



Ninja: 1,000 Years of the Shadow Warrior

By John Man

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The first major pop history of the Japanese stealth assassins, John Man's *Ninja* is a meticulously researched, entertaining blend of mythology, anthropology, travelogue, and history of the legendary shadow warriors.

Spies, assassins, saboteurs, and secret agents, Ninja have become the subject of countless legends that continue to enthrall us in modern movies, video games, and comics—and their arts are still practiced in our time by dedicated acolytes who study the ancient techniques.

Ninja: 1,000 Years of the Shadow Warrior, by British historian John Man, is as colorful and intriguing as the warriors it so vividly brings to life.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Countless numbers of teens (or even preteens) know ninja warriors only as the masked throwers of star-shaped, razor-edged projectiles, as seen in video games, comic books, graphic novels, or films. Man, a British historian and travel writer who has written extensively on Asia, strives to separate that mythological image from the reality of this mysterious warrior caste. Man traces the origin of the ninja to the fifteenth century, when Japan was wracked by a series of civil wars. To survive, they learned the arts of espionage, disguise, and infiltration of enemy strongholds to gather information and attack opponents. Initially, they formed tight bonds of loyalty to each other; eventually, they became the tools of local rulers, which placed them in opposition to each other. Man effectively demolishes much of the nonsensical romanticism that surrounds views of the ninja in the West. Unfortunately, he comes close to fostering his own counter mythology by suggesting they were valiant, honorable victims of historical change. Still, this is a useful, popular history suitable for general readers. --Jay Freeman

Review

“An **immensely entertaining** history, packed with **splendidly blood-thirsty tales** of derring-do, feats of endurance and self-sacrifice.” (The Guardian)

“*Ninja* is a racy popular history of a difficult and often mythologised subject and should appeal to the armchair warrior in us all.” (Literary Review)

“One could ask for no better storyteller than John Man.” (Simon Sebag Montefiore, author of *Jerusalem: The Biography*)

“An intriguing look at the enigmatic world of the deadly Asian assassin. ... Fascinating. ... A thoroughly researched, appealing examination of the original ‘men in black.’” (Kirkus Reviews)

“As colorful and intriguing as the warriors it so vividly brings to life.” (Bookreporter.com)

From the Back Cover

In this revelatory book, acclaimed author John Man's thrilling historical account brings to life the world of the ninjas, the Japanese "shadow warriors," whose otherworldly skills as assassins and spies still seize our imaginations like few characters before or since. *Ninja* is the first major history of these legendary masters of stealth warfare.

Out of the violent chaos of medieval Japan, a remarkable band of peasants from the mountainous Iga and Koga provinces rose to become some of the world's most feared warriors. These poor villagers trained to perfect the art of *ninjutsu*—the deadly union of martial skill and deception—to defend themselves against far more powerful warlords, samurai, bandits, and warrior monks who sought to exploit them. They disciplined their minds as much as their bodies—sitting under waterfalls to purify themselves and adhering to mystical religious beliefs. By 1500, the ninja's extraordinary talents, from infiltrating cliff-top castles to carrying out daring strikes for the imperial shoguns, were in demand across Japan.

Today, however, these real-life ninjas are overshadowed by legend and pop-culture caricatures. Could they fly? Climb walls? Cast spells? Survive being boiled alive? Or make themselves invisible? Drawing on a

wealth of historical texts, local Japanese sources, and his long study of medieval Asia, John Man unravels the authentic ninjas, taking us back a millennium to their origins in China, through to their heyday in the bloody civil wars that ended with the unification of Japan in 1600.

But the story does not end there. Man argues the Japanese tradition of shadow warfare survived quietly for centuries before reemerging through the Nakano Spy School, the elite twentieth-century military-intelligence academy whose graduates operated one of the most extensive spy networks during World War II. Now in his nineties, one former Nakano soldier named Onoda Hiroo may be the "last of the ninjas."

Compelling and absorbing, *Ninja* propels us from feudal Japan to the modern day, revealing at last the fascinating true history behind one of the world's most enduring legends.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Beverly McKeever:

Here thing why that Ninja: 1,000 Years of the Shadow Warrior are different and trusted to be yours. First of all studying a book is good but it really depends in the content than it which is the content is as delicious as food or not. Ninja: 1,000 Years of the Shadow Warrior giving you information deeper and in different ways, you can find any e-book out there but there is no publication that similar with Ninja: 1,000 Years of the Shadow Warrior. It gives you thrill reading journey, its open up your eyes about the thing that will happened in the world which is possibly can be happened around you. It is easy to bring everywhere like in park your car, café, or even in your means home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of Ninja: 1,000 Years of the Shadow Warrior in e-book can be your substitute.

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Jessica Sarmiento:

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