



# 5 INTON

## CONCEALMENT AND CAMOUFLAGE FOR THE NINJA

Perhaps one of the most efficient means of self-protection is simply to not be seen or noticed at all, thereby removing the possibility of becoming a target, a victim, or a person forced to be involved in a conflict requiring self-defense. Any confrontation has the possibility of becoming a dangerous situation; court records are filled with stories of traffic congestion rudeness that erupted into brutal fistfights, and of arguments among friends that escalated into fatal shootings or stabbings. In times of war or revolution, the considerations are even more urgent. The unnecessary expenditure of costly or scarce supplies and the sacrificing of the lives of loved ones can be reduced greatly by avoiding the conventional battlefield altogether. It is difficult for the oppressor or attacker to defeat an enemy that he cannot perceive. This finely developed art of invisibility is one of the principal methods employed by the ninja warriors of Japan.

### PERSPECTIVES ON THE ART OF INVISIBILITY

The power of invisibility can be developed on the physical level. Many of the concepts of invisibility embodied in the strategies of espionage and commando tactics for which the historical ninja were famous came to Japan with the hoards of Chinese military and religious authorities fleeing

the devastation following the fall of the T'ang dynasty.

Often quoted as another source for some of the warfare strategies of ninjutsu, the classical Chinese treatise on war compiled by *Sonshi* (*Sun Tzu* in Chinese) contains many references to the proper methods of clandestine operation and reconnaissance that had long been proven successful in China. *Sun Tzu's Art of War* is said to have been introduced to Japan in the middle years of the eighth century by the traveling Japanese scholar *Kibi no Makibi*. The thirteenth and final chapter of the work deals with the use of spies and espionage, and though rejected with contempt and disgust by many of the more conventional warlords of pre-feudal Japan, the teachings were well received and taken to heart by the vastly outnumbered families who dwelled in the mountains of the Iga and Koga regions.

The power of invisibility can also be developed on the mental or psychological level. Like the Japanese art of ninjutsu, the highly secret Tibetan warrior tradition of *trulkor* is based largely on the creation of images. Translated literally as "illusion action," the esoteric doctrine which mirrors the methods of Japan's ninja stipulates that all combat is based on deception. By creating shapes and images to confuse and delude the adversary, the skilled warrior conceals his true capabilities and intentions. His first target is

the mind of his adversary. From that point he goes on to secure the total victory. Like his Tibetan *trulkor* counterparts, the ninja moves like a ghost in the moonlight, unseen, unheard, and unnoticed, while the enemy takes to the battlefields all exposed, vulnerable, and fearful, never knowing just where or how its nemesis will appear.

The power of invisibility can be developed through spiritual perfection. Strongly influencing the development of the *shugendo* and *mikkyo* spiritual traditions that contributed to the body of knowledge studied by the historical ninja of Japan, the *vedas* and *sutras* of the Himalayan cultures contain numerous references to the development of reliable psychic skills for personal self-protection. Ultimately the real roots of the ninja's power methods do not lie in China as many historians assert, but past the Himalaya Mountains along the ancient Silk Road.

The yoga *sutras* of Patanjali tell of the powers that can be developed through the practice of *samyama*, or the three-part inspired blending of intense concentration, meditative flow, and the complete absorbing/merging of the consciousness with the object of concentration. The resulting *siddhis*, or "accomplishments," sound like a literal description of the legendary abilities of the ninja warriors of the night.

*Applying samyama on the physical form of one's body obstructs its perceptibility and removes the ability of others to see the body. The light emanating from the body does not register in the eyes of the beholder, rendering one invisible.*

*From this procedure also arises the ability to remove all sound and other physical sense aspects.*

*Applying samyama to the inner light gives one intuitive knowledge of that which is subtle, concealed, or distant.*

*Through the mastery of udana meditative breathing, one gains the ability to levitate over obstacles and walk over water and swamps.*

*Applying samyama to the relationship between the physical body and the ether (substance that supports the subatomic particles), and to the floating quality of lightweight objects gives one the ability to fly through the air.*

Though spiritual methods of rendering the body invisible, as taught by enlightened mystics such as India's Patanjali, Togakure *shugendo's*

Gakumon Gyoja, or Iga *sennin* wizard Kain Doshi, are of inspiration to neophyte students as they look ahead at what future training can provide, the ninja's skills of invisibility begin with physical fundamentals of how to avoid being detected. Once an attitude of confidence in one's ability to move unperceived has been allowed to develop, the student of ninjutsu can then, with unhesitating spirit, move on to the higher, rarer levels of *onshinjutsu*, the art of making oneself invisible.

### PHYSICAL METHODS OF BECOMING INVISIBLE

Darkness is one of the ninja's most formidable weapons. The simplest method of becoming invisible is to remove the ability of others to see you. In a totally darkened room, everything becomes invisible. Chairs, tables, stairwells, guard dogs, people—all become impossible to see when there is no light to be reflected back to the eyes of the perceiver. From the standpoint of the ninja's operational activity, darkness provides an excellent form of passive defense, in that most countermeasures and weapons require optical guidance to be effective. Without a target to sight in on, an attacker finds it difficult for blades, sticks, hands, even bullets, to be effective.

#### Camouflage

Further measures to lessen the likelihood of being seen include camouflage techniques for the individual warrior. Reduced conspicuousness can be attained by wearing garments appropriate to the area or the lighting in which the ninja will be operating. It should be noted that night camouflage entails much more than merely slipping into a black suit. Actually, an all-black uniform or color scheme is optimal only on certain occasions, because in any condition other than total darkness, black clothing tends to create an intense solid silhouette. Another negative consideration is the implication that all-black attire would have if spotted. Someone lurking about furtively in a black "secret agent" outfit of deck shoes and commando sweater, let alone a fifteenth-century ninja costume, is certain to be assumed as being up to no good if encountered by police or security personnel.

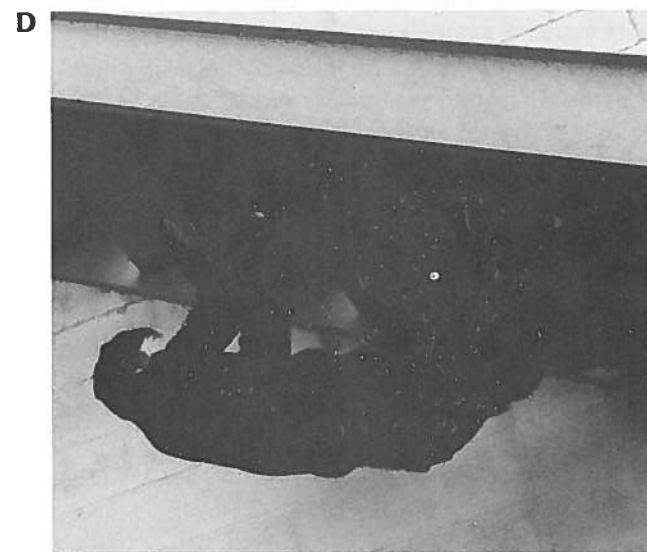
In urban or built-up areas, tones of gray, tan, or blue are best suited for image-concealing clothing. The ninja wearing a dark gray warm-up suit or a blue denim jacket-and-jeans combination can easily fade into the shadows when necessary, and will stand a better chance of moving unchallenged or at least explaining his or her way out if confronted. Running shoes, a rolled-up watch cap, a light sheen of perspiration, or even a towel or scarf around the neck or over the lower face will seem to be a natural part of the attire and should not create any additional suspicion at all.

Operations in wooded or field situations can be facilitated by wearing various tones of green or tan. Today's military preference for subdued shades of olive green, khaki, or camouflage pattern uniforms is easily adapted to ninjutsu training or work. The military colors blend readily with natural wooded or desert surroundings, and fade to dull grays in the reduced light of night.

Care must be taken to cover or camouflage the entire body. Natural body oils make the skin highly reflective, and a face can stick out like a beacon to an observer scanning a wooded or partially lighted area. When possible, tone down exposed skin areas with dirt, ashes, charcoal, shoe polish, or stick paint make-up. The historical ninja of Japan sometimes used specially constructed half-sleeves to cover the backs of their hands, and cloth strips to form a combination hood and mask to conceal the face and muffle the breathing.

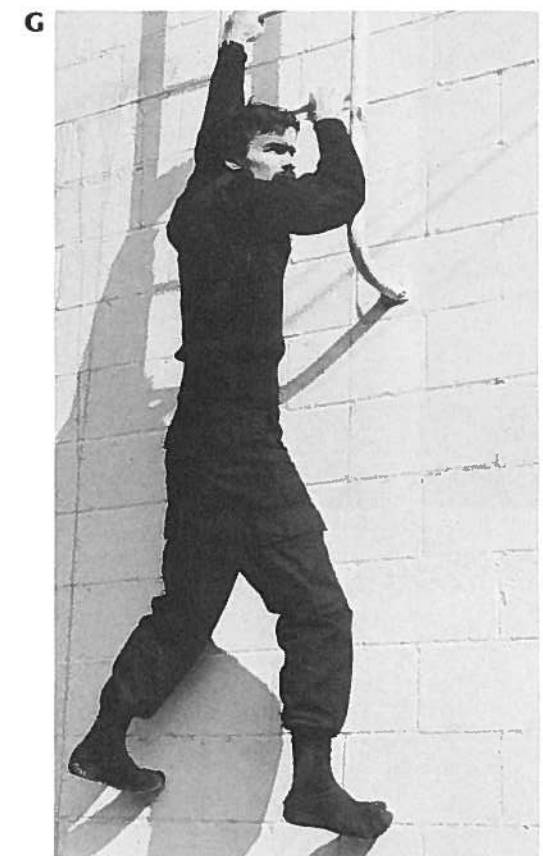
Physical skills of invisibility are essential in cases where infiltration, exfiltration, insertion, or extraction are required to protect the lives of loved ones or those for whom we are responsible. As an all-around warrior, the ninja trains to be able to use nature as a combat ally whenever possible. Darkness, with its concealing qualities, is first friend to the *shinobi* warrior.

In addition to camouflage skills of concealing one's presence from view, the ninja's arts of invisibility also involve abilities of moving through hostile territory without being encountered by enemy personnel. In this example of gaining access to a building under the cover of concealment, the ninja moves up a steel staircase beneath the steps, rather than take a chance on being spotted in the more conspicuous topside position. (It should be noted that for reasons of presentation clarity the photographs were taken during daylight hours. In actual application, night's darkness would aid the climber in his need for invisibility.

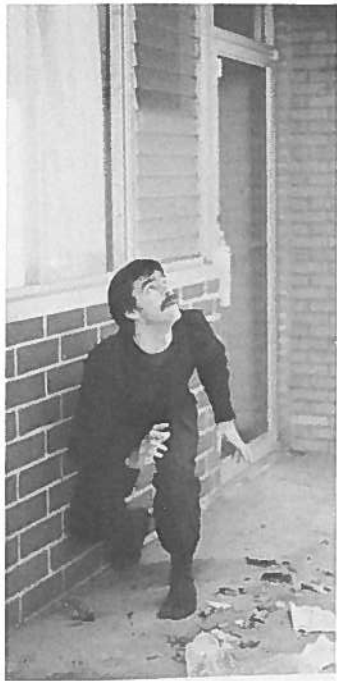




In this example of Togakure ryu ninjutsu's *shoten no jutsu* "vertical surface running," the ninja climbs to the roof of a building by means of an elevated escape ladder that has been mounted in such a way as to prevent access by the average person. Never one to settle for the average, the ninja is able to use his skills and knowledge of balance, momentum, and timing to carry his body twice the distance of his height onto the ladder. Once he has a firm grip on the ladder, the ninja continues his ascent upward, being aware of staying flat against the climbing surface and of continually scanning his surroundings to check for others who might spot him.



In another example of clandestine movement, the ninja uses the angling of his body joints to facilitate silent access onto a rooftop as a means of escaping hostile pursuers. Though unenlightened critics of the *shinobi* arts are quick to claim that such skills are easily adapted to immoral purposes such as burglary or terrorism, in truth, the question of morality is outside of the reality of training one's body to operate efficiently at one's command. It is difficult to imagine any parent who would not want their child to have the ability to physically vanish from the path of brutal and animalistic pursuers chasing them, regardless of the fact that it could be possible for other persons in other places to misuse such evasive skills for immoral personal gain.



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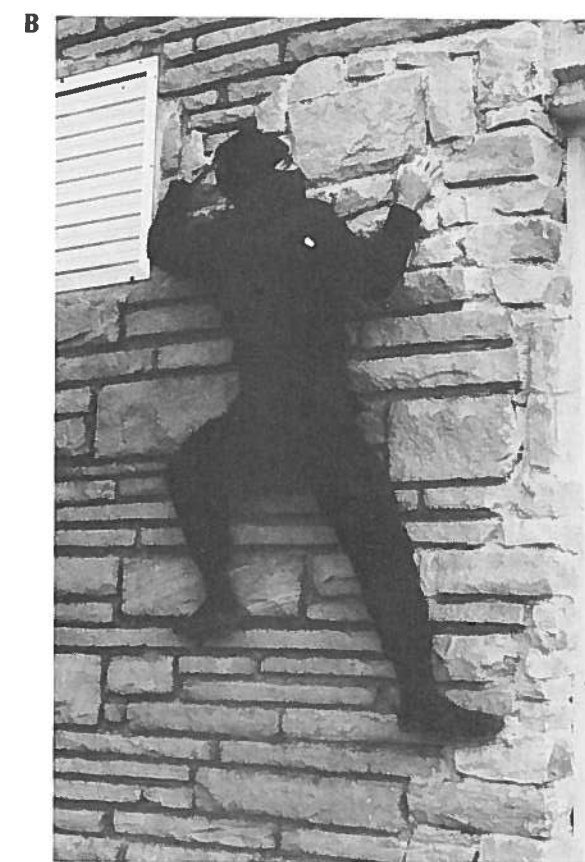


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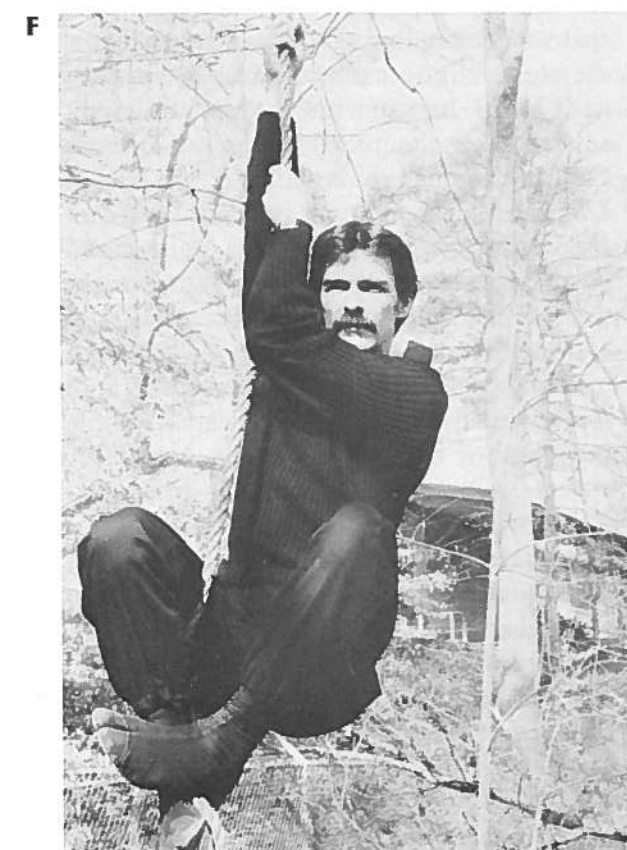
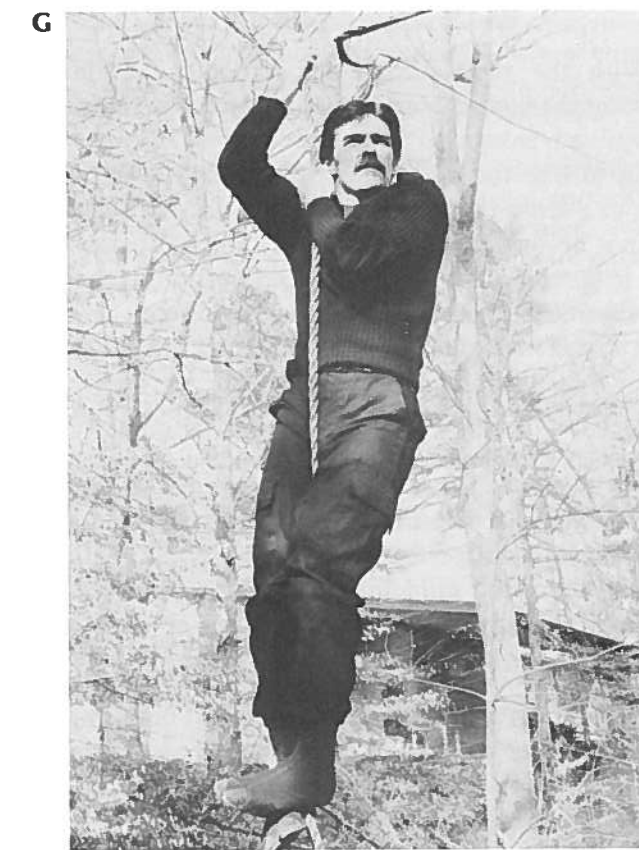
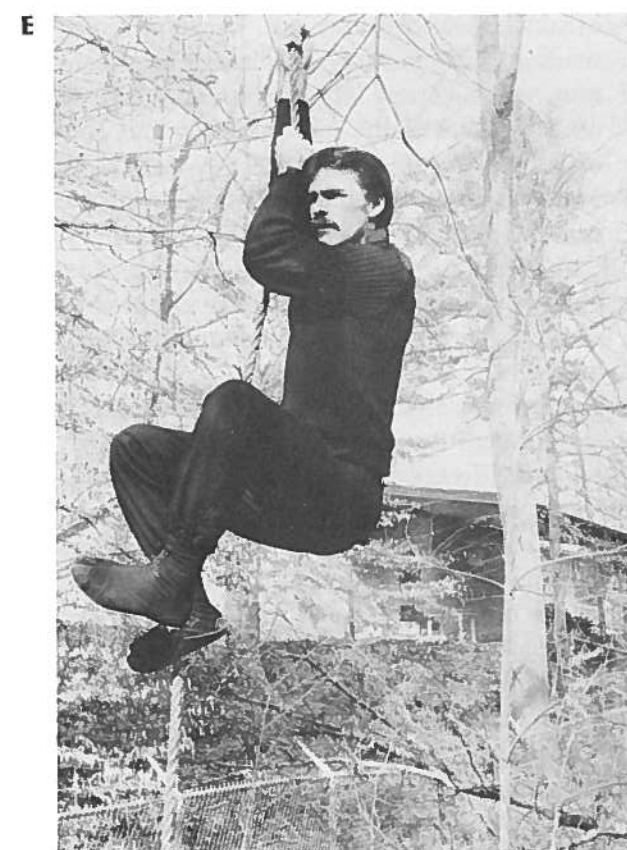
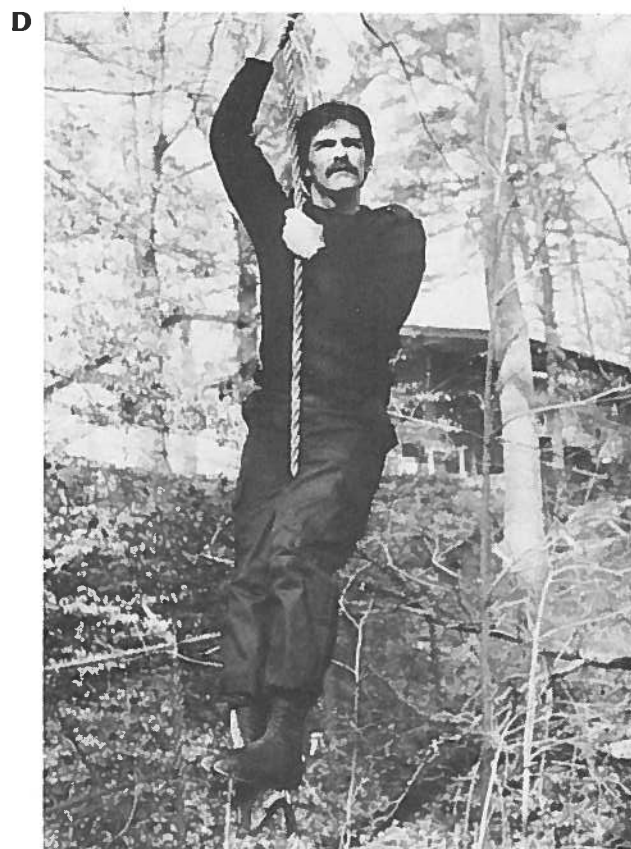
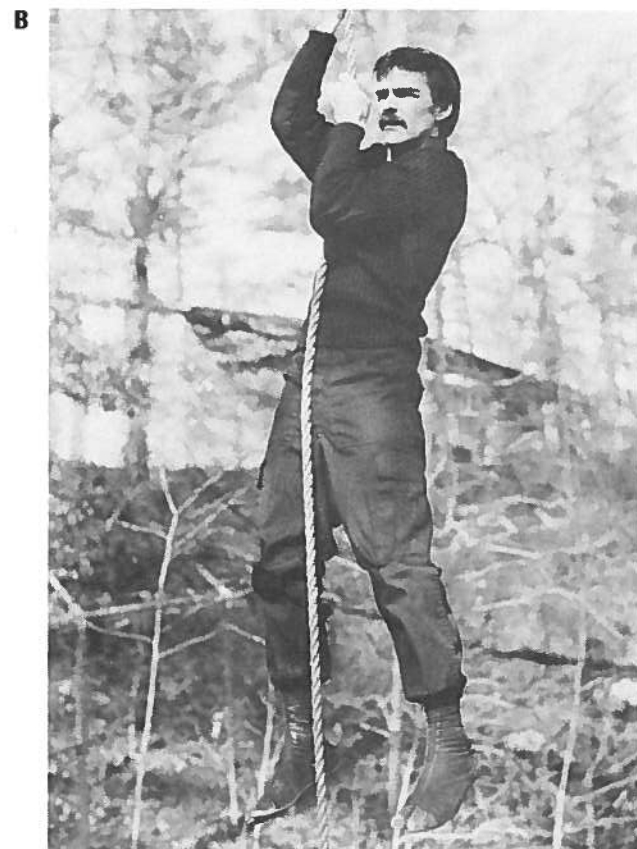
Ninjutsu covert climbing skills involve the scientific use of the body's mechanics and dynamics for efficient scaling. In this example, the climber uses outstretched limbs for movement, as opposed to tightly bent joints that tax and tire the muscles too quickly. Three points of contact are maintained at all times as the fourth limb is moved to seek out a new firm anchor. Breathing rhythm matches muscle contraction and relaxation. It is also important to be aware of keeping the body flat against the climbing surface at all times to avoid having to tense the muscles at awkward moments to prevent falling back. Wall hugging also produces a less-noticeable silhouette should a casual observer glance at the climber during the night.





There will be occasions when a suspended rope or chain may be the only access to escape into, or out of, a structure. Therefore, a scientific method of gripping the rope and moving the body up or down is a part of ninjutsu survival training. The rope is gripped at an angle across the palm of the hand, just as with a sword handle or hanbo cane. The body is held naturally upright for ease of movement and balance. The rope is allowed to wrap around the outside of the calf and across the top of one foot in

order to afford gripping purchase with the bottom of the other foot. The feet hold while the arms extend and secure a higher grip on the rope. The hands then bear the load while the feet relax their grip to permit the legs to fold and move up the rope. Again the feet grab and hold the weight while the hands move up again. At any time during the ascent or descent, the feet can lock onto the rope to permit relatively free use of the hands, should something be needed from a pocket or pack.



## Psychological Factors

With the proper frame of mind, the ninja moving through the night has a distinct psychological advantage over an adversary. Humans seem to fear the darkness instinctively, perhaps due to a sense of helplessness in the face of what cannot be seen. The ninja night warrior, operating in the blackness of the unseen portion of the environment, therefore, becomes the unseen object of the enemy's fear. The ninja, materializing from the invisibility provided by the darkness, has the opportunity of initiating the action. The sentry, watchman, or patrol is limited to watching, waiting, and finally reacting, because of the constrictions of a purely defensive approach to handling the danger.

The following guidelines should be observed during training for night work in home or enemy territory:

- Darkness provides concealment, but not protection or cover. Be aware of the possibility of random bullets or grenades that could be launched in your direction.
- Darkness does not guarantee total invisibility. Be aware of the possibility of infrared, laser, or heat sensitive optical devices being used to spot you.
- Due to the internal structure of the human eye, it is difficult to see objects in low-light conditions by looking directly at them. Glance around the object with quick, flitting eye motions, look out of the corner of your eyes, or lift your gaze above the object in order to use your eyes to best advantage during night operations.
- The process of fully adapting the eyes from a light environment to darkness requires a minimum of twenty to thirty minutes. However, to adjust from a dark environment to bright surroundings takes less than a minute. A bright flash or spotlight is all that it takes to break down your night vision, thereby causing the slow adaptive process to begin all over again for effective operation in the darkness. Be aware that a guard or sentry sitting at a lighted watch post or campfire will have greatly reduced vision capabilities when looking away from the light to peer into the darkness in search of you.
- Avoid staring into white light, which quickly

breaks down night vision. For night map reading, lock picking, or intelligence scanning, a small red lensed flashlight can be used in place of the undesirable white pool of light.

- Flares and searchlights instantly remove the cover of darkness. When caught by a ground flare, panning searchlight, or bonfire, dive out of the lighted area as quickly as possible. Aerial flares and helicopter-mounted searchlights can often be detected before they totally expose your area. On the other hand, when caught beneath an overhead floodlight or flare, freeze in position under a tree, inside a cliff overhang, or among rocks or uneven ground. In that situation, avoid attention-drawing motion as much as possible.
- When required to move across open areas, plan your route carefully. When exposed, move in quick bursts from shadow to shadow, cover to cover. In subdued or broken lighting, move slowly and steadily from spot to spot, or use one of the ninjutsu *taihenjutsu* rolling travel methods. Always be alert for alternate escape routes if escape should become necessary. If it is impossible to move without making noise, remember that short bounding or scurrying movements are closer to the patterns of night animals, and blend better with the natural night sounds than the paced rhythmical motions typical of human movement.
- Use weather conditions as aids and not hindrances. Falling rain and dark cloud cover provides excellent shielding for night work. The noise of the rain conceals activity and the soft damp ground reduces the noise of footsteps. Moonlit nights are best suited for reconnaissance and observation, while moonless or overcast nights are better for covert infiltration, exfiltration, or combat action.
- Whenever practical, study your destination in as much thorough detail as possible before going in, so as to reduce the danger of getting lost or becoming confused inside the enemy's territory. Learn routines, landmarks, and general layouts. Pre-action scouting of territory as many times as possible cannot be overemphasized in its importance to the night warrior engaged in covert activ-

ity. Stay alert and sensitive to your relation to cardinal directions. Losing your sense of direction at night could result in a fatal mistake.

The ninja uses the realms of light and shadow as symbols of the ability to blend with, and move through, all aspects of nature, comfortable in the knowledge that by becoming one with the surroundings, one can vanish in the minds and eyes of pursuers. Light and darkness, heat and cold, mountain and valley, the four seasons, and the elements of nature all befriend the ninja who has attained the enlightened power of oneness with the universe.

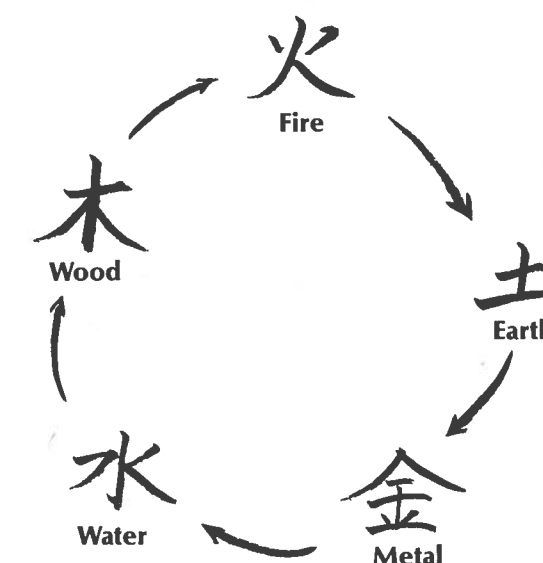
## GOTONPO

Historically, these natural escape strategies of ninjutsu were referred to by the title *gotonpo*, or "five elements concealing and escaping methods." The five symbolic elements were known as the *gogyo*, or "five elements transformations," and consisted of earth, water, fire, metal, and wood, each a symbol of a particular quality of "changing." The escape-and-concealment method consists of utilizing one of the elements as an appropriate mode of cover for escape and evasion. This tactic of invisibility through blending with nature does, however, involve far more than the symbolic code implied in the five elements title in its literal sense. The ninja warrior is expected to be able to move unhindered whenever and wherever necessary, no matter what the surroundings or prevailing environment.

As a guide to general combat and escape strategy, the *gogyo* five elements can be seen to represent the following tactical options:

1. *Mokutonjutsu* ("wood") represents rising, growing, swelling energy that could be employed to overcome the enemy's tendencies to rely on gathering, condensing, and stabilizing tactics. As an example of *mokutonjutsu* strategy, we could use the statement, "My forces marshal more troops and move against you with growing intensity as your forces attempt to hold onto your own territory."
2. *Katonjutsu* ("fire") represents expansive, evasive, free energy that could be utilized to

The *gogyo* "five element transformations" in their productive cycle, showing how one phase of energy manifestation leads naturally to another, and is seen thereby as producing the next stage of energy development. The labels of earth, metal, water, wood, and fire are used here as a form of code symbolism for the five energy transformation stages, and are not necessarily to be adhered to literally. "Water" sinking energy eventually produces "wood" upward growth energy. Upward rising energy eventually leads to "fire" free dissipated energy. Dissipation eventually begins to come together and draw down into "earth" solidity. Solidifying energy eventually produces the "metal" state of hardness. Hardness eventually cracks and dissolves into "water" melting, sinking energy. Through an intimate awareness of the inevitable cycle of nature, the ninja warrior came to be seen as having the mysterious ability to predict the future, when in reality he was scientifically reciting the most reliably predictable likelihood.

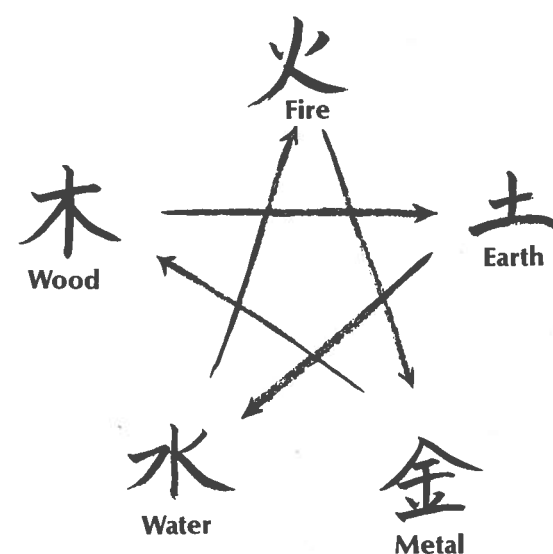


overcome the enemy's tendencies to rely on hard, edged, unbreakable tactics. As an example of *katonjutsu* strategy, we could use the statement, "My forces scatter and evade to frustrate and dissipate the power of your forces as they attempt to launch a piercing attack."

3. *Dotonjutsu* ("earth") represents gathering, condensing, and stabilizing energy that could be employed to overcome the enemy's tendencies to rely on melting, dissolving, and sinking tactics. As an example of *dotonjutsu* strategy, we could use the statement, "My forces draw together and intensify their hold on the territory as your forces attempt to slip in easily and surreptitiously."



The gogyo in their destructive cycle, showing how any given phase of energy manifestation can be inhibited or overcome by another, and is seen thereby as being destroyed. Again, it must be emphasized that the element labels are used as codes for understanding combat strategy, and are not necessarily limited to their literal reference to using nature for concealment and escape. "Fire" dissipation and free movement renders piercing and direct "metal" thrusts ineffective. Edged and direct "metal" advances nip growing and building "wood" energy in the bud. Growing and branching power breaks up "earth" contracting and ground-holding energy. "Earth" compacting and damming energy stops "water" sinking down and melting away energy. Sinking energy combats "fire" evasive free moving energy.



4. *Kintonjutsu* ("metal") represents hard, edged, unbreakable energy that could be utilized to overcome the enemy's tendencies to rely on rising, growing, swelling tactics. As an example of *kintonjutsu* strategy, we could use the statement, "My forces launch an immediate and decisive attack against your forces as they attempt to build strength and move into an advantageous position."
5. *Suitonjutsu* ("water") represents melting, dissolving, and sinking energy that could be utilized to overcome the enemy's tendencies to rely on expansive, evasive, free tactics. As an example of *suitonjutsu* strategy, we could use the statement, "My forces quietly melt into your territory as your forces scatter and thin out in an attempt to cover even more territory."

The ninja warrior using the tree for concealed observation of the enemy is merely symbolic of the *mokutonjutsu* "wood escape arts" of gaining the upper hand over the adversary who toils at holding his ground. The ninja's *gotonpo* "five elements of escape and evasion" is much more thorough and scientific than the simple teachings of hiding in trees, behind rocks, or within smoke clouds as is so often suggested in the books of authors who have not had the opportunity to actually experience the study of the authentic Japanese *shinobi* arts.



By becoming the earth and holding his position, the ninja thwarts the enemy who attempts to melt into the territory in search of him. The concealed warrior in this illustration is used as a symbol of the *dotonjutsu* "earth escape arts" that are much more far reaching in scope than the mere act of burrowing into the ground to escape hostile pursuers.



The submerged ninja breathing through a reed tube is symbolic of the *suitonjutsu* "water escape arts" of sinking out of sight to avoid the enemy who hastily scatters to cover the territory looking for him. Again, it must be emphasized that the *gotonpo* science of evasion is represented here in symbolism only. Mastery of the true art of invisibility requires an extensive knowledge and sensitivity towards the subtle vibrations of nature, the passing of the cycles, and an intuitive grasp of the enemy's psychology. Concealment under water has for centuries been used merely as a symbolic rendering of the teachings of one of the five branches of tactics.

