



Ninja Shadowhand: The Art of Invisibility

Author: Dr. Haha Lung & Christopher Prowant
Genre: Aikido and Other Martial Arts
Publisher: New York: Citadel Press, 2000
ISBN: 0-805-2607-6
RRP: £10.95 (+£2.80 p&p)

A mixture of technical manual and a history of the art of diversion, anybody interested in the Ninja (and those like them) need look no further.

'Avoid being seen... Seen, avoid capture... Captured, avoid being held'. This blurb is just one of the many maxims borrowed from the ages by Haha Lung and Christopher Prowant for inclusion in *Shadowhand*, an examination of the many diversionary tactics used throughout the history of warfare. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the authors focus on one group in particular for much of their discussion: the Ninja.

The book is split into seven chapters divided into two sections. Initially, and although there is no explicit suggestion of it by Lung and Prowant, the reader may begin to think - as I did - that they are implying their subjects possessed 'magical' powers. However this is not the case. Instead, the writers explore the 'tricking' of an opponent from every angle, from the tactics of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* through to an entire ship and crew allegedly vanishing in a radar experiment. More practically, diversionary attacks, camouflage on the battlefield and simple feints in the single-combat scenario are all discussed in detail and in various contexts, with diversionary techniques from both armed and unarmed attacker(s) being illustrated in detail in the second section.

Overall, though, this book probably will not suit those among us who want to learn super-duper-killer-ninja-moves. Instead, I myself see the inclusion of the practical techniques as part of a wider whole, a demonstration of the principles of invisibility that would otherwise remain mere theory. Ultimately, then, Lung and Prowant's effort is not just a book on the tactics of the Ninja, though they and their history are well covered here. Instead, it is an interesting book on the art of invisibility, on indirect warfare as a whole.

8 sausages out of 10

RW Dec '13