

## NINJA

The ninja is a decidedly Japanese spy, probably influenced in its earliest incarnations by the sections on espionage in Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. However, the ninja as we know him can be traced to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Michinoue-no-Mikoto is usually honored as the founder of this school of espionage and unconventional warfare. The title *ninja* was first granted as a badge of honor to Otomo-no-Saijin, who was given the name *Shinobi*. To this Japanese character, which means "steal in," another character was added to create the word *Ninjutsu*.

**Adventures:** The ninja's adventures cover the range of espionage and unconventional warfare. He is the special operative of medieval Japan, sent to spy behind enemy lines, infiltrate enemy strongholds, and perform the assassinations for which he is justly infamous. Most of the time it is not obvious that a character *is* a ninja, since he is almost always in disguise—the classic black jumpsuit and mask (the *shinobi-shozoku*) being reserved only for the rare frontal assault.

**Characteristics:** The ninja is skilled in numerous forms of armed and unarmed combat, as well as psychological warfare and stealth (in which he reigns supreme). While ninja are justly feared, their abilities are often exaggerated to superhuman levels—largely due to the air of mystery and terror cultivated by ninja and their clansmen over the centuries. Although ninja are willing to work with all sides of a conflict, they never formally join any side and the clans keep to themselves.

**Honor:** The ninja have their own code of honor. While this code shares some qualities in common with the samurai's code of Bushido (such as absolute obedience to one's superiors), it differs in many important ways. Ninja are not above employing any means at their disposal to accomplish their missions;

they have no qualms about using subterfuge, attacking with poison, or even assassinating a helpless target in his sleep.

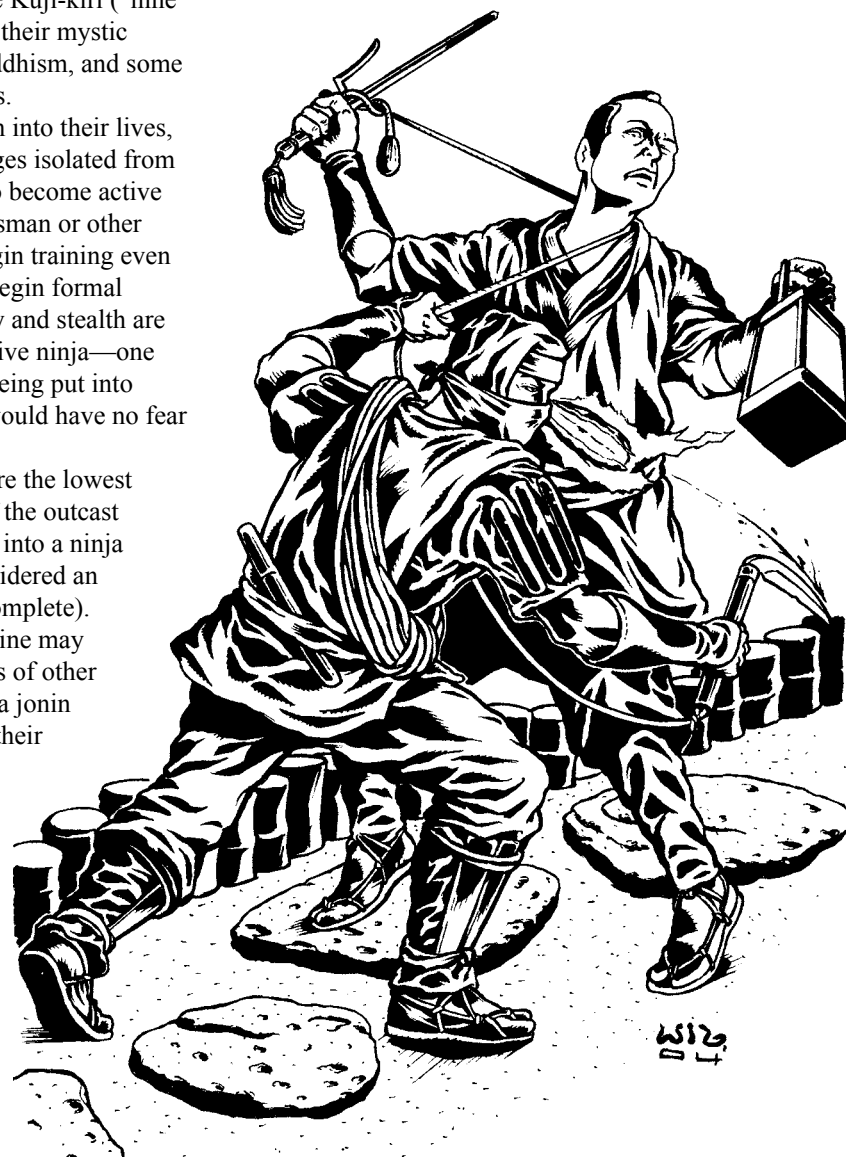
**Religion:** Most ninja practice no religion of any kind. A very few understand that the Kuji-kiri ("nine signs") from which the ninja derive their mystic powers have their origin in Zen Buddhism, and some ninja further explore these mysteries.

**Background:** Most ninja are born into their lives, growing up in small mountain villages isolated from the rest of Japan. Those who seek to become active agents (as opposed to farmers, craftsman or other common members of their clan) begin training even younger than do the samurai, who begin formal training at age 5. Balance, flexibility and stealth are the first skills taught to the prospective ninja—one story tells of young clan members being put into small pots for hours a day so they would have no fear of cramped or dark spaces.

**Bloodline:** Socially, ninja clans are the lowest of the low; all ninja are members of the outcast bloodline (even a character adopted into a ninja clan from a higher bloodline is considered an outcast by the time his training is complete). Only members of the outcast bloodline may take this class at 1<sup>st</sup> level. Characters of other bloodlines may swear allegiance to a jonin and take levels in this class later in their careers only with the Gamemaster's permission. (This should be very rare and, in a strongly historical campaign the Gamemaster could well rule it impossible—historically, "becoming" a ninja is tantamount to "becoming" a gypsy in medieval Europe.)

**Other Classes:** Ninja have an unusual relationship with the samurai. Although the ninja's

lack of honor (as the samurai sees it) makes him despised and distrusted, the samurai still needs the ninja to perform tasks that either a lack of training





(such as infiltration) or code of honor (poisoning a rival) prevents the samurai from undertaking. Thus, while powerful samurai families employ ninja, the two groups still share a mutual distrust bordering on loathing.

The attitudes of other classes towards ninja vary greatly—the ninja might be considered a pariah, a powerful ally, even a hero, depending on the circumstances. The lower classes are more likely to regard the ninja favorably—there are legends of ninja taking up the cause of oppressed commoners against samurai oppression.

**Role:** The ninja is a scout, spy and warrior. Although he never fights in the front lines, he is a highly skilled combatant who uses stealth, subtlety, and surprise to great advantage in combat.

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

Ninja have the following game statistics.

**Abilities:** Dexterity is the most important ability score to the ninja since his ability to remain unseen depends on it. Almost every other ability score is important, depending on the ninja's modus operandi.

**Honor:** Many facets of honor are unimportant to the ninja, and so there is no minimum Honor score required for membership in this profession. Indeed, since the Code of Bushido requires the samurai to be open and somewhat honest about his intentions, ninja are often employed by the samurai to do the things he could not do himself (spying or surprise attacks, for instance).

Despite this disregard for conventional honor, loyalty to the ninja's clan and superiors is extremely important, and a ninja who loses his allegiance of Loyalty to his clan (either by renouncing it or having it revoked) may no longer gain levels in this class.

Note that to first take levels in this class, a character must be of the outcast bloodline (see *Bloodline* above in the ninja class description for more detail on this).

**Hit Die:** 1d6.

**TABLE 2-3: THE NINJA**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+2	+2	+0	Ninjutsu; Silent Kill +1d6; Trap Finding
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+3	+3	+0	Shinobi-jutsu
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+2	+3	+3	+1	Silent Kill +2d6
4 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+4	+4	+1	Shinobi-jutsu (yoko aruki); Endurance
5 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+4	+4	+1	Ki 1/day (Rin, Kyo); Silent Kill +3d6
6 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+5	+5	+2	Shichi-ho-de; +10 ft. movement
7 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+5	+5	+2	Silent Kill +4d6
8 <sup>th</sup>	+6/+1	+6	+6	+2	Goton-no-jutsu
9 <sup>th</sup>	+6/+1	+6	+6	+3	Silent Kill +5d6; Chunin
10 <sup>th</sup>	+7/+2	+7	+7	+3	Ki 2/day (Toh, Sha); +20 ft. movement
11 <sup>th</sup>	+8/+3	+7	+7	+3	Silent Kill +6d6
12 <sup>th</sup>	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Tobi-ashi
13 <sup>th</sup>	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Silent Kill +7d6
14 <sup>th</sup>	+10/+5	+9	+9	+4	Jonin; +30 ft. movement
15 <sup>th</sup>	+11/+6/+1	+9	+9	+5	Ki 3/day (Kai, Jin); Silent Kill +8d6
16 <sup>th</sup>	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Master Jonin
17 <sup>th</sup>	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Silent Kill +9d6
18 <sup>th</sup>	+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Jonin Lord; +40 ft. movement
19 <sup>th</sup>	+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	Silent Kill +10d6
20 <sup>th</sup>	+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Ki 4/day (Retsu, Zai, Zen)

## CLASS SKILLS

The ninja's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (ninja alchemy) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (history, local, nature, nobility and royalty, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (dance), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Rope (Dex).

**Skill Points at 1<sup>st</sup> Level:** (8 + Int modifier) x4.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 8 + Int modifier.

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the ninja.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Weapon Proficiency (Agricultural, Knives, Ninja, Spears and Staves), Armor Proficiency (light).

**Ninjutsu:** All ninja receive training in unarmed combat to increase their lethality (since an assassin might be searched and disarmed at any time during his mission). All ninja receive this feat as a bonus feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

**Silent Kill:** Ninja are taught to quietly eliminate guards during the performance of their duties. Striking from complete surprise, they try to kill the target in such a way they he cannot cry for help or raise an alarm, then pose the body so that the victim appears to be asleep (especially if a sleeping target would not be checked on for some time, as would be the case for the lord of a castle). Alternately, a well-





positioned knife can pin a target to a wall so that a fellow guard would seem to still be dutifully standing watch over his master.

The ninja gains the listed damage bonus against surprised, flat-footed or flanked targets. The ninja does not gain this damage bonus against creatures without a discernable anatomy or which are not subject to critical hits.

If the ninja kills a target with this attack, only a Listen check (DC 30) will alert nearby guards of the attack. At ranges greater than 20 feet, the target of this attack will only be noticed as dead on a Spot check (DC 20), although direct examination always reveals that the victim is dead.

**Trap Finding:** This ability allows the ninja to use the Search skill to find traps with a DC higher than 20.

**Shinobi-jutsu:** The art of stealth or “stealing in,” this technique is a precursor to Ninjutsu itself and is closely studied by all ninja. This ability grants the ninja a bonus equal to his ninja class level to all Climb, Hide, and Move Silently skill checks.

At 4<sup>th</sup> level the ninja learns the yoko aruki, or sideways step. When a ninja uses this ability (which a ninja with this ability can do at full speed, even running), anyone tracking him cannot tell which direction he is traveling. Ninja also use techniques such as the “rub step” to smear their tracks and make them harder to follow (and can learn to use these specialized steps even while moving quickly). A ninja with this ability adds his ninja class level to the DC of any track attempt made against him.

**Endurance:** At 4<sup>th</sup> level, the ninja gains this as a bonus feat.

**Ki:** At 5<sup>th</sup> level, the ninja gains the ability to use his Ki to perform the Kuji-kiri, the “nine signs.” These mystical gestures add a veritable arsenal of magical abilities to the ninja’s potent training in stealth, tactics and psychological warfare. The ninja may use his Ki a number of times each day listed on the class

table (although a 20<sup>th</sup> level character knows all nine signs, he may use his Ki no more than four times each day). Using one of these incantations requires the ninja be able to gesture, but he does not need to speak. Activating each of these incantations is an attack action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Each ability is explained below.

**Rin:** This incantation increases the ninja’s physical strength, granting him a +4 bonus to his Strength for one minute per ninja level.

**Kyo:** This incantation makes the ninja invisible for one minute per ninja level.

**Toh:** This incantation allows the ninja to walk on water for ten minutes per ninja level.

**Sha:** This incantation allows the ninja to heal 3d8 +1 hit points per ninja level. This incantation can be applied to the ninja himself, or to another person by touch.

**Kai:** This incantation completely refreshes the ninja, removing any damage suffered from lack of food or drink as well as instantly healing any damage from the environment (heat, cold etc.). It also removes the fatigued or exhausted condition as if the ninja had rested.

**Jin:** This incantation allows the ninja to detect any falsehood deliberately spoken to him for one minute per ninja level. The ninja may also use this ability to determine the Honor of another character as an instantaneous ability (detecting the Honor of a character ends the ability’s duration).

If this incantation is used in combat, the ninja gains a bonus to all Sense Motive skill checks for one round per ninja level (useful for resisting Feint attempts and using the Sense Motive skill to predict attacks).

**Retsu:** This incantation allows the ninja to unleash his spirit on another. The target of this ability must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 30) or be knocked prone and stunned for 1-4 rounds. Characters who succeed at this saving throw are still knocked prone

for one round.

**Zai:** This incantation heals the ninja (and only the ninja) of 150 points of damage and also removes any and all of the following conditions: ability damaged, blinded, dazzled, deafened, diseased, exhausted, fatigued, nauseated, sickened and poisoned.

**Zen:** This incantation allows the ninja to see through normal and magical darkness, notice secret doors (including those hidden by magic), see through blur and displacement effects, see invisible creatures and objects, see through illusions, and see the true form of polymorphed, changed or transmuted things. This ability has a range of 120 feet and lasts for one minute per ninja level.

**Shichi-ho-de:** At 6<sup>th</sup> level, the ninja masters the “seven ways of going.” This is one of the ninja’s most powerful weapons, as it allows him to travel Japan freely, walking into castles right under the nose of guards determined to stop him. The seven ways of going are seven core disguises, each pulled from a common profession in Japanese society that is often encountered on the road. These disguises, carefully chosen to attract as little suspicion as possible, are a traveling actor, a wandering priest, a mountain priest, a Buddhist priest, a traveling entertainer, a farmer and a merchant. With these disguises, the ninja can travel freely throughout the country without drawing undue attention. By posing as a merchant bringing food to a castle or an entertainer arriving for a party, the ninja can even gain admittance to secure fortresses where his target feels secure.

When adopting a disguise from the above list, the ninja gains a bonus to his Disguise skill equal to his ninja level. He may also adopt these disguises in one minute (10 rounds—a disguise normally takes 10-30 minutes to construct).

**Goton-no-jutsu:** At 8<sup>th</sup> level, the ninja learns the “five escaping techniques” to aid his retreat after a successful assassination. A ninja skilled in this art practices the technique of freezing instantly in



place to trick passing guards into thinking he is a scarecrow, or curling up into a ball to be passed by as a boulder on the side of the road. Water can also be used as hiding places or escape routes for the ninja, with air-filled bladders, the hollow scabbard of the ninja-to, or even a hastily cut bamboo shaft providing air while the ninja waits underwater for pursuers to pass by.

This ability allows the ninja to make Hide checks even when under direct observation (he does not need to create a distraction).

**Chunin:** At 9<sup>th</sup> level, the ninja is offered the position of chunin or “middle man.” These sub-leaders of the ninja clan give assignments to their lower-ranking counterparts. Sometimes they embark on extremely dangerous assignments themselves, flanked by lower-ranking ninja who serve as a distraction, setting fires or firing arrows while the chunin slips close to the target for the kill.

This class ability is identical to the Leadership feat except that a character with this ability does not gain a Cohort. All the chunin’s followers are ninja of the appropriate levels.

Some ninja chose not to become chunin; such a character may take a bonus feat instead of this class ability.

**Tobi-ashi:** This is the ninja’s legendary “flying step.” Ninja seem able to arrive at a destination far faster than would be expected; depending on the source, this is attributed to either black magic or simply peak physical condition coupled with an intimate knowledge of the land. This ability allows the ninja to hustle (traveling 6 miles per hour) for a full twelve hours without rest. The ninja also suffers no movement penalty for rough terrain, meaning he can cover 72 miles per day. The ninja can maintain this speed for up to one day per ninja level before he tires and must slow to his normal rate of movement.

**Jonin:** If the ninja selected the Chunin ability at 9<sup>th</sup> level, he is invited at 14<sup>th</sup> level into the upper

echelons of his clan’s leadership to become a jonin (“upper man”). This ability adds +5 to the ninja’s Leadership score and grants him a Cohort in the form of a chunin assistant.

If the ninja did not select the Chunin ability, he instead gains a bonus feat in place of this ability.

**Master Jonin:** As Jonin, except that the ninja’s Leadership score is increased by +5 again and he suffers no Leadership penalty for the death of his followers.

If the ninja did not select the Chunin ability, he instead gains a bonus feat in place of this ability.

**Jonin Lord:** As Master Jonin, except the ninja has now risen to become the head of his own clan. His Leadership score is increased by another +5 (Leadership scores above 25 grant double the number of followers for each 5 full points above 25) and he gains a second Cohort.

If the ninja did not select the Chunin ability, he instead gains a bonus feat in place of this ability.



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