

Shinobi of Nippon – Background

Unseen by man, for countless generations, another and very different people have shared the world: the secretive shinobi of Nippon.

There have always been signs for those who cared to notice: a shadow slipping silently along a rooftop, the whisper of feet along the tiled streets at night, fleeting glimpses of figures vanishing into dark alleys. For centuries, these warriors have worked in secret, infiltrating the cities of men, moving unseen through backstreets and rooftops, and binding their world together into a hidden network of safe houses, training halls, and secret passages.

These shadow-clans call themselves **shinobi**—masters of stealth, poison, and assassination, trained from birth in the art of silent death.

Until recently, the shinobi were content to remain in the shadows, observing the world of men, striking only when necessary, and recovering lost treasures of mystical power. Among these are the **star-stones**, radiant crystals imbued with otherworldly energy. Long ago, the founders of the shinobi clans discovered that these stones could be harnessed to enhance martial skill, grant insight into the unseen, and even twist the fate of men themselves.

The destruction of **Mordheim** has changed everything. The city's ruins now offer a rare bounty of star-stones, spilling from shattered towers and crumbling streets. For the clans of Nippon, this is an opportunity that cannot be ignored.

Yet the shinobi are not united; each clan guards its secrets jealously, competing for influence, prestige, and mastery over their hidden traditions. Were the full extent of Mordheim's treasures to become known, countless warriors would pour into the city, and the spoils would be claimed by force of numbers.

For now, the **Shadowmaster of the leading clan** has chosen a more subtle approach. Instead of deploying vast armies, small warbands of elite shinobi are sent to move unseen through the city. Their mission: gather the star-stones and return them to the hidden sanctuaries of their clan.

These shinobi are masters of their craft. Trained in the arts of stealth, assassination, and subtle sorcery, they strike quickly and vanish without a trace. Their training begins in childhood within the secluded temples of Nippon, under the watchful eye of clan elders. Each operative knows that to fail is to bring dishonor not only upon themselves but upon their entire family.

In Mordheim, there is no room for hesitation. The star-stones are powerful, dangerous, and coveted. The shinobi must be silent, swift, and utterly efficient—or risk being lost to the ruins, or falling prey to rival clans equally eager to claim the city's secrets.

Silent Dart Tube

25 gold crowns

Availability: Rare 7, *Shinobi only*

The silent dart tube is a small bamboo or lacquered reed tube used by shinobi to fire poisoned needles or darts. The darts themselves are tiny and would cause little harm on their own, but when treated with the potent venoms prepared by the clan's alchemists, they can paralyse or kill with frightening efficiency.

Another advantage of the tube is its silence—an expert hidden in the shadows can strike unseen and unheard, leaving enemies collapsing without ever identifying their attacker.

Range	Strength	Save mod	Special Rules
8"	1	+1	Poison, Stealthy

Special Rules

Poison: The darts are coated in a venom similar in effect to Black Lotus (a roll of 6 to hit automatically wounds). A silent dart tube cannot cause critical hits. The weapon grants a positive armour save modifier; a model with a 5+ save becomes 4+ against these darts, and even models without armour receive a 6+ save to represent clothing or padding.

Stealthy: A shinobi firing a silent dart tube may shoot while hidden without revealing his location. The target may take an Initiative test to detect the shooter. If successful, the shinobi is immediately revealed.

Claw Gauntlets (Tekko-Kagi)

35 gold crowns per pair

Availability: Rare 7, *Shinobi only*

Among the unconventional weapons practised within the shinobi martial arts are the deadly **tekko-kagi**, metal claws worn over the hands. These bladed gauntlets allow a skilled warrior to rake, tear, and trap an opponent's weapon with swift, fluid strikes. In the hands of an expert assassin, they are terrifying to face.

Range	Strength	Save Mod	Special Rules
Close Combat	As user	–	Pair, Climb, Parry, Cumbersome

Special Rules

Pair: Claw Gauntlets are traditionally used one on each hand. A warrior equipped with them gains +1 Attack.

Climb: A shinobi using Claw Gauntlets gains +1 Initiative on climbing tests.

Parry: Claw Gauntlets may parry like swords. A failed parry may be re-rolled once.

Cumbersome: A model using Claw Gauntlets may not use any other weapons for the entire battle.

Jadefire Pistol

35 gold crowns (70 for a brace)

Availability: Rare 11, *Shinobi only*

Jadefire pistols are exotic weapons crafted by reclusive Nipponese artificers. These small hand-cannons fire shot infused with enchanted jade powder, causing horrific wounds that burn and fester with mystical corruption. Rare, volatile, and deeply feared, these pistols are prized by elite shinobi who can afford their unpredictable power.

Range	Strength	Save Mod	Special Rules
8"	5	-3	Fire every other turn

(Rules unchanged; only text renamed. If you prefer another flavour—like "Spellforged Pistol," "Dragonfire Pistol," or "Spirit-Powder Pistol"—I can rewrite accordingly.)

Bloodweeping Blades

50 gold crowns (per pair)

Availability: Rare 9, *Shinobi only*

The clans craft these slender blades by forging steel with fragments of cursed jade or demon-touched ore. The metal constantly "sweats" droplets of corrosive venom, earning them the name *Bloodweeping Blades*. Even a shallow wound can doom an opponent as the toxin ravages their body. Few weapons are as feared among the shadow clans.

Range	Strength	Special Rules
Close Combat	As user	Pair, Venomous, Parry

Special Rules

Pair: Bloodweeping Blades are always wielded as a matched set, granting +1 Attack.

Venomous: These blades are permanently treated with a Black Lotus-like toxin. No further poison may be applied.

Parry: As swords, they may parry and allow a re-roll of one failed attempt.

Shinobi Equipment Lists

HEROES EQUIPMENT LIST

Hand-to-hand Combat Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Notes
Dagger	1st free / 2 gc	Light, quick blade for assassins
Sword	10 gc	Standard warrior's sword
Chain Kusari	15 gc	Chain-and-weight weapon for skilled shinobi
Spear	10 gc	Traditional Japanese spear
Naginata	10 gc	Polearm for reach and defence
Bloodweeping Blades	50 gc	Twin cursed swords, venom-coated
Claw Gauntlets	35 gc	Clawed gauntlets for silent strikes

Missile Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Notes
Sling	2 gc	Basic ranged weapon
Shuriken	15 gc	Standard ninja throwing weapons
Silent Dart Tube	25 gc	Bamboo tube firing poisoned darts
Jadefire Pistol	35 gc (70 gc for a brace)	Rare magical pistol

Armour

Armour	Cost	Notes
Light armour	20 gc	Light protection for mobility
Buckler	5 gc	Small round shield
Kabuto	10 gc	Traditional lacquered helmet

HENCHMEN EQUIPMENT LIST

Hand-to-hand Combat Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Notes
Dagger	1st free / 2 gc	Standard sidearm
Bokken	3 gc	Wooden practice weapon, can still injure
Sword	10 gc	Full steel sword
Spear	10 gc	Basic polearm

Missile Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Notes
Sling	2 gc	Basic ranged weapon

Armour

Armour	Cost	Notes
Light armour	20 gc	Light protection
Shield	5 gc	Round shield for basic defence
Kabuto	10 gc	Simple lacquered head protection

Choice of Warriors

A **Shinobi warband** must include a minimum of three models.

You have **500 gold crowns** (representing your clan's resources), which you may use to recruit and equip your initial force.

The maximum number of warriors in the warband may never exceed **20**.

Assassin Adept

Every Shinobi warband must include **one Assassin Adept**—no more, no less. He is the clan's chosen operative and unquestioned leader.

Shadow Mage

Your warband may include a single **Shadow Mage**, trained in the secret arts of onmyōdō and spirit manipulation.

Shadow Enforcers

Your warband may include up to **two Shadow Enforcers**, elite shinobi who serve as the clan's executioners.

Street Stalkers

Your warband may include up to **two Street Stalkers**, eager young initiates recently accepted into the clan.

Street Agents

Your warband may include **any number of Street Agents**, the basic operatives, informants, and foot soldiers of the clan.

Clan Hounds

Your warband may include **any number of Clan Hounds**, the specially trained attack dogs bred by the shinobi.

Shadow Oni

Your warband may include a single **Shadow Oni**, a fearsome brutish guardian bound to the clan by oath or sorcery.

Starting Experience

- **Assassin Adept** starts with **20 experience**.
- **Shadow Mage** and **Shadow Enforcers** each start with **8 experience**.
- **Street Stalkers** start with **0 experience**.
- **Henchmen** (Street Agents, Clan Hounds, Shadow Oni) start with **0 experience**.

Shinobi Special Skills

Shinobi Heroes may choose to use the following skill list instead of any standard skill tables available to them.

Shadow Frenzy

The shinobi can call upon the **Shadow Frenzy**, a burst of deadly focus and fury that temporarily enhances speed and strength—but at a cost to their body.

At the start of their turn, a Hero may declare the use of this skill. They gain **+1**

Attack and **+D3"** to their Movement for the duration of the turn, but suffer **D3 Strength 3 hits** at the end of the turn, **no armour save allowed**, as their body reels from the effort.

Hidden Strike

Some shinobi are trained to fight with **hidden weapons attached to their clothing or arm guards**, such as small knives or chain-strikes. The model gains **an extra attack** with the appropriate weapon or a **+1 bonus to armour save**.

Wall Climber

A shinobi is adept at climbing sheer walls and vertical surfaces. They **do not need to take an Initiative test** when scaling walls or other vertical obstacles.

Shadow Infiltration

A shinobi skilled in the arts of stealth can be deployed **after the opposing warband** and may be placed **anywhere on the battlefield** as long as they remain **out of sight** of enemy models and **more than 12"** away from any enemy.

If both players have infiltrating models, **roll a D6 for each**, and the **lowest roll sets up first**.

Art of Silent Death

The shinobi has mastered **hand-to-hand combat**, as taught by the secret temples of Nippon. They can fight **unarmed or with light weapons** without penalty, counting as **two weapons** (+1 Attack).

In addition, a Hero with this skill **scores a critical hit on a To Wound roll of 5–6** instead of just 6.

This skill **can be combined with Tekko-Kagi (Claw Gauntlets)** for a total of **+2 Attacks** instead of +1.

Assassin Adept

The shadow-masters of the clan have dispatched the Assassin Adept to recover the fallen star-stones scattered across Mordheim. Success will bring great honour, wealth, and favoured standing within the secret hierarchy of the shinobi. Failure, however, would bring only disgrace—an end far swifter and far more silent than any enemy’s blade.

Shadow Mage (Eshin Sorcerer)

Shadow Mages are practitioners of forbidden arts, trained in the secret schools of onmyōdō and shadow-craft. It is they who inscribe talismans, bind spirits, and weave the subtle enchantments that empower the clan’s assassins. Though their magic lacks the raw force of the great wizards of the Old World, their hidden arts are precise, dangerous, and feared by all who understand them.

Shadow Enforcers (Black Skaven)

Shadow Enforcers are the clan’s most formidable warriors—elite shinobi hardened by relentless training in the deadliest martial arts. Silent, disciplined, and utterly loyal, they serve as the clan’s executioners and champions. In the ruins of Mordheim they excel at striking from concealment, eliminating targets before the enemy even realises they were there.

Street Stalkers (Night Runners)

Street Stalkers are young initiates of the shinobi clans—newly accepted into the hidden arts and eager to prove themselves worthy. Though lacking the experience of seasoned operatives, they make up for it with raw agility, sharp eyes, and an almost reckless determination to earn their place among the shadows.

Street Agents (Verminkin)

Street Agents are the clan’s common operatives—resourceful fixers, informants, and foot-soldiers who work in the alleys and underworld of Nippon. The strongest and most disciplined among them are gradually initiated into the deeper secrets of the shinobi arts, beginning the long path toward becoming full assassins. Every Street Agent dreams of one day earning the clan’s trust, donning the mask of a true shadow warrior, and rising from the gutters into the ranks of the feared shinobi elite.

Clan Hounds

Clan Hounds are fiercely trained attack dogs, bred for speed, obedience, and absolute silence when stalking prey. Raised from birth by the shinobi clans, these beasts are conditioned to hunt without fear and to strike as a pack, overwhelming foes through relentless coordination and sheer ferocity. In the chaos of Mordheim, their sharp senses and savage discipline make them invaluable allies to the shadow warriors who command them.

Shadow Oni

Shadow Oni are fearsome brutes bound into service by ancient pacts or sheer strength of will. Revered for their raw power and terrifying presence, they are highly sought after as bodyguards by the most influential members of the shinobi clans. Few foes can withstand the fury of an enraged Oni, and fewer still dare to stand against one.