Zoughari, Kacem, _The Ninja: ancient shadow warriors of Japan._ Tokyo, Tuttle Publishing, 2010 ISBN 9780806839273

This book really falls into two parts. The first is a history of ninja and the second moves into the philosophy behind the modern version. It is profusely illustrated though not necessarily with picture relating to ninja.

The book's strength is that Zoughari has done what Man didn't: gone to Japanese sources. This is helped by the fact he reads the language. He mines various war tales and histories for references to ninja and also ninja "manuals" like the _Shoninki_ and the _Bansen shukai_ He applies a suitably academic rigour to tese to sort out the wheat from the chaff. In addition he also consults works by modern Japanese historians.

However, the work's weakness, as with so many books these days, is that it needs a good editor. Zoughari's style can be convoluted and cumbersome of not impenetrable (reminiscent, at times of _'Allo, 'Allo_ and such statements as "the bedroom of the mother of my wife"). He repeats himself a lot and contradicts himself. Parts don't make sense. This is particularly noticeable in the historical section where it becomes a real chore to read which is a pity as it is, for me, the most interesting part.

The writing becomes a little smoother and more lucid in the metaphysical/philosophical part (which is of less interest to me as you can read similar in anything by Hayes or Hatsumi). The best part of this section is a biography of Takamatsu Toshitsugu (Hatsumi's mentor and teacher), based on his own writings.

There is a huge appendix, most of which I would have thought belonged in the body of the text. Footnotes usually contain more detail on citations. They do not introduce new material, especially not of this quantity.

In short, great material, shame about the text.