjaw and eventually death if not treated. Damage rolled is subtracted from Hits.

Thoroughly cleaning the wound or a successful Physician skill roll, DN 18, immediately after exposure (say, within one minute) gives the victim a +2 to his CON roll to resist introduction of the poison. Cleaning the wound at a later time will not stop progression of the poison.

Mode: Blood; **Speed:** 1 Day; **DC1;** **Duration:** 10 Days

Iwami-ginzan

Mercury is produced in silver mines, such as those in Iwami province (thus giving the poison its name). The mercury may be ingested or introduced directly to the bloodstream to be effective. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Note: Iwami-ginzan is very rare prior to the Tokugawa era (1603–1868).

Mode: Blood, Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC3;** **Duration:** 10 Min.

Kinpōge

Kinpōge (buttercup poison) is made from the buttercup flower, which grows wild in Japan. The petals are dried and ground into a powder, which is then introduced directly into food or drink. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Hour; **DC1;** **Duration:** 4 Hours

Mukade-no-doku

Mukade-no-doku is the venom of the *mukade* (giant centipede). It causes severe weakness and eventually death. Damage is subtracted from Hits, and one-fifth of the number rolled (cumulative) is subtracted from STR and CON.

Mode: Blood; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC2;** **Duration:** 10 Min.

Nuri-no-doku

Nuri-no-doku is a poison derived from the sap or bark of the lac tree. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Blood; **Speed:** 10 Min.; **DC2;** **Duration:** 60 Min.

Torikabuto

Torikabuto (Wolfsbane) is a very poisonous plant that grows wild in Japan. It is often lethal when consumed. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Min.; **DC2;** **Duration:** 10 Min.

Umihebi-no-dokueki

Umihebi-no-dokueki (seasnake poison) is a deadly nerve poison from the venom of the sea snake. The damage rolled is subtracted from Hits, and one-fifth of the number rolled (cumulative) is subtracted from REF and DEX. When both REF and DEX reach zero, the victim is paralyzed. Excess damage continues to subtract from Hits.

Mode: Blood; **Speed:** 1 Round; **DC3;** **Duration:** 1 Min.

Yūgai-kinoko

Yūgai-kinoko is one of several poisonous types of mushrooms that grow wild in Japan. To determine if a mushroom is poisonous requires a successful skill check using Survival (DN 10), Local Expert (DN 14) or Cooking (DN 18). Damage rolled is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 10 Min.; **DC1;** **Duration:** 1 Toki

Zagarashi-yaku

Zagarashi-yaku is a poison is created from the unripened green plum or peach. A special process is applied to the fruit, which is then dried and ground into a powder.

It is usually mixed with the intended victim's food and has an immediately fatal effect in most cases. It is sometimes used by shinobi at banquets when the shinobi wishes to eliminate large numbers of people at one time. Damage is subtracted from Hits.

Mode: Ingested; **Speed:** 1 Phase; **DC3;** **Duration:** 1 Round

OTHER CHEMICALS

Kayusako

Kayusako is a powder made from ground, dried nettle-thorns. When tossed onto an opponents skin (like the back of the neck) they cause instantaneous, maddening itching on the skin. The itching is so severe that most victims are completely incapacitated, unable to do anything but scratch. The victim suffers a temporary -5 to REF and DEX for a duration of 10 minus CON hours.

Shinobi often store this powder in drained hen's eggs (to be used as small grenades in combat) and can blow it from powder blowguns to blind foes (as the chemical is particularly nasty—often resulting in permanent blindness—when sprayed into the eyes).

NEW POISONS

This place is provided for GMs to note new poisons, either from other sources or of their own creation.

Name: _____

Effects: _____

Mode: _____

Speed: _____

DC: _____

Duration: _____

Name: _____

Effects: _____

Mode: _____

Speed: _____

DC: _____

Duration: _____

EQUIPMENT LIST

WEAPONS

STR Minimum: This is the minimum STR required to use the item without a penalty. For each 1 STR less than the minimum, take a -1 REF penalty for weapons and do -1 DC (i.e., one less d6) damage. For armor, increase the Penalty by 1 for every 1 STR under the minimum.

Damage Class (DC): DC is the damage class of the weapon, the number of six-sided dice to roll for damage. A DC means you roll 1d6, and a 1-2 means 1 Hit, 3-4 means 2 Hits, and 5-6 means 3 Hits.

Weapon Accuracy (WA): Some weapons are inherently more difficult to control than others. Likewise, some weapons are inherently easier to wield or more accurate. To reflect these differences we use the Weapon Accuracy (or WA) modifier. Add this number to your AV when making an attack roll with the weapon.

For example, a weapon with a WA of 1 allows the user to add +1 to his AV when rolling the dice to make an attack with that weapon. Likewise, a WA of -1 means you subtract 1 from your AV when rolling.

Range: Range refers to the melee weapon range, or “reach,” of the weapon. S = Short: The weapon is short and can only be used

in arm’s reach, to attack someone in an adjacent hex. M = Medium: The weapon allows you to strike someone up to 1 hex away. L = Long: The weapon is long and allows you to strike someone up to 2 hexes away. For additional rules and melee combat modifiers for range, see *SENGOKU*, Chapter 13 (page 197).

Cost: This is the cost of the weapon.

Skill: This is the primary skill required to use the weapon.

Similarity: These are skills which may be substituted for the primary skill (with GM’s permission) at the indicated penalty.

Notes: The following codes appear. They stand for the following:

2H = Two-handed weapon

AP = Armor Piercing

D = Allows use of Martial Disarm Action with weapon (character must have the weapon skill)

F = Flail Action may be used, +1 fumble chance

G = Allows use of Grab Action with weapon (character must have the weapon skill)

L = Long weapon

O = One- or two-handed

S = Short weapon

T = Throwable (using Throwing skill)

R = Range, x STR used, in meters

P = Phases to reload

() = Stun attack



Missile Weapons (Uchimono)

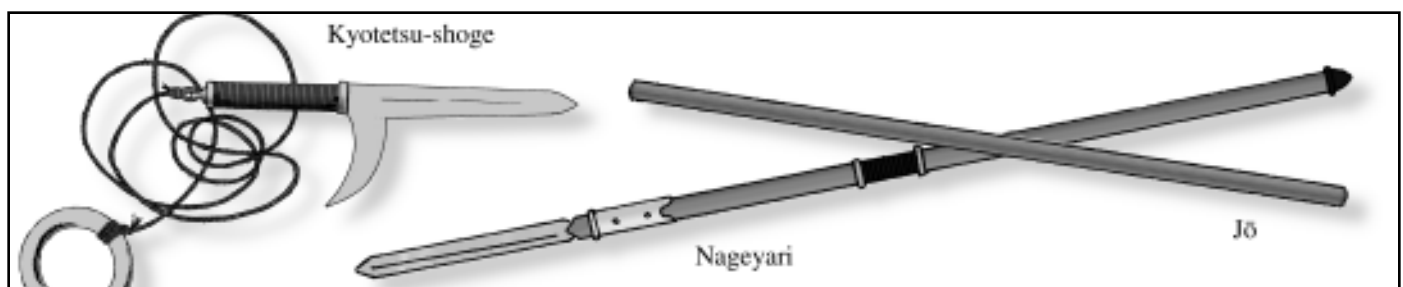
Weapon Name	DC	STR	WA	Cost	Wt	Notes
Aiguchi	1	2	0	1b	.5	R = STRx5 meters
Bakudan	1-8	1	0	1b	.5	Fired from teppō; Explosive, Area effect
Fukiya						Blowguns
dart	0	2	-1	3m	.2	may be poisoned
powder	Spec.	1	-1	4m	.2	aka metsubishi
water	Spec.	1	-1	5m	.4	Sprays liquid chemicals and water
Hankyū	3	2	-1	1b	2	2H, -1 DEX, R=x20 meters; DC added to STR, max 7
Kaiken		1	0	3m	-	R = STRx5 meters
Kogai	0	1	0	4m	-	R = STRx5 meters
Kozuka		1	0	3m	-	R = STRx5 meters
Nagedeppō	2	2	0	8m	.1	R = STRx5 meters; Explosive, grenade
Ōdeppō	6	5	-2	200b	10	2H, DEX, Explosive, 4P, R = x20 meters; Matchlock cannon
Ōzutsu	4	4	-3	400b	25	2H, DEX, Explosive, 4P, R = x20 meters; Matchlock cannon
Rock	1	2	0	N/A	.5	R = STRx5 meters, No maximum
Shinobi-hankyū	3	2	-1	1b	1.5	2H, -1 DEX, R=x20 meters; DC added to STR, max 7
Shuriken	1	1	0	1m	.1	R = STRx5 meters
Tantō	1	2	0	1b	.5	R = STRx5 meters
Tedan	1-4	1	0	5m	-	R = STRx5 meters; Explosive, Area effect
Teppō	5	2	-1	50b	4	2H, DEX, AP, 3P, R = x10 meters; Arquebus
Uchi-ne	2	2	0	6m	1	R = STRx5 meters
Umibari		1	0	3m	.5	R = STRx5 meters

“Plans...for harming the enemy are not confined to any one method. ...entice his wise and virtuous men away so that he has no counselors...send treacherous people to his country to wreck his administration. ...use cunning deceptions to alienate his ministers...send skilled craftsmen to encourage his people to exhaust their wealth...”

—Chia Lin

Melee Weapons

Weapon Name	DC	STR	WA	Rng	Cost	Wt	Skill	Similarity	Notes
Bakuhatsugama	Var.	2	Var.	M/L	4m	3	Kama, Chain	Ax -1	Kusarigama w/poison snake attached to chain
Bisentō	6	5	-1	L	1b	5	PA: Naginata	PA: Any -2	2H; Hvy Chinese glaive
Bō	(4)	2	1	L	3m	1	PA: Staff	PA: Any -1	2H; 6-shaku hickory staff
Chijiriki	Var.	4	0	L	10m	3	PA: Lance, Chains	PA: Any -1	-2H, G; See yari & manrikigusari for dmg
Feruzue	Var.	4	0	L	8m	3	PA: Staff, Chains	PA: Any -1/-	2H, G; 6 shaku staff with chain; see bō and manrikigusari for dmg
Hanbō	(3)	3	0	M	1m	.5	PA: Staff	PA: Any -2, Sword -1	O; 3-shaku wooden stick
Jō	(3)	2	0	M	1m	.5	PA: Staff	PA: Any -2, Sword -1	O; 4-shaku wooden stick
Kaginawa	1	1	-2	S	3m	3	Chains		2H, G. Rope & grapple
Kama	3	3	0	M	2m	1.5	Kama	Axes -1	Sickle weapon
Kama-yari	4	3	0	L	10m	2	PA: Lance	PA: Any -1	2H; Spear variant
Katana	4	3	0	M	8b	2	Swords		O; Long sword
Kawanaga	(2)	2	0	L	2m	1	Chains		2H, G; Weighted rope
Kiseru	(2)	2	0	S-M	4m	.5	Pipes	Swords/Axes/Kama -2	2-3' iron smoking pipe
Kumade	4	4	-1	L	10m	5	PA: Glaive	P.A. Any -1	2H, Heavy rake
Kusari-fundo	(1)	1	0	M	1m	1	Chains		O, G; Short chain
Kusarigama	Var.	2	Var.	M/L	4m	3	Kama, Chain	Ax -1	See Kama/Manrikigusari
Kuwa	3	2	0	M	2m	1	Kama	Ax -1	O; Broad-bladed hoe
Kyōtetsu-shoge	Var.	2	Var.	S/L	6m	1	Chains, Knives	Kama -1	See Kawanaga or Tantō
Mamukigama	Var.	3	Var.	M/L	8m	3	Kama, Chains	Ax -1	See Kama/Manrikigusari.
Manrikigusari	(2)	2	0	L	4m	2	Chains		2H, G; Weighted chain
Nagegama	3	3	-1	L	10	3	Kama, Chains	PA: Any -2	2H, G; Bō w/kama & chain
Neko te (nekote)	1	1	0	S	3m	.2	Ninpo Taijutsu	Any unarmed bugei -2	Iron fingertip claws
Nunchaku	(3)	2	-1	M	2m	1	Flails		F, O; Okinawan flail
Ōgama	6	5	-1	L	1b	5	Kama	PA: Naginata -2	2H; Heavy battle kama
Rokushakugama	4	3	-1	L	10m	3	Kama	PA: Any -2	2H; Bō w/kama blade
Shikomi-zue	Var.	4	-1	M/L	10m	4	Kama/Chain	Ax -1	2H, Bō with hook & chain.
Shinobigatana, ninjatō	3	3	0	M	4b	1.5	Swords	Knives -2	O; Shinobi sword
Shinobi-zue	Var.	3	0	L	12m	2	PA: Lance, Chains	PA: Any -1/-	2H; Bō w/hidden chain & blade. See yari and manrikigusari for dmg
Tantō	1	1	1	S	1b	.5	Knives	Jitte -2, Fans -3	T, R= x5 m/y; Large knife w/ hand guard
Taomi	—	2	+1	S	1b	3	Nets		G, O, T, Weighted net.
Tekage / Ashiko	1	1	0	S	5m	.2	Ninpo Taijutsu	Any unarmed bugei -2	Shinobi iron claws (+1 Climbing)
Tekko	(3)	2	0	S	5m	.5	Atemi-waza	Any unarm. bugei -2	Metal knuckle-dusters
Tetsubishi	2	0	—	—	1m	.2	—	—	Caltrop, dropped weapon
Uchi-ne	2	2	-1	M	6m	1	Knives	Swords -2	T, R = STRx2; Short, dart-like weapon
Wakizashi	3	2	0	M	4b	1	Swords	Knives -2	O; Short sword
Yari	4	3	0	L	8m	1.5	PA: Lance	PA: Any -1	2H; Spear



“He who intimidates his neighbors does so by inflicting injury upon him.”

—Sun Tzu

Clothing and Garb

Name	Wt	Cost
Disguises		
Actor / entertainer (<i>Mawashi</i>)	1	3m
Buddhist monk (<i>sō</i>)	1	5m
Itinerant priest (<i>komuso</i>)	2	8m
Merchant (<i>akindo</i>)	2	6m
Musician (<i>hokashi</i>)	1	7m
Rōnin	1	3m
Yamabushi (<i>shugenja</i>)	2	10m
Snowshoes (<i>yuki waragi</i>)	1	8m
Shinobi garb (<i>shinobi shozoku</i>)	1	5m

Other Tools

Ka-ki (Fire-related tools)

Name	Wt	Cost
Bamboo gun (<i>sodeteppō</i>)	3	30b
Candle, "L"-shaped (<i>ninshokudai</i>)	1	2m
Firecracker egg (<i>torinoko</i>)	.1	10z
Grenade (<i>nagedeppō</i>)	.5	8m
Hand cannon (<i>Ōdeppō/sodezutsu</i>)	7	175b
Lighting tool, portable (<i>gando</i>)	.3	4m
Mine (<i>umebi, jirai</i>), small	.5	6m
Mine (<i>umebi, jirai</i>), large	1	1b
Mortar (<i>ozutsu</i>)	14	100b
Multi-barrel gun (<i>hyakurai-ju</i>)	6	150b
Palm torch (<i>tanagatoro-taimatsu</i>)	.5	6m
Pistol		
bronze, matchlock (<i>futokoro teppō</i>)	1	100b
snaphuance or wheel-lock	1	200b
Pocket heater (<i>doka</i>)	.2	3m
Teppō (<i>Tanegashima</i>)	4	50b
Torch, waterproof (<i>mizu-taimatsu</i>)	1.5	3m
Uchidake (<i>Embers in bamboo tube</i>)	.2	1m
Wakizashi-teppō	1.5	120b

To-ki (Ropes and ladders)

Name	Wt	Cost
Hanging ladder, w/hooks (<i>tsuri-bashigo</i>)	2	70z
High ladder (<i>taka-bashigo</i>)	10	65z
Leaping ladder (<i>tobi-bashigo</i>)		
Single-cord loop ladder (<i>musubi-bashigo</i>)	3	20z
Spider ladder (<i>kumo bashigo</i>), 12-shaku	6	1m
Tube ladder (<i>kuda bashigo</i>), 10-shaku	5	6m

Kai-ki (Metal tools)

Name	Wt	Cost
Foot spikes (<i>ashiko</i>)	.5	1m
Rope w/grappling hook (<i>kaginawa</i>)	6	73z
Pully (<i>kasha</i>)	1	1m
Clamps/bars (<i>kasugai</i>)	1	50z
Pick borer (<i>kiri</i>)	.5	70z
Rake (<i>kumade</i>)	.3	40z
Digging tool (<i>kunai</i>)	1	1m
Spade (<i>kunashi</i>)	1	1m
Nekode (<i>shuko</i>)	.5	1m10z
Saw, thin (<i>shikoro</i>)	.5	2m

Tobi-kunai	1	80z
Bore (<i>tsubo-giri</i>)	.4	1m15z
Saw, heavy (<i>yajiri</i>)	3	80z

Sui-ki (Water equipment)

Name	Wt	Cost
Breathing tube	.1	12z
Boat, collapsible (<i>hasami-bune</i>)	45	2b5m
Raft (<i>kama-ikada, kamaikada</i>)	3	2m
Spider's Feet (<i>mizugumo</i>)	3	1b
Fins (<i>mizukaki</i>)	.5	70z
Flotation pots (<i>taru-ikada, ukidaru</i>)	.4	40z

Drugs and Chemicals

(All prices for a single prepared dose unless specified; high cost represents rarity of ingredients, dubious legality etc.)

Name	Wt	Cost
Depressants		
Blood paper (<i>ketsushi</i>)	.1	50z
Dung ball (<i>koyashi-tama</i>)	.1	20z
Hemp tea (<i>taima-yaku</i>)	.1	2m
Sleeping powder (<i>suiminko</i>)	.1	2m
Hallucinogens		
Insanity poison, feather (<i>chin-doku</i>)	.1	5m
Insanity poison, seed (<i>seishin-doku</i>)	.1	3m
Laughing powder (<i>warakinoko</i>)	.1	1m
Mushroom, hallucinogenic (<i>genkaku-kinoku</i>)	.1	1m
Healing & Medicinal Drugs		
Anti-venin (<i>gedokuyaku</i>)	.1	5m
Charcoal powder (<i>konasumi</i>)	.1	2z
Lozenge (<i>ijōzai</i>)	.1	2z
Medicinal herbs (<i>kanpōyaku</i>)	.1	6z
Medicinal salve/ointment (<i>nankōyaku</i>)	.1	10z
Poison antidote (<i>gedokuyaku</i>)	.1	5m
Puffball fungi (<i>bōkataka</i>)	.1	10z
Stimulant (<i>kakuseizai</i>)	.1	1m
Poisons		
Arsenic (<i>hisen</i>)	.1	3m
Autumn flower (<i>akibana-dokuyaku</i>)	.1	2m
Blowfish (<i>fugu-no-doku</i>)	.1	3m
Buttercup poison (<i>kinpōge</i>)	.1	1m
Centipede venom (<i>mukade-no-doku</i>)	.1	6m
Chrysanthemum (<i>dokukiku</i>)	.1	1m
Copper rust (<i>dōsanka</i>)	.1	40z
Horse dung and blood (<i>koyashi-akuchi</i>)	.1	8z
Lacquer (<i>nuri-no-doku</i>)	.1	2m
Mercury (<i>iwami-ginzan</i>)	.1	6m
Mushroom, poison (<i>yūgai-kinoko</i>)	.1	4z
Mushroom, toadstool (<i>dokutake</i>)	.1	4z
Plum/peach poison (<i>zagarashi-yaku</i>)	.1	1m
Seasnake, paralysis (<i>umihebi-dokueki</i>)	.1	5m
Tea poison (<i>gyokuro</i>)	.1	2m
Tiger beetle (<i>han-myō</i>)	.1	3m
Paralytic poison (<i>hiki-no-doku</i>)	.1	2m
Wolfsbane (<i>torikabuto</i>)	.1	2m
Other Chemicals		
Itching powder (<i>kayusako</i>)	.1	70z

"In happiness at overcoming difficulties, people forget the danger of death."

—I-Ching

SHINOBI AND THE CAMPAIGN

RUNNING SHINOBI CHARACTERS

Running shinobi characters, as either PCs or NPCs, requires some special thought on behalf of the GM and players.

If handled poorly, shinobi can quickly unbalance a game. The only real restraints on them are good roleplaying (sticking rigidly to the shinobi codes) and GM intervention. So, first and foremost, GMs must be confident that they can handle NPC shinobi effectively and/or that their players are ready to accept (and won't abuse) shinobi PCs.

SHINOBI NPCs

Incorporating the sort of developed shinobi NPCs (which this book presents) into a campaign setting shouldn't be much of a problem for an experienced GM, who will likely recognize that, far from representing a force for confusion in the game world, the Shadow Warriors can only expand the scope of any campaign by bringing another complex socio-political game environment for the PCs to explore.

There are many ways to do this and none of them is wrong. Even so, GMs may benefit from the following advice.

Shinobi are myth, legend, the sort of imagined terror that grandparents tell little ones about at night if they don't want them to grow up to become Yoriki. In fact, in a campaign where shinobi are predominantly NPCs, this is the view that the average player character should take. The appearance of evidence to suggest that a shinobi has been at work in a scenario should be a big thing, leaving great lords, ladies and warriors whispering about treachery, plots and enemies hidden just around the next corner; the ultimate foes to which no-one has a counter.

If the evidence of shinobi actions should be scarce, the appearance of a shinobi should only take place as the crux of some major plot point, adventure hook or resolution, in order to maintain the profession's mystique. For added dramatic affect when a shinobi is to be revealed, make him one of the previously introduced (and marginally important) NPCs.

Don't forget that not all shinobi are shinobi. There is great mileage in exposing a PC group to a threat that appears to be led, or backed, by these sinister agents of death but which ultimately turns out of little more than samurai, bandits or local roughs working up some sort of scam to make a quick profit, intimidate someone or disguise their true identity.

Added to that, of course, is what the "real" shinobi are going to do when they hear about such goings on. Should they decide to investigate the matter at *exactly* the same time as the PCs...

The key here is to present the shinobi as something totally beyond the lives and loves of the PCs, yet close enough—perhaps to their lord, their friends or their enemies—to make them scared to death of their presence, whether or not they are being used as foes or friends to the players. This approach works best when the party is totally innocent of shinobi-related knowledge.

Use shinobi infrequently but always use them outrageously.

SHINOBI PCs

Handling shinobi PCs takes a very different kind of approach. It is not possible to lean on the same level of mystery and suspicion in a game where one or more of the players are actually turning up every week to show the rest of the party that behind the black garb and shuriken there is a very pleasant chap just waiting for a chance to shine.

Dealing with PC shinobi can require something of a shift in the focus of the game itself—perhaps as far as making the PC



“Develop a Zen spirit and understand its implications. Become aware of sincerity and faith. Self-reflection and self-realization, then thankfulness and benevolence, are to be pursued.”

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu (on religion)



shinobi's secret histories and agendas the driving force behind the whole campaign (though this only tends to work best when the whole group is either made up of shinobi, or shinobi sympathetic characters).

To break the options down into more manageable areas we shall look at the two main campaign archetypes which come into effect when shinobi are involved—shinobi as part of the group and shinobi as the whole group. Each has its own unique problems and benefits.

MIXING SHINOBI AND NON-SHINOBI

Mixing shinobi into a standard game might seem the most appealing way to go. The shinobi's special skills would appear to simply complement the techniques of a standard party. But it is rarely that simple and for some very good reasons.

If things are being played out as they should be, most people in feudal Japan (with the possible exception of some enlightened *yamabushi*, sympathetic Buddhists and/or well-informed bandits, and the like) are going to react very negatively when presented with a shinobi party member. Of course, the GM could always make the whole party more understanding of the shinobi's purpose so that they feel less uncomfortable with role-playing characters against their own feelings. Role-players, no matter how good they are, tend to play "person to person" in environments where friends are involved.

This sort of scenario automatically invalidates a good deal of the shinobi's purpose in being however; their secret origins, disguise and the fact that few people are supposed to know about their existence at all. Yet, allowing the players to work up shinobi characters with dual identities and "front" professions can also cause serious problems if the group is not made aware of (or is unhappy about) the idea. It's nearly impossible for a player to keep that sort of character development hidden for long. Once revealed it can drive a wedge between the shinobi players and the others, who may feel left out or that they are just pawns for the shinobi, and so on. This kind of game may suit some but it doesn't suit everyone's.

The keys to adding shinobi to standard groups is to work out in advance how the players feel about it as well as whether you, the GM, can justify inserting them into your campaign. There are great possibilities for including shinobi into a regular style campaign, including from scaring the PCs with senseless encounters with friendly or antagonistic shinobi, to opening up the first layers of ryū life and politics to the well ordered minds of the PCs.

It's imperative, however, that GMs recognize that this environment is fraught with pitfalls that need to be addressed well before the game gets under way, lest they ruin the course of the campaign for the players and GM alike.

ALL-SHINOBI GROUPS

This game environment is where this sourcebook comes into its own. The all-shinobi campaign may seem like a huge ego or power trip to some, but (as we hope you have seen) the shinobi's power within his or her own world is well-balanced by equally strong checks: the shinobi code, the orders of the ryū and the fact that a shinobi's most effective weapon—secrecy—is of very little use against a foe who is similarly trained. Allowing all of the players to play shinobi PCs need not result in a "ninja blood-bath" with the PCs going crazy with power, unless, of course, that is the kind of campaign you *want* to play.

The real benefits of this sort of campaign for the average player are many and varied, ranging from the simple joy of exercising skills which few others possess, through being effectively involved in two distinct game environments—each with its own codes and rules—to the role-playing challenge of been required to create (and develop over time) a pair—or more—of personality types for his or her shinobi.

Perhaps the single most attractive and enjoyable aspect of this sort of campaign, from the PCs' point of view, is the way in which a group can be involved easily, and legitimately, with all manner of adventures, in almost any location, without stretching the credibility of the campaign in the slightest. It's a wonderfully enjoyable feeling to be able to take PCs, without breaking their concepts, to any adventure location to perform any type of mission. With other castes and professions in *SENGOKU* this sort of free-form plotting isn't always possible, nor should it be. With shinobi PCs, who answer only to their Jōnin, there are few restraints as to what they can do.

"When the strike of a hawk breaks the body of its prey, it is because of timing."

—Sun Tzu

The type of group will depend on the temperaments of the players. There are a great many skills available to shinobi and not every agent can be a master of them all. It behooves the GM to direct the players towards skill groups which will complement each other, yet at the same time give each PC shinobi a level of uniqueness which makes them interesting to play. This cannot be understated.

Where a character can be perceived on one level as being “the same” as all the others in a group, the desire to grow, change and follow a personal path is diminished as the player falls back on what is expected of that archetype. But where a player is given the right amount of unique attributes and life directions, the fact that much of his character falls into a template far more readily than some others becomes unimportant and, in fact, allows a deeper level of involvement with what is special about their PC.

Give the PCs their unity (a common bond), but give them their unique gifts (through skills and background). Give them the power which is their due, as invisible agents and masters of esoteric arts, but give them the responsibilities which go along with that, such as their code and their potential foes.

PATRONS

The patron is arguably more important to the shinobi than to any other caste in *SENGOKU*. Most ryū were founded because of the timely aid of one or more shadowy patron sages and most only continue to exist because of the aid offered by other sympathetic people or groups.

Such patrons may include employers, financial backers, martial arts teachers, politically or religiously understanding souls or simply those whom the shinobi “squeeze” for backing.

It is important that the GM get the right balance of patrons for a ryū (or PC group). Though most shinobi clans will have more than a single patron (unless the clan is very small), giving them too many patrons risks diluting the secrecy of the clan—if only in the minds of the players themselves.

PRIESTS, TEMPLES & SHRINES

Religious orders (especially Buddhist temples) make fine patrons. These groups share many of the same philosophical goals as the average shinobi group—attaining physical perfection, spiritual awareness and understanding of the world around. Religious sects often possess of the same political and social ideals, as well.

Shinobi are effectively both Buddhist and Shintō worshippers—respecting both the path of human enlightenment and the native power of the *kami*—and have long been associated with learning from (and passing themselves off as members of) both temples and shrines.

A particular religious community may patronize a shinobi ryū or cell in order to gain protection in a political climate in which armed priests are frowned upon. A shinobi group might be based

in an established temple or own one dedicated to their patron’s sect.

Whatever the reason, relationships with a temple or shrine will be colored by the prejudices of that order and will be affected by the shinobi’s (if religious) native respect for their patrons. Buddhists might not wish the shinobi to kill, for example. Particularly pious, Buddhist shinobi may well respect this, especially if they value their patron’s wishes (and backing).

In this sort of relationship it is common for the temple (or shrine) to be open to any member of the ryū—though only the senior members of the religious community are likely to know about the shinobi’s secret—and any agent, from *genin* to Jōnin, can expect aid from their patron.

GM Tip

Most, if not all, shinobi ryū have at least one Buddhist or Shintō shrine to which they can look for aid and, unless the GM rules otherwise it should be taken as a given that this place will automatically render aid to, and occasionally ask favors from, their shinobi wards.

DAIMYŌ

A wholly political patron and one who can supply a shinobi group with great power—in the terms of wealth, equipment, legitimacy and authority to act—but at a terrible price. Having a daimyō as a patron is tantamount to being chained to the will of a member of a society that most shinobi find repugnant.

Dealing with a *daimyō* is often a matter of playing the ryū’s services against what it can gain from the lord (unless, like the Kōga ryū, it descended from members of the *buke* caste). The daimyō will know this himself and will play his part to the hilt, attempting to squeeze as much from his shinobi for the prizes he offers. He may possibly even attempt to discover the ryū’s secrets for his own ends.

Relations may be friendly, though. It’s possible for a ryū to be attached to an honorable lord who protects the ryū’s cover in exchange for their acting as a police force in his *han*, dealing with bandits, monsters and external threats (as well as carrying out his more usual commands) that his regular forces cannot.

In such a relationship only the Soke, if not the Jōnin, and a few high ranking Chūnin will ever meet with the daimyō (or, more likely, his representatives). Low-ranking PC shinobi should not expect succor from the staff or holdings of such a patron. In fact, attempting contact with them might well result in a confrontation, causing a rift between the ryū and their powerful patron.

Remember, shinobi may be tolerated by buke, but often barely so. Overt contact between the two groups can cause many problems for the buke and if given a choice between losing face (or power) and turning on the shinobi...there *is* no choice.

“...if [the enemy] does not know where I intend to give battle he must prepare in a great many places. And when he prepares in a great many places, those I have to fight in any one place will be few.”

—Sun Tzu

Historical Note

This sort of patronage began quite early in shinobi history with the aid given to both Iga and Kōga shinobi ryū by small families in their region as a way of both protecting themselves from the intervention of larger clan groups and guaranteeing the security of their domain (if only from the shinobi themselves).

The daimyō as patron was formalized in 1603 when the effectively unified Iga-Kōga ryū was contracted to the Tokugawa *bakufu* as an intelligence agency, but it was not transferred to popular fiction until the time of the Tokugawa Shōgun Yoshimune (1684–1751). Yoshimune, known as the famous *Abarenbō Shōgun* (Wandering Shōgun), used to travel around his domain in secret, righting wrongs, with both a shinobi agent in his place at Edo and a bodyguard of loyal Iga warriors.

MERCHANTS

Merchants are practical patrons. Wealthy beyond the dreams of many daimyō and excluded from the normal run of polite society, the rich merchant makes a fabulous backer for a more urbane shinobi ryū, able to pay for even the most specialized of equipment, fund training and provide the perfect cover.

Sympathetic merchants however, tend to enter into this sort of agreement with a ryū on a more even footing. Certainly the merchant will have to pay huge sums of money out over time, but he will have a free workforce to call on at need, better protection for his wares (and shipments) than any other in the locale. What's more, he will be all but immune from thieves and the shinobi themselves (in the event they decide to supplement their income with some extortion aimed at other merchants).

Such relationships can be entered into voluntarily or otherwise. In a friendly relationship many or all of the members of the ryū will know the merchant in question, and perhaps even work for him. Even the lowest genin can seek aid from such a patron, as a rule.

The merchant may be extorted to provide cover and money, though this is rare—an ill-used tool will always turn its wielder eventually. In such an unfriendly relationship, the merchant will never know his “contacts,” for safety reasons, and so seeking aid from such a patron is not possible.

TOWNSMEN AND VILLAGERS

Shinobi, by-and-large, have a reputation for protecting the “people” from the depredations of the *buke*. It's therefore logical for a ryū to maintain contacts within the local communities, even to the point of counting certain individuals as patrons of the ryū. This sort of relationship is not usually undertaken for reasons of financial gain, however, but as something of a back up measure in times of trouble.

It has always been the way of Japanese society—especially among the ruling classes—to ignore what is both repulsive and harmless. The average commoner will often go unnoticed by his betters if quiet and unobtrusive.

Those working at popular businesses, such as *sake-ya* or brothels, can overhear many interesting conversations and provide their shinobi friends with all manner of information and insights into their area.

They can also help in a more direct way. In a friendly village, every house is a potential hiding place, every person an ally and every hand a willing source of aid. The village or town ward that supports a shinobi group can be confident that most of the lawlessness which might otherwise threaten them won't be a problem.

GAIJIN

Not as unusual as it might sound and certainly a fabulous game conceit, though there is little written evidence to support such a relationship. In fact, the only real sources for such patronage are the popular theater of the early Edo period.

Many shinobi ryū barely consider themselves Japanese at all and many more actively dislike the *shōgun* which have destroyed, as they see it, the ancient and celestial order of Heaven-Emperor-People, so why not side with the *nanbanjin*?

A European (or Sino-Korean for that matter) patron can offer a ryū a great deal—firearms, chemicals, gold and esoteric knowledge from their world—in return for what seems so little—help in establishing friendly trade links or breaking up rival trade groups, information on daimyō and aid in discrediting other gaijin or nanbanjin religious groups.

In such a relationship, only a handful of shinobi will ever be exposed to their patrons, if only because few will have learned the barbarian languages. Apart from agreed rewards, no shinobi should expect succor from a nanbanjin patron. After all, a barbarian has little or no concept of true honor, neh?

Historical Note

While stories of nanbanjin priests hiring shinobi to burn temples (very unlikely), kill hostile daimyō (extremely improbable) and deal with rival nanbanjin elements (not so unlikely but still...) are commonly held to be fiction—and rightly so—there is one interesting tale which has come down to us from the late 16th century concerning one William Adams, the first Englishman in Japan.

It is said that, either just before or shortly after he was taken in as an advisor to Tokugawa Ieyasu, he was married to a local woman who was, in fact, a *kunoichi* in the employ of the Tokugawa. This woman, so the story goes, was charged with both keeping the Englishman safe from Jesuit-sponsored harm and preventing him from interfering too much with the profitable Dutch trade, upon which the Tokugawa relied heavily at that time.

“...there are five sorts of secret agents... When these five types of agents are all working simultaneously and none knows their method of operation, they are called ‘The Divine Skein’ and are the treasure of a sovereign.”

—Sun Tzu

CAMPAIGN ARCHETYPES

So, you've got your players all decked out with shinobi PCs, supplied with sympathetic patrons and settled into a nice base. Now what do you do with them? It's quite simple. You give them a mission. Presented below are a few basic campaign archetypes.

The basic thrust of a shinobi campaign can be easily directed by what sort of role your shinobi PCs will have within it (who their patrons are and so on). The following are story elements which crop up time and again, both in historical records and in various forms of fiction which surround the shinobi.

RETAINERS

Shinobi as employed by a powerful figure (abbot, daimyō, visiting gaijin, and so on). The main sources of adventure in this sort of campaign should be divided more or less evenly between the "routine" missions for the PCs' employer and the sort of adventure which draws the players into the various webs surrounding their master.

Perhaps he is a daimyō plotting to take over another province and requires the players to destabilize his enemy's forces. Maybe he is under attack by a mysterious opponent and only the shinobi PCs can find out what is happening and who is responsible.

Whatever, the cause there should be a slowly developing plot which runs counter to the usual course of the adventures in the campaign, both to serve as a break from "classic" shinobi missions, but provide the players with some really juicy plot twists to get their teeth into.

HEROIC SHINOBI

A common thread in modern shinobi fiction, this campaign assumes that the PCs are more than usually dedicated to the precepts of the shinobi code of conduct, regardless of whether or not the ryū works for a powerful patron. They are dedicated to employing their powers only against the evil elements of Japanese society. Whether or not these "foes" include the Shōgunate, evil monsters, other shinobi or foreign invasion, the campaign environment should assume that even if the peasantry does not understand the shinobi's ways, they will recognize their heroic ideals and treat with them as friendly agents.

The fact that the players are portraying more "heroic" types should not preclude them from acting as part of more traditional mission types. Their choice of targets will be of great import. This type of game is perhaps closest to the standard fare of most traditional RPGs, with clearer lines drawn between "good and evil" and its emphasis on heroism.

Examples of this sort of campaign can be seen in *The Dagger of Kamui* (*Kamui no Ken*) anime and any of the four seasons of the *Shadow Warriors* (*Kage no Gundan*) series, starring Sonny Chiba.

SHINOBI WARS

The best foil for a shinobi is another shinobi. That's what this campaign is all about. It might simply be a civil war-type affair, with rival ryū having at each other since the dawn of time (Iga and Kōga spring to mind here), or it might be part of a larger conflict, with the shinobi fighting a secret war to ensure victory for their more mundane allies (a perfect model for a campaign set during the height of the *Sengoku-jidai*).

It's best if this sort of campaign doesn't lay out its true colors until well into the plot. The average PC will need some experience behind them before they can stand much of a chance of mixing it up with enemy shinobi on a regular basis (unless playing Chanbara-level PCs against Historic-level NPCs). The group will also need to be established in a ryū setting, with patrons, ranks and a familiar "mission" profile, before things start going hideously wrong for them.

This can be a difficult campaign to run for some GMs, for it is likely to have a very dark atmosphere, be very violent on occasions and—if the PCs are not careful—have a high mortality rate for PCs. This is a great archetype for both an all-shinobi group and a shinobi-supported team, however, because it allows the GM to play around with a lot of shinobi actions themselves and forces the players to think very carefully about everything they do (especially on missions) as they are up against their mirror images in effect.

RENEGADE SHINOBI

If you found the tale of Ishikawa Goemon entertaining, then this is the campaign archetype for you. "Rōnin" shinobi, selling



"Ninja should have the benevolence to protect men of justice
since there are lots of good and respectable people in the world."

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu



their training to the highest bidder, keeping one step ahead of their own ryū as well as their enemies, who may feel like taking advantage of the isolated shinobi... This can be as exciting and as rewarding a play experience as any other. It perfectly suits the sort of players who prefer to make all their own rules, assuming they are willing to pay the price.

Character types can be heroic, villainous, greedy or just plain old bored with ryū life. There might even be a possibility that their ryū have cast them adrift for a purpose—whether known to them or not.

An exciting campaign to be in, but a potentially taxing one for all players, as the PCs are cut off not only from the support of their peers, but from all the equipment training which only the ryū could provide. But such is the price of freedom.

KEEPING THINGS INTERESTING

It can be a chore keeping any campaign fresh. It can be even more so with a shinobi-based campaign. The temptation to send the campaign into a series of raids, assassinations, kidnaps and so on can be very tempting. These kinds of mission can be enjoyable for a while, as they usually involve a great deal of action and player participation, but will eventually lead to pettiness.

It's easy enough to say "keep it interesting" but quite another to explain how it is done. Every group will need to get something different out of playing, but we hope that the following ideas will help to keep your game "fresher" for longer.

INVESTIGATIVE

Your PCs are about as close to the "gumshoe" as any character can get in a game set in feudal Japan. Even the actual *yoriki* (police commandants) and *machi-bugyo* (town magistrates) can't compete with the average shinobi's powers of observation, and this fact should never be neglected.

Many of the PC's skill groups are investigative in nature. Give the PCs a chance to *think* their way out of any situation rather than fight—not because they can't handle themselves in a combat but because the characters are more flexible than the average buke and don't have to wade into the enemy at the drop of a hat.

Shinobi live and breathe the control of information and it behooves the GM to give shinobi PCs every opportunity to exercise that fact.

VARIETY

If you are going to be giving out a lot of missions, keep them different. Bodyguard duty, assassination, kidnap and so on there are so many things a shinobi could do, that it seems churlish to tie them down to the same old jobs week after week.

Try to include non-mission-related scenarios into the campaign on occasion. Even scenarios as basic as helping a friendly merchant deal with some local roughs or traveling under cover to visit an old master help keep the campaign from becoming stagnant. The best campaigns also involve character development and interaction. Adventures that allow players to explore their characters and themes can add greatly to a campaign.

LONG-TERM PLOTTING

A good shinobi campaign is more than merely a string of missions with nothing to link them. When writing an adventure always try to have the bigger picture in mind—the campaign's main villains, the PC's allies and so on—and how the results of any adventure will impact it.

Don't place major plot points into every scenario, but there *should* be something of the campaign (people, places, items, information etc.) in every session, if only to give the PCs something to think about while they are working. Treat the game setting as a large spider web, with every action having a consequence whose effects can be felt throughout the world. If the GM does this effectively, the players soon pick up on this and not only start being more attentive to your words but become more careful with their own actions too.

SHINOBI-CENTERED

In games where shinobi represent only a small part of a group, GMs must try to balance their skills (shinobi centered missions) with the rest of the team. This isn't too hard, for no matter what situation a group of PCs might get into there will always be something for a clever shinobi to do.

The real danger is overusing the shinobi's presence and making them too much the center of attention (to the exclusion of the other players) or making them feel as if they are nothing more than glorified scouts, thieves or what have you.

"As the sennin lives on wonderful pictures of Mother Nature and makes the singing of birds and the sight of animals his mental food, so do the ninja."

—Takamatsu Toshitsugu

GLOSSARY

A

- Akibana Dokuyaku—Ingested poison. Lethal.
- Akindo—A merchant.
- Ansatsu (Assassination)—A shinobi mission archetype.
- Ashikaga Clan, The: The Ashikaga clan is often noted in works on Japanese history as being the family whose internal weakness brought about the collapse of the order of the Kamakura period and the start of the Age of Civil War. However, it should also be noted that during the early years of the Ashikaga Shōgunate especially the reign of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the clan was responsible for establishing the form of military government which would become the model, in the Edo period, for the Tokugawa family's version of the older Minamoto bakufu.
- Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408): The third Ashikaga Shōgun was, unlike predecessors, greatly devoted to the high arts—perhaps as a result of his formative years being spent in the palaces of Kyōto. He was particularly fond of the No drama and of the master Kan'ami whose theatre troupe had first introduced the art to the Shōgunate.
- Ashiko—Foot climbing claws.
- Asobi-me [Playing / Dancing Maiden]: A name used to describe the mi-ko of a Shintō shrine who are trained to carry out Kagura dances.
- Asobi-wo [Playing / Dancing Music]: The term given to the musicians who provide the backing for an asobi-me's Kagura dance.

B

- Bakufu [Curtain / Tent Counsel]: A name, first coined by Minamoto Yoritomo, often used to describe the various military governments which controlled Japanese political life from the end of the Heian period to the beginning of the Meiji Era. The name comes from the old Japanese for a military counsel tent, or screen, and it is thought to have been used by Yoritomo to emphasise the fact that his first Kamakura period government was composed solely of his personal retainers.
- Bakuhatsugama—Kusarigama w/explosive shell on chain.
- Bisentō—Large glaive.
- Biwa Hōshi—(Lute Monks). Musicians and/or monks (traditionally blind) and practitioners of Heikyoku (telling the tale of the Heike), an art devised by the Minamoto to ease the passage of the members of the Taira family killed in the Genpei Wars. Shinobi were often thought to disguise themselves as Biwa Hōshi because, more than most traveling musicians or monks, people tended to avoid harming them

as they were supposed to be surrounded by the souls of dead Taira warriors.

- Bō—A six foot staff.
- Bō-shuriken—A slim, needle-like shuriken.
- Buddha—1: An enlightened individual. 2: A Ninpō-Mikkyō term implying the foundation, or energy associated with inertia and the source of all other spiritual energy.

C

- Chi—(earth) A Ninpō-Mikkyō element.
- Chijiriki—A chain and flail like weapon, looking very like a European light horse fail.
- Chindoku—Ingested poison. Hallucinogen.
- Chūnin—(Mediator). A ranking shinobi—maybe a teacher, or a senior agent—is known as a chūnin and they deal with the day-to-day running of the shinobi clan for the Soke.

D

- ~dono—(Lord). A suffix used when addressing one's own feudal lord or social superior.
- Doka—A pocket charcoal heater.
- Dokubari—Plant needles mixed with pulped vegetable matter and noxious chemicals. Primarily an irritant weapon for spooking horses.
- Dokuenjutsu—The making and use of smoke and vapor weapons.
- Dokuyaku—Ingested poison. Lethal.
- Dōsanka—Inhaled poison. Lethal.
- Doshi—(Moralist) A teacher, specifically of philosophy. Common in the Nara and Heian periods thanks to Sino Korean influence at the Japanese court.
- Do-ton-jutsu—(The Art of the Gateway to the Earth). Techniques involving hiding in and moving close to the earth unseen. Also teaches knowledge concerning earth related sciences, such as (basic) geology and (very crude) vulcanology.

E

- Ebisu: The Fortune of Luck and one of the “Four Patrons of Puppets” enshrined at Omido Hachiman Daibosatsu shrine.
- Endokuken—A shuriken containing a device for delivering poison smoke or gas.
- Ennen [Longevity]: This form of entertainment was developed by Buddhist temples as a method of making certain religious sermons more appealing to the public, by arranging them in the style of narratives with musical accompaniment.

F

- Feruzue**—A six foot staff with a section of chain concealed in its lower quarter.
- Fu**—(Wind) A Ninpō-Mikkyō element.
- Fūdo ryū, The**—Founded in Iga province in the 12th century. Supposed refiners of shurikenjutsu.
- Fudojutsu**—The Art of Immobility. A technique which tutors shinobi in a deep meditation technique which is reputed to involve lowering body temperature, almost suspending heart beat and cutting back on breathing.
- Fudoken**—(Immovable Fist) A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
- Fugu no doku**—Ingested poison. Lethal / paralytic.
- Fujiwara Clan, The**: During the Heian period, the bureaucracy of the Imperial court was almost solely managed by the vast interconnected families of the Fujiwara clan. As this family also traditionally provided spouses for the heirs to the throne, the Fujiwara patriarchs were also able to exert a great degree of political leverage on the government of the period.
- Fukiya**—Blowguns.
- Fukumi Bari**—A dart designed to be expelled from the mouth, with or without a Zetsukan.
- Fukushima Ryū, The**—Founded in the 11th century. Mortal Foes of the Fuma clan.
- Fuma Ryū, The**—Founded in the 14th century. Dread enemy of Fukushima ryū.
- Funkan**—Blowpipes for expelling powders.
- Fushōmen (The Shop/Storefront)**—Usually a general goods store, often situated in a Sanjō district to avoid unwanted attention.
- Futokoro teppō**—A small, pocket sized teppō.

G

- Gando**—A portable lighting tool. Similar to Doka, but including flint, steel and oil for making fires.
- Garyū Doji**—a Sino-Japanese teacher of proto ninjutsu techniques. Very little is known of the man himself, except through the many written texts which his pupils incorporated into their own work. His teachings are best seen in the Hakūn ryū's form of Ninpō taijutsu.
- Genin**—(Low / Under Man). The rank and file of a shinobi ryū.
- Genjutsu**—The arts of Illusion. A semi mystical skill which shinobi use to confuse opponents in combat.
- Genkaku kinoko**—Ingested poison. Hallucinogen.
- Gikan Ryū, The**—Founded in the 12th century. Masters of Ninpō Mikkyō.
- Go Gyo**—(Five Elemental Transformation). Ninpō Mikkyō formulae which represent the various strengths and weaknesses of the five Japanese elements.
- Gundan / Gundam (Battalion / Army)**. An organized unit of soldiers.
- Gyokkyo Ryū, The**—Founded in the 11th century. Developers of Koshijutsu.
- Gyokuro**—Ingested poison.

H

- Hakūn Ryū, The**—Founded in the 11th century. Masters of the arts of Kensou Akuma.
- hanbo**—A half face mask, usually made of metal. Similar to a menpo.
- hanmyo**—Ingested poison. Lethal.
- Hasame bune**—A collapsible boat, just big enough for four shinobi and their gear.
- Hensojutsu**—(The art of transformation). To a shinobi this is not just a form of physical disguise, but the art of carrying psychological and internal transformations too, ensuring that any cover the shinobi adopts will be perfect down to the tiniest mannersims.
- Hinin**—(None Person). The underclass of feudal Japanese society, untouchable and polluted—either by profession or familial descent. Synonymous with Eta. Most shinobi consider themselves (or are considered) as Hinin.
- Hira Shuriken**—A generic term for the classic three to eight pointed star shuriken.
- Hisen**—Ingested poison. Lethal.
- Hokashi**—A musician.
- Hyakurai ju**—(Hundred / many barreled gun) A teppō with between four and twelve barrels, ignited simultaneously.

I

- Iburi Dashi**—Smoking out buildings (caves etc.) in which targets are hiding.
- Idagama**—Spiked iron balls.
- Iga Han**—Modern Mie Prefecture. To the South of the Oumi Province and East of Ōsaka, the mountainous region of Iga was a perfect base for any group who wished to vanish from sight. Historically not only shinobi groups but dissident monks, political refugees and all bandits have made this area their home. Even today in Japan the whole region has something of a Buraku (village—a term used to describe Hinin and Eta peoples now that those terms have become slanderous) feel about it for most Japanese.
- Iga Ryū**—Founded in the 12th century. Largest and most capable shinobi ryū to have existed.
- Yanban**—Sino-Korean warrior monk who lived at the Japanese court until he was expelled in a political revision in the early 10th century. Allegedly the founder of the main Iga shinobi ryū.
- Ikko-Ikki, The destruction thereof**—In 1575, the Buddhist lead peasant uprising which had protested the treatment of the common man by the Buke was cruelly put down by Oda Nobunaga in a brutal rape of their base at Mount Hiei. Every monk was burned, shot or crucified and all the peasants of the “army” were burned in their stockade—except two hundred of the Ikki's maidens who were crucified after being abused by many members of Nobunaga's army. In retaliation many shinobi ryū declare war on the Oda, even defeating one of his armies in 1579 at the battle of Tensho no Iga no Ran.

“Those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle. They capture his cities without assaulting them and overthrow his state without protracted operations.”

Inpo—The art of hiding and moving in close proximity to an attacker / target without being detected.
 In-Yo—The Shinobi's concept of Yin and Yang is not one of positive and negative forces, as the Chinese look at it, but of two aspects of a single unified concept.
 Iwami ginzan—Ingested or injected poison. Lethal.

J

Jidaimono— (Historical Things) A term used to describe historical and heroic plays—whether factual or fictional—which came in to common usage in the 1500s. The term has always been most closely associated with Sekkyo, Kabuki and Ningyo Joruri.
 Jō—A three foot staff.
 Joenjutsu—(The art of Performing). Actually techniques of breathing and lessons in bearing which teach the shinobi to be more aware of their physical presence to make hiding and moving unseen easier. It might have a theatrical basis, but that is unknown for certain.
 Jōnin—(Standing Office) The defacto head of most shinobi ryū will be this figure and not the visible Soke. Most often the Jōnin will not actually be a very important member of the clan, preferring to remain in the shadows and rule from the security that obfuscation brings.
 Joruri [Ballad Drama]: The term Joruri is taken from the name of the lead character in the play which came to be regarded as first of this tradition's masterpieces: "Joruri Hime Monogatari." As Joruri is most often seen as a forerunner to Ningyo Joruri and the traditions of the puppet stage, it is important to stress that the tradition was actually created as an independent art—part of the Heikyoku / Sekkyo tradition—from which Ningyo Joruri took its inspiration.
 Jumon—(Empowered Words) A Ninpō-Mikkyō representation of a word which releases the thought (and the power) of a Mikkyō "prayer."

K

Ka—(Fire) A Ninpō-Mikkyō element.
 Kain Doshi—Semi mythical Sino-Japanese (his ethnic origin has never been accurately determined) teacher of Esoteric Buddhist practices. He is considered by most modern Shinobi ryū to be one of the founders of classical era Ninpō and, as such, has been "written into" the founding myths of many schools of ninjutsu.
 Kaiten—(avoid) . A Ninpō Taijutsu dodge maneuver.
 Kagakure Doshi—See Kain Doshi.
 Kaginawa—A fine rope with a small, two or three pronged grappling tool.
 Kagura [Spirit Music]: Also known as Kami Asobi. The earliest recorded form of theatre in Japan, these dances have been performed—throughout recorded history—at all levels of society as entertainment for the various native gods. It was considered such a fundamental part of Japanese religious and social life that many Kagura were performed at court

and a particularly important dance was included in Kojiki—the story of Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami and a solar eclipse. It is from evolved forms of this basic dance that most early entertainment evolved and the form still survives to day as part of the ongoing rituals of Shintō shrines.

Kasha—A metal and bamboo escapement for rappelling down rope at high speed.
 Ka ki—1: A generic term for firearms and explosive devices. 2: A generic term for metal tools.
 Kakurega (The Safe House)—Usually a business such as a bath house or a brothel in which a ryū's shinobi can rest, rearm and find healing.
 Kama—A small sickle type weapon, derived from an agricultural tool. Considered to be one of the signature weapons of the shinobi.
 Kamayari—A spear with a kama blade attached below the point.
 Kame baku—A turtle styled petard device used to blow doors open.
 Kan'ami (1333–1384): Kan'ami was a Shintō priest with a particular interest in narrative histories and the Kagura dances which he was aquainted with professionally. His greatest achievement is universally held to be his re-interpretation of the Sarugaku-no tradition—to create No—in order to make it more sophisticated and acceptable to the increasingly elite tastes of the warrior rulers of the Ashikaga period.
 Kanpaku [White Barrier]: The position of chief advisor to the Emperor. This rank was effectively created for Toyotomi Hideyoshi when he succeeded Oda Nobunaga as the supreme military ruler of Japan in 1586. The title of Kanpaku was bestowed on him because Hideyoshi, being of peasant stock, could not legally claim the rank of his old master, as the office was only open to those who could show a clear line of descent from the first Shōgun, Minamoto Yoritomo.
 Karma—A Ninpō-Mikkyō term denoting energy related to jealousy, envy and the will to succeed in a given task.
 Ka-ton-jutsu—(The Art of the Gate of Fire). Techniques for both setting fires and making explosives.
 Karakuri Ie—(Mechanical House). A favorite of the Iga ryū. A normal looking house with a selection of traps, crawl ways, false floors, sliding doors and the likes. No two are the same.
 Kasugai—Spikes and bars used to closing off and locking doors.
 Kawanaga—A weighted rope, used for climbing and as a crude club.
 Kayusako—Itching powder.
 Kensou Akuma—The Demonic hand to hand fighting techniques of the Hakūn ryū.
 Ketsushi—Inhaled poison. Sleep inducing.
 Kikaku ken—(Head Strike) A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Kinpōge—Ingested poison. Lethal.
 Kiri—Picks, borers and small drills.
 Kiseru—An iron smoking pipe which makes an effective club.
 Kitan ken—(Open Hand Strike) A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Kōga Han—The Kii Peninsula (modern Ise Prefecture) has always been a rugged and inhospitable land, historically favored by pirates who preyed on the sea trade between Ōsaka

"If the army is confused and suspicious, neighboring rulers will cause trouble. This is what is meant by saying 'A confused army leads to another's victory.'"

—Sun Tzu

and the ports to the north of the Japan Alps.

Kōga ryū—Founded in the 11th century. Once and ally of the Iga ryū, they are now their most deadly enemy.

Komuso—Itinerant Priest.

Koi—(Espionage). A shinobi mission archetype.

Kojiki [Account of Ancient Times]: Compiled between the years 682 and 710, Kojiki is a chronicle history of the rise of the Japanese state incorporating its mythical foundation and the descent of the gods to earth to found the Imperial family. With the authenticity of the Kujiki—a similar book allegedly written three decades before this text—in serious doubt, the Kojiki is currently recognised as the earliest work of Japanese history and literature in existence. While the authenticity of the work itself is not in doubt, a certain amount of myth does surround its creation—not least of which is the story of book simply being a written version of the oral narratives of Emperor Temmu’s official storyteller, Hideno Are.

Kokitai—a crude aqualung derived from the stomach and intestine of a dog.

Kokto, The—One of the small aboriginal Japanese tribes which inhabited the islands before the invasion of Asiatic peoples from the mainland. Slowly pushed back up the main island by the expansion of the “Japanese” only a few tribes still lived on Honshū by the turn of the 17th century.

Kongokai—(Cosmic) A Ninpō-Mikkyō representation of the boundless possibilities of the Whole Mind of the cosmos.

Koshijutsu—The powerful Atemi Waza based fighting techniques of the Gyokkyo ryū.

Koyashi tama—Inhaled poison. Sleep inducing.

Ku—(Void) A Ninpō-Mikkyō element.

Kuda bashigo—A bamboo tube ladder.

Kugutsu [Puppet / Basket]: A Nara period term for a ritual or performance puppet and one of the arts of ritual puppeteering popular during that period—especially from the island of Awaji. The word itself is said to derive from the term kugu [basket], referring to the way in which the puppets were carried around by the puppeteer. However, there is a possibility that it is related to the words kuki / kukli [puppet] (Altaic) and kuirui [doll] (Chinese), which is possible considering the level of continental contact between Japan and the rest of Asia by the Nara period.

Kugutsu Mawashi—Puppeteering.

Kuji-in—Focusing Ki energy.

Kumade—A large agricultural rake.

Kumo Bashigo—A net like rope ladder.

Kumogakure Ryū, The—Founded in the 13th century. Allies to the Gikan ryū.

Kunai—Digging tools.

Kunashi—A Spade, or a spade blade for the Kunai.

Kunoichi—(Great Suffering) An ironic Edo period theatrical term for a female Shinobi.

Kusari fundo—A short weighted chain weapon.

Kusari gama—A kama with a length of chain attached to the hilt. Considered to be a shinobi signature weapon.

Kuwa—An agricultural hoe.

Kyoketsu shogi—An unusual weapon indeed. A short dagger with a curving sickle like blade attached at the hilt which also possesses a length of weighted rope (using an iron ring). Considered to be a shinobi signature weapon.

Kyōyō (Extortion)—A shinobi mission archetype.

L

M

Machiga Jōhō (Misinformation)—A shinobi mission archetype.

Mamuki gama—A kama blade with a rope and snake attached.

Mandala—See Nenriki.

Manrikigusari—A long weighted chain weapon.

Mawashi—An entertainer, usually an actor or a mime.

Metsubishi—A powder blowgun.

Mikkyō—(Secret Buddhism). Esoteric Buddhist meditation techniques said to produce physical effects in the “false” (mundane) world. Used here to represent shinobi magical techniques.

Minamoto Yoshitsune (1159–1189): The half-brother of Minamoto Yoritomo. The historical Yoshitsune was the commander in chief of the Minamoto armies during the Genpei War with the Taira and a very popular general amongst his family’s forces. However when Yoritomo took the title of Shōgun, he considered Yoshitsune’s popularity a threat to his power base and, under Imperial decree, forced him to commit suicide. In later years, he was transformed— in both popular and elite mythology— into a heroic figure who became the focus of many stories and plays, especially in the puppet theatre.

Minka-dō—A method of judging the depth of sleep in a person.

Mizu gumo—Water walking boots, looking like small canoes.

Mizu kaki—Swimming fins.

Mizu-taimatsu—A waterproof torch.

Mukade no doku—Injected poison. Lethal.

Moku-ton-jutsu—(The Art of the Gateway to the Trees). Techniques for moving and hiding in the verdant environment. Also teaches such basic skills as herbalism, plant lore and wood carving.

Murasaki Shikibu. Also known as Fujiwara Murasaki (ca. 980—ca. 1020): A leading Heian period diarist, poet and writer and the author of arguably Japan’s greatest work of fiction, “Genji Monogatari” [The Tale of Genji]. Though she is known to have been from—and married further into—the Fujiwara family, the name by which the world knows her—Murasaki Shikibu—is derived from both the female lead of “Genji” (Murasaki no Ue) and from her Father’s court position as a member of the Shikibu [The Court Office of Rituals].

Musubi Bashigo—A single length of rope tied into a series of loops to form a ladder.

“...he who occupies the field of battle first and awaits his enemy is at ease; he who comes later to the scene and rushes into the fight is weary.”

—Sun Tzu

N

Nairan Kadou (Counter-espionage)—A shinobi mission archetype.
 Nagare—(Throw) . A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Nagedeppo—Hand grenades.
 Naya shi—(Block). A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Nage gama—a six foot staff with a kama blade attached.
 Neko de—(Cat Claws). Climbing claws. Favored by the Togakure ryū. Also known as tekage to avoid confusion with neko te.
 Neko te—(Cat Claws). Finger tip weapons such as reinforced nails or replica animal claws.
 Nenriki—(The strength of Will) A Ninpō-Mikkyō representation of various hand gestures which control, limit or confine the release of a Ninpō Mikkyō power.
 Nishina Daisuke—See Togakure Daisuke.
 Ningyō—Doll or puppet.
 Ningyō Jōruri—Sengoku era puppet theater.
 Ninja—(Hiding Person—Chinese reading) See Shinobi.
 Ninjutsu—(Art of hiding) The arts of the shinobi.
 Ninpō—(Laws of Ninjutsu). A term which encompasses all aspects of a shinobi's life, from physical training to the codes of conduct which guide their behavior.
 Ninpō Taijutsu—(The Great / Strong Art of the Laws of Ninjutsu). Martial art techniques taught as part of Ninjutsu.
 Nishokudai—A candle held on a long piece of wood.
 Nunchaku—An agricultural (grain) flail.
 Nuri no doku—Injected poison. Lethal.

O

Odeppō—A large caliber teppō. More like a hand cannon.
 Ogama—A large two handed ax, shaped like a kama. Considered to be a shinobi weapon of authority and leadership.
 Onibi no Jutsu—(The Art of Demon Fire). The manufacture and use of naphtha like liquid fire.
 Oukami Yo, the—(Night of the Wolf). 1581. An Iga raid on Kōga territory in which the children and young trainees of the Kōga clan were targeted by the Iga in retaliation for the Kōga's destruction of a number of Iga villages.
 Ozotsu—A crude wooden mortar device designed to fire explosive projectiles at a high angle.

P

Padma—A Ninpō-Mikkyō term denoting passion, desire and the dynamic forces which drive the cosmos.

Q

R

Ratna—A Ninpō-Mikkyō term denoting Chi, the Earth and the potential that can be found therein.
 Rikimaru—Allegedly the name of the Taira family Scion who founded the Fūdo ryū. However the name is a cunning construction meaning “the circle of strength” and was commonly used from the early Edo period to refer to heroic shinobi. The real name of Fūdo's founder (indeed if he ever existed) is not known.
 Rokushakubō—See Bō.
 Rokushaku kama—See Nagekama.
 Ryū—(Style or School). A suffix which denotes an establishment for physical or philosophical training. For a shinobi however, this term is synonymous with clan (or possibly even family).

S

Saimin-jutsu— A form of hypnotism which can also be employed against sleeping targets.
 Sangaku—(Three Amusements). Crude entertainment -acting, puppets etc.—designed for the rural peasantry. Not very refined (big on phallic representation).
 Sanmitsu—(Empowering Thought) A Ninpō-Mikkyō representation of the spark which drives a shinobi's power.
 Sarugaku—(Monkey Amusements). Acting, dancing, song, mime and other forms of entertainment. An evolved form of Sangaku, designed to appeal to more refined Buke tastes. The ancestor of Nō drama.
 Seami (1363–1443): See Zeami.
 Seishin—(Life Spirit). A very unusual concept which can be taken to meaning (when used with alternate kanji) Energy, the stars, essence, freshness and sincerity. Etymologically speaking they all rise from the same root—pure / life essence—and the term is used by shinobi to define the harmony they strive to keep their hearts in.
 Seishin doku—Ingested poison. Delirium inducer.
 Sekkyo [A Sermon / A Sutra]: A form of narrative storytelling—derived from both elements Ennen and Heikyoku in the fifteenth century—created by members of the Kansai Buddhist community as a way of drawing people to religious services with the promise of exciting religious epics which accompanied the main sermons. Immediately popular with temple attendees, it did not take long before enterprising performers created a purely secular form, called Joruri, which dispensed with all religious overtones and presented more historical and social plays. Sekkyo attracted many Biwa Hoshi to it, as they could easily transfer their skills across from Heikyoku and it is said that one such priest created the play which would allow Joruri to break away as an art in its own right—and provide it with a name—“Joruri Hime Monogatari.”

“When I wish to give battle, my enemy, even though protected by high walls and deep moats, cannot help but engage me, for I attack a position he must succor.”

—Sun Tzu

Senban Shuriken—A four pointed almost square shaped shuriken.
 Sensojutsu—(The Arts of War). Small unit strategy and battle tactics which favor shinobi skills.
 Shako ken—(Claw Strike) . A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Shamisen [Three Stringed Style]: A lute like instrument of Okinawan origin which became popular in Japan in the middle of the sixteenth century. A shamisen was made up of a long neck with three strings and a snake or cat skin covered sound box, which produced a tone much higher in pitch than other instruments in its class. It was much lighter and cheaper to produce than the Biwa [Japanese Lute], yet very similar to the older instrument in playing style—perhaps as both shared a common ancestor in the Chinese Lute: the P’iPa. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, most—if not all—Sekkyo, Joruri and Ningyo Joruri troupes had gone over to this instrument as their sole musical accompaniment.
 Shikan ken—(Extended Knuckle Strike). A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Shikome zue—A Bō with both a hook and a chain attached.
 Shikoro—Thin bladed saws.
 Shinobi—(Hiding Person) Member of a Ninjutsu ryū. A practitioner of Ninjutsu.
 Shinobi-iri—(Entering into Hiding). The art of moving quietly and quickly without being seen.
 Shinobigatana—A shinobi’s gimmick sword. Also known as “Ninjato.” Considered to be a shinobi signature weapon.
 Shinobi hankyū—A shinobi’s short bow.
 Shinobi zue—A generic term for a staff weapon with a retractable device (chain, blade etc.)
 Shishin ken—(“Finger Needle” Strike) . A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Shitan ken—(Thumb Pressure Strike). A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Shito ken—(Thumb Strike). A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Shojoku—A tight fitting (traditionally black) suit of clothing worn by a shinobi on mission.
 Shoten-no-jutsu—Climbing techniques.
 Crown Prince Shotoku (ca. 570—ca. 622): This figure is credited with introducing Buddhism to the Japanese Imperial family. It is also said that he was instrumental in bringing continental theatre troupes—including puppeteers—from Korea to entertain the court and nobility.
 Shukke—Itinerant Buddhist monk.
 Shuki ken—(Knee Strike) . A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Shuko—See Neko de.
 Shurikenjutsu—The art of throwing weapons, specifically specially designed stars or knives. To the shinobi however, the art is more than just a way to hurl blades as a skilled shinobi can cripple or kill an opponent with a single well aimed missile. Considered (generally) to be a shinobi signature weapon.
 Snap haunce—A European lock mechanism for a teppō. Classic flintlock design except that the priming pan is not usually incorporated into the frizzen. Prone to jamming if left on full cock for more than a few minutes. Not very common in Japan.

Sodeteppō—A Bamboo gun. Far stronger than it may seem.
 Soke—(Head Family). The grand master of a ryū. In shinobi ryū terms this is the officer who is the visible (to the ryū’s members) master of the clan and deals with most of the day-to-day running of the group. He also acts as the mouth-piece for the (usually) secretive Jōnin.
 Sokki ken—(Knee Strike) . A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Soku ken—(Toe Strike) . A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Sui—(Water) A Ninpō-Mikkyō element.
 Sui ki—A generic term for water related equipment.
 Suikan—Blowpipes for liquids.
 Suiminko—Inhaled poison. Sleep inducing.
 Suimin yaku—A generic term for sleep inducing drugs.
 Sui-ton-jutsu—(The Art of The Gateway to the Waters). This technique covers, not only swimming but such techniques as entering a body of water silently, fighting in water and how to make equipment for breathing under water.

T

Taima yaku—Ingested Poison. Sleep inducing.
 Taisatsu (Reconnaissance)—A shinobi mission archetype.
 Taizokai—(Material) A Ninpō-Mikkyō element representing the Physical Whole of creation.
 Taka Bashigo—An extendible ladder.
 Tantra—A Ninpō-Mikkyō term meaning “The ability to work energy by spiritual means.” Borrowed form
 Taomi—Fishing nets. If weighted properly, they can be used as a weapon.
 Taomijutsu—Using a weighted fishing net as a weapon.
 Taru ikada—Floatation devices.
 Tibetan Buddhism.
 Teko—Iron or brass knuckles.
 Tengu—Legendary half crow / half man demons who are said to have taught the first shinobi their skills.
 Tensho no Iga no Ran, The battle of—The only recorded instance of an army of shinobi defeating a trained field army in more or less fair terms.
 Tenmon—(Heavenly Writings). Traditionally the study of astronomy. Shinobi ryū often also include the study of meteorology into the art to make it a more practical navigation / survival art in the field.
 Teppō—An arquebus or musket. Usually match lock design.
 Tetsubishi—Caltrops.
 Tobi Keri—(Flying Kick) . A Ninpō Taijutsu maneuver.
 Tobi kunai—A wedge for forcing locked doors, or at least forcing them enough to get a saw through to deal with any bars or bolts.
 Togakure Daisuke—The founder of the Togakure shinobi ryū and one of Kain Doshi’s alleged pupils.
 Togakure Ryū, The—Founded in the 12th century. Masters of climbing and running techniques.
 To ki—A generic term for ropes and ladders.
 Tomoe-nage (Takedown) . A Ninpō Taijutsu grapple maneuver.
 Tonpo—Escapology.
 Torikabuto—Ingested poison. Lethal.

“During the early morning, spirits are keen, during the day they flag, and in the evening thoughts turn toward home. ...avoid the enemy when his spirit is keen and attack him when it is sluggish and his soldiers homesick.”

Totoku Hiyoshi—The art of dodging and deflecting small missiles such as arrows, spears and darts.
 Tozawa Hakunsai—A semi historical teacher of Ninjutsu who is said to have had a direct hand in the development of three distinct shinobi ryū, Iga (as a teacher), Hakūn (as a founder) and Gyokkyo (as a founder).
 Tsubo giri—A large bore or drill head, used mainly to create a hole for a saw blade but can be used to sink boats quite easily.
 Tsubute—A thrown club weapon.
 Tsugi bune—See hasame bune.
 Tsurī Bashigo—A hanging rope ladder, designed to be firmly affixed to any structure.

U

Uchi dake—Charcoal fire lighter very similar to a doka, but much cheaper.
 Uchi ne—A heavy throwing dart.
 Ukemi—Breakfall techniques.
 Umebi—Land and naval mines.
 Umihebi Dokueki—Injected poison. Lethal neurotoxin.

V

Vajra—A Ninpō-Mikkyō term implying clarity of thought, perception, wisdom, death and renewal.

W

Wakizashi teppō—a gun either hidden in or disguised as a short sword.
 Warakinoko—Inhaled poison. Hallucinogen.
 Wheel lock—A mechanical lock mechanism for a musket. A spinning abrasive drum causes sparking in a piece of iron pyrites to ignite the black powder in the semi sealed primer. Most reliable form of lock, but prone to jamming if left spanned (wound up) for any length of time. Not very common in Japan.

X

Y

Yanban—(Korean. Nobleman). By the Heian period over one third of Japanese noble families claimed Korean descent and often used Korean titles such as this to refer to their members. Synonymous with the Japanese “Dono” (lord).

Yaraji—A heavy bladed saw.
 Yōgen—Crude chemistry.
 Yūgai kinoko—Ingested poison. Various effects.
 Yuki Waragi—Snow boots. Much like Inuit snow shoes.
 Yuukai (Kidnapping)—A shinobi mission archetype.

Z

Zagarashi yaku—Ingested poison. Lethal.
 Zeami (1363–1443): While Zeami is known to history as the son of the creator of No theatre it is also fair to say that he represents the greatest champion and most skilled master which this art possessed. His contributions to the world of No are legion, but of particular import were his standardising of the art’s symbolic masks—a feature which would later cross into puppet theatre, preference for secular history plays over religious tales and his recognition of the importance of Kyogen as an art in itself—performances of which he always placed alongside any work of his own.
 Zetsukan—A tiny dart blowgun which is carried inside the mouth.



“You should not encamp in low-lying ground. In communicating ground, unite with your allies. You should not linger in desolate ground. In enclosed ground, resourcefulness is required. In death ground, fight.”

—Sun Tzu

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“If [a general is] reckless, he can be killed; if cowardly, captured; if quick-tempered you can make a fool of him; if he has too delicate a sense of humor you can culminate him; if he has a compassionate nature you can harass him. The ruin of the army and the death of the general are inevitable results of these shortcomings.”

—Sun Tzu

TOURIST INFORMATION SOURCES

IGA SHINOBI MUSEUM OF MIE PREFECTURE

Based in the bounds of Ueno city the museum is located on the site of one of the main Iga ryū's village bases and has served as the ryū's main archive since the revival of shinobi arts in the mid 19th century.

Run by members of the modern ryū as well as those surviving descendants of the agents who worked for the Tokugawa government, the museum is the single most enlightening and informative place to visit in the world if one wants to push as far past the myths of the ninja as possible.

The museum itself houses the best collection of shinobi related material anywhere in the world today, with items such as the famous Iga folding boat, a range of *shuriken* from Iga and allied ryū, all manner of training texts, medicinal books, weapons, disguises and much more.

Moreover, the collections are housed in both original and reconstructions of the famous *shinobi-yashiki* (shinobi house) and the *karakuri-ie* (mechanical houses) which were the mark of an Iga ryū base.

The museum houses more than just the history of the Iga, however. The whole site has been reconstructed to serve as both a training ground for the modern ryū and as a sort of active theme park in which patrons can kit up as shinobi and—under expert supervision—try their hands at such feats as shuriken throwing, climbing with *nekote* (cat claws), walking on water (with spider boots), silent movement (over nightingale floors), sword skills and tunnel fighting (in the warren of underground passages which serve the base).

Finally, there is even a rather nice little shop, selling all manner of Iga ryū licensed merchandise (a bit tacky but well-made in the main), from *laidō* blades to *shojoku* (ninja garb) in all the traditional colors.

The museum can be reached by bus from Ueno City—Mie Prefecture—and departs from the JR (Japan Rail) bus terminal outside the East entrance to JR Ueno Station.

OPEN: 9:00—17:00
CLOSED: Dec 29–Jan 1
ADMISSION: 400 yen

Iga Ueno holds a Ninja Festival on the 1st Sunday in April every year. Those residents of Mie who have a shinobi or *buke* heritage parade in period attire from Ueno to the Ninja Museum.

PERSONAL SOURCES

People from whom we have received help and advice over the years regarding our research into Ninpō.

- Ms. Taeko Nakajima. Shiga Prefectural Board of Education (Shinobi in Shiga Prefecture).
- Mr. Mineo Mizushima. Mito Prefectural Board of Education (Ninjutsu in the Tokugawa Period).
- Professor Naoko Terauchi. Kobe University (The Japanese Court).
- Dr. Christopher Hood. University of Sheffield (Education and training of Japanese children).
- Ms. Hiroko Takeda. University of Sheffield (The Social History of Ninpō).
- Mr. Lloyd Powell. Sheffield College (Weapons and Gimmicks).
- Professor Jane Marie Law. Cornell University (Japanese Folk Religions).
- Miss Lummanika Andwatta Barnes. Michigan State Board of Education (Japanese Minorities: the Kokto).
- Dr. Richard Siddle. University of Sheffield (Japanese Minorities: The Kokto and the Ainu)
- Doctor John Benns MD. Sheffield Area Health Authority (Poisons and Drugs).
- Mr. Danny Bourne. Sheffield (For being “Mr. Danny”).
- Dr. Nic Tranter. University of Sheffield (Nara and Heian Period Text Translation Adviser).
- Mr. Graham Healey. University of Sheffield (Shinobi in Edo Period Fiction).
- Mr. Alex Moresby. Squaresoft Europe (Shinobi in the Modern Popular Japanese Consciousness).
- Miss. Helen McCarthy. AnimeUK (as was) (Shinobi in Manga and Anime).
- Miss. Junko Fujimori. Mie Prefecture Iga Shinobi Museum (Iga ryū Archives).
- Mrs. Noriko Ito. Omihachiman Board of Education (Ishikawa Goemon).
- Miss. Yoko Takayama. Doushisha Women's College, Kyōto (Fact and Fiction in Shinobi Folklore).
- Dr. Miriam Jelinek. University of Prague / University of Sheffield (Japanese theater).
- Miss. Sawako Irie. School of Oriental and African Studies, London (Japanese Puppet theater).

“When [dust] hangs low and is widespread infantry is approaching. When dust rises in scattered areas the enemy is bringing in firewood; when there are numerous small patches which seem to come and go he is encamping the army.”

—Sun Tzu

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忍者

SHINOBI

Shadows of Nihon

Historic-level Character

RYŪ: _____ IGA
 Name: _____
 ML (Title): 2 (Genin)
 Chūnin's Name: _____
 Primary Cover: Wandering Entertainer

Complications
 -25 Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme)
 -15 Enemy: Koga ryū
 -10 Intolerant: to gaijin (rude)
 -5 Obsessed: with attractive members of opposite sex (risk embarrassment)
 -3 Oppressed: Hinin (Const, Min)
 -2 Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor)
 -15 Secret Identity: Entertainer (Frequent, Extreme)

Cost Perks
 4 Contact: Buddhist (Tendai) temple abbot
 4 ML 2 in Iga shinobi ryu

Cost Talents / Okuden
 3 Night Vision
 3 Ambidexterity
 3 Cramming
 10 Karumi-jutsu (can leap +20m, +1 END/10m)

Notes/Equipment
 Shinobi shojoku (ninja garb), reversible (black/brown)
 Shinobigatana
 9 shuriken (8-bladed)
 Kyotetsu-shoge
 Peasant garb (poor quality): kimono, kobakama, obi, fundoshi, 1-pair tabi, waraji
 Saragaku gear: red/yellow garb, gong, bo, juggling props, all stored in case/backpack

3	INT
4	WILL
3	PRE
3	AES
3	PIE
2	KAO
3	STR
3	CON
4	BODY
5	REF
5	DEX
3	TECH
4	MOVE
6	SD (2x CON)
20	REC (STR+CON)
30	END (CONx10)
20	STUN (BODYx5)
20	HITS (5xBODY)
8	RUN (MOVx2)
12	SPRINT (MOVx3)
4	LEAP (MOVx1)
12	RES (WILLx3)
20	Honor

SKILL	SCORE	+	STAT	=	AV
Acting	2		3		5
Acrobatics	4		5		9
Athletics	2		5		7
Binding	4		3		7
Buddhism	2		3		5
Chains	5		5		10
Climbing	4		5		9
Concentration	2		4		6
Confucianism	2		3		5
Conversation	2		3		5
Craft:	3		3		6
Dance: Popular Dance	2		5		7
Deduction	2		3		5
Demolition	3		3		6
Disguise	3		3		6
Evade	2		5		7
Folklore	2		3		5
Forced March	3		4		7
General Knowledge	2		3		5
Knives	4		5		9
Language: Japanese	2		3		5
Language: Iga clan dialect	2		3		5
Local Expert: Iga province	2		3		5
Meditation	3		4		7
Navigation	3		3		6
Ninjutsu	4		5		9
Ninpō Taijutsu	5		5		10
Perception	3		3		6
Scouting	3		3		6
Shintō	2		3		5
Sleight of Hand	3		5		8
Stealth	4		5		9
Survival	3		3		6
Swimming	3		5		8
Swords	4		5		9
Teaching	2		3		5
Throwing	4		5		9
Tracking	3		3		6



WEAPONS CARRIED

Type	STR	Min	Stat+Skill +	WA	=	AV	Damage*
Shinobigatana	3		9 +	0	=	9	3 d6
Shuriken	1		9 +	0	=	9	1 d6
Kyotetsushoge	2		9 +	0	=	9	2 d6
- knife							
- rope	2		9 +	0	=	9	(4)d6

* Includes STR bonus

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SHINOBI

Shadows of Nihon

Historic-level Character

RYU: _____ KŌGA _____
 Name: _____
 ML (Title): 2 (Genin) _____
 Chūnin's Name: _____
 Primary Cover: Yamabushi _____

3	INT
4	WILL
3	PRE
4	AES
3	PIE
3	KAO
3	STR
3	CON
3	BODY
4	REF
4	DEX
4	TECH
4	MOVE
6	SD (2x CON)
20	REC (STR+CON)
30	END (CONx10)
20	STUN (BODYx5)
20	HITS (5xBODY)
8	RUN (MOVx2)
12	SPRINT (MOVx3)
4	LEAP (MOVx1)
12	RES (WILLx3)
20	Honor

SKILL	SCORE	+	STAT	=	AV
Acrobatics	4		4		8
Athletics	2		4		6
Binding	4		4		8
Buddhism	3		3		6
Chains	4		4		8
Chemistry	2		4		6
Climbing	3		4		7
Concentration	2		3		5
Confucianism	2		3		5
Conversation	2		3		5
Craft:	3		4		7
Dance: Popular Dance	2		4		6
Deduction	2		3		5
Demolition	3		4		7
Disguise	4		4		8
Evade	2		4		6
Focus Ki	1		4		5
Folklore	3		3		6
Forced March	3		3		6
General Knowledge	2		3		5
Language: Japanese	2		3		5
Language: Koga clan dialect	2		3		5
Local Expert: Omi province	2		3		5
Meditation	3		4		7
Navigation	3		3		6
Ninjutsu	4		4		8
Ninpō Tajjutsu	5		4		9
Perception	2		3		5
Polearms: Lances	4		4		8
Scouting	3		3		6
Shintō	2		3		5
Sleight of Hand	2		4		6
Stealth	4		4		8
Survival	3		3		6
Swimming	3		4		7
Swords	4		4		8
Teaching	2		3		5
Throwing	4		5		9
Tracking	3		3		6



Complications
 -5 Bad Karma (1 point)
 -25 Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme)
 -15 Enemy: Iga ryū
 -3 Oppressed: Hinin (Const, Min)
 -2 Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor)
 -15 Secret Identity: Yamabushi (Frequent, Extreme)
 -10 Vow: humiliate/destroy any Iga shinobi he encounters (risk bodily harm)

Cost Perks
 4 Contact: Buddhist (Tendai) temple abbot
 4 ML2 in Koga shinobi ryu

Cost Talents / Okuden
 3 Night Vision
 3 Ambidexterity
 3 Blade Trapping
 10 Piercing Thrust: w/PA: Lances

Notes/Equipment
 Shinobi shojoku (ninja garb), reversible (black/gray)
 Shinobigatana
 9 shuriken (4-bladed)
 Shinobi-zue (w/yari & chain), disguised as a bo (staff)
 Peasant garb (poor quality): kimono, kobakama, obi, fundoshi, 1-pair tabi, waraji
 Yamabushi garb, backpack, conch shell horn.

WEAPONS CARRIED

Type	STR	Min	Stat+Skill +	WA	=	AV	Damage*
Katana	3		8 +	0	=	8	3 d6
Shuriken	1		8 +	0	=	8	1 d6
Shinobi-zue - yari	2		8 +	0	=	8	2 d6
- chain	2		8 +	0	=	8	(3)d6

* Includes STR bonus

SHINOBI

Shadows of Nihon

Chanbara-level Character

RYŪ: IGA
 Name: _____
 ML (Title): 2 (Genin)
 Chūnin's Name: _____
 Primary Cover: Samurai (or rōnin)

4	INT
4	WILL
4	PRE
4	AES
3	PIE
4	KAO
5	STR
5	CON
4	BODY
7	REF
7	DEX
4	TECH
5	MOVE
10	SD (2x CON)
10	REC (STR+CON)
50	END (CONx10)
20	STUN (BODYx5)
20	HITS (5xBODY)
10	RUN (MOVx2)
15	SPRINT (MOVx3)
5	LEAP (MOVx1)
12	RES (WILLx3)
40	Honor

SKILL	SCORE	+	STAT	=	AV
Acting	4		4		8
Acrobatics	5		7		12
Athletics	2		7		9
Binding	4		4		8
Buddhism	2		4		6
Chains	6		7		13
Climbing	4		7		11
Concentration	2		4		6
Confucianism	2		4		6
Conversation	2		4		6
Craft:	3		4		7
Dance: Popular Dance	2		7		9
Deduction	2		4		6
Demolition	3		4		7
Disguise	3		4		7
Evade	2		7		9
Folklore	2		4		6
Forced March	3		5		8
General Knowledge	2		4		6
Knives	4		7		11
Language: Japanese	2		4		6
Language: Iga clan dialect	2		4		6
Local Expert: Iga province	2		4		6
Meditation	3		4		7
Navigation	3		4		7
Ninjutsu	6		7		13
Ninpō Tajjutsu	5		7		12
Perception	5		4		9
Scouting	3		4		7
Shintō	2		4		6
Sleight of Hand	4		7		12
Stealth	6		7		13
Survival	3		4		7
Swimming	3		7		10
Swords (second score includes +1 for Knack)*	6/7		7		14*
Teaching	2		4		6
Throwing	5		7		12
Tracking	4		4		8



Complications
 -25 Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme)
 -15 Enemy: Kōga ryū
 -10 Intolerant: to gaijin (rude)
 -5 Obsessed: with attractive members of opposite sex (risk embarrassment)
 -3 Oppressed: Hinin (Const, Min)
 -2 Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor)
 -15 Secret Identity: Samurai (or rōnin) (Frequent, Extreme)

Cost Perks
 4 Contact: Buddhist (Tendai) temple abbot
 4 ML 2 in Iga shinobi ryū

Cost Talents / Okuden
 3 Night Vision
 3 Ambidexterity
 3 Blind Fighting
 3 Counterstrike
 3 Cramming
 3 Instinctive Direction Sense
 3 Knack w/Swords (+1)* incl

Notes/Equipment
 Shinobi shojoku (ninja garb), reversible (black/brown)
 Shinobigatana
 9 shuriken (straight)
 Manrikigusari
 Peasant garb (poor quality): kimono, kobakama, obi, fundoshi, 1-pair tabi, waraji
 Samurai garb: kimono, hakama, kataginu, average-quality daishō, geta

WEAPONS CARRIED

Type	STR	Min	Stat+Skill +	WA	=	AV	Damage*
Katana	3		13 +	0	=	13	4 d6
Wakizashi	2		13 +	0	=	13	4 d6
Shuriken (bō-shuriken)	1		12 +	0	=	12	1 d6
Manrikigusari	2		13 +	0	=	13	(4)d6

* Includes STR bonus

SHINOBI

Shadows of Nihon

Chanbara-level Character

RYŪ: _____ KŌGA _____

Name: _____

ML (Title): 2 (Genin) _____

Chūnin's Name: _____

Primary Cover: Bonge Pilgrim _____

6	INT
5	WILL
5	PRE
4	AES
3	PIE
3	KAO
4	STR
5	CON
4	BODY
6	REF
6	DEX
5	TECH
5	MOVE
10	SD (CONx2)
9	REC (STR+CON)
50	END (CONx10)
20	STUN (BODYx5)
20	HITS (BODYx5)
10	RUN (MOVx2)
15	SPRINT (MOVx3)
5	LEAP (MOVx1)
15	RES (WILLx3)
30	Honor

SKILL	SCORE	+	STAT	=	AV
Acrobatics	5		6		11
Athletics	4		6		10
Binding	4		6		10
Buddhism	5		6		11
Chains	5		6		11
Chemistry	3		6		9
Climbing	4		6		10
Concentration	3		6		9
Confucianism	2		6		8
Conversation	2		5		7
Craft:	3		5		8
Dance: Popular Dance	2		6		8
Deduction	3		6		9
Demolition	3		5		8
Disguise	5		5		10
Evade	2		6		8
Focus Ki	2		5		7
Folklore	3		6		9
Forced March	3		5		8
General Knowledge	2		6		8
Language: Japanese	2		6		8
Language: Kōga clan dialect	2		6		8
Local Expert: Omi province	2		6		8
Meditation	4		5		9
Navigation	3		6		9
Ninjutsu	4		6		10
Ninpō Taijutsu	6		6		12
Perception	3		6		9
Polearms: Lances	4		6		10
Scouting	3		6		9
Shinto	2		6		8
Sleight of Hand	2		6		8
Stealth	4		6		10
Survival	3		6		9
Swimming	3		6		9
Swords	4		6		10
Teaching	2		5		7
Throwing	4		6		10
Tracking	3		6		9



- Complications
- 5 Bad Karma (1 point)
 - 25 Code of Honor: Shinobi code, risk death (Frequent, Extreme)
 - 15 Enemy: Iga ryū
 - 3 Oppressed: Hinin (Const, Min)
 - 2 Poverty: dead broke (Constant, Minor)
 - 15 Secret Identity: Yamabushi (Frequent, Extreme)
 - 10 Vow: humiliate/destroy any Iga shinobi he encounters (risk bodily harm)

- Cost Perks
- 4 Contact: Buddhist (Tendai) temple abbot
 - 4 ML 2 in Kōga shinobi ryū

- Cost Talents / Okuden
- 3 Night Vision
 - 3 Ambidexterity
 - 3 Blade Trapping
 - 5 Reverse Cut: w/PA: Lances
 - 5 Lightning Strike: w/PA: Lances

- Notes/Equipment
- Shinobi shōjoku (ninja garb), reversible (black/gray)
 - Shinobigatana
 - 9 shuriken (4-bladed)
 - Shinobi-zue (w/yari & chain), disguised as a bo (staff)
 - Peasant garb (poor quality): kimono, kobakama, obi, fundoshi, 1-pair tabi, waraji
 - Backpack, Kasa
 - Prayer tapes (from various temples)

WEAPONS CARRIED

Type	STR	Min	Stat+Skill +	WA	=	AV	Damage*
Katana	3		10 +	0	=	10	4 d6
Shuriken	1		10 +	0	=	10	1 d6
Shinobi-zue - yari	2		11 +	0	=	11	4 d6
- chain	2		10 +	0	=	10	(4)d6

* Includes STR bonus

SHINOBI

Shadows of Nihon

RYŪ: _____
Family: _____
Name: _____
ML (Title): _____
Primary Cover: _____

Complications

Cost Perks

Cost Talents / Okuden

Notes/Equipment

- ___ INT
- ___ WILL
- ___ PRE
- ___ AES
- ___ PIE
- ___ KAO
- ___ STR
- ___ CON
- ___ BODY
- ___ REF
- ___ DEX
- ___ TECH
- ___ MOVE
- ___ SD (2x CON)
- ___ REC (STR+CON)
- ___ END (CONx10)
- ___ STUN (BODYx5)
- ___ HITS (5xBODY)
- ___ RUN (MOVx2)
- ___ SPRINT (MOVx3)
- ___ LEAP (MOVx1)
- ___ RES (WILLx3)
- ___ Honor

SKILL SCORE + STAT = AV

WEAPONS CARRIED

Type	STR	Min Skill	+	WA	=	AV	Damage
_____	_____	_____	+	_____	=	_____	d6
_____	_____	_____	+	_____	=	_____	d6
_____	_____	_____	+	_____	=	_____	d6
_____	_____	_____	+	_____	=	_____	d6
_____	_____	_____	+	_____	=	_____	d6

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SHINOBI

Shadows of Nihon

RYŪ:
 Chunin: _____
 Home village: _____
 Assigned: _____
 Position/Duties: _____

CHARACTER BACKGROUND / HISTORY

Where was your character born? Where did he grow up? What are the name of his parents and siblings (if any). What childhood events shaped your character's personality?

CHARACTER REPUTATION, RENOWN & HONOR

List any important incidents, encounters or events in the campaign that earned your character a reputation (deserved or not), renown or Honor points.

Event	When occurred	Outcome/reputation gained
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

MIKKYO

Is your character a practitioner of shinobi mikkyo? If so, list the prayers your characters knows.

Prayer	LoS Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NOTABLE PERSONALITIES

List any important NPCs that your character has encountered. These can be romantic interests, villains or rivals, influential people or anyone else who stands out in your character's mind.

Name	Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

GOOD / BAD KARMA

List any Good or Bad Karma points your character has here, along with what event earned the Good or bad Karma. (Let the GM see this list whenever asked.)

Pts	Good/Bad	Event
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

GOALS

Note your character's goals, as well as which your character has accomplished (see SENGOKU p. 94).

Done?	Goal
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Tools carried or available

Explosives carried or available

Poisons carried or available

Disguises available



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