

HEROES OF THE FAR EAST

ninja

I T IS ODD. PEOPLE ALWAYS look nervous when they see me. But they have it reversed. They should be worried when they cannot see me.

Samurai may rule the open battle field, but not all battles are won in the open. Sabotage, espionage, and assassination are the tools of the ninja, and these can do far more damage than a clever flanking maneuver. Those obsessed with codes of honor often look down upon the ninja for what they perceive as shameful tactics, and many believe all ninja are ruthless mercenaries who sell their services to the highest bidder. While true of some ninja, many ninja dedicate themselves to serving a particular lord or to protecting the less fortunate.

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This article presents two new careers. The ninja is a master of shadow, with powers of stealth and invisibility; the shinobi is a master of disguise and poison. You'll also find new equipment, like the ninja-to, smoke bombs, and shuriken. This is a fantastical, supernatural interpretation of the ninja; for a more grounded approach, see the assassin and burglar careers.

Ninja are trained in secret academies controlled by powerful clans, and they begin their training at a young age. New students are usually the children of ninja clan members, but they occasionally take in outsiders who show promise. The arduous training focuses the ninja's body, mind, and spirit. They learn battle tactics, stealth, and how to cloud their foes' minds. Rumors abound that ninja possess a host of supernatural powers, such as walking on water, changing into beasts, and controlling fire. While some of this may be true, ninja also deliberately spread misinformation to confuse and intimidate enemies.

The life of a ninja offers great reward, but also great danger. Not only do ninja undertake missions pitting them against a superior number of foes, they must also be vigilant of ninja from rival clans that may be lurking in any shadow.

Many ninja strive to keep their true identity secret even from their closest friends and family, both for their own safety as well as the safety of others.

NINJA (1D6 YEARS)

You trained in a ninja clan, and learned the power of shadows.

Prerequisites: must not have left this career, except for grades in the shinobi career*.

Attributes: AGI +1, END +1, INT +1, WIL* +1

Skill Choices: *swords, knives, reactions, meditation, [physical], [subterfuge], martial arts*

Physical Skill Base. You gain the following skills at one rank: *stealth, climbing, acrobatics, martial arts*. This does not increase an existing skill beyond 1 rank.

No Misstep (requires stealth skill). Your stealth skills are legendary. You always reroll 1s when making an AGI check to hide.



Vanish Before the Blade (requires Walk Unseen).

As a reaction, when an attacker is about to strike you, you become invisible. If the attack misses you, you move half your SPEED. You remain invisible until the start of your next turn.

Shadow Step (requires Walk Unseen). You are able to step from one shadow to another, using an action to teleport up to 30' when in darkness. This action requires expenditure of one LUC die.

Shuriken Flurry (requires knives skill). You may spend all your actions to throw a flurry of 6 shuriken at your target (only one attack roll is needed). On a successful hit, the target becomes disoriented (moderate Alertness/Stun track).

Natural Climber (requires climbing skill 3). You gain a CLIMB speed equal to your regular SPEED.

Ninjutsu Master (requires martial arts skill 3). Your base unarmed damage increases to 2d6. If it is already 2d6 or higher, you gain no benefit from this exploit.

Walk Unseen (requires No Misstep). Once per day you can spend an action to become invisible for up to one minute.

*In settings where the CHI attribute is used, the ninja and shinobi gain CHI +1 instead of WIL +1.

Water Walk. Once per day, you may walk on water as though it were solid ground for up to 1 minute.

Greater Water Walk (requires Water Walk). You may walk on water at any time as though it were solid ground.

Darksight. You can see in darkness as though it were normal light.

SHINOBI (1D6 YEARS)

Your ninja training specialized in disguise and infiltration.

Prerequisites: must not have left this career, except for grades in the ninja career*.

Attributes: AGI +1, CHA +1, INT +1, WIL* +1

Skill Choices: *swords, knives, reactions, meditation, [subterfuge], martial arts, herbalism*

Infiltration Skill Base. You gain the following skills at 1 rank: *disguise, stealth, thievery, escape artist*. This does not increase an existing skill above 1 rank.

Perfect Disguise (requires Disguise skill). As long as you concentrate (which requires one action per round) your disguise is perfect enough to fool any but close family members.

Facechanger (requires Perfect Disguise). Once per day you may change your face to exactly resemble somebody else. This takes two actions and lasts for up to one hour.

Poisoner. You are an expert at poison use, and gain 5 SOAK (poison).

Poison Immunity (requires Poisoner). Your resistance to poisons increases. You become immune to poison damage.



Water Breathing. You can breathe underwater as though it were normal air.

Poisoned Weapon (requires Poisoner). You can spend an hour per day creating 1d6 doses of poison which can be applied to a ninja-to or a shuriken. The poison, on a successful hit which does damage, continues to cause 1d6 poison damage per round for 1d6 rounds. Applying the poison takes two actions, and it lasts for five minutes once applied. If not used, poison doses become inert after 24 hours.

The ninja and shinobi are permitted one career change (from ninja to shinobi, or vice versa). If they leave either career (other than for their one career change), they cannot ever return to either.

WEAPONS & GEAR

A major part of the ninja's mystique comes from her gear. The ninja-to is the legendary weapon of the ninja, as are shuriken, smoke bombs, and more. These items are part of the ensemble of equipment which helps a ninja appear almost magical in capabilities.

Ninja-to. The ninja-to is the preferred weapon of the ninja. A shortsword in size and statistics, it is the perfect weapon for the quick kill, and causes critical hits on double-sixes rather than triple-sixes. These weapons are unique to each ninja clan, and any non-member who uses such a weapon is marked for death by all ninja.

Shuriken. Shuriken are small throwing stars. They are not deadly projectiles, used more to distract or to deliver poisons. A shuriken shares the statistics of a dart.

Smoke bomb. The smoke bomb is an important part of the ninja's arsenal. When thrown as an action, it creates a burst (20' diameter) of obscuring smoke. Any creature which enters or begins its turn in the smoke is considered half-blind until the start of its next turn (can only see 10'; -4 DEFENSE).

Metsubishi (blinding powder). Metsubusi is used by ninja to temporarily blind their foes. Often kept in a hollowed-out egg (*happo*), or bamboo tube, it is thrown in the face of the enemy. On a successful hit, the target is rendered blind until he shakes off the condition

Makibishi (caltrops). When caltrops are thrown, they fill a 10' diameter area which becomes difficult terrain.

Item	Cost (gc)	Weight (lbs)
Makibishi	20	1
Metsubishi	75	1
Ninja-to	50	3
Shuriken	1	0.5
Smoke bomb	100	1

THE NINJA'S ROLE

Contrary to popular belief, the ninja and shinobi were used more for espionage and sabotage than for assassination. While they can certainly be very effective killers, they come into their own when engaged in spy or reconnaissance missions. Ninja are renowned for being able to enter the enemy's stronghold, gather intelligence, or engage in sabotage. Ninja were often mercenaries, clans hired to accomplish missions during times of war.

The terms *ninja* (忍者) and *shinobi* (忍び) technically mean the same thing. In the WAIN system, the two terms are used to distinguish between specialists in shadow and in disguise.

Other careers useful for a ninja are the assassin (*hitogoroshi*), burglar (*gōtō*), and herbalist (*kanpō-i*). At the GM's option, characters may be permitted to take these three careers as part of their ninja training. In addition, the ninja or shinobi should consider all Eastern weapons and equipment from *WAIN Fantasy Equipment*.

The effects of invisibility are described in *WAIN Elements of Magic*. This is a brief recap for convenience.

Invisibility grants +3d6 to stealth attempts. A failed stealth attempt means that the 'viewer' knows where the invisible creature is due to non-visual clues - sound, tracks, moving items, scent, etc. - but cannot actually see it.

When you can't see your target, but know where it is, it gets the benefit of cover (-2d6 to attack it).

Invisibility should not be confused with blindness, which is an entirely separate condition.