

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 incendiary 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.