



UNDERSTANDING NINJA HISTORY

While you are reading this material a television program, based upon it, is being broadcast in Japan.

The program is entitled "The Museum of Historical Understanding of the Intriguing Japan: Hattori and the Ninjas of the Urawasa Clan during the Senkoku (wartime) period" — starring Mr. Masaaki Hatsumi.

During this period of war—Senkoku—, under the shadow of battle of the warriors, there existed a group of Urawasa professionals. These people became the eyes, ears and fangs of the warriors. This armed group of "professionals-in-the-dark" were known as..... Ninja.

The Chief—Jonan—of the Ninja group held absolute control over his subordinate Ninjas. Loyal obedience from these fellow Ninjas multiplied his being as if he had thousands of feet, ears and eyes because he was able to direct their actions. The Jonan's name was Hattori Hanzo; of the clan—Ryu—Hattori Ninja.

Masanari Hanzo, of the Hattori family, learned martial arts and Ninjutsu from his father, Yasunaga, from the time he was a little child. He virtually grew up in the practice and tradition of martial arts. When Ieyasu Tokugawa raided Uzichijo of Migawa at night, Masanari Hanzo—who was only sixteen years old at the time—earned a commendation for his talents on his first time in the battle field. He was thus given the nickname of—Hanzo the Ghost—and was well recognized by Ieyasu Tokugawa. Even to our present day the legendary name of Hanzo is still being sung everywhere at the places of Kawauchi.



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The Tokugawa Hall was well-liked and respected by people. So was Hattori Hanzo who was not only known as—Hanzo the Ghost—but also as—Hanzo The Great Lancer—a person of tremendous strength!

Mitsuhide Akechi, a subordinate officer of Nobunaga Oda, assaulted and killed his superior—Nobunaga Oda at the Honno Temple. On the second day of June, in the 10th year of Tensho (a.d. 1582), Ieyasu Tokugawa (who later became Shogun) was on his way back to Kyoto after a sight seeing trip to the border. Since he had not included a large enough number of guards in his party he was open to attack by the army of Akechi who could block the road and lay in ambush.

Therefore among Tokugawa's top officers different opinions emerged in a discussion of how to best protect their superior. The general opinion agreed upon was that when Ieyasu returned to his birth place, Migawa, his guards and



Adult Masanari Hattori was a greatly feared and well-known lancer.

Ieyasu Tokugawa at the time he fled to the Okasakijo



followers should be gathered and should take the initiative and attack the army of Akechi.

In order to return to Migawa, Tokugawa was forced to pass through Iga—a place heavily infested with two criminal elements; the Sanzoku (mountain bandits) and the Nobushi (vagrant warriors). There was a great deal of concern regarding his ability to pass through this area, enroute to Migawa, with the small number of guards that Ieyasu brought with him.

The question that was most often asked was, “What can be done if he really is attacked and his safety threatened?” Two high-ranking officers—Tadakatsu Honda and Chuji Sakai—who were with Ieyasu, pondered the problem.

During their contemplation of the matter Tadakatsu was made aware the Hattori Hanzo was born in the region of Iga. He called Hanzo to him and asked him if he had any plan or tactic to protect

Tokugawa. Hanzo indicated that he had a good plan in mind for the situation.

It seems that other than the Iga Ninja, there was another group of Ninja called, "Koga" from whom they could seek help. Hanzo had a friend within the Koga Ninja—Shiro Tarao—who would come to Hanzo's assistance with his fellow Ninja when needed. They could be reached quickly and easily with special Ninja signals. They could employ the Ninjutsu—*Five Ways of Fleeing Skills*—and set up a Ninjutsu defensive formation on the road for protection. They could also bring Ieyasu safely to the Okazakijo using the special—*Ninjutsu running technique*.

Later the numerous merits of Hattori Hanzo were well recognized and he was placed in charge of Hassenishi warriors. Thus Hattori Hanzo was given the name, Hattori Hanzo Iwaminokami.

In the movie I play the part of Yasunaga, the father of



Diligently learning the use of the sword. Here, Masanari stands in the posture of Hasso Gengan

Young Masanari practices the skill of Tekagi, defensive hand device.



Hattori Hanzo, who gives him strict instruction in Ninjutsu and martial arts as a boy. The following scene from the movie deals with the training of Hanzo when he is young. The letter "Y" will indicate the father speaking and "H", Hanzo.

Y:

"Masanari, you must practice well for you will eventually become my heir and will follow in my footsteps. You will be the head of Ninjutsu within the Hattori Family and the one to foster the unity of the people of Iga.

H:

"A unity binder." (repeated in singing)

Y:

"the 'Nin' of the Ninja is, in the keenly sharpened mind, a living thing!"

H:

"In the well-sharpened mind, it becomes a living being.

The young Ninja, Masanari Hattori, was to become the second generation of the Hattori

Hanzo. As in the past, the name was given from, and by, the father. For instance, the son of Hattori Nazo Yasunaga was given the name of Hattori Hanzo.



The scene has changed to one where instruction is being given in the skills and uses of gun powder.

Y:

“Among various Ninjutsu tools the use of gun powder is most powerful and very efficient as used in *Fire Fleeing Techniques*. One must learn it well to be a complete Ninja.”

“*Donohi*—fire body— a tool to project fire”

“*Ryusei*—meteor—the shooting dagger and the arrow used for signaling”

“Hand pitched iron bullets (hand grenades)”

“The buried fire (mines)

“—and many others.

Knowing how to utilize each of these effectively makes one expert in the handling of gun powder.

H:

“Possessing expertise in gun powder handling—”



Fleeing by smoke screen.

With the flow of the smoke, Masanari walks in a type of floating step to blend with the flowing pattern.



Y:

“Furthermore, to a Ninja, Astronomy, as well as Geography are considered two of the most important bodies of knowledge to possess. To know them both is to know the life forces of nature.”

H:

“Knowing the power of them both is considered to be knowing the nature of life...”

Y:

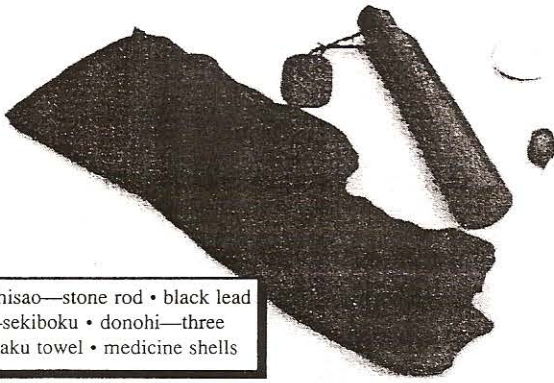
“Yes, absolutely!”

“Practicing Ninjutsu when the Moon is full, or on a dark, moon-less night—

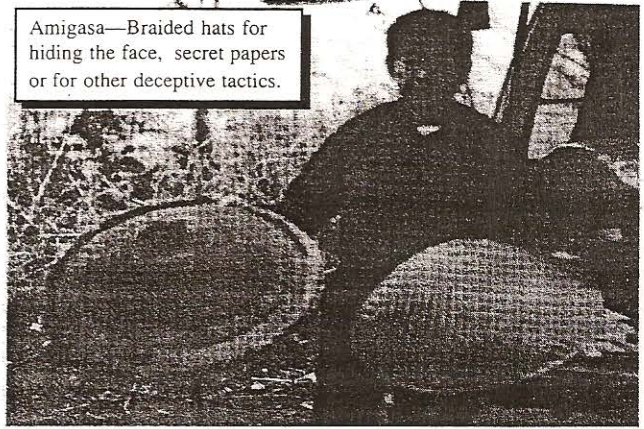
Knowing when the tide is high and how to read the flow of the current—being capable of determining direction through use of the stars—

Being able to see living things such as flowers and grass and understanding herbal medicine—recognizing the winds and the forces of the seasons—the ability to see and observe people and animals—all make up important parts of *Hito No Jutsu*—the

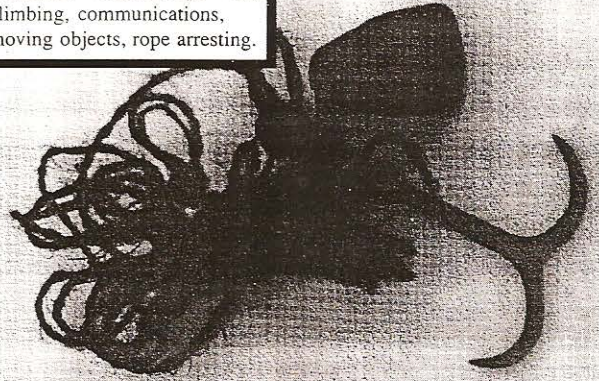
Ishisao—stone rod • black lead
—sekiboku • donohi—three
shaku towel • medicine shells



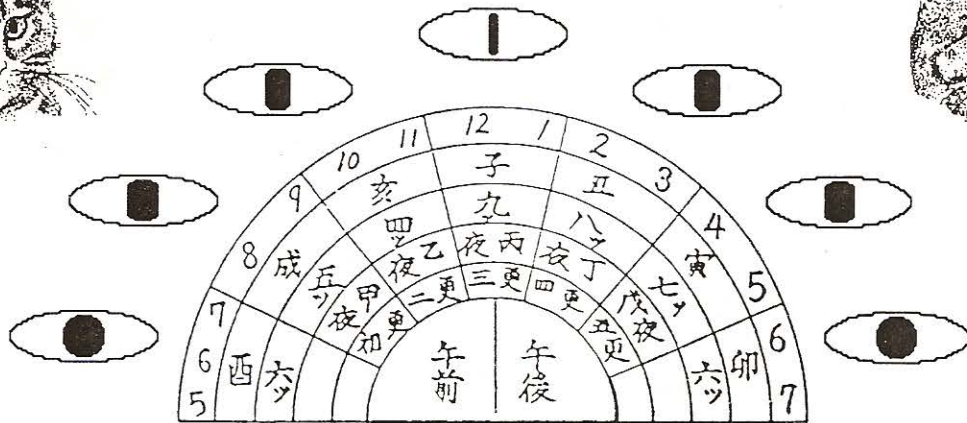
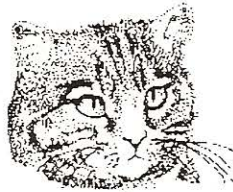
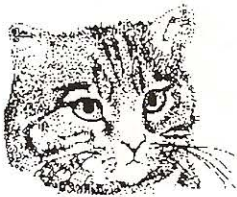
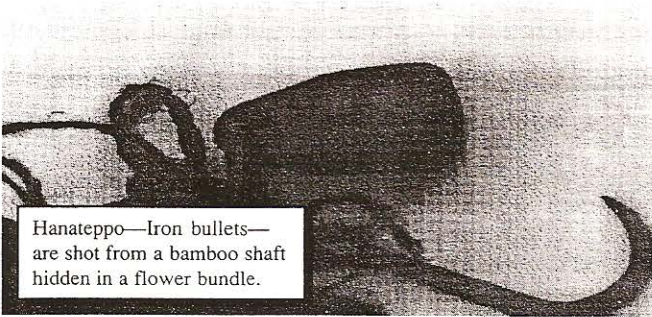
Amigasa—Braided hats for
hiding the face, secret papers
or for other deceptive tactics.



Kaginawa—Shinobi rope • For
climbing, communications,
moving objects, rope arresting.



Hanateppo—Iron bullets—
are shot from a bamboo shaft
hidden in a flower bundle.



Cat's eye Table of Time.
"See how the eye pupils change
from large to very small?"



Neko no me no jutsu—Skill of
the cat's eyes. Used as ciphers
in a type of Ninjutsu code.

Skill of the Human.”

H”

“Yes, the skill of humans and of all living things.”

Y:

“One of the distinctive examples of such skills is the *Neko No Me No Jutsu*—The Skill, or knowledge, of the Cat’s Eyes. Six of them are round—four to eight of them persimmon shaped—nine of them needle shaped.”

“What do you think they are, Masanari?”

“They are like ciphers which change shape with the changing light in the iris of a cat’s eye. A type of code often used in Ninjutsu.”

“Also, the cat can tell the coming of rain.”

H:

“Well, then, what is *Rokkai*?”

Y:

“*Rokkai*, also called the *Shinobi Rokkai*, are the bodily tools and equipment that the Ninja use in the practice of Ninjutsu.”

“They are not the so-called tools used to earn a living.

For instance, the *Amigasa* (a kind of braided hat) was usually used to hide one’s face. The *Kaginawa* is another such tool. It is a kind of rope made from womens’ hair. When utilized with hooks it can be used to climb up to high places or down to low ones.”

“There was another kind of weapon which was used when fleeing. It is called *Ishisao* which means, stone rod. Not only could it be used as a weapon, but it could be used to write secret codes due to it’s whiteness. Moreover, this white stone was also used to make medicine for curing illness. It could even be combined with other materials and made into sleeping potions and a lethal poison.”

“Amazingly, the *Donohi* was not used as a source of fire. Some time ago it was used in life-saving and resuscitation. It was used for moxibustion and maintaining body temperature and as a stimulant to revive those who were about

to die.”

“Next there was the *Sanjaku Tenugi*—the three *Shaku* hand towel, which was used to cover one’s face. It could also be used to filter muddy water for drinking after first soaking it in vinegar.”

H:

“Father, thank you very much. I have learned a great deal from your instruction.”

Y:

“You should learn all these things well and use them to serve your Lord and uphold justice. For justice and your Clan.....”



Well, my friends and readers, have you learned a little bit more about the history of the Ninja from this portion of —

"Understanding The History Of The Ninja?"