

Ninja Tools

Contributed by Administrator
Sunday, 19 June 2005

TOOL: ASHIARO

DESCRIPTION:

The Ninja were master trackers able to identify all types of prints on the ground and, being the proficient trackers they were, they also realized that they, too, could be tracked, especially while wearing tabi or split toed boots. This problem was solved by the invention of many types of "footprints" carved out of wood and attached to the soles of the Ninja's tabi.

The ashiaro took many shapes such as a bear's or a dog's and they also were made to imitate human prints. These prints made the Ninja's tracks look like those of a child by making the ashiaro small and shaped like a child's foot or the Ninja could be made to look like a cripple by deforming the shape of the ashiaro. Wearing these footprints, a Ninja could walk confidently through enemy territory and not worry about being tracked. After all, the Samurai wouldn't consider a cripple or a child a threat.

TOOL: DOKA

DESCRIPTION:

A doka is a small container for used to safely carry live coal. This device is used for lighting candles, fuses. It can also be used to warm their hands on cold nights.

TOOL: GANDO

DESCRIPTION:

Though the Ninja operated mostly by night, even they needed some light now and then. The gando was a lantern that acted much as a flashlight. A candle was mounted inside a piece of metal that was shaped like a cone and a handle was attached to the closed end of the metal. With the candle shielded by the metal, light only shone in one direction instead of all directions as with a regular lantern.

TOOL: HASAMI BUNE

DESCRIPTION:

Hasami bune is a collapsible float that is used to transport the ninja's equipment across the water without getting wet.

TOOL: KAGINAWA

DESCRIPTION:

The kaginawa, or grappling hook, was a climbing device consisting of a pronged hook with 12 to 15 feet of rope attached. The kaginawa was used to scale walls or to swing across large gaps, however, it could also be used as a weapon. By holding the rope and swinging the hook over the head, the Ninja could strike his opponent with the sharp prongs of the hook or the rope could be used to entangle the enemy and enable the Ninja to strike with another weapon.

TOOL: KAMA IKADA

DESCRIPTION:

A water crossing device that was like much like a raft. Ninja would build these to cross large bodies of water or to sail to their destination.

TOOL: KUSURIBIN

DESCRIPTION:

The Ninja often carried a "medicine can" filled with antiseptics and ointments which he used to heal himself if he were cut or injured while on his mission. The kusuribin was also used to carry poisons and antidotes.

TOOL: METAL GRIPS

DESCRIPTION:

Since the Ninja had to be prepared to run over any and all terrain, they often carried metal strips with a spiked edge on one side. These strips were tied to the bottom of the Ninja's tabi to gain a better grip over uneven or slippery terrain. These would be the equivalent of the spiked shoes that many athletes wear today.

TOOL: MIZU GUMO**DESCRIPTION:**

A Mizu Gumo is a water crossing device that was used by the ninja. It was an inflatable seat that surrounds the hips of the ninja and suspends him in water. The pouches that held the air were usually made out of rabbit skin and horse hide.

TOOL: METSUBISHI**DESCRIPTION:**

Metsubishi, or "eye closer", were used to temporarily, or sometimes permanently, blind the enemy. Hollowed out egg shells, paper bags and short bamboo tubes were filled with a combination of sand, metal filings and pepper and were used to attack the eyes of an enemy. Egg shells and paper bags were used by throwing the fragile containers at the opponent's face, causing it to break on impact and scatter the contents across the face and into the eyes. Bamboo tubes were sealed with paper or wax and, when the seal was broken, the tube was flung in the direction of the opponent, sending the contents into the face, blinding him.

Usually, metsubishi were used to make an escape when surrounded or cornered or if the Ninja felt there were too many

opponents to fight at once. For example, if a Ninja were faced with 5 or 6 opponents, he might use metsubishi to blind 2 or 3 of them while he dispensed of the others.

TOOL: SHUKO / ASHIKO

DESCRIPTION:

These were steel or iron bands that were tied over the hands and feet and used as climbing aids. With the use of shuko and ashiko, a Ninja could scale a wall or climb a tree in a matter of seconds. In fact, many Samurai were reported as saying the Ninja could "climb like a bear."

TOOL: SHIKORO

DESCRIPTION:

The Ninja carried a variety of small sawing tools with them in order to make small holes in walls so that a clear view could be gained into a room while hiding. Most of these saws were triangular in shape. This enabled the Ninja create a hole that was wide on his end of the wall and a small hole on the other side.

TOOL: SHINOBI BUNE

DESCRIPTION:

Sometimes, the Ninja had to cross wide rivers or even sail down them. For this, bamboo sticks and large, empty jars would be carried in a bag and, when the Ninja reached the river he had to cross or travel down, he assembled them into a criss-cross frame and then the jars, which were sealed closed, were tied to the bottom of the frame and acted as floats. The Ninja then pushed the boat into the water and used an extra bamboo stick as a paddle.

TOOL: SMOKE BOMB

DESCRIPTION:

This circular bomb of smoke was made famous by the ninja movies in the 80's. For a quick get away this bomb could be filled with gun powder to make an explosion and smoke.

TOOL: SHINOBI KAI

DESCRIPTION:

A shinobi kai is a collapsible oar that is used with ninja water crossing devices. It was made of bamboo strip with a fan at the end.

TOOL: SHINOBI KAI

DESCRIPTION:

A shinobi kai is a collapsable oar that is used with ninja water crossing devices. It was made of bamboo strip with a fan at the end.

TOOL: TOJIME

DESCRIPTION:

Since most Japanese doors slid from side to side instead of opening outward or inward, the Ninja would carry a variety of "jamming" tools. The tojime were bars of steel with a hook on each end. These hooks would be used to hold the door closed by locking them closed.

TOOL: TARU IKADA

DESCRIPTION:

Floatation pots used by the ninja to cross shallow waterways and streams. The ninja would put each foot into a pot and cross the water.

TOOL: TSUGI BUNE

DESCRIPTION:

The Tsugi Bune is a collapsible boat used by the ninja. Each ninja would carry their section of the boat when on land, and then join the pieces together when need for floatation.