

What Are Ninja?

There were two types of ninja: *innin*, who hid in darkness and engaged in combat and infiltration, and *yonin*, who disguised themselves as priests, merchants, street performers, and the like while engaging with their targets to gather information. *Yonin* would stay in an area for an extended time, becoming friendly with local residents to achieve their purpose. They employed a range of stealth and survival tactics that required physical endurance, mental agility, and strategic thinking.

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 organized itself into groups that were based on blood and territorial ties. These groups practiced autonomous governance and collective self-defense to maintain stability and prevent the rise of a dominant power. The Koka ninja served these groups, using their expertise to investigate enemy movements, assess weaknesses, launch surprise attacks, and provide strategic advice. Their role was crucial, and

their activities often determined the outcome of battles and the fate of their patrons.

The role of the Koka ninja evolved over time. During the Sengoku period (1467–1568), a time marked by widespread armed conflict, they were involved primarily in combat, intelligence gathering and strategic planning. During the relatively peaceful Edo period (1603–1867), some of the Koka ninja took positions in central or local government, where they served as escorts, guards, and sentinels for coastal defense.

Discover the world of the ninja and learn about their skills, tools, and importance in history during your visit to Koka.