

1
PLAYERS

PRICE £39.99

BY SEGA

RELEASE JANUARY

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOYPAD
CONTINUES: 7
SKILL LEVELS: 4
RESPONSIVENESS: QUICK
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
FINISHED THREE LEVELS

ORIGIN

Shinobi was a Sega coin-op. The sequel, Revenge of Shinobi was one of the first Megadrive games. This is the follow-up.

HOW TO CONTROL



A Activates Shinobi's ninja magic

B Fires shuriken from a distance. At close range, this button controls the punching and kicking.

C If pressed twice, Shinobi can also somersault.

S Pauses the game and brings up the magic selection menu.

HOW TO PLAY

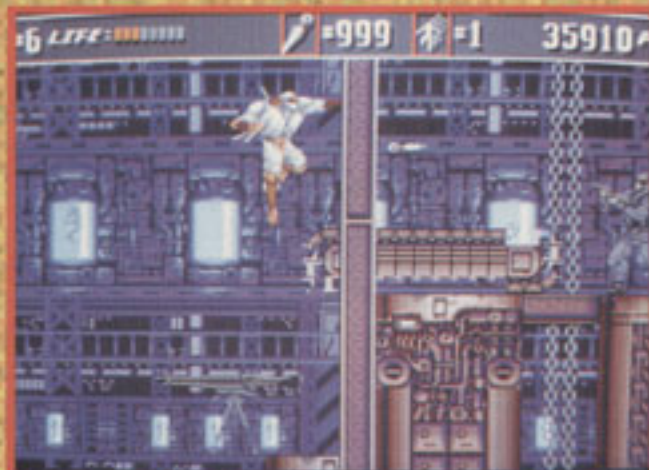
Guide Shinobi around an eight-directional platform environment, beating hell out of anyone in your way. Lifts and conveyor belts help or hinder progress and crates hold goodies.

SHINOBI

The wise man Confucius once said, 'A bad hairstyle is never cut, it just falls out in time.' Fortunately these were some of the old fool's less popular pearls of wisdom, because he couldn't have been more wrong. Once more the pungent smell of hair tonic is thick in the air as the lengthy-locked master of Neo Zeed has risen from his grave and again seeks ultimate revenge. Enter Joe Mushashi, ninja master and all-round short-haired good boy. Brought up by monks from an early age, Joe was taught the incredible skills of the sword, the awesome ways of the fist and the good honest values of a decent haircut. It was during those youthful days at Shinobi High School that young Joseph first learnt to use those all important skills. A vicious bully, Nigel Zeed continually taunted Joe about his centre-parting, the holy hair-do of the Shinobi. After many months of persecution Joe finally snapped. Stealing the sacred scissors from the School temple, he snuck into Nigel's room after dark and cut off all his hair. For ten long years, Nigel hid from the world, growing his hair in secret and massaging magic tonics into his scalp. Now he's back in the most incredible wig ever seen. He has kidnapped Joe's beautiful bride Naoko, and held the world to ransom. Stopping only long enough to trim his side-burns, Joe has once more donned his ninja garb and sworn to destroy the accursed Zeed once and for all, for he is the Shinobi...



▲ Mushashi dodges the evil fire-breathers.



▲ Joe confronts the evil might of a man with a large firearm.

BOXES OF DELIGHT

Obviously those accursed Zeed boys use the Frank Spencer Removal Service for transporting their belongings around, because scattered around all the levels are crates packed with all kinds of goodies. Inside these crates can be found extra throwing daggers, hearts which provide much needed energy and extra ninja magic. Joe can also collect a power-up icon which allows him to throw flaming shuriken and use a sword in close combat.



▲ Zeed guards zoom by overhead as the Shinobi master enters the fiery section of the Zeed stronghold.

DOING THE NINJITSU

Having been an avid fan of the Hot Shoe Show since he was a boy, Joe is quite adept in the sprightly movement department. What's more, he's picked up some smart new skills since the original game. Here's a rundown of some of the finest moves since the Highland Fling.

SWINGING

Joe now leaps up and hangs from the ceiling. From this position Monkey-boy Mushashi can swing from arm to arm, effectively climbing across the ceiling. This move is especially useful for climbing over a room full of baddies.



SOMERSAULT

Just like in the first game, Joe not only jumps, but also somersaults for extra height. Whilst spinning, he can unleash a lethal spray of throwing daggers, provided he has enough to throw, of course.



RUNNING

This might sound like no big deal, but let's remember that Joe couldn't run in the first game. Not so the case here. By pressing the joypad twice in one direction the boy Mushashi races across the screen as if his ninja-issue jocks were on fire.



BOOST

There was a time when Joe would cringe at the very sight of an impassible vertical cliff-face. Those days are gone for good. Everyone's favourite ninja master can now use walls to propel himself upwards. This means if there are two vertical walls on each side, Joe can bounce between each one and reach the top of the cliff. Sometimes, this trick can save Joe's hide if he's falling down a chasm.

COMMENT



Revenge of Shinobi remains one of my favourite Megadrive games ever so I was extremely anxious to get my hands on

RICH

the sequel. Now I have, I'm in two minds about it. I can see it's a brilliant game that's a lot bigger than Revenge of Shinobi with better graphics. I was disappointed by the music. Considering it was done by Yuzo Koshiro, I was expecting something far superior to the tunes this game proffers. In terms of playability, it's a lot faster than Revenge of Shinobi, and I really liked all of the new moves Mushashi pulls off in his quest to destroy the Zeed. However, I can see that as an overall package it's not quite as strong as the original game which was extremely polished and never short of action. To me, this isn't quite as good. Whilst I can see Shinobi III is a high quality cart, I can't help but recommend the original game over this. For Shinobi fans who really enjoyed the original, I'd recommend buying this immediately.



A close-up picture of the man with the large chopper himself: the Shinobi! In the game he's armed with shurikens, a sword and ninja magic!



SOWING YOUR ZEEED

Never has there been a more motley crew of shambling, grotesque villains than the Zeed bosses found at the end of each level. In fact, some of these bosses also happen to be some of the biggest seen on the Megadrive as well. Without further ado, let's see a slice of Zeed life at its most nightmarish.



▲ *Mushashi confronts Zeed on the airship level!*

BLUE LOBSTER

The evil samurai from the original game is back and he's brought a collection of his finest cutlery. Strapped to his waist is a giant pike which prevents you attacking him close-up and his chest and head are protected by the long swords he carries. The only way to peel this lobster is to get behind him and kick him in the back of the knees the old school way.



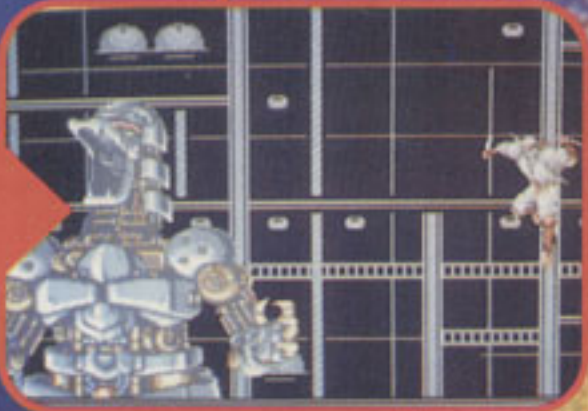
GENE CREATURE

Deep in the bowels of the Gene Factory lies a waste product of all the mutated human fodder, the gene creature. This foul beast bursts from its nest of fleshy excretion and proceeds to spew nuggets of meat at the mighty Mushashi before ducking under the waves of sinew and cartilage and reaching out with its horrible claws.



GIANT ROBOT

The mighty construct at the end of level seven is perhaps the most terrifying enemy Shinobi has ever faced. Rising out of the darkness, this creature screams and smashes the place around in the most tantrumous of manners. A slap on the botty is what's needed here.



HAIR TODAY

Waiting at the end of the game is the be-wigged one himself, the Master. In time-honoured tradition, he has prepared his fine locks with the ritual hair-grooming ceremony and it's up to Joe to defeat him if he hopes to stand a chance of saving the beautiful Naoko. However, the Master has been doing more than just crimping his hair since their last meeting and there are some extra special tricks up his sleeve. But is the Master really behind this dark and terrible scheme or is there someone else, someone more powerful holding the reins?

IKAZUCHI

By drawing strands of lightning down from the heavens, Joe envelops his body in a crackling shield. While engulfed in this protective shell, the Mushashi Marvel is impervious to any damage. However, take too many hits and the shield disperses.



COMMENT



LUCY

To be honest, I was expecting a lot from this sequel. The cartridge has twice the memory capacity of its predecessor and the screenshots looked just superb. That said, I can only express my disappointment at the end result. Graphically, the game's a mixed bag. The main sprite and most of the enemy sprites look gorgeous, but some of the backdrops are awful. On one level, for example, the waves in the background are just a still picture. It just spoils the whole feel of the game. The lack of variety between the levels is also another downer. Most of the levels are just machine-based factory-type levels and the more unusual levels, like the airship, are just poor rip-offs of other games like Sonic or Strider. The music's good, but considering the tunes were written by the master of console music, Yuzo Koshiro (of Streets of Rage and Revenge of Shinobi fame), it's all pretty standard and quite forgettable. As far as playability goes, this game has still got what it takes and the improved movement of the main character helps a lot, but the game just doesn't have the atmosphere or polished feel of its predecessor. I do like this game, but I was expecting so much more. As it stands, Shinobi III is not as good as Revenge of Shinobi.

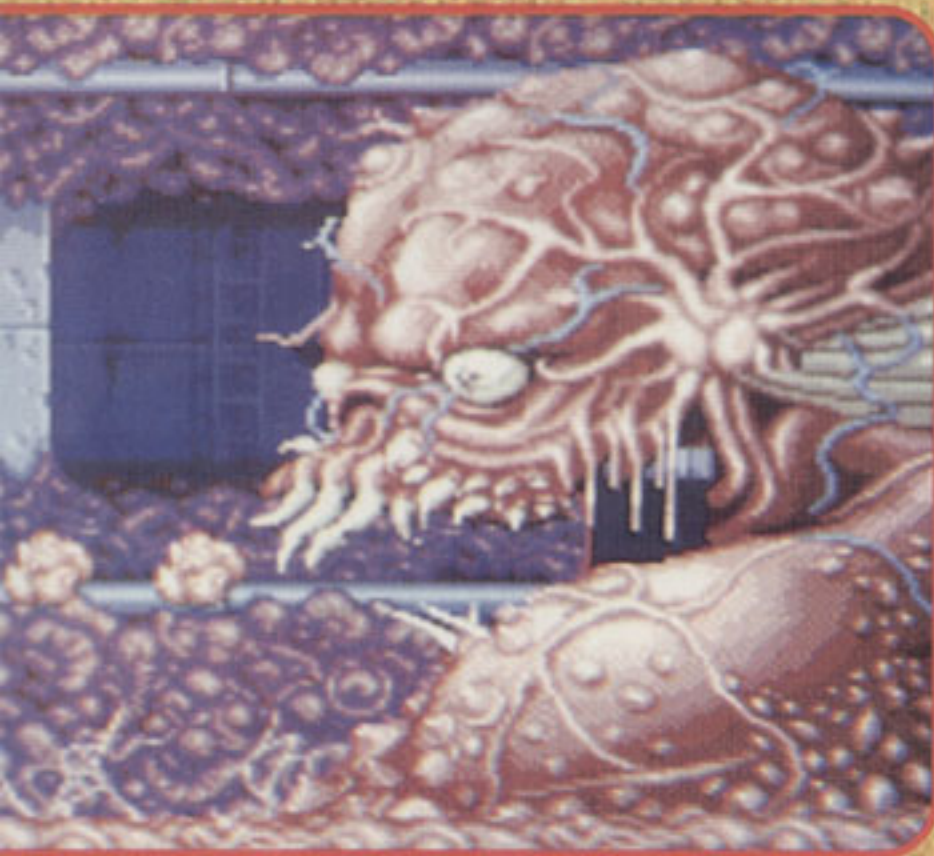
IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

As any Shinobi worth his salt knows, ninja magic is essential for healthy teeth and gums. Fortunately, Joe not only has a fine set of chompers, but he also has some pretty nifty tricks up his sleeve. Let's dip our hands into the Shinobi top hat of tricks and see what we can pull out.



HOUR	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
DAY	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
WEEK	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
MONTH	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
YEAR	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

STRATEGY	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
ACTION	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
CHALLENGE	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
REFLEXES	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█



MIJIN

Without a doubt Mijin is the most powerful of all the magic, but the price for its use is a costly one indeed, for Joe must sacrifice one of his own lives! By stabbing his sword into the ground and praying, Joe's body spontaneously combusts damaging all enemies on the screen, taking our ninja pal's life with it. Make sure you have a spare life left before using this magic.



KARIU

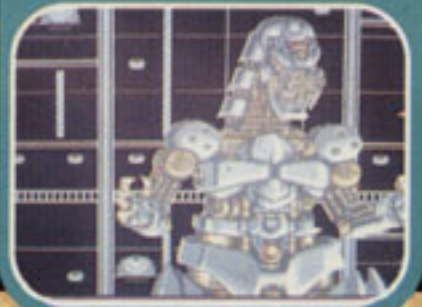
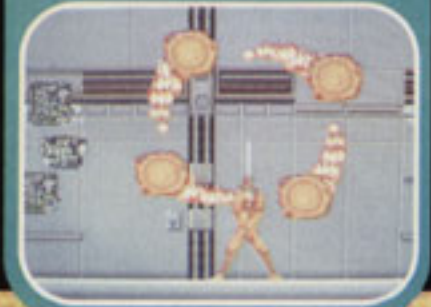
Never one to rub two sticks together, our man Joe can call on the power of the awesome fire dragons. These blazing creatures spiral around the screen scorching the eyebrows of even the most fire-retardant foe. Very useful for damaging end-of-level bosses and it makes a pretty smart party trick too.

FUSHIN

Sometimes, your average run-of-the-mill leap just won't satisfy. That's when it's time to turn to Fushin. This magic allows Shinobi San to leap to incredible heights and reach previously unattainable ledges. The smart thing is, this magic lasts for the whole level and doesn't vanish even if another one is used.

HAKURIU

This is Joe's newest and most visually impressive trick. Call upon Hakuriu and a swarm of massive purple jewels will rain down on the enemy. These stones shatter on contact with any object, breaking into smaller pieces. Only when all the pieces have broken up to minuscule proportions does this magic cease.



PRESENTATION

▲ The usual standard of options and a really nice intro sequence with a bit of storyline to boot.

85

GRAP

▲ The sprites are smartly drawn and animated and some of the bosses are superb.
▼ However, some of the backdrops are of a very low quality.

84

SOUND

▲ The spot-effects are excellent...
▼ Although the music could have been better considering it was written by Yuzo Koshiro.

87

PLAYABILITY

▲ The controls are easy to handle and the platform action's initially enjoyable.
▼ The somersault's more difficult to perform than in the original and the levels aren't imaginative enough.

89

LASTABILITY

▲ The eight levels are quite difficult, especially in hard or hardest mode and the bosses should challenge you for quite some time.
▼ Once completed, there's not a lot to bring you back.

87

OVERALL

88

Although not as good a package as the original Revenge of Shinobi, this game is still a decent platform ninja game, bigger and faster than the original. It's just a shame that more wasn't added to the concept.