Analysis of the Applicability of Ninja Intelligence and Arts in the Contemporary World

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Abstract:

Ninja existed approximately from the 14th century to roughly the 17th century as an occupation for conducting intelligence and military work for generals in Japan. On one hand, the term 'ninja' is widely known around the world, however on the other hand, the real feature of ninja is not well known. The reality of shinobi was a military intelligence officer who gains information sometimes by infiltrating into adversary territory, communicating with others pretending to be merchants or using other disguises. Ninja also worked as soldiers and mainly conducted surprise attacks such as ambushes or incendiarism tactics. Ninja were, therefore, people who blurred into the dark night to collect intelligence and/or conduct military attacks behind the spotlight of history.

In spite of its limited number of historical records in ninja literature, the recent study has been expanding more in Japan since the establishment of the Iga Community-based Research Institute at Mie University in 2012, followed by the creation of the International Ninja Research Centre in 2017. As research on ninja itself is relatively new, there are many opportunities in this field to find new aspects of ninja as well as its implication into today. In fact, the research on ninja intelligence and military tactics have never yet been analysed from security and intelligence research perspectives.

Therefore, this dissertation aims to bring intelligence and military points of view into the research field of ninja, and vice versa. The research question of this paper crosses these two fields: the extent of the applicability of intelligence and the arts of ninja in the contemporary world. And this dissertation finds the irregular and asymmetric aspects of ninja through exploring their activities. By unmasking the arts of ninja, the essence of their techniques and mindset, this dissertation finds the applicability of ninja methods to a certain extent to into the contemporary world.

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Most importantly, I appreciate my parents for giving me an opportunity to study in this program and supporting me to accomplish this degree. I would also like to thank my partner for giving me a limitless support particularly these last few months. It was impossible to finish this work without his help.

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Miki Hashimoto

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Introduction

Ninja existed approximately from the 14th century to roughly the 17th century as an occupation for conducting intelligence and military work for generals in Japan. On one hand, the term 'ninja' is widely known around the world, however on the other hand, the real feature of ninja is not well known, even among Japanese. Most people first imagine a person who is dressed in all black and uses a mysterious martial art to fight against villains. However, the reality of ninja was a military intelligence officer who gains information sometimes by infiltrating into adversary territory, communicating with others pretending to be merchants or using other disguises. Ninja also worked as soldiers and mainly conducted surprise attacks such as ambushes or incendiarism tactics. To conclude, ninja were people who blurred into the dark night to collect intelligence and/or conduct military attacks behind the spotlight of history.

The literature on national security intelligence has emerged and developed since 1975 (Johnson, 2012: 3). However, the literature of ninja intelligence emerged as early as the 16th century, evidenced by the publication of *Ninpiden*, one of the biggest ninjutsu manuals, in1560. It was the collection of secret scrolls of the arts of ninja that had been passed over to the successor within the family over several centuries. Although the contents were more about tactics and tips rather than the systematized literature, the work uncovers the essence of intelligence, namely what intelligence was meant for and how intelligence could be collected (Nakashima, 2015; Nakashima, 2019). In spite of its limited number of historical records in this literature, the recent study on ninja has been expanding more in Japan since the establishment of the Iga Community-based Research Institute at Mie University in 2012, followed by the creation of the International Ninja Research Centre in 2017. As research on ninja itself is relatively new, there are many opportunities in this field to find

new aspects of ninja as well as its implication into today. In fact, even though ninja research has ranged from its realistic, functional image based on historical materials, to fictionalized images of ninja produced by cultural phenomena, the research on ninja intelligence and military tactics have never yet been analysed from security and intelligence research perspectives.

Therefore, this dissertation aims to bring intelligence and military points of view into the research field of ninja, and vice versa. Through this new challenge, the author of this research hopes to attract more researchers to this new field and bring new learnings to enrich both fields of study. Accordingly, the research question of this paper crosses these two fields: the extent of the applicability of intelligence and the arts of ninja in the contemporary world. The first chapter of this paper will address the background of ninja and ninja research to uncover what is true and what is not about ninja. The second chapter will analyse ninja intelligence activity and their techniques by applying the framework commonly drawn in current intelligence studies. The third chapter focuses on ninja activity in military operations, followed by the ethics of ninja in chapter four. Subsequently, the final chapter will deal with the research question of the applicability of ninja methods in today. Throughout the dissertation, the following objectives will be pursued in order to answer this research question:

-Uncover who ninja were and what they did in history

-Disclose ninja intelligence and military skills and techniques

-Identify the arts of ninja by revealing the previous two objectives

This thesis will benefit readers who are looking for a new framework to conduct either research on ninja, or historical intelligence and security studies. Moreover, this dissertation contributes to better understanding of irregular warfare from the case study of ninja.

Finally, as an author's note, as many ninja researchers such as

Yoshimaru and Kawakami do, the paper uses the terminology of 'ninja' to express a mythic and fictionalised ninja aspect, while 'shinobi', the original word of ninja, indicated an occupation existed especially in the medieval period of Japanese history. Additionally, this dissertation uses many Japanese words especially for technical terms or nomenclature to maintain accuracy of their original meanings. However, as primary sources are written in old Japanese characters, in the case of the unreadable words even by the ninja scholars, these words are introduced in Japanese characters first and followed by the possible pronunciation in English. It is also important to mention that some of the Japanese terms ignore the English grammar rules such as plurals and adjectives. This is because the dissertation keeps the Japanese grammar for the Japanese words. Lastly, this dissertation follows the Hepburn style for applying Japanese words in English.

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Chapter 1: Ninja in History

1.1 Background of Ninja

The definition of 'ninja' is proposed by several historical records. As the term 'ninja' is a modern word that has appeared since the 1950s or 60s (Yamada, 2016: 9), 'Shinobi no mono' or simply 'Shinobi', the original word of ninja, leads to find the definition from history. *Bukemi yōmokusyō* (1806, quoted in Yoshimaru, 2012:106; Yamada, 2016: 14; Hirayama, 2020a: 21-22; Hirayama, 2020b: 1-2) propose a clear and detailed concept, which defines 'Shinobi no mono' as 'a spy, who infiltrates enemies, investigates situations, sets castles on fire and occasionally assassinates targets in secret (Translated by the author).' The word 'Shinobi' is also conceptualised in Japanese-Portuguese dictionary (unknown, quoted in Hirayama, 2020a: 47; Yamada, 2016: 42) written in the early 17th century, which defined shinobi as 'a spy, who infiltrates enemy castles and battle camps at night or secretly in the day to investigate hostile situations during conflicts (Translated by the author).' Compared to *Bukemi yōmokusyō*, an activity of shinobi introduced in Japanese-Portuguese dictionary is limited to the wartime and narrower. Nonetheless, the description is valuable by way of disclosing the historical truth that the term 'shinobi' was widely known enough to be listed in the dictionary at that time as early as the 17th century, (Yamada, 2016: 43).

It is still uncertain in which precise year the term 'shinobi' started to appear in Japanese history. However, according to the pioneers of recent ninja researchers, Yamada (2016: 9) and Yoshimaru (2012: 107) as stated, the emergence of shinobi was likely to be during a period from 1336 to 1392 in the Nanbokucho Period. Shinobi is believed to have originated from a group of people called 'akuto', who were similar to bandits or burglars (Kawakami, 2017: 77; Hirayama, 2020a: 51-52). As they were good at stealing things,

moving at night, gathering information, handling fire, killing people, conducting subversive activities and infiltrations, shinobi was likely to be originated from them and developed these skills as an occupation (Kawakami, 2017: 77; Yoshimaru, 2017a: i). About 80 years later after the Nanbokucho Period ended, the Sengoku Period (1477-1615), which is also known as a period of civil wars, was established. Before the Sengoku Period, the person but also the position named 'Shogun', and his clan were ruling Japan. The Japanese society in history had long been categorised by family classes, and the top class was a soldier class called 'samurai' or 'bushi'. Needless to say, the governors were from this class of people, and they were controlling Japan, instead of the emperor who had less power than the Shogun at the time. However, the Sengoku Period started because of the disputes over a succession within the sitting Shogun's family. As the Shogun had gradually lost its power, many local lords called 'daimyo' fought for the control to govern a larger area instead of the Shogun. This chaotic period is the time when ninja became most active in Japanese history (Yamada, 2016: 66; Liu, 2017: 296; Hirayama, 2020a). A military academic by the name of Sakuun Ogasawara wrote in *Gunpoji yoshu* (1618, cited in Hirayama, 2020a: 29) that even if daimyo were skillful in battles, the desired outcome would not be achieved without shinobi. In addition to the unstable political system, people at this period also suffered from disasters, poor harvests and famine, and they wandered around in this chaotic society (Fujiki, 1995).

Subsequently, as Ieyasu Tokugawa unified Japan and brought peace to the country, the Sengoku Period ended. When he moved to Edo, currently known as Tokyo, in 1590, he brought a few hundred shinobi with him (Yamaguchi, 1981: 30; Nakashima, 2015: 6; Yamada, 2016: 10). This indicates how successfully ninja had been working at the time. After Tokugawa seized power and established the Edo shogunate in 1603, the Edo Period lasted until the Meiji Restoration of 1868. During the Tokugawa's period, he established local governments with daimyo at the top to govern the entire Japan, and each local government owned about a few or several dozens of shinobi (Nakashima, 2015:

6). In accordance with the peaceful society brought by Tokugawa's governance, shinobi as an occupation saw significant changes in its characteristics from an espionage and military-related job to a bodyguard or investigator on local governors from the security perspective (Yamada, 2016: 10; Fujita, 2020: 114; Takao, 2020: 44). Moreover, the modernization of weapons such as the emergence of artillery and gun which could kill many people with less efforts also affected the work of the shinobi (Nakashima, 2015: 16; Fujita, 2020: 115). According to Yamada (2016: 10), ninja worked as shinobi namely covert and military at least by 1624, but there is no record later than this proving shinobi worked as they used to be. Although shinobi gradually lost their role in the Edo Period, the aspects of literature and culture based on them developed progressively since then. The features of ninja which most people would imagine have been created from this point and developed subsequently (Yamada, 2016: 11-13). The further analysis on fictionalised image of ninja is brought up in the next section '1.2 Myths and Reality'. Furthermore, the influence of ninja on literature and culture is touched in the section '1.3 Literature Review'.

The skills of shinobi were predominantly developed in the small regions called Iga and Koka, located close at the central Japan (see picture 1 in the next page). Therefore, even though ninja played an important role in a wide area of Japan (Nakashima, 2015: 5; Hirayama, 2020a), the well-known shinobi were always called 'Iga-mono' or 'Koka-mono' to express their roots. The predominant reasons of why their roots as shinobi were valued were because Iga-mono and Koka-mono had more specialised shinobi skills than any other shinobi. The prestige of Iga-mono and Koka-mono was even recorded in *Gunpoji yoshu* (1618, cited in Yamada, 2017: 10; Hirayama, 2020b: 1-2) by mentioning them as the best shinobi among others. As the book was written in 1618 by a military academic, the importance of the record as the primary source and its credibility are very high. The secondary reason was because Iga-mono and Koka-mono were frequently hired as mercenaries from daimyo or shogun outside of Iga and Koka, so that their roots were emphasized to keep their

identities even outside of their regions. Moreover, the outflow of the skillful Iga-mono and Koka-mono accelerated after Tenshō Iga no Ran, the war which destroyed the Iga region under the Nobunaga Oda command in 1581.
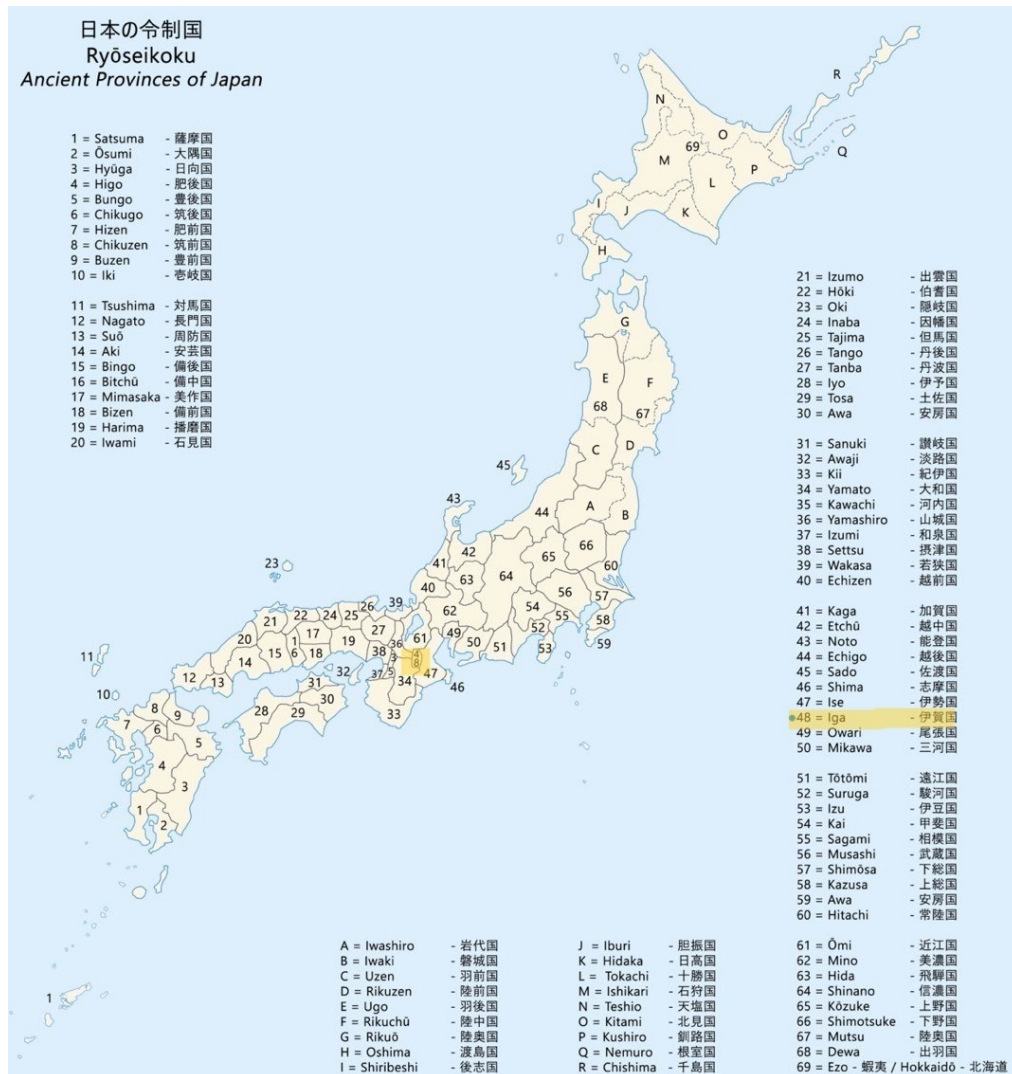
Picture 1: Ancient Provinces of Japan

The techniques of shinobi were significantly elaborated especially in Iga and Koka for the following reasons. The first reason is pursued by their regional

geographical uniqueness. Supported by a rich in nature environment including mountains (Yamada, 2016: 9), ninja improved their skills to conduct guerrilla tactics or to infiltrate castles by improving the ability for crossing moats and climbing up castle walls. The others reason is the weakness of the political system. Unlike the other regions, there was no leader to govern these regions. Accordingly, many individuals had their own castles to protect by themselves (Nakashima, 2015: 48-49; Yamada, 2016: 10, 67; Fujita, 2018: 16; Hirayama, 2020a: 23). According to archaeological research introduced by Yamada (2018: 2) and Takao (2020: 42), there were about 619 of castles only in Iga region, which is the highest distribution density in Japan. Similar to Iga, Koka-rigion had also many castles, and about 243 ruins were tracked in the rigion (Nakashima, 2014: 36). As people had to collect information on each other for their survival, 'ninjutsu' – 'the arts of ninja' especially developed in this region. Ninjutsu includes not only a martial art, but also techniques for gathering information, communicating with others, conducting guerrilla fighting tactics and scientific knowledge on firearms, gun powders, weapons, medicine, astronomy, breathing and so on (Nakashima 1996; Nakashima, 2015; Komori, 2018; Yamamoto, 2020). Further scientific knowledge elaborated by shinobi will be addressed in the section '1.3 Literature Review'.

Although shinobi sometimes worked as soldiers, in another name samurai or bushi, which was recognized as a high-class occupation at that time in Japan, the social class of shinobi was not as high as normal soldiers like them (Nakashima, 2015: 17). Unlike a bushi and samurai, or a British spy which used to be an occupation for gentlemen, the shinobi was an occupation for the lowest rank of soldiers or at the middle between soldier and peasant (Fujita, 2018: 16; Hirayama, 2020a: 63). For example, shinobi worked as a peasant in the half of a day and worked as a soldier in the remaining time. According to *Iranki* (unknown, quoted in Yamada, 2016: 67-68) written by Jiyogen Kikuoka (1625-1703), people in Iga worked as peasants in the morning and trained themselves to improve their fighting and spying skills in the afternoon. They were

occasionally hired only for a certain battle when it was necessary. The blurred social class did not make any problems until they were forced to choose either one in 1585 under the occupation from Hideyoshi Toyotomi, one of the most famous general in the Sengoku Period (Fujita, 2018: 21). Interestingly, in the case of prior to the ruling by Toyotomi, shinobi's self-recognition of their social rank differed even between Iga-mono and Koka-mono despite these two regions being geopolitically and culturally in the almost same circumstances (Nakashima, 2015: 4). Iga-mono recognized themselves as a non-soldier, while Koka-mono recognized themselves as soldiers (Nakashima, 2015: 3). In either interpretation, shinobi as an occupation was historically recognized as a socially lower-ranked job. Nonetheless, they were sometimes hired with high salaries depending on the daimyo in Sengoku Period (Nakashima, 2015: 46; Hirayama, 2020a). However, in the following Edo Period, ninjutsu became less valuable because of the peaceful society as well as the efflux of its techniques. In fact, Nakashima (2015: 17, 52) proved that the upper-class samurai could occasionally acquire ninjutsu as one of the educational tips in the Edo Period. Accordingly, the skills of shinobi became not necessarily kept only by shinobi, and they generally lost their role and speciality.

1.2 Myths and Reality

Referring to the Turnbull's explanation (2017: vii), ninja has now become 'a multi-million dollar cultural phenomenon', and many people in the world have at least heard about ninja. However, what people imagine when they think about ninja is probably different from shinobi, who were active in the Sengoku Period. In accordance with the shinobi becoming less important, the image of ninja was developed through literature, culture and arts, gradually from the Edo Period (Yamada, 2016: 11). The tales using mysterious shinobi as a model appeared in novels and plays such as 'Kabuki', a traditional Japanese form of theatre. In novels written in the beginning of the Edo period, ninja was

drawn as a man who could be invisible by making certain hand gestures, or who could also turn themselves into a toad with a special scroll in his mouth (Yamada, 2016: 11). In the late Edo period, ninja started to appear in kabuki and 'ukiyoe', a Japanese woodblock art form that flourished at that time. The visual image of ninja dressed all in black was created and iron ninja stars called 'shuriken' started to appear in cultural and literature works by the end of the Edo Period (Yamada, 2016: 11). Moreover, looking at the culture of the Taisho Period (1912~1926), the period started just after the Edo, ninja became so popular, especially among young people. The popularity was driven by the publishment of 'Sarutobi Sasuke' (Yamada, 2016: 11) of 1916, a story based on an actual person in the past who took a shinobi-like job (Yoshimaru, 2017b: 150). According to Yoshimaru (2017b), the book was progressive in the way that ninja first shifted from a supporting role to a hero of a tale, and their characteristic turned from a dark and evil image to one of moral and justice based on 'bushido', the soul of samurai. Films based on ninja also started being produced in the Taisho Period (Onishi, Yamada and Yoshimaru, 2014: 206; Yoshimaru, 2017b:156).

Subsequently, ninja became internationally recognised and more popular with more films, anime and manga in popular culture. The 11th James Bond novel 'You Only Live Twice' by Ian Fleming published in 1964 played a large role in introducing the term and the concept of ninja overseas (Kubasov, 2014: 151; Turnbull 2017: 163-165). Many movies and comics about ninja have depicted them as models have been produced since then. According to Kubasov (2014), ninja as a master of martial arts and as a skilled assassin were emphasized more so outside of Japan.

As described above, the images of a typical ninja wearing black costume, using mysterious superhuman abilities, making oneself invisible, and conducting assassinations have been created by people's imaginations inside and outside of Japan. However, the reality was quite different from what it

thought to be.

First, shinobi were not dressed in black. Though the ability to merge into the shadows and carrying secret missions like assassinations can be easily imagined with the visual support of a black costume. There is no supporting evidence of proving that shinobi actually dressed in black from head to toe. The black image of ninja spread through kabuki because black costumes of stagehands could blend into the stage of the theatres (Turnbull, 2017: 116). In addition to the theatre's feature of kabuki, it was especially popular among the public at that time, and it certainly helped create the idea of ninja's wearing black to the masses. Moreover, one of the most valuable ninjutsu playbooks, *Shōninki* written by Masazumi Natori in 1681, teaches the importance of being less suspicious to gather information (Nakashima, 1996). In the book, the seven types of disguises were suggested depending on the situation which shinobi tried to blend with their surroundings. These seven types of disguises are (Nakashima, 1996, 45-55; Nakashima, 2015; 9-10):

> Komusō – Are zen monks, who played a bamboo flute called the 'shakuhachi' in a training. They wore a straw like hat that covered their head and face, so that they could move around in many locations with their face kept in secret. The shakuhachi was not only used as an instrument but also as a weapon because of its durability. Moreover, unlike the ordinary monks, they could easily disguise themselves to other forms as they could have hair. As monks worked collectively, the disguise allowed them to blend and conduct any mission requiring many individuals.

Picture 2: Komusō

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(Accessed: 20 August 2022)

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Syukke – These ordinary monks, who could easily acquire information from temples and local people without any type of suspicion. Similar to Komusō, they could hide their face with straw hat and could collectively act as a group.

Yamabushi - Mountain monks, who conducted varies trainings on mountain worship. They were historically paid less suspicious, allowing them to while cross borders even with weapons such as blades and firearms. This was an appropriate way to work collectively with others like the Komusō and Yamabushi, and they could communicate with each other from distant places by Triton's trumpet. The Triton's trumpet was used frequently to transmit signals by making big sounds from the distant location.

Picture 3: Yamabushi

Picture 4: Triton's trumpet

Inserted from: (Accessed: 20 August 2022)

https://www.sankei.com/photo/movie/news/150911/mov1509110001-n1.html   https://thewellhub.blogspot.com/2021/07/294871.html

Shōnin - Merchants, who could get close to the target. They would gather information with their unique communication skills. They would take various notes or recordings without any suspicion.

Hōkashi – These street entertainers would work either alone or in a group. They would easily bring useful equipments into the locations they have infiltrated. Furthermore, they could also gather information

fain the centre of the crowd. Occasionally, they could get a chance to get closer to any target as local governors tended to value street entertainers as information holders. If the target asked the infiltrated shinobi to cooperate with the reconnaissance, it was a chance to work closely with the assigned targets.

Sarugaku - Actors of a Japanese traditional style of theatre. They could easily infiltrate the target residence when they were requested to act there.

Tune no Nari - Any disguises which could be the most suitable to conduct missions depending on the goal. Farmers, townspeople or samurai were the typical examples.

Overall, it was the way to blend into the target locations. In addition to the disguises, shinobi had to understand the local culture and perfectly mimic dialects of the location in order to draw less attention in carrying out their secret operations. Accordingly, the actual appearance of shinobi must blended in the public like a spy, rather than gathering attention with a fully black costume.

Additionally, shinobi did not use a star-bladed weapon called 'shuriken'. Though throwing shuriken towards an enemy can be easily imagined with ninja, and the word of 'shuriken' itself can be found in several historical texts, and yet, no record of 'stars-shaped' shuriken has been traced (Turnbull, 2017: 167). The shuriken found in *Gunpo Jiyoshu* was mentioned as follows: throw a 'nage taimatsu'; 'a torch made from split wood and fitted into a metal base with a spike (cited and translated by Turnbull, 2017: 167)' like shuriken (Kubasov, 2020: 195). Even this record does not reveal whether shinobi used any star-shaped shuriken or not in reality. However, many ninja researchers believe that it is less likely that shinobi used a star shaped shuriken in actual fights (Kubasov, 2020). The reason for the argument is quite simple; an attack by shuriken would not cause a fatal wound to an enemy. Moreover, shuriken could hurt the owner when he moves actively for special duties. Furthermore, considering the cost of

producing shuriken, it is better to reuse them, but it is not ideal to pick them up and bring them back after throwing during the fights. Nor is ideal to leave them on the ground as shinobi possibly used individual shapes of shuriken depending on their family or style. Less or even no clues on shinobi should be left for discrete work. Even though a star-bladed Shuriken was less likely to be used by shinobi, bar-shaped shuriken, a straight and heavy steel spike, might be used like a dart (Turnbull, 2017: 167; Kubasov, 2020).

Thirdly, shinobi could not make themself invisible, nor had any superhuman abilities. It is quite obvious nowadays that there are limitations in human abilities. However, during the time when ninja took a significant role in Japanese history, jujutsu, a religious occult like curses and fortune, was strongly believed among the people. For example, in the Sengoku Period, whenever a strategist was faced to a vital fight, psychic knowledge based on jujutsu had power to help his decision (Yamada, 2016: 96). Considering the social background mentioned above, even though the invisible technique or other techniques transcend human abilities, as Yamada (2016: 96) pointed out, it was likely that people believed them as reality ones to a certain extent. In fact, there are several records explaining how to become invisible. According to the *Heiho Hijutsu Ikkansho* (no date, quoted in Yamada, 2017: 6-7), a person can disappear by invoking special words after reciting Mudras, wearing esoteric hand gestures using fingers in certain ways. There is a similar expression in *Yōkan Kajō Denmoku Kugi* (1787), introducing how a person can disappear with special tools or means (Yamada, 2016: 93-95). It is now a collective truth that no person can be invisible by any means, and shinobi might have known this fact as well. According to the scroll consisting of a part of *Heiho Hijutsu Ikkansho*, what the invisible technique actually meant was that 'a person hidden in the shadow can avoid from being found by enemies by these actions' (Yoshitsune Toranomaki, 1657, cited in Yamada, 2016: 96; Yamada, 2017: 7). Therefore, *Heiho Hijutsu Ikkansho* introduces how to be "invisible", which actually explains techniques to be hidden. These mysterious gestures were

highly likely believed as the way to keep a strong mindset rather than provoking superhuman abilities. Teruhisa Komori, a psychiatrist, brings a unique point on this. According to the outcome of his experiment, unlike the other research subjects, people who mastered ninjutsu could get higher concentration, relaxation and less sleepiness and tension after making the special Mudras (Komori, 2020: 167-169). As the successor of Koka ninjutsu and the Honorary Director of the Iga-ryū Ninja Museum, Jinichi Kawakami (2017) describes, the ability of shinobi certainly stays within human limitations, however, his true strengths can be found in his mindset and spirit. Moreover, it is notable to mention that rather than being athletic or pursuing superhuman abilities, wisdom and intelligence was especially required to become a shinobi in reality. In *Gunpo Jiyoshu* (1618), three elements were suggested to choose an appropriate person who was suitable to become a shinobi. These elements were wisdom, good memory and communication skills (*Gunpo Jiyoshu*, cited in Yamada, 2019: 49-51). Furthermore, *Mansenshūkai* (1676)), the best instruction manuals used by shinobi in Iga and Koka, proposed ten elements for choosing an appropriate shinobi, and six of them were to some extent regarding wisdom and intelligence, three of them were about characteristics, communication abilities and mindsets of the person, and remaining one was about the credibility of the person and his family (Nakashima, 2015: 79). Considering these necessary characteristics for shinobi, it is obvious that shinobi's job is not limited to an assassination, as many may believe about ninja. Accordingly, although people would imagine that ninja possessed special physical and mysterious abilities, the shinobi in reality did not have superhuman abilities nor were these abilities required of shinobi.

Finally, even though female ninja called 'kunoichi' frequently appear in novels, movies, animations and comics of ninja works, it is less likely that females worked as shinobi. There was no historical record found so far that implicates the existence of female shinobi or females who used ninjutsu (Yamada, 2016: 12; Yoshimaru, 2017c: 167). However, a technique called

'kunoichi no jutsu' is recorded in *Mansenshūkai* (1676). This certain technique is making women infiltrate locations where men were unable to get in (Fujibayashi, 1676: 96-97). For example, no male adults were allowed to step into the place called 'Ōoku', the residence of the Shogun in Edo Period. Therefore, using women to gather important information was one of techniques for shinobi, but it does not mean there were female shinobi at that time.

In summation, shinobi did not wear any black outfits, nor use shuriken. there was no female shinobi called kunoichi in the past and shinobi's job is not limited to an assassination. They did not possess superhuman abilities, and yet their strength was supported by the strong mindset. Entrancingly, these created ideas of ninja based on imagination have their own history of how they were created from scratch. Some mythical characteristics such as the ability to become invisible and the existence of female shinobi were created by drawing from historical descriptions. As Yoshimaru (2017a) pointed out, people may be tricked by mysterious shinobi through these myths, but the value of ninja is everything including these myths.

1.3 Literature Review

Although the term 'NINJA' has been well known by people inside and outside of Japan through media or publications since long ago, research on ninja themselves from the academic perspective have been thought of as an untouchable topic even in the historical science field. This unspoken understanding among researchers was predominantly caused by the limited materials on ninjas as well as the virtual image which the topic brings in advance (Hirayama, 2020a: 7). Even though some research was conducted by Gingetsu Itō (1871~1944) and Seiko Fujita (1899~1966), for example, to find the true image of shinobi predominantly from the martial arts and mental perspectives (Kawakami, 2017b; Yamada, 2017b), it was not enough to unmask the comprehensive substantial image of shinobi. However, Hisashi Fujiki, a

Japanese historian who specialised in the Sengoku Period, found the existence of soldiers called shinobi among other foot soldiers and mercenaries, and uncovered that part of shinobi activities for the first time in the academic in his book published in 1995 (Fujiki, 1995). The research brought a new impetus into historical science on shinobi, and other scholars were inspired to expand the field. The research movement on shinobi was even more accelerated by the establishment the Iga Community-based Research Institute at Mie University in 2012 to investigate broad topics about ninja. Mie University is located at Mie Prefecture in central Japan. As the former region of Iga, Mie is the birthplace of the ninja and as such, ninja research has been centered at Mie. It can be probably said that Ninja Study was born from that point of 2012, and the ninja as an untouchable topic was transformed into a significant topic of study in the historical science field. The ninja study was further expanded by the establishment of the International Ninja Research Centre at Mie University in 2017 and the International Ninja Research Association in 2018, and now the research even exceeds the field of history as it can be seen later in this section entitled 'Science'. Moreover, "the study of ninja and ninjutsu" was as part of the curriculum of the postgraduate degree in humanities since 2018 (Mie University, 2017). Through the education, the ninja study has been expanding more as seen from the news of a student who got the highest marks for writing an essay in invisible ink by using ninjutsu introduced in the ninjutsu manuals (*BBC*, 2019).

Because a ninja is a person who existed in history, the study of ninja covers a wide subject ranging from the shinobi's real image in history to created image in the modern world, and from his activity to his skills. As there are specialists in each subject, the author roughly divided ninja study into five dimensions to look at further prior research on ninja. These five dimensions are the true image of shinobi, ninjutsu manuals, the science, the invented image of ninja and lastly, the martial arts of ninjutsu.

A.   Substantial Image of Shinobi

Ever since ninja have begun to gain attention as a research field, the real image of shinobi who existed in history began to be investigated. Yuji Yamada at Mie University is the pioneer of this field. Especially the works published in 2016 and 2019 entitled '*The History of Ninja*' and '*The Spirit of Ninja*', respectively, are the "monumental work" in the historical science field referring to Hirayama's expression (2020a: 8). These books reveal the comprehensive and substantial images of shinobi including itstheir overall history from the origin to the disappearance, spirit, techniques, arts and the current ninjutsu (Yamada, 2016; Yamada 2019). Tatsuo Fujita (2018) also uncovered the interesting point of shinobi, which is how they had been hired by daimyo and shogun, and how their social status had been featured.

Moreover, unlike Yamada's work on the "authentic" shinobi who developed their skills using ninjutsu manuals that originated predominantly from Iga and Koka, shinobi activity as a mercenary during wartime of the Sengoku Period were classed as "outlaw" shinobi (Hirayama, 2020a). Scholars other than Hirayama such as Hisashi Fujiki (1995), followed by Tsuneaki Aragaki (2003), Masahiro Morimoto (2014) and Akihiro Iwata (2021) have also investigated about the activity of "outlaw" shinobi. They unmasked the substantial image of shinobi activity by decoding primary historical records and picking up descriptions on shinobi. Especially, the work of Yu Hirayama published in 2020 entitled "*Shinobi in the Sengoku period*" is fascinating because it is the first book that only focuses on shinobi activity in the Sengoku Period (Hirayama, 2020a), unlike other works which track the activity of shinobi as either only a small part of the work or article on an otherwise more broadly focused topic Furthermore, Yoshiki Takao (2017, 2020), Naoya Inoue (2019) and Tetsuya Ueda (2020, 2021) uncovered shinobi's activity and life in the Edo Period more clearly than ever. The changes of shinobi's role from a soldier in wartime to a bodyguard and investigator in peacetime can be

ascertained from Takao's work (2017).

B.   Ninjutsu Manuals

The research and investigation on ninjutsu manuals have predominantly been driven by Atsumi Nakashima. All three books, *Ninpiden*, *Mansenshūkai* and *Shōninki* which constitute the 'three great ninjutsu manuals', were translated from old Japanese to modern Japanese by Nakashima (1996; 2015; 2019). As seen from his magnificent work, Nakashima has been investigating many primary ninjutsu manuals. Other than these three, the translation of *Gobu Massyo* was published from the Journal of Ninja Studies in 2021 (Nakashima, 2021). It is not only Nakashima who translates the primary source into the modern Japanese, but also Yamada (2014), who decoded *Toryu Dakko Shinobi no Makichu*, and Ueda who (2019) deciphered *Shinobi no Maki*.

Moreover, a comparison of ninjutsu to Chinese ancient strategies, particularly *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, was carried out by Nozomi Katakura (2017) and Yamada (2017: Ch.2; 2019: Ch.2). Even though ninjutsu was greatly affected by Chinese ancient strategies, it was developed in its own unique way. Yamada (2017: Ch.2) pointed out that the influence of 'jujutsu', religious and occult like curses and fortune-telling, can be clearly seen in ninjutsu. Yamada explained the reason behind this influence by tracing back the flow of Chinese ancient strategies imported in Japan. Yamada (2017: Ch.2) also indicated that ninjutsu manuals introduce more practical techniques and skills at a tactical level than the Chinese ancient strategies (Yamada, 2017: 110). Moreover, Katakura (2017) approached the influence of Chinese strategy from the morale point of view. She concluded that ninjutsu manuals advocate the importance of morale for shinobi, unlike the Chinese strategies which focus on its relation to strategists. Although the different aspects between them roughly resulted from the difference in audience and the needs of that audience, the importance of deception is pursued by both.

C.   Science

The study of ninja was expanded into the scientific field starting in April 2014 after being sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of the Japanese government for two years. As the result, many researchers conducted experiments and since 2014, and shinobi techniques were scientifically assessed by them. For example, Teruhisa Komori (2018; 2020) and Makoto Nishimura (2020) experimented with the effectiveness of shinobi's special breathing technique's influence on their mind and nerves. They both concluded that the breath could effectively be used for mental concentration with certain trainings. Moreover, they found the possibility of it being used for stress management in the contemporary world (Komori, 2020; Nishimura: 2020).

Another example is that Yamamoto (2020) found out that the knowledge on pharmacy and poison using plants which was introduced in *Mansenshūkai*, could partly be proved as scientifically effective in the modern world. Even though two techniques using a specific plant and a specially made tea introduced to be used for an assassination could not scientifically proved useful, many plants used by shinobi has still been used as medicine up to now (Yamamoto, 2020). Yamamoto found that shinobi had abundant knowledge on many plants including dual effects as medicine and poison, as well as the appropriate amount to utilize them (ibid.).

An experiment was also carried out for assessing the accuracy of fire weapons by Araki (2020). Concerning the period in which shinobi were working, creating and using gun powders appropriately required specialised knowledge and skills. Though it has been recorded that gun with nitre was brought into Japan in 1543 from Portugal, shinobi had already manufactured their own nitre by then and were using it in arrows, mines, grenades, and so on. *Mansenshūkai* introduces more than 200 varieties of fire equipment with half of them being

weapons (Nakashima, 2015: 224-258). The importance of utilising fire can be seen from this case. The rest of the fire equipment are lights and communication signals using gun powder. Araki proved through experiments that most of the tested fire weapons worked properly (2020). Some even worked regardless of difficult environmental factors such as in water, rain, or wind, if the tools were made with specialized methods, respectively. Araki found difficulties in adjusting the amount of the homemade gun powder, the lengths of the fuse as well as the positioning of the components (Araki, 2020). Araki praised shinobi as a scientist and technicians.

Moreover, experiments on the effectiveness of the signal fire (Kato, 2020), the efficiency of the walking technique (Wakita, 2020), and recreating the portable rations (Hisamatsu, 2020) of shinobi were conducted and scientifically analysed. Even though the signal fire was concluded as ineffective to recognise with eyes, the research suggested another hypothesis that shinobi might transmitted signals by burning animal dung, such as from wolves, and having the stench be the main signifier (Kato, 2020). The walking technique scientifically proved as efficient through the experiment, and even more, Wakata (2020) identified that people could exert more power by relaxing their muscles, especially the knee in shinobi's case, and using one's weight rather than his muscle force. Lastly, Hiramatsu (2020) concluded that the rations brought by shinobi were nutritionally not helpful, and most of the introduced recipes in ninjutsu manuals were not tasty, but they could be used medicine when shinobi were under pressure during missions because they had effects on easing stress.

D.   Fictionalised Image of Ninja

The research on the invented image of shinobi is probably the biggest research field among the others seen above and below. The image of the shinobi was created and developed differently from the real image of shinobi in and

after the Edo Period. The fictionalised image of shinobi which is what think of as ninja nowadays is the part of the important field of ninja study. These virtual images have been influenced by the culture and literature, and at the same time, they have been affecting the culture and literature, too.

Katsuya Yoshimaru is at the frontier of this field, and he successfully disclosed how shinobi became the ninja that we know today (2012; 2017a; 2017b; 2017c; 2020). Beyond this transformation, Fedor Kubasov (2014) and Toshihiro Inoue (2014) analysed how the Japanese ninja became the worldwide NINJA. The study on the implication of Japanese ninja culture which was brought into other regional cultures such as Korea and China was elaborated on by many researchers such as Junbei Kim (2017), Eiryo To (2017) and Go shin (2014).

E.   Ninjutsu as a Martial Art

Although ninjutsu is widely misunderstood as a martial art, the martial art is only a part of ninjutsu. Besides, a ninja is sometimes considered someone who demonstrates a mysterious and superhuman ability. However, scholars who examined the martial arts of ninjutsu all state that ninjutsu stays firmly within human ability. The ninja's martial art and its ability were first academically investigated by Gingetsu Itō (1871~1944), and later by Seiko Fujita (1899~1966). Itō tried to understand ninjutsu rationally and reveal aspects of truth within accounts of the fictionalised ninja. Fujita also emphasized the importance of the spirit of ninja through the demonstration of ninjutsu and called himself the 'the last Ninja'. Through the research on the ninja, Itō (1937) defined ninjutsu as the "technique for reconnaissance", and Fujita (1942) defined it as the "technique for military reconnaissance" which means "the spy technique".

The current study in this field is led by Junichi Kawakami who is the successor of Koka ninjutsu and the current Honorary Director of the Iga-ryū

Ninja Museum, as mentioned in the previous section. Kawakami (2017a) as the successor of ninjutsu carries out research on the ninja spirit by tracing Japanese philosophy from ancient times. Furthermore, Kawakami (2020) investigates the historical and modern families or styles of ninjutsu and their authenticity. As these three researchers mentioned above acquired the martial art of ninja by training themselves, it can be considered that their words are the primary source of ninjutsu masters. All three strongly emphasized that the essence of the spirit of ninja is "endurance". Kawakami (2020) argues that although there are limitations on human ability and thus also in ninjutsu, human ability has unlimited possibility for expansion through the training. Kawakami (2017b: 105) also insists as the common sense among the modern ninja researchers that the spirits and techniques of ninjutsu can transcend time and are applicable today if applied appropriately in each generation.

This is an overview of the field of ninja study today. Even though the elaboration on the study has accelerated in recent decades, no research has been conducted on how shinobi fought in wartime and what shinobi intelligence was. Even though scholars who have been tracing shinobi's substantial images and ninjutsu manuals investigate the military and intelligence aspects of shinobi, the analysis on these subjects is never done. In other words, the research centres on the shinobi activity and life as historical study. Therefore, the ninja study has never been analysed from the intelligence or military perspectives so far. Therefore, this dissertation pays attention to this blank area, and is aiming to bring the new topics of intelligence and military into the shinobi field, and vice versa.

1.4 Methodology

The research question of this dissertation is the extent of the applicability of the intelligence and the arts of ninja in the contemporary world. To answer this research question, the intelligence and military tactics of ninja are

researched and analysed by applying the frameworks used by the current intelligence and military study into shinobi activities which could be traced from the historical materials. The analysed and interpreted brushed-up shinobi's uniqueness will be elaborated furthermore on the exploration of the applicability of these features for today. As the subject of this research is the person who does not live today and the phenomenon cannot be seen at present, the ideal approach should be the documentary and archival analysis which is frequently used in historical research. However, as the author of this dissertation cannot read old Japanese, the primary source cannot be handled. Therefore, the secondary and the tertiary sources are predominantly drawn for conducting this method but with the great care on the authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning of the sources (Burnham, Lutz, Grant and Layton-Henry, 2008). To evaluate the applicability of historical phenomenon into today, the comparative method is not used in this dissertation. Rather it tries to uncover the uniqueness of ninja by applying the current frameworks of intelligence and military study and deducing its applicability in the contemporary world.

Concerning the methodology, there are certain limitations which can be pointed out beforehand. The access to the primary source, the limitation on the available source, the representativeness of secondary and tertiary sources, and the difficulty of generalisation and confirming authenticity were identified.

A. Access to the primary source

As mentioned already, the first and the biggest limitation in this paper is that the author of this dissertation cannot access most of the primary source which relates to this dissertation topic because of the language problem. Although the author is native Japanese, the old Japanese used in the time when shinobi lived is totally different from the one understood today. To deal with this limitation, the author tried to gain the secondary and tertiary source as much as possible. Moreover, this dissertation will proceed through an observation on

the current study rather than discovering something new from the history. Therefore, even though the limited access to the primary source would be the big issue of this dissertation, its predominant method is analysis of shinobi activities and techniques by applying the framework of the current intelligence and military study which have never before been brought into the ninja study

B. Limited available source

The second limitation regarding the source is that only a small amount of primary source remains today. Since the subject of this dissertation lived and disappeared more than about 400 years ago, the difficulty in gaining access to relevant archival material is also the limitation of this paper. The embedded issue in the historical research has been strongly recognised by the researchers who trace the substantial image of shinobi such as Hirayama (2020a), Yamada and Yoshimaru (2017: i). It is worth noting that it is not only the historical subject that is the reason for the small number of remaining materials, but also the particular character rooted in the topic itself. {s enhancing this issue) The nature of shinobi, as can be imagined from the current spy, is the secrecy. Even the biggest ninjutsu manual *Mansenshūkai* wrote down this essential characteristic by describing as "the names of shinobi who are well known today are all failed shinobi" (Nakashima, 2015: 50). Besides, ninjutsu was traditionally passed on to the successor from esoteric practitioners within their family over many centuries. The knowledge and the arts including tips and skills from practitioners were treated with great care in each family and developed by them generation by generation (Takao, 2020: 39-40). Therefore, according to Turnbull (2017: 96), the transmitted object is not only limited to the knowledge, but also power and authority of individual family. These differences among

families appeared as 'style' of families and were conducted orally or by secret scrolls. It is worth mentioning that ninjutsu cannot be acquired without many years of direct instructions from the master, therefore, reading ninjutsu manuals is not enough to learn the principles of it (Nakashima, 2015: 40). In short, the secrecy of ninjutsu affected the number of sources remaining today. Unfortunately, this limitation cannot be addressed anyhow by the author.

C. Representativeness

The method of this dissertation is handled by predominantly referring to the published books and articles by scholars. It means the written contents in the secondary and tertiary source is once analysed by the authors. In other words, the records on the shinobi, which this dissertation is focusing on, might have survived more than what the author has expected, but it might not appear in the published books and articles. This is because the aim of creating the publications differs individually, and only the piece of the whole picture of certain truths are chosen to be introduced to meet their research aims. To overcome this lack of representativeness of the secondary and tertiary source, the author of this dissertation had an opportunity to talk with Yoshiki Takao, the associate professor at Mie University as well as the research fellow of the International Ninja Research Center and talked with him on the 9th of August 2022 at the International Ninja Research Center in the Iga city. Through the conversation, the author could acquire further knowledge of shinobi and gain an access to the new sources which the author had not came across by then. Even so, still the possibility of bias that comes from the scholars' perspectives on the research might remain in the way of not noticing the facts. Even the truth which this

dissertation is dealing with might be written in the primary source.

D. Generalisation

Making generalisations from the small number of historical materials is the struggling issue among historians. Nonetheless to say, this paper also needs to address this problem. The types of primary source can be mainly divided into two. One is the diary of someone, or someone's oral history written by another person to keep his achievement in notes, or the correspondences between people, to name a few examples. Even though no record dedicated to only shinobi action was found, these materials can reveal the part of shinobi's activities from the piece of their works. Another type of primary source is the ninjutsu manuals which shinobi actually used. These works can uncover the theories which shinobi followed. However, the former type of literature only records concrete examples of shinobi's activity, and the only source itself cannot deduce the generalisation of it. Hence, the later source is the compilation of principles. Even though ninjutsu manuals such as *Mansenshūkai* were proved to be used by shinobi in practice by Takao (2020), the question as to what extent shinobi referred to these manuals cannot be answered. Therefore, this paper predominantly proceeded by checking both the description of manuals as well as the corresponding records from diary or similar to this kind and tries to analyse the substantial image of shinobi.

There is another problem with generalising shinobi activities. As discussed in the section 1.1 "Background of Ninja", shinobi existed over almost three centuries. Needless to say, the role of shinobi had been transformed depending on the demand from daimyo or shogun of the certain time. The great attention to the shinobi business needs to be paid depending on the subject of this dissertation carrying out

through. Moreover, the question of for whom the shinobi were working does matter a lot because the range of shinobi affairs differed not only by time but also by the lord of the region (Takao, 2020). Additionally, ninjutsu was only used by shinobi in the Sengoku Period while it expanded to the higher rank of soldier as a part of the education in the Edo Period (Nakashima, 2015: 17). The analysis on the shinobi occupation should also be careful on the user of its arts.

Concerning on this issue, the dissertation needs to make clear on the subject of shinobi. The aim is this dissertation is to analyse shinobi's intelligence and its arts. Therefore, the focus will be predominantly centred on the shinobi activity of Sengoku Period, the golden age of shinobi. However, the differences of shinobi activities by area are ignored in this paper, simply because all of the sources need to be drawn to make generalisations although the few records remaining do not cover the whole of Japan.

E. Authenticity

The credibility of the primary source is also another big issue among the historians as well as this dissertation. As all ninjitsu manuals were compiled in the Edo Period in accordance with the concerns of disappearance of shinobi arts in peacetime, there is a time lag between shinobi applying its arts in practice in the Sengoku Period or even earlier. Memories could fade before compiling the secret scrolls or tips and skills passed over orally into ninjutsu manuals (Turnbull, 2017: 24). Moreover, as Kawakami (2017: 27) points out, the primary source frequently contains exaggeration, misinformation, disinformation, theories on paper, and the obvious mistakes. Yamada and Yoshimaru (2017: i) also states that some parts of the primary source are invented by the imagination. After all, it is

impossible to reproduce shinobi from the remaining sources. This is another limitation that nothing could be done except for assessing the facts from other materials and increase the authenticity of the source as much as possible.

Even carefully concerned these limitations through the paper, the fundamental question can be brought to the research question itself which is the argument of the relationship between history and political sciences (Burnham, Lutz, Grant and Layton-Henry, 2008: 190). This dissertation tries to apply historical disciplines to the political and international phenomenon in the contemporary world. However, there is the question whether a history can bring disciplines into the current world, or historians might think that a history should even be separated from the current lives. If people think there is an absolute separation between history and the current world politics, this dissertation might be nonsense. However, as Kavanagh (1991) cleared the necessity of history in political sciences, the author of this dissertation believes that the knowledge brought from history could help in further understanding the contemporary world.

The limitations discussed above affects this dissertation particularly in the number of referencing sources. Although several dozens of ninjutsu manuals and more than a hundred of investigation reports written by shinobi have been found so far (Nakashima, 2017: 10), the predominant documents among them were written in Edo Period. As this paper focuses on Sengoku Period, only a small number of materials will be examined in this dissertation. Among these historical records, three works are recognized as the 'three great ninjutsu manuals' by ninja researchers, which are *Ninpiden*, *Mansenshūkai* and *Shōninki*, the most valuable and priceless shinobi works found so far. All these three works were translated from old Japanese to modern Japanese by Atsumi Nakashima and published in 2019, 2015 and 1996 respectively. In this dissertation, *Mansenshūkai* is predominantly referred to as it is the greatest work

in quality and quantity among the big three ninjutsu manuals (Nakashima, 2017: 13) and seen as a bible or an encyclopaedia of shinobi (Yamada, 2017: 12; Turnbull, 2017: 40).

Mansenshūkai, also well known as *Bansenshkai,* was written by Yasutake Fujibayashi in 1676. It comprises 49 styles of ninjutsu which was kept in secret at that time, 45 from Iga and four from Koka (Nakashima, 2015: 4, 40). It consists of six major chapters. The first chapter is entitled 正心 (*Shoshin or Seishin*), the righteous heart, teaching the ethical framework. The second chapter is *Shōchi*, explaining the importance of the leader who employs shinobi and instructing the tactics of using shinobi. The third and fourth chapters introduce the techniques of the two types of spying called '*Yōnin'* and *'Innin'* respectively. The explanations on these two are followed up more deeply in the section 2.1 'Shinobi and Intelligence'. The fifth chapter is entitled *Tenji*, the timing of heaven, followed by the final chapter 忍器 (*Ninki, Shinobiki*) introducing secret shinobi weapons. Advice and tips from successive esoteric practitioners of each family were also collected and explained at the end of the manual. *Mansenshūkai* was influenced by earlier works including the Chinese Seven Military Classics such as *The art of War* and *Wuzi,* Chinese work *Wubei Zhi* (1621) from Ming Dynasty (Nakashima, 2015: 5). However, there are differences between Chinese ancient strategies and ninjutsu manuals as already discussed in the previous chapter "B. Ninjutsu Manuals".

To make a note on the contents of this dissertation, this paper will analyse ninja activities from two aspects, which are intelligence and military. However, as proceeding further on the research about ninja, the author faced a difficulty in dividing shinobi's activity into these two. The reason is because these two shinobi faces are not perfectly separable. Take an example of a scouting soldier. The activity, without doubt, has an intelligence element; at the same time, it is a job of the military. The current intelligence officer would never

conduct scouting, nor is the scouting soldier an intelligence agent. The division of intelligence and military as an occupation is clearly applicable to the present as the terms are based on the current phenomenon. However, it is more difficult to apply it to the historical occupation. In fact, looking at the shinobi's time, the border between peace and war was ambiguous, and intelligence and military were not separated like what can be seen now. Both intelligence and some parts of military activities were conducted by shinobi in history. Accordingly, to judge the shinobi aspects, the author uses the 'plausible deniability' as a border to divide intelligence from military. Plausible deniability is the word used as the absolute requirement for covert action (Lowenthal, 2020: 241). The author defines a shinobi mission which could insist on plausible deniability as intelligence, which could not be seen as military. In other words, the judgement could also be made by the line between 'in area of operation (AO)' and 'out of AO' in fighting. In a battle with weapons, the mission can be easily attributed to the combat's boss, while for the one conducted out of AO it is harder to detect the attribution, even when both would be used for military purposes. Concerning above and applying a scouting soldier and patrolling, for example, into this definition, it can be categorised more to a military aspect of shinobi. The reason is because by the time a scouting soldier works for combats, it is generally clear who the enemy is and almost impossible to insist the plausible deniability. However, in the war time which shinobi lived, because too many wars occurred everywhere by many entities, not all scouting works could be attributed clearly enough to the person worked for, especially before battles start. In this case, it can be defined as intelligence aspects, as shinobi can insist plausible deniability on his work if the place is out of AO. spying is also hard to categorise the work into intelligence and military. As the term simply means one of the secret collection disciplines, it can be used both for intelligence and military. Even though the current spying is easy to define intelligence or military by the collector's attributed entity, shinobi could be both. In short, the activity of shinobi spying is uncategorisable until understanding the situation, so that it will

be separated case by case based on its concrete situation in this paper. Although the author tries best to divide shinobi activities into intelligence and fighting by using the concept of plausible deniability, the categorisation might bring some criticism as shinobi activity itself was predominantly taken at borders of the battle where many actors face at first (Morimoto, 2014). By accepting the limitation by this categorisation, the author tries to capture shinobi's activities as clear as possible.

Chapter 2: Shinobi in Intelligence

2.1 Shinobi and Intelligence

Sherman Kent (1949) referred to intelligence in three aspects: knowledge, activity, and organization. In the understanding of Sharman Kent, the information addressed as knowledge is "high-level foreign positive intelligence" (Kent, 1949: 3-10). Compared to this definition, the knowledge that shinobi was dealing with was operational or tactical than the high and strategic level according to the ninjutsu manuals. Regarding shinobi intelligence, a comprehensive description expressing the essence of ninjutsu answers the question of "what is ninjutsu for?". *Mansenshūkai* says that the essence of winning in a battle is quickly making enemies down in surprise immediately after a moment. They are distracted by something or let their guards down. The arts of ninjutsu, including intelligence, is to understand enemies' secret plans and intrigue to attack in surprise at the enemy's unexpected timing (Nakashima, 2015: 40). It was also noted how *Shoninki* states that ninjutsu is a principle and compass for making tactics and plans, and is a key for military strategy (Nakashima, 2017: 30). However, as the definition brought by Sharman Kent only referred to the intelligence required on the peacetime (Shulsky and Schmitt, 2002: 170), shinobi intelligence which was emerged and developed in the wartime fundamentally differs from the one of Kent's. Shinobi was also aware of domestic intelligence, not limited to foreign and non-positive intelligence, such as counterintelligence.

Moreover, regarding domestic intelligence, one of the roles of Shinobi in the Edo era was to investigate the local governors who worked under unified Japan for the Tokugawa regime, as introduced in the earlier section "1.1 Background of Ninja,". Therefore, Shinobi brought many domestic bits of intelligence, especially in Edo Period. Another fundamental difference from Kent's definition is that Shinobi had less advanced scientific knowledge,

including technology, to gather intelligence. Information about the region, such as geospatial information, and information based on science as meteorological information, was also treated as intelligence rather than simple information. In addition to these differences in intelligence knowledge, there is another significant difference between Kent's understanding of intelligence and shinobi intelligence. Modern intelligence as knowledge refers to not only "raw information" but also analysed and processed product based on it. However, no record found that Shinobi turned collected raw data into analysed products. To conclude, shinobi intelligence as knowledge was more specialized at the tactical level, and their product was not likely to be analysed from the raw information. Moreover, the basic information could be essential intelligence without being proceeded much at that time.

Intelligence as an activity to obtain and process knowledge is the second aspect that Sharman Kent proposed in his work. However, the activity of intelligence encompasses wide and broad meaning (Shulsky and Schmitt, 2002: 2). However, Mark Lowenthal (2020: 14) points out that "Intelligence can be divided into four broad activities: collection, analysis, covert action, and counterintelligence." As mentioned above, shinobi was not likely engaged in the analytical process shown in the intelligence cycle (CIA, 1987: 16). Even though shinobi might analyse his collection to assess and make it more straightforward for reporting. It is back to what scouting more solid does today, and the analysis activity conducted institutionally nowadays by secret services did not exist in shinobi time. Thus, shinobi had four broad activities: collection, covert action, and counterintelligence. The further explanation of shinobi activities is addressed in the later sections of this chapter. However, looking at the shinobi intelligence overall, these activities were only held by human agents. The reason is that the time shinobi lived had no technology that could be used for intelligence activities. Therefore, a human preceded all intelligence activities. However, unlike the current human agents, shinobi also took an important role in making the enemy down by himself as a soldier, and ninjutsu was the tool to

achieve this role. It is worth noting that the activity of ninjas differs a lot between the Sengoku and Edo Periods, and the contents of collected intelligence differed a lot from one collected during the wartime of the Sengoku Period and the one of the Edo Period. In the Edo Period, shinobi frequently investigated certain regions' political, social, economic, and demographic information. However, in wartime during the Sengoku Period, he gathered more tactical intelligence, as a scouting soldier does today, to win a battle (Hirayama, 2020a). However, limited historical records remain from the Sengoku Period. Only a few remained, such as *Koyo Gunkan* (1575-1577?) cited by Hirayama (2020a), but these were not dedicated to the Shinobi's work.

Moreover, all investigation products created by Shinobi and all ninjutsu manuals remaining up to date were all written in the Edo Period. According to the techniques introduced by the ninjutsu manuals, however, shinobi should be more likely a specialist in wartime intelligence rather than an investigation specialist, commonly seen in the Edo Period. The ninjutsu manuals created aimed to introduce techniques to win a battle with small powers. Furthermore, the investigation also utilized these techniques as shinobi's specialty in peacetime. Regarding the tactical intelligence in wartime, shinobi was taking a role of scouting or more of it before starting fighting. For example, stealing passwords of the enemy and infiltrating into enemy's combat before starting or during the fight was shinobi's important role (Nakashima, 2015: 106-114).

Moreover, shinobi also conducted surprise attack like guerrilla (Hirayama, 2020a). *Mansenshūkai* suggests shinobi infiltrate into castles just after the adversary leaves there for the night attack and set fire to the castle to create confusion within the enemy, then take over the enemy's site with support from own side attacking from outside of the castle in confusion (Nakashima, 2015: 111). *Mansenshūkai* calls this technique "the top-secret technique." The manual considers this technique the most effective and appropriate time to attack the enemy (ibid.). The enemy would not predict to be attacked while it

plans and conducts a night attack. The enemy would not have time to think about anything except its operation, and less thinking goes on the defences.

Moreover, people on the adversary's side would frequently go in and out of the castle. Therefore, it would be easy for shinobi to infiltrate there. People generally need to give a password to get into the castle, but it would not be asked just before leaving for the night attack. Furthermore, it is easy to set fire to the castle, and the remaining people on the enemy side would not be enough to react. Then, the combats from the shinobi side can smartly take over the castle when the supporting unit from its side arrives at the castle. The technique includes other psychological elements, and Shinobi's activity was wider than scouting soldiers, including first riding or surprise attack. A scouting aspect of shinobi after starting fighting is categorized as a soldier aspect based on the author's categorization mentioned in the methodology. More on shinobi scouting will be explained in the later chapter. To conclude the shinobi's activity, it is more likely to assume that the shinobi skills of the investigation were developed and expanded from wartime intelligence. Furthermore, shinobi devoted his work predominantly to investigation and bodyguarding in the Edo Period and developed his skills from wartime ninjutsu.

Intelligence in any organization, any shinobi was hired individually by the boss, instead working as a member of a specific organization dedicated to intelligence. The intelligence end-user was the daimyo or shogun, and shinobi worked closely and directly with the intelligence user. In *Mansenshūkai*, shinobi was suggested to work just with the country's top leadership. Such as the daimyo shogun, and secretly operate his missions without being known by anyone else, including retainers of the country (Nakashima, 2015: 50). However, even though the manual ninjutsu advice the ideal way to conduct intelligence like above, an intelligence operation in practice could be different from the instruction. For example, *Koyo Gunkan* (1575-1577?, cited in Hirayama, 2020a), a military manual used by the Takeda family who fought incredibly in the

Sengoku Period, but was beaten by the allied force of Oda and Tokugawa, tells another story. According to the military manual (Hirayama, 2020a: 38-39), Takeda sent his Shinobi even to his close retainers for some assistance, even though retainers also possessed their own shinobi. Therefore, two types of Shinobi, one sent from Takeda and another hired from the retainer, would worked at the same time in the same region under the retainer's operation except for the vital missions given directly by Takeda to his direct Shinobi (ibid.).

Furthermore, when it came to the Edo Period, shinobi ordered his missions through either the person who managed human affairs in peacetime or the person who was a secretary of the shogun for investigational works (Takao, 2017: 64,192). In short, theoretically, shinobi should have secretly worked only for his daimyo or shogun. However, in practice, he worked not only with his daimyo or shogun but also with their close people who could be the direct boss of shinobi. Accordingly, regarding the intelligence as an organization, from Kent's explanation, there was no secret service, at least in the Sengoku Period, because most shinobi were predominantly hired for battle like a mercenary (Hirayama, 2020a). However, it is ambiguous whether it appeared under unified Japan by the Tokugawa family in Edo Period or not. As explained in the previous chapter, Ieyasu Tokugawa brought hundreds of shinobi with him as proper employees when he started governance in Edo. Therefore, shinobi in Edo Period was likely to operate more systematically than the Sengoku Period. However, still, it differs from what we can imagine as the current secret service. It was more likely that shinobi worked just in a group of several people depending on missions rather than in an institutional organization (Yamaguchi, 1981: Takao, 2020).

The number of people shinobi worked with depended on the missions. In a ninjutsu play, manual *Shoninki* suggested that the most skillful shinobi should work alone so that others would not disturb his work (Nakashima, 1996: 26-35). Besides that, *Yoshimori Hyakushu* (unknown, inserted in *Gunpo Jiyoshu*,

1618), a series of the Japanese style of poems advising tips on shinobi. It suggests working in pairs as one person could keep collecting information while another could work as a liaison throughout the day to bring information in appropriate timing. Even historical researches tell that shinobi occasionally worked with dozens of other shinobi (Yamaguchi, 1981: 55-68; Nakashima, 2015:45; Hirayama, 2020a). However, these records also suggest that shinobi did not work systematically as an organization (Yamaguchi, 1981: 55-68; Hirayama, 2020a). Even if the organization dedicated to intelligence existed in the Edo Period, it lacked analysis, and the intelligence flaw is still unknown. Accordingly, shinobi more likely worked case by case, and he changed the number of people to work with depending on the missions and shinobi's skills. However, it can be assumed that there was no systematic analytical process. The collected information would likely be delivered to users without much loss. The intelligence cycle of shinobi was likely to start from intelligence requirements, followed by intelligence collection, and preceded to dissemination, consumption merely with feedback (Yamaguchi, 1981: 50-51), and back to the requirements.

Regarding the simplified intelligence cycle, which was used in the CIA (1987: 16), there is a critique on the directions that only flows in one way (Hulnick, 2006: Lowenthal, 2020: 78). However, shinobi intelligence was likely to follow the one-way cycle, as fewer people engaged in the cycle itself. Moreover, as seen above, there were no analysts or institutional organizations. There should be less change on the first intelligence requirements or plans because communication tools were not developed like the modern days.

Though there are many differences between the current intelligence system and the one shinobi, some shared principles exist. For example, like the role of the current intelligence services, the core aim of shinobi intelligence was to evaluate the adversary's capabilities and intentions (Nakashima, 2015: 44). Even though ninjutsu manuals do not use the exact terms mentioned above,

shinobi tried to win the battle with minor power by uncovering the enemy's secret plan and intrigue (Nakashima, 2015: 40). Shinobi also worked for revealing enemies' capabilities, according to several reports created by shinobi (Nakashima, 2017: Ueda, 2021). Therefore, the role of intelligence in revealing adversaries' abilities and intentions remains the same.

2.2 Source of Intelligence

The current Intelligence communities tend to rely more on technology (Kosal, 2018; Lowenthal, 2020: 18-19). They put more effort and budgets into enhancing especially geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) capabilities or technical intelligence (TECHINT) capabilities (O'Connell, 2005; Hitchens, 2021). However, as mentioned in the previous section, intelligence was conducted only by human agents in the Sengoku and the Edo Periods. Therefore, all derived intelligence from shinobi was human intelligence (HUMINT). Currently, there are two means of conducting HUMINT: covertly and overtly (Mark Lowenthal, 2020: 125-135). While the overt operation is conducted openly to collect intelligence, the covert operation requires secrecy in the mission, including spying, espionage, and clandestine operations. Shinobi predominantly worked only covertly without revealing his missions to anyone else. One exception would be liaison work conducted overtly between shinobi. The liaison work of shinobi is explained in more detail later in this section. However, interestingly, *Mansenshūkai* divides shinobi's activities further into two. One is called yōnin, and another is called innin. Yōnin is an activity that refers to spying and covert action conducted by shinobi, which physically show up in front of the enemy or the target.

On the other hand, innin refers to an activity conducted invisibly by shinobi who never appear in front of the target (Nakashima, 2015: 93). Therefore, it is yōnin if shinobi infiltrates into the enemy's castle overtly with his physical existence showing up in front of the enemies. At the same time, it

is innin if shinobi infiltrates into there without being even seen by enemies. Even though the current spies conduct their missions under either official or non-official cover, both are yōnin in this understanding. Nevertheless, if a spy infiltrates a building to steal targeted data in the middle of the night without being seen by anyone else, this is innin in shinobi's understanding. In *Mansenshūkai*, 130 techniques and tips are introduced through three chapters regarding yōnin, and 268 techniques and tips are introduced through five chapters only for innin. Therefore, it is almost impossible to introduce everything about shinobi's activities in this paper, and it is even out of my research aim. Therefore, only essential techniques are referred to in the later sections. The author strongly recommends reading "*The Book of Ninja: The Bansenshukai – Japan's Premier Ninja Manual*," the translated book of Mansensyukai published by Antony Cummins and Yoshie Minami in 2013, if any of the readers of this paper got interested in these techniques.

Human agents collected all intelligence in the shinobi's time, but it does not mean shinobi only gathered HUMINT. Shinobi collected geographical information based on his visual or sensory information. For example, geospatial information of the lengths, wideness, steepness, and depths of natures like mountains, rivers, oceans, or castles, including their internal design and facing structure gathered by visual and sensory information of shinobi, also constituted one of the crucial bits of intelligence. Some sources of intelligence driven by shinobi were HUMINT, but at the same time, they were classified as another source of intelligence, such as GEOINT.

Regarding the types of collected information, shinobi collected not only the adversary's military intelligence but also its political, social, economic, or demographic information according to several historical records (Nakashima, 2017; Ueda, 2021) and shinobi manuals (Nakashima, 1996; 2015; 2019). The current intelligence or military services use specific frameworks to collect intelligence more efficiently and understand complex environments. For

example, CA SCOPE (Department of the Army, 2003), an acronym for civil areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events, or DIME (Clark, 2020: 17) represents diplomatic (or political), information (or psychosocial), military and economic, are such frameworks. Even though shinobi did likely not establish such frameworks, he might follow specific instructions which his family taught him. For example, *Syugyochu Kokorogake* (unknown, cited in Yamada, 2019: 45-46), a part of documents written by the Akutagawa family of Koka-mono, gives 16 points of notes that shinobi should always be aware of doing. These 16 points are:

1. Strength of a castle's defence and the geography around it.

2. Geographic features on the way and back from a castle

3. Checking a bypath in a country, features of mountains, rivers, and oceans

4. Essential rules of a country

5. Popular manners and customs and the character of the people

6. The popularity of the lord of a castle

7. Degree of eagerness for martial art and preparedness for weapons

8. Building personal networks around countries

9. The person who got ahead in politics, who are good at their work, who is brave, and who is timid among soldiers in a country

10. Place of storage of gunpowder

11. Famous people and wellborn people of status

12. Amount of rice in storage

13. Means of conveyance of crops and profit and loss in business, and the exchange rate of gold, silver, and money

14. Price of crops, the situation of harvest, and the average harvest in every season

15. Famous products

16. Noting a distance to a target and to points that could be signed in

detail（Translated by the author from modern Japanese to English, with the support of an associate professor Yoshiki Takao of Mie University for translating old Japanese to modern Japanese）

However, the question would arise whether these notes were not only written in the manuals but also utilized by shinobi practice. According to the research by Ueda (2021), for example, on the remaining report of investigation on Kumamoto castle conducted by Hagi-Han through 1611 to 1612 in the Edo Period, shinobi collected GEOINT such as the details of Kumamoto castle possibly reported with hand-written pictures including its structure, distances, and wideness of pathways and to the gates, the place of rivers, bridges, and bush, or the distance of Kumamoto castle from its division castles. Most of the reported contents were about military intelligence, such as the number of weapons, soldiers by positions, shinobi, horses, or flows, and the number of military provisions such as rice (Ueda, 2021). intelligence on politics was also collected by HUMINT, especially from the retainer who was discontented with his boss (ibid.). The movements of the head of the castle and the primary retainers were reported in detail (ibid.). More importantly, shinobi also collected the economic intelligence by HUMINT, highly likely disguised as the merchant (ibid.). The currency flew at that time, laws on commerce, the market information such as the products in the market, the prices of them, popular products, the price of crops including rice, soybean, chestnuts, the amount of catch of fish (ibid.). As seen above, shinobi, in practice, gathered many bits of intelligence from many sources in the short stay, in this case, 11 days. To conclude, by assessing the remaining shinobi products (Nakashima, 2017; Ueda, 2021), shinobi investigated the same kind of information found in the manuals. It is impossible to know how much and which notes of manuals shinobi referred to on his mission.

Shinobi also used liaison as an intelligence source. It is expected that

liaison officer exchanges intelligence between allied or friendly countries in the contemporary world (Lowenthal, 2020: 129). However, shinobi surprisingly exchanged intelligence with not only allied or friendly shinobi but also the adversary's shinobi (Nakashima, 2015: 6). This was because the identity was being shinobi was more critical for them than the contract with their boss. Bringing an example of Iga-mono and Koka-mono, they had extraordinary promises between them that ensured shinobi to give information when the enemy is Iga-mono or Koka-mono visiting their place and vice-versa (Nakashima, 1996: 19-25). Therefore, the promise was valid and sincerely kept between them in secret even when their employer or *daimyo* differed, and shinobi spread widely outside of Iga and Koka. To prove that the origins of shinobi were from Iga or Koka, the unique sign used between them was secretly passed within the families so that they could check the authenticity of their roots. However, according to Nakashima (2015: 17), the wise shogun or daimyo, who recognized the promise, used two shinobi separately: Iga-mono, Koka-mono, and the home-grown shinobi. Home-raised shinobis only conducted top-secret missions regarding their own country. In the manual *Gōbu denpō Kyuken* (unknown, cited in Nakashima, 2015:17); however, within the *Shoninki*, it also writes that shinobi share information within shinobi's community regardless of their working country (Nakashima, 1996). Accordingly, Iga-mono and Koka-mono seemed to work only for specific jobs depending on the daimyo or shogun's decision.

In signal intelligence (SIGINT), there is no record proving shinobi intercepted the adversary's signal information. Shinobi transmitted information through oral words, letters, sometimes affixing to an arrow, flaming torches, signal fires, smoke, flags, codes, and Triton's trumpet (Nakamura, 2015: 13, 107). Shonin advice never to mistake the signals using torches and fires, mainly when shinobi infiltrate the target castles or trenches (Nakashima, 1996: 84-86). Even though the author could not find evidence that proved the interception of communication signals by adversaries. It should be more natural to assume that

some coding and decoding interactions between adversaries occurred in practice because intelligence fundamentally "seeks access to information some other party is trying to deny" (Shulsky and Schmitt, 2002: 172).

Moreover, regarding the relationship between science and intelligence in the current intelligence study, scientific information stays within information or knowledge as long as it does not bring secrecy (Shulsky and Schmitt, 2002: 172). However, the scientific knowledge at that time shinobi lived could directly become the source of intelligence. For example, the way to forecast the weather was introduced in Masenshulai (Nakashima, 2015: 194-196), and the prediction made by shinobi became intelligence. Meteorological or geospatial information was not publicly available then, and this kind of information contains secrecy. Many researchers have analysed the credibility of shinobi science recently, as introduced in section 1.3, "Literature Review." It can be said that the ninjutsu manuals were full of the state-of-the-art science of those days, which were kept top-secret by shinobi. Borrowing the words from Nakashima (2015: 2; 2017: 7), ninjutsu is the "comprehensive technique for a daily life," but at the same time, it was the arts of shinobi to win a battle with small power.

Regarding open-source intelligence (OSINT), the current technology-based society with a significant amount of available information differs from the one of shinobi's period. About 80% of the information is collected from OSINT nowadays (Hulnick, 2012: 230; Charania, 2016: 94), and publicly available information is vital in the intelligence community. However, there was almost no open source available during Sengoku and Edo Periods. Even if there was such information, it is rational to assume that it is not helpful for tactical intelligence.

2.3 Covert Action

In U.S. law, covert action is defined as "any activity conducted by an

element of the U.S. Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad so that the Government's role is not apparent or acknowledged" (Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991, 1990). Plausible deniability is the absolute element of conducting covert action (Lowenthal, 2020: 241). Concerning this, most shinobi activities on intelligence can be classified as covert actions or spying because they can never admit what they are working for, and plausible deniability is always required on the mission. The exception, however, is the liaison work mentioned in the previous section. The difference between covert actions and spying of shinobi is the purpose of its activities. At the same time, covert actions aim to intervene and change the target's circumstances and spying aims to collect intelligence.

Covert actions have roughly five types of activities: propaganda, political activity, economic activity, coups, and paramilitary operations (Lowenthal, 2020: 234-239). However, shinobi did not likely conduct paramilitary operations. In wartime, like during the Sengoku Period, it would be much easier to operate its combats to invade targeted nations rather than promoting other entities to take military actions. Instead, shinobi might conduct assassinations, another type of covert action, to achieve the aim of their own country. In this section, shinobi's activities in covert action are analysed by following Lowenthal's five types of covert actions. However, the last one is on assassinations instead of paramilitary operations.

Propaganda: Using propaganda has been the most common way to influence other countries for a long time (Lowenthal, 2020: 234). For example, sending disinformation has been a traditional and practical tool to make the target unrest, and it remains the same. However, unlike today, the targeted termination of disinformation was predominantly the head of the enemy, either shogun or daimyo, and not civilians. As the opinions of people living there did not have the power to affect the political system in the Sengoku and the Edo Periods, the ways to bring forged letters are explained with a solid emphasis in

Mansenshūkai (Nakashima, 2015). Another technique introduced in *Mansenshūkai* that disinformation can effectively transmit when shinobi noticed that the enemy's shinobi were infiltrating their castle (Nakashima, 2015: 102). *Mansenshūkai* recommends that shinobi pretend like he has not noticed the enemy's existence so that the enemy would bring the wrong information back to his boss as a vital secret gained successfully (ibid.). It is more rational to assume that shinobi used disinformation to upset the enemy and support their own country. However, no description was written in the ninjutsu manual, and no historical records have been found.

Political Activity: To transmit disinformation or to influence the targeted daimyo or shogun by any means for their purpose, shinobis had to choose the right person to cooperate with the same goals. As finding the right person was essential to achieving missions, *Mansenshūkai* notes what kind of person should be recruited and who should not, mission by mission (Nakashima, 2015). In Sun Tzu's definition, the most compelling way was to make a "converted spy," who had been working for the enemy as a spy but turned to their side and carried out its purpose (Nakashima, 2015: 102). Shinobi recruited the enemy's personnel not only as converted spies but also as "local spies" who originally lived in the enemy's territory or "inward spies" who initially worked for the enemy, referring to the art of war of Sun Tzu (Nakashima, 2015: 97-102). There were many ways to attract them, like giving money, having promised his social rank or position after the mission, or giving him treats (Nakshima, 2015: 97-98). Then, taking his family hostage and signing the contract were likely to be the process of recruiting someone (Nakashima, 2015). Shinobi could also infiltrate into the enemy side on his own as a converted spy. There are many techniques introduced in *Mansenshūkai*, how to survive if the enemy doubts him (Nakashima, 2015: 103-104). For example, creating a fake family before infiltrating the enemy's side was even suggested. So that shinobi could give his false wife and children to the enemy's boss as the hostage and gain credits from him (Nakashima, 2015: 96). Then, shinobi could use these agents or himself to

transmit disinformation almost directly against the enemy's boss.

Economic Activity: The description of intervening in the economic activity was not found many in ninjutsu manual or historical records. Cutting off the supply of food as one of the military tactics was carried out quite frequently (Hiryama, 2020a). Moreover, considering the historical truth that shinobi was collecting intelligence regarding the places of enemy's rice and crop storage in the castle, it was likely that he first aimed these storages to set fire on the castle. However, the aim was more based on military purposes, such as cutting off the supply of food to the enemy, rather than economic manipulation. Even though many records insist that shinobi were paying caution on the adversary's economic and financial situations, as seen from the previous section, there is no evidence that shinobi tried to influence the enemy's economy.

Coups: This could be achieved only when the political activity succeeded. The predominant aim of transmitting disinformation was to create internal discord by breaking adversaries' trust. For this purpose, for example, whenever a shinobi infiltrates the enemy's castle, either as yonin or innin, *Mansenshūkai* advises them to bring forged letters on their person (Nakashima, 2015: 99).

Then, internal discord will occur or develop when the enemy's boss reads the letter that proves the indication of betrayal by his subordinate. *Mansenshūkai* even teaches detailed instructions on how shinobi should act and what words he should say in a particular situation (Nakasihma, 2015: 99-100). As seen from this example, the covert action of shinobi was likely aiming to make self-destruction within the enemy rather than trying to promote coups to make regime change which can be easily imagined today as coups.

Assassinations: The activity has been prohibited by the law in the United States since 1978 (Office of the Federal Register, 1978: 2-305). However, unlike the current United States, there was no rule on this while shinobi had existed. *Mansenshūkai* introduced the technique of using beautiful girls for poisoning

by infiltrating them when they were young (Nakashima, 2015: 95). Moreover, there are remaining historical records that confirm that a shinobi held the assassination. In 1560, the head of the Kariya castle, Nobuchika Mizuno, was assassinated by a surprise attack from about 30 shinobis from Iga under the Okabe's command, which was the head of the Narumi castle (Ietada Nikki Zouho Tsuika, 1624 – 1702; Mikawa Monogatari, 1974, cited in International Ninja Research Center, 2022). However, this is the only assassination case conducted by shinobi, confirmed as accurate from the remaining historical records. Even though limited records remain about assassinations, it is unclear how frequently shinobi conducted assassinations at that time. Though, generally speaking, conducting assassinations seemed extremely difficult to succeed because the house of the daimyo or shogun had a living space called O-oku, which only limited people could use. Even disguise could not be used in this place. Therefore, the technique mentioned in ninjutsu manuals which suggests someone infiltrates in advance, was considered necessary.

As analysed above, covet actions were likely essential tools to gain an advantage over the adversaries. Disinformation seemed to be used frequently in covert actions. However, despite many descriptions regarding disinformation in the ninjutsu manual, including specific techniques, tips, and notes, there are limited historical records that can prove the success of these activities. It might be because the essence of covert actions was plausible deniability, or it was not simply recorded in history, or maybe both. However, the lack of records makes it difficult to reveal shinobi's activities. However, according to ninjutsu manuals, many ideas have at least existed among shinobi, and the psychological aspect was emphasized to win over adversaries, as explained above.

2.4 Counterintelligence

According to the US executive order 12333 (Office of the Federal

Register, 1981: 3.4), counterintelligence is defined as "information gathered and activities conducted to protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted for or on behalf of foreign powers, organizations or persons, or international terrorist activities." Shulsky and Schmitt (2002: 172) stated that counterintelligence is an integral part of intelligence because intelligence is fundamentally the struggle between countries to seek information and deny it. Shinobi was also aware of the importance of counterintelligence and developed his skills for it. No specialized chapter regarding counterintelligence was found in ninjutsu manuals. Accordingly, it is natural to assume that shinobi did not treat counterintelligence as the specific subject to be concerned. Nevertheless, many techniques and descriptions are explained to protect information across many chapters in the manuals. Using information as a weapon, including deceiving information, is emphasized to gain an advantage over adversaries.

There are roughly two types of counterintelligence; denial and deception (Lowenthal, 2020: 95). Simply denying adversaries access to their information, shinobis took predominantly two countermeasures. One is using countersign. Soldiers used three types of countersigns on the battlefield. Alternatively, in the castle to judge whether the person in front of them was working for the same daimyo. These three types are oral passwords, particular belongings such as the designated color of the designated part of the cloth, and unusual movements such as standing up or sitting down just after accepting the unique sign (Nakashima, 2015: 108-109). Military combatants used these to prevent invasion from shinobis. Of course, shinobi were aware of them, and many techniques were introduced in ninjutsu manuals to counter these countermeasures from the adversary. Stealing countersigns was the primary goal shinobi had to do before infiltrating the enemy. However, these signs could change frequently or even daily, depending on the situation. *Mansenshūkai*, for example, promotes shinobi to firmly keep his mind and not to be unsettled by any situation as an essential thing so that he could quickly find the countersigns

or deceive the enemy by acting like a silly person (ibid.). Countersigns were countermeasures used against yonin, and another counterintelligence use would be to place a spike in the castle and houses to protect against invasion from innin. These spikes were installed on top of a wall as a protective device. To repel shinobi from outside the castle or house. It is ambiguous how effectively it worked because ninjutsu manuals do not take this countermeasure seriously. *Mansenshūkai*, for example, suggests that shinobi infiltrate the castle from the place, placing spikes as a chance because adversaries would not pay much caution on the walls with spikes (Nakashima, 2015: 138). It is unclear from the description that shinobi had a unique technique to cross over the spikes, or it might just be an example of the hole of human mentality.

Nevertheless, either way, spikes were installed for counterintelligence. Besides these two counterintelligence cases, as mentioned earlier, shinobi would carefully select the person they would work with on their objective. The purpose was also for the counterintelligence to keep personnel secure.

Various ways were conducted to deceive the enemy. They were recruiting enemy personnel to deceive their boss, using enemy personnel without being recognized by him to deceive both him and his boss. Infiltrating the enemy's castle by disguising themself as a yonin to deceive the target or simply disguising in the typical seven types of occupations introduced in the earlier section 1.2 "Myths and Reality" are only a few examples of deceiving the adversary. Sometimes, the enemy uses the converted shinobi to disinform the shinobi's original boss or to judge the shinobi's honesty. However, it could be the infiltrating spy who temporarily works as the converted spy for the enemy but lying for a mission. For this kind of double-agent situation, *Mansenshūkai* suggests that shinobi follow what he was ordered to do by the enemy (Nakashima, 2015: 104). Then, the enemy would rely more on the fake converted shinobi, and it would be easier to deceive them when needed. *Mansenshūkai* advises the principle before infiltrating into the enemy's side, that

is, making some rules, promises, and signs between shinobi and his boss to keep trusting on shinobi in any cases (ibid.).

Another example is that shinobi sometimes used an unreliable person as a "doomed spy," the terminology from Sun Tzu, who was told false information but delivered it without knowing it was fake. These examples constitute only a tiny piece of the whole picture of shinobi activities for deceiving adversaries. However, these could tell enough the situation of how vital intelligence was used in wartime.

As further examined in the previous sections on covert actions and counterintelligence. Disinformation was a standard tool to influence the enemy and take advantage of many adversaries. Moreover, as analysed above, the binding domain of warfare at that time was the psychological domain fought between them. Much of the disinformation took a significant role as the predominant tool. Even though this cannot be seen well from historical records like covert actions, it is strongly emphasized in the ninjutsu manuals.

Chapter 3: Shinobi in Fighting

3.1 Another Aspect of Shinobi

As seen in the previous chapter, shinobi developed their intelligence skills for the collection, covert action, and counterintelligence to win battles in wartime. Therefore, shinobi carried many aspects of military intelligence officers for tactical purposes more strongly than the state intelligence services that conduct strategic intelligence. However, as there was no clear categorization between military intelligence and fighting force during the Sengoku and Edo Period, shinobi also carried out not only military intelligence, but also attacks and fighting. This dissertation divided shinobi activity into intelligence and fighting by using the concept of plausible deniability. Military aspects of shinobi intelligence were analysed in the previous chapter if it contains plausible deniability, although shinobi fundamentally encompassed the military aspect of activities, especially in the Sengoku Period. However, in this chapter, the shinobi activity without arguable plausible deniability is explained. Especially in fighting, shinobi cannot argue plausible deniability—activities of shinobi in combat are focused in this chapter. There were predominantly two operations which shinobi conducted with a speciality: scouting and surprise attacks.

However, before getting further discussing shinobi operations, it is worth noting that these activities were not necessarily conducted only by shinobi in the Sengoku Period. As Iwata (2021) revealed in his research, the tactics of night infiltration, takeover, and incendiarism were also recognised with the term shinobi as an activity. Moreover, shinobi predominantly represent Iga-mono or Koka-mono who developed their skills from ninjutsu manuals as seen in the previous sections. These shinobi were frequently hired as regular soldier by daimyo or shogun. However, Hirayama (2020a) concluded that there was another type of shinobi who were specialists of night activity, infiltration,

incendiarism, killing and pillage at town, and developed these skills mainly from theft and being contract soldiers for battles as mercenaries. As they were good at moving in the night and infiltration, and had strong geographic knowledge (Morimoto, 2014: 170), they were hired as shinobi and conducted similar operations as authentic shinobi. Hirayama called this type of shinobi as "outlaw" shinobi, and peasants, townsmens, and even when they were scouting, taking over and conducting surprise attack operations as shinobi (Hirayama, 2020a). Shinobi jobs including infiltration or surprise attack must have contained high casualty rates because they had to conduct their operations at the very front-line with a small number of soldiers outside or on the border of their territory (Hirayama, 2020a: 325). During wartime of the Sengoku Period, there was likely to be a social structure of hiring so-called outlaws as shinobi for wars as mercenaries, and many wandered to seek a job to be hired (Morimoto, 2014; Hirayama, 2020a).

As already seen in this paper, the term shinobi had various meanings including a person, occupation, activity ranging from intelligence to assassinations or military activities, and their social status and contracts varied as some hired as official employees and others as mercenaries. Their backgrounds were also different—some succeeded in their job as a family business with authenticity and some ninjutsu manuals, but others were hired as shinobi by developing their skills through theft or other crimes. More on shinobi's military activities will be analysed in the later sections, but it is also important to note that shinobi have other names as seen from shinobi's multiple aspects. As it is difficult to mention what shinobi is, it might be natural that shinobi have other names, but shinobi was occasionally called 'Kusa', 'Fuse', 'Kamari', depending on the places where shinobi worked. In addition to the meaning as an occupation or a person, these words also have the meaning of an activity like shinobi. In the later section, the term Kusa is used more often than shinobi because the author respects the words used in the historical records as it is. However, the author notes here again that the concept of shinobi includes

these names too.

3.2 Source of Intelligence

Mansenshūkai, a ninjutsu manual, introduces three types of shinobi works on collecting intelligence and tips to conduct their role (Nakashima, 2015: 115-128). A position called 'Mekiki' collected "basic intelligence", which is defined by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as, "intelligence derived from any source, that may be used as reference material for planning and as a basis for processing subsequent information or intelligence" (The Official NATO Terminology Database, 2020). Mekiki predominantly collected geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), including the size and steepness of mountains, the existence of forests and grasses, the depth and width of rivers, valleys, oceans, rice fields, moats and the situation of these natural conditions at a specific place or time (Nakashima, 2015: 115-119). This intelligence was especially important when deploying combats and preparing for battles (Nakashima, 2015: 115). Moreover, Mekiki collected intel not only about the natural environment mentioned above, but also enemy conditions such as the environment around their castles, structure of them, the situation of provisions including water, firewood and food (Nakashima, 2015:119). The reputation of the enemy leader from their followers was also considered an important part of intelligence, including the leader's honesty, justice, spirits, and his favourites and dislikes (Nakashima, 2015: 120). While Mekiki collected basic intelligence, the position called 'Miwake' collected the intelligence on enemy combat or castles from the tactical perspective. For example, the estimation of the number of people in a specific troop or overall power and possible ways of getting attacked when infiltrating in enemy's castles were collected by Miwake (Nakashima, 2015: 120-124). Miwake also evaluated an enemy's morale, tiredness, or starvation by observing humans living there. The last type is '間

見' (Aidami, Kanmi or Kenmi, the meaning of "see in distance"), who collected intelligence on enemy movements from relatively distant places. They evaluated whether the combat troops were moving forwards to the battle or stepping back, or accessing the enemy's next step such as crossing over the river or staying to observe troops (Nakashima, 2015: 124-128). Additionally, *Mansenshūkai* teaches not only shinobi's works but also tips, notes and knowledge for collecting such intelligence. It is impossible to mention everything in this paper, but ninjutsu manuals are the collection of wisdom elaborated by shinobi's real experience over a few hundred years. It teaches, for example, when shinobi observe five to seven people whispering something everywhere within an enemy's castle, it means cracks are appearing among them (Nakashima, 2015: 124). If enemies are busy for preparing provisions, it means the military order is not working properly meaning that their boss is incompetent (Nakashima, 2015: 123). To potentially intercept the enemy's night attack plan, assessing through the movement of fires and lights at enemy camps or castles, the existence of reconnaissance units, the patrolling situation, and the whinnying of horses and barks of dogs are important (Nakashima, 2015: 125). More and more tips and notes are introduced in the book.

Although shinobi scouting activity can be confirmed not only in ninjutsu manuals, but also in a historical record, the record in *Koyo Gunkan* (1575-1577, cited in Hirayama, 2020a) tells of slightly different types of scouting. Koyo Gunkan is the military record written by the Takeda family as already explained in section 2.1, and it is one of the few historical records that can tell the accurate situation of the Sengoku Period written at that time. In the material, three types of scouting are written as 'Metsuke', Miwake and 間見 (Aidami, Kanmi or Kenmi), and Miwake and 間見 are almost the same meaning as *Mansenshūkai*, as they use the same terms as it. Miwake in *Koyo Gunkan* collected intelligence from a place relatively near to enemy camps or castles, while 間見 observed

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from further distance. However, the remaining Metsuke differs from Mekiki introduced in *Mansenshūkai*, as it can be imagined from the different nouns being used. While Mekiki's role was to collect basic intelligence of the enemy and the battlefield, Metsuke in Koyo Gunkan took a role to collect intelligence by integrating with enemy troops and listening to their conversations.

Therefore, the authentic shinobi such as Iga-mono and Koka-mono might provide a different quality of scouting intelligence from the one hired as a mercenary. It can be deduced that while the authentic shinobi valued basic intelligence and gathered information on this, the outlaw shinobi was required to take more risks to recover information. However, *Mansenshūkai* introduces the way to infiltrate the enemy and collect intelligence as a scout by devoting another chapter on it, the risk, in terms of the distance from the enemy, might be the same. The difference in putting emphasis on basic intelligence is likely to be the significant difference between the authentic and the mercenary shinobi.

Although, as seen from *Mansenshūkai* and *Koyo Gunkan*, authentic shinobi and the daimyo Takeda distinguished scouting activity into three different roles, it is more likely that other daimyo or commanders just treated a scout as Metsuke. According to the historical records introduced by Hirayama (2020a: 259-281) and Morimoto (2014: 205-210), Metsuke was used to gain information that did not necessarily require infiltration into enemy combat with many risks, unlike Takeda's definition of Metsuke. For example, taking information which could have been investigated from a distance was also written as Metsuke's role. Therefore, scouting activity itself was likely to be called simply as Metsuke in general, and the investigation differed case-by-case. Moreover, Metsuke took a wider role than investigation. They sometimes worked as guiding soldiers to bring their own troops to targeted locations through the best path because he had a specialised knowledge on the geography at the area (Takao, 2019: Hirayama, 2020a).

3.3 Surprise Attack

Shinobi conducted many types of surprise attacks such as taking over castles or setting fire to enemy castles and camps at night by predominantly infiltrating into their territory. *Mansenshūkai* suggests that it is important to first infiltrate the castle and then set fire to the storage of gun powders, nitres, firewood, provisions, or the bridge crossing between the buildings to take over a castle (Nakashima, 2015: 142-143). It also notes that it is not enough to just set fire to the castle, but to send signals to their own troops waiting outside of the castle before setting the fire is important (Nakashima, 2015: 142). If the signals are sent properly at the appropriate time, shinobi will get support from their own troops, making it easier to take over the castle from both inner confusion and attacks from outside. Though t whether the takeover tactic was used in practice or not was unsure, the answer is surely yes. Hirayama (2020a) revealed that the takeovers were conducted predominantly by getting informants who had been working in the enemy castle and sending hundreds of shinobi at appropriate time from the information of the informant. Although the case of takeover was revealed already by Aragaki (2003), it was only a concrete example of many other cases and means. Other Many takeover cases from historical records from the perspectives of shinobi's role finally saw the light of a day by the research of Hirayama. Although some takeover cases succeeded and some failed, Hirayama (2020a) revealed that the takeover as a tactic was common among daimyo during the Sengoku Period, and it was conducted by the shinobi. Concerning the rewards which daimyo proposed in the cases of success, it is even likely that the tactic was highly valued. Fires were also used effectively as a surprise attack at night frequently with the takeover tactic, but it was also used for simply creating confusion within enemies. For instance, a successful example is when daimyo Date's shinobi set fire to the temple which the enemy was using as the camp in 1510, and the operation successfully made the enemy flee (Hirayama, 2020a: 239).

Shinobi also conducted a surprise attack to kill many soldiers by ambushing at enemy sites or the borders of the battlefield. The tactic in *Mansenshūkai* proposes drawing enemies into a strategic place and laying siege (Nakashima, 2015: 176). Although there is not much description on ambush in *Mansenshūkai*, many historical records state the tactic was conducted quite frequently by using kusa. For example, a military tactic called 'kusa-chogi' or 'fuse-chogi' (the term kusa mainly used in Tohoku region, and the term fuse predominantly used in Hokuriku and Chugoku region) made kusa infiltrate in the adversary's territory, way-lay the enemy, and attack them in surprise. The tactic used three kusa groups and made them wait at distant places away from each other during the night. The first kusa group was made up only by foot soldiers and infiltrated in the closest place from the adversary's castle. When the enemies appeared around thecastle, the first kusa group tried to kill them. But if enemies noticed their existence and appeared armed in advance, all members ran away at the same time. Then, if the armed army followed after the first kusa group, the first group ran to the place where the second and third kusa were ambushing. Finally, kusa could attack the enemy who followed the first kusa group together with other two groups. This tactic is written in *Mansenshūkai* (unknown, cited in Morimoto, 2014: 146-149; Hirayama, 2020a: 131-133) which records the Masamune Date Family who fought greatly in the Tohoku region in the Sengoku Period. The record further explains that if the enemy tried to conduct the same tactic, and their own comrade finds the enemy's kusa troops before being attacked, their own troop should find the returning route of the enemy's first kusa. Then, their comrade should pretend to be found by the first enemy kusa group and follow them, so that other comrades can effectively attack from behind when all three enemy kusa groups gather.

These kusa operations brought brilliant outcomes, at least tactically. *Date Terumune Nikki* (unknown, cited in Hirayama, 2020a: 137-138), the diary of Terumune Date (1544-1585), *Date Tensho Nikki* (1587-1590, cited in Hirayama, 2020a: 139-158), the diary of Masamune Date (1567-1636) and

Masamuneki (unknown, cited in Hirayama, 2020a) record many kusa activities. In particular, *Date Tensho Nikki* recorded 30 successful kusa operations conducted from the 20th of March 1588 to the 11th of August 1599 (Hirayama, 2020a: 152-158). Only within a year-and-a-half, kusa killed 307 enemies including at least one enemy and at most 200 enemies at once (Hirayama, 2020a: 157). Kusa conducted not only killing, but also catching enemies alive to collect information, or taking adversary letters to steal information (Aragaki, 2003; Morimoto, 2014: 153; Hirayama, 2020a). Even though it is hard to evaluate to what extent these activities influenced war at strategic level, as Hirayama (2020a) pointed out, it should give damage to the enemy's power by killing soldiers even little by little and by creating tension within the enemy all the time, especially when it became a long battle.

The tactic using ambush and surprise attacks at the place where one's own troop has an advantage of a decentralised irregular force is similar to guerrilla tactics. Moreover, kusa activities were frequently held at borders between two or multiple powers. There was no clear battle line like guerrilla warfare. As Mao (2015) argued "alertness", "mobility" and "attack" as elements for guerrilla strategy, kusa activities encompassed these features, too. Although the tactics are almost identical, the significant difference between kusa and guerrilla is that the combatants had no revolutionary aspect for kusa activities, while guerrilla warfare requires it (Clausewitz, 2014: Mao, 2015). Even though Mao stated that guerrilla warfare as strategy will fail without a political goal (Mao, 2015: 29), kusa activities included more tactical aspects. Rather than the purpose of guerrilla warfare being to achieve political goals by maintaining the aspect of territorial actor in the protracted war (Mao, 2015; Endo, 2017), the purpose of kusa tactics were simply to reduce enemy power and win a battle (Hirayama, 2020a). Therefore, the combatant in kusa activities was predominantly composed of mercenaries while guerrilla warfare is made up of the ordinary population. In fact, kusa activities were sometimes conducted against the enemy's population at village or population at border (Morimoto,

2014: 162, 186-187). In fact, kusa frequently pillaged and killed population at enemy's village or population at border (Fujiki, 1995:130-132; Morimoto, 2014: 145, 162, 186-187).

Chapter 4: Ethics

The term ethics can be defined as "the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group" (*Merriam-Webster*, 2022). The debates regarding ethics in intelligence activities appeared after the Second World War (Scott and Jackson, 2004 :163). The ethics of the contemporary world are greatly influenced by the international norms that place limitations on nation states. However, in the time shinobi were active there was no such international structure or concepts of ethics that could constrain the acts of lords or shinobi. This does not necessarily mean that the ethics itself did not exist. People in the Sengoku and Edo Periods strongly put limitations on their behaviour by themselves based on their own morality. For example, a bushi or a samurai, the Japanese ancient soldier, followed the way and the code of conduct called 'bushido'. Needless to say, shinobi had their own morale to constrain his behaviour. Even though the ethics of shinobi have not been discussed much in earlier research yet, except from the 正心 (*Shoshin or Seishin*) meaning the righteous heart of shinobi written in *Mansenshūkai*, this section tries to reveal the implications of 正心 (*Shoshin or Seishin*) as well as the identity of shinobi themselves through the comparison with bushido.

Bushido has often been debated in history and in the present. For example, it is analysed and described in the great works including *Gorin no sho: The book of Five Rings* by Musashi Miyamoto believed to be written between 1643 to 1645, *Hagakure: The book of Samurai* by Tsunemoto Yamamoto written possibly in 1716, and *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* by Inazo Nitobe in 1899 to name a few. Bushido is the conduct of duties which a bushi must follow in his occupation as well as in daily life in accordance with his social rank as bushi (Nitobe, 2014: 27). This is the responsibility of living as a bushi (Nitobe, 2014: 30). Individual bushi must act as a representative of his social status

(Mishima, 2016: 69). Moreover, a bushi must keep his honour, the honour which resonates him to give his live to many people (Nitobe, 2014: 108). According to Yamamoto's understanding, "Bushido is to die" (Hagakure, quoted in Mishima, 2016: 10). If a bushi acts against these duties, he would be required to commit suicide. Hara-kiri, the ritual suicide of a bushi, is the way to atone for such a sin, apologise for a mistake, forgive one's own shame, save others, and proove one's honesty (Nitobe, 2014: 110). In Mishima's understanding (2016: 42), hara-kiri is an extreme expression of a freedom of the will which bushi can take by his own decision to keep his honour (Mishima, 2016: 42). Recognising the existence of death for a whole day from morning to night is required to enhance bushido (Mishima, 2016: 106). To conclude, according to the author's understanding, dying itself is a honour for a bushi either by fighting or by hara-kiri. Living as a bushi is to keep his social status, and that social status was protected by valuing the bushido. Therefore, a bushi is always aware of how people see him. Even though it is not written in the bushido books, whenever talking about bushido, there is always an invisible someone in the books who evaluates the way of living of a bushi. Mishima (2016: 55) also noticed and pointed this out by describing "the outward moral" (translated by the author), the moral's formed by the outside world.

Before the Sengoku Period, combat was considered ritual fighting only by a bushi who attained the bushido. A battle had certain rules based on bushido, such as announcing one's name before combat began or fighting in one-to-one combat (Kadokawa Shoten, 2011). It was because the aim of fighting was not to win the battle, but rather to prove one's authenticity as a bushi by showing that the fighters adhered to bushido, by displaying traits such as his courage. However, the modes of combat began to change in the Sengoku Period, and it became more common to engage in group battle to gain control and power over territories. Because of this shift, the social class of bushi expanded to cover a wider range of people who fought in various kinds of battle. The occupation of shinobi thus emerged in this situation.

While bushido is known widely and analysed well, regarding the 'nindo', the term officially introduced by Yamada (2019) to express the conduct of shinobi, there is no such research going beyond the words written in the ninjutsu manuals so far. Similarly to bushido, the *Mansenshūkai* also expound the importance of duty, loyalty, courage and benevolence or compassion (Nakashima, 2015: 54-57). Moreover, these terms are mentioned in 正心 (Shoshin or Seishin), the most important part according to the *Mansenshūkai* itself. However, as mentioned above, because bushido treasures the honesty and rightness of the heart as the duty of being a bushi even against enemies, playing a nasty trick or cheating someone in a fight is never allowed in bushido. Nevertheless, most of the introduced techniques and tips in the *Mansenshūkai* focus on the ways to deceive adversaries such as the night attack, spying, infiltration, takeover, ambush and incendiarism. It also praises the nameless deaths of shinobi (Nakashima, 2015: 50), the secret missions unknown by anyone else (Nakshima, 2015: 50) and the inconspicuous actions taken by shinobi (Nakashima, 2015: 54). To sum up, the life of shinobi must be hidden in the shade while bushido is constituted through the eyes of others. However, making a note again that while shinobi were also considered bushi, their rank was the lowest of the social class of bushi, and their status was somewhere between that of bushi and that of peasant. Reading the *Mansenshūkai* from this perspective, it is full of the contradictions and the struggle of bushi called shinobi who breach the bushido. As Yoshiki Takao described the *Mansenshūkai* as the "identity of shinobi" (from personal communication, 9 August 2022 at International Ninja Research Centre), it can be also read as the shinobi bible, as well as a manual with the underlying assumptin that shinobi were supposed to comply with the codes of bushi. Even though the *Mansenshūkai* insists that shinobi should keep unlimited loyalty to their masters(Nakashima, 2015: 54), the shinobi's liaison work introduced in the section 2.2 proves the unloyal dimension of shinobi. It recognises the tactic of attacking the enemy at night after pretending to withdraw was unonhorable, yet it still gave this as one of the

strategic options a shinobi could persue   Nakashima, 2015: 176).

Furthermore, it is worth noting the extent of the *Mansenshūkai* kept secret. According to the contract for initiation in 1716 in the middle of the Edo Period, the users of the *Mansenshūkai* were not allowed to reveal the skills and techniques written inside to anyone else except, for the beginning part of the manual (Takao, 2020). However, Takao (from the personal communication, 9 August 2022 at International Ninja Research Centre) assumes what it actually indicated is that, the beginning part was made under assumption of being seen. Or shinobi rather would have shown the beginning of the manual to their employers, in order to express their own importance, and to explain the origin of shinobi's conduct and understanding of how battle would be carried out. From this understanding, an interesting aspect of the *Mansenshūkai* comes up. The beginning part of the manual does not introduce any concrete methods of ninjutsu but includes the introduction and the chapter of 正心 (*Shoshin or Seishin*). The conduct of the duty, loyalty, courage and benevolence or compassion which shinobi must follow is explained here. The importance of using shinobi to win a battle is urged by inserting many descriptions from Chinese ancient military strategies such as the *Seven Military Classics* including *The Art of War* and the *Six Secret Teachings* as an instance. The *Mansenshūkai* even alerts that generals would lose their battles without shinobi (Nakashima, 2015: 41). Moreover, the manual locates the section of 'general must be familiar with the shinobi's value' as the second crucial point of the book (Nakashima, 2015: 41). The most decisive part of the *Mansenshūkai* is the 正心 (Shoshin or Seishin) section, as already indicated. It asserts that ninjutsu is the techniques of thieves, so that it strongly prohibits using ninjutsu for one's own desires (Nakashima, 2015: 40, 53).

As it can be seen from the discussions above, the *Mansenshūkai* had the crucial role of building the identity of the shinobi and outlining what kind of

ethics shinobi should follow as practitioners of bushi. The manual touches on Japanese history, emphasizing that famous daimyo and generals such as Hojo and Uesugi valued shinobi and hired them with a high salary (Nakashima, 2015: 46). This description can be understood as geared toward shinobi, and also for the generals who were allowed to read this beginning part. Moreover, the description on prohibiting alcohol, love affairs and desires (Nakashima, 2015: 55) could also be taken to obscure the true meaning of the manual for anyone reading it who was not shinobi themselves. These passages may have been meant to communicate two separate meanings, one for the employer of the shinobi who was allowed to read it conditionally, and one for the shinobi who would have been trained to uncover and understand its true meaning. As the information contained in the *Mansenshūkai* was vital to the functioning of shinobi as a distinct and employable group with skills to offer, their ninjutsu would have been guarded closely. The suggestion for not choosing corrupt generals (Nakashima, 2015: 56) could be a simple recommendation for shinobi about who to share even this small bit of ninjutsu with, as well as to alert the employer to their position as the guardians of important knowledge.

Consequently, the ethics of shinobi are hard to define from the *Mansenshūkai*. Yamada (2019) successfully uncovers the conduct and spirit of shinobi in his book by drawing simply from what was written in the *Mansenshūkai* about shinobi's ethics. The ethics uncovered by Yamada owes more to the traditions of bushido, and is derived from idealized image of the historical shinobi. However, considering the social structure of bushido that was highly respected among bushi, nindo expressed in the *Mansenshūkai* could mean something slightly different from how it appears upon initial inspection. Additionally, it is worth noting that many shinobi were hired as mercenaries and were evaluated on their skills as trained burglars in the Sengoku Period. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is unknown to what extent the ethics written about in the *Mansenshūkai* were respected among outlaw shinobi. The

existence of these outlaws might affect the establishment of something like 正

心 (Shoshin or Seishin) seen in the Masnenshukai as an important theme.

Furthermore, it is unknown when the original scrolls were compiled into the *Mansenshūkai* and the question of when shinobi began to adopt the nindo raises more concerns. Although these uncertain holes in history blur the substantial image of shinobi and make it more difficult to understand who the shinobi were, what is clear is that shinobi must have struggled between their identities as bushi and their occupation as shinobi who worked against the teachings of bushido. Meanwhile, it might be said that the only reason bushi could adhear so steadfastly to the tenants of bushido was that there were shinobi, who were responsible deploying what would be deemed unethical tactics by bushido, fighting alongside them in battle.

Chapter 5: Shinobi in Today's Understanding

5.1 Redefining Shinobi

In this paper, a large breadth of shinobi activity has been discussed. Early ninjutsu practitioners and experts defined it as a "technique for military reconnaissance", "the spy technique" (Fujita, 1942) or simply "reconnaissance technique" (Itō, 1937). Moreover, Nakashima (2015: 2; 2017: 7) grasps ninjutsu as the "comprehensive technique for daily life". Although these definitions serve to highlight basic aspects of shinobi attitudes, they are too broad to express ninjutsu accurately enough and do not show what it inherently indicates. Another definition of ninja was introduced in 'background of ninja', but one must note again that *Bukemi youmokusyou* (1806, quoted in Yoshimaru, 2012:106; Yamada, 2016: 14; Hirayama, 2020a: 21-22; Hirayama, 2020b: 1-2) defines shinobi as 'a spy, who infiltrates enemies, investigates situations, sets castles on fire and occasionally assassinates targets in secret (Translated by the author)'. This definition simply names examples of shinobi activity and it does not explain who shinobi qualities. This section will surmise and formulate the extent of shinobi activity and explore prospective redefinitions of shinobi and ninjutsu, in other words the arts of shinobi.

To start with, the intelligence activities of shinobi ranged from investigations, infiltrations, spying and political interventions to military takeovers, deliberate acts of arson, assassinations and more. Functionally, shinobi adherents operated militarily with responsibilities to predominantly scout, patrol, path find, intercept communications and carry out surprise attacks including ambushes, takeovers, and incendiarism. Combining these activities together, shinobi actions are summarised to be tactically irregular with an essence of asymmetric power flowing through their methods. The term irregular here refers to an actor who does not fall into mainstream warfare behaviour and asymmetric refers to the use of non-conventional weapons. In this case, irregular

actors are represented by the shinobi themselves. In either intelligence or military operations, they primarily worked with small numbers of people and never linked up with conventional soldiers. One would have to be reminded of the conventionally held mercenary role of a shinobi. Even those who were hired sporadically operated outside of large combat. Therefore, shinobi worked on a mission-by-mission basis rather than be consistently relayed orders under a predetermined chain of command. This was because their tasks required a strong secrecy to succeed in investigations or surprise attacks, for example. The asymmetric aspect of shinobi warfare is garnered from these features as well. To conduct surprise attacks akin to guerrilla warfare, or to infiltrate a target's territory, the small-scale, close and mobile combat effectively worked to disrupt the operations of regular armies (Gray, 2007), armies seen to be "like plants, immobile, firm-rooted, nourished through long stems to the head" (Lawrence, 1976: 149). Moreover, the guerrilla tactic is fundamentally asymmetric as Mao noted it as 'a weapon that a nation inferior in arms and military equipment may employ against a more powerful aggressor nation' (Mao, 2015: 28). Even though guerrilla tactics employed by those with lesser means work more effectively against superior forces, it does not necessarily mean that smaller groups do not attack more niche elements of their enemies' inferiors: as can be seen in the case of shinobi. As guerrilla warfare defined by Mao emphasizes the importance of political aims to achieve missions (Mao, 2015: 29), it had revolutionary aspects to its nature. However, what was conducted by shinobi was solely a military tactic par excellence. Intelligence also has asymmetric or irregular powers through using information as a covert weapon; something small, concealable, invisible and mobile.

To sum up, a shinobi can be defined as 'an irregular fighter who specialised in the use of asymmetric tactics and weapons.' Therefore, the arts of shinobi was the techniques to win battles with smaller forces by gaining advantages over adversaries through means which would be likened to what is observed from irregular and asymmetric warfare in present day conflicts (Gray,

2007). According to the *Mansenshūkai*, as introduced in section 2.1, it asserts that a quintessence of battle is to quickly take enemies down by unforeseen actions and to use ninjutsu to gain access to and understand hidden plans held by enemies (Nakashima, 2015: 40). In other words, the essence of such tactics is asymmetric, and the onus lies on users of ninjutsu to uncover enemy intentions. To define ninjutsu, one should extract the purpose of shinobi activity. Through analysis in Chapter 2 and 3, two elements are found in common; stealth and deception. In fact, the *Mansenshūkai* and other ninjutsu manuals teach how one can become silent and employ the use of stealth and deception to deal with an enemy. Noted examples being techniques to infiltrate enemy territory at night, ways to blend into the atmosphere by disguising and imitating dialects or customs. These are a non-exhaustive list of examples among others in ninjutsu manuals to achieve mission success without being discovered by enemy combatants. Moreover, deceptive acts are emphasized by the teaching of methods within combat that seek to non-lethally incapacitate targets or keep them unaware of your actions. The relationship between stealth and deception is that being stealthy is imperative in the conducting of deception. As Clausewitz pointed out, a surprise attack can only be achieved when the enemy stays deceived (Clausewitz, 2001: 285-286). To maintain a plot's secret, or in other words, to achieve something asymmetric, stealthiness is required. Spying or the use of propaganda becomes effective only when the target does not know the truth. Therefore, as Sun Tzu stressed, "to fight is to deceive" (quoted in Asano, 1997: 25-28), deceptive acts are the absolute highest requirement to successfully conduct all shinobi missions. In short, ninjutsu, the arts of ninja, is a means of techniques to become stealthy, unseen and capable in the hope to deceive an enemy.

To combine the definition of ninja and ninjutsu as seen above, shinobi activity is conducted by irregular belligerents to gain advantages over adversaries by applying the use of asymmetric or irregular tactics and weapons and that these are effectively bolstered by the enhancing of stealthiness to

deceive and overcome enemies. In the next section, the applicability of this insight into will be analysed with a focus on the contemporary world in which we live.

5.2 Applicability of Shinobi Methods to the Contemporary World

The study of shinobi has brought insight for gaining advantages over adversaries. This section, as the last part of this dissertation, analyses an applicability of its perception in the contemporary world; that an irregular actor can utilize asymmetric or irregular tools to enhance their chances of a successful outcome by increasing levels of stealth while carrying out a deceptive act. To make it clear, an irregular actor who is someone who does not engage in conventional behaviour in warfare. This means they work in "the absence of large-scale open combat" as referred to in Gray (2007: 245). The perception observed through studying shinobi could be effectively available on tactical levels. This is simple because the techniques that shinobi used specialised in niche tactical realms. Clausewitz also clarified this aspect further by referencing asymmetric tactics in relation to the features of a surprise attack (Clausewitz, 2001: 285-286). Asymmetric tactics and tools using non-conventional weapons conducted by irregular actors can be cyber-attacks, sniping, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) use or drones for example.

Cyber had first been thought as the tool which could make a "cyber-Pearl Harbor" which could "cause physical destruction and the loss of life, an attack that would paralyze and shock the nation and create a profound new sense of vulnerability", according to the words of the United States Defence Secretary Leon E. Penetta (quoted in Bumiller and Shanker, 2012). Although there has been a great fear against cyber threats, the recognition of the risks has changed to be more tactically minded (Gordon and Rosenbach, 2022). Cyberspace is frequently used as a platform to spread disinformation, interfere with target countries or conduct espionage (Nye, 2022). It could also make an impact on

the physical domain. For example, the Russian cyberattack against Ukraine's electronic power system in 2015 affected 225,000 people (*BBC*, 2017). A cyber-attack contains irregular and asymmetric aspects, and the cyber domain surely has increased its importance in weakening adversaries at several tactical levels. Applying ninjutsu elements into the cyber case, it can be said that if the attack maintains a stealthy nature, deception has succeeded and damaged adversaries because the covertness in the cyber-attack delays the target's digital forensic capabilities and hides its attributes. While stealth is kept, the adversary may not respond or even notice the situation or that they have been attacked. Therefore, there are an extent of possible relations between irregular activities and stealth. However, as the cyber domain easily crosses borders, disinformation, for example, can hurt their own citizens by keeping falsified information secret and creating confusion not only among the enemy's side, but also in their own society. The same issue could happen in the intelligence. The insight which shinobi brought might have been the golden rule during the Sengoku Period, but in accordance with the development of technology and increasing features of borderless societies, such excessive levels of stealth could be counter-intuitive and generate confusion within the country of the aggressor. Therefore, the effectiveness in the relation between irregular activities and stealth can only be pursued under the condition of not harming one's own society. Although the time in which the shinobi lived, and the cyber-based society of contemporary times differ a lot, a unique work entitled '*Cyberjutsu*' has been conducted by Ben McCarty (2021) who tried to apply shinobi infiltration methods and other shinobi techniques to modern cyber procedures. Ultimately, he proved that the essence of shinobi tactics and the mindset of the shinobi could be applied to the contemporary cyber domain.

In the case of using long range, hand-held weapons such as snipers and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones, if a scenario maintains the features that indicate an absence of large-scale open combat, utilisation of stealth and deception can enhance the chances of those employing such tactics

to find success. The act of using sniper rifles in hyper specific operations would rarely succeed without deception, which is an absolute necessity to achieve mission success. Furthermore, UAVs and drones also enhance covert capabilities by keeping the existence of such acts distant and harder to trace. The current UAVs industry is increasing efforts to invest more in the improvement of stealth capabilities to gain advantage over and improve upon various asymmetric and information warfare aspects; nations all around the globe, no matter the size of their military capabilities, are researching and investing technologically in this area (Palik, 2019).

However, limitations of stealth capabilities and deceptive acts, that is, limitations of asymmetric warfare by irregular actors, is a tactic that cannot attain victory in a battle by itself. Even if perfect stealth capabilities were to be pursued and that these tactics and deceptions were to be carried out secretly, nations would not be able to seize enough power to control other countries. As Gray (2007) concluded, irregular warfare is a tool used by inferior forces to gain certain advantages in warfare. These tactics stay outside of mainstream battle situations. However, it is also notable to mention that such important tactical domains in military and political settings are assisted by technological development in areas that focus on more covert and underhanded methods of conflict resolution, warfare and information acquisition. As the debate on hybrid warfare makes clear, borders are becoming more blurred between war and peace, the battlefield among nations is erasing the distinctions between soldiers and civilians and is now cause for concern in several aspects of the psychological domain (Hoffman, 2007). The methods brought forth by shinobi ideology ensure that the level of stealth importance in irregular warfare at the military level, can be applied even more so in the technologically based contemporary world which blurs the lines between military action and a want for peace. Deceptive happenings in war alongside ulterior motives and actions like espionage, surprise attacks, vulnerability-focused strikes and disinformation now influence conflict more than ever.

Conclusion

Unlike the fictionalised ninja, shinobi did not conduct many assassinations or fights with mysterious techniques dressed in black, but they surely lived in the black shadows of the Sengoku Period. In the comparison with the bright light of the bushido, the shinobi's identity was tha of a person who was reaching toward that light of bushi, but could not perfectly become it, is revealed throughout the ninjutsu manuals. This was because if a bushi could be expressed as the Sun, shinobi was the moon in Japanese history. Shinobi were the experts of deception, so that their work was predominantly attacking with tactics such as surprise night attack or ambush. Much intelligence was gathered by hiding their own job or hiding at night to infiltrate into the enemy's territory. While a bushi valued his honour as a way to continue living as a bushi, and by following the rules of bushido which would never allow deception, shinobi utilised deception to bring victory to his daimyo, who was of course a bushi. These two contrasts can be seen by these two fundamentally different descriptions, "bushido is to die" for keeping one's own family's honour in several ways (*Hagakure*, quoted in Mishima, 2016: 10) while "to fight is to deceive" for gaining a win (Sun Tzu quoted in Asano, 1997: 25-28). The latter was clearly the job of shinobi, who were hired from members of outlaw society (Hirayama, 2020a). Even though the *Mansenshūkai* emphasize the importance of deception by referring to *The Art of War* written by Sun Tzu, it was not acceptable for those who lived according to Japanese honour-based society. The spy is generally taken as a respectful occupation in other countries. Although the spy is widely recognised as the gentlemen's job in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom, the fundamental differences between a spy and a shinobi can probably be traced back to the social structure in each country's history, as seen through out the dissertation. Although the weakness of Japanese intelligence service has long been pointed out and discussed by researchers such as Ken Kotani (2007) and Richard Samuels (2020), the existence and the social status of shinobi might be able to illuminate one of the reasons for this situation.

Even though shinobi disappeared from history in the 17th century, there is a record that shows that 'Ninpo', another term of ninjutsu, was taught in the then Nakano school of the Japanese army in 1938 (Ito, 1984: 150). The Nakano school is the army school established for training combatants who operate in secret operations including propaganda, guerrilla tactics, reconnaissance, infiltration, political and philosophy maneuverer and so forth (Ito, 1984: 1122-124). Ninpo was taught as part of the curriculum at the school by Seiko Fujita, who had proclaimed himself to be the last ninja. A class named 'disguise' was also taught. The soldiers who graduated from the school were sent to Myanmar, India, Indonesia and other colonies that Japan had been occupying during the World War and conducted secret operations similar to what shinobi were doing in the Sengoku Period.

As a specialist of irregular warfare, shinobi took a wide variety of roles not only limited to intelligence but also in military operations by utilising asymmetric tactics through deceiving targets. The *Mansenshūkai*, therefore dedicated many pages to introducing techniques aimed at how to move with stealth, deception of the enemy as the essence of ninjutsu, and the arts of the shinobi. These arts would likely have been passed over to the Nakano school and utilised during the Second World War. The applicability of the arts of ninja in the contemporary world may be useful to a certain extent, especially when the actor is an irregular fighter and utilises asymmetric warfare. Though it may only be effectively utilised at the tactical level, the domain in which the arts of ninja can be utilised has been expanding in accordance with the blurring of the lines between war and peace. Dedication to the further study of ninja would bring more insights into understanding our own time more clearly.

Although this dissertation focused on the substantial image of shinobi, it is important to notice that the fictionalised ninja has also had an outsized influence on Japanese society and culture, as Yoshimaru (2012; 2017a; 2017b: 2017c) frequently argues. All aspects, both historical and idealized, embody the

truth of the ninja in the modern imagination. This is just one more example of the legendary deceptive power of the ninja, passed down through history, into our own time.

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