

SAMURAI AND STEEL

PLAYER'S GUIDE TO KARA-TUR



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TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

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INSPIRATION

Many of the archetypes and concepts in this book are adapted and transformed from *Oriental Adventures*, by Gary Gygax, and the second edition of that book by Shawn Carman and Rich Wulf. Some setting material is adapted from *Kara-Tur*, the *Eastern Realms*, published by TSR.

Additional print references include *The Book of Five Rings* by Miyamoto Musashi, *Red Sorghum* by Mo Yan, and *Wolf Totem* by Jiang Rong.

Film references include films by Akira Kurosawa, Jet Li, Jackie Chan, Michelle Yeoh, and others.

Some artistic liberty was taken with concepts and names that have cultural or historic meaning. This is done in respect, within the spirit of fantasy fiction writing.



INTRODUCTION

Kara-Tur, the mysterious land in the East of Faerun in the Forgotten Realms, is an enigma to Western scholars and adventurers alike. This continent possesses long and storied history of heroes, honorable samurai warriors who served their daimyo masters without fear of death, and of villains and demons they vanquished.

KOZAKURA

One country in the East of Kara-Tur is Kozakura, ruled in name only by the Divine Jade Emperor. In reality, a military Shogun seized power centuries ago and the Emperor is a figurehead. The Shogun elevated the Samurai, soldiers of the empire, to a noble caste, though many corrupt bureaucrats of the imperial family retained their positions. The country has been ruled by a line of Shoguns ever since.

The country is made of four large islands and dozens of smaller ones. Its society is divided into a strict caste system, with the Emperor at the top, followed by the clans of the Samurai caste, then by artisans and farmers who produce necessary goods, then merchants and geisha who merely trade but produce nothing, and at the bottom are the unclean peasants who handle the dead.

The Shogun exerts military power so long as he enjoys the support of powerful feudal Daimyo and their clans of Samurai. The clans are almost constantly mired in conflict, as Samurai turn insults or territorial disputes into reasons for bloody wars. To unite the clans (and suppress dissent against his rule) the Shogun calls on the clans for total war against the neighbouring nations of Koryo and Wa.

Most adventurers come from the Samurai caste. The Samurai include Kensai, unparalleled masters of the sword in the world, and Yojimbo, devoted protectors. All Samurai follow the Code of Bushido, a set of ethics that began as a warrior's code but has now come to embody Kozakuran culture. Those Samurai who have failed in their duties become Ronin, masterless vagabonds with fewer morals.

Many traders from Shou Lung on the mainland bring their customs and magic to Kozakura. Kozakuran Wu Jen and Shukenja imported their theories of the Five Elements from Shou Lung many centuries ago.

Kozakuran religious practice is unlike the pantheon of Western Faerun. Instead of clerics to one deity or another, Shukenja maintain shrines to celestial spirits and the blessed ancestors. Monks pursue enlightenment in monasteries while yamabushi pursue enlightenment alone in the wild. Druids follow a more animistic faith, seeking enlightenment by communing with the spirits of nature. A few rare Warlocks make pacts with their ancestors to avenge their deaths or fulfill their destinies.

Kozakuran spellcasters do not draw a distinction between arcane and divine magic, indeed, all magic comes from the spirits that surround all daily life.

This country is not without its own criminal element. The Yakuza are a brotherhood of thugs that control smuggling and organized crime. More sinister ninja are whispered of in hushed tones, but are usually considered to be mere fables.

Many visitors to Kozakura make a point of visiting a Geisha house for rest and relaxation. The Geisha offer entertainment, companionship, and information.

Finally, what binds the Empire together is Bushido, a warrior's code of honor that has come to embody the spirit of the people.

In Kozakura, Honor is as strong as Steel.



BACKGROUNDS

SAMURAI

Samurai, which means "to serve" are a caste of warriors, which since the rise of the Shogun, became the nobility of the Empire. They have a duty to protect their Daimyo (Lord) of their clan, their vassals, and their honor.

The Samurai follow a code of Bushido, which means "Way of the Warrior." It began as a set of rules for soldiers but since the Shogun elevated the warriors to nobility, Bushido became an idealized philosophy.

Samurai may be benevolent or cruel, merciful or vengeful. They do not overly concern themselves with good or evil, but instead are dedicated to duty and honor. A Samurai receives a stipend from his lord who collects taxes from citizens such as craftsmen and merchants, and the Samurai's place in life is to protect his or her daimyo's interests.



Skills Choose two from:

Animal Handling: Horses are expensive and scarce in the Empire, available only to the feudal daimyos, who ensure that their samurai are trained to ride them for warfare.

Intimidate: Commoners know that a Samurai can dispense justice, while other Samurai know that any insult can result in blades being drawn and blood spilled. Sometimes the unspoken threat is deafening.

History: Samurai can recite their family lineages back through generations, and can recount many great deeds performed by their ancestors.

Persuasion: Preserving face and maintaining self-control means using tactful persuasion. After all, hard-fought gains on the battlefield can be lost through courtly intrigue.

Proficiencies Long sword (or one language if already proficient in long sword from character class). Land vehicles.

Starting Equipment Fine Clothes. Katana (Long sword) and 5 gp. Riding horse, saddle, and feedbag of millet. The sword and horse should not be sold; they are provided to the Samurai by his Daimyo.

FEATURE: FEUDAL OBLIGATION

A Samurai can expect to receive regular support from his Daimyo so long as he is in good standing. The Lord will keep the Samurai in a good lifestyle, pay for ammunition and other standard expenses. A Samurai's Lord will always host the Samurai and his companions as guests.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the table for the Soldier background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for the Samurai's personality Trait.

As for Ideal and Flaw, choose one tenet of Bushido (see sidebar) which the character follows rigidly as an ideal, and one tenet which the character struggles to uphold because of personal failings as a flaw.

A Samurai's bond can be associated with his clan or Daimyo, a forbidden love, or a thirst for violence.

THE CODE OF BUSHIDO

Many warriors and scholars have written the code of Bushido in different forms and with emphasis on different tenets. This is the most commonly known version, though variations exist. It is not a religious code, but a moral one.

Loyalty Accept and follow your Daimyo's orders until death. You may protest by taking your life in the ritual suicide of seppuku.

Courage Do not cling to life. Your life does not belong to you, so death cannot take anything from you. The sword does not hesitate to strike its target, and so neither must you hesitate from danger.

Righteousness Your behaviour must be above reproach and without hypocrisy. Do not seek to evade responsibility. Comply with the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law. Accept death before dishonor.

Benevolence All life is connected, so share your good fortune with others, and it will be returned to you. This is Karma.

Respect Each person and creature and spirit has its own station, whether above, below, or equal to you. Denigrating another, even an enemy, is to rebel against the order of the universe.

Sincerity Speak always with truth, and if you say you will do a thing, it must be done. The sky is true. The earth is true. These things cannot lie. Be true like them.

Honor Do not tolerate any insults to yourself or your clan or daimyo. Defend your good name, or else your face will be covered in filth.

Self-Control Do not show or act on emotion, but rather act with discipline in the name of duty. Emotion is a wild horse which must be stabled.



GEISHA

The Geisha are hosts and entertainers, most often female, sometimes companions, and other times gatherers of information. They pour sake and engage in conversation with Samurai. Their services are necessary to provide an escape from the propriety that a Samurai must project and from the violence that permeates the soldier's life. In a geisha house, a Samurai can be at ease, gamble, drink, show emotion, and small lapses of honor are tolerated. Some geisha houses are operated by the yakuza, and these criminals hatch their plots within.

A girl raised in the confines of a geisha house may yearn for escape to become an adventurer. Few geisha become adventurers, but the ones that do are very resourceful.

Skills Choose two from:

Deception: Geisha learn to only speak only those truths which the listener wants to hear.

Insight: To attend to a client's needs is to understand his unspoken desires.

Performance: Geisha learn to entertain for all strata of society.

Persuasion: The sweet words of a Geisha have swayed history more times than will be known.

Proficiencies One language, one musical instrument, disguise kit.

Starting Equipment One musical instrument, disguise kit, fine clothes, and 10 gp.

FEATURE: MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

An adventuring geisha has friends among her former colleagues and other entertainers. Once per week they provide information about the local criminal, military, or aristocratic activity for free. Information can be gained more frequently, for a small fee.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Entertainer in the *Player's Handbook* to choose Personality Trait, Ideal, Bond and Flaw, customizing them as appropriate for the Geisha character.

RONIN

The legendary Seven Samurai were Ronin, veterans of a war that the empire wanted to forget and whose daimyos had either died or become too poor to support them. These hungry seven took work as mercenaries and defended a village from bandits for the meager price of a bowl of rice. Five of them made the ultimate sacrifice. There is always honor to be found by the honorable.

A Ronin is a masterless samurai. They may have been soldiers fighting for a clan or daimyo that was defeated, or they may have been expelled by their clans for disobedience. A Ronin is unwelcome in most civilized areas, as samurai consider them honorless and peasants are afraid that armed Ronin are little more than bandits. They carry the shame of defeat with them, for they chose not to commit honorable seppuku after whatever failure they suffered. Some Ronin follow the code of Bushido devotedly, hoping to regain their lost honor. Other Ronin are downright scoundrels, living as bandits or working as muscle for gangs. For the most part, Ronin follow bushido as best they can, but recognize that compromises must often be made to survive. They are more realistic about their flaws than other, more idealistic samurai. Most Ronin would not call themselves heroes.

Skills Choose two from:

Athletics: The rugged countryside where some Ronin hide from the law is not suited to the weak.

Intimidate: Ronin who take up banditry carry fearsome reputations.

Perception: A Ronin must keep his wits about him and is always on the lookout for hungrier Ronin.

Survival: With no Daimyo to support them, the masterless samurai must occasionally forage for food.

Proficiencies Long sword (or one language if already proficient in long sword from character class). Gaming set.

Starting Equipment Katana (Long sword), Explorer's pack, Common clothes.

FEATURE: SAFE PASSAGE

Some Ronin engage in banditry while others hunt bandits for bounty. Bandits, for their part, will generally avoid Ronin and try not to antagonize them. Ronin know off-road routes across the countryside that will avoid both magistrate patrols and bandit patrols, though these routes are not always the fastest or easiest terrain.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

To choose a personality trait, use the table for the Soldier in the *Player's Handbook*, customizing as appropriate for the Ronin character.

As for Ideal and Flaw, choose one tenet of Bushido which the Ronin hopes will restore his lost honor as an Ideal and another tenet which he fails to uphold as a Flaw.

A Ronin's Bond is likely associated with basic survival, avenging a wrong, or restoring his lost honor.



DOWNFALL

Each Ronin has lost the feudal support of a clan Daimyo, often for some shameful act or crime. Choose a personal failing or roll randomly from the list of suggested downfalls.

d8 Downfall

1 My clan was dissolved by imperial decree for rebelling against the Shogun.

2 My teacher was murdered and my Daimyo refused to allow me to pursue vengeance, so I left his service.

3 My Daimyo became too poor to support his Samurai, so I took up banditry to be able to eat.

4 My Daimyo was corrupt and I could not follow him and maintain my honor.

5 I disobeyed my Daimyo's order to kill innocent peasants who supplied our wartime enemies.

6 I fled cravenly from a losing battle and was too ashamed to return to my clan.

7 My Daimyo died without an heir and our clan's territory was seized by rivals.

8 My criminal activities became exposed and I fled justice. The Yakuza have since offered me employment.

IMPERIAL EUNUCH

The position of imperial eunuch is an honored one, and the requirements for admission are high. Applicants are selected young and receive the best education. Nevertheless, many samurai daimyo see imperial eunuchs as loathsome schemers and self-serving meddlers.

The tradition of castration did not originate in Kozakura, but was practiced for centuries in Shou Lung before being imported by the Shogun. During a rebellion, an alliance of noble clans that make up imperial bureaucracy attempted to overthrow the Shogun and restore power to the Emperor (or at least to wield influence through him). This rebellion was unsuccessful but executing or exiling a large portion of the bureaucracy posed a problem. The bureaucrats had knowledge that was necessary for the functioning of the Empire, and their loss would have caused more chaos. The compromise was to castrate those bureaucrats who had committed treason but proved necessary to keep alive. Corrupt eunuchs could no longer have sons and daughters to patronize, and can trusted to serve the needs of the Empire first, or that is the expectation.

Imperial eunuchs serve as judges, ambassadors, tax collectors, land surveyors, and other positions in the imperial bureaucracy. Many of these positions require travel with armed escort across the empire and to adventures beyond.

Skills Choose two from:

History: Eunuchs are educated in the history and glory of the Divine Jade Emperor.

Investigation: Some eunuch serve as judges in courts of law.

Nature: The Empire possesses advanced knowledge of botany and biology and knowledge of agriculture is necessary to a tax collector.

Sleight of Hand: Quick fingers can palm a bribe or embezzle a taxpayer's coin.

Proficiencies Choose any two languages. Calligraphy set.

Starting Equipment Wax seal bearing the eunuch's position. Calligraphy Set. Scholar's pack. Fine Clothes. 15 gold pieces.

FEATURE: SCENT OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Being mired in the corrupt bureaucracy of the Empire, an Imperial Eunuch learns to subtly offer bribes to officials to escape justice on minor offenses, which are often accepted. The offers are so subtle so as to avoid accusations of impropriety. Penalties for simple assault, disobeying guards, refusing searches, evading taxes, and the like may be avoided.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Noble in the *Player's Handbook* to determine personality traits, customizing as appropriate for the Imperial Eunuch character.

An Imperial Eunuch's bonds are related to whether or not he is corrupt. Some Eunuchs live to strengthen the empire, others work to enrich themselves with bribes and to expand their influence.



YAKUZA KOHAI

The Yakuza are thugs, smugglers, blackmailers, thieves, and proprietors of opium dens, geisha houses, brothels, and gambling dens.

Their organization was originally formed to protect low-class peddlers and merchants. Merchants hired muscle during festivals to protect their stalls and then to force competing merchants out of business. From there, protection rackets, and control of the vice trade came naturally. Their most valuable trade, however, is in secrets.

Kohai means "junior" in the common tongue, and they are the lowest rank of associates, subordinate to the Senpai and the Oyabun. The Yakuza have formed their own clans and they are as loyal as they are unforgiving. Failure is punished with cutting off a finger, betrayal is always met with death. Any insults or disrespect are usually met with violence. They do not follow Bushido, but they have their own sense of honor among thieves. Infighting between Yakuza clans is treacherous and deadly.

The practice of young Yakuza Kohai tattooing themselves to show their allegiance is gaining popularity.

Skills Intimidation, plus choose one from:

Deception. The Yakuza deceive without honor to outsiders, but never to their superiors.

Insight. One liar recognizes another.

Sleight of Hand. Palming a weapon or stealing an important document

Proficiencies Gaming set. Choose one other tool or kit appropriate to Criminal Enterprise.

Starting Equipment Common Clothes. One tool or kit appropriate to Criminal Enterprise. Dagger, hidden in the sleeve. 10 gold pieces.

FEATURE: BLACK MARKET DEALINGS

A Yakuza Kohai can use his contacts among smugglers and other businesses of ill repute to access black market goods. He may purchase goods or services for his own use at 75% of the normal cost, though the Dungeon Master may have his contacts dry up for a time if his frequent purchases risk exposing them.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Criminal in the *Player's Handbook* to choose personality trait, ideal, bond, and flaw, customizing as appropriate for the Yakuza Kohai. A common bond is professing loyalty to one's clan. A common flaw is willingness to do anything to advance, even secretly betraying one's clan superiors.

CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE

Each Yakuza Kohai has an area of criminal expertise. Roll on the table below or choose one:

d8 Criminal Enterprise

- 1 Smuggling.
- 2 Common Muscle.
- 3 Forgery.
- 4 Information gathering.
- 5 Geisha house.
- 6 Opium den.
- 7 Gambling den.
- 8 "Legitimate" business.



PHYSICIAN

Once upon a time in Shou Lung, the first Emperor expelled his physicians that they might seek the elixir of life to provide him with immortality. Fearful of returning without results, many physicians settled in Kozakura, bringing with them a treasure trove of medical knowledge.



Medicine in Kara-Tur has been developed over millennia and its physicians possess learning that is far beyond the barbers and folk healers of western Faerun.

In eastern tradition, the five elements of earth, fire, water, wood, and metal govern the universe. Physicians interpret these elements not as static types of matter, but of states in transition. The five elements represent the five major organs: spleen, liver, heart, lung, and kidney. The flow from one element to the next is Ki. Physicians manipulate this Ki to heal the body.

Physicians in Kozakura are highly respected and provide their services to all who seek them, having taken a vow to treat all patients equally. Medicine is taught in organized schools with textbooks and rigorous examinations. These schools have become centers for learning and free thought. Physicians are more likely to see Samurai and peasants as equals, because they all bleed the same. In this war-torn land where magical healing exists, the magic is often monopolized by the Daimyo and his Samurai following a battle. It falls to the physician to treat the conscripts and civilians who fall victim to endless conflict.

Because physicians see the horrors of war from this perspective, many of them become politically active, encouraging peasantry to refuse their Daimyo's call to fight or even fomenting rebellions. These actions can make doctors into outlaws, though most magistrates will not have a skilled healer arrested without hard evidence. Many physicians take up adventuring to bring their healing to remote areas, to hide from the law, or to inspire resistance around the country.

Skills A physician gains proficiency in the Medicine skill and one other skill chosen from:

Animal Handling: Many physicians practice veterinary medicine as well.

Arcana: The teachings of the five elements extends to astrology and magic.

Nature: Knowledge of botany and poisons are necessary to the healer's arts.

Persuasion: Many physicians try to help their patients proactively by convincing others to avoid violence.

Proficiencies Gain proficiency with the Herbalism kit and one language.

Starting Equipment Healer's kit which contains acupuncture needles, Herbalism kit, common clothes, 10 gold pieces.

FEATURE: ACUPUNCTURE TECHNIQUES

A Physician may resuscitate an unconscious ally by applying acupuncture techniques for one minute, rather than waiting the standard 1d4 hours. This ability consumes one use of a healer's kit and the revived character awakens with one hit point.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Folk Hero in the *Player's Handbook* to determine Ideal, Bond, and Flaw, modifying as appropriate for the Physician character.

OTHER BACKGROUNDS IN KOZAKURA

Heroes of the Empire come from many backgrounds:

Acolyte. Many monasteries and temples dot the land, and not all members are ordained. Non-ordained martial protectors of monasteries are called Sohei.

Charlatan. Charlatans are skilled infiltrators, and may call themselves ninja, but never in public.

Criminal. Not all criminals are part of the Yakuza, but that organization will usually demand tribute from any independent it catches.

Entertainer. Music and Kabuki theatre are highly valued in Kara-Tur in peacetime, as mastering a difficult art is an honorable pursuit.

Folk Hero. When the Samurai clans go to war against one another, heroes arise from among the peasantry to protect the people.

Guild Artisan. Craftsmen who pursue perfection are respected, moreso than merchants who do not produce anything. Musashi wrote: "Master one thing to know ten thousand things."

Hermit. Seekers of the Way of Enlightenment undergo isolation to achieve inner peace. Some wise seekers become teachers and establish monasteries.

Noble. Before the rise of the Samurai, clans of aristocrats intermarried with imperial relatives and rose to positions of power. Their influence is diminished in the Shogun's court, but they wield it more subtly.

Outlander. Some mountain clans and tribes on the outlying islands do not practice the customs of civilized Kozakura. They interact with civilization when they take up banditry.

Sage. Kara-Tur is a highly literate culture. Teachers and scholars are revered. Sages are called Sensei.

Sailor. As an archipelago nation, Kozakura has a long tradition of seafaring. Its many port towns are rowdy with sailors waiting to find work.

Soldier. The samurai clans conscript their peasant vassals to fight as soldiers, called Bushi, and many peasants remain in this role if their farms were burned in war.

Urchin. Centuries of inter-clan warfare have left many cities swarming with refugees and the destitute.

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CLASS ARCHETYPES

BARBARIAN PATH

RIDER OF THE GOLDEN HORDE

The barbarian hordes that traverse the vast steppes have threatened Kara-Tur for centuries. Across the Great Wall from the Shou Empire, the Tuigan Horde are masters of horsemanship. The riders lack sophistication and refinement, and they fly into a rage instead of honorably fighting with composure. Surprisingly, their rage conceals a highly tactical mind that has allowed them to conquer the steppes. The Empire will do well to not underestimate the Horde's tactical intelligence because of their uncouth customs.

Riders are rare in Kozakura, but some do come to find work as mercenaries. They often end up in the employ of the Yakuza or a wealthy but shameless Daimyo.

The Golden Horde is made of Soldiers and Outlanders, though some exiles are of a Criminal bent. Their Acolytes worship a great sky-spirit that is embodied in the wolf.



At third level, a Rider gains proficiency with Animal Handling if he doesn't have it, or another Barbarian skill if he does. A rider is able to mount and descend from a mount more quickly, using only 5 feet of movement to do so.

KHAN'S TACTICS

During a Rage, a Rider of the Golden Horde may perform the following tactical maneuvers. These maneuvers may be performed while mounted or on foot.

•**Unpredictable Step.** A Rider may Disengage as a Bonus action.

•**Thunderous Charge.** The sight of the Golden Horde charging can shake a foe and knock him off his feet. Whenever a Rider moves at least 20 feet towards his target, he may as a Bonus action shout fear into his heart. The victim must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 + Proficiency + Charisma bonus) or be knocked prone.

•**Hind Leg Kick.** A horse is most hostile when surrounded, stomping and kicking in front and behind. Riders of the Horde copy this behavior. When a Rider is adjacent to at least two hostile creatures, he may make a kick attack as a Bonus action. The attack deals 1d4 damage and applies the Rider's strength bonus. The Rider may not take the kick attack and the Attack action against the same foe in the same round.

•**My Steed Is My Sword.** While mounted on a warhorse, a Rider may take a Bonus action to command the mount to make a hoof attack. It makes this attack on its next initiative. Add the Rider's proficiency bonus to the attack roll.

The dungeon master may allow other creatures to be used as mounts for the purpose of this attack. Some barbarian legends tell of terrifying wyvern-riders that united the tribes.

RAGE ACROSS THE STEPPES

Starting at 7th level, the Rider and his mount ignore the movement penalty of difficult terrain while he is raging.

DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE

Starting at 10th level, you may take a swig of an alcoholic beverage to dull your senses towards pain and fuel your rage. Spend an action to take a quick drink and spend short rest hit dice to recover hit points. You may spend no more than four hit dice this way. This ability can only be used once before finishing a long rest. If you are raging while you use this ability, your rage will not end this round for not having attacked an enemy.

Riders of the Golden Horde prefer to drink airag, an intoxicating beverage of fermented horse milk.

FREE AS THE WOLF SPIRIT

Beginning at 14th level, when raging, a Rider may take a Bonus action to gain the benefit of a *Freedom of Movement* spell, for you and himself and mount for the remaining duration of the current rage. No concentration is required. During this effect, spells and magical effects cannot reduce their speed nor cause them to be paralyzed or restrained. They may spend 5 feet of movement to escape restraints or a grapple.

BARD COLLEGE

YAKUZA SENPAI

The Yakuza are a brotherhood of organized crime lords, information gatherers, and thugs. They enjoy living an opulent life surrounded by luxury and spinning tales of their fearsomeness and magnanimity, while maintaining a veneer of respectability. They also like using big words.

While the Yakuza as an organization employ many types of criminals, the bard College of the Yakuza Senpai represents the most promising members being groomed for leadership. Senpai means "older brother" and are a rank above the Kohai.

Bards possess many traits that the Yakuza desire: flexibility, leadership, charisma, and they trade in magical secrets. Bards can spread propaganda and inflate the Yakuza's reputation. The Yakuza are known for their fierce loyalty and oaths of secrecy to their brotherhood; mistakes are punished by cutting off a finger, and traitors are punished with a painful death.

Yakuza recruit bards from the Yakuza, Charlatan, Geisha, or Entertainer backgrounds. A few disgraced Ronin take employment as muscle and rise through the ranks, though these are rare, as even Ronin try to maintain a sense of station above these low-lives.

When this college is selected, the Yakuza gains the following abilities: Information Gatherer, Stolen Secrets, and Opportunity And Disaster Are The Same Character.

INFORMATION GATHERER

Yakuza gain proficiency in one skill chosen from Intimidation, Investigation, Stealth, and Deception. If he already has proficiency with each of these skills, he may gain Expertise in one of them. He gains proficiency with a gaming set if he does not have it.

STOLEN SECRETS

The Yakuza trade in stolen secrets. A Yakuza may choose one cantrip from any class and add it to his spell list.

OPPORTUNITY AND DISASTER ARE THE SAME CHARACTER

In the written script of the Empire, "opportunity" and "disaster" are the same character, and the Yakuza always try to turn one into the other. Any Inspiration die that is given to an ally that is used to augment an attack of opportunity also adds to the damage roll. An ally may spend an inspiration die when targeted with an attack of opportunity to add to its AC against the attack and to subtract from the damage if the attack hits.



UNCANNY DODGE

A yakuza learns to channel his ki to anticipate and sidestep attacks. From 6th level, when an enemy hits the Senpai with a damaging attack, he may take a Reaction to reduce the damage by half.

SHOGUN ASSASSIN

Yakuza strike with precision rather than overcoming their opponents with brute force. Starting at 6th level, the Yakuza has Advantage on one melee attack roll made each round.

THE BIG BOSS

Yakuza oyabun (bosses) rest while their underlings do the heavy fighting for them. Starting at 14th level, a Senpai can spend an Action to rest and spend hit dice to recover hit points. You may spend no more than four of your hit dice this way. You may perform this action once before completing a long rest.

CLERIC DOMAIN

SHUKENJA

The Shukenja are holy men and women who maintain shrines to the spirits and mediate between the human and spirit worlds. They meditate, revere nature and the spirits around them that embody all things and venerate the ancestors. Plants, rocks, trees, the sun, gardens: all things have spirits. Their beliefs are mysterious and taught from master to student rather than in a single book of scripture, and rituals vary from one area to the next.

While they resemble the yamabushi healers, the shukenja is less isolated, taking an active role in a community. Their role in the community is to perform marriages, bless a village's crops, and bless couples wishing to have children. They perform rituals of purification for the villages closest to them and practice kindness and mercy. They mediate between the spirits of the ancestors and nature, and the human world. Shrines are not dedicated to any one spirit or god. Each shrine contains three elements which represent the divinity of the Emperor; the sword, the mirror, and the precious stone.

Shukenja lead lives of purity, simplicity, cleanliness, reverence, and veneration of nature's beauty. They are not dogmatic, preferring to lead pure lives as an example to others.

Shukenja commonly come from the Acolyte, Hermit, and Urchin backgrounds.



A Shukenja gains proficiency with a calligraphy set (for inscribing holy scrolls which are displayed for protection). A Shukenja's holy symbol is an unrolled scroll with an incantation written on it. She prays for spells at dawn.

DOMAIN SPELLS

Add these Domain spells to the Shukenja's prepared cleric spells.

1st: Shield, Protection from Evil/Good

3rd: Spike Growth, Continual Flame

5th: Magic Circle, Fireball

7th: Banishment, Conjure Minor Elementals

9th: Commune, Cone of Cold

WARD AGAINST EVIL

A Shukenja can focus her ki to create a ward against evil spirits. She may cast *Protection from Evil and Good* without expending a spell slot. She may do this a number of times equal to her wisdom modifier (minimum one) before completing a long rest.

TURN ASIDE THE ELEMENTS

Starting at 2nd level, a shukenja can turn aside from the flow of Earth, Water, Fire, Metal, and Wood. She may expend her Channel Divinity to turn Elementals, Plant creatures, or Constructs made primarily of stone or metal. Use the same rules as Turning Undead.

PURIFY THE PROFANE

A Shukenja meditates to create an area of purification. From 6th level, he may spend his Channel Divinity to ward an area from malevolent spirits. When he casts an abjuration spell of 1st level or higher, he may expend his Channel Divinity immediately to regain the spell slot.

PURE STRIKE

Some spirits cannot be satisfied and must be banished through more forceful means. At eighth level, a Shukenja adds 1d8 radiant damage to all weapon attacks. The damage bonus increases to 2d8 at 17th level.

MEDITATIVE MIND

At 17th level a Shukenja's meditative state of mind permanently grants him protection from spells. He has advantage on all saving throws against spells.

DRUID CIRCLE

CIRCLE OF KITSUNE'S BLESSING

The Kitsune are a race of wily fox spirits that can shapeshift into human form. They occasionally fall in love with humans and choose to live among them, hiding their true natures but bringing blessing on their human households. Some druids who show special kindness to animals (or a good-natured reaction to a Kitsune's tricks) receive a blessing from the Kitsune, and learn to take a special form of a spiritual fox that can cast spells. This druid circle is not especially organized, as so few exist each generation. Like the Kitsune who bless them, they are curious and seek out the companionship of others. They commonly come from the Charlatan (as foxes like to play tricks), Outlander, or Hermit background.

KITSUNE'S TRANSFORMATION

The spirit of the fox lets the druid in on a secret. Starting at 2nd level, as an Action the Druid may spend one use of Wild Shape to transform into a Fox Spirit which lasts for one hour.

She may cast Druid spells in this form, but ALL other racial and class abilities are suppressed. The druid may speak, but only with truncated words, as Kitsune cannot pronounce full words (this should be roleplayed).

The fox spirit appears as a normal fox, or it may sparkle in the light. It may have one tail or up to nine, but always an odd number.



FOX SPIRIT

Small fey

Armor Class 12 + Proficiency Bonus

Hit Points Equal to three times Druid level

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	*	*	*

Damage Resistances Resistance to nonmagical weapon attacks.

Senses passive Perception as Druid. Darkvision 60ft.

Languages As druid, plus the language of foxes.

Quickness Advantage on Dexterity saving throws

Cuteness Advantage on Charisma saving throws.

Mental ability scores As druid.

Actions

Bite. Melee Spell Attack: Wisdom Bonus + Proficiency to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 1d6 + Wisdom Bonus piercing damage. Damage increases by 1d6 at 5th, 11th, and 17th druid levels. Damaged targets must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC= spell save DC) or be knocked prone. Attacks of opportunity are taken with this attack.

Spellcasting. A druid may cast Druid spells in this form. Somantic components may be performed with paws, waive inexpensive material components. A small pouch appears around her neck that acts as a spellcasting focus.

Revert to Normal Form. A druid may revert to its normal form as an action.

SPIRITED AWAY

The Kitsune teaches the druid to cut her spirit free from its invisible tether to the earth. Starting at 10th level, the fox spirit form gains a fly speed of 30'.

A FOX KNOWS MANY THINGS

A fox is a master trickster and isn't easily tricked. At 14th level, a Druid's Wisdom score increases by 2 in fox spirit form. This ability may raise Wisdom to a maximum of 22.

FIGHTER ARCHETYPE

KENSAI

A Kensai is called a "sword saint" and is spiritually dedicated to the lessons one learns from the martial arts, especially the art of swordplay. They are philosopher-warriors and revere the teachings of the Book of Five Rings by the master Miyamoto Musashi. Many Kensai are motivated to travel the Empire, seeking out other masters of the sword to defeat them in a duel of honor. Duels are typically fought unarmed, for to wear armor is to lack confidence in one's abilities; Musashi teaches that the Kensai who lacks confidence will always lose to the one who possesses it.

Many Kensai in Kozakura aspire to be admitted to the Light-Water-Sparkling school.

Most Kensai practice their art with the sword, though some Kensai-Monks blend hand-to-hand techniques with swordplay and eschew armor altogether.

Kensai are most often from the Samurai, Ronin, Folk Hero, or Hermit backgrounds.

When this archetype is selected, a Kensai gains two abilities, The Great Wave Off Kanagawa, and Masamune.



THE GREAT WAVE OFF KANAGAWA

A Kensai can draw on the inner reserves of Ki and focus it into a single strike with the power of a crashing wave. A Kensai gains four Ki points. A ki point may be spent to maximize the result of one damage die on a weapon attack, once per round. This point may be spent after damage is rolled, but before it is applied.

The Kensai recovers all ki points when meditating during a short or long rest. They are interchangeable and stack with other sources of Ki points, such as from the Monk class.

MASAMUNE BLADE

A Kensai gains proficiency with smith's tools if he does not already have it. He may use the techniques of the smith Masamune to craft an exquisite weapon, paying the weapon's normal cost in materials and working during downtime.

This weapon is blessed by the ancestors and considered a magical weapon when wielded by the Kensai. The ancestors will only bless one such weapon unless the first weapon is destroyed and the Kensai completes a ritual of atonement and crafts a new one.

FEARLESS

Musashi teaches that the way of the warrior is resolute acceptance of death. At 7th level, a Kensai has advantage on saving throws against being Frightened.

The Kensai adds one ki point to his maximum.

HATTORI HANZO BLADE

At 10th level a Kensai may pray to dedicate only one weapon he owns to her ancestor's memory and it will be blessed by Hattori Hanzo, the legendary master smith. The Dungeon Master selects one magical weapon property from the Dungeon Master's Guide or from other magical weapons available in her campaign, and imparts this property to the weapon. It should be superior in quality to a magical weapon already possessed by the Kensai. If the weapon is lost a Kensai will go to any lengths to retrieve it. If it is destroyed, he may complete a great quest of the Dungeon Master's devising to ask Hattori Hanzo to bless another weapon. A Kensai cannot otherwise receive a second weapon this way.

The Kensai adds one ki point to his maximum.

BLIND SWORDSMAN ZATOICHI

Musashi teaches that the swordsman must learn to perceive that which the eye cannot see. Starting at 15th level, a Kensai can take an Action to focus and spend one Ki point to gain Truesight out to a distance of 30 feet. This effect lasts for one minute.

The Kensai adds one Ki point to his maximum.



FIGHTER ARCHETYPE

IRON DRAGON SCHOOL

In a land where both monks and fighters study martial arts, the distinction between them is this: monks practice martial arts to wage peace while fighters train in them to wage war. The Iron Dragon School does the latter.

Once upon a time in Shou Lung, a forgotten master contemplated the transitions between these elements and converted his own living flesh to something like metal. His techniques were coveted by warlords and eventually learned by an unscrupulous disciple named Yim who went across the sea to Kozakura and spread these teachings to whoever paid his price.

Since then, the forgotten master's spiritual teachings have been debased to train soldiers for mere warfare, instead of furthering knowledge and enlightenment. Teachers of the Iron Dragon school became very rich and their main temple is adorned with gem-encrusted iron statues.

The Iron Dragon school usually admits Samurai, Nobles, and Criminals to study its secret techniques, and some Yakuza have infiltrated the school as well. The competition between the Iron Dragon and other schools had led to open warfare in the past, and may again soon.

INVINCIBLE ARMOR TECHNIQUE

The Iron Dragon's intense muscle tone provides protection against blows. The flesh becomes as hard as metal.

His armor class when not wearing armor is equal to 10 + Constitution modifier + Dexterity modifier. This does not stack with other Unarmored Defense abilities, such as from the Monk or Barbarian class.

The Iron Dragon's subtracts his proficiency bonus from all incoming sources of damage. This ability does not stack with similar damage-reduction abilities, such as the Heavy Armor Mastery feat or with resistance. In the situation that a character has multiple abilities to reduce damage, apply the ability which grants the greater effect.

IRON STAGGER

The Iron Dragon can strike an enemy's legs and make them feel supernaturally heavy. At 7th level, when the Iron Dragon Fighter hits an enemy with a melee weapon attack, the enemy's speed is reduced by half until the end of the Fighter's next turn or until she moves from her position. This effect does not stack with itself.

IRON MONKEY

The Iron Monkey technique is used to reorient the flow of Ki around vital organs to avoid hits to these critical areas. At 10th level, The Iron Dragon may take a Reaction to convert an incoming critical hit into a normal hit.

BLADE SHATTERS ON ANVIL

The Iron Dragon hardens his flesh to become as hard as an anvil. At 15th level, the Iron Dragon may make a Reaction when damaged with a nonmagical melee weapon attack to shatter the weapon. The attacker may make a Strength saving throw (DC = 8 + Constitution modifier + Proficiency bonus) to prevent this.



MONK TRADITION

WAY OF THE DRUNKEN BOXER

Monks train a lifetime to practice discipline and restraint, but The Way of the Drunken Boxer teaches the monk to drink to excess and throw restraint to the wind. It is a tradition which is looked down upon by other schools of martial arts, though they cannot deny its power. Strong drink can dull the sense of pain and increase fluidity and bravery, but it can also destroy the spirit from within.

The Drunken Fist beverage of choice is baizu, which is fermented rice and sorghum, aged in terracotta barrels. It can be acquired for any price, from a few coppers for disgusting rotgut, to hundreds of gold pieces for a century-aged distillation. In a pinch, they will even drink lantern oil. Monks from this tradition normally carry baizu in a flask tied around their neck (interacting with the flask is part of the Bonus action of drinking, and requires one free hand).

Drunken fist boxing is not accepted in many monasteries, instead being taught by wandering masters who find their students among temple outcasts and drinking buddies. They commonly come from the Urchin, Geisha, or Folk Hero backgrounds.

A drunken boxer gains proficiency with Brewer's tools.

COME DRINK WITH ME

Starting at 3rd level, intoxicating beverages have a pain dulling effect on you, but sap your ability to draw on the inner reserves of ki. In one fluid motion, the Drunken Boxer makes an unarmed strike attack and takes a drink from a flask. The alcohol grants temporary hit points equal to his Monk level plus his Wisdom modifier.

When you have zero ki points, you are considered *falling down drunk* and unlock the power of the drunken fist! You remain so intoxicated until you recover ki points.

When you are *falling down drunk*, your breath becomes dangerously flammable and you learn a party trick to ignite it with a tiny spark from the snap of your fingers to impress your friends. You may cast Burning Hands, and Wisdom is your casting ability for it. You may cast this spell once before completing a short rest.

This replaces any normal penalty associated with being intoxicated.

HOLD MY DRINK I'VE GOT THIS

The drunken boxer possesses the supreme confidence of the drunkard. Starting at 7th level, he adds half of his proficiency bonus to all ability checks which would not otherwise add the proficiency bonus.

When a drunken boxer is *falling down drunk*, he adds his proficiency bonus an additional time to Dexterity and Strength saving throws.

HALF A LOAF OF KUNG FU

Nothing goes better with a hard drink than greasy food; it sobers the Drunken Boxer up enough to start drinking again. Starting at 11th level, as an Action a drunken boxer can take a bite of food to spend up to four hit dice to restore hit points as if he were taking a short rest. This action can only be taken once before finishing a long rest.

If the monk was *falling down drunk* before using this ability, he regains 2 ki points and is no longer drunk.

THE RETURN OF THE DRUNKEN MASTER

Starting at 14th level, when you are attacked, as a Reaction you may impose Disadvantage on the attack roll, as you hilariously slip below the enemy's blow.

If you are also *falling down drunk* and you use this ability, you gain resistance to the damage of the incoming attack.



MONK TRADITION

EASTERN SNAKE STYLE

Many martial arts styles emulate the movements of animals. This style mimics the movements of the snake. It learns to constrict like a boa and poison like a viper.

Monks who study the Eastern Snake Style believe in spiritual purity through meditation and physical training. Their teachings require the monk to avoid the temptation to use their techniques for unnecessary violence. Combat should be avoided through stealth whenever possible. But when violence is required, hostile enemies should be subdued quickly from a hidden position.

They hold the duality between poison as a natural substance produced by life which grants death as representative of the dual nature of martial arts. Snakes do not kill for pleasure or revel in violence, it is not in their nature.

The Eastern Snake Style favors quick strikes to vital areas, using flurries of blows to quickly incapacitate an enemy. It favors piercing weapons, such as daggers and spears, as these items resemble a viper's fangs.

This tradition is respected in many monasteries where Acolytes and Hermits study. Some unscrupulous Charlatans infiltrate these monasteries to learn the Snake Style techniques to become skilled assassins.



SNAKE IN MONKEY'S SHADOW

The Snake Monk emulates the constricting boa snakes of the jungles. She has Advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks to grapple opponents. She can also slither out of the restrained or grappled conditions by spending a Ki point, without requiring an action or an ability check.

When the Snake Monk hits an opponent with both attacks from the Flurry of Blows ability, she may attempt to grapple that opponent without requiring an action.

THE FIVE DEADLY VENOMS

At 7th level, the Snake Monk learns to disrupt the flow of Ki in a target in the same way as a viper's poison. When you deal damage with a piercing weapon attack using the Attack action, you may as a Bonus action affect the target with this technique. The target suffers 5d8 poison damage with a Constitution saving throw for half damage (DC = 8 + Proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier). Targets that fail the save gain the Poisoned condition for one minute. This ability may be used once before completing a long rest.

SNAKE IN EAGLE'S SHADOW

Starting at 11th level, the Snake Monk emulates the massive constricting snakes of the deep jungles. Targets grappled by the Snake Monk are also restrained.

THE SORCERER AND THE WHITE SNAKE

Serpents are related to the legendary dragons and Snake Monks jealously guard the secrets taught to them by these revered creatures. Starting at 14th level, she may spend 3 Ki points to cast *Fly* on herself without material components.

PALADIN OATH

OATH OF PROTECTION

The sacred Oath of Protection is sworn by a Paladin who is willing to sacrifice his life to defend his charge from all harm. As opposed to other paladins who protect laws, citizens, abstract ideals, nature, or their country, this oath focuses on protecting specific individuals or groups.

A Samurai or Ronin Paladin who swears the Oath of protection is called a Yojimbo. An Acolyte or Hermit paladin who swears an Oath to protect a monastery is called a Sohei. Paladins of other backgrounds, such as Folk hero or Soldier, devote themselves to protecting their villages or their adventuring companions. A few Paladins who swear this Oath come from Entertainer, Charlatan, or Geisha backgrounds, to provide discreet protection without drawing attention to their role.

TENETS OF DEVOTION

The oath of protection demands the following virtues:

Protection: Ward your charge from all harm.

Honor: Do not allow your protected charge to fall while you still draw breath. If your charge dies under your protection, then you should take your own life in shame. This is called Seppuku.

Responsibility: Protection comes not only in combat, but in taking responsibility for one's charge, like a parent who works a farm without any promise that the land will be prosperous. Your charge should be warm when you are cold and fed when you are hungry. This too is bravery.

Humility: Do not seek glory for yourself. Your life is not your own. Do not demand gratitude for your service. You serve your charge, he does not serve you.

OATH SPELLS

Add these spells to your Paladin spells known.

3rd : Sanctuary, Heroism

5th: Calm Emotions, Warding Bond

9th: Slow, Magic Circle

15th: Death Ward, Stoneskin

17th: Wall of Stone, Raise Dead

LONE WOLF AND CUB

A Yojimbo may spend a Bonus action and expend his Channel Divinity to mark a friendly target as his protected charge. For the next minute, whenever the charge suffers hit point damage, the Yojimbo may transfer the full (not partial) amount of that damage to himself without requiring any action.

FURY OF THE SOHEI

As an Action, a Yojimbo may expend his Channel Divinity to focus his ki and imbue himself with the fury of the sohei. For the next minute, he may reroll one failed weapon attack roll each round.

AURA OF THE SEVEN SAMURAI

Legends tell of seven ronin samurai who defended a poor village from hungry bandits, and five of these samurai paid the ultimate price. Yojimbo draw inspiration from their sacrifice and vow to protect their charges to the end.

Starting at 7th level, the Aura of the Seven Samurai protects the Yojimbo's allies. He may apply his Lay on Hands with a range of 30'.

Whenever an ally within the aura falls unconscious, the Yojimbo may take a Reaction to apply Lay on Hands. He may spend exactly 7 points of healing to restore only 7 hit points in this way. Note that the ally should be prone from falling unconscious.

TO MOVE A MOUNTAIN, CARRY SMALL STONES

To protect one's charge, a Yojimbo must defeat untold numbers of enemies. Beginning from 15th level, whenever he knocks an enemy unconscious or kills it with an attack while using a Smite ability, or spell with Smite in the name, he regains the spent spell.

STAND AGAINST THE WAVE

Starting at 20th level, a Yojimbo may take a Bonus action to invoke a blessing from the divine heavens to become a paragon of protection. He gains resistance all damage. If any ally within 60' suffers damage, he may absorb that damage on himself (and reduce it with the resistance), this does not require any action. This benefit lasts for 1 minute and may be used once before completing a long rest.



RANGER ARCHETYPE

YAMABUSHI HEALER

A yamabushi is a recluse who retreats to the wild to find enlightenment. Some Yamabushi establish shrines in the most remote wilderness regions. While similar in religious practice to the Shukenja, the Yamabushi would rather establish a shrine on a mountaintop for pilgrims than in a village. She practices feats of strength and endurance because life is meant to be endured. Existence is suffering, and enduring physical trials teaches the yamabushi to alleviate unnecessary suffering in others. This is the source of her healing magic.

Yamabushi usually come from the Hermit, Outlander, or Acolyte backgrounds. Some even come from the Soldier background, as many soldiers retire to seek enlightenment when they've become weary of war.

At 3rd level, the yamabushi gains the following abilities: Field Medic, Rest Well Under My Watch, and Zen Archery, Zen Swordsmanship.

FIELD MEDIC

A Yamabushi gains proficiency in the Medicine skill and the Herbalist Kit if she does not have them, or another Ranger Skill or Tool if she does (as appropriate). She may perform a Medicine check to stabilize an adjacent dying ally as a bonus action. She adds *Cure Wounds* to her Ranger spells known if she doesn't know it, or another 1st level Ranger spell if she does.

REST WELL UNDER MY WATCH

A Yamabushi applies herbal remedies to the pilgrims who make the dangerous treks to her shrine, imparting energy to continue. During a short or long rest, a Yamabushi gains temporary hit points equal to her Ranger level plus her Wisdom modifier. Up to five friendly creatures each gain temporary hit points equal to half this amount.

ZEN ARCHERY, ZEN SWORDSMANSHIP

When a Yamabushi focuses her ki, she aligns her spirit and her body with her surroundings. While the Yamabushi still has the temporary hit points granted above, she has advantage on weapon attacks. Other characters do not receive this benefit.

HERBAL INFUSION

A Yamabushi endures injury, cold, and starvation with sometimes only water and willow bark to drink, but this is enough. Starting at 7th level, during a Long Rest, a Yamabushi may quickly brew volatile Potions of Healing or improve existing potions. She may brew or improve a number of potions equal to her Wisdom modifier. The Yamabushi may improve existing (non-volatile) potions of healing to volatile Potions of Greater Healing. Existing (non-volatile) Potions of Greater Healing can be similarly upgraded to volatile Potions of Superior Healing.

The potions brewed this way, or the improvements made this way are volatile and become ineffective after 24 hours. Improved and Superior potions revert to their original potency. The Yamabushi does this with components gathered using a herbalist kit while foraging during her spare time. These potions cannot be sold for full value, as merchants recognize that they are volatile and temporary.



INVIGORATE THE SPIRIT

A Yamabushi that has endured to this level learns a spiritual endurance. Starting at 11th level, a Yamabushi learns to recuperate part of her magic during a short rest. During a short rest, she may recover spent spells at an amount of spell levels equal to half her ranger level. This feature may be used once before a Yamabushi completes a Long Rest.

KI UNBLOCK TECHNIQUE

The Yamabushi learns to unblock the flow of ki without the need of herbal remedies. Whenever she casts *Cure Wounds* or *Lesser Restoration*, the target also refreshes temporary hit points as if he had rested with the Rest Well ability. (If the Ranger casts the spell on herself, the Zen Archery, Zen Swordsmanship ability functions as normal).

THE REED BENDS, IT DOES NOT BREAK

Starting at 15th level, a Yamabushi learns to bend to avoid an enemy's blows, and directs his allies to do the same. Whenever a hostile creature within 5' makes an attack, a Yamabushi may take a Reaction to impose disadvantage on each attack that creature makes this round.

ROGUE ARCHETYPE

NINJA OF THE HIDDEN FORTRESS

Legends tell of forty-seven Ronin who went into hiding after their Daimyo was compelled to commit seppuku after being provoked to attack his enemy. For a year and a half, the Ronin wandered aimlessly, being mocked wherever they went. When they could bear the shame no longer, each one of them took new lives as laborers, architects, servants, and merchants to infiltrate the home of their late master's enemy. They painstakingly planned their revenge, and once they had all gathered in the home of the enemy, they killed him together to avenge their master. The Ronin surrendered to the law and forty-six were ordered to commit seppuku. The forty-seventh Ronin was spared out of respect for their loyalty. This extreme dedication to duty at the expense of their own identities inspires the Ninja of the Hidden Fortress.

The hidden fortress clan believes that its founder was the forty-seventh ronin who has achieved immortality, but they are masterful liars. Whether a clan leader even exists is a matter of speculation for the members, who teach each other one-on-one and work in independent cells. When a cell receives "orders from the clan" it may only be the cell's own leader trying to ensure loyalty. Cells do fight shadow-wars "in the name of the leader". Nobody has been able to discern the truth from the propaganda, and ninja trust no one, not even each other. This may be how the leader maintains control. Needless to say, the true nature of the organization is kept secret and even more myths are spread to outsiders. Even the existence of the "hidden fortress" is a myth, meant to send their enemies on a wild goose chase. Or is it?

Members almost never reveal their membership. Only a few daimyo who are willing to pay gold for dishonorable services have contacts with the organization.

Anyone with an unsatisfied desire for revenge makes a good candidate to join the clan. The Hidden Fortress takes the desperate and gives them power, but more than that, it frees them from the restrictions of honor. And this is their greatest strength. Their greatest bond is loyalty to the clan; the cult-like indoctrination breeds loyalty and any rebellion is weeded out. Many rogues may be called ninja, but only the Hidden Fortress clan practices the mystical art of ninjutsu, which combines poisons and mystical ability to manipulate reality.

Ninja can come from any background, but the Charlatan background is most common, so as to impersonate other occupations. The Hidden Fortress clan also inducts Geisha, Ronin, Criminals, and Urchins into its ranks.

At 3rd level a ninja gains the following abilities: Blinding Powder, Kuji Kiri, and proficiency with Poisoner's kit.



METSUBUSHI BLINDING POWDER

The first ninjutsu technique taught by the clan is to blind one's enemies by blowing a ball of ground glass laced with toxins into a target's eyes and nose. As an action, choose a target within 10 feet that you can see who must make a Constitution Save (DC = 8 + proficiency + dexterity bonus) or take 1d12 poison damage and become blinded until the end of the Ninja's next turn. Creatures immune to poison automatically pass the save. The damage increases by 1d12 at 5th, 11th, and 17th Rogue levels. Blowing the powder requires one free hand.

This ability has a special material component, a bit of ground glass combined with minor toxins and moisture, and rolled into a ball covered in thin paper. Provided he has access to a poisoner's kit and occasionally scavenges for ingredients during his spare time, a ninja can prepare a number of blinding powder bombs equal to his intelligence modifier (minimum 1) following a long rest which remain potent for 24 hours.

A ninja may only throw powders he prepares himself, as each ninja prepares the package using their own variant techniques. Any other character attempting to throw a ninja's powder will be affected by the powder, rather than the intended target.

KUJI KIRI

A ninja learns hand gestures that convert ki into energy which can distract guards during stealth missions. He gains the *Dancing Lights* cantrip. Dexterity is the casting ability for it.

KOUGA NINJA SCROLLS

The ninja of the hidden fortress study a number of strange techniques that defy gravity. Starting at 9th level, a ninja may walk on water, but sinks at the end of his turn. He may carry an additional 200 pounds above his normal weight limit without suffering from encumbrance, which is useful for carrying out kidnappings. He can hold his breath for up to 10 minutes while fighting or otherwise exerting himself. He subtracts his Rogue level from falling damage as he gently glides to the ground.

The ninja may prepare one additional dose of blinding powder per long rest.

POTENT POWDER

Beginning at 13th level, a ninja unlocks the secret of more potent metsubushi. Immunity to poison no longer provides protection against the effects.

The ninja may prepare one additional dose of blinding powder per long rest.

GREATER KUJI KIRI

The ninja develops his ki manipulation further. At 13th level he learns to cast *Hypnotic Pattern* once per long rest and Dexterity is the casting ability for it.

PARALYZING POWDER

The most secret poison powder developed by the ninja is a neurotoxin that can disrupt the flow of ki throughout the body if it builds up over time. This metsubushi is learned at 17th level. Any creature that fails its saving throw against two uses of your blinding powder during two consecutive turns becomes paralyzed until the end of your next turn and blinded for one minute.

The ninja may prepare one additional dose of blinding powder per long rest.

TEN THOUSAND THINGS AND I AM ONE SUBSTANCE

At 17th level, the ninja learns that the mystery of the ten thousand things. He may cast *Etherealness* once per long rest. Dexterity is the casting ability for it.



SORCERER ORIGIN

PROFANE BLOODLINE

Sorcerers of the Profane, also called Blood Sorcerers are not necessarily evil, but they are always feared. Too many profane sorcerers in the past have fallen to corruption. The ancestry of the blood sorcerer is usually tainted by evil spellcasters who performed sacrifices for power and trafficked with evil spirits. The power they gained and the bargains they forged are not easily destroyed, and pass dormant through the bloodline until a descendant with the confidence to wield these energies arises.

Unlike a warlock which may strike a bargain with a an evil spirit, a Blood Sorcerer's entire family is cursed by one bargain made by an ancestor. That evil spirit offers power to each member of the family line, expecting that power to corrupt the sorcerers that accept it.

This power is embodied in a Blood Blade, a dagger which carries a spirit, detailed below. Some good-aligned blood sorcerers believe that in creating the blood blade, they are exorcising the evil from their body to trap it within the blade, and that while they possess the blade, evil cannot enter them. The blade is happy to let them believe that. Some blood blades claim that they consume the souls of those slain with it, but this may be more of the weapon's lies.

Sorcerers drawing their power from their profane blood are commonly drawn from the Imperial Eunuch, Sage, Criminal, and Noble backgrounds.

BLOOD BLADE

You may attune a dagger to yourself in a special bloodletting ritual and it becomes your Blood Blade. The blood blade becomes a magical weapon in your hands if it wasn't magical before, and may shed ominous red light to 15' at your command. It serves as your spellcasting focus. It also gains a rudimentary intelligence, as a fragment of your spirit, or perhaps your ancestor's evil spirit (or something more profane) inhabits it. It is evil in alignment and communicates telepathically with you while you carry it, encouraging you to perform evil acts. It cannot sense its surroundings but knows all of your thoughts while you hold it. If you use the dagger in a throwing attack, it will return to you at the end of your turn.

If the weapon is lost or destroyed, a new weapon may be inhabited by the same spirit by performing another bloodletting ritual during a short rest.

Add the *Greenflame Blade* cantrip to the sorcerer's known cantrips.

WORD OF BLOOD

The sorcerer learns to redirect the flow of ki in his body with but a word. Add *Healing Word* to the blood sorcerer's known spells.

A blood sorcerer gains proficiency with light armor. His profane blood is precious and should be protected from being spilled.

BLOOD REIGN

The sorcerer's growing confidence (hubris) feeds his strength. Starting at 6th level, he may add his Charisma modifier to attack and damage rolls with his Blood Blade, instead of Strength or Dexterity.

BLOOD SHIELD

From 14th level, whenever you deal damage with a spell or an attack on your turn, blood swirls in the air around your body in a protective shield. You may cast the *Shield* spell before your next turn without expending a spell slot, even if you don't know the spell.

THRONE OF BLOOD

As a bonus action, you may cut yourself with your blood blade to regain sorcery points, at a cost of two hit points per sorcery point regained. This damage cannot be reduced or negated in any way. Maximum hit points are also decreased by the same amount until you finish a long rest.

You may also sacrifice a sentient humanoid victim which to refresh all sorcery points. The victim must be in good health (full hit points) and unconscious and restrained before sacrificing it in a ritual to your ancestor's profane patrons. The creature is killed as you plunge the dagger into its unprotected heart. This is an inherently evil and despicable act and is abhorred by all good or lawful creatures of the empire. Needless to say, the spirit within the blade is pleased with this act.



WARLOCK PATRON

REVERED ANCESTORS

In the Empire, the bond between the living and the revered dead is strong. Peasants and nobles alike revere their ancestors. Some heroes even form a bond with their ancestors to fulfill their destiny, unburden them of karmic debt, or avenge them against their enemies. These warlocks become Devotees of the Dead.

Female Devotees are called Miko, and the rarer males are called Geki. Their tradition descends from the earliest shamanistic practices of the Empire. They perform sacred dances, divinations, and speak for the ancestors. They may enter ecstatic states and give utterances or prophecies. Devotees abhor undead, as their spirits should be put to rest.

The powers granted to them come from the realm of the ancestors' spirits, and the power is as good or evil as the ancestors making the bargain.

Devotees are mistrusted by the political powers in the Empire, and some Daimyo forbid their shamanistic ways. Any Devotee could be present to avenge some past wrong, and they keep their motives to themselves. No one wants to encounter one's enemies still scheming from beyond the grave. Common people may fear the Devotee as well, fearing that she may bring the evil eye on them.

Devotees of the dead hail from a wide diversity of backgrounds: anyone could hear the beckoning call of their ancestor's spirits, though Acolytes and Sages are common.

PATRON SPELLS

Add these spells to the Warlock list for a Devotee of the Dead

- 1st:** Bless, Inflict Wounds
- 2nd:** Gentle Repose, Augury
- 3rd:** Speak with Dead, Bestow Curse
- 4th:** Phantasmal Killer, Death Ward
- 5th:** Raise Dead, Commune

ATTACHED TO LIFE

The afterlife does not easily accept a Devotee until her karmic duty is fulfilled. When a devotee is knocked unconscious by being reduced to 0 hit points, she may spend one hit die to recover hit points as if she had completed a short rest. This ability may be used once per long rest.

TOUCH FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

A Devotee gains the Chill Touch cantrip in addition to other warlock cantrips, and adds her Charisma bonus to damage on all damaging spells and cantrips of the Necromancy school.

ANCESTRAL RECALL

A Devotee can enter an ecstatic state to invoke the spirit of his ancestors, reincarnated in her, to share their insight. Beginning at 6th level, she may cast a Divination spell she knows without expending a spell slot. This ability may be used once before completing a long rest.



THE DEAD CALL TO THE DEAD

A devotee of the dead wishes to see the undead reach their final rest. Starting at 10th level, a Devotee may expend a Warlock spell slot to Turn Undead or Destroy Undead as a cleric of the same class level. Refer to the cleric class features of the same name.

EVIL EYE

The ancestors grant the Devotee strange shamanistic powers. At 14th level, whenever the Devotee is damaged by an attack, she may cast *Bestow Curse* as a Reaction, targeting the creature that damaged him. The devotee does not need to know the spell or expend a spell slot.

A creature that passes the saving throw cannot be targeted by the warlock's Evil Eye for another 24 hours.

WIZARD TRADITION

WU JEN

The Wu Jen practices the magic of luck. Unlike the Wild Sorcerer who acts without caution, the Wu Jen knows how to act superstitiously to maximize her luck. She observes many portents and the relationships between heaven and earth to guide her magic. Numbers hold a special meaning and her spells are complex numerical formulae, computed to find the lucky numbers that govern magic.

This magic is also tied to the five elements: Earth, Metal, Fire, Water, Wood. Unlike the four elements of the West which represent static objects, these elements are aspects of five forces that govern everything from the body's organs to the seasons to the planets. The Wu Jen systematically studies and learns to position herself within and direct that flow. This practice is called Feng Shui, and was brought to Kozakura from Shou Lung centuries ago.



AUSPICIOUS TABOO

When a Wu Jen rolls a natural 1 on the d20 on an ability check, saving throw, or attack roll, she may turn that die upside down and instead treat the result as a natural 20. If used on an attack roll, this ability will grant a critical hit. This ability can be used once before completing a long rest.

A Wu Jen selects two or more taboos (see sidebar). If a taboo is broken, then this ability does not function until after the Wu Jen completes a long rest and atones with a private ritual that takes 10 minutes. Furthermore the Wu Jen that breaks a taboo is cursed until she completes this ritual, with any natural 20 roll on a d20 being treated as a natural 1 instead.

TABOOS

Wu Jen believe in keeping more taboos in order to maximize their luck. The Wu Jen chooses a minimum of two taboos, such as:

- Cannot eat meat
- Cannot wash oneself
- Cannot touch a corpse
- Cannot take a life
- Cannot drink intoxicating beverages
- Must leave a daily offering of food to the spirits
- Must abstain from intimacy
- Cannot speak of death
- Cannot break any crafted items
- Must carry all objects only in lucky number quantities

Other taboos may be chosen at the Dungeon Master's discretion.

Wu Jen who attempt to cheat luck by habitually breaking taboo after receiving the luck bonus or before resting will find that fate is fickle and cannot be fooled. Her luck may turn more disastrous. The extent of this disastrous change of luck is at the Dungeon Master's discretion.

SIXTH SENSE

A Wu Jen's meditative state of oneness with the universe makes her aware of things outside of normal perception. Starting at 6th level she gains a sixth sense. She adds her Proficiency on Initiative checks and gains proficiency in Perception. If she already has proficiency in perception, she gains Expertise in it instead. If The Wu Jen breaks her taboo, she loses this bonus until she completes a long rest and atones.

FLOW AND EBB

Starting at 10th level, a Wu Jen's good fortune means misfortune for her enemies. The Wu Jen may impose disadvantage on one saving throw made by an enemy against one of the Wu Jen's spells. This ability may be used once before completing a long rest.

If The Wu Jen breaks her taboo, she loses this bonus until she completes a long rest and atones.

BEING AND BECOMING

A Wu Jen's meditation has taught her of the connectedness of the elements, and casts spells with greater potency. Starting at 14th level, when she casts a spell of 1st level or higher that deals fire, cold, poison, bludgeoning, slashing or piercing damage, she may spend an additional spell slot of the same level to have the deal its maximum damage without rolling the dice. Affected creatures may still benefit from saving throws and resistance as normal.

If The Wu Jen breaks her taboo, she loses this bonus until she completes a long rest and atones.



COMBAT STYLES

Samurai are known around the world for their signature weapon, the Katana. Forged by master smiths using the most advanced steelmaking techniques in the world, each katana is treated as an heirloom, passed down to each Samurai from his or her ancestors. Use the statistics for a Long sword to represent the katana.

These combat styles are available to Fighters, Rangers, and Paladins.

TWO HEAVENS AS ONE

Historians credit the legendary swordsman Miyamoto Mushashi with the development of this technique. (The master never was ashamed of taking credit for perfecting other's work).

When a character with this style makes an attack with a Katana with the Attack action, he may make an attack with a wakizashi (short sword) in his other hand as a bonus action. The attack with the wakizashi adds the wielder's strength or dexterity bonus to the damage roll. This is an exception to the rule that off-hand attacks may only be made when fighting with a light weapon in each hand. Note that the Katana can only apply the user's Strength bonus.

STRIKE FIRST, STRIKE LAST

Many Samurai specialize in the art of the Iaijutsu duel, to draw and cut with one motion in breathtaking speed. The legendary swordsman Miyamoto Mushashi won an astounding sixty duels of honor in his lifetime.

A specialist in this style adds her proficiency bonus to initiative checks. Whenever she makes a melee weapon attack against a foe with a Katana and no friendly (to her) creature is adjacent to that enemy, she adds a +2 bonus to the damage roll.

FEAT

FIND THE CENTER

In the West, only Monks contemplate the mysteries of Ki, but in Kozakura, warriors of all types learn to utilize this inner flow of power to rebalance the energy within the body.

A character with this feat takes a Bonus Action and may spend one hit die to recover hit points as if the character were taking a short rest. The character may also reroll any saving throw to immediately end any of the following ongoing negative status effects: blinded, deafened, paralyzed, poisoned (this ability may be used while paralyzed). This feat may be used once per short rest.



SUBRACE

KOROBOKURU

The Korobokuru are a race of dwarves native to the Empire, they dwell in villages located in bamboo forests, on mountain slopes, or other areas of great natural beauty. They lack the sophisticated architecture of their underground cousins, rather living in shallow caves or huts, so many dwarves do not acknowledge the kinship. Korobokuru culture should not be called primitive, as their advanced brewing skills are legendary, and they pride themselves on gardening or making artistic crafts of wood or stone.



Weddings and childbirths in Korobokuru culture are a central feature of daily life. Planning for a wedding takes many months of intense preparation as the village is covered in flowers that are timed to bloom on the wedding day, special beers are brewed, and the nuptial festivities can last for weeks. Similarly long and elaborate festivals follow the birth of children in the village. Korobokuru have a reputation for being boastful or rude by samurai standards, lacking civilized manners. The Korobokuru speak a soft dialect of the dwarven language.

Common backgrounds for Korobokoro are Entertainer, Folk Hero, Outlander, and Guild Merchant. There are no Korobokoro samurai clans, but an especially brave member of this race could swear fealty to a human clan.

In addition to the bonuses for the Dwarf race, Korobokuru gain the following:

Ability Score Increase

+1 Strength. Korobokuru work long days tilling soil and clearing rocks for their gardens.

House of Flying Daggers

Korobokuru have Proficiency and Advantage on all ranged thrown weapon attacks. They are proficient with throwing fist-sized rocks at a range of 20/60 that deal 1d4 damage. As with other thrown weapons, add Str or Dex bonus to attack and damage rolls.

Peach Garden Oath

Gain proficiency with Nature skill.

Korobokuru may cast the Druidcraft cantrip. At third level, they may cast the Entangling Strike spell, and must complete a long rest before casting this spell again. Wisdom is the casting ability for these spells.

SAMURAI AND STEEL

PLAYER'S GUIDE TO KARA-TUR

