

# THE NINJA

To the Empire, ninja do not exist. They are simply peasant superstition passed down from generation to generation in farmer villages and old women's tales. Though tales of shadow-walking ninja persist to this day, noble samurai dismiss them as the result of paranoia or as lazy guards' excuses.

Those who still walk in shadow would have it no other way.

**Adventures:** Invariably, ninja are spies, assassins, or both. Like rogues, they are masters of subterfuge, stealth, thievery, and lies. Unlike rogues, they understand the deeper mysteries of the shadows, and are far better at misdirection and murder. Because of this, and the Empire's view of ninja, they generally fit into a samurai party under false pretenses, or into a party of ninja. When a ninja ventures forth, it will always be to cause disorder and confusion among his lord's enemies. This can range from simple assassination to a more prolonged campaign to disrupt activities in an area. Some ninja are not assassins at all, but merely serve as spies for their lord. These spies are generally more honorable than their assassin brethren. Most non-Scorpion ninja in service to a lord fill the role of a spy, and use their skills for little else than simple information gathering, thievery, and causing confusion.

**Characteristics:** Ninja are impossible to classify as a group by personality. Because every Rokugani publicly despises them, a ninja must keep his actions secret, or face execution — one of the lowest forms of dishonor. Many ninja in service to a daimyo adopt a public face to hide their activities behind, and are accepted among the samurai caste. Being able to adapt different personas, anticipate the movements of their enemy, and acquit themselves well enough in a fight to survive are the skills that separate the ninja that are feared from the ninja that are dead.

**Honor/Alignment:** The motivations for a ninja's actions can be anywhere from serving the wishes of his lord to simply working for his own gain. A ninja can be of any non-lawful alignment, though they are generally evil. The actions of a ninja, however, are nothing short of dishonorable, no matter who their lord is or why they do their tasks.

**Background:** Ninja are usually without clan affiliation, except students of the Shosuro Dojo in the Scorpion lands. Though the Scorpion take great pains to train their ninja well, Non-Scorpion ninja are generally as effective as the Shosuro. This usually is due to natural talent more than effective training — there are many more Scorpion ninja than ronin ninja. However, every Clan has at least one minor lord who employs the shadowy services of the ninja.

**Races:** Ninja are strictly human. Naga and Ratlings practice stealth on a daily basis, with the Ratlings stealing from humans as much as they speak with them. However, neither race cares enough about assassination and sabotage to ever put their efforts into training ninja.

**Other Classes:** Ninja must be cautious in their associations with other classes, as one false step could lead to their execution. Ninja also have rather skewed views of honor, though that is no reason they cannot find a place within an adventuring party. Those ninja with a samurai lord see themselves as the daimyo's worthiest servants, willing to give up their own honor for that of their lord. In any case, ninja tend to multi-class in order to create more complete false identities, or in rare cases become ninja after being dishonored as a samurai. Many Scorpion "samurai" are actually ninja (or multi-class fighter-ninja) in order to further the goals of their clan. A Scorpion is not above the law of Rokugan, however, should he be caught walking the dishonorable path of the ninja.

## Examples of Ninja in Legend of the Five Rings:

Shosuro Nishiko, Matsu Hiroru, Mamoru, Bayushi Aramoro, Shosuro Chian, Bayushi Yokuan, Hirariko, Hoseki.

## GAME RULE INFORMATION

Ninja have the following game statistics.

**Abilities:** Dexterity and Intelligence are the most important scores for ninja, who are almost constantly in a position where they must stay on their toes mentally and physically. Extra skill points foster a ninja's adaptability to any given situation, and a high Dexterity will aid the ninja in a fight and when the time to run comes.

**Honor/Alignment:** Any non-lawful, dishonorable.

**Hit Die:** d6.

**Class Skills:** A ninja's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, Exclusive Skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pocket (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read Lips (Int, exclusive skill), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex). (See the *Player's Handbook™* for skill descriptions.)

**Skill Points at 1st Level:** (4 + Int Modifier) × 4.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the ninja.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Ninja are proficient with the following weapons: Dagger, Dart, Shuriken, Katana, Ninja-to, Chain, Kusari-gama, and Blowgun. Though ninja are able fighters, this comes more from their training in hitting pressure points and finding weaknesses in another's defense than from sheer martial prowess. Ninja are not proficient with any armor or shields, relying on freedom of movement and highly trained reflexes to keep them out of danger. When wearing armor that incurs a penalty check greater than 0, the ninja loses several of his abilities, as noted below.

Armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armor or equipment carried.

**Sneak Attack:** If a ninja attacks an opponent who is unable to defend himself effectively, the ninja can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Any time the ninja's target would be denied his Dexterity bonus to AC (whether he actually has a Dex bonus or not), or when the ninja flanks the target, the ninja's attack deals extra damage. The extra damage is +1d6 at 1st level and an additional 1d6 every two levels thereafter. Should the ninja score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. (See *Attack Roll Modifiers in the Player's Handbook™* for combat situations in which the ninja flanks an opponent or the opponent loses his Dex bonus to AC.)

Ranged attacks can only count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. The ninja can't strike with deadly accuracy from beyond that range.

With a sap (blackjack) or an unarmed strike, the ninja can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead of normal damage. He cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty, because he must make optimal use of his weapon in order to execute a sneak attack. (See *Subdual Damage in the Player's Handbook™*)

**TABLE 1-6: THE NINJA**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+0	+2	Sneak attack +1d6, Ninja Dodge +1
2nd	+2	+0	+0	+3	Poison Use
3rd	+3	+1	+1	+3	Sneak attack +2d6, Uncanny Dodge
4th	+4	+1	+1	+4	Speed of Darkness
5th	+5	+1	+1	+4	Sneak attack +3d6, Ninja Dodge +2
6th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+5	Uncanny Dodge
7th	+7/+2	+2	+2	+5	Sneak attack +4d6
8th	+8/+3	+2	+2	+6	Shadow Run
9th	+9/+4	+3	+3	+6	Sneak attack +5d6
10th	+10/+5	+3	+3	+7	Blind Fight, Ninja Dodge +3
11th	+11/+6/+1	+3	+3	+7	Sneak attack +6d6
12th	+12/+7/+2	+4	+4	+8	Deflect Arrows
13th	+13/+8/+3	+4	+4	+8	Sneak attack +7d6
14th	+14/+9/+4	+4	+4	+9	
15th	+15/+10/+5	+5	+5	+9	Sneak attack +8d6, Ninja Dodge +4
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+10	
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	Sneak attack +9d6
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	Sneak attack +10d6
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Ninja Dodge +5

A ninja can only sneak attack a living creature with a discernible anatomy — undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is also not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The ninja must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The ninja cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment (*See the Player's Handbook™*) or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

**Ninja Dodge:** The ninja gains this special variation of the Dodge feat for free at first level. Effectively, this ability has the same effect as Dodge, except that the ninja gains the ability multiple times. At fifth, tenth, fifteenth, and twentieth level, the bonus granted by Ninja Dodge is raised by one. At fifth level, the ninja may also choose to dodge multiple opponents in a round, declaring his dodge feat during his action. The ninja may choose to use some or all of this bonus to dodge each attacker; a ninja with +3 dodge may choose to use Ninja Dodge to gain +2 AC against one attacker, then +1 against another in the same round, +3 against a single attacker, or gain +1 AC against three attackers in the single round. Unlike the normal Dodge feat, this ability may not be used when wearing armor with a check penalty greater than 0. This ability stacks with the bonus provided by the actual Dodge feat. A ninja may take feats with Dodge as a prerequisite if he has Ninja Dodge, but may not use these feats when wearing armor with a check penalty greater than 0.

**Poison Use:** Ninja are trained in the use of poison and, beginning at 2nd level, never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

**Uncanny Dodge:** At third level, the ninja gains the ability to react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. He retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) despite being caught flat-footed or being struck by an invisible attacker. He still loses his Dexterity bonus if immobilized.

At 6th level, the ninja can no longer be flanked; he can react to opponents on opposite sides of him as easily as he can react to a single attacker. This defense denies other ninja and rogues the ability to use flank attacks to sneak attack him. The exception to this defense is that another ninja or rogue at least four levels higher than the character can flank him (and thus sneak attack him).

**Speed of Darkness:** The strength of a ninja's attack lies in his ability to strike quickly at exposed areas and fade away. At fourth level and beyond, the ninja adds his Intelligence modifier to his initiative roll.

**Shadow Run:** The ninja gains a speed bonus equal to his Constitution modifier  $\times$  5 when wearing no or light armor (and not carrying a heavy load). This bonus is to his base speed, before modifiers such as taking the double move action are figured in.

**Blind-fight:** At tenth level, the ninja gains this feat for free.

**Deflect Arrows:** At 12th level, the ninja gains this feat for free, even if he does not have Improved Unarmed Strike. This ability may not be used when wearing armor with a check penalty above 0.

### EX-NINJA

A ninja who becomes lawful or honorable may no longer progress in levels as a ninja, though he retains all class abilities. Note that judicious use of the ninja class abilities should quickly return the character to a state in which he can continue to progress as a ninja.

### SCORPION NINJA STARTING PACKAGE — SHOSURO FAMILY

**Armor:** No armor.

**Weapons:** Ninjato (1d8, crit 19–20, medium, slashing); Aiguchi (1d4, crit 19–20, 1 lb., tiny, piercing).

**Skill Selection:** Pick a number of skills equal to 4 + Int modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor
Bluff	4	Cha	—
Gather Information	4	Cha	—
Listen	4	Wis	—
Move Silently	4	Dex	—
Search	4	Int	—
Spot	4	Wis	—

**Feat:** Skill Focus: Move Silently.

**Bonus Feat:** Many Masks (Ancestor: Shosuro Furuyari) (*Ancestor feats are introduced in Oriental Adventures, and many more are introduced in Rokugan.*)

**Starting Wealth:** 1d6 $\times$ 10

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