

Ninjutsu Hiketsu Bun

(Essence of Ninjutsu)

by Toshitsugu Takamatsu

The essence of all martial arts and military strategies is self-protection and the prevention of danger. Ninjutsu epitomizes the fullest concept of self-protection of not only the physical body, but the mind and spirit as well. The way of the ninja is the way of enduring, surviving, and prevailing over all that would destroy one. More than merely delivering strikes and slashes, and deeper in significance than the simple out-witting of an enemy; ninjutsu is the way of attaining that which we need while making the world a better place. The skill of the ninja is the art of winning.

In the beginning study of any combative martial art, proper motivation is crucial.

Without the proper frame of mind, continuous exposure to fighting techniques can lead to ruin instead of self-development. But this fact is not different from any other beneficial practice in life carried to extremes. Medical science is dedicated to the betterment of health and the relief of suffering, and yet the misuse of drugs and the exultation of the physician's skills can lead people to a state where an individual's health is no longer within his or her personal control. A nutritious well-balanced diet works to keep a person alive, vital, and healthy, but grossly over-eating, over-drinking, or taking in too many chemicals is a sure way to poison the body. Governments are established to oversee the harmonious interworking of all parts of society, but when the rulers become greedy, hungry for power, or lacking in wisdom, the country is subjected to needless wars, disorder, or civil and economic chaos. A religion, when based on faith developed through experience, a broad and questing mind, and an unflagging pursuit of universal understanding, is of inspiration and comfort to people. Once a religion loses its original focus, however, it becomes a deadly thing with which to deceive, control, and tax the people through the manipulation of their beliefs and fears. It is the same with the martial arts. The skills of self-protection, which should provide a feeling of inner peace and security for the martial artist, so often develop without a balance in the personality and lead the lesser martial artist into warped realms of unceasing conflict and competition which eventually consume him.

If an expert in the fighting arts sincerely pursues the essence of ninjutsu, devoid of the influence of the ego's desires, the student will progressively come



to realize the ultimate secret for becoming invincible - the attainment of the 'mind and eyes of the divine.' The combatant who would win must be in harmony with the scheme of totality, and must be guided by an intuitive knowledge of the playing out of fate. In tune with the providence of heaven and the impartial justice of nature, and following a clear and pure heart full of trust in the inevitable, the ninja captures the insight that will guide him successfully into battle when he must conquer and conceal himself protectively from hostility when he must acquiesce. The vast universe, beautiful in its coldly impersonal totality, contains all that we call good and bad, all the answers for all the paradoxes we see around us. By opening his eyes and his mind, the ninja can responsively follow the subtle seasons and reasons of heaven, changing just as change is necessary, adapting always, so that in the end there is no such thing as surprise for the ninja.