Ninja Juhakkei

The 18 Skills of the Ninja

(忍身十八形)
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Ninja Juhakki/Juhappan

The ancient Ninja and Samurai were considered by history to be complete warriors. In order to survive in almost constant state of battle and conflict, these warriors developed highly organized methods to teach their skills to others within their clan, or group. Many if not all Koryu, (Koryu is a general term for Japanese schools of martial arts that predate the Restoration (the period from 1866 to 1869 which sparked major socio-political changes and led to the modernization of ). While there is no "official" cutoff date, the dates most commonly used are either 1868, the first year of the period, or 1876, when the edict banning the wearing of swords was pronounced.) school’s organized a systematic training syllabus to bring their warriors training.

For Example the Tenshin Katori Shinto ryu is one of the oldest recorded koryu within Japan, and its curriculum was extremely detailed:

Tachi Jutsu
- Kenjutsu (sword technique)
- Iaijutsu (sword drawing and cutting - covering both kneeling and standing forms)
- Tachi Iai Jutsu - (5 kata)
- Kodachi (short sword)
- Gokui no Kodachi - (3 kata)

Kyojutsu – (archery)

Bojutsu (staff)
**Naginatajutsu** (glaive - curved spear)

**Sojutsu** (יס; straight spear)

**Shurikenjutsu** (spike throwing)

- **Yawara-jutsu** (grappling and knife fighting)

- **Ninjutsu/Shinobi** (intelligence gathering and analysis)

- **Chikujojutsu** (field fortification art)

- **Gunbai-Heiho** (strategy and tactics)

- **Tenmon Chirigaku** (astronomy; geomantic divination)

- **In-Yo kigaku** (philosophical and mystical aspects derived from **Mikkyo** - esoteric Buddhism).

The Ninja were intimately related to and involved with the Samurai warriors, and their curriculum was designed to complement their specific mission in combat. As such it included the traditional fighting tactics as well as more specialized areas involving intelligence gather and stealth skills, disguise and hidden weapons. As with many other koryu the curriculum was designed to enhance the ability of a practitioner to survive the rigors or warfare and daily life.

The curriculum that is outlined here is one from the Togakure ryu ninjutsu tradition, as there were various ninja clans in areas of Japan each had specialized skills and tactics. Most of these arts have fallen into history with no surviving legacy, the Togakure ryu headed by Soke Hatsumi has survived and continues to educate today’s modern ninjutsu practitioners.
Togakure Ryu Ninjutsu Ninja Juhakki

- Seishin teki kyoyo (spiritual refinement)
- Taijutsu (unarmed combat)
- Ninja ken (ninja sword)
- Bojutsu (stick and staff fighting)
- Shurikenjutsu (throwing blades)
- Yarijutsu (spear fighting)
- Naginatajutsu (halberd fighting)
- Kusarigama (chain and sickle weapon)
- Kayakujutsu (fire and explosives)
- Hensojutsu (disguise and impersonation)
- Shinobi iri (stealth and entering methods)
- Bajutsu (horsemanship)
- Sui ren (water training)
- Bo-ryaku (strategy)
- Cho ho (espionage)
- Intonjutsu (escape and concealment)
- Ten-mon (meteorology)
- Chi-mon (geography)
Curriculum Descriptions

Seishin teki kyoyo

(spiritual refinement)

The first and the most necessary of skills, presumes a self-knowledge level of the warrior that will be able to control the senses, motivations, and intentions, both his and their opponent’s. From this point, the Ninja warriors developed a mystical discipline, with its own philosophy and mental doctrine, known as Mikkyo Ninpo.

Taijutsu

(unarmed combat)

Taijutsu forms the basis for all training in ninjutsu’s warrior methods. Taijutsu strives to develop natural responsive actions with the body. As the practitioner progresses, one can use the lessons gained in the physical, as models for the psychological and tactical training in advanced studies.

Practice in Taijutsu involves methods of rolling, falling and rebounding from the ground, striking, grappling, and special ways of walking, running leaping and climbing. Taijutsu’s effectiveness is based on it not being a specialized system, but a total system of development. Think about this, what would happen if, you had only studied the striking skills, and had to fight a grappler? Or vice versa?
Ninja ken

(ninja sword)

Practitioners of ninjutsu utilized the same swords (Katana, wakazshi) as did their samurai counterparts. They often would have adjusted their swords to accomplish several other tasks, making them smaller (faster draw), hiding in the saya (scabbard) different powders, using them as digging, climbing or breaking tools. For a ninja, the sword was nothing else but a tool.

Sword techniques are actually nothing else but an extension of taijutsu principles. The same body weight, balance and movement principles being applied on the weapon use. Also called ninja-to or shinobi-ken, the sword could be used in iai moves (cutting with the very first move of drawing it from the saya) or direct sword-to-sword techniques, often with unconventional and changing handle grips combined with body movements.

Bojutsu

(stick and staff fighting)

The Japanese stick fighting art, practiced by samurai and peasants alike, was also a strong skill of the ninja. Togakure ninja were taught to use the bo long staff (six feet) and hanbo "half-staff" cane (three feet), as well as sticks and clubs of varying lengths. Specially constructed shinobi-zue or ninja canes were designed to look like the normal walking sticks, but concealed blades, chains, or darts that could be used against an enemy.
**Shurikenjutsu**

(throwing blades)

Probably the most known ability of the ninja warriors, the art of throwing weapons included various forms of **hira shuriken** (the "stars", throwing blades with multiple points), **bo shuriken** (more like nails or chips) and **blades/knives**. Such techniques are common in the old schools (Koryu) of the Japanese traditions. Shurikens are not utilized as primary weapons, but rather as distracting, escaping, or simply tactical weapon.

One of the secret weapons from Togakure ryu was the **senban shuriken** (the 4 points blade), which could be also used as a carving, digging, prisoner control etc.

**Yarijutsu**

(spear fighting)

Also read as Sojutsu, it is the art of handling the spear, not for throwing it, but rather for direct fight with the opponents. The spear has the advantage of being very long, yet flexible, and allows both lateral strikes and thrusts with the point.

Within ninjutsu there is a special form of Yari called **kamayari** (a hooked spear, a weapon probably used by pirates), which also allowed catching an opponent, especially if they were mounted on horse.
**Naginatajutsu**

(halberd fighting)

Virtually a short blade mounted on a long handle, the Japanese halberd was used for cutting and slashing attacks against adversaries at medium range. Togakure ryu ninja warriors were also proficient with the bisen-to, a huge heavy-bladed version of the naginata halberd. Based on a chinese war tool, the broad-bladed weapon was heavy enough to knock down attackers, smash through armor, and ground the horses of mounted samurai.

A specific weapon of ninjutsu is the **bisen-to**, a very heavy and massive naginata, able to cut and break a samurai’s armour.

**Kusarigama**

(chain and sickle weapon)

The Japanese chain and sickle weapon was adopted into the arsenal of the Togakure ryu ninja. A chain, six to nine feet in length and weighted at one end, was attached to the handle of the traditional grain cutting tool. The chain could be used to block or ensnare the enemy’s weapon, and the blade then used to finish off the attacker. The kyoketsu-shoge, a weapon similar to the chain and sickle, was favored by the togakure ryu. The weapon consisted of a straight hand-held dagger blade with a secondary blade hooking out from the hilt, attached to a fifteen foot resilient cord usually made from women's or horse's hair. A large steel ring was attached to the free end of the cord.
Kayakujutsu

(fire and explosives)

Ninja were experts in the effective placement, timing, and rigging of explosive devices for demolition and distraction. In later years, the use of black powders and other explosives was supplemented with knowledge of firearms and their strategic applications.

Hensojutsu

(disguise and impersonation)

A true art of shinobi warriors, hensojutsu was developing special abilities that allowed to imitate, simulate or transpose into someone else position. Know also as the "five ways of going", hensojutsu allowed ninja to appear either as a priest, samurai, merchant, craftsman or farmer. Used either to facilitate the access in various areas, to hide themselves or even to replace someone's person in order to get access to specific protected zones, such art was completing a ninja's training transforming him into a "transforming" warrior.

Shinobi iri

(stealth and entering methods)

Obviously, a discipline of vital importance in any espionage mission, shinobi iri was training the warriors in various walking, observing, sneaking or infiltrating in opponent's area. Ninja warriors were experts in using the land natural resources or the landscape's elements to dissimulate their presence, to enter or evade from a guarded place without being felt.
Bajutsu

(horsemanship)

A "mandatory" discipline for the bushi warriors especially starting from the Edo period, bajutsu is the art of fighting while riding, being able to both lead the horse and make a proper use of the kyu (archery), naginata, yari or sword.

Sui ren

(water training)

Sui-ren was the training that ninja underwent for techniques involving water, and the techniques were organized into 5 major categories, such as boats, water as a weapon, tools, stealth, and survival.

Ninja used portable collapsing boats (Shinobi Bune, Tsugi Bune or Ukidaru) to follow convoys in the water or to cross rivers. While they were not designed to last long in the water, these boats kept the ninja afloat for long periods of time. Another kind of water vehicle is Ryu O Sen, a true small size submarine made by wood and leather with a sand ballast.

The Togakure Ryu ninjas used various tools for interacting with water, like Mizu Zutsu, a breathing tube reed-like to stay underwater for a long period of time, often used to blow darts into opponent from the water (sometime they used even the saya of the "multi-functional" ninja-to).
Bo-ryaku
(strategy)

Unconventional tactics of deception and battle, political plots, and advantageous timing for use of current events were used by Togakure ryu ninja. By employing or influencing seemingly outside forces to bring the enemy around to doing what the ninja wanted him to do, ninja were able to work their will without drawing undue attention to themselves.

Cho ho
(espionage)

The art of spying on the enemy, infiltrating agents to any decision level, collecting vital information or providing misinformation, cultivating a network of intelligence connections or simply to watch over the other's actions. This discipline is also closely connected with escape and concealment (Intonjutsu) and strategy (Bo-ryaku).

Intonjutsu
(escape and concealment)

Intonjutsu is the art of "disappearing" and is comprised with various walking and stealth techniques such as Gotonpo (hiding knowing, using the five elements concepts), and Shinobi-Aruki (silent movement steps and leaps). Ninjutsu practitioners were experts in adapting and improvising in any situation the natural environment advantages, such as water flows, trees
branches, or any natural obstacle. Combined with attention-distracting techniques, disguise and even taijutsu, and based on a deep understanding of all the 5 basic elements of nature, assured them methods to conceal or escape from the most difficult situations.

**Ten-mon**

(meteorology)

Forecasting and taking advantage of weather and seasonal phenomena was an important part of any battle consideration. Practitioners were trained to observe all the subtle signals from the environment in order to predict weather conditions.

**Chi-mon**

(geography)

Chi-mon wasn’t actually the ability to encyclopedically know geographical places, but rather to, inspect, and use the land's characteristics on strategic considerations. Knowing where the sun rises and sets on a battlefield, wind movement, finding the best places for ambushes and use of natural resources such as relief, plants or animals, provided ninja warriors with the right attributes to defeat and win any battle, no matter of land type, territory surface, weather or human forces involved.

As you can see a ninja’s martial education was highly detailed and involved for the time period.
Traditional to Modern Application

Utilizing these outlined structures today’s ninjutsu practitioner must be able to adapt to the Modern/Real world application of the curriculum. Why else practice a martial art that espouses the “art of enduring/surviving” without a modern application and interpretation of these skill sets?

Contained within the Ninjutsu Training Online lessons will be just that, both a traditional and modern application of Ninja Juhakki. In my many years of avid learning and applying the traditional ninja juhakki to my modern combative and real world application, I have realized that not all is a conflict or a combative situation but by applying the skills and strategies I have learned to say for example, in my work or career progression, I have accelerated beyond what I thought was possible. In that situation I was able to apply principles from boryaku and choho, to gain intelligence and utilize that intelligence in various well laid out strategies to succeed in difficult situations.

Modern day survival involves new technologies and reliance on well proven historical strategies and principles. Here in the USA or where ever you may be practicing technology has advanced and we should be utilizing and adapting these new technologies and tools to our practice of ninjutsu skills.
As you go through each of the various lessons contained here on Ninjutsu Training Online, remember that these skills being outline and taught are for you to utilize **TODAY** in protecting your life and those of your loved ones around you. Only you can know what is appropriate to use in any situation and only you can decide on what to utilize in a situation. Trust in the traditions but utilize them in a modern application and you will survive and thrive in your life!