

Overwatch: a study of  
the character genji  
shimada in this  
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## Profile of Genji Shimada

Many stories and shows feature deuteragonists of various kinds. The murderous Darth Vader was once the hero general Anakin Skywalker. The Fire Nation's Prince Zuko at first wanted nothing more than to capture the Avatar to please his tyrannical father, Ozai. However, he had a change of heart and helped the Avatar stop the evil Ozai and reunite the world after a century of divisive war. In the world of 2016's game of the year, Overwatch, one of the most loved and hated playable characters has endured a lifetime of hardship that has forced him to turn from the life of a self-centered seeker of revenge to a defender of worldwide tranquility, but not without asking himself his true purpose in the world. A modern ninja assassin turned humble monk, Genji Shimada has seen the world from both sides of the blade.

Genji was born as the younger son of the leader of the Shimada crime family, which ruled the criminal underground in Japan. While he was a young boy, Genji, along with his older brother, Hanzo, trained in Ninjutsu under their father at the Shimada family estate in Hanamura, Japan.

Mr. Shimada hoped that Genji and Hanzo could succeed him in leading the Shimada clan, and ensure that the family empire would last for another generation. However, the two brothers didn't always see eye to eye. Genji was a bit more of a troublemaker than Hanzo, but the two trained well and became exceptional ninja warriors. With their training, they would be the Shimada clan's top assassins. Genji with his sword and shurikens and Hanzo with his bow and arrow were equipped to carry out their father's deeds on whoever had crossed him.

Of course, like any large crime organization, people had some knowledge of it and what went on behind its doors. Everyone in Hanamura knew about Mr. Shimada and his two master ninja sons. Although they were evil criminals, they were sort of local celebrities in their own right. Like movie stars in Hollywood, being a celebrity usually meant you had a crowd of people following you around every single street corner even if you preferred they leave you alone.

Hanzo didn't want an involuntary entourage following his every step, and as a result, he spent most of his time within the walls of the Shimada estate, only venturing outside to complete another of his father's dirty tasks. He was always very close to his father. He was loyal and unquestioning. He would do anything his father asked of him and do it his father's way in hopes of one day inheriting the family empire. He was the perfect son.

Genji knew the Shimada clan was popular and people wanted to be involved if for nothing more than an autograph from one of the famous ninjas. He took advantage of the star status he was born with in more ways than one and became a bit of a playboy (Blizzard Entertainment 1).

Despite his mobster father's intentions, Genji had little interest in the actions of the Shimada criminal empire. More to the clan's dismay, he was rather open and public with his life for one who is trained in the art of stealth. Genji went to all the huge parties and scored all the girls. If you lived in Hanamura and wanted to have a good time, you probably partied with Genji Shimada.

While all these parties went on Genji's father grew very ill, and because of his aged and compromised immune system, succumbed to his sickness. As a <https://assignbuster.com/overwatch-a-study-of-the-character-genji-shimada-in-this-blizzard-entertainments-online-game/>

result, Hanzo, the Shimada Clan's most skilled assassin, had inherited his father's throne and took control of the empire.

Genji still carried on with life his own way, going against his clan's goals and his brother's wishes. In turn, Hanzo grew increasingly infuriated with Genji's actions, and because Genji usually shrugged off his brother's concerns, the two often argued.

Eventually, Hanzo could no longer tolerate Genji's lifestyle. Wanting his brother to be more directly involved with the Shimada's operations, Hanzo confronted Genji once more. Genji wouldn't comply, and the tension between the brothers grew bitter and dark. Soon after, Hanzo turned violent, and the two became engaged in a life or death showdown. After many of Genji's shurikens had been thrown and an array of Hanzo's arrows had been shot, Genji hung on the verge of death, and Hanzo emerged the victor of the battle (Blizzard Entertainment 1). Hanzo then retreated to inform his clan of Genji's defeat.

Unbeknownst to Hanzo or Genji, the Shimada Clan had been under close watch by the world's top international security group, known simply as Overwatch.

After Hanzo had left his brother to die, Overwatch agents retrieved the critically wounded Genji and brought him to their nearest base of operations. There, he was cared for by Overwatch's leading doctor, Angela Ziegler (Blizzard Entertainment 1) known to Overwatch as her codename: "Mercy."

The Swiss medic was globally renowned for her groundbreaking medical work. If no other doctor could save Genji, Mercy was up for the challenge.  
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With many of Genji's vital organs badly damaged and his body covered in deep wounds, Mercy resorted to an untested, experimental procedure. She performed cyberization surgery in order to save the dying ninja. Though very risky, the surgery was a success, and Genji was transformed into a half human, half robotic cyborg.

With the exception of a removable face mask, Genji's entire exterior was replaced with glossy white armor plating, green LEDs (Mercy most likely chose green because Genji had always put lime dye in his hair), and robotic fibers. His hands and feet were amputated and robotic limbs took their place. Many of his damaged organs were removed and replaced with computers and machines that helped his new cybernetic body function properly. Even with all this internal technology, he still had a beating heart within his chest and a human brain inside his head. The surgery had also taken away his ability to taste. Though he could still eat despite it no longer being biologically necessary.

After Genji got the hang of his new cyborg body and the new sword that Overwatch had forged him, he joined the Overwatch Strike Force. Overwatch had thought that Genji would be an asset in their missions against the Shimada Clan. Genji angrily wished to get back at his brother, and over a short period of time, Genji took part in many missions directed at halting the Shimada's operations.

Spitefully wanting to do upon his brother what his brother had nearly done upon him, Genji lead a final mission against the Shimada, with Overwatch's ultimate goal being to bring down the empire once and for all. Genji

however, set off on the mission with a personal goal. He only wanted to go back to his former Hanamura home in order to confront Hanzo, and get even. Genji knew Hanzo believed him to be dead, and as a result his appearance would be unexpected.

Along with a squad of Overwatch agents, Genji successfully infiltrated the Shimada estate. Unfortunately, of every Shimada goon that Genji faced at Hanamura, his brother was not among them.

Unaware of his incoming brother, Hanzo had left the estate shortly before the infiltration began. The guilt and depression that stemmed from the thought that Genji had been killed at his own hands had driven him to leave the Shimada clan out of regret for his brother's murder and resentment of himself for being so ruthless.

Although he never spoke of it, Genji had been suffering from a bit of an existential crisis while he was in Overwatch, which spiked after the Hanamura mission was over. Being half man and half machine, he struggled with realising who he really was and what his true purpose in the world actually is. This internal strife would cause him to leave Overwatch in search of answers. He started traveling alone and eventually came across Zenyatta, a young Omnic monk from the Shambali Monastery.

Zenyatta sensed that Genji was troubled, and tried to persuade Genji to follow the path of tranquility. At first, Genji was stubborn and resistant of Zenyatta's requests to mentor him. However, Zenyatta knew he could help Genji find peace and was persistent in his attempts to take the ninja under

his wing. Eventually Genji gave into the monk's words and he began to study under Zenyatta (Blizzard Entertainment 1).

Many years would pass as Genji continued to follow Zenyatta's teachings. Through the monk's mentorship, Genji would finally come to peace with who he is and learn to accept his current place in the world. Part of Zenyatta's Tranquility 101 taught the ninja to have grace for those who had helped him overcome his hurdles, and forgiveness for those who had wronged him. As he continued on his path of enlightenment with his new friend and mentor, Genji would increasingly desire to seek out his brother, and finally confront him after their grueling battle so many years ago.

After doing some research, Genji would discover that Hanzo had been making annual visits to the two brother's former home in Hanamura on the day of Genji's supposed death.

Out of grief, Hanzo had infiltrated the Shimada compound every year in order to secretly mourn his brother at a shrine that the Shimada clan had established within the estate. Knowing this, Genji decided that he would confront Hanzo on his next visit to Hanamura. This time he wouldn't be seeking revenge, but the chance to forgive his former enemy and friend.

The day of Genji's not so true death arrived. That night, Hanzo took down the front guards at the Shimada estate, and made his way inside to Genji's shrine, unaware he was being followed. After setting up some traditional Japanese incense in front of Genji's former sword, the archer began to quarrel with his inner demons. However, shortly after he began his session

he sensed that he was being watched from the shadows. Being a traitor of <https://assignbuster.com/overwatch-a-study-of-the-character-genji-shimada-in-this-blizzard-entertainments-online-game/>

the Shimada Clan, he had seen many assassins try and fail to eliminate him over the years, and he thought that this was just another useless attempt on his life. " You are not the first assassin sent to kill me" the archer stated " and you will not be the last."

Suddenly a small cluster of green lights flickered on above one of the support beams stretched across the ceiling, and the cyborg Genji jumped down to finally face his brother, responding " You are bold to come to Shimada Castle: the den of your enemies."

Hanzo, not recognizing Genji in his cyberized form, retaliated with an arrow. " This was once my home. Did you masters not tell you who I was?"

Genji dodged his brother's arrow with lightning fast reflexes, spitefully saying " I know who you are, Hanzo. I know you come here on the same day every year."

Taken back, Hanzo shot another arrow, only for it to be dodged once again. Another arrow followed. With a bit of deja vu, the two Shimada brothers were engaged in another all out battle.

With a dashing retreat by Genji, the fight moved from the shrine room to a nearby courtyard overlooking the illuminated metropolis of Hanamura. It was an ironically beautiful view to be used as the backdrop of such a violent battle.

Genji had the advantage. His brother had lost track of him and there were many more places to hide outside. With Hanzo unable to pinpoint him

amongst the ornate pillars surrounding the overlook, he stated " I know you  
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tell yourself that your brother disobeyed the clan, and that you had to kill him to maintain order. That it was your duty." The cyberized ninja emerged from the night shadows, and faced Hanzo again.

"It was my duty. And my burden." Hanzo replied. "That does not mean I do not honor him!" he shouted as he unleashed another projectile upon his foe.

The two fought on for a few more melee exchanges before Genji managed to pin his brother against a set of railing, which hung over a fatally tall drop. Nearly breaking the handrail keeping his brother from falling to his doom, Genji shouted "You think you honor your brother Genji with incense offerings? Honor resides in one's actions!"

"You dare to lecture me about honor?" Hanzo said as he threw the cyborg off him. "You are not worthy to say his name!"

At this point in the struggle, both brothers were ready to activate their dragon attacks. Hanzo shouted "Ryu ga waga teki wo kurau!" as he launched his two shining blue Spirit Dragons, only to have Genji deflect them right back at him with his Dragonblade, putting the archer on his knees, weakened.

Knowing that the Shimada were the only ones who could control dragons, Hanzo asked his cyborg opponent for his identity. Blade in hand, Genji dashed forward with unparalleled speed and stopped at a point where if he'd have gone any further, Hanzo's neck would be slashed.

With almost no emotion at all, Hanzo said "Do it then. Kill me."

The cyborg sheathed his sword, replying “ I will not grant you the death you wish for. You still have a purpose in this life, brother.”

Hanzo stood up in disbelief saying “ No. My brother is dead.” His eyes widened as Genji then removed his mask, finally revealing to his brother that years after their first duel, he was still alive (Dragons).

Genji told Hanzo to stop letting himself be consumed by grief, and informed him that he could still pursue a new path and purpose in life and come to terms with his struggles, just as Genji had done thanks to Zenyatta. After his short lecture, he disappeared in a cloud of smoke, leaving Hanzo with the choice to turn his life around and devote his future to restoring his honor or continue grieving himself away because of his past shame (Dragons).

The cyborg ninja known as Genji Shimada is a shining example of turning oneself around. Instead of getting the murderous revenge he had originally dreamt of, he displayed forgiveness. With actions, people can make peace with their demons, and correct their corrupted path. Maybe it could be making up for a small misdeed, or a lifetime’s worth of evil. General Iroh, who once helped the tyrannical Fire Nation topple the Earth Kingdom, later took part in the fight to liberate it. Even the darkest individuals can find light.

After Genji confronted and made peace with both he and Hanzo’s demons, he returned to Zenyatta at the Shambali Monk’s Monastery in Nepal to continue his mentorship (Chu and Montllo 10). As the monk’s brightest pupil, the now 35 year old Genji trains with Zenyatta to both improve his fighting and to become a better monk himself. Although Overwatch has long since

been disbanded, One of the security force’s scientists, Winston, has recently <https://assignbuster.com/overwatch-a-study-of-the-character-genji-shimada-in-this-blizzard-entertainments-online-game/>

issued a worldwide recall of Overwatch agents (Recall). Genji has yet to answer the call, and was last shown writing a letter to Mercy, which is implied by some voice interactions within the game to be romantic. (Chu and Montllo 10).

Will Genji get together with his savior? Will he be joined on his path of enlightenment by his brother? We'll have to wait for more Overwatch shorts, comics, and character interactions to find out.