Kuji-in
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The word ku-ji simply means “nine syllables”, and refers to a variety of formulas or mantras that consist of nine syllables. The syllables and variations used in kuji are numerous, especially within the realm of mikkyo [Japanese esoteric Buddhism]. The kuji most often referred to is of Taoist origin, not Buddhist. However, several Taoist text say that the kuji came to China via Tibet; if this is true then it is a safe and logical argument that the kuji, in some aspect, may have very likely originated with Hinduism. It is unknown at this time if the nine standard kuji found in Taoism are found in Tibetan Buddhism, and if so what their correlation with the nine Taoist kuji are.

The kuji are first introduced in Taoism in the text Neipian written by Ge Hong (a.k.a. Baopuzi, c.280-340ADE). In it he introduces the kuji as a prayer to the six Liu Jia, ancient Taoist gods. The Chinese kuji actually form a grammatically functional sentence when translated, “May all those who preside over warriors be my vanguard!” Other translations are possible as well, as numerous esoteric interpretations, especially in Japanese esoteric Buddhism.

How the kuji arrived in Japan is still a matter that is debated. Current scholars seem to agree that the kuji arrived in Japan via China through Jodoshu [True land Faith], and Shugendo. As to what the kuji consisted of is unknown. The mudras are found in Taoist material as well as Shugendo. Some have suggested it was Shugendo who added the mudras that are known today to be associated with the kuji. This would make sense as the vast majority of information that is known about the kuji to date comes from Shugendo literature.

The kuji that is most often seen in the context of budo, or martial arts, and also in general, consists of the nine original Taoist syllables: Rin, Pyo, To, Sha, Kai, Jin Retsu, zai, zen. Which are Japanese versions of the nine Taoist kuji: lin, bing, dou, zhe, jie, chen, lie, zai, qian (May all those who preside over warriors be my vanguard). The fact that the Taoist kuji are not seen extensively in Japanese documents and writings until around the 1700s indicates that they were either not extensively practiced, or considered kuden [oral transmission]. However, the fact that so many koryu list the kuji in their makimono indicates it must have been considered an essential teaching (goku-i). And the fact the ku-ji are written in numerous kobudo makimono is proof that the ku-ji were practiced by the bushi.

There are numerous variations of the nine original Taoist kuji in Japanese Buddhism. Most of these variations occurred well after the introduction of the kuji into Japan. Some, however, are other Taoist formulas taken from Taoist writings and Buddhist sutras. Why the number nine is used has also been of concern to some. The number nine is seen in Taoist divination as the perfect number for yang/yō, the “bright side” when determining the individual hexagram lines according to the I-ching (Book of Changes). Some have suggested that the number nine refers to the nine planets, that the Taoist believe directly influence human destiny, or to the seven stars of the Big Dipper (Northern Seven Stars) plus the two attendant/guardian stars which Taoist believe is the gateway to heaven, and which each star is a Taoist deity. (Waterhouse, 1996)

The Kuji-in (九字印), "Nine Hand Seals," refers to the mudra (seals) associated with the nine syllables themselves. Kuji-ho is a specialized form of Buddhist meditation. Most of the original ku-ji no in ritual invokes the Hindu deity Indra [Taishaku-ten –Jpn.; Jupiter - Roman], King of the...
heavens, who holds vajras [thunderbolts] in his hands. Technically the word "Kuji-in" refers only to the hand postures (mudra) and their related incantations (mantra).

The influence of Taoism is apparent all throughout the kuji. One of the most obvious influences is that of onmyōdō (the way of Yin and Yang). This is clearly seen in the mudra themselves. Especially in regards to the first and last mudras, the mudras associated with the syllables to and sha, kai and jin. These mudras are obvious yin and yang counterparts. The mudra gejishi-in (gesture of the outer lion) and its immediate counterpart naijishi-in (gesture of the inner lion) clearly represent yin and yang relations, as does gebbaku-in [gesture of the outer bond] and its immediate counterpart neibbakku-in [gesture of the inner bond]. The first and last mudra occupies the two most important positions, the beginning and the end. In relation to yin and yang theory, the yang aspect is the light, masculine, positive, offensive, absolute, horizontal, left, forward, upward. While the yin aspect is the dark, feminine, negative, defensive, relative, vertical, right, backward, down. (Waterhouse, 1996)

The related practice of making nine cuts—five horizontal and four vertical, alternating—in the air or palm of a hand with the finger or on paper with a brush is known as kujikiri, nine syllable cuts. Kuji kiri is explained in Shugendo texts, quite correctly, as a preparatory ritual of protection, to cut off demonic influences and their inki (vital substance) (Waterhouse, 1996). In Japanese folk-magic and onmyōdo, the nine cuts are often made over writing or a picture, to gain control of the object named or pictured. Thus, a sailor wishing to be protected from drowning might write them over the kanji for "sea" or "water". The Fuji shu does not spell out every ritual in detail. However, in several of the kuji kiri rituals it is spelled out that the strokes are made alternately horizontal and then vertical: five horizontal and four vertical for men; and four horizontal and five vertical for woman.

According to the Neipian, the kuji is a prayer to avert difficulties and baleful influences and to ensure things proceed without difficulty. To this end it can be said that the primary purpose of ku-ji is shōkanjō [consecration, abhiseka – Skt.] and chōbuku [exorcism]. The nine syllables of ku-ji have numerous correlations and associations with Japanese esoteric Buddhism. They are associated with the gorin (five cakras), the godai (five elements), certain directions of the compass, certain colors, and numerous Tantric and esoteric deities

Ku-ji itself is a very flexible practice that can be modified depending on the needs of the practitioner. The practice of ku-ji ho as found in Japanese esoteric Buddhism is a sanmitsu nenju [concentrated three mysteries practice], and as such, consists of several dependent, integrated practices. It can be practiced in the form of either of the two mandaras of esoteric Buddhism [mikkyō]. The Kongo-kai mandara Diamond Universe Nine Assemblies mandala of Shingon Buddhism, or the Taizo-kai mandara. It is also used by other Buddhist sects, especially in Japan; some Taoists and practitioners of Shinto and Chinese traditional religion; and in folk-magic throughout East Asia.

Ku-ji as generally practiced in budo comes from Sugen jinpi gyoho fuju shu or Fuju shu for short, a Shugendo document of the Tozan-ha lineage, edited between 1871-1934. The Fuji shu lists 400 rituals, 26 of them kuji-ho. The original document is believed to have originated with either Tachikawa-ryu, a branch of Shingonshu, or Ono-ryu [Waterhouse, 1996].

The two particular techniques of ku-ji that are most directly related to budo, and most widely known are kuji hon-i (Fuji Shu #199) and kuji no daiji (Fuji Shu #200). These two kuji rituals are centered the esoteric deities of Shingon mikkyō, the Shitenno (Four Heavenly Kings) and Godai myo-o (Five Wisdom Kings). Other groupings of deities exist as well depending on the sect and purpose of the kuji.

The Kuji-in practice symbolizes that all the forces of the universe are united against evil; because of this, it was often used by the common people for luck when traveling, especially in the mountains.

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Mantra and mudra

In Japanese, the nine syllables are: Rin (臨), Pyō (兵), Tō (闘), Sha (者), Kai (皆), Jin (陣), Retsu (列), Zai (在), Zen (前). If the nine cuts are then made, as is sometimes done, the syllable Kō (行) is sometimes spoken.

Note that the syllables are shortened forms, and there are also longer, Japanese mantra that go with the same mudra. As to why there appears to be no correlation between the mudra and mantra and the representative deities is unknown at this time.

The mudra [hand postures] are as follows:

臨 (Rin): Hands together, fingers interlocked. The index (sometimes middle) fingers are raised and pressed together.

兵 (Pyō): Hands together, pinkies and ring fingers interlocked (often on the inside). Index finger and
thumb raised and pressed together, middle fingers cross over index fingers and their tips curl back to touch the thumbs' tips, the middle-fingers' nails touching.

Mudra is, daikongorin-in, "seal of the great thunderbolt."

Mantra is, On isha naya in tara ya sowaka. [Om to the Vajra (great diamond thunderbolt)! All Hail!]

■ (Tō): Hands together, index fingers cross each other to touch opposite ring fingers, middle fingers crossed over them. Ring and pinky fingers are straight. Tips of ring fingers pressed together, tips of pinkies pressed together, but both sets of ring and pinky fingers are separated to form a V shape or bird beak

Mudra is, gejishi-in "seal of the outer lion."

Note: this mudra is not found in Shingon. But is rather a Shugendo mudra.

Mantra is, On jite rashi itara jiba ratanō sowaka.

Note: this mudra is associated with the pair of lions which stand guard over Buddhist temples, in particular the lion who utters the sound "a", the alpha.

者 (Sha): Hands together, ring fingers cross each other to touch opposite index fingers, middle fingers crossed over them. Index finger, pinky and thumb straight, like American Sign Language "I love you".

Mudra is, naijishi-in "seal of the inner lion."

Note: this mudra is not found in Shingon. But is rather a Shugendo mudra.

mantra is, On haya baishiraman taya sowaka.

Note: this mudra is associated with the pair of lions which stand guard over Buddhist temples, in particular the lion who utters the sound "Om", the omega.
皆 (Kai): Hands together, fingers interlocked.

Mudra is, gebaku-in "seal of the outer bonds."

Mantra is, *On nōmaku sanmanda basaradan kan.* [Om homage to all-pervading diamond thunderbolts. Utterly crush and devour!] [Eng.]

Note: this is the "One Word Mantra/不動一字呪 of Fudo myo-O (Acalanatha)

陣 (Jin): Hands together, fingers interlocked, with the fingertips inside.

Mudra is naibaku-in "seal of the inner bonds."

Mantra is, *On aga naya in maya sowaka.* [Om to the glory of Agni (God of the Scared Fire). All Hail]

列 (Retsu): Left hand in an upward-pointing fist, index finger raised. Right hand grips index finger, and thumb is pressed onto left index's nail.

Mudra is, Chiken-in "seal of the wisdom fist," also known as "seal of the interpenetration of the two realms."

Note: this is the primary mudra associated with Dainichi Nyorai (Vairocana)

Mantra is, *On hirota ki shanoga jiba tai sowaka.*

在 (Zai): Hands spread out in front, with thumb and index finger touching.
Mudra is "seal of the ring of the sun."

Mantra is, *On chirichi iba rotaya sowaka.*

前 (Zen): Hands form a circle, thumbs on top and fingers on the bottom, right hand overlapping left up to the knuckles.

Mudra: hobyo-in/ongyo-in "seal of the hidden form, mudra which conceals its form"

Note: The mudra hobyo-in is associated with Fugen Bosatsu (Samantabhadra) in the Kongo-Kai mandara, as well as Ichiji Kinrin. Whereas the mudra ongyo-in is a mudra associated with Marishi-Ten.

mantra: *On a ra ba sha nō sowaka* [Om a ra pa ca na. All hail!] [Eng.]

Note: this is mantra of Monju bosatsu (Mañjusri Bodhisattva)

**Meaning of ku-ji**

The influence of Taoism is very apparent in the practice of ku-ji, in that there are yin/in and yang/yô aspects to ku-ji that must be taken into consideration by the practitioner. There are five yang/yô-syllables, and four yin/in-syllables. In onmyôdo [inyo goku] philosophy yin/in is related to relative, to benefit self, defensive; yang/yô is absolute, to use against others, offensive. Thus, when looking at the implied meaning of the syllables in ku-ji it is apparent that the in-syllables are used to defend the self, and the yô-syllables are used to attack outside influences.

The yin and yang theory of kuji also carries over to kuji kiri. In kuji kiri the vertical strokes/slashes represent the yin/in syllables, while the horizontal strokes/slashes represent the yang/yô syllables. Thus in kuji kiri the practitioner is fist making an aggressive horizontal slash representing the first syllable which is a yang/yô which represents the absolute aspect or offensive nature of the deity. The second stroke/slash is defensive and represents the second syllable or relative aspect or defensive nature of the deity. And so on...

Often a tenth syllable is added at the end. Generaly it is the mata [syllable] for victory, or "to destroy".

**Yang/Yô syllables [horizontal, absolute]**

臨/Rin: come
闘/Tō: fight
皆/Kai: ready
列/Restsu: line-up
前/Zen: in front

**Yin/In syllables [vertical, relative]**

兵/Pyō: warriors
者/Shā: one
陣/Jin: formation
在/Sai: take position

Thus the essence of the meaning of the ku-ji can be roughly translated as,

Taoist: “**May all those who preside over warriors be my vanguard.**” [Waterhouse, 1996]

Japanese: "**Come warriors, fight as one, ready in formation, line up and take position in front. Destroy/victory!**"

Each of the nine syllables has a meaning that when integrated with the corresponding mudra, mantra, and visualization [corresponding deity] manifests sanmitsu kaji [grace, viture, merit of the Three mysteries]. In general it can be said that ku-ji is the harnessing and control of psychospiritual or psychophysical energies, and, or, of cosmic/universal spirits/deities/energies.

The deities most commonly called upon in mikkyo [esoteric Buddhism, Vajaryana-tantra] are deities of Hindu and Tantric origin, which are ultimately all emanations of Mahavairocana (Dainichi Nyorai). These deites are the Shitenno and the Godai myō-Ō, as well as Marishi-ten [Goddess of light], Nitten [Sun god], Bon-ten (Brahma), Ichiji Kinrin Bochto (Ekaksa-rosnisa-cakra, or Ekasara-buddhosnisa-cakra), and so on.

With relation to Japanese esoteric Buddhism [mikkyo], the yang/yō-syllables represent the Shitenno (Four Heavenly Kings), with the exception of the “kai” syllable which represents Fudo-myō-o. The yin/in-syllables represents the Godai myō-o. A simple look at the ku-ji and their relation to the prescribed deities shows a very logical pattern. The ku-ji and associated deities form a simple mandara, with Fudō myō-Ō at his rightful and proper place in the center, surrounded by the other four Myō at their respective locations, which comprises the inner sanctum/hall of the mandara. The shidaitenno being of a lower rank/office than the Myō, occupy the outer sanctum/hall of the mandara at their respective positions.

**Fuji shu #199, kuji hon-i**

**Yō/yang syllables**
臨 / Rin: Tammon-ten/Bishamon-ten Vaisravana - Skt.

闘 / Tô: Jikoku-ten (Dhrtarastra - Skt.)

皆 / Kai: Fudo myô-o (Acalanatha - Skt.)

列 / Restsu: Komoku-ten (Virupaksa - Skt.)

前 / Zen: Zocho-ten (Virudhaka - Skt.)

**In/yin syllables**

兵 / Pyô: Gonzanze myô-o/Shozonzae myo-o (Trailokyavijaya - Skt.)

者 / Shā: Kongō-yaksha myô-o (Vajrayaksa - Skt.)

陣 / Jin: Gundari myô-o (Kundali - Skt.)

在 / Sai: Dai-itoku myô-o (Yamantaka - Skt.)

**Fuju shu #200, kuji no daiji**

This is the other kuji ho that most directly deals with the martial arts, the most direct being the above kuji hon-i.

**Yô/yang syllables**

臨 / Rin: Tammon-ten/Bishamon-ten Vaisravana - Skt.

闘 / Tô: Nyoirin

皆 / Kai: Aizen Myo-O (Ragaraja)

列 / Restsu: Amida Nyorai (Amitâbha)

前 / Zen: Monju bosatsu (Mañjuśrī)

**In/yin syllables**

兵 / Pyô: Juichimen Kan'non (Ekādaśa-mukha)

者 / Shā: Fudosan (Ācalanātha)

陣 / Jin: Sho Kan'non (Āryāvalokiteśvara)

在 / Sai: Miroku Bosatsu (Maitreya)

Other groupings of the ku-ji include:
A] Kujisuijaku [Nine Planets][Fuju Shu no. 197]

In Fuju #197 & #198 which relates to the nine planets and Seven Northern Stars, the purpose of the kuji-ho is to obtain protection, as well as longevity; and the correlations with the nine planets and Seven Northern Stars. The idea was to perform the ritual to remove bad or baleful influences which a particular star or stars might in exerting over at that time over a person in a particular age group, by converting it into a auspicious star, planet, and influence. [Waterhouse, 1996]

臨/Rin: Keitosei [descending lunar node], southwest, Jizo bosatsu

兵/Pyô: Nichiyōsei [sun], northeast, Sunday, Fudo myo-O

闘/Tô: Mokuyōsei [Jupiter], east, Thursday, Monju bosatsu

者/Shā: Kayōsei [Mars], south, Tuesday, Hachiman bosatsu

皆/Kai: Ragosei [ascending lunar node], southeast, Dainichi Nyorai

陣/Jin: Doyōsei [Saturn], center, Saturday, Kan'non bosatsu

列/Restsu: Getsuyōsei [moon], northwest, Monday, Fugen bosatsu

在/Sai: Kin-yōsei [Venus], west, Friday, Kokuzu bosatsu

前/Zen: Suiyōsei [Mercury], north, Wednesday, Seishi bosatsu

Note: if Myoken bosatsu is included at the end, kujisuijaku becomes jujisuijaku or ten stars/十曜星. Myoken is the primary deity of worship of the shukuyoo/宿曜 or nine constellations/planets.

B] Kujihonji [Northern Seven Stars (Big Dipper Ursa Major)] [Fuju Shu 198]

臨/Rin: Donrōshō/貪狼星; Nichirin Bosatsu; ; [Dubhe; Alpha Ursae Majoris (α UMa / α Ursae Majoris)]

兵/Pyô: Komoshō/巨門星; Gachirin Bosatsu; ; [Merak ; Beta Ursae Majoris (β UMa / β Ursae Majoris)]

闘/Tô: Rokuzonshō/祿存星; Kōmyōshō; [Phecda, Phekda or Phad; Gamma Ursae Majoris (γ UMa / γ Ursae Majoris)]

者/Shā: Monkokushō/文曲星; Zōchō Bosatsu; [Megrez; Delta Ursae Majoris (δ UMa / δ Ursae Majoris)]

皆/Kai: Renjōshō/廉貞星; Ekoshō Bosatsu; [Alioth; Epsilon Ursae Majoris (ε UMa / ε Ursae Majoris)]

陣/Jin: Mukokushō/武曲星; Jizō Bosatsu; [Mizar; (ζ UMa / ζ Ursae Majoris)]
列/Retsu: Hagunshō/破軍星; Kongōshu Bosatsu (Fugen bosatsu) (Samantabhadra -Skt.); [Alkaid (or Elkeid) and Benetnash (Benetnasch); Eta Ursae Majoris (η UMa / η Ursae Majoris)]

Two attendant stars

在/Zai: Gatten; M101 [The Pin Wheel Galaxy] located to the north of Alkaid

前/Zen: Nitten; M51 [The Whirlpool Galaxy] located to the south of Alkaid

C] Zokushu

Zokushu is the earliest known Buddhist adaptation of the kuji. It is a kuji ritual based on Kakuban's formula, in which each of the kuji corresponds to a shuji/bonji/bija. However, instead of the original nine Taoist syllables, Kakuban created a new set of nine syllables based on the mantra of Amida Nyorai. There are in fact several zokushu rituals that Kakuban designed. The ritual itself is based on the deities Avalokitesvara [Kannō bosatsu], and Amida buddha (Amitabha) as well as the nine deities of the inner sanctum of the Taizo-kai mandara/胎蔵界曼荼羅 (Garbhadhatu). Zokushu is based on Jodoshu [Pure land sect] and therefore the primary deity of worship is Amida Nyorai.

Zokushu #5

Zokushu #5 gives lists the nine original Taoist syllables and gives a corresponding Japanese syllable. The shuji themselves when placed in order of their corresponding kuji form no logical sentence or statement, and may represent Sanskrit bija, and, or Tantric deities, or, it may be a prayer. Without further evidence, no other conclusions can be made.

臨/Rin: Ri

兵/Pyō: Na

闘/Tō: Tan

者/Shā: Sha

皆/Kai: Ku

陣/Jin: Chirin

列/Retsu: Raku

在/Zai: Rau

前/Zen: Ron

Ri-na-tan-sha-ku-chirin-raku-rau-rau-ron

It is unclear how this set of kuji is related to the Sanskrit bija Kakuban gives for the primary zokushu kuji, which is the mantra of Amida buddha.
Um, a, mr, ta, te, je, ha, ra, hum

which compose the mantra,

Om amṛta tese (teje) hari hum [Om to the elixir/nectar of immortality of most exalted virtues and noble strengths, to the heavenly queen Amida buddha, hum.] or [Om save us in the glory of the Deathless One hûm].

Another kuji formula is found in the writings of Jodo Shinshu, founded by Shinran, and is yet another mantra to Amida Nyorai which reads

Na, mu, fu, ka, shi, gi, ko, nyo, rai

Which spells the mantra, Namu fukashigi-ko Nyorai (Homage to the Tathāgata [buddha] of inconceivable light.)

A juji formula is then given with the syllables,

Ki, myō, jin, jip, pō, mu, ge, kō, nyo, rai

This spells the mantra, Kimyo jinjippō mugekō Nyorai (Homage to the Tathāgata [buddha] whose light shines without obstruction universally in the ten directions!)

It may be that this juji ritual is based on, or connected to an older Taoist juji formula,

Ten-ryū-ko-ō-shō-ze-myō-ki-sui-dai

Rather these kuji and juji originated strictly within Japanese Buddhism is unlikely as Jodo Shinshu is, like many things in Japanese theology, influenced by Taoism. And it is also safe to assume that both Kakuban and Shinran would have been familiar with the various Taoist kuji and juji formulas. Rather or not their kuji and juji formulas are Japanese versions of Taoist formulas may never be known. However, what is clear is that they represent the earliest known use of the kuji and juji in Japanese esoteric Buddhism [mikkyō]. (Waterhouse, 1996)

Again, in the absences of further evidence no other conclusions can be made.

The same ritual goes on to give a list of related Taoist deities [Waterhouse, 1996]:

C.2]

臨/Rin: Taishi

兵/Pyô: Suzaku

闘/Tô: Bunno

者/Shâ: Genbu

皆/Kai: Santei

陣/Jin: Byakko
Lastly, in the late Edo jidai the kuji were practiced by various Shinto schools. And therefore, a set of correlations was developed between the kuji and various Shinto schools and related deities. Below is one such list belonging to a Shinto school in the Yamato region [Waterhouse, 1996]

**Tammon-Ten’s kaji kuji (Vaisravana’s nine syllable empowerment)**

Another kuji prayer is outlined by the monk Nichiei, and is found in the Lotus Sutra where it is uttered by the deva King of the North, Tammon-ten/Bishamon-ten (Vaisravana), and is said to guarantee protection to those who recite it.

*Ryo-hyaku-yu-jun-nai-mu-sui-gen* [Cause all feeble sickness to be naught a distance of a hundred yojans (approximately 1,000 miles)]

As it should be apparent, the kuji are a very adaptable ritual which has, and will likely continue to be, adapted to the local needs of the individual or organization. In so long as the overall structure of esoteric practice is understood, that being the practice of sanmitsu, then the kuji can be adopted to fit almost any need.

**Meanings in Shinto**

Each word is translated to the following meaning for Shinto.

- Rin: To face.
- kyō/Hyō/Hei: The soldier.


- **Tōh**: To fight.
- **Sha**: The man (or the people); a foe
- **Kai**: The all, or the whole effect, or whole effort.
- **Jin**: In Formation, or position in camp or to prepare.
- **Retsu**: To move in column or a row, in a line; or marching, or to focus.
- **Zai**: To appear, or to exist to make yourself known, or create existence.
- **Zen**: To be in front. or show up in front.

Kuji-in is used as part of a ritual in Shinto,[1] and is used to purify a person with a waterfall.

**RIN**

**STRENGTH OF MIND AND BODY**

At first this may appear to be physical strength and mental intellect but maybe we can think of this as being physically well and having a positive outlook.

Middle fingers extended, others interlocked.

**PYO**

**DIRECTION OF ENERGY**

To begin this may seem to refer to directing your energies into work but later it could be that you see it as a way of directing your internal energy to increase your inner power.

Index fingers and thumbs extended, middle fingers curled over index fingers. Others interlocked.

**TOH**

**HARMONY WITH THE UNIVERSE**

This can work on many levels from learning to live in peace with mankind and the animal kingdom to being at one with yourself.

Last two fingers extended to form a V (tips touching). Thumbs extended, others interlocked.

**SHA**

**HEALING OF SELF AND OTHERS**

The ability to heal is more powerful than the ability to kill. When you sense your inner power you will no longer succumb to viruses and other ailments. A word to those that would use their powers to harm others: "It is easy to kill a man, but could you watch one die?" Index fingers and thumbs extended, others interlocked.

**KAI**

**PREMONITION OF DANGER**

If this cut is fully achieved you may find that you can feel the emotions of others (even at a distance) which can aid in knowing how others will react in a given situation.

All fingers interlocked.

**JIN**

**KNOWING THOUGHTS OF OTHERS**

I believe that this cut increases your ability to "feel" the thoughts of others. When you are adept at this power you can hide your thoughts and feelings from others.

All fingers interlocked inwards.

**RETSU**

**MASTERY OF SPACE AND TIME**

Think of this... Have you ever noticed how the day has passed quickly for others but has taken an age for you? Everybody has the ability to control their own "time". With this power one could use it to easily defeat an opponent.

Index finger of left hand pointing up with the fingers of the right hand curling round it. The thumb of the right hand should be pressed against the outside edge of the nail on the index finger of the left hand).
CONTROL OF THE ELEMENTS OF NATURE
Can one truly control nature? Maybe the real answer is that a Ninja understands nature and works with it.
Fingers outspread, palms out. Index fingers and thumbs touching.

ENLIGHTENMENT
Know yourself before you ask "Who are you?"
Right hand covering Left hand. Thumb tips touching.

Meanings in Buddhism

Each word is translated to the following meaning in Buddhism.

- Rin, to confront
- Pyō / Hyō / Hei to soldier on
- Tō, to Battle with
- Sha, Against One/Person
- Kai, With everyone/entire/group
- Jin, The formation
- Retsu, In a row
- Zai, To Presence
- Zen, To move Forward

There as many as 81 variations to the Kuji-in in certain sects of Buddhism in Japan, to say nothing of other mudra that are also used.

Meanings in Ninjutsu

While the kuji-in have no unique relation to ninjutsu, the ninja traditions are steeped in esoteric Buddhist beliefs, especially Mikkyo. The kuji-in are used in a number of their meditations, both those related simply to their religious practice and those dealing with their martial arts; in some ways, they are used similarly to the Taoist ideas in Chinese internal martial arts (some of the ideas of Chinese internal arts are, however, incorporated in many Japanese arts, including ninjutsu and jujutsu). In his book *Ninja Vol. II: Warrior Ways of Enlightenment*, Stephen K. Hayes claims the following interpretations:

- Rin - Strength
- Pyō / Hyō - Channel
- Tō - Harmony
- Sha - Healing
- Kai - Sense of Danger
- Jin - Reading of thoughts.
- Retsu - Control space and time.
- Zai - sky or elements control.
- Zen - enlightenment.

The kuji-in are a tool to be used in meditation, and are frequently over-simplified in popular culture as being a form of magic. This misrepresentation, along with the misuse of the mudra and mantra, has been further popularized by *Dead or Alive*, *Tekken*, *Tenchu* and certain neo-ninja.
In popular culture

- In the anime *Sailor Moon*, Rei used the Kuji-in front of a fire to see visions. She also used it to banish oni when used with an ofuda, or anti-evil scroll, with the chant "Rin, pyou, tou, sha, kai, jin, retsu, zai, zen. Akuryou Taisan! [臨、兵、闘、者、皆、陣、列、在、前。悪霊悪霊悪霊悪霊] (Evil spirits, disperse)!" [2] This was first seen in episode 10. [3] In the English adaptation, the chant was changed to "I call upon the power of Mars. Fireballs charge!" or variants of this phrase. Later it was changed to "Sun, Moon, Sky, Earth, Fire, Air, Water, Rock, Star!" and also "I am Flame, Flame is Light, I am Fire, Fire is Sight."
- In the light novels and anime for *Ghost Hunt*, this is one of the first protection mantras that the miko Ayako Matsuzaki teaches to Mai Taniyama to help protect her during a case. She eventually uses the technique against a human and is harshly chided for this by the monk Takigawa Houshou.
- In *Tekken 5*, Raven show the hand seals and chants the sounds as one of his victory animations.
- In *Naruto* known as these were named after the Chinese Zodiac.
- In "Yami no matsuei" it's used to break a curse.
- In the anime *Shounen Onmyouji*, it is one of the sets of chants that Masashiro has used against Youkai.
- In the anime *Tactics*, it is one that was used as a chant. The main character uses the kuji-in to control the spirits that he deals on the anime.
- In *Ninja Gaiden* for the Xbox, *Ninja Gaiden 2* for the Xbox 360 and *Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword*, Ryu Hayabusa uses the Kuji-In to increase his physical endurance. He does it by either using a full Nine Seal set (Lives of the Thousand Gods), or by collecting each of the jewels (life/lives of the gods) until he reaches the whole nine seals.
- In *Tenchu Z* for the Xbox 360, the Kuji-in seal names are the ranks for the online player match portion of the game. Ascending from Rin all the way to Zen.
- In *Nightshade* for the PlayStation 2, the character Hotsuma recites the syllables for all nine seals during certain tate poses.
- In *Shadow Hearts* for the PlayStation 2, the character Zhuzhen recites this chant before using special skills.
- In *Ninja Assassin*, the character Raizo uses the Kuji-in to heal his wound as he is being taken back to the ninja compound. He was Taught by his sensei this when he was young to initiate his advanced training for ninjitsu which requires him to deal with physical, mental and spiritual damage as a young apprentice. And the Head Master of the Ninja clan uses Kuji-Kiri over a self inflicted cut of his hand to heal the wound in front of the children student assassins to demonstrate his power.
- In *Super Street Fighter IV*, Guy uses the Kuji-in as his primary taunt, standing and performing the hand postures rapidly while muttering the chant.
- In *Soul Blade* (a.k.a Soul Edge) it is used in one of the endings - it is used to kill a demon.

References


1. ^ Kami no Michi Appendix C: MISOGI AND SPIRITUAL EXERCISES
2. ^ The Sailor Senshi Page: Sailormoon Item & Object Encyclopedia
3. ^ Sailor Moon Uncensored: Episode 10

External links

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuji-in
Kuji-in: Nine Hand Seals

Categories: Buddhist meditation | Gestures

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