

# THE SECRET TRADITIONS OF THE SHINOBI

HATTORI HANZO'S SHINOBI HIDEN AND  
OTHER NINJA SCROLLS



EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY  
ANTONY CUMMINS AND YOSHIE MINAMI

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## THE YOSHIMORI HYAKUSHU

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## Editors' Preface

The experience of reading these shinobi scrolls is at once highly rewarding and highly frustrating. It's rewarding to read the actual words of a real-life ninja, his descriptions of the skills and the world he lived in. But doing so inevitably illuminates the many new avenues that need to be explored. Though many of our burning questions are answered, we end up with a whole new set of problems and loose ends.

This is to be expected. The scrolls' authors didn't know what kinds of explanations or context we future readers would need. Indeed, the scrolls were not intended for our prying eyes, but for the next generation of shinobi. The manuals were not meant to document every detail for future historians and enthusiasts. They were secret documents created by old Japanese families when the shinobi arts were falling into decline, during the long, peaceful Edo period. Therefore, tools and other objects are mentioned without explanation, as the authors took for granted that their intended readers would understand exactly what they were writing about. Parts of the manuals were often written in a simple list form—intended more as a selection of “hooks” to prompt an already-trained shinobi's memory of the full tradition. As a result, the finer details were lost when the actual skills died out. Worse, in other areas, the entry's title no longer explains what the skill actually was, and so the entire entry is, at least for now, lost.

And then there's the problem of mistranscription. Mistakes were sometimes made during transcription, and that often leads to confusion. Also, in some cases, alternative ideograms were used. Chinese ideograms (which are the basis of the Japanese language) have both phonetic and pictorial meaning. Sometimes, alternative ideograms were used in the scrolls, simply for their phonetic sound. At the time, a reader would know whether to read the word phonetically, ignoring the pictorial meaning, or to read it using its pictorial meaning, ignoring the phonetics. However, the meaning of some words has been lost over time, so what would once be obvious to the reader is now a difficult choice for the modern scholar, who must try to identify the word through its phonetic pronunciation (which isn't always possible) or by guessing at its pictorial meaning. Normally this is not an issue, as context helps to establish the correct meaning of any anomalous ideogram. However, in the case of the aforementioned “skill lists,” there is no context, and thus the meaning is lost, leaving us only with the pronunciation.

While these kinds of problems can be frustrating, they are also exciting. They lead us to more questions, which in turn leads us to more avenues of exploration. The more avenues we have to explore, the more vast and complex our understanding of the shinobi becomes. So let us welcome each new question as a new challenge—a new avenue to pursue in the future.

—Antony Cummins and Yoshie Minami  
Warabi, Japan, April 2011

To learn more information about Antony Cummins' work, and to discover more about the ninja and samurai of Japan, visit [www.natori.co.uk](http://www.natori.co.uk).

Part One  
**THE SHINOBI HIDEN**  
忍秘伝

Written by Hattori Hanzo and others circa 1560

## COMMENTARY

The *Shinobi Hiden*, or “Secret Ninja Tradition,” is a manuscript that is said to have been passed down in the family of Hattori Hanzo Yasunaga 服部半蔵保長, who served the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshiharu, and later, the Tokugawa clan, in the domain of Mikawa. Previously, my team and I published a translation of this document based purely on a scroll in Okimori Naosaburo’s collection. That scroll has an ownership mark showing that it belonged to Ooka Echizen no Kami, a famous magistrate of Edo. Though it is very vague, it possibly bears the mark of the Sainenji Temple, which was founded in 1594 by Hattori Hanzo Masanari 服部半蔵正成, also known as “Devil Hanzo,” a name considered to be due to his ferocious tactics in warfare. In 1634, the Sainenji Temple and Hanzo’s grave were moved to Shinjuku, in Tokyo. Working from the inscriptions on that version of the manuscript, it can be deduced that Masanari’s father, Hattori Hanzo Yasunaga, originally gave the manual to him in 1560, when he was nineteen. However, it must be understood that the Okimori document is not the original manual—it is a transcription done by Kato Sakuzaemon 加藤作左衛門 in 1731.

Since that first publication, we’ve discovered another version that belonged to the Nagata family. The Nagata version contains additional information, as well as an entirely new final chapter, making it the most complete version of the *Shinobi Hiden* known to date. The version printed in this book includes both the Okimori and the Nagata texts.

## COMPARING THE OKIMORI AND NAGATA TEXTS

It is without doubt that the Nagata text is a later transcription of the Okimori text. It carries the same transcription errors—implying that the Nagata text was a direct transcription of the Okimori text. The differences between the two versions are mostly slight, an example being *ka* turning into *ga*, which reflects the grammar change that took place in the late Edo period.

One bigger difference, however, is the change in the now famous ninja skill of crouching and stepping on your hands to silence your walking as you move through an enemy’s house. The Okimori text has a transcription error that complicates this issue but shows that the “left hand under right foot and right hand under left foot” variation is possible. In contrast, the later Nagata text clearly says it is “left hand under left foot and right hand under right foot” (the Nagata text is the first record of this same hand, same foot version). Since all other indications prove that Nagata was copying the text from Okimori’s version, and since this could not have been a transcription error (as multiple errors would have been required in order to make the sentence work), Nagata must have

deliberately made this change. Nagata was not a practicing shinobi and was seen as a scholar on warfare, meaning that it is only his interpretation of the skill—but this does not rule it out as a possibility. This could also have been the origination point of the now common confusion over this skill. For a full discussion on this issue, including the multiple transcription errors, see *In Search of the Ninja*, by Antony Cummins.

Another point of interest—and confusion—is the fact that though the Okimori text lists a final section called “Kuruma no Arai,” that section is in fact missing from the Okimori text. And although the Nagata text does feature an additional section of skills at the end, it is not the missing “Kuruma no Arai.”

Nevertheless, the new section of the Nagata text (which has never before been published, in English or in Japanese) is an exciting discovery in the world of ninjutsu. We know this “lost” section was part of the original manual, because it is signed by Hattori Hanzo and others who appear in the Okimori version, and because it shows much earlier dates than anticipated, cementing this manual’s place and importance in the history of the ninja.

## CHANGING THE NAME FROM “NINPIDEN” TO “SHINOBI HIDEN”

The Shinobi Hiden 忍秘伝 is more commonly known as the “Ninpiden.” While not incorrect, the name “Ninpiden” is most likely a modern reading; the original pronunciation was most likely *shinobi hiden*.

The Japanese language offers two readings or more for most words. The ideogram 忍 can be pronounced as *nin* or as *shinobi*. However, all of the historical references to this ideogram that are accompanied by phonetic markers show that when it is at the start of a word, it is pronounced as *shinobi*, never as *nin*. When used in context with the ninja and combined with being at the start of a title, the rest of the title, 秘伝, is pronounced *piden*. But when *piden* comes back to the original form, it becomes *hiden*. Thus we get *shinobi hiden*. (However, it may also be pronounced as *shinobi no hiden*, because though the particle *no* is often dropped from written language, it is used in speech.)

In the interest of conserving Japanese history, we refer to this manual by the name we believe the ninja first gave it hundreds of years ago: the Shinobi Hiden.

## DATING PROBLEMS

As this is a transcription and is riddled with mistakes, it is hard to discern a date. Multiple dates appear in the volumes.

Volume I      1655<sup>1</sup> (given as the original date), 1727, and 1731

Volume II	No date given
Volume III	1560 (given as the original date) and 1733
Volume IV	1560 (given as the original date)

To add further confusion, there is another manuscript dated 1560 and named the Hattori Hanzo Ninpo Menjo Certificate. It is a transcribed abstract from Volumes I, II, and IV of the Shinobi Hiden, and the inscription reads:

Written in 1560	Hattori Hanzo 服部半蔵
	Hattori Sukenoshin 同(服部)助之進
	Hattori Hanzo 同(服部)半蔵
Written in 1733	Kato Sakuzaemon 加藤作左衛門

There are three theories regarding the dates of the Shinobi Hiden.

### **Theory #1**

Volumes II, III, and IV were written simultaneously in 1560 (or before), and an introduction, in the form of Volume I, was added at the later date of 1655. Then, in the eighteenth century, the whole document was transcribed and was at that time given the respective volume titles. This would appear to be credible, as the last three volumes deal with what could be considered “warring period” ninjutsu, while Volume I (1655) concentrates on the history of ninjutsu and bears a resemblance to the Bansenshukai (1676), a document that claims to have collected information from myriad ninjutsu texts, and the Iga-Koku Ninjutsu Hiho (“Secrets of the Ninjutsu of the Iga Domain”), written by Kikuoka Nyogen and compiled in 1698.

### **Theory #2**

The entire document was written in 1655, and the date of 1560 was falsely inscribed alongside the names Hattori in order to create greater respect for the text.

### **Theory #3**

The entire text was created in 1731, and the aforementioned Hattori Hanzo Ninpo Menjo Certificate was copied from it in 1733. While unlikely, it must be registered as a possibility. Only the discovery of an earlier text would fully discount this theory.

## **THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR**

The Shinobi Hiden is attributed to Hattori Hanzo I, but this is only a theory. It's quite difficult to determine the scroll's original author with any certainty, as there are many names listed on it (see [this page](#)–[this page](#), [this page](#), and [this page](#)).

We believe Volumes II, III, and IV were written by Hattori Hanzo I, and that the subsequent names are the people these scrolls were given to. We would like to offer the theory that Hattori Minobe Saburo wrote Volume I, and that the scroll was passed down to those listed after him. Because the text was transcribed, we cannot use handwriting to verify this theory.

Another possibility is that the individuals listed are cowriters. However, this seems unlikely, as only one Hattori Hanzo in each clan can exist at any given time (the word “hanzo” in this context is that of a family title or position). The new Nagata section was also written by an author identified as Hattori Hanzo and was transcribed as early as 1646, but why it was never included in the other versions is a mystery.

## HATTORI HANZO: ONE NAME, MANY MEN

Hattori Hanzo is a giant name in the world of the ninja. But there is often confusion over the name. “Hattori” is a family name. “Hanzo” was both a name and a social position; it was a name taken on by the head of the Hattori family. As a result, there were many who went by the name Hattori Hanzo. It is unknown exactly how many heads of the Hattori family there have been; however, when it comes to the ninjutsu, you only need to know of few. The following is a family tree showing the main members in question.

### Hattori Hanzo I

Hattori (Yasunaga) Hanzo was first named Hanzo 半三 Iwami-no-Kami, which later changed to Hanzo 半蔵. He was from Chigachi, in Iga, and moved to serve the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshiharu. Afterward he went to Mikawa to serve the Tokugawa clan. It is thought that his son Hanzo Masanari (Hattori Hanzo II or Devil Hanzo) was born there. The Shinobi Hiden dates point to this Hattori as the original author of the manuscript, and that he gave it to his son—which would mean Hattori Hanzo II, or Devil Hanzo, as he was known.

### Hattori Hanzo II

Hattori (Masanari) Hanzo II, or Devil Hanzo, was the son of the first Hattori Hanzo and is the man who is thought to have received the Shinobi Hiden from his father at the age of nineteen. It is believed that at the age of sixteen, during the night attack on Udo castle in Mikawa, he infiltrated the castle, leading many shinobi. It is also believed that in 1576 he attacked Kakegawa Castle of the Totoumi; took part in several battles, including Anegawa, Ushikubo, Kosaka, and Takatenjin; and was a friend to the future

shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. Hattori Hanzo was a master tactician and the leader of three hundred ninja in the service of the shogun. It has been postulated that this Hattori Hanzo was the man who arranged for the shogun to escape his enemies by making a mountain crossing through Iga, using Hattori's connection with the men of Iga. This resulted in Tokugawa Ieyasu employing two hundred men of Iga.

### **Hattori Hanzo III**

This was the first son of Hattori II, and he was also named Masanari. If his father was the archetypal “perfect general,” Hattori Hanzo III was the archetypal “annoyed teenager.” By the time of the ascension of Tokugawa Ieyasu to supreme shogun of Japan, Hattori Hanzo II was dead, and Hanzo III was in charge of the two-hundred-strong ninja group stationed at gates at the palace in Tokyo—gates that are still visible today. We know from historical records that the ninja under Hanzo III revolted, complaining that he was a poor leader. The incident resulted in manhunts and bloodshed as Hattori Hanzo III tried to hunt down those who rose against him, which led to scandal and the dishonor of Hattori III. The problem ended with the death of Hattori Hanzo III in the siege of Osaka.

## **TRANSCRIPTION ERRORS**

It is well known that this 1731 transcription is littered with mistakes. It appears that the transcriber did not correctly copy some sections of the text. For example, the measurements *bu* 分 and *sun* 寸 appear to have been mistranslated at certain points in the text, making many of the tools impossibly large or impossibly small. (See Appendix A for a chart showing the modern equivalencies of the units of measurements used in this book.) Fortunately, this kind of mistake is quite obvious and occurs in only a few places, and each instance has been identified in this book.

Also, Volume IV lists twelve points for the shinobi to remember. (See [this page–this page](#)). In the transcription these points were numbered but were not put in order. We have corrected that issue.

## **IN CLOSING**

On the whole, the Shinobi Hiden is a great resource for those who wish to study ninjutsu in its historical context. It is full of fascinating information and brings to light ninja tools and skills that have for so long lain in secret.

We must remind you, however, that this translation is subject to the difficulties inherent in the text (see the [Editors' Preface](#)). Certain aspects of the text seem to be open to interpretation. However, we have endeavored to bring you the best translation

possible. The Shinobi Hiden is a manuscript that has not yet given up all of its secrets, and it is open to much further study and correction.

# THE SHINOBI HIDEN

## Volume I

### THE TRADITIONS OF IGA AND KOKA

The shinobi 竊盜 were founded in the period of the Emperor Gao of the Han dynasty of ancient China.<sup>1</sup> At that time, both the arts of war and the shinobi were initiated, and the shinobi were called *kan* 間.<sup>2</sup> In the *Zuo Zhuan* 左伝 they were called *cho* 長, and after that, *ryosaku* 兩作.<sup>3</sup>

It is known that a man called Yi Yin 伊用, who was a retainer of King Chen Tang of Shang of China, snuck into the palace of King Zhou, who reigned over the Shang dynasty, and defeated him.<sup>4</sup> Also, Jiang Ziya, who was the prime minister to King Wen of the Zhou state, wrote seventy-one chapters on the shinobi ways<sup>5</sup> and ruined Dodo, a retainer of King Jie of Xia.<sup>6</sup>

Sun Tzu, a retainer of Helü of Wu, invented five types of shinobi,<sup>7</sup> which appear in his chapter called “Son Yokan” 尊養寒.<sup>8</sup> It is said that some retainers of the Emperor of Gaozu of the Han dynasty, such as Zhang Liang, Han Xin, and Sun Tzu, used the arts of the shinobi, as they are referred to in the book on the dialogues with Emperor Taizong.<sup>9</sup>

In our country, these skills are found as late as in the era of the nineteenth emperor, who was called Tenchi.<sup>10</sup> Prince Seiko rebelled against Tenchi’s orders and withdrew to Otabe of Yamashiro province, where he built a castle and conspired against the emperor.

Also, the Emperor Tenmu gave an order to send a man named Takoya to venture on a shinobi mission and thus defeat a prince.<sup>11</sup>

Down the generations, to the 107th<sup>12</sup> after the Emperor Jinmu, in the reign of Ogimachiin and Masamitsukennin Sou Senko, there were eleven people in Iga who created shinobi ways. Among them was Yahei Tahei-Tateoka no Dojun, a retainer of Hattori Mimasaka-no-Kami who lived in Tamanawa no Sho. Under the wing of Sasaki no Nagatsune, of Omi province, they attacked Dodo, who retreated inside of Sawayama castle. Yahei Tahei Dojun picked forty people from Iga and four<sup>13</sup> from Koka and used them for the attack against Dodo. Afterward he founded his own school of the shinobi path, which he intended to be transmitted for generations.

### THE WAY OF ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO THE SHINOBI<sup>14</sup>

The Art of Fire-Carrying Devices 筒之火之事

1. The art of carrying the fire egg<sup>15</sup> 鳥之子持様; to be transmitted orally<sup>16</sup>
2. The art of the rapid-fire tool; wrapped with straw  
筒之火大早 ワラニ包持<sup>17</sup>
3. The art of the fire-carrying cylinders 同筒火持様; to be transmitted orally
4. The art of metal fire-carrying cylinders 同金筒之事
5. The art of carrying the paper handkerchief fire 鼻紙火之持様<sup>18</sup>
6. *Yojinhi* tool; to be attached to *shoto*, or short sword 養陣火<sup>19</sup>
7. How to light tinder 保口燈様
8. The plate fire 付板<sup>20</sup>
9. *Shinobitsume* 忍詰; to be transmitted orally<sup>21</sup>
10. The fire key 火カキ<sup>22</sup>

### The Way of Shinobi Torches 忍打明忝<sup>23</sup>

1. The 1-*shaku*, 2-*sun* tied torch—bright tiger 長一尺ニ寸ユイ明忝明虎; to be transmitted orally
2. The 8-*sun* tied torch—big tiger 長八寸ユイ明忝大虎; to be transmitted orally
3. The 5-*sun* greater bundled torch—big tiger 長五寸ククリ明松大虎; to be transmitted orally
4. The 3-*sun* lesser bundled torch 長三寸ククリ明松
5. The flying bundled torch 飛明松ククリ明松
6. The soft torch ヤハラ明忝<sup>24</sup> <sup>24</sup>
7. The 1-*sun* to last 3 *ri* torch 一寸三里明松
8. The wooden torch 木明松
9. The waterproof flying fire torch 水火飛明松
10. Yoshitsune's waterproof fire torch 義経名火水明松<sup>25</sup>
11. The rainproof bright battle camp torch 陣中雨降明火明松
12. The *samei* torch 左明明松 to be transmitted orally<sup>26</sup>

### Important Points within the Shinobi Arts 萬竊盜之大事

1. Yoshitsune's *myogahi* [divine protection] 義経明賀火<sup>27</sup>
2. The dream [or illusion] fire 夢想火<sup>28</sup>
3. The folding [or snapping] fire オル火
4. The art of fire within your palm 手之内之火

5. The night-attack celestial fire arrow 夜打天文火<sup>29</sup>
6. The ball fire 玉火<sup>30</sup>
7. The turret-collapsing fire 矢倉落火
8. The devil's fire 魔王火<sup>31</sup>
9. Shinobi easy-ignition powder 忍焼薬<sup>32</sup>
10. The fire of Kumasaka 熊坂火<sup>33</sup>
11. The lead hand grenade 玉コアシ火
12. Rushing-the-enemy fire 付火<sup>34</sup>
13. The oil fire cylinder 筒火油火
14. The 3-*sun* fire 三寸火<sup>35</sup>
15. The nameless fire 名無火
16. The running fire 走り火<sup>36</sup>
17. The rice wine fire サケ火
18. Various kinds of waterproof fuses 水火縄

## Shinobi Tools

1. The greater fire-carrying tool with measurements 大苦無<sup>37</sup>
2. The lesser fire-carrying tool with measurements 小苦無
3. The outside drill [or gimlet] 外切
4. The inside drill [or gimlet] 内切
5. The sickle saw 間カキ
6. The winged key ハカギ
7. The extendable key 延ヘカキ
8. Drills [or gimlets] キリ
9. Locks 錠
10. Floating bridges 浮橋
11. The descending ladder 下カ橋
12. The tied rope ladder ユイハシ
13. The folding [or hinged] ladder タタミハシ
14. The metal tool for peeping ノゾキ金
15. Toihiki nawa 間引縄<sup>38</sup>
16. The sound amplifier 聞カ子
17. Iron caltrops 金ヒシ

## 18. Caltrops on a string 結ヒシ

### Controlling Powders 仕置薬

1. Powder within the palm 手之内薬
2. Powder that is “to hand” 手本クスリ
3. Rifle equipment 鉄砲仕物
4. Sleeping powder 空眼散 39
5. Keeping-sleep-at-bay ointment 明眼膏<sup>40</sup>
6. One-*cho* hiding powder 壹丁カクレ
7. [Charcoal of the] kiri [tree] キリノ院<sup>41</sup>
8. Goblin Powder 天狗之矢トリ<sup>42</sup>
9. Total concealment powder 惣隠ノナワ

### The Art of *Kuruma Arai* 車洗ノ次第<sup>43</sup>

1. The speaking scroll 言之巻
2. Important points about hanging battle camp command curtains 幕之大事<sup>44</sup>
3. Deeper secrets about hanging battle camp command curtains マクノ大極意
4. Important points on besieging a camp or castle 仕寄之大事
5. The mysteries of esoteric mantras 諸真言秘蜜之大事

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On the above matters there is much to be orally transmitted, as these are our deepest secrets and are kept within our family. Even between a father and a son or brothers, it should never be passed down to anyone who is undeserving, or without due consideration.

To people other than those in the family, never show or give away even a word, without exception. Whether people are descendants of any Iga and Koka family, no one should be shown all the above points, apart from a father to only one of his sons. This manual has the deepest secrets and the core principles of the correct way, and it should be kept inside, deep in one's mind.

The above is the origin of the shinobi.

This is presented on the first day of the Rabbit of the eleventh lunar month.

Jo Ou 2 [1655] 于時承應次歳

Kinoto Hitsuji 乙未<sup>45</sup>

On a lucky day of the third month 三月吉

Hattori Minobe Saburo 服部美濃邊三郎

Ichisangu Kage Daimyoin 山宮影大明神<sup>46</sup>  
Hattori Minonokami Yasukiyo 服部美濃守保清

Hattori Kizaemon-no-jo Yasutsugu 同(服部)喜左工門尉保次  
Hattori Chubei Masayasu 同(服部)忠兵衛正保  
Hattori Sukenoshin Yasutatsu 同(服部)助之進保辰  
Hattori Hanzo Nagayasu 同(服部)半藏長保  
Hattori Gondayu Yasuhisa 同(服部)權大夫保久  
Morita Chozaemon Hisaaki 守田長左衛門久明

[Transcribed] in the Year of the Sheep on a lucky day of the tenth month,

Kyoho 12 [1727] 享保十二未年十月吉日

Seno Kaheiji Katsuaki 瀬野嘉平治勝明

[Transcribed] in the Year of the Boar on a lucky day of the first month,

Kyoho 16 [1731] 享保十六亥年正月吉日

Kato Sakuzaemon 加藤作左衛門

# THE SHINOBI HIDEN

## Volume II

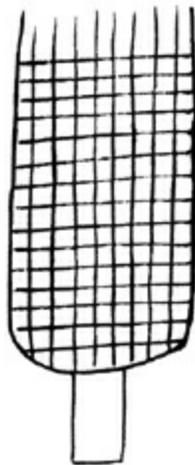
### THE SECRET WAYS OF SHINOBI TOOLS

When you infiltrate the enemy line and come to a naturally fortified place, use the appropriate tools to gain entrance successfully. To get into an impregnable castle with a high stone wall, a high fence, a barrier, or a castle not naturally fortified but well constructed, or even one fortified with water such as a river, it is essential for you to prepare yourself with useful tools before you embark on a shinobi mission. In addition, you need to use the appropriate weapons when you invade the enemy's residence. This chapter shows how to create these tools.

#### **The Lightweight Torch** 軽松明

As it is inappropriate to carry a torch openly on your journey between your base and the destination; you need to put it on your back and beneath your kimono, or wrap it in a straw bundle. For this purpose, this style of torch is best.

It should be 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun* long. The handle should be wrapped with anything that is deemed appropriate; normally, this is done with the sheath<sup>1</sup> that accompanies young bamboo. It should be tied as in the picture, at intervals of 1 *sun*. Tear the bark of a Japanese cypress tree into narrow strips and bundle them in accordance with the size specified. Tie it up with linen thread, rattan, or even a makeshift rope.



#### **The Greater Fire-Carrying Tool** 大宮内<sup>2</sup>

This is a tool to carry as a fire starter. Strip skin, make it into a bundle, and tie it up as in the drawing.

It should be 2 *shaku*, 2 *sun* long. The handle at the bottom is made in this fashion so it is easy to hold.



### The Lesser Fire-Carrying Tool 小宮内

This tool is 8 *sun* long, and the handle is 2 *sun*, 5 *bu*, making the overall length 1 *shaku*, 5 *bu*. This is also a tool to carry as a fire starter, so attach a flint and steel of 1 *sun* and 5 *bu*.

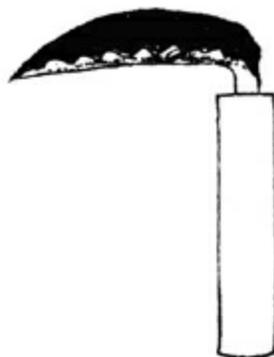
The handle is 2 *sun*, 5 *bu*.



### The Art of Making Sickles 鎌作

The blade should be 5 *sun*<sup>3</sup> in length and 9 *bu* in width, and it should also be double edged. The handle should be 5 *sun*, 5 *bu* or 6 *sun*. The end of the handle where the blade is should have a ring clamp of 8 *bu*<sup>4</sup> and should be 1 *bu* in thickness. For the handle, use Japanese evergreen oak or standard oak. Here, the blade should be V-shaped and symmetrical.

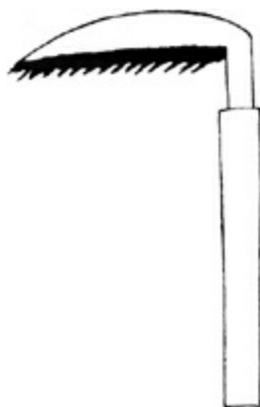
Put an iron spike into the blade slot to clamp it in place. The length of the blade is 5 *sun*. The blade is sharpened on both sides.<sup>5</sup> The handle is 5 *sun*, 5 *bu* long.



## The Sickie Saw トヒカキ

This tool is 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun* in length and 1 *sun* in width. The sharpened, serrated blade edge should be 1½ *bu* to 4 *bu* in length. The handle is 1 *shaku* in length. The iron should be hammered into a thin blade. The iron spike used as a clamping barb should be 1 *sun* in width and 2 *bu* in thickness. This tool is to be used to break into a castle, to cut through a fence, or to break fence posts.

The blade should be 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun* in length. The handle should be 1 *shaku*, 1 *sun* in length. The iron spike used as a clamp is 1 *sun* wide and 2 *bu* thick. The sharpened blade edge should be 3 *bu*<sup>6</sup> or 4 *bu*.<sup>7</sup> It should have a sawlike edge.<sup>8</sup>



## The Iron Machete 鉄

Make this tool as it is in the drawing. Be sure the iron blade is well forged. Do this in case it is used in place of a sword, and thus the blade is of the most importance. The length should be from 5 *sun*, 5 *bu*, up to 6, 7, or even 8 *sun*; make the width 3 *sun*. The handle should be 8 *sun* long and made of Japanese evergreen oak. Near the blade end of the handle, it should have a clamping spike of 1 *sun* in width and 2 *bu* in thickness. Make it in the shape seen in the drawing, because this enhances its strength so it can serve its purpose when you are in a battle camp.

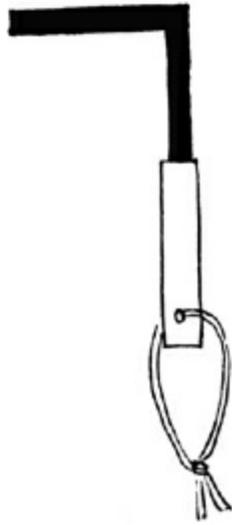


The clamping spike should be 1 *sun* in width and 2 *bu* in thickness. The handle should measure 8 *sun* long. The blade should be 3 *sun* wide and 5 *sun*, 5 *bu* long. This can reach to 6 or even 7 *sun*. Make a sharkskin sheath the length of 9 *sun*, 5 *bu*. Put a hole at the tip of the sheath and then connect a thieves' gimbal lantern onto it. Wear the tool on the left.

Details are to be transmitted orally.

## The Door-Opening Tool クロロカキ<sup>9</sup>

This tool is used to infiltrate a house or a storehouse that is locked up tight with a large ring or latch on the door. With this tool you can remove the latch and get inside. How large it should be depends, as there are a range of measurements needed, so the size will not be specified here. However, a medium-sized one will do in most cases. Make it out of iron, and make the handle out of Japanese cypress. Use a cord to attach it to your waist.



The iron L-shape should be 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun* in length. It should be 2 *sun* in width and 1½ *bu* in thickness. The handle should be 5 *sun* long. The cord is 6 *sun*, 8 *bu* long.

### The Drill キリ

Use this when you need to pry into somewhere and the wall is so thick that it is not easy to look through. Drive a scoring device into a wall or clapboard,<sup>10</sup> and bore a hole so you can look inside. Or push a rope through the holes you make to use as footholds or handholds. If it is at high altitude, you can bore holes to let a rope through them and then use the rope to descend or ascend. Also, sometimes you can use it to let light or water in through the hole. Use well-forged iron and make the size as in the drawing.



The handle should be of Japanese cypress and should be 8 *sun* long. The blade of the drill should be 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun* long and 2 *sun* wide. When pulling it out, apply the oil-of-toad lubricant<sup>11</sup> and put fire around the handle.

## The Large Saw 大鋸

You can use this saw on a house, a turret, a wall, or *tamon* house<sup>12</sup> in the case that you have to break through a wall. Also, you can use it to construct camps, sheds, or weapons. It should be double edged so you can cut at both sides of a corner at the same time. The iron should be most strongly forged. For the handle, Japanese cypress or Japanese Mallotus would be fine. Use a fastening clamp to secure the blade and make it large.



Make it 2 *sun* in width. The handle should be 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun*. The blade should be 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun*. This tool is used to cut bamboo and wood.

## The Anchor 碇

It should be made like the anchor of a boat. This tool is used with a floating bridge as an anchor in water to hold the bridge in place or when you need to stretch a rope. Use it to hook to a rock or something fixed in the water so you can stretch the rope and move back and forth in water while holding the rope. When you need to climb up to a height, you can attach a rope to the anchor and grapple your way up. Also you can use it to break down a castle fence by getting a hold of a roof bracket and pulling the rope. When an enemy ship comes, you can attach it to the riverbed and snare the ship. It will stop the vessel or even overturn it. When the enemy intends to put up a bridge to cross a river, hook this somewhere on the bridge from in the water and destroy the bridge by pulling on your rope. It should be made of iron. The size is as in the drawing.



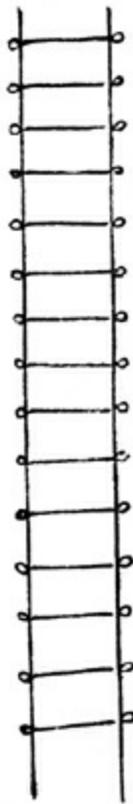
Each arm is 8 *sun* in length. You can tie a bag around the neck to make the tool

heavier for when in water. The ring is 5 *sun*, 5 *bu* in circumference. The length between the ring and the arms is 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun*.

Details are to be transmitted orally.

### The Tied Ladder 結梯

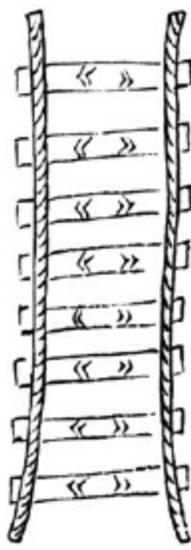
In case you cannot take a ladder with you all the way to your destination, take only a long<sup>13</sup> rope. When you need to climb to a height, get some bamboo or wood from the area and create a ladder. This will provide you with footholds and aid you to ascend. You can also use this ladder when you need to measure how deep water is. Each rung should be tied from the top down, so when you descend by stepping on the rope, it will not fail. If you use bamboo, be sure to tie it at the joints of the bamboo. In any form of construction, it would be good to fix the ropes in place by securing them with nails so that it is even. The side poles can be of wood or bamboo.



Put your first step here at the bottom. Fix a nail and secure the rope to the nail as you tie the knot.

### The Floating Bridge 浮橋

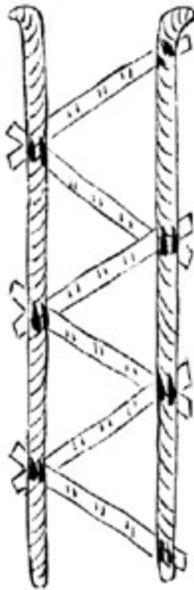
When you need to create a makeshift bridge to cross over a castle moat or over a river used by the castle as a natural fortification, make a bridge as in the drawing. Then put the bridge on the water and tie it at both ends with ropes. It should be as light as possible, so use thick bamboo, put the bamboo pieces onto the bridge, and tie them up with thick ropes. Details are as in the drawing.



The width should be between 1 and 1½ *ken*. Secure the bridge with thick ropes so anything can cross over it, especially people. If only one person needs to cross, the following example will be fine.

The bamboo sticks should be tied in a zigzag manner, as in the illustration. The rope to be used on both sides should be a *hosobiki* 細引.<sup>14</sup>

### The Small Saw 小鋸





For usages other than those mentioned above for the large saw, this smaller one can be used sometimes, so it is mentioned here.

This double-edged blade is 8 *sun* long and 2 *sun* wide. The handle is 9 *sun* long.

### The Sound Amplifier サフト聞金

When you have sneaked in and cannot hear sounds within the house clearly, hold this tool close to your ear to amplify any sounds there may be, so they resonate within the amplifier. This is one of the most useful tools for the shinobi. It should be made of brass or gold so it can resonate well and produce clear sounds. Always carry it in your clothes to use in a time of need. In most cases it can resonate through a wall or even two walls, over 50 to 60 *ken* away. Use the shell of a sea urchin first.<sup>15</sup>



Details are to be transmitted orally.

Use a thread to hang or hold up the amplifier, which will allow it to resonate. It is 1 *sun*, 2 *bu* long and 1 *sun* wide. The length of the black section is the same as the width of the upper white section, and that is 1 *sun*.<sup>16</sup> The metal walls are 1 *bu* thick.

### Caltrops 蒺藜

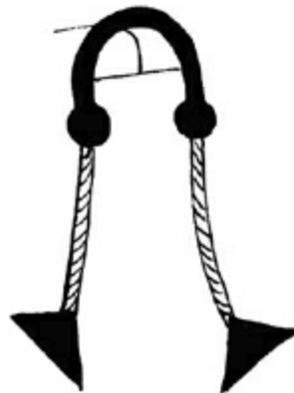
When you sneak in the enemy's house and need to prevent people from coming out and giving chase, this will allow you to escape successfully. You should use caltrops made of

iron or bamboo as in the drawing. Scatter them on every road apart from the direction you withdraw, so if you are pursued on your way out, they will step on them and have difficulty in their pursuit. These should be sometimes attached to strings; however, if this is not practical at the time, scatter them behind you. Caltrops should be as in the drawing below.



Each caltrop is 1 *sun*, 5 *bu* long. The above shape is in case you use iron. If you use bamboo, cut it into pieces of 2 *sun* long, and connect them so that one point always stands upright with the shards left, as sharp as when they are cut.

### The Underwater Helmet 水中スイリ



This is used when you need to hide under water, such as in a moat or river. Make the top round part of iron just like a helmet, and line it with leather, so you can wear it on your head. Put cords at the right and left sides with iron plates as sinkers. No matter how rapid the river streams, the buoyancy will never force you to be face upward. If you are hit from above, your head will not be hurt, and the helmet will protect you from arrows or bullets. Well-forged iron would be fine. Hold the cords on both sides with your hands.

The length over the top of the head<sup>17</sup> is 1 *shaku*, 3 *sun*, 5 *bu*. The internal shape will depend on the individual head and is lined with leather. The iron sinkers are 7 *sun* long and 5 *sun* at the widest point.<sup>18</sup> The cord is 3 *shaku*, 2 *sun* long.

### The Underwater Sound Amplifier 水中サヲト聞金<sup>19</sup>

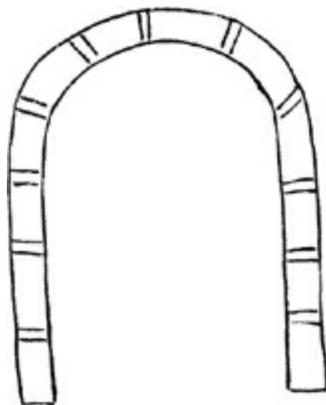
When you hide in water and listen to the sounds outside of the water, use this tool. Make a thin plate of brass, as in the drawing, and put a thin plate of gold at the bottom. The length depends on the depth of water. Also, apply the oil of toad onto the edges of the mouth, ears, and eyes when diving. If you do not stay inside the water long enough, it will be hard to catch or understand the sounds with precision.



Change the length according to the depth of water. The upper white section is a thin plate of brass 1 *sun* wide and 1 *bu* thick. The bottom section is made of gold and is 1 *sun* long, 1 *sun* wide.

### The Underwater Helmet II 水中甲

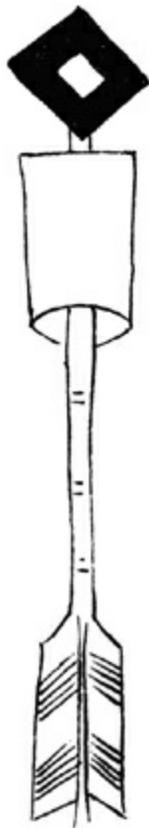
When you are hiding under water, if it is the moat of a castle, the enemy may drop rocks from above the moat onto you, or if they approach you by ship they may hit you from above. This tool protects you in such cases. Bend thick bamboo into an arch, and put both ends into your outer sash when you are under water so you will not be hit by rocks or objects.



This bamboo is about 5 *shaku*, 8 *sun* long.<sup>20</sup> The bamboo should be cylindrical and not split. Your body fits into the archway as you put both ends into your belt. When bending the bamboo, apply oil to it and warm it over a fire. When you are in a rush, you can use a young green bamboo.

## The Large Country Fire Arrow 大国火矢<sup>21</sup>

This is a fire arrow to be shot at the enemy castle. On estimation, you can shoot it from a distance of 6 to 7 *cho*. The length of the cylinder will change according to the distance you need to shoot the arrow. If you make a bigger version, put the bamboo shaft through the cylinder and fix the cylinder at about 3 *sun* from the arrowhead. The size of the cylinder depends on the amount of gunpowder, which should vary according to the estimated distance.<sup>22</sup>



Fix the cylinder at 3 *sun* from the arrowhead. Use bark for the fletchings. The length will depend on the length of the bamboo. Put gunpowder in this cylinder. The amount depends on the distance it needs to travel. If the distance is about 8 *cho*, the length should be 4 *shaku*. There are more specifications not mentioned here.

## The Leather Floating Aid 浮踏

This is used when you move through the water but wish to view the outside with ease. Make a bag of tanned leather, and inflate it with air. You can put it around your upper waist.



On the right is a cord of 1 *shaku*, 1 *sun*. The total length is 2 *shaku*. On the left is a cord of 1 *shaku*, 1 *sun*.

### **The Long Leather Bag** 丈長袋

The length is 6 *shaku*, 5 *sun*. This is used to carry caltrops, to drop the soil you have dug out [of a wall] without making sound, and to pass barriers of inverted bushes by crawling through them.



Hattori Hanzo 服部半蔵  
Hattori Hanzo 同(服部)半蔵  
Kato Yashiro 加藤弥四郎

## **AN EXPLANATION OF MAGICAL MEDICINE** 仙方妙薬前書

Once, in ancient China, there was a serious drought when the grain died and did not grow back. People starved, until an old man came from the foot of Mount Hakusan, the White Mountain, and said to the emperor that he had invented a wonder medicine, or food supplement, that had made seventy members of his family live at ease. If this medicine is used, your complexion or ability will not decline even a bit, and you will feel even better than normal. He then said to the emperor, “If this medicine is false, the entire family of seventy people I saved can be put to death.”

### **The Recipe**

Take 5 *to* of black soybeans, remove the skins, wash them in water 100 times, and then dry them.

Collect 3 *sho* of hempseed.

Grind the above two into powder. Make it into fist-sized balls, and steam them in a

basket steamer or on a wicker work tray.

### **The Finish**

Take out the tray in the hours of the Rat, Cow, or Tiger, or the first third of the hour of the Rabbit. Then dry them until the hour of the Horse, and finally pound it down into powder for use.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Usage**

You can take it as you like and then stop at any time.

### **The Effects**

If you take it once, for the following seven days you will not feel any difficulty and your complexion and abilities will be no less than usual, even if you never take it again.

Take it twice, and the same effects will be obtained for 49 days.

Take it three times, and the same effects will last for 343 days.

Take it four times and the same effects will last for 2,401 days.

Take it five times and the same effects will last for 16,080 days.

Even if you do not take it ever again, you will not lose any of your power but instead have a good complexion, and you will feel or work as well as usual.

Whenever you do not have a normal appetite, you should take this medicine. Take this golden thing as it is and you will retrieve your usual appetite.

You can make a decoction of it and cool it down with water to ingest.

## **THE SHINOBI 竊盜**

Shinobi 忍 from the first have been utilized by generals since ancient times with a great emphasis. It is the case that one man and his strategy can destroy tens of thousands of enemies, attain virtue and achievements, or make his way where there is no path. Even if you try to block these men with an iron gate, they can outwit you in such a skilled way, as if guided by a divine power. None could do better than them.

On a battlefield, both the enemy and your allies use weapons or armor to win a victory. However, dozens of your allies can be destroyed by a single shinobi if he is used properly. Also, on a night attack, if the general has aid from shinobi troops, he could have them get into the enemy camp to burn it down. A fire could occur in the least expected place, as if it were like fire from heaven. This would confuse the enemy, even within their own encampment. The enemy will ruin themselves, and your allies will become secure. Your fame will be admired through future generations; your country will flourish and be in peace, which is of the most importance. Also, these shinobi can excel, even in combat.<sup>24</sup>

One of these warriors is a match for a thousand, and they have succeeded in a countless number of incidents. This is as clear as *I Ro Ha Ni Ho He To*.<sup>25</sup>

According to oral tradition, in the use of this art, things should be simple and straightforward enough for a child to see.<sup>26</sup>

# THE SHINOBI HIDEN

## Volume III

### THE TOOLS OF THE SHINOBI HIDEN

#### The Tinderbox 火箱<sup>1</sup>

For this box, the most desirable wood is from the Kiri tree<sup>2</sup> or cedar. It is 3 *sun* wide and 3 *sun* high. There should be a lip on all four sides of the inside of the box, so the lid can be pushed on and be flush on all sides.<sup>3</sup>

There is another type of tinderbox that is made from a bamboo cylinder. To make this, you should place a *hikane*<sup>4</sup> at the bottom of the box and put the tinder over it. Also, make the lid airtight, so any flame will be extinguished. This method is used for *nakauchi*.<sup>5</sup> Be sure that the six materials<sup>6</sup> are completely dry, and put them in the box. Always be prepared with this tinderbox. Remember, it is not good to use burnt charcoal; prepare grasses instead.

#### Smoldering Materials and Carrying Embers 黒焼<sup>7</sup>

Crumple cotton, silk, or paper until it is soft. Divide it into small amounts, and dry-roast it until it is black, paying attention that it doesn't burn white. Keep it within a tightly covered container, and be sure to always have some at hand.

#### The Striking Steel 火金

This is different from a common *hikane* in that it is 2 *sun*, 5 *bu* long; as large as a *tenugui* [cloth] when folded; and feels comfortable in your palm. It has an edge down both sides, and when you use it, strike down the edge. If you strike it freely,<sup>8</sup> you will not fail to start a fire.

#### The 4-Sun Fuse Cylinder 四寸火繩筒<sup>9</sup>

Expose an old hemp cloth to rain, dew, and sun for three years, twist the cloth into a 5-*sun* circumference or bundle. Make a hollow of 2 or 3 *sun* and shallow-bury<sup>10</sup> the twisted material. Next, make a fire on the ground above where the container is buried. After the appropriate time has passed, the fire will die down and smoke will rise, at which point the embers will become red.

After the appropriate time, and if you think you have constructed it correctly, take the material out of the ashes and put it into a bamboo cylinder. Next, put a cover over it, so it is airtight. Generally, the material smolders.

There are several instructions you should be aware of regarding how to wrap it, but they should be transmitted orally.

### **The Night-Attack Fire Tool** 夜打鳥子<sup>11</sup>

Use the branches of a satsuki tree<sup>12</sup> and soften them up like silk floss. Then collect and make balls the size of a white-necked crane egg. Also soften the pods of this tree, and wrap the floss balls within them. Wrap both hands around a ball to get the most desirable size. When you are on your way to a destination and you need to produce fire at some point, light the fire cylinder before you enter the area. Do this by sheltering it with your body. Open the cylinder, at which point the fire will flare up. However, if the cylinder does not give forth fire immediately, then fan it or air the cylinder.

In case the fire in the cylinder flares up too much, hide the flare. Light the fire tool, shelter it with your hand, and then use it quickly.<sup>13</sup> Also, when lighting the fire tool, be sure you're fully attentive. If not, the fire will die.

### **The Ninja Infiltration Light** 竊盜鳥子

Soften the branches of a satsuki tree so they are like silk floss, and hold an egg-size portion of it in your palm. Set a fire to it when you are stealing in. Do this when you need to see the situation of a dark house. When you open your palm, it will flare up so you should have a look at the inside of a room as quickly as possible. If people are asleep inside, put it out immediately.

Remind yourself of the way of *yakaji no narai* [the teachings of arrow smithing].<sup>14</sup> Otherwise, if the fire gets out of control and goes wild, you yourself may not fall into a serious difficulty, but rumor will spread enough so people will hear of this event until generations after. The recipe will be dishonored and considered as not being good enough, and it may be lost. Now you have in your hands the secret of our traditional way of fire. Be sure not to let people know it; I warn you now.

### **The Attack Torch** 打タビ<sup>15</sup>

Scrape away the external pieces of the Japanese cypress until you get to the red center of wood, and shape it (them) into triangular sections. You can also use a *shojiki* [cooper's shaving plane] to do this. The length of this torch should be 1 *shaku*, 2 *sun*, and you should tie it with a *sukiyahineriyui*<sup>16</sup> at intervals of 1 *sun*. The width can be up to 3 *sun*, 7 *bu*. Insert *mon*<sup>17</sup> into the wood as tightly as possible. The *negane* [tip], which is fitted to the forward end, should be made of iron and made in the shape of a bamboo whisk.

Also, there is a recipe for powder to make it burn properly, which you can add at the time of a meeting. Put this powder into your torch, and when the lord is present, you should have two or three torches within a specific area. This is what you should be aware of at the time of meetings.

## Torch Hilts 臺尻<sup>18</sup>

This should be 6 *sun* long and have a flat end on three-tenths of the length, so that little effort will be needed to insert it into the end of a torch. It is essential that the tip should be made square and steel forged. This varies a little according to the family tradition. If you do not have this hilt, there are ways of improvising by using large or small rocks. If you want to be more resourceful, use iron caltrops as an alternative.

Details are to be transmitted orally.

## The Probing Iron サクリ金

Whether it is small or large, this tool is for any door secured by a ring of metal guarded with a *sen* [hook]. Use this probing iron to see how the door is locked and to carefully find the locking mechanism. You can use it to release the latch. Also it can be used to carefully probe the latch, allowing you to release the door. It is useful when securely connected with the *nobekane* [extendable iron tool].

If you still worry about going in, you should put in a secret device first [not revealed here], to see how the things are before you get in there.

## The Extendable Key 延カキ<sup>19</sup>

Whether it is a small or large door, if there is a lock, you should probe it with a tool or key. If it is a *wakane* [ring lock]<sup>20</sup> and is fastened tightly, try to open it and see how it is locked. The extendable key should be as thin as possible and opened up like the *sasumata* [U-shaped, thief-capturing polearm].

## The Winged Key ハカキ<sup>21</sup>

This is different from a usual key, as it does not have a bend at the edge. Its length should be shorter than a usual one, as in the drawing.<sup>22</sup> Put it into the hole gently and probe around, find and hook the string,<sup>23</sup> and gently pull or push it upward [until it opens].

## The Shield 楯

This is a shield constructed of wood from the Japanese Zelkova tree, or another such hardwood. This shield is 3 *shaku*, 5 *sun* long and 1 *shaku*, 8 *sun* wide. It has handles for both hands on the inside. Its most important usage is to thrust at the enemy and batter him with it. A metal shield should sometimes be used.

## The Lever 金牛房<sup>24</sup>

This is the same as a normal lever [or crowbar]. Use the blade end to open any bar that is guarding a door; it does not matter if the door is small or large. The lever should be 3 *shaku*, 3 *sun* long.

## **The Sturdy Sickle** カキハ

It is the same as a normal sickle. The blade should be thin in width but heavy in thickness, so it will serve for multiple purposes. It should be strong enough to cut even bamboo.

## **The Hatchet** 木太刀

It is like a normal hatchet but should have a tip or ferrule on the end for strength.

## **Chisel Edges** 刃先

This tool should be the same as a normal chisel. Be sure to always be prepared with a variety of blades, having edge lengths from 2 *bu* to 1 *sun*, 2 *bu*.

## **Gimlets with Triangular or Square Cross-Sections for Puncturing Holes**

三方通シ or 四方通シ

This tool is no different from a normal version. Remember to prepare four or five various sizes of triangular spiked gimlets. Also take four or five square spiked gimlets of various sizes. However, it depends on the number of people you have to carry them.

## **The Thin Gimlet for Puncturing Holes** スリキリ

It should be thinner and longer than the one you normally use. Make it from wood or bamboo.

## **The Nail Remover** 釘クイ

There is a ring at the end of this tool. You can prepare two types.

## **Wheel Caltrops** 車ヒシ<sup>25</sup>

These are iron caltrops. Bamboo ones should also be prepared. Bamboo caltrops should resemble a knot. The bamboo spikes should have sharp ends and be put together in a crisscross fashion, so they will stand up no matter which way they are left.

## **String Caltrop Trains** 後縄ヒシ

The string used should be 2 to 3 *ken* long. Tie the caltrops at intervals of 2 *sun*. When chased by the enemy, trail this caltrop train behind as you are running.<sup>26</sup> The use of caltrops with strings is a secret method and is to be used in accordance with the opportunity.

## **Bows and Arrows** 弓矢

These are normal bows and arrows. Unless you are given strict orders, you should take a good aim and keep shooting in succession, until you are out of arrows, so you will achieve your real intention.

### **The Measuring Rope** 水縄

This is to measure the distance of a *100-ken*<sup>27</sup> moat. First you should stand in position with a *shojiki* [tool to determine vertical lines]. Then have two people stretch a rope to the right and to the left, so you can equate the distance of the moat. When you wish to estimate a distance to something inside the moat, you can do this in a similar way.

### **Depth Measurement** 下縄

There is a method called *ishimusubi* [tied stone], and this is used when you need to see how deep a moat is. You can measure the depth down to the waterline or to the bottom, even during the night, but it requires careful judgment.

### **The Descending Ladder** 下橋

To establish exactly how far it is to reach down to the moat, put rungs onto thick bamboo and tie them with grass rope. Also attach *kunai* [digging tools] on the top and the bottom, let the ladder down, and then descend.

### **The Fire-Hiding Bridge** 火カクシ橋立<sup>28</sup>

The hidden explosives should be put in front of the main [part] and should clear the front [of the bridge]. Keep the main explosive ready until the attack. Those men on the side should stand on both sides of the main explosives with a *tachi* [long sword] ready. They should maintain the main explosive but remain quiet and observe all directions, right or left, front or rear. When you want it to explode, take the burning grass and strike quickly. Make sure the left, the right, and the main devices explode separately by using a time rag [timed fuse], and keep attentive. The main explosive must not miss the target or fail to explode. It is essential to use your experience and skill to make the appropriate attack. After the explosions, do not fail to surround the rest of the enemy force and strike at them from all directions so you can take advantage of the situation.

Be aware that the situation could be reversed, as Heaven is a reversal of Hell. Make those who are not so careful aware of this fact, so they will understand and obey your orders exactly.

Another important way to use fire is *uzumihi* [landmines].<sup>29</sup> It should not be given away, even from father to son or between brothers.

Details are to be transmitted orally.

### **The Flowing Bridge** 流橋

To start this bridge, use two *kunai* [digging tools], and secure them within heavy stones or at the base of a stone wall.<sup>30</sup> Attach thick grass rope to the digging tools and put them across the water. Put two pieces of thick bamboo of equal lengths across the water, and use thick bamboo as rungs between the two. Then place three lengths of bamboo over the rungs and tie planks on top with no gaps. This is to act as a floor. Construct this three or four times, and tie them together with thin grass rope so there will be no gaps on the floor of the bridge. This will allow any number of people to cross.

Details are to be transmitted orally.

### **The Rollaway Ladder** マクリ橋

This ladder is 5 *shaku* long and 2 *shaku* wide. Prepare as many as four rungs for each *shaku*. The rungs should be tied tightly with thin grass and attached to the thicker main lines. When you climb up a stone wall, use two or three *yuteka* [blades] to hook the wall repeatedly. Climb the ladder, move it up in stages, then climb up it again.

When you reach the base of the wall at the top of the moat, attach the ladder onto a gun or arrow port and fix it there. If there are no gun ports, use an *uchikagi* [grappling iron], as mentioned before.

### **The Digging Tool** 宮内<sup>31</sup>

Its use is to be transmitted secretly. The *kunai* is 1 *shaku*, 6 *sun* long and is round at the broad handle end. It has a square cross-section toward the tip. One hundred of these should be prepared.

### **The Forged-Tip Tool** シャチホク

This is 3 *shaku*, 4 or 5 *sun* long and is similar to the above-mentioned digging tool. The tip should have forged steel.

### **The Long Bag** 土通

Make a long, open bag of cloth, of which the length depends on the height of the stone wall you intend to use it on. In addition, it should reach nearly to the surface of the moat from the height you stand on the wall. Drop soil quietly so it will make little noise. The bag has no bottom.

Further details are to be transmitted orally.

### **The Folding Grapple** 折カキ

This tool has four hooks and is folded away when not in use. When in use, open the hooks like an anchor. Fasten it with a square socket and then attach a rope. It should be made so that it will not come off, even if it is hooked onto any form of tree or bamboo.

## **The Hammer** 堅腦

This is the same as a commonly used hammer.

## **Arrows** 矢

These are the same as commonly used bamboo arrows.

## **The Adze** 鉋

This is the same as a commonly used adze.

## **The Basic Burning Torch** 焼明松

This is the same as a commonly used torch.

## **Silk Floss** 真綿<sup>32</sup>

When opening a gate or door, put this on the working part so it will make very little noise. Without this, a door will sound out loudly.

## **Chirori** チロリ<sup>33</sup>

This is a deep secret, so it is not to be mentioned here but is to be transmitted orally.

## **On Small Birds** コ鳥

This also is a secret, so it is not to be mentioned here but is to be transmitted orally.

## **Bamboo Contraptions** 竹法作物<sup>34</sup>

This also is a secret and is to be transmitted orally.

## **Fire within the Hand** 手ノ内火<sup>35</sup>

There is a skill called *hiyuita* 火湯板.<sup>36</sup> This is also an important secret in the path of shinobi, so is not to be explained here. Overall these deep secrets have a number of things that can only be transmitted orally.

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The items in the list above are the forty-one articles. These are things you should always keep in mind. On the whole, these articles should be closely examined and protected as a set of deep secrets in the way of the shinobi. Here it is passed down to you; however, it should not be given to anyone who lacks a single mind to believe in Buddha's principles and the power of Heaven. These unceasing ways of contriving and exercising are the best in the country. Even a single word of these

secrets should not be given away, unless the person makes a vow in writing. Otherwise never show or tell any of this to anybody. That is the way this writing on shinobi should be kept.

A lucky day in the second month in the year of Eiroku 3 [1560]

永祿三年子二月吉日

Hattori Hanzo 服部半藏

Hattori Sukenoshin 同 (服部) 助之進

Hattori Hanzo 同 (服部) 半藏

[Transcribed] on a lucky day of the eighth month in the year of

Kyoho 18 [1733] 享保十八癸丑年八月吉日

Kato Sakuzaemon 加藤作左衛門

# THE SHINOBI HIDEN

## Volume IV

### SECRET TEACHINGS ON PREPARING SHINOBI MISSIONS

The most important thing you should keep in mind when you go on a shinobi mission is to imitate well the language of the target province and the ways of the local people. This includes their appearances, the way of wearing clothes, the way of shaving the head, the way of making up their hair, the way of making up a sword or short sword, and the way of refinement and luxury.<sup>1</sup> All of these elements change from location to location. Be sure to get used to the regional ways by observing and listening carefully; learn to act in similar ways and disguise yourself as a local. The most essential thing is to blend with the local people of any given province.

These are the techniques to use when you impersonate a *bushi*<sup>2</sup> warrior. Also, you can impersonate a *shukke* [monk], shrine keeper, merchant, outcast, beggar, and so on.

However, if you have to investigate someone who is in a higher class than the middle classes 中人, unless you disguise yourself as one of them and in a similar way, you will find yourself far from any subtleties or secrets. Therefore, use your ingenuity according to the opportunity. When you are mixed among *bushi* warriors, be sure not to behave in a loutish way, but have good manners at all times. If you talk, you should talk about *sono kashoku no bugei* [the martial arts; 其家職ノ武藝], your family, or old famous heroic warriors. By observing the way the opponent responds to or criticizes what you say, you can know what his mindset is like. Also, by talking about topics in the province, you can obtain information about current affairs.

When you are mixed up with merchants or craftsmen, you should have little sense of decency, behave inconsiderately, have a mild temper, but be ignorant. They tend to talk a lot about their own profession. When they gossip about current subjects of the province, such as the pros and cons of the military governor or of the *bugyonin* [administrative stewards], they will often like to hear of current affairs concerning their own provinces.

If you are going to mix with monks or shrine keepers, behave in a mysterious manner; look calm and obedient. Whenever they talk about anything, they speak in terms of their jobs. The best way to become intimate with them is to ask them to instruct you on things and give them an opportunity to display their knowledge. Therefore, pretend to be ignorant in certain matters, even if you know them well.<sup>3</sup> The same goes for when you are associated with fortune-tellers. If you talk about their profession, they will feel an intimate connection with you.

When you associate with lower people, you will have to choose a suitable way to deal with them individually. Otherwise people will not feel comfortable with you, and you

will hardly reap the benefits.

Here are considerations for how to approach appropriate people and use them for your purpose.

To know about the governor or lord of another province, try to get in contact with an influential person who is an administrator of that province. Other people you should try to form a bond with are the following:

*kokudai* [province deputies]

*gundai* [district deputies]

*daikan* [deputies or managers entrusted with local administration]

*machi bugyo* [city magistrates]

*metsuke* [overt inspectors]

*yokome* [undercover inspectors]

*kumigashira* and *monogashira* [troop commanders]

*gungyo* [tacticians]

retainers who always serve the lord closely

doctors

*otogishu* [advisors]

educated monks

others who often have a chance to work in the presence of the lord

It is essential to get acquainted with these people to gather necessary information. You should cultivate your contacts with such individuals. Also, get close to those who used to please the lord and were given an important position but now have fallen out of favor with him. Do this to get information. Such people usually feel bitter against their lord, so they will give away anything that is normally deemed inappropriate. Also useful is someone who was a favorite lady with the lord but has since fallen into disfavor and is now in a helpless situation, wandering around aimlessly. You should get to know such a woman and collect information. In general, if you can successfully get acquainted with people who seem to have something to benefit you, then you will often find that they have useful information about a given situation. If you approach only ordinary people to seek information instead of these people, your plans will not succeed. This is just as you cannot find fish by climbing up a tree, or you cannot get fire by entering water.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Skill of *Au Awazu***

If you go to another province and associate with the local people, it is quite likely that you will happen to see a spy 間者 of the province from time to time. You should not show that you have noticed what he is, but pretend to be unaware of it when associating

with this local spy. You do this because if he realizes that you know who he is, he will feed you false information. However, if you two always associate with each other, and as it is your job to lie, it is often the case that either of you may unintentionally give away the truth. This is called *au awazu* 逢不逢 [outwitting the enemy spy].

There are things you should be aware of when you listen to him talking to his allies. In case they know you are a spy, they will talk falsely. To see the truth through a lie like this, compare what is said with what you have heard from other people. If all fits together, then it is truth; if it does not, then you should consider it to be false. However, sometimes people of a province are told not to tell the truth to those from another province. If what you see fits in with what you hear from people, you can believe it is true. Remember, even if what people tell you is generally consistent, but it is different from what you can visually observe, you can judge that they do not collectively tell the truth.

Compare what you can see with what people say, and if you think “no” and people say “yes,” follow whichever fits more with the situation.

If you ever need to talk to them about your own country for an appropriate response, keep in mind that you should tell them false things that sound like truths, because if you totally falsify things, it can arouse people’s suspicion. So you should tell a falsehood that resembles the truth.

Compare what you saw or heard yesterday and what you saw or heard today. If there is no difference, you can think it is correct. If there is a difference, then it may be incorrect. People tend to make a rough and ready decision from what they see or hear only once, without having a careful sense when judging it. Also, people have their own state of mind. So be aware that some are always deceptive and some are honest. You should make a judgment on whether something is true or false by paying attention to the way their minds work.

Those who are absolute liars tell a plausible lie that sounds like truth, so it is not easy to tell exactly if it is a lie or not.

Here are some considerations for dealing with places you should investigate:

When you use people to gather information, first enter the province and hear what topics are popular among the people or what people are gossiping about. Also, by observing people’s haunts or work, you can try to understand information about the following points:

If the lord is good or evil

What the provincial governor likes or dislikes

If the people of the province like and respect him or dislike and shun him

What the laws or prohibitions are and whether they are good or bad

Whether he has a passion for *geino* [the arts]<sup>5</sup>

If the vassals of the clan are encouraged to be well mannered or to be skilled in the arts; that is, if being good at the arts is appreciated by them

In addition, you should investigate the entire province by observing the following:

If the peasants are rich or poor and what they look like

If there are arduous and steep routes within the area that are difficult for the traffic of people and horses

If their castles are impregnable; that is, whether they are too difficult to capture, not so impregnable, or easy to capture

This is the essential information you should get by seeing with your eyes or by listening to people. Though there are lots of other points than these listed, this list includes the basic points and topics that you should observe or listen to.

When you are trying to gather information from people, they do not always tell the truth. If they tell a falsehood and you believe it, it will do harm to you. So you need to give very careful consideration to what you see or hear during your investigation to obtain the correct information. Even if people tell a lie, you should have a good sense of judgment and use your ingenuity. Remember, if what they say fits with what you have grasped yourself, it may not be appropriate to conclude that their words are false.

The heart of your investigation should be this:

Even if something is deemed negative for today, take the path that is good for tomorrow. So judge well and take the balanced perspective about which elements will turn out to be reasonable in the end.

If you take in something that has temporary benefits as correct but do not consider that it may be disadvantageous in the future, it cannot be a proper way of investigation. Even if you think what people say makes good sense at that moment, if you do not examine it with utmost reason for the deeper meaning of their words, it will be difficult to get the most use out of it. While observing just the surface of things is a matter of course, try to see things deeply and with a careful and proper mind.

When you listen to others concerning a topic, you cannot fully understand the truth hidden within unless you understand the context they are in. Also when observing a situation, most people observe only from a normal position. However, you need to find [hidden places] to the rear to fully understand exactly what is seen. You should always question yourself on all points so you are fully attentive in these matters.

With this careful consideration, you can conduct a proper and thorough investigation by observing and hearing the situation.

As you have multiple things to investigate, no matter how much you try to be careful, you cannot cover all the angles and areas in full. It is difficult to cover all avenues; bear this in mind and be careful.

Here are considerations in the way of disguise according to the place and opportunity:

When you go to another province on a secret mission, you may be inspected by the local people if they wonder about your identity. Therefore, you need to disguise yourself when you go out, so you can move around and investigate without arousing suspicion. There are lots of ways to change yourself, and you should use disguises that follow the

ways of that area.

1. If you need to penetrate into the mountains, make yourself look like a lumberjack by wearing clothes with a tear in them, putting on an axe, and securing a long rope on your waist.
2. When going into a grass field, imitate a field worker by putting a sickle and a rake on your waist to deceive people. It is the same in a wild field.
3. When you go around in rice fields and vegetable fields, copy a farmer by carrying a hoe, a plough, and so on, and by putting on a straw raincoat or a straw hat. Blend in with other people.
4. When going to a place around a river or the seaside, dress yourself as a boatman by holding an oar and hanging a boat lock on your person.
5. You can copy a fisherman by holding a fishing rod or a net in hand, or by putting a creel basket<sup>6</sup> on your waist. You could also copy a fisherman who has cormorant birds in a boat with torches.
6. In towns or markets, disguise yourself as a merchant with a load of commodities suitable for the location, and blend in with those people.
7. Copy a craftsman with necessary tools for the prepared job, while also dressing as would be expected.
8. To disguise yourself as a samurai warrior, you should specialize in the needed *sonomichi no bugei* [martial arts; 其道ノ武藝]. If you do this well enough to look like a skilled warrior, people will make every effort for you, and you can grow intimate with them.
9. If you copy a monk, you should read a sutra, say an Indo requiem for a departed soul, or conduct a service. In this way people will believe you, which will turn out to be beneficial. To impersonate a shrine keeper, you should learn about Shinto and the origins of some shrines. Tell people such stories so they will believe you are a true shrine keeper.
10. If you are going to copy a fortune-teller, traveling musician, *yamabushi* [monk who endures suffering as a way to acquire power], or any other kind of person, follow these guidelines and elaborate various ways to disguise yourself. This way people of the province will not so easily get suspicious or confront you.

The first thing you should learn is to get used to the language commonly used by the people of the province. No matter how good your disguise is, if your language is different from theirs, it will cause suspicion. Once you have created suspicion, they will not give away information. Therefore, you should be careful not to arouse people's suspicion at all.

Here are some considerations for infiltrating another province:

In a province where the regional governor is ruling strictly, by inspecting the people

going in or out, it is difficult to infiltrate freely. You should try anything that is appropriate, or choose a busy road filled with people and horses, making yourself look like a traveler.

1. In cases concerning checkpoints, be aware of the following things; disguise yourself as a courier, beggar, or outcast when passing through a checkpoint. If there is a Shinto service or festival, there will be some wild merrymaking, where you can become mixed in with others and pass through the checkpoint. It is difficult for them to check everyone closely on such an occasion, so you should take advantage of such a festival if you can.
2. Take advantage of severe wind. When the wind is strong and all the trees and plants are swaying hard, when the mountains and rivers are roaring, clouds of sand are swirling up and blinding people. It will be difficult for people to see outside and discover you. This is a suitable opportunity for you to infiltrate without being detected.
3. Take advantage of heavy rain for your infiltration. With such an opportunity, there are hardly any comings or goings by local people; therefore, you can go anywhere without being questioned by anyone.
4. Use a big tree. When in another province, climb a large tree and hide there during the daytime. Come out at night for investigation. A big tree gives you good shelter, even for two or three people. You will be covered with branches and leaves so people cannot see you from underneath.
5. Use a big stone. Get shelter by hiding beside a big rock or stone. Stay there so that people will not see you, and then come out by night to investigate. Even if you are two or three people, you could use a stone as shelter. If a town fire or something else occurs, people will become noisy. You can infiltrate by taking advantage of the confusion, and seek information by getting mixed in with them.
6. Use the mountains. To hide yourself, enter mountains where few people are traveling but not too distant from a village. Sneak from the mountain during heavy rain and wind, or in the dark of the night, or by taking advantage of a commotion in which people are excited. This gives you a gap to mix in among them without being noticed.
7. Use water. Hide yourself in a river, in the sea, or in a moat of the castle. Also, intermingle with objects in the water.
8. Use a waterfall. Approach the basin of a waterfall and seek the shelter of it. The noise that it makes will mask any other sound, will not be noticed, and will thus make it easy for you to wait for an opportunity to venture out.
9. Use a bridge. Hide under a heavily used bridge to hear people talking and know their ways.
10. Use fire. Fire makes it difficult to open your eyes wide or to see clearly, especially to see details, so take advantage of it.

11. Take advantage of local people fighting. People become excited and noisy when there is a commotion. Get mixed in there and examine them closely.
12. Use horses. If you release a horse, it will cause a commotion. Take the chance and get in for an investigation.

These ways are how to use the things around you to investigate the enemy. There are also other skilled ways to do this, as these above are only guidelines.

Here are some considerations on the difficulty you will have along the way:

When you are walking in another province or on a mountain path in the night, birds roosting in the trees may call, and when walking along the ridge between rice fields, birds resting on the water may be surprised and squawk. This noise may attract people's attention, and you may be called into question. In such a case, make yourself look like a local farmer by carrying a hoe in your hand; wear a straw hat and a straw coat so you can pass without being suspected.

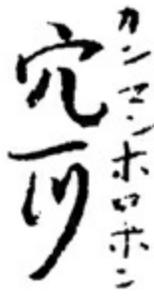
Sometimes, dogs come out and bark at you. This will always let people know that something is wrong, and you will be called into question. In such a case, if you get angry or throw a stone at the dog, it may hold back a little but soon it will be chasing you everywhere you go. Therefore, don't try to come down on them with anger or throw a stone, but feed them with any food you can. Treat them well so they will not bark at you, and you will be able to get through the area without difficulty. If you get angry at the dog or try to beat it, it will not only bark even louder but will also encourage other dogs around to come out and bark together.

In addition, pay attention to the frogs in the rice fields, as they may stop croaking. This too may arouse people's attention to the point where they challenge you. Therefore, if you imitate the croaking of a frog while passing by, it will allow you to go without attracting people's attention.

When you pass by the grass, the insects will stop singing, and it will arouse people's attention. To avoid this, when walking in the grass, use *sukiashi* [reduced or tiptoe steps].

If someone is coming, take shelter behind a stone or a tree. If there is nowhere you can slip behind, look around you and use your wits. There is the trick of staying still in the middle of a field with a straw hat on; in doing this, people may think you are a scarecrow and walk past you without noticing your presence.

In case you come across a wolf or a wild dog, do not lose your head and run away. If you try to run away, you will not succeed. Instead, keep walking on very calmly, light two or three fuses, and hold them in your hands. They fear rifles and will not come close to you if you carry one.



When you come across a fox in a field, you should urinate, then walk past it. Trace with your finger the Sanskrit words *kanman horohon* on your forehead while chanting the following passage as you go by:

天下鳴弦雲上歸命頂来

*Tenka meigen unjo kimyo chorai*

If you need to cross a river at night and you are not sure where you should cross, search the riverside for footprints that people and horses have left. Since it may be difficult to find them during the night, you will have to find where straw sandals, horseshoes, or so on are thrown away, as they are signs that shallow water is nearby. If you find a boat, make sure it has a pole before you jump into it and put off. If you cast off without a pole, the current will take you away and may endanger you.

Generally, on a summer's night when you infiltrate someone's house, be careful and aware that mosquitoes may swarm around you or the insects under the floor will stop singing. It will make people notice that something is there.

Even if you have managed to get into the target's house yet cannot detect what is going on, listen for noises with the *saoto kikigane* [sound-amplifying] listening device.

It is dangerous to try to break into a house without careful preparation. Gather information about the internal and external aspects of a compound by hearing and seeing. Also, send scouts discreetly to establish whether anything is amiss. To get into such a house where the doors have strong locks, take the appropriate tools with you.

When you need to cross over a fence, use a *suribashigo* [hanging ladder], a *musubibashigo* [tied ladder], a *dai kunai* [digging tool], and so on.<sup>7</sup> What you should be aware of most of all is to be careful about sound.

## THE DEEPEST SECRETS OF INFILTRATING

### Monkey Infiltrating 猿子入

To get into a house during the daytime, you should go along the eaves or the ridge of the roof. Also, you can imitate a cat to infiltrate a house.

To go from tree to tree in the garden like a monkey, you can imitate a monkey by wearing its skin. Details about the way to make it should be transmitted orally.

There are also skills taught for two monkeys<sup>8</sup> and for a single monkey.

You can copy a raccoon, fox, or dog according to the opportunity.

If the distance between the edges of the roofs is close, use a hinged ladder.<sup>9</sup> Steal along the underside of the eaves; take *kunai* [digging tools] and fix them along the way

so you will not have to step down on the ground. Be careful if the eaves have a gutter attached.

To infiltrate by going over the walls, use a grappling hook with a rope.

To get in under the floor, move through the under space of the house and pay attention to the stone mounts, floor joists, or any unevenness.

Keep in mind before you open and go through a gate that you apply oil or hot water to it, so the gate will not make any noise.

### **Crossing a Moat and Capturing the Castle Tower 臺拔<sup>10</sup>**

To cross a moat when the walls are too high, use a hooked ladder, fix it onto an *udegi* [main bracket], and climb up. If the bracket is too short to hook onto, hook on a grappling hook and ascend. For an even higher place, put a jointed ladder against the eaves of the outer wall and climb up. Also, you can cross over [a moat] by using a supporting rope and holding it firm. In case a large number of people need to cross the barrier, make it more secure by grappling with iron sickles.

### **Opening a Gate**

When a door is opened, the *hijitsubo* [pivot hinge] usually squeaks loudly, and you need to apply floss to it or around the hinge. Wrap the floss on the inside of the pivot hinge so the door will open without making any noise.

### **Opening a Door on Which Rests a Timber Brace<sup>11</sup>**

To open a door with a solid frame locked with a beam, apply water or oil so it will not make noise when you open it. If oil or water is not available, urinate on it.

### **Sneaking into Places and Past People**

When sneaking where someone is sleeping, if your breathing<sup>12</sup> or footsteps are noisy, the person will wake up. Therefore, hold and bite paper in your mouth to thin out and filter your breath. Walk with your hands on the floor and with your feet on your hands. To do this, put the left hand forward and put the right foot on it; then put the right hand forward and put the left foot on it.<sup>13</sup> Repeat this, and in this way you will not make any noise and thus will not be detected. Also if you walk along the edge of a tatami mat it will make less noise.<sup>14</sup>

### **Walking on a Shingled Roof**

If you walk on a shingled roof and step on the shingles, it will make a noise that can be heard below. Therefore, be sure to step on the clay tiles on the ridge of the roof. Or you could fold a straw mat, put it over the ridge, and walk over it. Then place it ahead of you again. After you pass over, it put it forward and move along the roof in this way.

# THE SECRET TEACHINGS ON COVERT ACTIVITY<sup>15</sup>

Even after you infiltrate someone's house, if you cannot know clearly what is going on inside, you should take appropriate measures to understand the situation.

## Wood Clappers

When you have sneaked inside a house and want to know clearly what the situation is, see what is happening, and assess the people, create a commotion. Do this by striking wooden clappers to see how they will react in response to something unusual. In case you want to cause chaos among the people, move through the place striking wood clappers, which is a form of alarm system. Do this so they will come out in a ruckus.<sup>16</sup>

## Calling Loudly with Your Voice

Examples of a loud cry: "Heavens help me!" "Fight!" "Thief!" "Night raid!" "Cat burglar!" These can create a diversion to an area you want.

## Setting Fire

Set fire to an out-of-the way house or deserted building and move around. People will make a commotion, and you can see how things happen between them.

## Setting Free the Horses

If you get into a stable and release the horses, it will create a commotion among people. Take advantage of it and see how they will act.

---

This volume is a secret tradition of the shinobi and should not be given out to anyone. However, as you are of the deepest mind, I will transmit all of it to you. You should never give it away to any other person. This should be agreed with a signed deed.

Eiroku 3 [1560] 永禄三年

Hattori Hanzo 服部半藏

Hattori Hannai 同(服部)半内

Kyoho 18 [1733] 享保十八年癸丑年

The eighth month

Kato Sakuzaemon 加藤作左衛門<sup>17</sup>

## THE “LOST” SHINOBI SCROLL OF THE NAGATA TEXT

1. The forms and traditions of religious belief.
2. The advantage of perseverance,<sup>1</sup> benevolence, righteousness, fidelity, and bravery.
3. Inside shinobi and outside shinobi.
4. The necessity of cooperation.<sup>2</sup>
5. On life and death, and on good luck or bad luck.
6. The momentum and feel of the province.
7. On laws.
8. The essence of the province.
9. On the types of superior generals.
10. On wise retainers [samurai].
11. On retainers who question their lords with the intention to benefit the lord’s aims.
12. Love one person and all those around will leave.<sup>3</sup>
13. Do not arrange marriages between close retainers.
14. Great people have great ambitions.
15. Leave your ego behind and you will understand great valor.
16. The “wisdom”<sup>4</sup> of a minister can ruin a clan.
17. Samurai should have true loyalty.
18. Appropriate times for farming.

The above eighteen articles are principles to use during periods of peace in a country. Shinobi spies should be aware of these points.

The following are the mysterious and subtle skills that have been passed down from ancient China and to the present day.

1. The five types of Chinese spy.<sup>5</sup>
2. On appropriate timing.
3. [Information gathered] from the eyes, the ears, and the nose.
4. Seeing in the dark of night.
5. Attacking in the daytime and the nighttime.<sup>6</sup>
6. Infiltrating the enemy castle before the enemy province comes to war.
7. Points to be aware of with flatland castles and mountain castles.
8. Infiltrating the enemy castle with the three principles of Heaven, Man, and Earth.

9. Infiltrating a castle to ruin the enemy's military tactics.
  10. To instantly defeat the enemy camp.
  11. To outdo the enemy's schemes.
  12. On capturing the enemy alive.
  13. Muskets, haft-arrows and bows 柄矢弓,<sup>7</sup> fire arrows 火箭, and estimating the distances required to send them.
  14. The art of signal fires.
  15. Rhythms within the military [bells and drums].
  16. Secret messages for the lord or general.
  17. Passing into enemy land with your lord.
  18. Crossing over a moat or river with your lord.
  19. How to go through water with your lord.
  20. Safety precautions when boarding a boat.
  21. Points on rain showers, downpours, the wind, and the snow.
  22. Knowing about poison and how to nullify it.
  23. Knowing the correct targets in battle camp quarters and temporary battle shelters.
  24. House shields and shinobi shields.
  25. The beaten iron cylinder and the original iron cylinder 鎚筒本筒.<sup>8</sup>
  26. The haft-arrow.<sup>9</sup>
  27. Various kinds of fire projectiles.
  28. The art of hand grenades.
  29. The art of fire arrows.
  30. Land dispersed balls and water dispersed balls.<sup>10</sup>
  31. Divine fire dispersed balls.<sup>11</sup>
  32. Large country fire arrow.<sup>12</sup>
  33. The basket torch.
  34. The waterproof torch.
  35. Cut fire or fire ignition strips [used to quickly start fires].
  36. *Noroshi* [smoke, fire, and flare signals], including signals during rainfall.
  37. The various tools of the shinobi spy.
  38. Lord-Water-Fence.<sup>13</sup>
  39. Hunger pills—those that save all soldiers.
  40. Military medicines and powders.
-

The above forty articles are the secret military skills of shinobi spies and were transmitted from Tai-gong-wang (Jiang Ziya) to Guan Zong (?–645 BC). The people of the Qi dynasty trained themselves with these skills. Xu Fu<sup>14</sup> inherited the traditions and brought them to Japan from China. He went to the Kumano Mountains and tried to find a certain plant. He could not find what he was looking for in the land of Japan, but he did not return to China. From here, he went into the mountains in Iga province and passed down these subtle secrets of the military skills to two of the children he brought with him. Later Minobe Saburo inherited these traditions, and they were passed down as seen in the detailed record of the Iga Chikage Daimyoin, who is the premier deity in Iga.

These traditions should be passed down for generations to come and only in the Hattori family. They should never be allowed to be given to anyone outside of this family, without regard to rank or social status. If anyone breaks this principle, he will be punished by the Iga Chikage Daimyoin and all other gods of war.

Hattori Hanzo 服部半蔵

Kikukawa Gentar 菊川源太郎

The eleventh month in the year of Kinoe<sup>15</sup>-Chicken [1646]

Seno Kurozaemon 瀬野九郎左衛門

The twelfth month in the year of the Tiger [1723]

Kato Sakuzaemon 加藤作左衛門

The eighth month in the year of Mizunoto<sup>16</sup>-Ox [1733]

Nagata Santen 永田賛典

The second month in the year of Mizunoe<sup>17</sup>-Ox [1843]

Part Two

**THE KOKA RYU NINJUTSU DENSHO**

**甲賀流忍術傳書**

Written by Konyo circa 1700

## COMMENTARY

The Koka Ryu Ninjutsu Densho<sup>1</sup> is a short yet intriguing ninjutsu manual that is currently kept in Mukyukai Library in Machida City, Tokyo. Its exact date is unknown, and it was signed simply “Konyo.” But it was most likely written after 1700, because the use of the terms “Koka-ryu” and “Iga-ryu”—that is, the fact that the Koka *ryu* (school) is distinguished from the Iga *ryu*—indicates at least the middle of the Edo period. Therefore, what we have here is a short collection of information about the ninja arts from Koka that do not describe which family or clan they originally came from but consider themselves to be universal to Koka.

The manual itself is highly interesting and is a mix of clearly authentic ninja skills and a belief in the power and aid of the gods. It includes ritualistic spells to aid a ninja’s work—rituals that are also found in other, unquestionably authentic manuals. It is written in a style that presumes the reader has a foundation in the ninja arts of Koka and a good understanding of the esoteric and religious practices of that time, which further supports the case for its authenticity. Another factor supporting its authenticity is the fact that it includes a focus on practical skills. Often, lesser or clearly fake ninja manuals concentrate on magic, brushing over practical skills. Authentic manuals concentrate on practical skills and include short sections of ritual or esoteric abilities. This manual balances both and is written concisely, as though the reader already has an understanding, which indicates that the full teachings go much deeper. The Koka Ryu Ninjutsu Densho is probably intended to supplement a student’s standard military skills and lower-level ninja techniques.

The first and main point in this manual is the concept of *Shinden Yaguruma no Ho*, “the Arts of the Divine Arrow Windmill,” which is apparently the basis of the power of this Koka line. A *yaguruma* (a small, spoked wheel or windmill) is made up of eight arrows, with the arrowheads pointing inward and the outer rim made of string. You can still see this ritual item today; it’s connected to Japanese religion and can be found on festival flagpoles.

The author of the Koka Ryu Ninjutsu Densho indicates the *Shinden Yaguruma no Ho* as a primary skill or art but unfortunately assumes that the reader understands what needs to be done with this magic implement, the *yaguruma*. The author even gives the spell required and includes an unexplained list of the numbers one to ten but again assumes the reader knows what they are for.

Luckily, the Koyogunkan Tekito manual describes a variation of this ritual. The idea is that a shinobi will take this windmill out of its case, open it, and lay a mirror on top of it. He will perform the spell, which is quoted in the text, and then cover it with leaves. The spell is used to hide the ninja’s image from the enemy. In other words, it’s a form of hiding magic.

Intriguingly, though the author claims that Iga ninjutsu uses this same method, he

added the word *shinden* (“divine,” or “inherited from the gods”) for the Koka version, but not the Iga version, implying either that Iga did not inherit this skill from divine sources, or that their version is not supported by Shinto deities.

The manual also uses the suffix *no ho*, which means “arts of.” This shows that the Divine Arrow Windmill is not just an object but also a skill to be performed. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that the text says that when not in use, the object is to be kept in a leather bag made from deer skin—implying that there is a particular use for it; that it’s not just a lucky charm or talisman. (Interestingly, Inko Ryu also uses deer skin in its shinobi rituals).

The second magical element that causes confusion is what appears to be a teleportation spell, which does slightly raise the question of dubious authenticity. While it is unknown to what extent the ninja believed magic was involved, it is clear that the ninja did not believe that he would magically travel thousands of miles in an instant. Other forms of magic, such as *juji*, the art of putting a tenth ideogram on to the famous *kuji* matrix (a nine-line grid), were also used for safe and speedy travel. But that *juji* spell involves “forty-nine days” of journeying, and soil from the intended destination is required to cast it, meaning that the ninja would have needed to have been there before, most likely during a previous scouting mission. Taking this into account, it cannot be assumed that this spell in this manual was considered a teleportation spell; it was probably a ritual for safe and speedy travel.

The third and final magical section is the supremely important and interesting alternative spell for the ninja, the *ongyo no ho* (the spell of hiding), made famous by the Bansenshukai ninja manual. The basic concept is to hide your face and chant a spell in your mind that will bring divine aid to help you hide from the enemy. Here in this manual, we find an alternative version—from the Bansenshukai—in which a shinobi uses the power of a lunar eclipse captured in the wood of a hairpin. He then supports this power with the visualization of black clouds surrounding him, so that no one can see him.

To the casual reader the text may appear to contradict itself with the statement “This school of Koka does not use magic or conjuring arts,” when clearly, magical arts are used. This is because the Japanese words used in that statement are *genjutsu* (an array of tricks, sleight of hand, and other “street illusions”) and *kijutsu* (“strange arts,” another word for “trickery”). When the author talks of spells and divine magic, he is talking about a belief and power attributed to supernatural gods who aid the ninja through his spells and rituals. This should be stringently separated from illusion and sleight of hand.

Finally, the author of this manual complains that the ninja of Iga overuse tools to perform their arts and implies that they approach ninjutsu in an overly functional, simplistic way. While he does not say so in the text, it can be inferred that the author, a Koka ninja, feels that the ninjutsu in Koka is superior, approved by the gods, and obtained by divine right. This is echoed in the writings of the ninja Natori Masazumi, who said that even the slightest use of tools can give away a ninja’s intention, and that using no tools at all is the perfect path for a shinobi.

Overall, this translation of the Koka Ryu Ninjutsu Densho is a rare look inside the

Koka ninjutsu and is a marvelous addition to the growing series of ninjutsu manuals available in English.

## THE KOKA RYU NINJUTSU DENSHO

The arts of the shinobi have been passed down from the [Shinto] deities Oomunamumi<sup>1</sup> no Mikoto and Sukunahiko no Mikoyo from the Age of the Gods. Afterward the arts were written down and kept in the imperial palace and were called Kumoshibari and Kumaso-jimi.<sup>2</sup> At the rebellion of Soga no Emiji, many writings were burnt and destroyed. Only a small section of the writings remained intact, and the records of these [shinobi] arts were left in these surviving texts. Emioshikasu<sup>3</sup> obtained these documents and passed them down to Kakuho of Iga, where they were transmitted to Lord Kusunoki Masashige, and then to Akutagawa Hyobu, who was a samurai guard at the imperial palace. He later lived in Koka in Omi province, and it was from this point that [the arts] spread. From these teachings, some sections were retained, and others were discarded, at which point the essence of the teachings was taken up and came to be known as Koka-ryu. This school [of Koka] does not use magic or conjuring tricks but is based on the principles of the Divine Arrow Windmill.<sup>4</sup>

In Iga-ryu, they too use the principles of the Arrow Windmill<sup>5</sup> and call it *makabukuro* [the great bag], but their version is not divine, which means it was not inherited from the gods. Also, many [of those of Iga] perform shinobi infiltration only with the aid of tools. These ways [of Iga] are what we [of Koka] avoid, as we try to have a righteous mind, discipline ourselves, and practice with our skills. After such preparation, we enter into the enemy and fully discover their secret plans. This is what Sun Tsu called the five types of spy.<sup>6</sup>

To fully obtain information on the enemy with these skills and methods [of the ninja] is a task of great importance in military affairs. Therefore, [shinobi] performers should be careful and continue to practice.

## THE ART OF THE DIVINE ARROW WINDMILL HIDING RITUAL

The arrows [for this talisman] should be 8 *sun* long and have *mabane* feathers.<sup>7</sup> Out of tens of arrows, pierce a hole at the bottom end of each arrow, and put a cord through them all.<sup>8</sup> The cord you use should be 7 *shaku* long. Keep this *yaguruma* in a bag made of deer leather; this bag should be treated with charred turtle on the inside. Keep this above your gateway when not in use. When you use this talisman and perform the Divine Arrow Windmill art [then you should use the chants below].<sup>9</sup>

1. *He*
2. *Fu*
3. *Me*

4. *Yo-u*
5. *Ii*
6. *Mu*
7. *Na*
8. *Ya*
9. *Kou*
10. *Tou*

*Hu Ru Be Yu U Yu U Ha Ru Be To Mo Hu Su Ha Ru Be Yu U Yu U Hu Ru Be To Mo Fu Su*

## THE FIVE TYPES OF PRACTICAL TRAINING<sup>10</sup>

1. On Gods and Buddhism<sup>11</sup>
2. Medicinal training<sup>12</sup>
3. Craftsmanship and the arts of the merchant
4. Sake manufacture and farming<sup>13</sup>
5. The arts<sup>14</sup>

## THE SEVEN FORMS OF INFILTRATION<sup>15</sup>

1. Through temples and shrines
2. As a medicine peddler
3. As a craftsman or merchant
4. As a sake [merchant or] farmer
5. Through exploiting the arts and performance [of all manners]
6. Through love<sup>16</sup>
7. Through greed or desire

The above seven ways of infiltration are to be used for the following tasks:

1. To know the names of the senior councilors
2. [To record the enemy] crests, their retainers, and the number of their samurai
3. To obtain information about their gunnery sections and *daisho*<sup>17</sup>
4. To record their rations status and storage facilities
5. To make drawings of their castles, and so on

## THE ART OF SHRINKING GREAT DISTANCES<sup>18</sup>

Traveling from one *ri* to one hundred *ri*, and from the start to the finish, here is what to do. Take one *sho* of soil from both the starting point and the finishing point, scatter this soil under an *rokudan* [altar], and write in the soil 千里一步.<sup>19</sup> Next, step on the ideograms 道頭<sup>20</sup> with your left foot, and step on 萬里<sup>21</sup> with your right foot. With your left hand, adopt the “thunder sign,”<sup>22</sup> and with your right hand [perform] the *kenketsu* [sword cut].<sup>23</sup> Take [power] from the *chi* of the east and use the spell that is written below. Say it seven times consecutively, after which you should burn the talisman, which is also shown below.

One journey, finished in forty-nine days, should have the soil sent back by a long, streaming river.<sup>24</sup>

Remember, when traveling more than one thousand *ri*, this [ritual] still works and will commence the moment you take your first step, allowing you to arrive before you know it.

The spell for the above, which is to be said seven times:

“One step to a hundred steps and the land will shrink itself—if you come across mountains, they will flatten; if you come across a barrier of water, it will dry up; if you come across trees, they will break; if you come across fire, it will be extinguished; and if you come across land, it will shrink itself. I devote myself to Sanzankyuko sensei, let my will be done!”

To the right is the talisman to be burned as written in the instructions above.<sup>25</sup>



## THE ART OF HIDING<sup>26</sup>

On the first day of a big year,<sup>27</sup> [get close to] a dead woman before her funeral, and take from her one strand of hair.<sup>28</sup> Steal it without being seen by anyone else. Use a *shujinenshi*<sup>29</sup> and wrap the strand inside it. Keep it in a pure place.<sup>30</sup>

Then, when it is the night of a lunar eclipse, [take some wood,] and with a blade carve a *kanazashi*.<sup>31</sup> In your mind, continually chant the spell listed below, and repeat it countless times until the lunar eclipse ends. At this point you should finish carving the hairpin. Use this pin in your hair, and if an urgent or emergency situation [in which you need to hide] arises, you should pray seven times with the spell listed below. Envisage

black clouds forming around you, which will hide your form; in this manner, you can immediately hide when needs arise. Then, if you wish to end the spell, you should take a bite of the sun,<sup>32</sup> which will allow your form to be seen again.

### The Spell [of Concealment]

*Rai De Seishin Kou Ten Kou Setsu*

咒  
日  
雷ライ  
電デン  
星  
辰  
烹カウ  
轉テン  
車カウ  
轉  
棋セツ

---

The above skills in this scroll are being given for the [receiver's] many years of achievements, and it is imperative that [the secrets] should not be given away to anyone, even to those who are of the same school.

崑陽  
Konyo

Part Three

**THE THREE SHINOBI SCROLLS OF THE GUNPO JIYOSHU**  
**軍法侍用集**

Written by Ogasawara Saku'un Katsuzo circa 1612

## COMMENTARY

The Gunpo Jiyoshu is an incredibly extensive manual, covering virtually all points of Japanese warfare. Among its many scrolls are three that are dedicated to the way of the ninja. Though often overlooked, these three scrolls are full of little-known shinobi techniques and reveal how the shinobi were used by their commanders, providing an otherwise rarely seen view of the ninja. In addition to the three shinobi scrolls, the Gunpo Jiyoshu makes other references and comments regarding the shinobi, and those extracts are also provided at the end of this section. For more information about the Gunpo Jiyoshu's comments on the way of the ninja in relation to magic, see *In Search of the Ninja*, by Antony Cummins.

The Gunpo Jiyoshu was originally named Shiyoshu (meaning “personal collection”) and was intended for personal study. However, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the military genius and the first shogun to unify Japan, caught word of this manuscript and procured a copy. He was so impressed with it that he told the author, Ogasawara Saku'un Katsuzo, to change its name to Gunpo Jiyoshu (The Collected Way of the Samurai Military Arts), because he thought it should be essential reading for every samurai in the land.

Ogasawara Saku'un Katsuzo was a strategist of the Ogasawara school of military strategy and the author of several other works, including the Toryu Gunpo Kosha no Sho and the Shoke no Hyojo, which, when combined with the Gunpo Jiyoshu, can arguably be considered a trilogy because of their connect content. The twelve volumes of the Gunpo Jiyoshu include the essence of his school—a school whose teachings originally consisted of five hundred and fifty volumes by Minamoto no Yoritomo (the founder of the Kamakura shogunate) on the way to govern a country. Coupled with these documents, he included statements by the most significant warriors of all time.

In the bibliography section of the Toryu Gunpo Kosha no Sho, the author, Ogasawara Saku'un Katsuzo, is introduced as “brave and composed in character, of merits that are the most excellent in the country. He is said to have distinguished himself in the service of Ogasawara Masanori.”

We established the date of this manual as 1612 by cross-referencing historical events with the death dates of the people involved, and through information provided by the original introduction for this manual at the time of its dissemination. The author states that Matsudaira Hidanokami Hideyuki, a retainer of the Tokugawa family, was the person who personally showed this document to the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. Since we know that Hideyuki died in 1612, we can conclude that the manual must have been finished before then.

This has considerable significance for the subject of shinobi research, as we know that the author was a samurai of the Sengoku period. He himself claims to have obtained this knowledge from writings by a ninja of the Hattori line called Hattori Jibuemon Ujinobu, who is recorded to be involved with the Yoshitsune school, the supposed lineage of the

war master Yoshitsune.<sup>1</sup> This means that the information in this volume is the closest we will ever get to understanding the ninja at the height of their power. It shows us a true record of the real arts of the shinobi.

Note that at the end of the second shinobi-related scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu, there is a fascinating compilation of one hundred waka poems called the Yoshimori Hyakushu. In order to examine these poems closely, we've given them their own section in Part Four.

Also, in addition to these three shinobi-related scrolls, there are other mentions of shinobi ways in the Gunpo Jiyoshu. Those "extras" appear at the end of this section and are entitled "Other Shinobi-Related Text from the Gunpo Jiyoshu."

## THE FIRST SHINOBI SCROLL OF THE GUNPO JIYOSHU

### ALL CLANS SHOULD HAVE A MAN OF IGA AND KOKA SERVE THEM

No daimyo would be able to carry out his wishes without shinobi in his vassalage. No matter how adept the commander is at the art of war, none of his stratagems will work if he knows nothing about the enemy, their topography, or their location. In addition, in order to maintain a high level of vigilance in a guardhouse or during surveillance, you should have in your service those who have trained in the ways of the shinobi. It is common knowledge that in ancient times there were people in Iga and Koka who were highly skilled on this path. Their skills have been handed down to their descendants, and so they still exist today. Thus the people in command of these tasks are called Iga-shu or Koka-shu and are hired in every clan across Japan.

### THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU SEND OUT A SHINOBI

It is said that the most distinguished strategists can even use ordinary people for shinobi activities. When they wish to know the inside layout of an enemy castle, they send them out by changing their appearances to such things as monkey trainers, *shakuhachi* [flute players], or *hoka* [street magicians and performers]. This type of infiltration was also commonly done in ancient times as well.

### WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE YOU SHOULD SEND AS SHINOBI

When you choose to send someone out as a shinobi in the above fashion,<sup>1</sup> you should examine each case very closely. First, choose those with intelligence; second, those who have a good memory; and third, those who speak eloquently. Anybody without these natural abilities will not make a good shinobi. However, those who are assigned to the task and who train themselves on this path should be good, capable, and resourceful laypeople. This is so they will have a good understanding about the tasks required, even if they are not good at other things. Therefore, be mindful, as is said above: it is better and more correct to use the [trained] people of Iga and Koka for this.

### WHAT THOSE WHO GO ON SHINOBI MISSIONS SHOULD KEEP

## IN MIND

Those who go on shinobi missions should sacrifice their lives, attach importance to honor, value honor above life, be loyal to their lord, and throw themselves away for loyalty. Furthermore, they should equip themselves lightly.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN ON YOUR SHINOBI MISSION

Bring back the following information: what are the enemy's military codes, formations, armaments, passwords; what is the appearance of the enemy's commander-in-chief; also, information on their troop commanders, the crests of the flags and war-curtains, the route to the enemy, the locations of the mountains and rivers, and the layout of the residential districts. Bring this information back in an illustrated form or by any other means. However, if you try to pay too much attention to detail, you will not be able to memorize it in its entirety; therefore, you may forget something of the utmost importance. You must always carry a brush and ink in the folds of your kimono, with the intention to write down everything as a memo.

## HOW A SHINOBI SHOULD EQUIP AND DRESS HIMSELF

A shinobi should not be ashamed of running away when pursued. You may often leave every tool you possess, even your long and short swords. You should consider it a principle to know the enemy well and think nothing of your body or life, but instead devote yourself to loyalty and your lord. Therefore, you should not have anything with your lord's name upon you, nor your own name, your crest, or any other clue as to your allegiance. You should make yourself up in various ways, such as a beggar, a merchant, and so on.

### **Supplement: How to Get Information about Your Area of Interest**

When you are in other provinces and have to ask for information about the surrounding area, go into a peasant's house and, after some basic chitchat, push your point and try to make the people talk spontaneously on the subject that you need to know about. Make it occur in the natural flow of conversation, without asking them directly. You should not talk at all of your own province, but rather talk about another province you know very well. Preparing some pottery or wares for sale is an effective way to pretend you are from a different province that they, the enemy, do not know very well. To pursue the way of the shinobi, you should know several dialects well. Monkey trainers, *shakuhachi* [flute players], fortune-tellers, or traveling monks usually know much about the surrounding area. Thus it is a good idea to get acquainted with these people.

## A SHINOBI SHOULD CARRY FIRE

It is essential for a shinobi to carry embers. You have to sleep outdoors in the fields or the mountains, and in the enemy's province, thus making it hard to ask a local resident for fire without causing suspicion. You sometimes need to make smoke signals, for example, when you are waiting for your allies. Therefore, it is vital to have fire on you.

Put embers in a small censer, and carry it in a drawstring pouch.

Mix black burnt *sugihara* [a type of paper] and seaweed<sup>2</sup> into a solid form, ignite it, and sandwich it between two boards to carry.

Details are to be orally taught.

A recipe for tinder:

Mix fine pieces of roasted stems of the tobacco plant to the measurement of 5 *momme* and potassium nitrate to the measurement of 1 *momme*. Then put it into a bamboo cylinder and carry it. This can be ignited with amazing ease.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD WEAR FOR SHINOBI MISSIONS

It is desirable for a shinobi to wear fur clothes, as you have to lie down on the ground and within fields or in the mountains. Also, it is proper for you to be dressed in an inconspicuous way.

### **Supplement: You Should Carry Food**

Nothing is as good as dried, boiled rice to carry as rations. Also you should have salty kelp or wakame.

## KNOW WHERE WATER IS

Here are things you should be aware of when you have to look for water. You will usually find a stream near where willow trees are growing, where gulls and herons are gathering, and beneath steep mountains. You should search out such places and detect water sources.

## THE FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR A SHINOBI

These three volumes of the *Shinobi no Sho* were originated by Hattori Jibuemon, in the entourage of Lord Takeda Shingen and written down by me. He once said that there are five things of vital importance for the shinobi.<sup>3</sup>

1. Guidance

2. Fire
3. The enemy
4. Time
5. The principle of infiltration

## TRADITIONS OF THE SHINOBI

Those who are active as shinobi should try their best to see, hear, or write down what they should know and, in secret, to collect the information about a place, even while in a battle. This will enable you to steal into the enemy territory with tactics. When you steal into an unfamiliar province to record where the bedroom of the enemy's commander is situated, obtain a drawing of the required position from the shinobi of that area. They usually keep in contact with each other and have acquaintances in various provinces. Thus, when shinobi of different alliances meet and talk, if they are good shinobi, you can often gain information in this way. In such a case, be careful about the way you talk, so that your speech will not be a disadvantage for your allies. Also it is indispensable to pay attention to what the enemy says.

## FROM WHICH DIRECTION YOU SHOULD STEAL IN

It is essential for a shinobi to decide which direction to steal in from. Day and night, you should be aware of the two different ways. In daytime, mix with the crowd in public. It is difficult to infiltrate from a position that is quiet, even if there are but a few people. At night, the most important thing is to choose an area where there is no noise or sign of the enemy, and use your stratagems to make a feint and steal in from there. If the enemy does not become silent when you produce a small test noise, you know that the watchmen are letting their guard down or are incompetent. You will be able to get in from such a place in the end. You can do this if you take your time and simply wait, looking for a gap that you can take advantage of. Do not enter a gap if you see those who appear to be *togiki* [listening scouts] holding their spears or long swords under their arms, walking along the walls or the fences, and trying to examine all things closely while keeping distinctly quiet. Also, if a noise is made nearby and only two or three people out of ten guards come outside of the guardhouse, it means they are alert. You should leave such a place as soon as possible. Unless you are fully attentive and hide well even while you are leaving, this situation will often cause you trouble. If you hear the enemy speak very loudly, sing, or make too much noise for no particular reason in the guardhouse, you can guess that they do not have a good head for their duty. So, to test their alertness, you could intentionally make noise with an instrument or place something interesting to attract their attention. Do this to create a feint to establish how

the enemy reacts. If they go quiet at your noise making, then begin to keep watch firmly, and send some men to listen for any sound. It would be very difficult even for a skilled man to infiltrate from such an area.

If a small castle is full of people, you should steal in there, where people are getting together. If a small number of people are staying in a big castle, it will be relatively empty, thus you should steal in from a naturally fortified and difficult area. This is also the case with a night attack. Remember, this is just a principle and not an absolute.

An inexperienced person will always try to steal in by crossing the corners of fences or by entering near the water gate or a place where water is falling down. This is a mistake. However, be aware that shinobi can steal in anywhere by taking advantage of any gap in the enemy when they are letting their guard down.

## YOU SHOULD RELY ON A SHINOBI FOR GUIDANCE

Those warriors who are very ambitious and want to ride first in a battle charge should rely on a shinobi for guidance if they do not know the topology of the battlefield. It is important to have the same mind and work in complete accord. Only a skilled shinobi can accomplish this task.

### **Supplement: The Need to Unify with a Beginner**

Even in the case where you have difficulty retreating from a battle area, if you leave a novice behind and allow him to be captured by the enemy, it will cast shame on you for the rest of your life. Generally, you should have a novice following you when going on a covert mission, and let him go before you when getting back. However, it is important to communicate in full any methodology previous to the mission. Also, you should use five colored sets of marks as a sign: blue, yellow, red, white, and black. Agree with each other on which color to use in which case. A beginner should try to remember the mountains, rivers, or woods along the route of their return.

## THE THREE CALL SIGNS OF THE SHINOBI

The three call signs of the shinobi are as follows: one for the name, one for the way, and one for the finding.

The first is for the name, and it is used when four or five shinobi go out together to follow an enemy or to find a target. You should have rice of five colors and decide beforehand who is blue rice, who is yellow rice, and so on, so that you can know who has been there before you.

The second is for the way, and it is used to inform your allies which direction to take where the road is divided into two. This allows those who are following to choose the

correct path. An example is thrusting a bamboo stick into the ground.

The third is a mark for finding the target that you are pursuing. You should decide on what mark to make if you find him, for example, putting rice bran on the ground.

In any of the above cases, choose what would not raise people's suspicion. Having a previous agreement is of great importance.

As one cannot easily find the marks at night, sometimes the method of putting a piece of paper in a prominent place is used, or, on a moonlit night, you could scatter something white on the grass around your sign to help illuminate it. However, these ways have been used since ancient times and are known to some people; you must be aware of this and be creative.

## WHERE MANY DOGS ARE FOUND

A shinobi should carry food for dogs. If you pursue a runaway or a target and find yourself near too many enemies, having no allies that have arrived yet, and needing to take shelter around that area while waiting for your allies, the local dogs may bark at you furiously. In such a case you should feed them. This is to avoid having the enemy notice you are there.

There is a verse to prevent man-eating dogs from attacking you:

われは虎いかになくともいぬはいぬし

しのはがみをおそれざらめや

“I am a tiger. No matter how hard you bark, a dog is just a dog. How could it not fear a tiger's bite, as he is the king of the beasts?”

You should chant the above verse three times, and then count on each finger, starting from the thumb of your right hand, saying, “dog, boar, mouse, ox, and tiger.”<sup>4</sup> This verse is a secret told by Jibuemon.

## ABOUT TORCHES

In the case of moving your position, crossing a river, or attacking at night, torches should not always be held by lower servants, but in some cases should be held by good samurai or in most cases by shinobi. First, those who take the job should know everything about the path ahead and be capable of leading the allies, so they will not become scattered. Second, hold a torch and keep a distance from the main force. You may have to change this according to the situation, for example, whether it is upwind or downwind, for correct lighting during a night attack, and so on.

There are traditions that are to be verbally transmitted.

### *The Regular-Use Torch*

To make torches for regular use, you should split pinewood into thin pieces and tie them up with a thin rope, as this will be the center of the torch. Then cover it all with a layer of bamboo. When it is extinguished, if you give a shake and hold it upright, it will quickly catch fire again.

### ***The 5-Ri Torch***<sup>5</sup>

Split Japanese chestnut oak wood into thin pieces, apply oil to them, and let them dry. Tie them up with a thin rope so you can hold it. This is called a 5-*ri* torch.

Peel cherry trees and get thick chunks of bark; then dissolve sulfur in alcoholic spirits and apply it twice to the bark. Dry them out so they will make a fine torch. This type of torch is good for when the rain and wind are hard.

### ***Water Torches***<sup>6</sup>

Alum: 5 *momme*

Mouse droppings: 1 *momme*

Pine resin: 5 *bu*

Moxa: 1 *momme*<sup>7</sup>

Camphor: 5 *momme*

Saltpeter: 5 *bu*

Copper sulfate: 5 *bu*

Hemp ash: 1 *momme*

Cut the above into fine power and put it into a bamboo cylinder. Make sure to compact it firmly and light it with *kuchigusuri*.<sup>8</sup> It will not go out, even if it is dipped in water, no matter how hard the rain or wind may be. However, it makes a loud noise, so it is not suitable for a shinobi to carry.

### ***Palm Torches***<sup>9</sup>

Split a cedar board to get a piece that is 4 or 5 *sun*. Apply a little sulfur on the tip and hold it out. This is called a *monomi* [scouting torch], and shinobi use it to look inside a window or a knothole.

### ***Cloth Torches***

A *kinu* [cloth torch] is made by wrapping four or five reeds with cotton cloth, then applying pine resin to it. Dry and bundle a few of these to make a torch. It will not go out in the rain. Each piece of the wrapped reeds can also make a small independent torch. It serves as a good light and is also good for a night attack.

### ***Throwing Attack Torches***

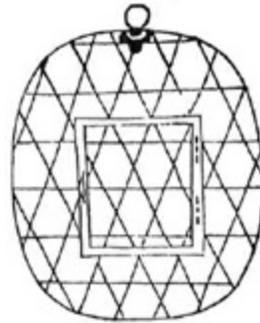
Split bamboo into thin pieces, mix them with pine slivers, and make a bundle. Make the length around 2 *shaku* or even up to 3 *shaku* if you wish. Make one end thin and put a weight within the forward end, so it has a good balance. Then put in a nail of 4 or 5 *sun* as a spike at the front.



The drawing shows what the torch looks like; the length or the size depends on you. Be sure to fit the weight so it has a proper balance. This torch is also good as *shuriken*.<sup>10</sup> However, it is not used to hit a person, but to throw many during a night attack [to illuminate the area or set fires].

### ***The Brazier***<sup>11</sup>

A watch fire of this type is good when you stay in one place for defense. Make a round basket with iron of a thickness of 1 or 2 *bu* with ends of 2 *bu*. However, you can change it as you wish.



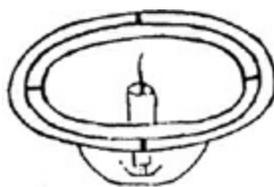
Make a hinged door and latch as shown in the drawing [on the left].

This is the device that should be put inside the cage as a source of illumination. It should be the same as in a thief's gimbal lantern.

This brazier is good when you attack someone who is camped. Torches for regular use are not so safe when it comes to fire prevention. Also it could happen that a careless person may be deprived of their torch by a prisoner; in fact, anyone could be taken advantage of in this way, even a talented person.

In darkness you cannot work very well, or you may even fight among yourselves by mistake. With this light, you should be able watch what is going on around you. It has

the advantage that it cannot be put out nor taken over by a prisoner.



The recipe for the candle that is to be lit in the brazier:

Copper sulfate: 8 *momme*

Camphor: 5 *momme*

Pine resin: 10 *momme*

Sulfur: 3 *momme*

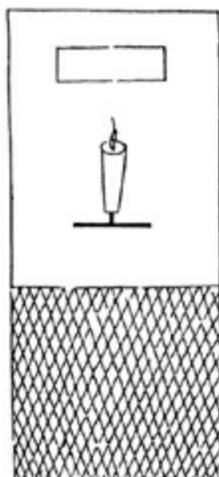
Saltpeter: 5 *bu*

Harden the above in the fashion of a candle, put a little *kuchigusuri* [ignition powder] on the top, and ignite it. It will not go out even if you throw water over it.



*Kuchigusuri* [ignition powder] is placed on the top. It looks like a candle, as is shown here.

***The Shield Torch***<sup>12</sup>



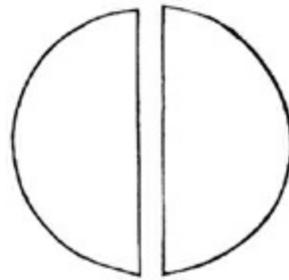
This is good when you go on the defensive, as well as for a night attack. The shield itself should be made of willow trees if possible. It should measure roughly 8 *bu* in thickness, 2 *shaku* in length, and 6 *sun* in width, though you can change it as you like. You should be aware, however, that it is detrimental to make it too big, as it will then be difficult to handle your sword.

Attach a chainmail skirt of 1 *shaku* or 9 *sun*. You can change it as you wish. This chainmail should be made of iron, like the chainmail used for armored gauntlets. Then, 1 *shaku* below the viewing window, put a crosspiece on the outside of the shield, so that you can put a candle there.<sup>13</sup> On the inside, put a handle of 6 *sun* below the window.

## Supplement: About Firearms

### *Hand Grenades*

Use this on a night attack by throwing it where many enemies are gathering, in order to create a commotion among them.

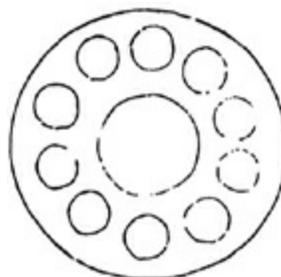


Insert an ignition powder fuse within it. As seen in the drawing on the right, it should be made of clay and be as thin as unglazed earthenware. Fill it with gunpowder that is used for rifles, and include iron filings, fine sand, and so on. Then place the mixture between the two pieces. You use it by throwing it where the enemy is gathering. Also, it is good if you need to flee very quickly from a shinobi mission.

Further information is to be orally transmitted.

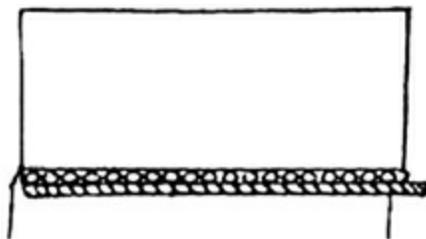
### *Another Type of Hand Grenade*<sup>14</sup>

The number of chambers can be changed as you wish. Put burning charcoal into the chambers around the center. Load *kuchigusuri* [ignition powder] through the center hole; then load it with shot and gunpowder. Cover the whole thing with paper. Throw it where people are gathering.



### ***The Landmine***<sup>15</sup>

You should apply *kuchigusuri* [ignition powder; or a fuse] from the bottom right.



You should apply *kuchigusuri* [ignition powder; or a fuse] in the hole on the bottom left.

Use a *hinawa* [fuse]. Change the size depending on the place and situation. The boards used for the box should be as thin as possible.

1. Split bamboo in half, and place it with the inside of the bamboo face down. Place an [unlit] fuse under each bamboo section [with the ends coming out of one side and tied together].
2. Put a mixture of gunpowder and pebbles into the box [and close it].
3. Put the bamboo [with the fuses inside] on top of the box [with all their fuses coming together], and make sure the flame can pass through [the ground after you have buried it].<sup>16</sup>
4. Put an old straw mat on the box and spread soil thinly on the top [to camouflage it].

This weapon should be positioned on the enemy's path and should be made so that it will ignite when someone steps on it.<sup>17</sup>

More details are to be orally transmitted.

### ***The Heat Horse***<sup>18</sup>

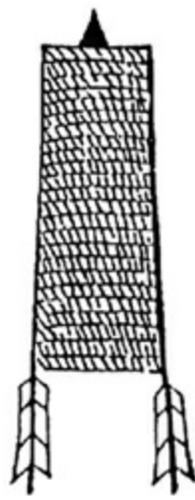
On a night attack you can place torches on horseback and drive the horse into the enemy. Attaching the torches upside down is a good method. The number of torches depends on the enemy. The horse should be a packhorse. The torches should be tied with a single-loop short rope to a packsaddle, so that they will burn up in a short time.

### ***Rolled Burning Arrows***<sup>19</sup>

This should be used just as its alternate name, Rat Fire, implies.<sup>20</sup>

Cut out and put a hardwood seal in the center and at the back of the tube. Wind a thin rope onto a bamboo cylinder. Apply *kuchigusuri* [ignition powder; or a fuse] around the tip and in a bamboo joint.

For the fletchings of the arrows, the bark of the cherry tree is recommended. The size can be varied as you wish.



Here is the gunpowder recipe to put in the above fire arrows:

Saltpeter: 5 *momme*

Sulfur: 3 *momme*

Iron fillings: 2 *momme*

Ash of Paulownia wood: 5 *momme*

Make this into fine powder and put it into the cylinder. Ignite the *kuchigusuri* [ignition powder, or a fuse], and throw it into the enemy on a night attack. The more you use, the better.

## HOW TO STAND WATCH

When you stand watch, make sure to keep as quiet as possible, paying attention to everything, so you can detect the enemy shinobi and defend against a night attack. In the case that there is a commotion, if you are ten in number, three or four of you should go outside to investigate. The others should strengthen the defense at the guardhouse and act in accordance with what information is given from the outside.

In such a case, the most important aspect is to have plans. In emergency situations, it is sometimes difficult to conduct even a well-constructed plan without fail. You should be fully aware of this. To keep an all-night vigil, take turns on watch, especially when you stay in an inn while traveling. Nobody can keep alert when tired.

### **Supplement: Making a Watch Fire within a Three-Walled Embankment**

The construction of a watch fire is written in full in *Sonae no Sho*, the second volume of this scroll.<sup>21</sup> However, how to make one during the rain and wind is written here.



As shown in the drawing, embank the fire on three directions, with the walls facing your camp and the fire shining outward, toward the enemy. The height of the walls should be about 7 *shaku*. Put intakes into it to create airflow. The size can be changed according to your purpose. The appropriate position or distance that a fire should be in relationship to the camp is written in *Sonae no Sho*, the second scroll.

Make the watch fire at dusk. If it is raining, you should add straw or straw mats to build the fire. On a windy night, be very careful. This is the way of creating the main, continuous, and steady fire. For a single-use fire, stack firewood so the windward side is longer, and then light a fire from the leeward side.<sup>22</sup> In general, a watch fire should burn low and long. There are traditions on how to do this.

## LISTENING SCOUTS<sup>23</sup>

Whether you stay at a set position or in the confines of the castle, you should go out for “listening scouting” at midnight, so you can get close to the enemy and listen for any noise to report.

### **Supplement: Scouting at the Guardhouse**

Also, if there are ten people in the guardhouse, two or three of them should go outside, over and over again, to listen for noises. When doing this, hold your spear or long sword under your arm and remain quiet.

## HOW TO CLAP THE WARNING CLAPPERS

In the time of an emergency, get some *monogiki* [scouts] whose job it is to listen for noises, and have them go 6 or 7 *ken* ahead of one person who has been and is clapping with his wooden signal clappers. The clappers should be made of cedar wood, so the enemy cannot hear them from this prescribed distance. When your camp is the victim of a night attack, you should use hardwood warning clappers, so the sound carries well to all.

When you clap the signal clappers to say all is well, use the following patterns:

4, 2, and then 3 claps at dusk

6 and then 3 at midnight

1, 5, and 3 at dawn

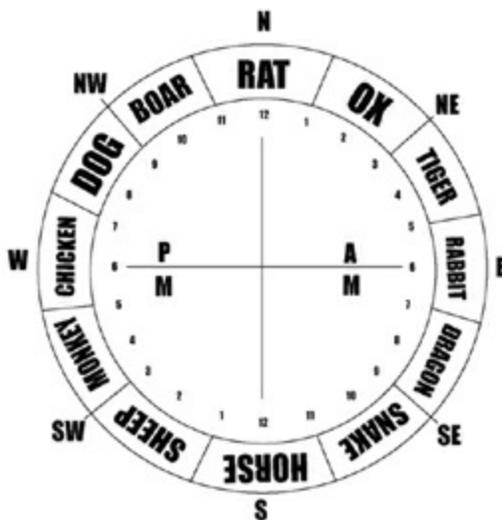
This is so you will not be deceived by a false signal. However, in an emergency, the clappers should be clapped at full tilt in a rhythm of 4, 4, 6, and 2.

## KNOWING FROM WHICH DIRECTION THE ENEMY NIGHT ATTACK OR SHINOBI WILL COME

Shinobi and those who night attack tend to infiltrate and utilize specific places as shelter or a hiding place. You should be aware of this; shinobi of all people are likely to move along behind things.

Also, there is a way to know what a ninja will do [in accordance with the Chinese Sexagenarian Calendar], which has been transmitted here by Jibuemon.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is not mentioned in the Hidorisho, which is volumes 9 to 11 of this scroll, but it is written here.

[When using the Sexagenarian Calendar,] a ninja will infiltrate from the eighth direction while counting in a clockwise motion on the following days:<sup>25</sup>



*Ne* [rat]

*Uma* [horse]

*Tori* [chicken]

*Mi* [snake]

*I* [boar]

*Tora* [tiger]

[When using the Sexagenarian Calendar,] a ninja will infiltrate from the fourth direction while counting in a clockwise motion on the following days:<sup>26</sup>

*Ushi* [ox]

*Hitsuji* [sheep]  
*Tatsu* [dragon]  
*Inu* [dog]  
*U* [rabbit]  
*Saru* [monkey]

For these days, you should be able to work out the direction of a ninja infiltration, or from where a night attack will come. Apply the above rules and count the correct number of spaces on the calendar in accordance with this information.

## Understanding the Times Shinobi Will Infiltrate or When Night Attacks Will Come<sup>27</sup>

During the days of *Kinoe* and *Kinoto*, a night attack will occur [or a ninja will infiltrate] during the hour of *Inu*.

During the days of *Hinoe* and *Kanoe*, a night attack will occur [or a ninja will infiltrate] during the hours of *Tora* and of *Ne*, *Inu*, and *I*.

During the days of *Tsuchinoe* and *Kanoto*, a night attack will occur [or a ninja will infiltrate] during the hours of *Ne* and *Inu*.

During the days of *Tsuchinoto* and *Mizuenoe*, a night attack will occur [or a ninja will infiltrate] during the hours of *Ushi* and *I*.

During the days of *Mitsunoto* and *Hinoto*, a night attack will occur [or a ninja will infiltrate] during the hour of *Ne*.

You can work out the time by applying the above information and name of the day to the corresponding hours [on the Sexagenarian Calendar.]

Also, there is a way to know if people have broken in, by spreading sand or laying thorny plants on the route they are likely to take; this has been transmitted since ancient times. You should be creative and think about various ways to protect yourselves. It is vital for all the night watchmen and watch guards to know fully how to perform listening scouting and observation scouting.

## WHAT A SHINOBI SHOULD KEEP IN MIND TO KNOW THE ENEMY

It is essential for a *shinobi monomi* [covert scout] to speculate deeply about the way the enemy is. However, you should not report what is not reasonable enough to report. The commander in chief, troop commanders, or strategists make their strategy about the enemy based on the information given from the above covert scouts. This is critical to defense; whether the information is reliable or not is of vital importance. For example,

you should be very careful to listen for the sound of instruments, voices, or the neighing of horses. There are many variations of situations, and these should be transmitted orally.

Also, you should not be inflexible concerning these things. What you should do is know how to use your own resourcefulness. It is exactly as one man said, “Every moral to be taught about the arts of war exists in your heart already.”

## ON SECRET COMMUNICATION

Secret communication is a job that a shinobi should undertake. A secret letter should not be normally intelligible if dropped or exposed to others' eyes. In ancient times, there was a way of writing a secret message with tangerine juice. Therefore you should be very careful if you find something strange or out of place. In the case that the enemy has a properly disciplined code of conduct, you should know that almost any shinobi would not be able to steal into their position.

### **Supplement: Letters Sent Tied to an Arrow**

As for letters sent tied to an arrow,<sup>28</sup> you should examine the text closely. It is essential for you to know if the letter from the enemy is true or false. There have been instances in which the enemy accomplished success by hiding a letter in a fish's belly or beat their foe by concealing a false letter into an old man's groin by splitting it.<sup>29</sup>

## THE SECOND SHINOBI SCROLL OF THE GUNPO JIYOSHU

### HOW TO NIGHT ATTACK

For a night attack, you should use a *shinobi no mono* for guidance.<sup>1</sup> Though this is a primary requirement, you may sometimes have nobody appropriate for the job. In that case, conduct your attack with the knowledge of the location and footing in mind. If you intend to night attack, you should not exhaust your mind or body too much in a daytime battle. When you see signs of tiredness in the enemy, carry out a night attack. If night attacking in great strength, you should divide your force into three main groups. One is of *keki no musha* [boisterous warriors], those who raise war cries and make noises with instruments to surprise the enemy. Another group is of *shinobi no musha* [shinobi warriors], those who exploit any gaps in the enemy's defense and force themselves forward with the aim to defeat them. The last group is of *hyori no musha* [tactic warriors], those who move around swiftly among the enemy, especially paying attention to the front or the rear of the enemy's force.

If you attack as stated above, then the enemy will be misled about the size of your force, often be thrown into confusion, and in the end be defeated.

In the case of attacking sneakily and in a small number—for example, fewer than a hundred people—and with shinobi as guides, one successful way is to have as many people as possible throw hand grenades everywhere, scattering them. Make one or two raids very quickly, taking advantage of their confusion. In principle, you should not be slovenly when conducting night attack. It stands to reason that you should retreat quickly.

### THE SHINOBI WHO PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR A NIGHT ATTACK

It is not an easy task to guide a night attack. You should go there secretly to obtain a proper observation on the previous day. There are five colored marks, which were mentioned in the previous scroll.

### THE APPROPRIATE DAYS AND TIMES FOR A NIGHT ATTACK

The best times for a night attack are as follows: in a tough situation, during an intervention, on the night after a night of heavy rain and wind, on the night of heavy rain and wind. However, if it gets too heavy, you will be limited in movements, to the

point that you cannot fight very well.

## MOCK NIGHT ATTACKS

Creating a mock night attack means to surge ahead, close toward the enemy for two or three nights in a row, raising a war cry. Then when enemy comes out to counterattack, retreat quickly to show them you will not be easily defeated. After having kept them tense like this, do nothing for a couple days. Then the enemy will let their guard down and relax, which is the right opportunity for you to successfully and fully assault them.

### **Supplement: Ways to Mislead the Enemy**

There is a way to manipulate the enemy, in which you order your force to get ready for a night attack without any real intention. Do this on several occasions so that the enemy's shinobi who have infiltrated your area will return with misleading information. Alternatively, you can make your horses neigh to make the enemy tense. In the same way as above, when you find the enemy has let their guard down and have traces of exhaustion, prepare covertly, and make your raid.

## THE DECEPTIVE NIGHT ATTACK

Though there are many skills you should be aware of, the most significant ones for skilled warriors are the skills and tactics of a night attack called *hyori no youchi* [deceptive night attack]. In this skill, you hit and lure the enemy out, if you know they have the intention to follow and infiltrate your force. Before doing this, you need to strengthen the defense of your castle or position; lay *fushikamari* [ambush troops] in ambush here and there, and then strictly prearrange a safe pass mark or something else you will recognize among yourselves. You can make a raid of up to 100 or 200 people around where the enemy is waiting. Then retreat swiftly, making a show of your force being in the state of chaos. If the enemy follows and tries to get in your force during your retreat, lure them to a naturally fortified area of your castle or to a *hikibashi* [sliding bridge]. Envelop and hit them with the said ambush—this should be naturally led. If you do this halfheartedly, you could fall into real confusion when retreating.

Another possible way is to deliver two or three swift attacks onto the frontier of the enemy, all in one night. In doing this, switch to a different leader and set of troops each time. The purpose of this is to exhaust the enemy. It may happen that the employment of this tactic will cause the entire enemy force to collapse if it is not well prepared. Otherwise it is a tactic that you perform to gain an advantage for a battle the following day.

## FOLLOWING AND INFILTRATING THE ENEMY<sup>2</sup>

When you follow and infiltrate the enemy's forces during their night attack, you will fail if you are not fully prepared or only half dedicated to the ruse. You need to identify those of high rank. If the enemy commander is not proficient and the night attack is not conducted efficiently, you may be able to follow and infiltrate the enemy's force. In addition, if you have on your side good shinobi who have secured the enemy's passwords or identifying marks and how they are used, your plan to infiltrate the enemy will be much easier. Both conditions are important. Generally, if you intend to slip in with 100 people, you should have 70 of them go ahead in the vanguard. They are to mix with the enemy troops. And 30 of them should act as a rear guard, under the guise of pursuing the original 70. Their real intention is defending all troops against being attacked by the enemy's ambush shinobi or enveloped by the enemy force.

Details are to be transmitted orally.

## PASSWORDS AND IDENTIFYING MARKS

Passwords must be easy for your allies to remember but should be changed from day to day and from time to time, so they will not be easily leaked to the enemy. Use the *mushajirushi* [warrior marks] to recognize troops on your side who have had their *sashimono* [declaration banner] broken. There is another way, called *aikei*, which is a series of identifying marks. Examples include having your allies wear white clothes on a night attack to identify each other, or using Kusunoki Masashige's technique of *tatesuguri isuguri*.<sup>3</sup> With these techniques in mind, you should establish a proper way to identify your allies.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD WEAR ON A NIGHT ATTACK

On secret night attack, a roan-colored horse or a white outfit is undesirable. However, once in close quarters, wearing something white could be helpful when you are fighting and retreating.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, you should wear something white and hide it with a black *haori* jacket. While fighting, take off the jacket, so you are dressed in white. Also, you should bit the horses and secure those bits<sup>5</sup> in a specific manner so they will not make a sound.

### **Supplement: The Mental Guideline You Should Have**

There are different methods according to whether the attack is from a castle or a camp. If you are going to sally forth out of your castle and the enemy intends to slip into your force by coming from their camp, if it is earlier than midnight, hit them while they are

stranded at a naturally fortified area around your castle.

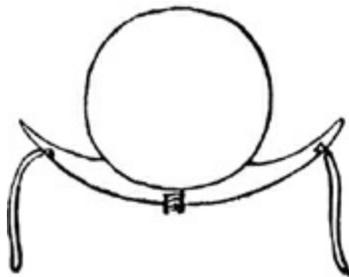
If you yourselves push a night attack from your camp and the enemy is coming from their castle intending to infiltrate your force, it would be better if you could draw them out before dawn. The basic rule of thumb is thus: you should know that those who try to slip in your force are always well trained. Therefore the best thing to do is disperse them before they can even get close to you.

## TAKING A PRISONER INTO CAPTIVITY ON YOUR NIGHT ATTACK

If you have nobody who knows the topography of the enemy's ground, you could take a prisoner into captivity. For that purpose, make a promise that if he does well in his guidance, you will spare his life and give him gold and silver. What you should be aware of here is that you must treat them differently according to rank.<sup>6</sup> In doing this, you should tie his upper thighs and upper arms, and keep him on a long leash so he can act as a guide.

You should take careful measures to keep him quiet:

### *The Ball Gag*



Create a ball.

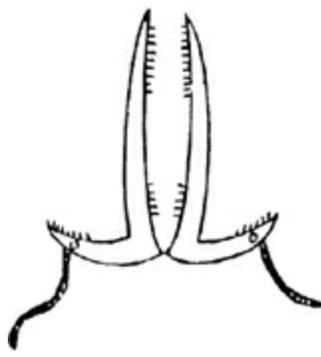
Use string for the ties.

Cover and stitch it with fur.

Put the ball into his mouth, and tie the strings on his top knot. It allows him to breathe freely but not speak aloud.

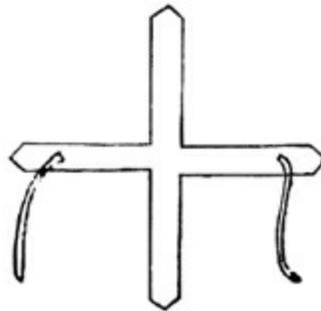
### *The Monkey Gag*

Put his tongue between these saw-toothed parts. The strings should be tied in the same way as above.



### ***The Cross Gag***<sup>7</sup>

Make a cross of wood like this above image. Tie the strings in the same way as above. These are preventive measures that stop the prisoner from speaking.

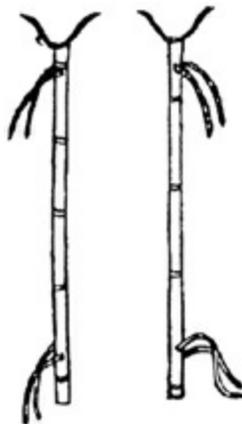


Put the rope “cross coupled” at the shoulder blades and tie the upper arms. Knot the rope with an *otokomusubi*<sup>8</sup> on the front. Hook the inside of the elbows with the excess part of the rope, and tie him with a *kamousagi*<sup>9</sup> on the back. Then secure with another *otokomusubi* on the top, and finally tie it at the upper thighs with the excess rope. Put a nocked staff on each side, so he cannot bend forward nor reach his thighs, as shown below.

[The length of the shafts are] 3 *shaku*.

Put these under his armpits, tie them at the top and bottom with an *otokomusubi*, and tuck the excess part inside the cross-coupled band. After putting the nocks on as above, tie up the hem of his kimono and the sleeve edges with the nocks.

Further details are to be transmitted orally.



# SCATTERING CALTROPS ON A NIGHT ATTACK

When you retreat from your night attack, you should scatter caltrops. The enemy may not be in proper footwear, but your allies will have prepared their feet for a night attack. Therefore, this prevents the enemy from fighting very well and allows you liberty to do anything you wish. The people in charge of scattering caltrops should stay in hiding beside the pathway and not join the fighting. When the allies are retreating, the hidden agents should scatter the caltrops. It is essential to have your allies prepared well with the correct footwear.

When you retreat, it is not easy to get your allies to move in unison. Therefore, it is important for them to retreat all together by having them make marks or using instruments to sound signals.

You should make instruments of bamboo as well as iron.

The size is not definite, and you should have a variety of sizes ready. As iron is heavy, you should have 70 or 80 made of bamboo out of each unit of 100, or 2 or 3 *sho* of iron ones out of a total 1 *to* of caltrops. For a shinobi to carry all bamboo ones would be correct.



## NIGHT ATTACKING AND UTILIZING AN IMPREGNABLE PLACE

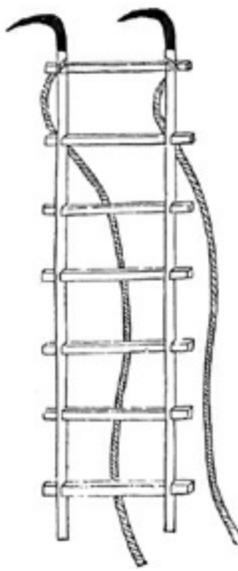
When a few people stay in and defend a large castle relying on natural fortifications, you should infiltrate from these places. Without exception, they will be less guarded, as their defense relies on steep mountains.

### **Supplement: About Tools**

You should have *kasugai* [wide, U-shaped iron clamps] to use as footholds or handholds. They are useful when you climb up rocks or walls.

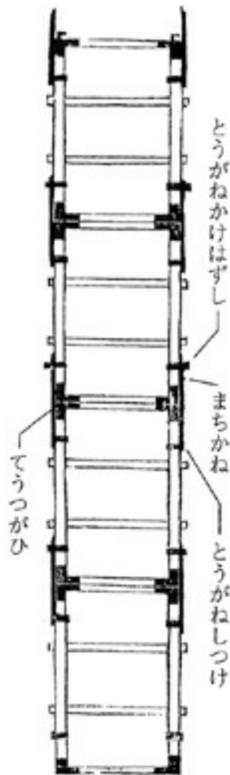
Snowshoes have curbed bamboo underneath, to broaden them for support on the snow, and they have nails or spikes on the bottom. These are good for snowy roads, slippery roads, or moving on rocks. It is difficult for an inexperienced person to move with a pair on. They are not good when you fight. You should be able to take them off quickly if the need arises.

### **Rock Ladders**



Fix the hooks onto the rocks and climb the ropes. The ropes should be made as strong as possible.

### *Hinged Ladders*



A sliding latch bracket is made to slide up off the bracket as seen on the right side.

Hinges are attached.

Connect the ladders with hinges so they can be folded in an accordion-style fold. Around the joints they should have metal reinforcements on the side. On top they should have sliding latch brackets that are detachable at the upper section, so you can separate the ladders into sections. When unfolded and extended long, they should be fixed with a sliding latch on the bracket, which is on the metal reinforcement. The hinges should be

of the pivot hinge style and be removable so you can use the ladder separately, whether long or short, and in accordance with your needs. You can also use it as a shield if a board is nailed to it. This hinged ladder is stronger and more versatile than the ancient ones.

### ***Hanging Lift Basket***

Four ropes should be tied so the basket will not obstruct the heads of people within it. Put split bamboo on the bottom of the basket for reinforcement. Weave the brim with rattan. The rope should be 3 ply; the longer, the better. Use a stick to push off when you are stuck within rocks.



With this basket made as in the drawing above, even on the steepest cliff, once six or seven nimble people can manage to climb up and secure it, they will be able to draw up the rest of the people.

Besides the above, there are also *tsukubo*, *sasumata*, and *tobikuchi* [criminal-catching rakes of various shapes] and so on, which have been mentioned many times, so they are not explained here.<sup>10</sup>

## **TOOLS TO USE IN BESIEGING**

To make a *kurumataketaba* [bamboo cart], tie together four bamboo sticks in the *yotsume* form.<sup>11</sup>

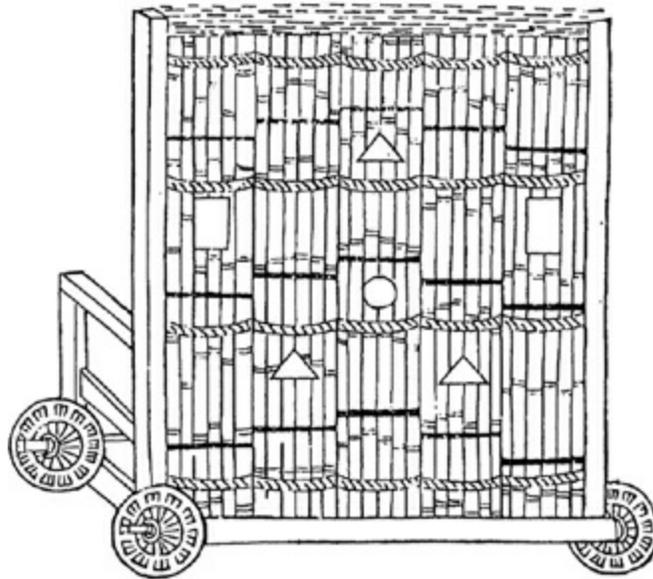


Then tie four of these bundles into this shape again. Make peepholes and put the bamboo on a cart. This cart is also good for scouting. It has been invented to give

mobility to the bamboo bundles that usually function as shields. The general-purpose bamboo bundles are mentioned in the Koshanosho and not here.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Drawing of a Bamboo Cart***

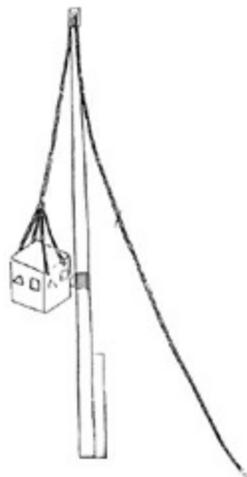
The width and height depends on the place. However, for mobility, it should not be bigger than a cart for twenty people.



### ***The Watchtower***<sup>13</sup>

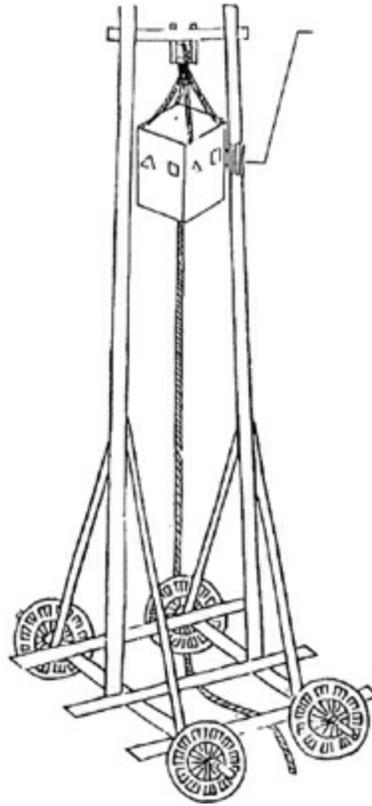
The lower short bar is for support. Make it like a *surigi* [pinrail], as it would be in sailing. The above is also called a scouting watchtower; it was devised by Yamamoto Kansuke.<sup>14</sup>

A foreigner named Shikei gave a telescope to Lord Shingen. With this you can see anything within 50 *cho* as if it were in front of you. From a very simple watchtower like this, you can scout from a long distance with this telescope. You can have the lift large enough for the person to shoot a matchlock musket from. This is rarely used in any other clans.



### ***The Hanging Watchtower***<sup>15</sup>

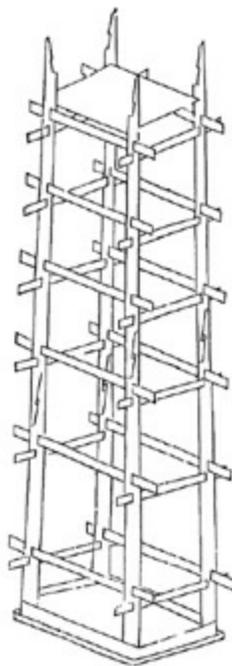
Make it like a *surigi* [pinrail], as it would be in sailing.



### ***The Built-Up Watchtower***<sup>16</sup>

*Shachitugi* [spiked joints] are desirable.

### ***The Triangular Built-Up Watchtower***<sup>17</sup>





## TAKING ADVANTAGE OF WATER

A *hikibashi* [wheeled bridge] is a measure that lets people out of a castle as and when they like, but it does not let the enemy do what they want. Generally, the bridges for the secondary enclosure of a castle should be wheeled bridges. Traditional types of bridges are widely known, so they are not mentioned here.

My invention is to put hinges in the middle of the bridge, so you can use a wall that folds upward as a defensive shield when the sliding bridge is installed into the castle's fixed outer parapet. Place arrow holes on the half of the bridge that folds upward. This forward part that folds upward is double boarded and makes a shield for your men. The top half of this fold-up double wall can be taken off and placed across the handrails, so your men can stand on it and shoot out into the enemy.<sup>18</sup>

Also, you can use this sliding bridge as a watchtower, as well as for a defense position.

The way to attach the towlines on this structure should be just as has been transmitted since ancient times.

However, there are various versions of how to make this bridge, which have been transmitted orally.

*Sokotsuna* [riverbed rope] is a rope that should be stretched across the river where it is narrow. In ancient times the rope was stretched perpendicular to the river's flow, but these days it is put at an angle along the current. Fix the rope below the surface at approximately half depth.

This is to be orally transmitted.

In order to prevent the enemy from knowing where the river is deep, twist the roots of duckweed or reed, put a weight on it, and float it on the river so it looks as if it were growing there. Where the river is rushing, you should dam the stream to make it look as if it were not rushing. Use various tricks according to the place.

To dam the stream, the people of the ancient times used only sandbags. However, it is hard to dam in this way where the stream is too strong. These days a shiplike box or boxes should be placed with holes on the bottom or latticed along it. Then pile bags of

stone in it to dam the river.

## TAKING ADVANTAGE OF MOUNTAINS

*Sarusuberi* [monkey slipping] is the skill of preparing a cart with heavy timber or stones on it and positioning it up a slope. Hold it with towropes; then, when the enemy is coming close, cut the ropes and let loose the cart. It should be done the same as the *otoshibei* [falling wall] skill.<sup>19</sup>

The *horinuki* [digging through] skill is to dig out a groove in the middle of a slope. The depth should be 6 or 7 *shaku*, and the width depends on the slope. Drive stakes at random to the bottom of the groove, and cover it with leaves or some form of camouflage. You can also dig such a groove in the shallows of a river, and cover it with water weeds or such.

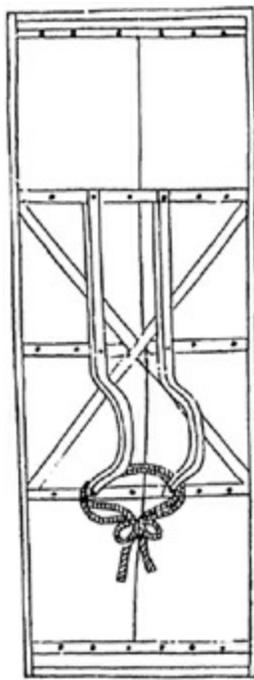
How the stakes should be constructed is common knowledge in the world, so it is not explained here.

The *komagaeshi* [defense against horses] skill is to dig lots of shallow holes of about 1 *shaku* in the mountains to damage the horses' legs.

## THE FAKE WALL

A *tsuribei* [fake wall] is a wall weighted inside with wood and stones and sustained with three to five guide ropes. In a mountain castle it can be lightweight, but on a flatland castle it should be heavy. Once the enemy climbs it, allow it to fall, and they will be destroyed.

## SHIELDS



In ancient times, their length used to be about 5 *shaku*, 8 *sun*. These days it is much shorter, as they measure 5 *shaku*, 4 or 5 *sun* long, making for easier handling. The width is 1 *shaku*, 8 *sun*. The branches of a Japanese medlar plant<sup>20</sup> of 3 *shaku*, 6 *sun* in length are made into handles of 8 *sun*. Nowadays, under these branches, you should put crosspieces that are X-shaped. Also, the shield is 8 *bu* thick. However because there are firearms in these modern times, the outside should be iron shielded and the nails should not be clinched. This was also invented by Yamamoto Kansuke.

This is also called *nagatate* [long shield]. The wood to use should preferably be from willow or pine trees.

## HOW TO MAKE A SIGNAL FIRE

Though there are a lot of recipes transmitted to different clans, this is a secret recipe invented by Kusunoki Masashige.

Wolf droppings: One-third the amount of the straw used<sup>21</sup>

Pine needles: One-fourth the amount of the straw used  
Straw

In the above, one-third means with three bundles of straw, you should put wolf droppings equal to one-third the amount of straw. My addition to this is when the above three are mixed, you should put gunpowder of one-fourth the amount of straw, so the smoke will reach higher.

## HINTS FOR WHEN YOU SEE THE SIGNAL FIRE

In strong wind or rain, or when far away from the signal, it is hard for you to see the smoke. You should give full attention to the clouds in that direction. In the daytime it should look white, like haze. At night it looks reddish. These things may not be worth mentioning, but I say that you should be careful about everything.

## MARKING THE WAY OUT OF A NIGHT ATTACK

On a night attack, it would be easier to have a way out that is opposite to the way in and on the other side. It can be difficult to come back the way you came in. However, in case you have to return that way, try to leave a certain number of men at places on the way. Remember the mountains or the rivers as markers. Put pieces of paper or bamboo sticks in the ground at necessary places, so you can come back depending on these arrangements. This is the case for shinobi as well.

## THE THIRD SHINOBI SCROLL OF THE GUNPO JIYOSHU

### NEVER DROP YOUR GUARD ON NIGHT PATROL

In the way of the samurai, your staunch enemy is inattentiveness. Your tactics, intelligence, or castle will be given away to the enemy, and you will be exposed to the danger of defeat by the enemy's night attack. Their shinobi will set fires, and you will end up being routed through inattentiveness. Mounted warriors will have their harness or gear stolen and be disgraced. Even in peaceful times, any samurai can make mistakes at any moment if he lets his guard down. Above all, the task of night guards or a night patrol is of vital importance. While on patrol, you should keep encouraging your allies to stay alert, giving attention to everywhere and everything. Communicate with the guardhouse and prepare the watch fires properly, so the enemy cannot steal in.

### HOW TO PERFORM GUARD PATROLS AT NIGHT

For a night patrol, it is not good to have too many people or too few, as it is dangerous. On patrol you should keep as quiet as possible. When patrolling in a party of thirty people, send fifteen foot soldiers 1 *cho* ahead of a mounted warrior; five of them should carry shooting weapons. On both sides of the mounted warrior, there should be ten foot soldiers with bows, rifles, rakes, and thief-capturing rakes, and some should be empty-handed. At the rear, and at a distance of 1 *cho*, five foot soldiers should follow empty-handed.<sup>1</sup>

If you are in an urgent situation or in a camp that is close to the enemy lines, it is highly recommended that the team with the mounted warriors, as mentioned above, should patrol the outside of the fence. Along the inside of the fence, twenty foot soldiers should patrol in two groups. Also, you should have five or six people follow two to three *cho* behind the night patrol on foot, carrying shooting or long-reach, handheld weapons with them. Their job is to listen for any sounds.

If you do this main night patrol five times a night, the listening scouts should go on patrol seven or eight times. It is essential to pay special attention behind buildings or similar places.

### CARRY DRUMS, BELLS, AND CONCH HORNS WHEN NIGHT PATROLLING

The most important thing to remember on night patrol is that you should not think

much on your own honor. You should just assume that what you are supposed to do is night scouting. This is so that if anything suspicious occurs, all you will do at that time is to inform your allies as soon as possible. However, if you are not far from your allies, you should not leave the situation without due consideration. To prevent such a case, you should give even the lowest man your password or identifying mark. It should be easy to memorize but changed often, so it will not be leaked to the enemy. If someone does not know yet what the latest password or identifying mark is, consider that person suspicious in most cases. It is quite reasonable to suspect such a person. Thus, you should take any means to capture him alive. If he is on your side, there will be no difficulty in arresting him.

However, you should not bind a samurai with a rope. If he is too resistant and too formidable, leave him, as this is just a precaution to defend against the enemy's shinobi. In the case of a fight between your allies, first separate and capture them. In any case, inquire who their master is and hand them over to the troop commander. In the case of a fire, send four or five foot soldiers to notify others of the fire. Let those with *tobikuchi* and *kumade* [criminal-capturing rakes] stay there, but the leader should go around patrolling for the enemy. If you find the enemy on a secret night attack or hiding behind the wall or fence, you should get your shooting weapons armed or beat a drum or something similar. It is not good to shoot weapons at random before your allies get together, especially if you are only few in number. Once your allies are grouped together, you should fight to the full.

Generally, a night patrol should be assigned two leaders, and each one leads in turn. Once you are attacked at night by the enemy, get your allies together efficiently and according to the prearranged signals. For example, one leader should go in the direction that the enemy comes from and beat a drum, while the other leader takes measures against an attack from behind, and he uses a bell. Prearrange who should go to the bell and who should go to the drum. You need to have prearrangements like this among your allies, so if an emergency takes place, everyone will respond to the call correctly. It could happen that you do this halfheartedly, which may result in the following: people will be scared of being struck; they may be herded together; they may not defend against an attack from behind; they may let the enemy get close to the headquarters and the lord; or they may fight among themselves in the dark hours of the night. In such situations, if you leave the guardhouse, forsake your assigned task, or work mainly with the intention to avoid being attacked, no matter how good your exploits have been, they will be regarded as being done in a flustered manner. However, all the above possibilities and your actions will depend on the standard bearer and the lord, whether they are in danger, and how fierce the enemy is.

## HINTS FOR HOW YOU SEE THE ENEMY'S NIGHT ATTACK

If the enemy on a night attack is giving war cries loudly, trying to make themselves look

as brisk and rough as possible, be aware that there must be an attack from behind. If they retreat without fighting so hard, it is because of their tactics. If you cannot find any markings where they have come, they must intend to escape the opposite way. In any situation, always try to know the enemy's intention by placing yourselves in their position. You should not pursue them sluggishly.

## HINTS FOR STAYING AT QUARTERS WHILE TRAVELING

While traveling, you should place watchmen at every doorway of an inn, and consider the residence in just the same way as when you are in a camp. Around the bedchamber of the lord, vigils should be on guard. A man should walk around the house clapping with a pair of clappers; also, have scouts on night patrol to listen for any strange sounds. Everyone, even the lowest person, should wait as if in a military camp, with their weapons or armor readily available. Pay attention to every inch of the building. Try to find out very carefully if something is suspicious, especially within the drawing room, and never trust the host of the lodging. If you have important baggage, you can set up a paper canopy around it or put it on a legged chessboard. In any case, keep your important luggage in the middle of a room and under guard. Often, luggage is stolen by someone cutting out a lattice from under the floor or from behind a wall, and taking it through the hole. If traveling alone, you should be even more careful.

## THE GEAR TRAVELERS SHOULD CARRY

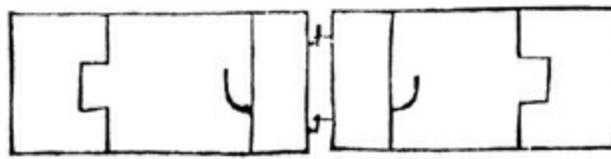
One who is traveling alone or of low rank should carry a hand drill with him. At an old house, for example, every shoji, if it has a latch [or pivot], is usually not secure enough to protect you. In case you are afraid that the owner of the house may open it, put the drill at the end of the door to hold it fast.

You could carry a spear with a short shaft; put it in your bedroom beside your pillow. Tie the cords of your long and short swords together and sleep on the tied strings, with the handles toward the rear.

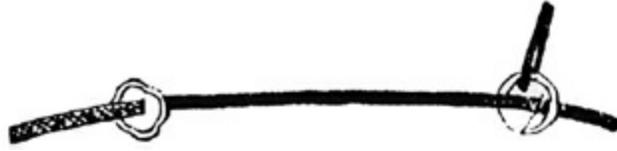
### *Traveling Sword Rack*

It should be made as a folding screen is, and it should be connected with latches. You can also use it as a shield.

Attach handles on the outer edge. The above item should be 1 *shaku*, 5 to 6 *sun* in length on each side; 6 *sun*, 4 to 6 *bu* in width; and of any thickness you like. When you use it as a shield, disconnect the latches and use only one section.



When you are pursuing someone or traveling on a long journey, your long and short swords are not fixed and may slip around. Thus you should use a *hayakoshiate* [waist fastening tool].



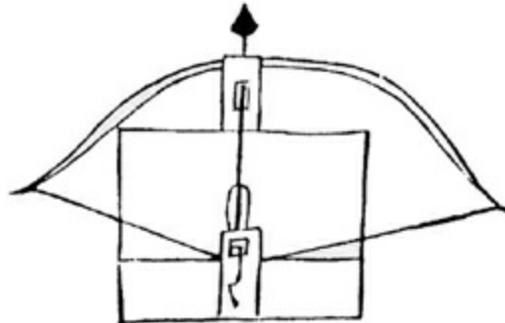
The connecting strap above the circle should be leather to let your sash through it. Make the ring of iron. The size should allow the scabbard to rotate freely.



This should be a tweezerlike grip and be closed with a metal fastening part.

In case there are no secure doors or locks at the lodging, stretch a thread out at waist height or stand up the tatami mats. A thief or intruder will be distracted for a little while by these measures. Another method is an arrow launcher; this is a complex mechanism you make with the aid of a box, as is drawn below. This is called the “bow in your absence.”

The size of the box depends on how big the bow is. Fix bamboo holders to secure the arrow at three places: the post of the bow, the front, and in the middle.



Put a thread on the trigger of the mechanism, and stretch it over a bamboo stick, which is placed above the door. Then stretch the rest of the thread across the doorway at waist height. If someone hits the thread, the arrow will launch.

This is to be orally transmitted.

## HINTS FOR PURSUING

When pursuing someone, it is bad for you to act rashly. If a thief breaks into someone's accommodation, people often fight without proper composure. They do not take in the full scenario, which often results in failure. Particularly when traveling, if you are not fully acquainted with the way out, you should not act hastily. Generally, shinobi prepare countermeasures for when you chase them; keep this in mind.

## THINGS TO BE AWARE OF IN CASE OF FIRE

In case of fire, lightweight clothing is not appropriate. It is difficult to protect against the spread of a fire on the leeward side. Generally, even if you work hard against a raging fire, it is not considered as great an honor as being brave in combat. It can bring disgrace on your head if you act rashly. Furthermore the fire and smoke may be too heavy; thus you may not work very well. This would be shameful for you. You should be careful about this, particularly in the presence of your lord. When you stay at an inn while traveling and a fire takes place, give attention to your luggage. You should be watchful for robbery in case of fire. In wartime you have reason to think the enemy is on attack if a fire is started.

It is desirable to dress in fur and in a *nerikasa* [leather hat]. The tools to use are *tobikuchi* [criminal-capturing rakes] or anything of this nature. When it is very windy, often the fire will leap to houses relatively far away. If it is hard to check the spread of the fire, destroy the houses around there, if possible.

## THINGS TO BE AWARE OF WHEN ATTACKING THOSE WHO ARE HOLED UP

In attacking the besieged, some young warriors can act too rashly and die for nothing. If skilled people are holed up in defense, be very careful. Those who are trapped will have taken every possible measure in defense, such as removing the flooring, cutting off the lattices, scattering caltrops, standing up the tatami mats, and so on. If you try to be the first to get in there and you cannot work very sharply, you will not look competent. Neither is it good to die for nothing. The lord would not like to have his vigorous warriors killed; remember this. In such a case, you should get shinobi in first or take measures to outdo the enemy. However, if a large number are holed up or you hear they have shooting weapons, kill them as soon as possible by attacking and burning the place down, or in similar ways. In wartime, this could cause large-scale confusion throughout the province, due to the possibility of political repercussions. It is not good to be slow in reacting to enemies who are positioned in such a way.

# MEASURES FOR SHINOBI TO TAKE

Shinobi will take various measures. If those on guard are not fully aware of these things, they will make a blunder.

On a rainy night, shinobi may put a *karakasa* [oiled paper umbrella] in front of the doorway to attract the guards' attention. Meanwhile the shinobi will get in there from the back door.

They may take bamboo, or something else, dressed in clothes and put it into the guardhouse door, so they can see how the guards react. Another version is to let a cat or dog go into the doorway, and see how they respond.

For secret scouting, open at least two windows from the outside and from different directions. From one direction, a scout is peeping in, and from the other, a single hand-sized torch should be thrown in as light. Torches are mentioned in the previous volume.

## ***Locking the Back Door***<sup>2</sup>

On a night attack, shinobi may lock the neighboring house with a drill penetrated into the bolt of the gate from outside, so those in there cannot come out.

## ***Going through the Loops***<sup>3</sup>

There are gun or arrow ports in a wall for looking out or shooting. Make the ports wider by burning or cutting them out, so you can get in from there. Or you can slit or cut open the enemy's wall using a saw or something of that nature. This will allow you to infiltrate.

These are just examples told to me by Jibuemon. When you stay at a lodge while traveling, you should have a more watchful eye, and in a guardhouse it is essential to keep quiet in such cases.

# STAYING AT A LODGING WHILE TRAVELING

If you are traveling alone, you should not stay in a room without ceiling boards, or on the ground floor of a two-story house. If you are a large number, stay separately, both on the ground floor and on the second floor. If you are in a situation that needs extra preparation, you should prepare by removing the tatami mats and looking under the floor of the room you stay in. Do not sleep with your head toward the side door. If the owner takes the trouble to come to talk and look around to find out how your stay is, you should not give any extra information. Then find out what his intention is. On a summer night, if the singing insects outside suddenly stop, be aware that someone is there. If there are mice making a noise at night and it suddenly gets quiet, you should find it strange. In any case, as long as you keep your attention on everything, you cannot fail to bring down any shinobi or prowler.

# ABOUT PRISONERS

If you capture prisoners, be sure not to let your guard down. It is often the case that they will remove their neck brace or slip their bonds and escape. Be careful if prisoners are detained in a room without bonds. If it is a small number of captives, keep watch on them with a considerable number. The guards should take rests in turns. If five people are on guard, they should make a prearrangement to take turns in periods of about four or six hours. In case the prisoner is an important and distinguished samurai and you have to take him to another province, do not tie him in bonds with a rope, but use a palanquin or cage. This should be as small as possible, so as not to let him kill himself. If you confine a prisoner in a room, someone who enters the room as an attendant should not carry a weapon. Also, to have an attendant in the room with him is a way to prevent him from committing suicide. You should be aware of that.

# HOW TO BIND PEOPLE

For an important prisoner, you should not bind the neck with a rope. You should kill a samurai immediately rather than capture and bind him with a rope. If you need to capture him alive, bind him with a sash or the cord of a sword. Even if you restrain him by the feet, do not set his hands free.

You should not put a light near a prisoner bound with a neck brace. Neither should you put a blade in reach.

# TORTURING A PRISONER

Do not torture by waterboarding. Waterfall torture, in which you splash water with a gutter from above his head without stopping, would be better.<sup>4</sup> Be sure not to have him facing downward.

Torture by fire is a nonproductive way, as the prisoner will be exhausted too soon. Generally you should be careful not to ruin an important prisoner.

# HOW TO DECAPITATE SOMEONE WHO IS COMMITTING SEPPUKU

The *wakizashi* [short sword] to be given to the person performing seppuku should be dismounted from its hilt. This is a measure to stop him from attacking with it. The blade should be bare in less than 20 percent of its length.<sup>5</sup>

The *kaishakunin* [second] who decapitates the condemned man should face toward the

sun or the moon when cutting off the head, so his shadow cannot be seen by the person committing seppuku.<sup>6</sup> The second usually stands on the left side of the person committing seppuku. However, standing on the right side should be sometimes allowed, according to tradition. In such a case, it should be justifiable to go against these manners. Still, it is essential to be careful not to let the condemned prisoner attack you.

## HINTS FOR THE SECOND

To cut off the head at a lower section is unfavorable. Cutting at a high position is good. Details are important, as this task will be talked about a lot. You should not bring disgrace on your own head by failing to do it properly. You should cut the head off in a perfect and proper way. Traditions say you should cut with the breast of the condemned man and your right knee on level, keeping your eye on his chin. However, it depends on how the head of the condemned man is ready to be cut. You should keep in mind that you should carry out your duty in an unhesitating manner. The person committing seppuku will fall forward when he plunges the short sword and makes his cut; thus, the neck will be extended. Take advantage of this opportunity and strike. However, the sword used by a second should not be very long. If you use a short sword to decapitate the man, you should cut from the front of the neck. However, this depends on the situation at the time.

## GUIDANCE FOR OFFICIAL INSPECTORS

The *kenshi* [inspector] should sit down in front of the condemned man not further than 2 *ken*. He should not let his guard down. There was a case, in one clan, in which the condemned man took the sword of the inspector and wounded lots of people. Also, you should be more careful while doing this job if it takes place at night.

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What is mentioned above about the shinobi is based on the words and the inventions of Hattori Jibuemon Ujinobu and other warriors. This scroll should not be shown to other people but only to a limited number, as it was written for my personal use. Therefore, though there are lots of discrepancies in the text, they have not been examined.

## OTHER SHINOBI-RELATED TEXT FROM THE GUNPO JIYOSHU

### THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN TAKING UP A POSITION

#### From Volume II

Before building a battle camp, you should establish a single night camp [for the entire army] no nearer than 5 or 6 *ri* from the enemy. Before the lord advances, you should send shinobi forward several times.

Before you take up a position, make sure to know the topography and the status of the enemy by having scouts investigate thoroughly.

Those shinobi who have come back from a mission should pass the information they have acquired to those going out on a mission. This is because it is easier to find your way after you know what the land ahead is like. Then they should report their findings to the lord. If any shinobi returns hastily without special effort, ensure that you use good judgment with this in accordance with the situation. Detect if he gives false information about the enemy. If those who are sent later argue with those who are returning and insist on going back out together to infiltrate deeper, remember they should not go, as it is not advantageous for your side. This is because if shinobi are detected, it will not only do harm to them but will also be grave and bad luck for your lord. Therefore, you should keep this in mind all of the time.

In addition, even *shinobi no mono* are part of one troop, which means that if something successful is achieved, then it is not one man's achievement but that of every individual of the group. If it is the case that someone who is very skilled is sent and rewarded for his achievements by the lord, the lord should remember to give even just a small money reward to everyone, including those who went before [the main shinobi].

### HOW TO DEFEAT MANY PEOPLE WITH FEW

#### From Volume II

There are three ways you can defeat a large number with a small number: by measures, by tactics, and by deceit.

#### *Examples of Measures*

In a battle on flat land [take the following measures:] produce smoke to hide a bank or a steep from view, tie flags onto trees, build ample watch fires, lay fuses held in bamboo sticks here and there, bury landmines where the enemy are expected to come, burn fresh pinewood before a battle, infiltrate by taking advantage of a fine misty rain, exhaust

the enemy with a tactical attack followed by a retreat, start to attack at twilight, and so on.

### ***Examples of Tactics***

Giving a horse, hawk, or food to someone on the enemy side; giving the enemy an impression that there is a betrayer by the way you treat them, so they will have doubts among themselves; performing night raids unexpectedly on an unlucky day; showing them a decoy troop to lure their attention while attacking them from behind; sending shinobi to outwit the enemy in various ways; and so on.

### ***Examples of Deceit***

Having a monk or an aristocrat as the middleman, pretending to seek reconciliation by taking down flags or disarming in the middle of mediating, taking advantage of the enemies' gaps and attacking them, forging letters, and so on.

It is essential to keep these three in mind.

## **HOW TO FIGHT BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL FEATURES**

### **From Volume II**

When you confront the enemy across a river, it is essential to send shinobi from the early evening onward, or to have a local person estimate and guide, to identify a good place to cross the river.

## **CONCERNING SHINOBI CAPTAINS**

### **From Volume III**

The tasks of the shinobi are described above; however, there have been many cases since ancient times, and in the present, in which shinobi infiltrate. This results in the destruction of a camp or castle and is discussed later. You should consider this fully and be prepared. This means that those who take on the mantle of captain should know that the first priority is to set fire to a castle. Then find a path to the enemies' water supply, learn of secret communication and guidance, and know the job of *kamari* [ambush troops]. However, no matter how good his men are, if the captain does not have good judgment, his men cannot perform well.

# CONCERNING THE INFILTRATION OF SHINOBI OR THIEVES<sup>1</sup>

## From Volume III

If you find shinobi or others such as them have infiltrated your position, do not chase them in haste. They may have laid *kierimatchi* [waiting ambushes]. You may be lured to where they have arranged caltrops, and you will be killed for nothing. If you become entrapped, you may have to consider an escape, which is a disgrace. Generally speaking, if you are chasing someone or in a fire, if you rush before others and then slow down when it comes to action, it is also a great shame. On the other hand, if you come later than others but advance at the time of need, this is a valiant feat.

In case of a fire, if you remain in a position where you do not have a good footing, such as on top of houses, when the fire builds in ferocity, you will enter into serious danger and die in vain. Having to change position during an episode is also negative, so consider the position you are going to take. If you hear a ruckus in the area and attend the incident late, it looks like you have lowered your guard and are not attentive. Be aware of this. You should have your outfit and manners the same as others, but perform actions greater than those around you.

Part Four

**THE YOSHIMORI HYAKUSHU**

義盛百首

Attributed to Minamoto no Yoshimori year of original unknown

## COMMENTARY

Even though these poems are part of the Gunpo Jiyoshu, they have been given their own chapter.

The Gunpo Jiyoshu is a collection of wartime experiences and lessons written by Ogasawara Saku'un, whereas these poems are attributed to Ise no Saburo Yoshimori (1159–89), a legendary warrior. There are several theories and stories surrounding Yoshimori's life, but there is very little fact. One theory says he came from Iga, the home of the ninja. In the Tale of the Heike (1219–43), he was portrayed as a bandit in the Suzuka Mountains of Ise province. The most popular legend about him tells of how he met and attacked Minamoto no Yoshitsune in the mountains but was defeated by him. Thereafter, Yoshimori became his disciple, one of the four great retainers of Yoshitsune.<sup>1</sup> In the Bansenshukai, Yoshimori is listed as one of seven generals who used the arts of the shinobi, and in the Gunpo, these one hundred ninja poems are attributed to him.

Though the attribution of the poems to Yoshimori is debatable and lacks any documented evidence, it's clear that the poems of the Yoshimori Hyakushu are older than the Gunpo Jiyoshu, which dates to 1612. So in any case, these poems originated somewhere between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries, which means they are the oldest collection of written ninjutsu information in the world.

A short selection of these poems reappeared in the 1676 ninjutsu manuscript the Bansenshukai. There, they are called "The 100 Shinobi-uta Poems," which translates directly as "The One Hundred Ninja Poems." In the Bansenshukai, some of the poems differ from those in the Gunpo Jiyoshu, but only slightly, with the exception of poem number two; see that poem for an explanation.

The poems are waka (also known as tanka), a type of classical Japanese verse consisting of a syllabic pattern of 5-7-5-7-7. Collections of waka poetry constitute an important genre of Japanese literature and have been compiled since ancient times. Because of the form's rhythmic ease, people used it not only for its literary value but also to teach or learn a set of skills, and to pass down through the generations the ways of professions, arts, and other skills and knowledge.

Though in the Gunpo Jiyoshu the poems of the Yoshimori Hyakushu were not numbered, we have numbered them here for ease of reference.

## THE YOSHIMORI HYAKUSHU

~ 1 ~

大雨や大雨のふる時をこそしのびようちのたよりとはすれ

**In heavy rainfall, when the rain is at its most, take advantage of it for your shinobi activities and night attacks.**

The iconic image of the ninja hiding outside during a storm, waiting to infiltrate a camp, is supported here, and the use of natural phenomena such as storms reoccurs throughout the historical ninjutsu methodology.

This verse also appears in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 2 ~

雨風もしきりなる夜は道くらくようちしのびの働きもなし

**In the dead of night, when the wind and rain are raging, the streets are so dark that shinobi cannot deliver a night attack easily.**

An alternate version of this poem appears in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai and states: “In the dead of night, when the wind and rain are raging, the streets are so dark that shinobi *can* deliver a night attack easily.” Obviously, these two versions are at odds with each other. It is possible that both versions are correct. The different perspectives point to the fact that the wind and storm will aid you when cover is needed, but also that the bad weather could work against you, as you may not be able to carry out your work with ease. Of course, it’s possible that this was just a transcription error.

~ 3 ~

いつはりを恥とおもはじしのびには敵出しぬくぞならひなりける

**A shinobi should not be ashamed of falsifying, for it is his duty to outwit the enemy**

This statement may seem surprising for a ninja manual. But it must be remembered that ninja were predominantly lower-level samurai who still lived according to Japanese chivalry. These shinobi samurai had to come to terms with deception.

~ 4 ~

**How could you be ashamed of telling a lie, since you, as a samurai, think that faithfulness to your lord is the most principal issue?**

The warrior class did hold to chivalric ideas, and while it was not possible for all actions to be chivalric, they aimed for such. Therefore, the arts of the shinobi, which are often based on cheating, stealing and lying, would have been abhorrent to some of the warrior class. This poem is trying to quell those doubts, saying that it is acceptable when done for a higher purpose.

This poem is also in the second volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 5 ~

竊盜には時をしるこそ大事なれ敵のつかれとゆだんする時

**For a shinobi, it is essential to know the proper time. It always should be when the enemy is tired or has let their guard down.**

Though the popular ideogram for “shinobi” is 忍, which is a blade above a heart, the two ideograms used for “shinobi” in the Gunpo Jiyoshu are 竊, which means “sneaking or spying,” and 盜 which means “thievery, stealing, or thief.” The Koka ninja Kimura, in his discussion on the future of ninjutsu, states that there is a difference between the two types of ideograms for shinobi, implying that there are two types of shinobi action. (For more about Kimura, see *In Search of the Ninja*, by Antony Cummins.) On the whole, the arts of the shinobi can be divided into two: the arts of “classic spying”; i.e., those who go in into enemy territory openly but in disguise; and those who go covertly, by sneaking and by stealth. While some shinobi may have done both, it is possible that certain ninja were specialized in only one kind of infiltration.

This poem is also found in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 6 ~

ぢんがへの用意のあらば竊盜にはさき立て行あないをみよ

**If you are to move positions, send a shinobi in advance to discover exactly what the topography is.**

The use of shinobi was fundamental for any situation involving enemy movements or ascertaining the situation of the road ahead. The main question that arises from this poem is whether *in-nin* (scouting the land ahead at night and in secret) or *yo-nin*

(disguising oneself and infiltrating in enemy territory) is implied.

~ 7 ~

ちんがへの案内をせば山川やてきのあひだをだい一とせよ

**In order to give proper guidance for your army to move positions, the essential information you must record is the mountains, the rivers, and the distance between you and the enemy.**

Cartography was a primary shinobi skill, and even with the ninja would be a brush and ink set. However, the ninja would not just draw the area—he would observe it from the mind of a tactician. He had to know what the geography meant to the movement of an army, including rivers and their depth, fields and their condition, villages and their inhabitants, and types of mountains, in case they were to become the site for an encampment or a battle.

~ 8 ~

しのびつつ見たつる事を絵図にして軍者にむかひ談合をせよ

**Always draw what you have learned during your covert infiltration, and then report it to the strategist directly, in person.**

It must be emphasized that a shinobi was primarily a scout, spy, and information gatherer. We can see that this advice was to minimize information loss and maximize the knowledge base that the command team held.

~ 9 ~

陣がへはまづ時と日とのならひありしのびの役は所てきあひ

**For moving the camp, there is a set of principles to follow about the time and the day of moving. The duty of a shinobi is to know exactly the geography of the area and the distance to the enemy.**

Understanding the local terrain appears to have been the major responsibility of any shinobi who were placed within an army. It appears that their knowledge of geography was very important to the decision-making process around establishing a camp and moving an army. The reference to time and day is about auspicious and inauspicious times, a practice borrowed from Chinese thought.

~ 10 ~

しのびには城と陣とのならひ有なんじよの方と森と物かげ

**What shinobi should keep in mind when stealing into a castle or camp are the naturally fortified and difficult directions, the woods, and blind spots.**

Most fortifications use the area's natural surrounding geography to maximize their defensive qualities. The language here implies that you should infiltrate a castle or camp from the side that is classed as naturally defended or too difficult to be breached, as that is where there will be fewer guards, and the defense will be its weakest.

~ 11 ~

しのびには身の働きはあらずとも眼のきくを専一とせよ

**Even if a shinobi does not have impressive physical abilities, remember that the most vital thing is to have acute observation.**

Throughout all of the shinobi manuals, the most important factor that a ninja must work toward is to be formidable in his ability to record and memorize information. It is this information and intelligence that is a priority, even now, for warfare. A single man cannot achieve victory, but the information he carries may change the course of a war.

This poem also appears in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 12 ~

夜うちにはしのびの者を先立て敵の案内しりて下知せよ

**For success on a night attack, send shinobi in advance to know the details of the enemy's position before you give your orders.**

The night attack in question is to be carried out by samurai or part of the army. It was a ninja's job not only to plan the route but also to lead the attack. This is supported in the Shoninki by stating that in ancient days a shinobi was known as a *yato* (leader in the night). Also, other manuals show these shinobi samurai in a leading role.

This poem also appears in the fifteenth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 13 ~

軍には窃盗物見をつかはして敵の作法を知りて計らへ

**In war you need to send *shinobi monomi* to get the information about the enemy's tactics before you make your strategy.**

*Monomi* are scouts who were in most cases mounted and who were sent to watch the

enemy from a comparatively distant place, while typical shinobi infiltrated or got very close to the enemy. There were multiple types of *monomi*: *o-monomi*, a mounted group; *ko-monomi*, a medium-sized group; *ko-monomi*, a small group; and *shinobi monomi*, those who scout in stealth.

This poem is also in the fourth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 14 ~

窃盗者に敵をとひつつ下知をせよただあやふきは推量のさた

**Before giving orders, you need to inquire of a *shinobi* [no] *mono* about the enemy.  
It is dangerous if you give orders based on guesswork alone.**

Remembering that this document is for army commanders to read during war, we can see that this could be a reminder to the social elite not to be too hasty or proud. They should use the samurai below them and all their skills and attributes. There is an undercurrent of reluctance to use spies in some manuals, as they are considered dangerous.

This poem can also be found in the fourth and fifteenth volumes of the Bansenshukai.

~ 15 ~

計りごとも敵の心によるぞかししのびを入りて物音をきけ

**Whether a strategy works or not depends on what the enemy intends to do. Thus,  
you should send a shinobi across the enemy line to pick up any sounds.**

The Shoninki and Shinobi Hiden go into vast detail about the methods of entering an enemy's camp and infiltrating the enemy ranks as "one of their own." Thus this simple statement carries a distinct amount of required ability behind it, opening up a whole chapter into the methods of the ninja. By "sounds," the poem means any form of sound, from horses to conversation.

This poem is also found in the fourth and fifteenth volumes of the Bansenshukai.

~ 16 ~

心がけふかくありぬるもののふはしのびにひかれ道筋をしれ

**A *mononofu* who has an honorable ambition should know the path to take, with  
the help of a shinobi as a guide.**

Normally used for poetry because of its syllable content, *mononofu* is an alternate reading for *bushi*, or samurai, and holds the same connotations. It is presumed here that this is a group or a lone samurai planning a single attack. The shinobi scrolls of the Gunpo Jiyoshu also mention that it would be a great dishonor for any ninja to allow the samurai they are guiding to fall into enemy hands.

This poem also appears in the fourth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 17 ~

しのびにはゆく事よりも退口を大事にするぞ習ひなりける

**It is a fundamental lesson for shinobi to think more of the way out than the way in.**

On one hand, ninja manuals repeatedly state that a ninja should preserve his life at all costs and secure his escape route at all times. At other times, however, the manuals say that a shinobi should be prepared to throw his life away without any second thought. The most plausible reason for this contradiction is the differing levels of shinobi. We know through the Shoninki that there were five basic types of ninja (called *gokan*). It would appear that a fully trained and professional ninja was a commodity to keep alive, but a low-level operative, trained from the ranks, was of disposable value. In any case, this issue doesn't directly apply to this poem, which applies to a ninja's need to secure a firm exit strategy from whatever situation he is about to put himself in.

~ 18 ~

ただ人をつれてしのびにゆく時はまづ退口をしるしおしへよ

**When you steal in with an ordinary person, the first thing you should do is mark and show him the way out and how to escape.**

It is unknown here if the author is referring to a samurai that he may be leading, a trainee ninja, a civilian, or any one of the above, depending on the situation. However, the Bansenshukai shows us that inexperienced people were sometimes used, depending on the quality of men available. When a ninja took someone on a mission with him, it was considered important that the person came back.

This poem also appears in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 19 ~

しのびにはならひの道はおほけれとまづ第一は敵にちかづけ

**Though there are many principles a shinobi should learn, the first thing is how to get close to the enemy.**

We can see this as a warning for the ninja on an *in-nin* (covert night mission). On the other hand, this can equally aid the element of infiltration while on a *yo-nin* (incognito daytime mission), as the primary mission of a ninja is to interact or be close to the enemy.

~ 20 ~

我陣に夜うちしのびの入事は与黨の人の科とこそきけ

**If your camp is the subject of a night attack or infiltration by an enemy's shinobi, you should judge that it is the fault of your own men.**

Remembering that one of the principal jobs of a shinobi group hired as retainers by a warlord was camp defense, we can see that any successful infiltration attempt by the enemy would reflect on the skills of those shinobi and the samurai left to guard the perimeter.

~ 21 ~

しのびには道具さまざま多ともまづ食物はこしをはなすな

**No matter how many tools you carry as a shinobi, remember, above all things, that you should always have your food on your waist.**

The word “shinobi” here is probably used as a verb and means to “steal in” or to do covert activities. It is known that a ninja would carry high-energy food parcels, but this poem gives a modern audience a look at how the ninja carried this equipment. We can guess that the shinobi would carry equipment upon his belt or have it strapped to his waist before and during a mission by using a *tenugui* (special type of cloth).

~ 22 ~

火と水ははなさぬものぞしのびには野山にねるを役とおもひて

**Keep water and fire with you at all times, as sleeping outdoors is an inseparable part of a shinobi's life.**

As a shinobi, living in the wild was a way of life, and wilderness living was an important part of ninja training and shinobi missions. It was of paramount importance for a ninja to always have fire and water at his disposal.

~ 23 ~

**Japanese ink and a brush are useful for every purpose. You should not go on a shinobi activity without a *yatate*.**

A *yatate* is a portable case consisting of writing materials and a cylinder used for brush storage. This gives us a good image of the shinobi on his mission, recording aspects day by day. Also, it reinforces Natori's warning that a ninja should be careful about the tools he carries. Anything out of context can give away your position, and your life may be forfeit.

This poem also appears in the ninth volume of the *Bansenshukai*.

~ 24 ~

城中や陣所をしると早くただ立ち帰るこそ巧者なりけり

**Once you get the details and layout of the castle or the camp, all you need to do is get back with it as soon as possible, as that is what a good shinobi should do.**

The shinobi scrolls of the *Gunpo Jiyoshu* provide a great amount of detail about how to defend and construct defenses, and the *Shoninki* manual goes into detail about infiltrating an enemy camp. This poem reinforces that simple intelligence about an enemy fortification is decisive in destroying the enemy, and it was even the task of a ninja to travel the country in times of peace to acquire drawings of others' castles.

~ 25 ~

敵にもし見付けられなば足ばやににげてかえるぞ盗人のかち

**If detected by the enemy, a *nusubito* can still outdo the enemy by taking quick flight.**

*Nusubito* means “thief” and can be understood here as a type of shinobi. In the *Shoninki*, Natori Masatake shows a massive dislike for the *nusubito* and mentions them as part of the shinobi matrix. However, he establishes that they are not to be respected as full-fledged ninja, even though their skills are of a high level.

~ 26 ~

しのびえては敵かたよりもどうしうちの用心するぞ大事なりける

**After you have slipped into the enemy's area successfully, give more attention to not accidentally fighting yourselves than to the enemy.**

The factor of mistaking your own shinobi or men for the enemy is always a key feature when historical manuals talk about night missions or attacks. It appears that passwords or forms of identification were used to discover who was who. In the Bansenshukai, Fujibayashi discusses the fact that some ninja are killed on the way out of an enemy camp by their own men.

This poem also appears in both the fifth and twelfth volumes of the Bansenshukai.

~ 27 ~

ようちには敵の付入る事ぞ有味方のさほふ兼ねて定めよ

**During a night attack, you may have the enemy follow you and get into the ranks of your allies. To prevent this, have a prearranged policy—a way to identify your allies.**

Remembering poem number 20, it appears that shinobi would need passwords not only when infiltrating an enemy camp but also when on guard in their own forts. This would have been to identify whether any shinobi had infiltrated your ranks during the confusion of a night attack.

This poem also appears in the seventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 28 ~

どうしうちも味方の下知によるぞかし武者のしるしをかねて定よ

**Fighting among yourselves can always happen, depending on what instructions you are given. You should always decide on an identifying mark for your warriors beforehand.**

This is another version of the last two poems; thus, it must have been extremely important to the ninja to create passwords and signs as a measure of security. The Shoninki also talks about such signs, with examples such as written identification marks or the process of sitting or standing when passwords were given mentioned, for added security.

This poem also appears in both the fifth and twelfth volumes of the Bansenshukai.

~ 29 ~

さまをかへ姿をかへていろいろに敵をなぶるは盗人の役

**A part of what *nusubito* do is to harass and confuse the enemy by disguising themselves or changing their appearance in various ways.**

Remembering that in the context of this manual, *nusubito* is a form of ninja, we can see that this is an example of the external form of *shinobi no jutsu* (arts of the shinobi), in which a ninja would be in plain sight but incognito and undetected. This way, the enemy would never know who or where the ninja spy is. That is a weapon in itself, as these *nusubito* would spread discord between the enemy and take information back to their allies.

~ 30 ~

道すちに目付をせんと心がけよ我家わすれてふかくぼしすな

**Always try to make a mental note of the way you have come, so that you will know how to get back; if not, you may blunder.**

As modern people living in a modern age, it is difficult to understand just how confusing and dark the medieval world was. In a place where helicopter mountain rescue did not exist and no government agency would search for you if you went missing, knowing your way back was vital. The ninja used tied grass and various kinds of markers to aid them in their return journey.

This poem also appears in the twelfth volume of the *Bansenshukai*.

~ 31 ~

うちよりもあふ事あらば森はやしすこしのかげにまづかがむべし

**If you need to hide, forests or groves are better than grassy places. The first thing to do is crouch behind even the smallest of shelters.**

Taking refuge in forests is also mentioned by Natori in his ninja manual the *Shoninki*, and here we see the shinobi as a commando in the wild, using camouflage and the natural surroundings to outwit his pursuers.

~ 32 ~

しのびにも又夜うちにも行道をかへるは大事ゆきぬけはよし

**On a shinobi activity or night attack, it can be difficult to go back the way you have come. However, it can be easier if you make your way through and out the other side.**

This is a basic but oft-ignored principle. For many, the instinct is to retreat the way you

came, as a safety measure; since we know that path, it is deemed safe. However, sometimes we are closer to a safe exit on the other side of a situation.

~ 33 ~

しのびとて道にそむきしぬすみせば神や仏のいかでまほらん

**If a shinobi steals for his own interest, which is against common morals, how can the gods or Buddha protect him?**

Because it is difficult to draw a clear line between shinobi and thieves, a warning is needed to give shinobi morals and encourage them not to steal for their own benefit. It is easy for shinobi to steal, thus we presume there was an attempt at a moral coding. Because of this and other documentation, we can see that theft was a major issue in samurai life.

This poem is also found in the second volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 34 ~

得たるとぞおもひきりつつしのびなば  
まことはなくとかちはあるべし

**Make yourself resolute with the idea that you will win whenever you go on a shinobi mission, and you can succeed, even if it is not realistic.**

This is a reoccurring theme in Japanese martial thought. Samurai ethics often talk of the “way of life and death” and to never hesitate when there is a choice of life or death. This premise is also supported in the Shoninki, and we can conclude that all references to this way of thinking indicate that as a warrior you should go forth with pride, confidence, and direction. This attitude will lead to success, and the opposite approach will result in failure.

This poem is also in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 35 ~

しのびにもほそりをするな武士のまことのなさは一類のひけ

**You should not steal as a shinobi; if a *mononofu* is insincere, it would be a dishonor to his clan.**

Remembering that *mononofu* is an alternative word for the samurai, we can glimpse here the problematic nature of teaching ninjutsu to some proud samurai. It would

appear that possibly, the ethics of the samurai class were in conflict with the essence of the arts of the shinobi. Some samurai may not have accepted this with ease.

~ 36 ~

おどろかす敵のしかたにさわぎなぼしのぶ心のあらはれぞする

**If you are upset by the feints the enemy makes at you, your secret intentions will be revealed.**

Natori Masatake, in his third scroll of the Shoninki, goes into great detail about the psychology of conversation and the art of not allowing external events to faze you. It seems that a ninja must give nothing away, have an iron will, and maintain an unshakeable constitution.

This poem is also found in the ninth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 37 ~

大勢の敵のさわぎはしのびよししづまるかたにかくれがもなし

**You can find a way to creep in where a many of the enemy are making noises.  
Where they are quiet, you may find no place to hide.**

Whether entering enemy territory through the stealth of an *in-nin* (covert night mission) or through a *yo-nin* (incognito day mission), this is a fundamental lesson. When a camp is at ease or in a scarcely populated area, a shinobi's actions will be more noticeable. However, if there is a distraction, a ninja can use this misdirection to gain entry.

This poem is also found in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 38 ~

しのびには三ツのならいのあるぞかし論とふてきと扱は智略と

**A shinobi should have three major principles: skillful speech, boldness, and strategy.**

This is not a reference to the Asian trinity of Heaven, Earth, and Man but is a simple and straightforward instruction on the three building blocks that a ninja should have.

This poem is also found in the ninth volume of the Bansenshukai.

もののふのつねにしんじんいたすべし  
てんにそむかばいかでまぼらん

**A *mononofu* should always be religious. How could he be protected if he is against Heaven?**

Again we see a strict moral code being given to the warrior class. A ninja is an expert in guerrilla warfare and holds the power to do much harm. Without a moral foundation, anyone with power of any form will abuse it.

This poem appears in the second volume of the Bansenshukai.

しのびにも行事あらば祈念してしよぐわんじょうじゅの上に出べし

**When you go out on a shinobi mission, you should depart after praying for the fulfillment of your wishes.**

People of the time had true faith in the divine; the shinobi were no different and would pray for guidance and protection in their missions.

しのびゆく道や門出にけのあらば時日かへつつあらためて行け

**If there is an unlucky aspect to the direction or date of your mission, you should back out and choose another day or time for departure.**

Auspicious and inauspicious associations were given to a variety of days, directions, and omens. By the time Fujibayashi was writing the Bansenshukai, this belief system had started to dwindle.

門出にすわりし食にもみあらば夜討しのびの吉事なりけり

**If you find a *momi* in your departing meal, it is a sign of luck for your upcoming secret night attack.**

A *momi* is a grain of rice still in its husk. Here we are presented with a great view of the culture of the ninja and a window into their daily lives. This poem makes us wonder whether *momi* were sometimes placed in bowls intentionally before a departure, or

whether such a “false” *momiji* placement would actually be deemed as unlucky. It is this kind of information that truly excites our imaginations about the life of the shinobi.

~ 43 ~

門出の膳なる汁にかけなくばそのよのしのび大事なりけり

**If you can see no lucky sign in your bowl of soup during your departing meal, the shinobi activity of that night will be seriously difficult.**

It cannot be determined here what type of sign in a bowl of soup would be considered lucky. The soup of medieval Japan was typically a miso soup.

~ 44 ~

かど出にからすの声のきこゆるは  
はんなるぞよきちやうはつつしめ

**When you leave home, if you hear a crow call an odd number of calls, it is lucky. Thus, an even number suggests that you should be careful.**

There appears to be no modern superstition in Japan that is concerned with the call of the crows or the number in which they appear. But we can see that such a call was taken seriously enough to warrant that extra care or regarding a ninja mission.

~ 45 ~

しのび行く方角あしき時ならばまづよき方に門出をせよ

**If the direction you are traveling in during a shinobi activity is unlucky, you should start your departure in a lucky direction at first.**

The direction mentioned here is a changing direction that is based on a Chinese system of divination and superstition. Thus, each day, a ninja may have had to work out which direction was a lucky direction for that day, and if that day was the start of a mission, he would have to set off on the correct path. For more information, see [this page](#)–[this page](#) and [Appendix B](#).

~ 46 ~

行さきをねずみの横にゆく事は  
ねこ(猫)いたち(鼬)よりふかくつつしめ

**You should be careful not to get close to mice, more careful than with cats or weasels.**

The issue here points to the elements involved in infiltrating a house or castle. Mice, cats, or weasels may cry out if you become a threat. We can understand that when a shinobi was searching for a way through or under a house, he must consider more than the expected and think of the local wildlife as well.

~ 47 ~

いきもののしのびにむかいつつ  
は(這)はばまづ行く事のしんしゃくをせよ

**If a creature is crawling toward a shinobi, the shinobi should consider what is going to happen and be careful about the mission at hand.**

Shinobi had to have an acute sense of nature; the disturbance of birds, herds, or other animals could prove to be a giveaway to their position. We know that a large part of shinobi training consisted of animal handling and understanding animals and their actions.

~ 48 ~

しのびゆく道にけだものふす事は仕合のよきずいさうとしれ

**If an animal is hiding out of the way of a shinobi, you should be aware that it is a sign of luck for the mission ahead.**

This poem is one of the more difficult ones to translate; it could mean an animal lying down or an animal in hiding.

~ 49 ~

しのびには星なき方にゆかぬなり曇る夜ならば雲光るかた

**For a covert shinobi activity, you should not go in the direction where there are no stars. If it is a cloudy night, you should also not go in the direction where the clouds are shining.**

From a pragmatic angle, you should not go to an area where there are no stars, as this will lead you into true blackness. However, it is possible that this instruction is of a more esoteric nature, as a replica of this statement is found in a section of the Gunpo Jiyoshu that primarily deals with magic. Therefore, it is not clear what the exact reasons are for avoiding these two situations. In addition, being able to see the stars is fundamental for telling the time or observing the passage of the night.

~ 50 ~

いなづまの跡光るこそ吉事なれさきに光るをふかくつつしめ

**If lightning is behind [or after] , it is auspicious; if it is ahead [or before] , be careful.**

This is a rather ambiguous poem. It's not clear whether it is referring to space (behind/ahead) or time (after/before). However, as the other poems tend to refer to spatial properties, it seems likely that the same would be the case here. Therefore, a probable interpretation would be something like "A ninja should not to head toward storms but away from them."

~ 51 ~

月の夜は白出立ぞ目にたたねやみにしのぼくろきものきよ

**On a moonlit night, being dressed in white is unobtrusive, but on a moonless night you should be dressed in black.**

On a moonless night, black clothes would have helped a shinobi agent infiltrate with ease. But since moonlight emits a white highlight upon all that it touches, dark garments on a moonlit night would be ineffective. White garments, however, might parallel these highlights and help the ninja blend in with the surrounding areas.

~ 52 ~

日月にむかひし時はかげもなしうしろひかりはかげぞあらはる

**When heading toward the sun or the moon, you have no visible shadows ahead, but if you have the light from behind, your shadow will project forward.**

What seems to be a basic tip for the child's game of hide and seek was more than likely a fundamental lesson for entering into ninjutsu training, and it was probably a very serious lesson. Fujibayashi, the author of the Bansenshukai, also discusses the use of shadows.

~ 53 ~

雪ふりにしのびにゆきし事あらばまづ足あとの用心をせよ

**If you have to steal in as a shinobi when it is snowing, the first thing you must be careful about is your footsteps.**

Once you have made your mark in fresh snow, it is difficult to cover. But it's not clear what exactly is meant in this poem. It could mean make footprints only where other people will not see them as suspicious, or tread only where others will not see your footprints.

目つけもの又はしのびにゆく時は書置をせよ後の名のため

**Before you carry out surveillance or a covert shinobi activity, you should leave a note for your future reputation.**

This poem is also found in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai. In the Bansenshukai version of this poem, the ending (“for your future reputation”) reads differently, as *のちの世のため*, which could be interpreted as “for the benefit of the allies in future.” The original is considered to mean something like “leaving proof of your exploits,” but the implication of the Bansenshukai version is “to aid your mission’s deception.”

もののふはあやぶみなきぞよかるべし  
まへうたがひはをくびやうのわざ

**A *mononofu* should have no anxiety or hesitation. Doubts beforehand come from your own cowardice.**

This poem appears in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai, in which the wording is changed; the word *mononofu* is changed to “shinobi.” We have to understand that the Bansenshukai was written to promote the art of ninjutsu during an era of peace.

もののふはただ物ごとのおくれなく手軽出立いさざよきかな

**A *mononofu* should have the good grace to depart [on a mission] without delay or hesitation and in a brisk fashion.**

It is in extracts such as this that we may see the human side of the image of the samurai and ninja. Fear is a human constant, and these small windows show us that even the hardened warriors of Japan had to find courage.

This poem is also found in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

とが人の跡をしたひてめつけせば姿をかへて人にしられな

**When you follow a target that is under surveillance, you should change your appearance so as not to let anyone know of your activities.**

The word とが人 has been translated as “target” here; however, it usually means “criminal.” In a feudal society a “criminal” could be anyone the authorities deemed to be a threat. Since that connotation would be incorrect here, the word “target” has been used.

~ 58 ~

人をしり我をしらぬしわざこそしのびのものの巧者とはいへ

**The way a good *shinobi no mono* works is to know about people, but he will not let them know about him.**

Knowing how to be inconspicuous was fundamental to the shinobi way of life. The Shoninki states that a ninja must look like the most stupid man but be the cleverest underneath this visage, and the Shinobi Hiden speaks of constant adaptation.

~ 59 ~

とが人のつくるをしるとおもひなぼ道をかへつつ出合ひにせよ

**If you think the target realizes that you are following him, you should take another route, so you can cross paths somewhere later on.**

A simple set of advice shows the modern audience one of the ninja’s key roles in society: capturing a target. Like in poem no. 57, we’ve used the word “target,” even though the most literal translation would be “criminal.” In medieval Japan, anyone the lord wanted captured was considered a “criminal,” whether or not he or she had actually committed any crime. It was a time in which there was one final authority at the top, and the concept of “innocent until proven guilty” did not exist.

~ 60 ~

一人をふたりのしのびつけ行ば敵をはさみてあとさきに居よ

**When two shinobi people follow one person, you should bookend the enemy at the front and the rear.**

In what seems like a police surveillance maneuver, a subject is blocked in from two sides. What is not clear is for what reason the target should be bookended, and whether this is a skill to be used for apprehending or surveilling the target.

~ 61 ~

しのびにも又は目つけの時もただよるを大事と心がけせよ

**It does not matter if you are stealing in or engaged in surveillance, the first thing**

**you should keep in mind is how to get close to the enemy.**

It is interesting to realize that the ninja differentiated between the word *shinobi* as a verb meaning to “steal in” and the word *metsuke* for “surveillance.” This reinforces the notion that the classic and original understanding of the realm of the shinobi was in fact the stealthy infiltrator and one who observes.

~ 62 ~

長途は大勢つれてめつけせよかはりがはりにやすまんがため

**You should take turns keeping watch during long-distance travel when in a large group, so you can take turns resting.**

The word used here is *metsuke*, which has been used for various meanings, such as scouting, tailing someone, surveillance, observing, and so on.

~ 63 ~

しのびにも夜づめ番衆もくたびればふかくをとらん始めなりけり

**On a shinobi activity or while on night watch, your tiredness could be the cause of a serious blunder.**

The main difference between the shinobi scrolls of the Gunpo Jiyoshu and the Shoninki is that the former deals more with the shinobi activities during the warring period, and the Shoninki deals with the elements needed for a peacetime. This poem is a firm example of this, as throughout the Gunpo Jiyoshu and the Bansenshukai, it is shown that the ninja were constantly on guard duty but were more than simple guards.

~ 64 ~

つかれよりゆだんおこれる物なればかはりがはりに夜詰ぼんせよ

**As your guard is down when you are tired, you should take turns when keeping a night watch.**

It appears that the shinobi and others would guard in numbers of ten. This comes from an extract of the shinobi scrolls of the Gunpo Jiyoshu and from references dealing with shinobi in the guardhouse. If nothing else, this poem gives us a magnificent image of the situation that existed in the guardhouses of castles in Japan.

~ 65 ~

番所にていましむべきは高咄酒もりうたひ拍女ばくえき

**In a guardhouse, it is warned that you should not talk in loud voices, drink booze, sing, have prostitutes, or gamble.**

The image of the stoic samurai is always with us. However, one has to remember that there were various levels within the warrior class, and most of what we know of their behavior comes from modern media. Here we see a more human side of the samurai and get a glimpse of their vices. We find the ideogram 女 (woman) in this poem, though in context, it indicates “prostitute.”

~ 66 ~

さわがしき事ありとても番所をば立のかざりし物とこそきけ

**Even if there is a din outside, be aware that the guardhouse should not be left completely empty. Also, you should listen for any sounds.**

It is a shinobi trick to create a sound and have the guards leave the guardhouse, or at least test their ability by challenging their reactions. By providing the stimuli and observing their reactions, the shinobi could determine how well trained the guards were, and whether the guards were also shinobi.

This poem is also found in the seventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 67 ~

夜まはりや大事の番をする時はしづまりみつ物をとをきけ

**When you are on night patrol or have to stand guard in an emergency, you should keep quiet, so you can hear any sounds.**

From this poem we can see how the attacking shinobi could establish whether other shinobi or experienced guards were on watch. This is the classic cat-and-mouse game of testing the guards and guarding against the attacker.

This poem is also found in the seventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 68 ~

夜廻のとほる跡よりまはすをばかまりつけとぞいふならひける

**You should conduct a thorough search, following behind the party of a night patrol. This is called *kamaritsuke*.**

*Kamari* is a form of ambush troop; however, the ideogram used is different here. There

are two or more ideograms used for *kamari*, such as 蟠 and 奸, but here, it is used in hiragana, which is a phonetic representation of the sound, without meaning. *Tsuke* means “detection” in this context. The impression is that a full and proper search is conducted, looking to all things and going beyond that of a normal guard and his duties in searching for enemy shinobi.

This skillset is clearly defined in the *Bansenshukai*, and this poem can also be found in that manual’s seventh volume.

~ 69 ~

夜廻のとほる跡こそ大事なれかまりつけをばいくたりもせよ

**After the night patrol is conducted, it is important to conduct *kamaritsuke* over and over again.**

One can see how important it was for shinobi to conduct this form of detection. The shinobi themselves would have understood that any slack in this regard would result in an opening for enemy ninja.

This poem is also found in the seventh volume of the *Bansenshukai*.

~ 70 ~

かまりつけはだんだんに行廻こそ敵のしのびを見つくと聞く

**When undertaking *kamaritsuke*, it is said that you should make the search very carefully to enable you to find the enemy’s shinobi agents.**

Within the context of other shinobi manuals, it seems that the skill of detecting *kamari* (ambush troops) was not just a physical search. It could mean that it included “searching” the actions of the people within your compound or camp, looking for even the smallest detail that seems out of place. However, in the main, this skill appears to be done around the perimeter of a castle or fortification.

This poem appears in the seventh volume of the *Bansenshukai*.

~ 71 ~

敵かたの馬のいななきしきりならば夜うちの用意するとしるべし

**If the horses of the enemy are neighing frequently, be aware that they are preparing for night attack.**

This poem is from the point of view that two enemy camps are situated near each other in preparation for battle, or that a shinobi is within hearing distance of the enemy camp. Also note that an alternative trick is to falsely prepare horses for a night attack to give enemy shinobi the impression of a coming battle, which they would report, thereby confusing the enemy.

~ 72 ~

森林ねとりさわぎて立つならば敵のあるぞと用心をせよ

**If the sleeping birds in the woods suddenly flush at once, making noise, be careful, as the enemy might be out there.**

The rush of birds leaving a tree often indicated the approach of the enemy. However, the difficulty here would have been in identifying whether the disturbance was truly caused by the enemy or by something else, such as an animal.

~ 73 ~

夜まわりの心がけには物音や敵のさわぎと火事と油断と

**On night patrol, you should be careful about external noises, a commotion among the enemy, a fire in your camp, and your inattention to the surroundings.**

A good shinobi guard is a quiet guard who listens to the situation around him and understands the mind of the enemy ninja. This poem provides instructions to keep vigilant and to be the type of guard that dissuades other shinobi from approaching.

This poem is also found in the seventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 74 ~

よまわりにふしんのものを見付なば  
ちりやくをまはしいけどりにせよ

**If you find a suspicious individual while you are on night patrol, you should capture him alive by calling on all your resources.**

More than anything, this highlights the experience of living in a feudal system in which the freedom of the individual is at the whim of a superior. It shows us the reality of the judicial system in ancient Japan and in times of war.

This poem is also found in the seventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

夜まわりにうち捨つるは大事なればやまり過て味方うちすな

**On night patrol it is inadvisable for you to cut someone down immediately. You should not be too rash; this is to avoid the risk of killing your comrades.**

The important issue when confronting someone is to capture him alive. This could involve engaging the person in conversation and asking him to come into custody—because if he is a true ally, he will submit himself for verification. Attacking anyone who comes along would be putting your life at risk and would possibly lead to inadvertently attacking your own shinobi.

なりがたきしのびをしたる手柄にはしるしをとりて帰るべきなり

**If you have achieved success in an almost-impossible shinobi mission, you should come back with evidence.**

The concept of evidence retrieval occurs a few times within the shinobi manuals. It appears that generals did not always trust their hired shinobi. There was suspicion that they would not do the job they were hired to do and would instead just return with a false but likely report, or that they would turn out to be double agents. An army commander would need some form of proof that the shinobi had been where he said he had been and had achieved the feats he claimed to have achieved.

武士はただいつも丸ねをこのむべし  
身をくつろぎてゆだんばしすな

**A *mononofu* should always be ready to leave and should never despise sleeping in his clothes. Do not relax your dress much, and never let your guard down.**

This is a reminder to those who take on the task of the shinobi to be ever ready for a mission, to be prepared as a warrior, and to never let their guard down. Some samurai literature also states that a good samurai should not spend too much time sleeping and being at ease.

何事もこころひとつにきはまれりをのがこころにこゝろゆるすな

**Every single thing is decided by your own mind and by the way that you think. Never let your guard down or fail to keep an eye on the state of your mind.**

A third of the Shoninki is dedicated to the subject of psychology and other topics relevant to the mind. It goes on in depth about how a ninja must be ready to face all the pressures of a spy's life; how he must be able to undergo intense stress and still have a clear mind and a level-headed understanding of the world.

~ 79 ~

まのまへに敵のあるぞと心得ばゆだんの道はなからまじきを

**If you always assume that you are facing the enemy, you will never drop your guard in any way.**

This is a basic and blunt message: complacency and soft-heartedness cannot coincide with a warrior's life. If a ninja is always ready in the mind and always at the edge of his ability, there will not be much that will escape him.

~ 80 ~

あかつきは人のねふりもさめやすししのびにゆかば心得をせよ

**Before dawn, people wake with ease; be fully aware of this when you steal in.**

There are detailed accounts of the times that a shinobi should steal into a house, in accordance with the average sleep pattern of humans. The statement above concurs with other shinobi lore.

~ 81 ~

敵中に女のふしてある時は火の立てやうに大事こそあれ

**When there are any women in the enemy camp, there will be something unusual with how fire is kept.**

Dr. Nakashima, considered to be Japan's Shoninki expert, theorizes that this poem signifies that when prostitutes or other women visited the camp, there would be a difference fire setup—either larger communal fires, or smaller solitary fires, where couples would be talking. He also believes that the poem is a warning to the shinobi that couples may be fornicating in the dark recesses of the camp, and that shinobi, through observing the difference in the fire, should be aware of this.

~ 82 ~

四季の火はならひの道のある物をしらで立るはあやうかりけり

**To form fire, you should learn the way in accordance with the four seasons. It is inadvisable to make fire without this knowledge.**

We know that a shinobi will use fire in the following three ways: for warmth while traveling; as a guard fire (used for light and warmth while standing guard outside of a castle); or for arson. In Chinese war manuals and military classics, arson must be done in accordance with a knowledge of the seasons. In some geographical areas, certain and permanent winds blow, and at times, grass and combustibles are dryer than at others. Therefore, a ninja must know these things in order to use fire against the enemy.

~ 83 ~

敵の城敵の陣所に火をつけば味方に時のやくそくをせよ

**If you are going to set fire to the enemy's castle or camp, you need to prearrange the ignition time with your allies.**

The measurement of time was done in various ways and normally through observing the stars. Sometimes castle towns would have bells to mark the time, or a shinobi team would have to track the moonrise and moonset. It is also the case that ninja need to know the direction of attack and the signals to be used when setting fires, depending on the situation. An elaborate system is described in the Bansenshukai.

~ 84 ~

城や陣に火付け入れんとおもひなば味方近付く時をまつべし

**If you intend to set fire to the castle or camp, you should wait for your allies to come close.**

This is to make sure that the ninja do not set fire to the camp or castle before their army or forward-attacking force has arrived. In those times, troops could be miles apart and weren't always moving in one solid group.

~ 85 ~

城や陣に火をつけぬべき時はただあかつき方の風を待つべし

**When you intend to set fire to the castle or camp, you should wait for the wind just before dawn.**

There are a number of theories as to why it's recommended to do this just before dawn. One is that dawn is when most people are beginning to rise and are not fully prepared for an attack. It's also when guards, in the apparent safety of the coming daylight, might be less vigilant.

~ 86 ~

敵城のしのぶしるしをとるならばまぎれぬものを肝要とせよ

**If you take evidence of your entry into the enemy's castle, it should be an object that would cast no doubt [over whether you entered the castle].**

As discussed before, evidence of a mission's objective being complete appears to have been an issue with those who hired shinobi.

This poem is also found in the twelfth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 87 ~

敵かたの旗馬じるしとりくるは味方のためにあしきとぞ聞く

**Getting the enemy's *hata* or *umajirushi* and bringing it back with you is said to be bad for your allies.**

*Hata*, also called *hatajirushi*, are war banners that were used to identify the daimyo lords and the important warriors on the battlefields in medieval Japan. *Umajirushi* were used in the same way and were three-dimensional banners, used in silhouette. The third shinobi scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu states, "It is said to be unlucky to bring an enemy's flag back to the camp." It is unknown if this is for pragmatic or superstitious reasons.

This poem appears in the twelfth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 88 ~

火をつけて味方近づくものならばときをつくりて声を合せよ

**If your allies advance from the outside in synchronized timing with you on the inside, set your fires and then make battle cries in accordance with each other.**

It was a common tactic to have attacks from the outside driven in unison with an internal fire, all on a prearranged signal. At this point, when the fires were raging, any group that had infiltrated inside the castle would also attack from the inside.

~ 89 ~

敵方の城や陣所に名をかきてしのぶ手柄を人にしらせよ

**You should write your name within the enemy's castle or camp. This is so that people will know you have achieved success in your mission.**

This unusual request appears to have had two purposes: first, to prove your success, and second, to elevate you in the shinobi ranks. This was done before an assault on that camp, so that if your side was successful in overtaking the camp or castle, the lord

would see your name as he entered his newly won fortification.

This poem is also found in the twelfth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 90 ~

我がかたにしのおびの入とおもひなば  
味方をかぞへてせんさくをせよ

**If you suspect the enemy's shinobi might have snuck in on your side, find out by counting the number of your allies.**

In the second shinobi scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu, it states that when a group of raiders is on the move, enemy shinobi can infiltrate the ranks (see [this page](#)–[this page](#)). Or, when an army is entering into a night mission, shinobi sometimes join their ranks during a retreat, even to the number of around seventy.

This poem also appears in the seventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 91 ~

番所などにこつじきひにん来りなばあらくもてなし追かへすべし

**If beggars or outcasts come near the guardhouse, treat them in a rough way and clear them away.**

It is clear that the beggar or outcast is a suspected shinobi on an observation mission. It may have been impossible to arrest all the beggars who hung around the camp; thus, removing them from prominent places was one way to counter shinobi techniques.

This poem can also be found in the sixth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 92 ~

番所にて心のよわき人はただふかくをとらんもとみなるべし

**In the guard station, a weak-minded person can make a blunder, simply through his nature.**

We should keep in mind that someone considered weak-minded in medieval Japan would probably not be considered so by today's standards. After all, the intended audience for this scroll was comprised of men who were used to facing death frequently.

This poem is also found in the sixth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 93 ~

他国よりくる人ならばしんるいも番所に近く寄すべからざる

**You should never allow anyone from outside your province to come close to the guardhouse, even if he or she is a relative.**

Interestingly, the Shoninki talks of how a shinobi spy can use family ties, whether real or fake, as a means of entering enemy territory. In other words, the shinobi might say, at the guarded entry, that he is the cousin of the man in a certain troop, or the nephew of a certain person in a certain part of the city. Thus, we can see that this was an adopted method used across the ninja clans.

This poem is also found in the sixth volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 94 ~

番所にてしきりにねむくなるならばことあるべきと用心をせよ

**If you feel sleepy again and again when in the guard station, you should be careful that something may happen.**

One ninja trick is to test the reactive state of the people in the guardhouses and to understand their level of attention. Thus, if a guard is sleepy and not reacting to these distractions, it could provoke a ninja into taking this window of opportunity. Also, the shinobi were known for their various forms of sleeping medicine, which was a chemical concoction burnt in guard rooms to induce intoxication and entice drowsiness.

~ 95 ~

旅にてはなにに付けてもゆだんすなふかくの事のある物ときく

**While traveling, you should never let your guard down with anything. It is said you are likely to make a blunder if you do.**

The five-hundred-year oral tradition of the Katori Shinto Ryu states that a samurai has to be on the defensive while traveling. Thus, it is true that if a samurai is alert and looking for shinobi, the shinobi should be equally alert.

~ 96 ~

大事なる荷物をもてる旅ならばまづかどせどの道筋をみよ

**If you are traveling and carrying an important object with you, check the route toward and around any gate, and check behind all doors.**

Though it's clear that this is a warning that one should take precautions against possible traps or ambushes around gates and other entryways, what's not clear is whether one should send other shinobi in first, to check the location, or just that one should be particularly cautious in these vulnerable areas.

~ 97 ~

にもつをば座敷の中につみ置て壁あるかたに番をなすべし

**When staying at an inn, you should put your luggage in the center of the room and stay by the wall to watch it.**

The Shoninki and the oral traditions of the Katori Shino Ryu mention hiring local people as spies and low-level operatives. Thus, those on a shinobi mission should be alert when staying at an inn and should take care about who approaches them.

~ 98 ~

たび宿の二かいざしきに気をつけてすがき遣戸に用心をせよ

**Be careful if your stay is in a room on the second floor, and also be careful about latticework or the sliding door.**

Staying in a pre-prepared room is dangerous when shinobi are involved, as the shinobi will be able to ask the innkeeper where you will be staying. Also, entry methods used by the ninja include doors and lattices. Often floors are made from latticework or bamboo, and shinobi can gain access to your belongings via the floor.

~ 99 ~

窃盗にはふたり行くこそ大事なれひとりしのびにうき事はなし

**When going on a shinobi activity, it is important for you to go as a two-man team. Solo shinobi missions have no advantages.**

This statement is in direct opposition to the Shoninki, which states that solo missions are by far superior. The difference can be attributed to the change in the role of the shinobi between the warring period and the era of peace. The Gunpo Jiyoshu shinobi scrolls are the memoirs of a warring samurai, and thus, solo shinobi missions were probably of little effect. However, when in an era of peace, more than one man spying could attract attention. The difference in the time of writing is less than a century, but the roles of the shinobi were vastly different.

This poem appears in the eleventh volume of the Bansenshukai.

~ 100 ~

ふたり行くしのびはひとりさきだちて跡なる人に道をしらせよ

**When you go on a shinobi activity in pairs, one should go ahead to let the other know the way.**

This implies at least three possibilities: one ninja leading another through the mountains; one ninja leading another over a castle or camp wall; or the two ninjas traveling days apart, in disguise, throughout the provinces.

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The above one hundred poems are written here and taken from the document Yoshitsune Kakisute Monogatari, where they are referred to as the Yoshimori poems.

## Appendix A: Units of Measurement Conversion Charts

### LENGTH

Measurement	Ideogram	Imperial	Metric
<i>rin</i>	厘	0.01 inches	0.3 millimeters
<i>bu</i>	分	0.11 inches	3.03 millimeters
<i>sun</i>	寸	1.19 inches	3.03 centimeters
<i>shaku</i>	尺	11.93 inches	30.3 centimeters
<i>ken</i>	間	5.96 feet	1.81 meters
<i>cho</i>	町	357.9 feet	109.1 meters
<i>ri</i> *	里	2.435 miles	3.92 kilometers

\*The distance *ri* changed in the Edo period; in the Sengoku period, it was 650 meters. In this book, all measurements of *ri* should be taken as the equivalent of 3.92 kilometers.

### WEIGHT

Measurement	Ideogram	Imperial	Metric
<i>buffun</i>	分	0.013 ounces	0.37 grams
<i>momme</i>	匁	0.132 ounces	3.75 grams
<i>ryo</i>	兩	1.32 ounces	37.5 grams
<i>kin</i>	斤	21.16 ounces	600 grams

### CAPACITY

Measurement	Ideogram	Imperial	Metric
<i>shaku</i>	勺	0.63 fluid ounces	18.04 milliliters
<i>go</i>	合	6.34 fluid ounces	180.4 milliliters
<i>sho</i>	升	3.17 pints	1.8 liters
<i>to</i>	斗	31.74 pints	18.4 liters
<i>koku</i>	石	317.4 pints	180.4 liters

## Appendix B: The Ten Celestial Stems

Along with the twelve zodiac signs, the ten calendar signs, also known as the ten celestial stems and the ten heavenly stems, were used as part of the dating system in medieval Japan. The stems are associated with the concepts of the five elements and yin and yang. These “stems” would be set in rotation, and each day would be linked to one of the ten stems. In context with their use in this book, a defender would check what stem was linked with that day and would look for shinobi in the direction corresponding to that stem.

This complex system would have been the normal method of dating, and most people would have understood which stem listed below corresponded to which day. Thus, with the simple use of the chart shown on [this page](#), anyone could count around its circumference to find the appropriate direction. All one needed to know is which item in the following list corresponded to the day you were on.

All the days listed in this chapter are measured by the Chinese calendar and would have been understood by all. They would have been able to use this information with ease, as they would know which days fell where. Modern Chinese and Japanese calendars can still carry this information.

The ten celestial stems are as follows:

1. *Kinoe*, wood yang
2. *Kinoto*, wood yin
3. *Hinoe*, fire yang
4. *Hinoto*, fire yin
5. *Tsuchinoe*, earth yang
6. *Tsuchinoto*, earth yin
7. *Kanoe*, metal yang
8. *Kanoto*, metal yin
9. *Mizunoe*, water yang
10. *Mizunoto*, water yin

## Notes

# PART ONE: THE SHINOBI HIDEN

## Commentary

1. The original manual shows the year as 1653. However, by cross-referencing this with the Chinese date, which is also found in the manual and which is based on the ten celestial stems, we arrive at the year 1655. For information on the ten celestial stems, see [Appendix B](#).

## Volume I

1. Emperor Gao's reign lasted from 256 to 195 BC.
2. The ideograms used here are 忍 (shinobi) and 竊盜 (shinobi). Next to each other, this is the difference between “open spying” and “infiltration.”
3. The *Zuo Zhuan* is often translated as “The Chronicle of Zuo.”
4. The Shang dynasty lasted from 1075 to 1046 BC. Also, the ideogram for Yi Yin appears to be wrong; it should read 伊尹.
5. The seventy-one chapters are *The Six Secret Teachings*, one of the seven Chinese military classics.
6. It appears that they wrote the name of the king incorrectly; here we have used the version found in the *Bansenshukai* as an alternative reference.
7. *Gokan*, which is the name for the five types of Chinese spy as taught by Sun Tzu in *The Art of War*.
8. This name does not appear in *The Art of War*. *Yokan* is the same sound for the Japanese reading of the chapter title “Use of Spies.”
9. “Questions and Replies” is a dialogue between Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty and Li Jing, a prominent general of the dynasty. It is one of the seven military classics of China. Zhang Liang's and Han Xin's years of birth are not known; they died in 189 and 196 BC, respectively.
10. Tenchi reigned from 668 to 671 BC. In fact he was not the nineteenth but the thirty-eighth emperor, though he was once counted as the thirty-ninth emperor. It is possible that this is also a transcription error.
11. Tenmu was the fortieth emperor and reigned from 673 to 686 BC.
12. This should read 106th.
13. The original text states forty from Koka; however, the *Bansenshukai* states it as four. It is believed that the *Bansenshukai* is correct due to its further explanation of the story.
14. This is not a table of contents, but a list of “memory hooks” that include important

factors in the ways of the ninja.

15. The Fire Egg is made of straw and is to be thrown into the enemy position or used as a light.
16. The term *kuden* means “oral transmission,” which means “more information to be passed on by word of mouth.” It is unknown why it appears only on various items, as all would require further instruction.
17. Literally “fire cylinder, big speed.”
18. This type of fire is embers in a tube carried inside of a paper pocket handkerchief.
19. The ideogram here is literally “feed campfire.” However, it means “attentiveness” but appears to be a form of embers or light attached to the scabbard of a sword.
20. A plate fire is two boards that sandwich slow-burning embers for fire starting.
21. The meaning of *shinobitsume* is unknown. The first ideogram is 忍 and stands for “shinobi.” The second is 詰, for “to interrogate” or “to press” or “to fill.” The Gunpo Jiyoshu uses this phonetic sound to represent “horse taming,” but it’s not clear how horse-taming would be related to a fire-carrying device, or if this has anything to do with equestrian skills at all.
22. *Hi* means fire. *Kaki* (or *kagi*) is in katakana and is phonetic. It could mean “key.” Thus, this could be “fire key.” However, there are no descriptions of this tool elsewhere, so it’s hard to determine with any real assurance.
23. See Appendix A for a conversion chart for all units of measurement.
24. The soft torch is a slow-burning, low-light torch that uses a powdered mixture of saltpeter, sulfur, camphor, borneol, and ivota privet wood with hemp oil.
25. According to the Bansenshukai there are three torches with the name “Yoshitsune.” However, this is not one of them.
26. It is not known what kind of torch this is. *Samei* translates literally as “left bright.”
27. According to Bansenshukai, there are three torches with the name Yoshitsune; however, this is not one of those three, as the name differs. The word *myogahi* has the phonetic sound of “divine protection.” However, the idioms themselves are not the standard ones used for this word. Their actual pictorial meaning is “bright celebration.” It would seem their phonetic meaning—that of “protection”—is better suited in context.
28. According to the Bansenshukai, this is a mixture of saltpeter, sulfur, borneol, camphor, and ash. It is placed in bamboo with gunpowder and is most likely a tool for producing smoke and filling the enemy position with this smoke.
29. This is a bag containing flammable liquid attached to an arrow.
30. These are balls of a hardened flammable mixture that are thrown into the enemy position.
31. According to the Bansenshukai this is a mixture of sulfur, tinder, borneol, and perilla

oil put into well-aged sake to make a thick flammable liquid.

32. For arson.
33. Kumasaka Chohan was a legendary thief in the Heian period. This is a mixture of sulfur and hemp plant.
34. This is a bamboo cylinder filled with ignition powder that sprays out of four holes in the cylinder when thrown into the enemy position. According to the Bansenshukai, one must grind saltpeter, sulfur, and the sawdust of pinewood, and then put it into a cylinder.
35. This is a long-lasting bamboo fuse.
36. Possibly a version of the Bansenshukai's "Trail Fire," a line of ignition powder that leads to an ammunition dump, or "Dripping Fire," a fire that would be oil based and that would drip from above.
37. The ideograms used here are not for the fire-carrying tool and are in fact the ones used for the digging tool. However, throughout the text, the ideograms have been mixed up and changed, as both have the same sound. Therefore, in the context of the list, it appears the author means the fire-carrying tool, not the digging tool.
38. Literally, "probing, pull, and rope." This tool is referenced in other works and appears to be a stick that is secured into the ground with a cord tied to it. As a shinobi infiltrates an unknown area, he passes the cord out behind him, allowing him to find his way back again.
39. Used to render guards intoxicated and drowsy.
40. *Myoganko*, an ointment used to stay awake.
41. The second ideogram is used in this text as "flare." Therefore, this could be a connection to Kiri tree powder, which is used in the ninjutsu curriculum of the Katori Shinto Ryu. The powder obscures the human form at night when it is thrown in front of the shinobi.
42. We've translated *tengu* as "goblin," though the rich lore around this type of creature makes that a rather simplistic translation. The literal full translation for this powder is "*tengu* that catches an arrow" or "catching an arrow shot by a *tengu*." The meaning of this is unknown.
43. The ideogram here is illusive and has no modern meaning. Literally, it is "vehicle or wheel washing." Unfortunately, the meaning is now lost.
44. These "curtains" were a hanging cloth used to cordon off the lord and his command group in a battlefield camp. These points are not listed in this manual; however, other Koka and Iga traditions talk about this.
45. Note that Hattori Hanzo's name does not appear and that the date is well after his death..
46. This is the name of a shrine or a deity. It may be that the name of the man following this name (Hattori Minokami Yasukiyo) was actually the shrine keeper of Ichisangu

## Volume II

1. The Japanese is *take no kawa* 竹の皮.
2. This was probably a leather-bound pouch for carrying live embers or tinder. It is important to note that the ideograms used for this instance of *kunai* do not mean “digging tool” but “inside the shrine or palace.”
3. The transcriber used the measurement of 5 *bu*, which is equal to 1.5 cm. That is believed to be a mistake; the believed length is 5 *sun*, not 5 *bu*.
4. In the original, the measurement was given as 8 *sun*. As that is clearly incorrect (most likely, a transcription error), it was changed here to what was probably intended.
5. Meaning it has a V-shaped, wedgelike blade.
6. This original states “Blade, 3 *bu*, 4 *bu*.”
7. This measurement reflects the black serrated area.
8. This sentence was originally with the description of the previous tool, but since that is believed to be a transcription error, the sentence has been moved here.
9. A form of key used in latch opening.
10. A wooden panel or board used as wall covering or formed as part of the wall structure. It may be set horizontally or vertically. The boards may also overlap in either direction.
11. An ointment made from toad secretions and mixed with pork or horse grease.
12. This is a building that is constructed on the top of a stone wall, usually on fortifications.
13. Literally, “large.”
14. A rope made up of 50 to 100 cords.
15. The text states “helmet shell,” which is an older term for the shell of the sea urchin.
16. The overall length is unknown, as it appears the thinner black cylinder goes inside the larger white housing.
17. This could also be “the circumference of the head.”
18. This is a three-dimensional shape, and they would be widest at the bottom.
19. One of the more difficult tools to understand, this is either a hollow cylinder pressed to the ear or a flat plate held in your teeth so the sound resonates through your head.
20. Again the transcriber uses what appears to be an incorrect measurement of 5 *bu*, which would make the device far too small; therefore, we went with 5 *shaku* in this translation.
21. The sound for “large country” could alternatively refer to the deity Okuninushi.

22. The full variations and distances are given in the Bansenshukai.
23. The Japanese day was divided into “hours” of 120 minutes each and were allotted an animal name. For a full discussion of this, see *In Search of the Ninja*, by Antony Cummins.
24. 一騎と一騎 is an idiom that literally translates as “one mounted warrior versus another mounted warrior.” However, in the Sengoku period, this develops into an idiom that means “man-to-man combat” (that is, the “mounted” aspect was no longer specified.) The translation of the sentence on [this page](#) (“Also, these shinobi can excel, even in combat”) comes from two sources. The older source is in cursive writing and appears to mean “ninjutsu is better than man-to-man combat.” The Nagata version (a more recent transcription) appears to express “excellent at,” although this is ambiguous. It could mean that using a ninja is better than hand-to-hand combat, or that shinobi are excellent fighters as frontline soldiers. This is a complex matter, as the rest of the paragraph does not talk of any form of physical violence and implies that ninjutsu is espionage. Also, note that in the original Okimori manual, this section was added later, possibly in the Edo period. The Nagata version is from the late Edo period, making the Okimori cursive version the oldest. It’s almost unintelligible.
25. This could be understood as something like the ABCs.
26. The handwriting in this sentence is different from the transcriber’s, and the sentence itself is ambiguous.

### Volume III

1. An illustration of this is given in the Rodandhu scroll. For a full translation of the latter, see *In Search of the Ninja*, by Antony Cummins.
2. Of the genus *Paulownia*.
3. Difficult to explain in words, this is a box with a detachable lid that is held in place by a lip when the lid is pushed on. These are common even today.
4. Literally, “striking steel.”
5. Literally, “the middle strike.”
6. It is not know which six materials are being referred to.
7. This is meant to be the fuel/filling for *donohi* (capsules for carrying embers), which were mentioned in the Bansenshukai and Shoninki manuals.
8. Literally, “strike without striking.”
9. *Hinawa*, another version of the *donohi* fire-carrying cylinder.
10. In the cold ashes of a previous fire.
11. This could be either a tool for arson or a tool for producing light. It is a ball of pounded kindling, with a layer of the flower’s sticky pods holding it together.
12. *Rhododendron indicum*.

13. By “use,” “throw into a flammable area” is probably meant.
14. It is possible that this is a metaphor for a skill; however, its meaning is unknown.
15. This is a torch that you throw into the enemy camp when you attack.
16. This is an unknown knot.
17. This word could not be translated; it is phonetic only and does not appear in context when cross-referenced with any known Japanese.
18. In Japanese, *daijiri*. In the Bansenshukai, *daijiri* are referred to as iron tips or nails to be attached at the end of a torch. These are used as spikes that help the torch stick in the ground when thrown into the enemy camp or when you stand them upright.
19. Strictly speaking, the phonetics dictate that this is *kaki*. However, all instances of *kaki* have been replaced with *kagi*. There is a grammatical argument to support the fact that the original sound may have been *gi* instead of *ki*.
20. While ambiguous, a *wakane* is most likely referencing a wooden peg in a ring latch, or implying that the hook is curved more than normal to secure the ring better.
21. “Winged” could be translated as “bladed.” This is not a key in a modern sense but a bent iron bar used to unlock doors.
22. This drawing is missing from the original text.
23. The string would be attached to the wooden peg that is locking the latch in place.
24. This could be translated as “crowbar.”
25. This appears to be the six-pronged caltrops, whereas the other version illustrated in this manual has four prongs.
26. There was a reference here to this tool being similar to the start and end of paradise. However, the text is so ambiguous and out of context, it has been removed and listed here: 前後ノ極楽ニ似タリ, or *Gokuraku no zengo ni nitari*.
27. This is not a reference to a precise distance; it refers to the concept of “large” or “massive.”
28. Literal translation. “Fire-hiding” could mean something like “exploding.” This item is complex and almost untranslatable. The translation of the description is a best guess and is substantially augmented by the translators.
29. The secret of the ninja landmine is given in the first shinobi scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu. See [this page](#).
30. It also says to use two (*mo*) *kochikami*, which has only a phonetic reading; its meaning is lost.
31. The ideogram used for “digging tool” is not the ideogram for *kunai*. It is the same as the fire-starting version. However, the description represents the digging-tool version, so we’ve used “digging tool” for the heading.
32. This could be cotton or silk; however, in the Sengoku period, it may have been easier to get silk than cotton.

33. *Chirori* means “mushroom-shaped,” but it is also the name for some kinds of Polychaeta. Its meaning is unknown in this context.
34. This listing has the ideogram 作, which means “to make.” However, later in the actual text, the ideogram for “bamboo” is used.
35. Small, hardened flammable balls used to throw into the enemy position.
36. An unknown skill.

## Volume IV

1. Design, architecture, tea ceremony, and so on.
2. *Bushi* is synonymous with “samurai.”
3. Possibly due to a transcription error, the sentence appears to be missing a component. This translation is our best estimated reconstruction.
4. The original literally translates as “you cannot get fire by entering going out.” This obviously does not make sense. Because the ideogram for “going out” is similar to the one for “water,” and since “you cannot get fire in water” is an established Japanese idiom, we believe the original was erroneously transcribed.
5. *Geino* could mean any form of arts, including the martial arts; however, its meaning has evolved over time.
6. “Creel basket” is our best estimated translation; the word, *fuko*, is in phonetics.
7. The ideogram used for *dai kunai* is the one representing “fire tool.” However, it is believed to be a transcription error. Therefore, we’ve instead used “digging tool.”
8. Presumably a pair of shinobi in this same disguise as two monkeys; however, the sentence is ambiguous and could be referring to two shinobi dressed as one monkey or simply two shinobi who are using a skill whose name refers to the way a monkey moves.
9. This tool image and description does not appear in the Shinobi Hiden. However it does appear in the Gunpo Jiyoshu (see [this page](#)).
10. *Dai* means *tenshudai*, the foundation of the tower of a castle, and *nuki* means “to capture” in this context. Thus the word used here, *dainuki* 臺拔, means to climb upon the foundation of the castle tower.
11. In Japanese, *shikii*. This could be either a sliding door or a gate locked with a beam. We know from the oral traditions of the Katori Shinto Ryu that the ninja used this skill on sliding doors.
12. Literally, “voice noise.”
13. The Okimori version contains a transcription error; for a full discussion on this topic, see *In Search of the Ninja*, by Antony Cummins.
14. It is of interest to note here that the Katori Shinto Ryu’s ninjutsu curriculum points out that when a shinobi cross-crawls across tatami mats, they make too much sound

and are thus detected.

15. In Japanese, *shinobi onmitsu*.
16. Presumably, a ninja would do this to gather information on their alarm-system response and tactics, or to open a gap for a second ninja to utilize.
17. This name is found only in the Nagata version; however, the name does appear in other volumes of the Okimori version.

### The “Lost” Shinobi Scroll of the Nagata Text

1. For “perseverance,” 忍 (the kanji for “shinobi”) was used.
2. This could be cooperation between shinobi, or between shinobi and others.
3. In other words, avoid favoritism.
4. The quotes used around the word “wisdom” are purposeful. The original text indicates sarcasm, or something like “so-called wisdom.” In other words, not all advice given to a lord is good advice.
5. These are called *gokan*, which are the five types of Chinese spy, as taught in *The Art of War*.
6. This point is of interest; the manual contains an unknown ideogram that could be referencing clothes worn during the day and night or could simply mean the differences in attacking methods during the day and night.
7. 柄箭 Haft-arrows and bows. This is an unknown, possibly Chinese weapon.
8. Unknown tool or weapon; possibly a Chinese gunnery weapon.
9. The same unknown weapon as stated previously in this list.
10. Unknown items or skills, presented here in literal translation.
11. As above.
12. Explained in detail on [this page](#).
13. Unknown skill or tool.
14. Xu Fu was Chinese military scholar; it is recorded that he was attempting to find the elixir of life. This is a recording of an oral tradition that is over a thousand years old and therefore may not be historically accurate.
15. See [Appendix B](#) for an explanation of this term.
16. See [Appendix B](#) for an explanation of this term.
17. See [Appendix B](#) for an explanation of this term.

# PART TWO: THE KOKA RYU NINJUTSU DENSHO

## Commentary

1. The cover of the manual states “Koka Ryu Densho,” but the opening page says “Koka Ryu Ninjutsu.”

## The Koka Ryu Ninjutsu Densho

1. Also known as Okuninushi.
2. *Kumoshibari* means “spider binding” or “paralysis by spider.” The implication is “to entrap.” The Kuma were a tribe in early Japanese history who rebelled, and *jimi* in this context means “to suppress.” Thus, *Kumaso-jimi* is “the arts that suppressed the [rebellious] Kumo tribe.”
3. Emioshikasu Fujiwara; 706–764.
4. See the commentary for an explanation of this device.
5. Notably, the term *shinden* (“divine”) is not used here. See the commentary for an explanation of why this is worthy of note.
6. *Gokan*; this is the term used to refer to the five types of Chinese spy.
7. The word *mabane* is untranslatable.
8. It is implied that here that you should choose eight arrows and make a wheel shape with them, with the arrowheads coming together at the center.
9. The following list of numbers comes without explanation and with alternative readings to the normal Japanese language. The sounds that follow the list are to be pronounced during the spell.
10. It is implied that this is practical training required for shinobi infiltration. Literally, it translates as “physical training,” but in context, “practical” is more accurate.
11. Also implied is “and all required sections of religious training.”
12. Most likely, herbs and treatments.
13. The text simply states “sake farming” and could mean the production of sake, or selling sake and farming as two individual tasks. However, the former is a more probable translation. The general meaning here is that a ninja should have the required knowledge to be able to set up a business in another province.
14. Including dance, theater, street performance, sexual services, and anything along the lines of entertainment.
15. “Used by the Koka ninja” is implied. These almost replicate the above five items; however, this is by design. The first five are elements to be learned, and these seven are the actual methods of infiltration. Also, the original document had simply one

single ideogram per point; the meaning would have been understood in context. For the benefit of the reader, we have expanded upon the original.

16. The text simply says “love.” Most likely, what is meant is infiltration through relationships with key people.
17. The word *daisho* translates to “large and small” but is used to mean a pair of swords used by the samurai. Here it gives no grammatical clue to its use and could simply mean the large and small guns of the enemy. But also it could concern enemy swords, as the Shoninki manual states it is a ninja’s job to steal blades and destroy weapons.
18. In Japanese, *shu guji no ho*.
19. In Japanese, *sen ri i po*, meaning “one thousand *ri* in a single step.”
20. In Japanese, *michi-gashira*, meaning “the starting point.” Note that the text is not clear about where this and the next ideograms should be written. Presumably, you perform this and the rest of the ritual at your journey’s starting point, after you’ve done the altar ritual.
21. In Japanese, *ban ri*, meaning “an extremely long distance” (literally, “tens of thousands of *ri*”).
22. Most mudras (hand positions with special powers) are made with two hands; therefore, this is most likely a variation, or a talisman of some kind.
23. The most logical action here would be not an actual sword cut but performing the sword mudra, which is used in many Asian rituals.
24. The meaning is unclear, but could mean that the ninja, after a safe journey puts soil in a river to journey back to where he came from.
25. The ideogram used for the talisman means “Be gone mountains, water, and rivers.”
26. In Japanese, *ongyo no ho*. This spell is of major interest and supports the manual’s authenticity. It is similar enough to the version in the Bansenshukai to show a connection, but dissimilar enough to show that it’s not a direct copy. Its authenticity is further supported by the use of a talisman positioned in the hair as a focus of invisibility—something that is also described in the Gunpo Jiyoshu.
27. “Big year” is the literal translation. The Japanese term used here has not been recorded in any form, so a more meaningful translation is not possible. It could be a reference to a leap year.
28. The ideograms here are 筋一根 and were used to count very fine and thin objects. It probably refers to either a strand of hair or a thread from her kimono. From a ritualistic standpoint, the hair may have been considered to be more powerful, so we’ve gone with that translation.
29. This appears to be a paper talisman.
30. The original manual does not show a connection between the dead woman’s hair and the magical pin, nor does it explain their connection.
31. A form of hairpin. Today, this kind of hairpin is generally used by women.

32. This is an unknown idiom that has not been recorded elsewhere. Most likely, it implies a change in thought process, possibly along with a hand gesture.

# PART THREE: THE THREE SHINOBI SCROLLS OF THE GUNPO JIYOSHU

## Commentary

1. Yoshitsune was a twelfth-century general famous for his tactics. His name was used throughout Japanese history to add prestige to a school. Hattori Jibuemon Ujinobu's connection to this school is recorded in the *Bugei Ryuha Daijiten* (the Encyclopedia of Martial Arts Schools).

## First Shinobi Scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu

1. That is, someone who is not trained as such.
2. *Gloiopeltis complanata*.
3. It is unknown if the author and Hattori ever met, as this Hattori wrote down his school in other documentation; however, the syntax of the original text implies it was included in conversation.
4. This is a part of the twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac.
5. The unit of *ri* differed in the Sengoku period (see the length chart in Appendix A). This document was written at the end of the Sengoku and the beginning of the Edo, so its hard to know which version of *ri* is intended.
6. *Bu* and *momme* are units of measure; see Appendix A for a conversion chart.
7. Moxa is a form of mugwort used in Chinese medicine and burnt on a patient's back.
8. This appears to be a fine powder used for ignition purposes.
9. The ideogram literally means "inside your hand." Therefore, in this context, we've translated it as "palm."
10. *Shuriken* are small blades to throw at people. However, *shuriken* can mean "hidden blade" and is not always an object, but can simply mean throwing any form of blade.
11. The word used for brazier is *kagohi*. *Kago* means "basket" and *hi* means "fire."
12. In Japanese, *tate taimatsu*.
13. It is not certain if this candle is the windproof candle in the previous tool; however, logically, this would be the best option, as most candles would simply blow out in the wind.
14. The description of this construction is difficult to translate.
15. It is believed that this image is inverted and incorrectly displayed. It is possible that the author of the Gunpo Jiyoshu, the samurai Ogasawara, misinterpreted the ninja Hattori and drew the box upside down. This was later miscopied by Fujibayashi in his

Bansenshukai. This would allow for the differences in the image and the text, and for the differences that arise when cross-referencing with other schools. Therefore the instructions have been expanded here to include material from other documents.

16. Other manuals indicate that a separate section of bamboo comes out of the side of the box, marrying all the fuses together. This would then be covered and camouflaged after being lit.
17. The general idea among other manuals that have been investigated show that when a person steps on the mine, their weight cracks the bamboo with the lit fuses and also the thin lid of the box. This empties the embers and burning sections of fuse into the box, which ignites the gunpowder and launches the stones upward into the groin and soft underside of the person who triggered it.
18. In Japanese, *netsuba*.
19. In Japanese, *makibiya*.
20. In Japanese, “Rat Fire” is *nezumihi*. This is possibly a reference to a medieval Chinese weapon in which the explosive jumps around. They are used to create confusion as they “jump around like rats made of fire” and attach themselves to buildings. This tool would be thrown into a camp in large numbers.
21. This reference is not to the second shinobi scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu translated in the next section, but to the second scroll of the entire Gunpo Jiyoshu.
22. The idea here is to build a fire in a flat fan shape. Because it is left unattended, the fire will burn against the wind, which will prolong its life.
23. In Japanese, *togiki*.
24. The Chinese Sexagenarian Calendar is a dating system that uses the ten celestial stems and the twelve Chinese zodiac signs. See [Appendix B](#) for information on the ten celestial stems.
25. In other words, using the image provided on [this page](#), first find the current day (Rat, Horse, etc.), then, starting with that day, count forward (clockwise) eight days. The direction indicated by the day you land on is the direction the shinobi will infiltrate from. For example, on the day of the Rat, the shinobi would infiltrate from the southwest.
26. In other words, using the image provided on [this page](#), first find the current day (Ox, Sheep, etc.), then, starting with that day, count forward (clockwise) four numbers. The direction indicated by the day you land on is the direction the shinobi will infiltrate from. For example, on the day of the Ox, the shinobi would infiltrate from the southeast.
27. See [Appendix B](#).
28. In Japanese, *yabumi*.
29. It is unknown if this is a letter divided up and placed in the underwear of a few elderly men or if this is a full letter placed in the opened groin of a dead man’s body.

## The Second Shinobi Scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu

1. *Shinobi no mono* is the original and more correct way to say “ninja.”
2. In Japanese, *tsukeiri*.
3. This is a set pattern of double-sealing passwords by prearranging if one should sit down or stand up while using the password or mark.
4. For example, so the ambush shinobi do not mistake you for the enemy, so you can identify your allies and flee away together, or so you can find out which direction to run in.
5. The word used is unknown but means something like “divide the mouth.”
6. The Bansenkushai explains that if you want to drive warriors of high rank into submission, humiliate them in terms of honor and persuade them with reason; for lower-rank people, convince them to act on their desires and defeat them with deceit.
7. In Japanese, *shihokutsuwa*.
8. An unknown kind of knot.
9. An unknown kind of knot.
10. Here the author is referring to the rest of the entire Gunpo Jiyoshu, not just the scrolls translated in this book.
11. The image to the right is an example of the *yotsume* form; it did not appear in the original manual.
12. The Koshanoshō is one of the three major works by Ogasawara Katsuzō.
13. In Japanese, *kuruma seiro*. However, this appears to be a mistake. This title appears to go with the image in the top left, as that watchtower is on a wheeled frame. It is believed that the author mixed up these two titles.
14. In Japanese, scouting watchtower is *monomi seiro*. Yamamoto Kansuke was a famous tactician who served Takeda Shingen (?–1561).
15. In Japanese, *tsuri seiro*.
16. In Japanese, *kumiage seiro*.
17. In Japanese, *kumiage*.
18. This paragraph has been simplified so that a Western audience can understand what is quite a complex description in the original text.
19. This is the first time this type of wall is mentioned in the text. It is unknown how it differs from “the fake wall,” which is discussed in the following section.
20. Genus *Mespilus*.
21. The use of wolf droppings also appears in contemporary Chinese literature.

## The Third Shinobi Scroll of the Gunpo Jiyoshu

1. It is presumed here that “empty-handed” means to be only with their standard sword(s).
2. In Japanese, *uratoji*.
3. In Japanese, *samanuke*.
4. Presumably, waterfall torture starts slow and is long and drawn out, therefore yielding a more truthful answer, whereas waterboarding creates an immediate sense of urgency in the prisoner, possibly yielding fake information.
5. It is implied that the blade should be wrapped, with only the end (20 percent) protruding, so that the condemned man cannot attack and escape.
6. The second who aids the condemned man can be a friend or companion, but not necessarily so. In the absence of a friend or companion, someone can be appointed the task. The decapitation is done to end the agony of the seppuku (self-inflicted disembowelment). The second should face the sun or moon so that the condemned man does not see the shadow of the decapitator’s falling sword and flinch. For a full explanation of ritual suicide in Japan, *Seppuku: A History of Samurai Suicide*, by Andrew Rankin.

### **Other Shinobi-Related Text from the Gunpo Jiyoshu**

1. The Japanese word used here for “thieves” is *hosori*

# PART FOUR: THE YOSHIMORI HYAKUSHU

## Commentary

1. The triumphant Yoshitsune is one of the most popular heroes in Japanese history. Along with his older brother, Minamoto no Yoritomo, the founder of Kamakura shogunate, Yoshitsune was the son of the leader of one of the most important samurai clans at the time, the Genji clan. Yoshitsune is well known for his splendid and unexpected tactics, whereas Yoshimori is said to have had a unique way of fighting and was a highly skilled guerrilla tactician.

# THE SECRET TRADITIONS OF THE SHINOBI

HATTORI HANZO'S SHINOBI HIDEN AND  
OTHER NINJA SCROLLS



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