

Site of the Wada Fort

During the Sengoku period (1467–1568), the ninja of the Koka area built forts to protect their families and defend their villages. Around 180 of these sites have been identified in the region's rugged mountains and valleys.

The forts have sometimes been called castles, but they were simple compounds consisting of earthen walls surrounded by moats. Most of the sites identified are on what is now private land, with little evidence remaining of the former structures that stood on them. However, it is possible to visit the site of the Wada Fort, which enables visitors to gain an understanding of the role such forts played in the lives of the ninja.

The Koka area was unusual for the time, because the power of the local daimyo was weak here, unlike in most other parts of the country. Instead, the local community formed groups that were based on blood and territorial ties, and practiced autonomous local governance. This strategy of local rule and collective self-defense was crucial in maintaining stability and preventing the rise of a single, dominant power. The well-secured,

hard-to-attack forts reveal the defensive skills of the people of Koka, including the ninja.

The Wada Fort was constructed on a hill at the end of a valley. The main enclosure formed a square, and each side measured 50 meters. It was surrounded by earthen walls, some of which are believed to have reached up to 7 meters in height.

Seven forts once stood in the valley, where any suspicious movement would trigger an attack from a fort.

As the site of the Wada Fort is somewhat difficult to find, visitors are encouraged to stop by the Tourism Information Center at the Kokaryu Real Ninjakan for directions.