Anime Ninjas vs Real Japanese Ninjas (feat. GajinGoombah)

Hey guys! Before we jump into the video I'm just here to let you know that this video is sponsored by Netease Games and their hit mobile RPG game Onmyouji! With over 200 million downloads worldwide and winning a ton of awards from The App Store, Google Play and Facebook, Onmyouji is a traditional Japanese folklore styled turn-based RPG with its innovative AR and voice summons, fun and engaging PVP modes and a ton of awesome and uniquely designed characters and fighting styles! The game is aided with the help of some of Japan top voice actors including Sugiyama Noriaki, Kugimiya Rie and Jun Fukuyama among many many others! And if you go check out the game right now, they have a special event in which you're guaranteed a random SSR after summoning 100 times using the mystery amulets, AR amulets or Jades. Best of all the game is absolutely free to play, available on iOS Android and PC! If you're into your Japanese folklore and tactical turn-based JRPGs then you don't wanna miss out on this one so make sure to check out the game by clicking the link in the description below! Anyways thank you to NetEase games for making this episode possible, and I hope you enjoy the video!

intro
I think ever since the first use of it in traditional media, ninjas have always been something that anyone of any culture and any background looks at and unanimously says, "that… is fucking cool." And you better believe I'm right there with them! Whether it be used in animation or live-action media, ninjas have always been the shadow superheroes of our childhoods. We always imagined ourselves sneaking around, throwing ninjas stars, smoke bombing our enemies, assassination pro to the max goddamn I'm rock hard just thinking about it! And can I get a show of hands of how many people saw anime ninjas and just fell in love with the concept… *looks around*, I mean I can only see this camera but I presume there's a good number of you. Anime has managed to take this concept of ninjas and twist and turn in so many different and unique ways. And the first time I ever properly fell in love with a ninja too was also in anime, but it also got me interested in actual Japanese ninjas. Because if you look back at the real-life history if Japan, you'll actually start to see a lot of cool stories about real badass ninjas that existed and did some extraordinary things back in the day! But then I stopped and thought to myself… how accurate are anime ninjas to real-life ninjas? How much has the medium of anime shapeshifted the concept of traditional ninjas, and what is the one anime that portrays these real-life ninjas in the most historically accurate way! Well to help me get to the answers to those questions, I've brought on the help of fellow ninja enthusiast and Japanese culture expert, GaijinGoombah.

GG: *Smokebomb intro in costume* Are you stealing my show?

Nah I kid, hey everyone Gaijin Goombah here. Yeah when Joey was telling me he was working on a video talking about the legitimacies of ninja in anime, I absolutely had to jump in on this.

I've got a show over on my channel called Which Ninja that does exactly what we're doing today. Looking at media's most popular shinobi to see which are good and which are bad. For almost a year now I've been breaking down video game, movie, and anime ninja.

So let's do this thing Joey, I'm absolutely ready for this.

· NARUTO -

This is probably the first ninja you think of when you hear the words “anime ninja”. And rightfully so, it’s not only the third highest selling manga of all time but for a lot of people, Naruto is also most likely the first manga and anime series you ever read or watched. And as much as we can dedicate a whole video pointing out all the subtle differences of every single character in this series, for the sake of time, we’re just going to be looking at the general ninja stuff that comes out in the Naruto Universe. Let’s start off with what would be the obvious points like the use of chakra to use certain magical ninjutsu’s in battle. While anybody with any sense of realism can immediately tell you that no ninja, or rather no living person could ever use this kind summoning, transformative or energetic magic, surprisingly enough the idea of chakra and ninjutsu are both ideas that actually exist!

For starters, chakra is described by many Hinduism and Buddhism beliefs as a spiritual psychic-energy power that resides naturally in all humans. In Naruto, the ninjas use this chakra to conjure up energy which they convert to magical powers through ninjutsu coupled with a bunch of funny hand gestures. Funnily enough, these weeby hand gestures are an actual thing that was used by ninjas called Kuji Kiri or The Nine Cuts, which were used by ninjas and other meditative practices to correspond with mantras that evoked energy change and enlightenment in the individual. Of course, using that to evoke enough energy and enlightenment to shoot fire from your face or manipulate water into creatures is a completely different story, but the practice itself is a totally real and existing thing.

GG: Speaking of Jutsus, I hate to break it to you guys, but by and large they're actually pretty boring.

Granted ninja made an absolute effort to try and convince their enemies that they wielded some kind of mysterious magic when it came to their techniques. After all, fear is one of the shinobi's greatest allies. But by and large that which we call katon no jutsu, or suidon no jutsu have nothing to do with bending nature or personal energy to create fireballs or move landmasses, but rather are code words for very simple techniques. A Katon no Jutsu is literally just be a ninja using flint and tinder. A Suidon no Jutsu is literally just be the ninja hiding under water. Heck, Raijutsu was nothing more than waiting for lighting and thunder to strike to use as cover to move to another strategic spot. Yeah, not exactly the all powerful elemental power we see Naruto's characters throw around.

But not everything about Naruto is all fantasy! One idea that is actually historically accurate is the entire concept of ninja classes such as Genin, Chuunin and Jyounin. This concept of class seperation was used by the Iga-ryu Ninjas, one of the two giant ninja nations that thrived Muromachi Period. However, the idea of competing in some sort of ninja exam to go up the ranks was something that was made up in the Naruto universe. Funnily enough though, it was thanks to the success of shows like Naruto that caused the people of the Shiga prefecture - the home grounds of the Koga-ryu ninja nation) to hold an annual ninja exam event to celebrate their heritage and widespread cultural interest of the ninja ways. Since this has been happening from as early as 2008, it might be safe to say that this was influenced by shows like Naruto and not the other way around. So yeah… even the descendants of what was one of the biggest ninja nations also partake in Annual Naruto Run Day… the weeb disease has finally made it back to the homelands, goddamnit.

· GINTAMA -

GG: Now you would think that a show set in the Edo Period with samurai's, mercenaries and a giant sentient bird costume would be the perfect setting to see things like ninjas right? Well... Not as much as you think.

When Ieyasu Tokugawa unified Japan back in 1603, he DID utilize his crack team of Kouga and Iga ninja for his personal guard and private information network, but after a few decades of relative peace, what need does a ruler have for assassins and thieves? The Sengoku Jidai was over and as the country settled into a period of peaceful calm, what we know as ninja's slowly started to die out.

Granted there are characters in Gintama that DO mirror real historical characters of the time like Hattori Zenzo who's name is a rather goofy pun of Hattori Hanzo (Hanzou [半蔵、半 = half] vs Zenzou [全蔵、全 = full]).. But despite nearly EVERYONE saying Hattori Hanzo Masanari, retainer to Ieyasu Tokugawa, was some penultimate ninja, he very much was not! Hanzo was born of Iga yes, but his family were spymasters and commanders of ninja, but not ninja themselves.

But weirdly enough, a show about aliens invading the Edo Period actually has a lot of historically accurate parts about it too! In the show, Zenzou is the leader of a group of ninjas tasked with being the shogunate's special forces called the Oniwabanshuu, which surprisingly enough was a group of quote-unquote "ninjas" that actually existed! In both Gintama and Japanese history, they existed during the Edo Period and were said to specialize in espionage, assassinations and security, and were said to be comprised of a number of ninjas descended from the Iga-ryu ninja teachings. And Gintama isn't the only show that uses the idea of Oniwaban either, there are plenty of other manga and anime series that have referenced them in historically accurate ways including Ga-rei, Rurouni Kenshin and Samurai Champloo. Even the small detail of Zenzou being a specialist of weapons like explosives, kunais and swords are also historically accurate as the Iga-ryu ninjas were infamous for their use of explosives and a

multitude of weaponry. Everything except for the hemorrhoids part, probably would have been hard for Hattori Hanzou to get by with that up his ass.

· BASILISK -

As mentioned, there are plenty of ninja anime that exist, each differing in levels of historical accuracy. And even though we could compare and contrast Japanese ninja history with a plethora of other ninja anime such as Ninja Scroll, Sengoku Basara and even Senran Kagura, there is one anime series that people think of when we say “historically accurate”. And that is none other than Basilisk! The series takes place during a time where the Iga and Koga ninja clans were at a constant war, until Tokugawa Ieyasu ordered a cease fire. But after the leaders of both clans fall in love with each other, a war between the Iga and Koga clan to determine which grandson of Ieyasu will become the ruler creates a rift between the two lovers. So as you can see, we already have a bunch of historically accurate points: they mention by name the Iga and Koga ninja clans as well as other historically present characters like Tokugawa Ieyasu and Hattori Hanzou. Even the timeframe of the 1600s in accurate as this was a time that all of these characters were alive.

GG: F&$%^#ing F$&% Joey I swear to God I'm losing my mind here.

I watched Basilisk from start to finish, and while this series feels like what would happen if Ninja Scroll was made into a 24 episode series, which I would love by the way, historically accurate OH MY GOD... WHAT!?

For one, this never, EVER happened! Ieyasu's crack team of ninja, also known as the Hyakunin-gumi served him, his successor, HIS successor, HIS successor, for almost 200 YEARS did the collective Kouga and Iga ninja watch over Edo and the Tokugawa families. Then this anime rolls in with this scrotal-chinned phoney and tries to convince me that he would go against Hanzo Masanari, HIS DEAREST FRIEND, and pit the two clans that SAVED HIS ASS when General Mitsuhide betrayed Oda Nobunaga and was after Ieyasu!?

No... NO... No... Ieyasu did some horrible things to get to where he was, including executing his wife and son to prove his loyalty to Nobunaga, but he would have NEVER purposely start a civil war for something so stupid. ESPECIALLY between the two ninja clans that saved his life and served his family for 200 years!

Basilisk go to your room and think about what you did! Historically accurate my ass...

So at the end of the day, almost every ninja related manga and anime is historically inaccurate. Now I’m sure there are probably a lot of you who aren’t all that surprised by that, like of course it’s inaccurate, it’s a work of fiction afterall! But I just think it’s really interesting to see all the small little changes that these series made to make it that much more interesting to us viewers, and its kinda neat to look at where all of these historical references originated! So let us know if

you learnt anything new and maybe the next time you see a ninja anime that we didn't mention, you can try and see the discrepancies for yourself!

GG: And if you love ninjas and ninja culture, head on over to my channel and check out Which Ninja! In fact, Joey and I did an episode together talking about one of the most historically accurate ninjas in gaming, Zer0 from Borderlands two. Oooooh you may doubt me now, but when we're done breaking this boy down, We'll prove beyond a shadow of a doubt Zer0 is legit.

outro