

Kuji-In:

“An Introduction to the Nine Hand Seals”

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Introduction

The subject of Kuji-Ho is a very large one that covers Ku-ji, Kuji-In, Kuji-Kiri, Kuji Goshin Ho, and Kuji-Kan. Altogether it encompasses Meditation, Martial Arts, Magic, Protection, Health & Fitness, and many other areas.

In this paper I hope to give you a basic introduction to one section of Kuji-Ho, the Kuji-in finger entwining hand “*seals*” which stem from the mudra hand postures of Indian, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese esoteric lore, and represent the channelling of subtle energies, the transmitting of wisdom, and the affording of psychic protection to self and others.

- Ku-ji simply means “*Nine Characters*” or “*Nine Syllables*” and refers to a variety of mantras that consist of nine syllables.
- Kuji-In means “*Nine Character Seals*”, “*Nine Syllables Seals*” or “*Nine Hand Seals*” and refer to the mudras associated with the Nine Syllables.
- Kuji-Ho refers to the entire ritual of Ku-ji and encompasses the mudra, mantra, and meditation.

History

Kuji-Ho is believed to have originated in the Hindu religion, as a system to bring the virtues of the Spirit into the physical experience. This system was later absorbed into Buddhism, which kept the mudras the same, but replaced the original Sanskrit mantras with Buddhist ones. This Buddhist movement then migrated to China, where Kuji-Ho was passed on to the hermetic and esoteric groups and was used by Taoist scholars and later strategists. It was here around 300AD that Kuji-Ho first appears in written records in the Baopuzi (*Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity*) written by Ge Hong.

At around the time of the Chinese Tang dynasty, Kuji-Ho was brought to Tibet, and later Japan, where it was further adapted and became even more complicated and esoteric in nature as it was appropriated by esoteric Buddhism, the Ninja and some Samurai groups. This Japanese Kuji-Ho translated the Buddhist mantras into Japanese phonetics.

In 1981 the movie “Enter the ninja” was released, which as well being one of the first movies to popularise the “Ninja” in the western world, also brought Kuji-In to the attention of the masses. Since the main character recites and performs the Kuji-In at the beginning of the film as his final test to becoming a ninja, and again before the final showdown. After this movie many Western Martial Arts schools started teaching Kuji-In, and it started to appear in popular culture of films, comics, and cartoons.

This modern Kuji-Ho technique is composed of a ritual process comprising the traditional application of the Buddhist “three secrets”. Mudra (*hand postures*), mantra (*associated prayer*) and the mandala (*associated symbol or visualization*).

It should not be surprising that a system with such an ancient history that has worked its way into so many cultures and religions over such a long period of time would have many variations in how it is practiced and understood. This paper mainly sticks to the Japanese Ninpo Amatsu Tatara System.

Meridians

The electromechanical makeup of the human body contain energy centres and pathways. Meridians are the energy pathways in which Qi/Ki flows throughout the body, it is believed that the hands and feet contain the sensitive ends and turn-around points of these energy channels. Chakras are spiritual energy centres located in our spiritual bodies that channel Energy or Qi/Ki both in and out of our physical and spiritual selves, they are considered both receivers and transmitters of energy. The belief is that both your Chakras and Meridians must be balanced to be physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually healthy. The theory of meridians was originally expressed by the Chinese based off the observations of illness and holistic treatment.

A Mudra is a gesture of position of the hands, that locks and guides energy flow and reflexes to the brain. By stretching, crossing, curling, and connecting the fingers of our hands, we can balance out or direct the energy of the body, which can result in an alternation of the body’s mood, bearing, and predominant capability at any given moment.

As well as the energy meridians in the hands, each finger represents an element, the entire universe lies within the connections of your ten fingers.

In the system I was taught: -

Little Finger	Ring Finger	Middle Finger	Index Finger	Thumb
Earth	Water	Fire	Wind/Air	Void/Spirit

Other systems have: -

System	Little Finger	Ring Finger	Middle Finger	Index Finger	Thumb
Bujinkan Ninpo	Earth	Metal	Fire	Wood	Water
Pancha Bhoota	Water	Earth	Space	Air	Fire
Reiki	Water	Wood	Fire	Metal	Earth
Wuxing	Water	Metal	Fire	Wood	Earth

No matter what the system is, they all agree that the fingers represent the five main elements.

So, by using Mudras we can not only redirect the energy flow throughout our bodies, we can by coupling that with connecting the different elements together to benefit from the forces associated with those elements we can affect change.

The Nine Hand Seals

前 <small>ぜん</small>	在 <small>ざい</small>	裂 <small>れつ</small>	陳 <small>ちん</small>	皆 <small>かい</small>	者 <small>しゃ</small>	鬪 <small>とう</small>	兵 <small>ひょう</small>	臨 <small>りん</small>
隱形印 おんがいのん たのまのふかくはげ	日輪印 ひつりん たのまのふかくはげ	智拳印 ちけん たのまのふかくはげ	内縛印 ないばく たのまのふかくはげ	外縛印 がいばく たのまのふかくはげ	内師子印 ないしし たのまのふかくはげ	外師子印 がいしし たのまのふかくはげ	大金剛輪印 だいこんがうりん たのまのふかくはげ	獨古印 どこ たのまのふかくはげ

The Kuji-In “Nine Hand Seals” stem from the mudra had postures of Indian, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese esoteric lore, and represent the channelling of subtle energies, the transmitting of wisdom, and the affording of psychic protection to self and others. They accomplish this by balancing out or directing the flow of energy through the hands.

“*Rin, Pyo, Toh, Sha, Kai, Jin, Retsu, Zai, Zen*” are the jumon vow that accompanies the weaving of the fingers for each of the nine steps, or “*Levels of Power*”. Each of these characters/Syllables has its own hand pose (mudra), which in turn has its own chant (mantra) that calls upon a particular personification of some cosmic aspect or Deity for assistance in directing power, in effect you select a goal of emulation and then become that goal in thought, word, and deed, by attuning your body, voice, and mental imagery with the desired outcome. The entire personality then takes on the feel that the goal has already been accomplished, and is merely awaiting the proper time to physically manifest itself.

The Kuji also have very Yin/Yang aspects to them, and should be taken into consideration by the practitioners. Five of the Ku-ji correspond to Yang, and relate to absolute, use against others, and offensive. The other four correspond to Yin, and relate to relative, benefit to self, and defensive. The Yin/Yang aspects are more important in Kuji-Kiri than Kuji-In which will be mentioned briefly later in the paper.

Yin/In = Rin, Toh, Kai, Retsu, Zen

Yang/Yo = Pyo, Sha, Jin, Zai

Note: *If you do further research into this subject, you will find several variations on both the hand mudras, and associated mantra. As previously stated any system with such an ancient history, which is associated with so many different cultures and religions will develop variations. The variations presented below are based on the Ninpo Amatsu Tatara system which is based on the theory that connecting the meridians provides the greatest enhancement of energy. Also on a personal note it is the system I received training in. All of the variations are valid, and you should try them and go with the one that best works for you.*

The Nine levels of the Kuji-in are:-

Rin

Seal of the Thunderbolt
Strength of Mind and Body.

Chakra: Base

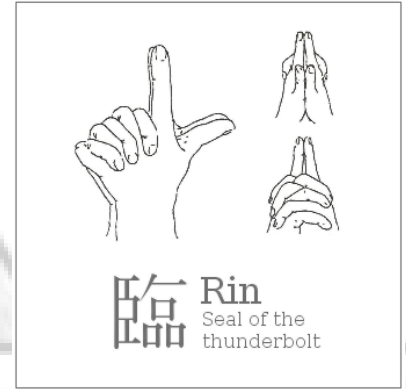
Mudra: Dokko-in/Kongoshin-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om vajramanataya swaha.

Mantra (Japanese): On bai shira man toya sowaka.

Mantra (English): O thunderbolt to / who has glory / sacrifice.

Mantra (Alternatives): "I am empowered with vital energy" or "I am strong".

**Meanings**

Shinto: To face.

Buddhism: To Confront.

Ninpo: Strength.

Clasp both hands together with the fingers interlocked. Extend the index fingers of each hand and press them together, raising the thumbs likewise together.

Note: *In some forms of Kuji-In the middle fingers are used instead of the Index.*

Strength of Mind and Body does not just refer to physical strength or mental intellect, but also of being psychically well and having a positive outlook on life. Rin should always be performed before any of the other Kuji-In to get the full benefits from them. Rin acts as to connect you to the source of all power, by connecting you to this Divine energy, the Rin strengthens your mind and body, making you stronger at every level.

The physical imitation of the mikkyo dokko or kongo “diamond thunderbolt” which represents the awesome power of wisdom and pure knowledge as it smashes through crudeness and ignorance, the dokko-in is used to inspire the strength for overcoming physical and mental trials, and for prevailing over all that would crush the ninja.

Pyo

Also known as Pyōh , Kyo
 Seal of the Great Thunderbolt
 Direction of Energy.



Chakra: Hara/Navel

Mudra: Daikongorin-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om ishaanayaa yantrayaa swaha.

Mantra (Japanese): On isha naya in tara ya sowaka.

Mantra (English): O vigorous behavior instrument glory.

Mantra (Alternatives): “I know my deep Spiritual self and I am not tempted by distractions”
 or “I am fearless.”

Meanings

Shinto: The Soldier.

Buddhism: To soldier on.

Ninpo: Channel.

Clasp both hands together with the fingers interlocked. Raise the index finger and thumb pressing them together. Take the middle fingers and cross them over the index fingers with their tips curled back to touch the thumbs' tips, the middle-fingers' nails touching.

Direction of Energy, in the beginning this may appear to refer to directing your energies into work, but later it could be that you see it more as a way of directing your internal energy to increase your inner power. Pyo helps you learn to direct the flow of energy with your body and outside of you, in your environment. Although willpower directs energy, you must not push too hard with your willpower, you must always be at peace and relaxed.

The physical imitation of the thunderbolt, symbol of the power of knowledge which transcends the worldly limitations, the daikongo-in is used to inspire personal power through the channelling of energy to the appropriate area of consciousness for the purpose at hand.

Toh

Seal of the Outer Lion.
Harmony with the Universe.

Chakra: Dan-tian, between the Hara and the Solar Plexus

Mudra: Gejishi-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om jitraashi yatra jivaratna swaha.

Mantra (Japanese): On je te ra shi itara ji ba ra ta no-o sowaka.

Mantra (English): O conquering zodiac place life treasure glory.

Mantra (Alternatives): “I am one with the Infinite Divine Energy and in Harmony with the Universe.” or “I am confident, enthusiastic and at peace”.

**Meanings**

Shinto: To fight.

Buddhism: To battle with.

Ninpo: Harmony.

Point your thumbs, ring and little fingers, while your middle and Index fingers are interlocked inside your hands. Ring and Little fingers to form a V.

Note: *In some forms of Kuji-In the fingers are interlocked on the outside.*

Harmony with the Universe can work on many levels from learning to live in peace with mankind and the animal kingdom to being at one with yourself. Toh helps you develop your relationship with your immediate environment, and eventually with the entire universe. Toh is the Kuji-In of harmony, it teaches you to accept the outside events of life while remaining at peace inside.

The lion has merely to roar, and all other animals surrender to him. This hand trying signifies the successful surrendering to the lion outside of us, or attaining what we need while going along with whatever confronts us. By coming into attunement with the forces of fate, the ninja can develop the ki-ai to foresee and go along with the scheme of totality. The sotojishi-in is used to inspire the insight for traveling with the process of the universe.

Sha

Seal of the Inner Lion.
Healing of Self and Others.

Chakra: Solar Plexus

Mudra: Najjishi-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om haya vajramaantayaa swaha.

Mantra (Japanese): On ha ya bai shi ra man ta ya sowaka.

Mantra (English): O thunderbolt to / who has glory / sacrifice.

Mantra (Alternatives): “The flow of Infinite Divine energy flows through me healing myself and others.” or “I am healed.”

**Meanings**

Shinto: The Man.

Buddhism: Against one/person.

Ninpo: Healing.

Extend the Index finger, little finger, and thumb. Interlace your ring and middle fingers inside your hand.

Note: *In some forms of Kuji-In the fingers are interlocked on the outside.*

Healing of Self and Others is important because the ability to heal is more powerful than the ability to kill. When you sense your inner peace you will no longer succumb to viruses and other ailments. Sha helps increase the healing ability of your body, as you practice this Kuji-In your body will become more efficient in its daily rebuilding, healing and reconstruction.

The internal workings of our bodies are symbolized by the lion within. Our health can provide us with enormous power or can destroy all chances for accomplishment in this lifetime. The uchijishi-in, along with the proper jumon vow, is used to generate the energy for healing self and others, and to promote healthy surroundings.

Kai

Seal of the Outer Bonds.
Premonition of Danger.

Chakra: Heart

Mudra: Gebaku-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om namah samanta vajranam ham.

Mantra (Japanese): On no-o maku san man da ba za ra dan kan.

Mantra (English): O homage everything diamond hãm.

Mantra (Alternatives): “I see, feel and know the energy connections between myself, the Infinite and all things” or “I am psychic.”

**Meanings**

Shinto: The all, or the whole effect, or whole effort.

Buddhism: With everyone/entire/group.

Ninpo: Sense of Danger.

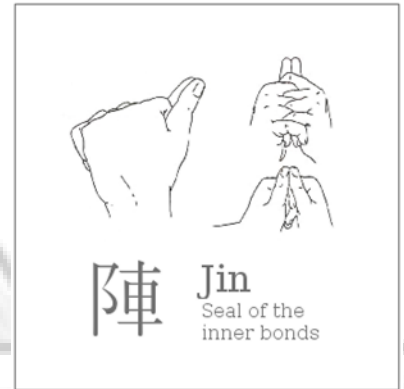
Clasp both hands together with the fingers and thumbs interlocked. With the tip of each finger pressing into the root of the facing finger.

Premonition of Danger, if this Kuji-In is fully achieved you may find that you can feel the emotions of others, which can aid in knowing how others will react to a given situation. Kai raises your awareness and helps develop your intuition. Intuition is a powerful ally; it is the way you perceive what your senses register from your contact with the environment, and from the people surrounding you. This set will increase your intuition and will help you to learn to love yourself and others.

The passions that bind us to illusions prevent us from receiving all that our consciousness is capable of taking in. The gebakuken-in represents the ninja working towards the attributes of the god by letting go of the bonds, and is used to inspire an expanded awareness that will allow the ninja to feel the approach of a premonition of danger.

Jin

Seal of the Inner Bonds.
Knowing Thoughts of Others.



Chakra: Throat

Mudra: Naibaku-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om agnayaa yanmayaa swaha.

Mantra (Japanese): On aganaya in maya sowaka.

Mantra (English): O fire of Agni made of surnatural glory.

Mantra (Alternatives): “Through the Infinite, I know the mind of each and all” or “I am telepathic”.

Meanings

Shinto: In Formation, or position in camp or to prepare.

Buddhism: The formation.

Ninpo: Reading of thoughts.

Interlace all your fingers, with your fingertips inside, each of them touching the equivalent tip of the other hand’s finger, if possible. Place your thumbs together with the right thumb on top of the left.

Knowing Thoughts of Others, helps increases your ability to “feel” the thoughts of others, and also hide your own thoughts and feelings from others. Jin connects you to your True Self, and by reaching deep inside yourself, into the place with no word, you may contact this same place in others. When this connection is made, you may hear the thoughts of others without words, but communicate by concepts.

The mind’s insistence on limiting its intake to physical sense data must be overcome before the ninja can employ the full powers of enlightenment. The naibakuken-in represents the ninja relying on the cosmic consciousness of the god by accepting the reality of intuition and is used to attune the awareness towards knowing the thoughts of others and projecting thoughts to others.

Retsu

Seal of the Wisdom Fist.
Mastery of Space and Time.



Chakra: Jade Gate, at the back of the head

Mudra: Chiken-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om jyotihi chandoga jiva tay swaha.

Mantra (Japanese): On I ro ta ki cha no ga ji ba tai sowaka.

Mantra (English): O lighting for chanting life stream glory / brilliance.

Mantra (Alternatives): “I am one with the energy of manifested reality” or “I am charismatic.”

Meanings

Shinto: To move in column or a row, in a line; or marching, or to focus.

Buddhism: In a row.

Ninpo: Control of space and time.

Make an upwards pointing fist with your left hand, extend the index finger. Take your right hand and wrap it around the left's index finger, pressing the thumb down on the fingers nail.

Mastery of Space and Time, the Time-lord Kuji-In. 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". Retsu alters your perception of gross matter so you will be able to perceive the different flows of energy composing our space-time multi-dimensional universe. As the theory of relativity, as mass accelerates, time slows, thus if your energy is flowing, and you apply your willpower, your pass accelerates, time slows for you, and equally the opposite is possible.

Mankind in the material world, represented by the upraised left index finger, is totally surrounded by the power and protection of the actuality of pure knowledge, represented by the right hand. The two hands together represent the oneness of the taizokai material realm and the kongokai spiritual realm, and the oneness of the individual soul and cosmic soul. The chicken-in figuratively frees the ninja from the limits of time and space and is used to assist the ninja in focusing on distant places and other times as sources of knowledge for application in the present time and place.

Zai

Seal of the Ring of the Sun.
Control of the Elements of Nature.

Chakra: Third Eye

Mudra: Nichirin-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om srija iva rtaya swaha.

Mantra (Japanese): On Chi ri Chi i ba ro ta ya sowaka.

Mantra (English): O creating in a manner the proper way / glory.

Mantra (Alternatives): "I see the consciousness of the laws of nature, and I am that consciousness." or "I manifest reality."

**Meanings**

Shinto: To appear, or to exist to make yourself known, or create existence.

Buddhism: To presence.

Ninpo: Control of sky and elements.

Spread out the fingers on both hands with the palms facing away for you, Touch the tips of the Index fingers and thumbs together forming a triangle.

Control of the Elements of Nature, can anyone truly control nature? It is more accurate to say Understand nature and work with it. Zai helps you establish a relationship with the universal components of creation, the elements both physically and spiritually.

The body of flame is triangular, and the triangle symbolizes the fire which must destroy all that is impure and stands in the way of sammaji, or the elevating of the mind beyond material reality to a plane where it is one with the unity of the universe. The nichirin-in is used to transport the ninja to a point of oneness with the source of all manifestation in the universe, where directions and physical forms of matter can be altered and controlled through the power of will alone.

Zen

Seal of the Hidden Form.
Enlightenment.



Chakra: Crown

Mudra: Hobyō-in/Ongyō-in.

Mantra (Sanskrit): Om ah ra pa cha na dhi.

Mantra (Japanese): On a ra ba sha no-o sowaka.

Mantra (English):

Mantra (Alternatives): “I am the void and the light.”

There is no English translation of the Zen Mantra.

Meanings

Shinto: To be in front. or show up in front.

Buddhism: To move forward.

Ninpo: Enlightenment.

Rest your left knuckles on the fingers of your right hand, with your right palm open. Touch the tips of your two thumbs gently.

Enlightenment, Know yourself before you ask “Who are you?”. Zen brings illumination which is the highest state of mind. Illumination is a kind of completeness, accomplished by meditating.

The ninja’s power and perspective in life comes from an enlightenment that can be resented and scoffed at by lesser souls lacking enlightenment. Therefore, a part of the enlightenment is a knowledge of the ways to become invisible. Along with the proper jumon recitation and mind set, the ongyō-in is used to obtain the protection of cosmic forces in order to become invisible to all lowly, resentful, and evil people and to vanish in the face of disaster.

Kuji-Kiri

Kuji-Kiri is very closely linked with the Kuji-In and in fact most people confuse the two, both are said to have been introduced into Japan via the same route. And while this paper is “An Introduction to the Nine Hand Seals”, I feel I should make some small mention of Kuji-Kiri.

Kuji Kiri, is a form of practical sorcery. The practice consists of making nine cuts, five horizontal and four verticals, alternating in the air or palm of a hand with the finger or on paper with a brush. Kuji-Kiri is explained in Shugendo texts, quite correctly, as a preparatory ritual of protection, to cut off demonic influences. In Japanese folk-magic and onmyodo, the nine cuts are often made over writing or a picture, to gain control of the object named or pictured.

The Yin/Yang theory of Kuji also carries over to Kuji-Kiri. Where the vertical strokes/slashes represent the yin/in syllables, while the horizontal strokes/slashes represent the yang/yo syllables. Thus in Kuji Kiri the practitioner is first making an aggressive horizontal slash representing the first syllable which is a yang/yo 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.

Pictured below are the names of the Kuji forming a grid of nine slashes. The grid is drawn starting with a horizontal slash, followed by a vertical one, and so on following the across then down pattern (*Yin/Yang*).

	2.	4.	6.	8.
	KYO	SHA	JIN	ZAI
1. RIN	—			
3. TOH	—			
5. KAI	—			
7. RETSu	—			
9. ZEN	—			

A common practice of Kuji-Kiri is to write the name, or symbol of what you want, or want protection from (*Preferably in Japanese Kanji but any symbol will do*) and then draw the Kuji-Kiri grid over it, first start with a horizontal line, then draw a vertical line then another horizontal etc. It is important to do this in the correct order for the spell to work. The names of the Ku-Ji should be recited as the slashes are made. Another method of using the Kuji Kiri is to draw the talisman on the palm of the hand using your index finger.

One of the earliest known use of the Kuji-Kiri dates back to ancient times when Sailors would draw the Kanji for water on a piece of paper and then overlay this with the nine line grid. This was said to protect them, as even if the boat sank, the sailor himself would survive. A more modern example of the use of Kuji-Kiri can be found its way into the world of Japanese sports where some athletes can often be seen sporting tiny taped lattices (representing the nine cuts symbolically) on their skin.

Translations

- Ku-ji - Nine Characters (Occasionally in English Nine Syllables)
- Kuji-ho - Nine Character Law
- Kuji-In - Nine Character Seals (Occasionally Nine Character Mudras)
- Kuji-Kan - Nine Character Visualization
- Kuji-Kiri - Nine Character Cutting
- Kuji Goshin Ho - Nine Character Method of Protection

Glossary

- **Chakra:** Each of seven centres of spiritual power in the human body.
- **Kanji:** A system of Japanese writing using Chinese characters, used primarily for content words.
- **Mandala:** A symbol or image that is visualized in order to engage the mind in active participation with an energy work or a spiritual process.
- **Mantra:** A word or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation.
- **Meridian:** Each of a set of pathways in the body along which vital energy flows.
- **Mudra:** A hand gesture or a hand position that is employed to bring into effect the flow of energies that terminate or start at the fingertips.

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