

Legend of the Five Rings™



Roleplaying in the Emerald Empire™



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We tell the tales of heroes to remind ourselves that we also can be great.

– The Tao of Shinsei

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Without these folks, this would have been a diceless game with five Traits I would have never paid attention to, a bunch of Skills I wouldn't keep track of and a 350 page Book of Void. Just mentioning them here doesn't do justice to the work they did to make sure this book came out right.

Those who stand alone, fall alone.

Thank you, thank you. Thank you all.

-JW

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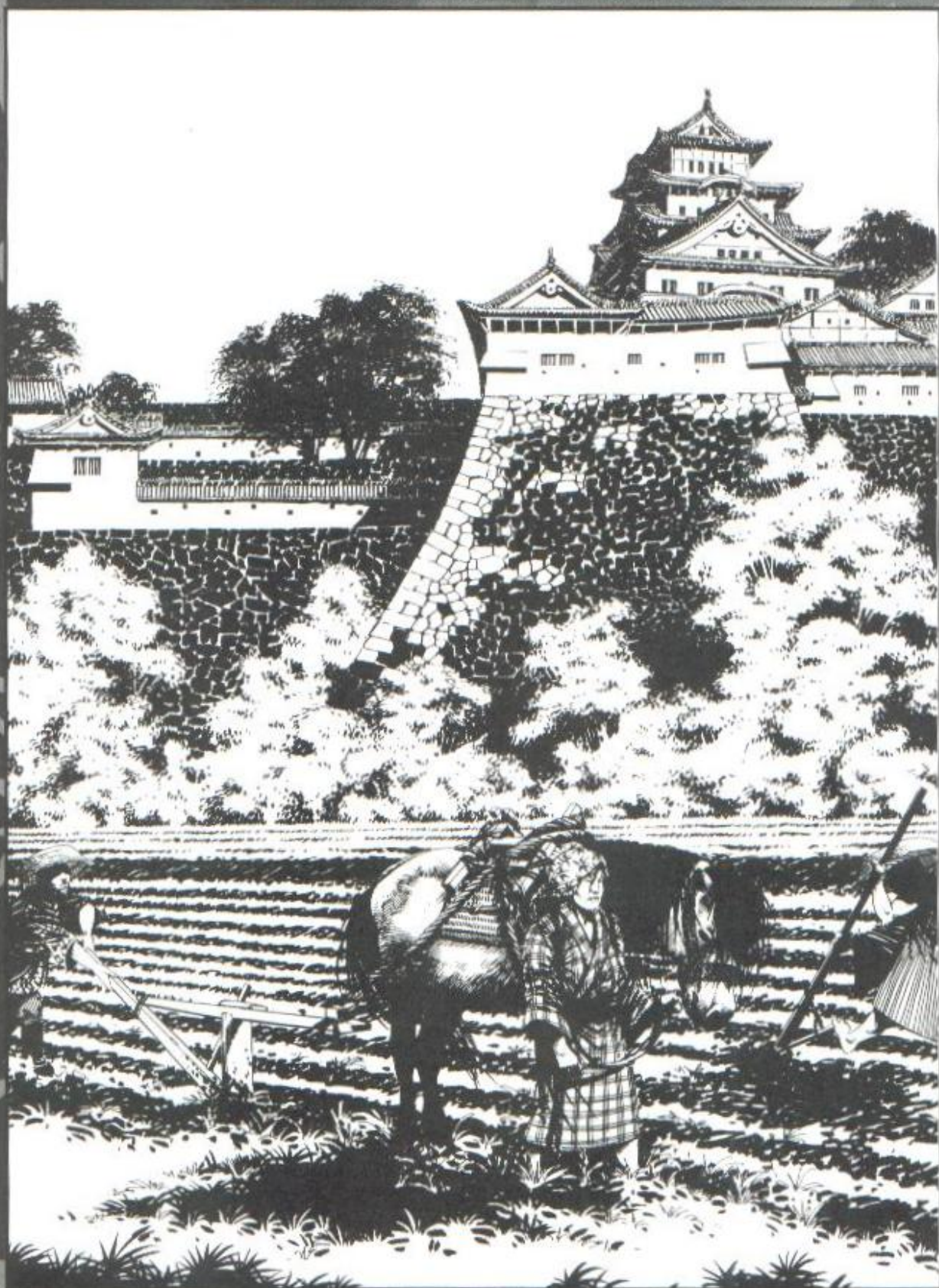
WHAT WE CHANGED

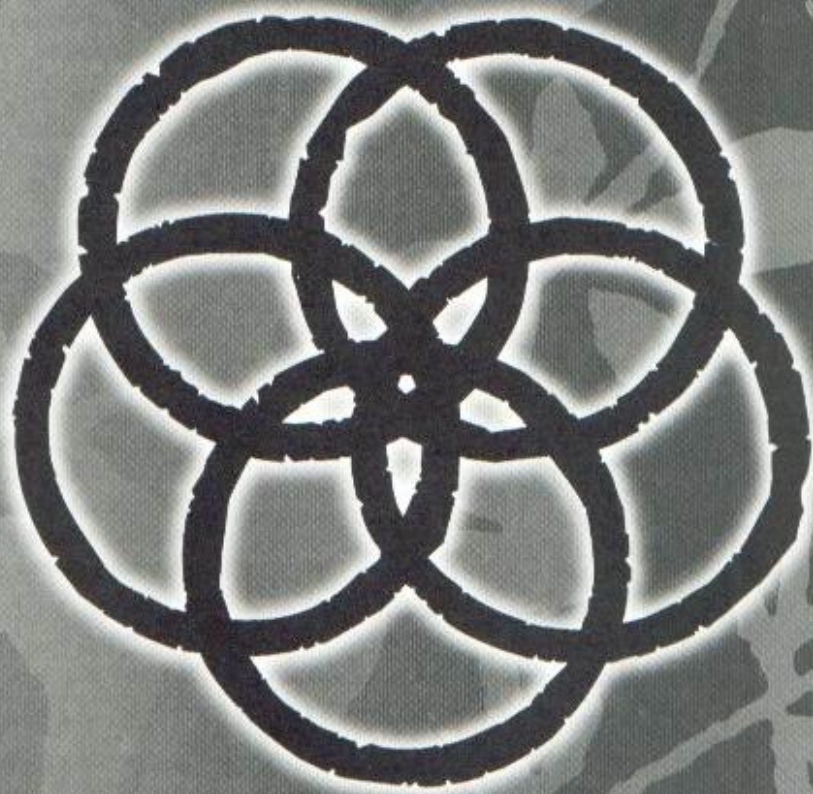
We took the advantage of a second printing to clear up some ambiguous rules, fix blatant errors and do a general clean up of errata.

A list of these changes can be found on page 246. If you want a complete list of all L5R RPG errata, you can get it by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

L5R RPG Errata
c/o AEG
4045 Guasti Road
Suite 212
Ontario, California
91761

Any requests for errata or FAQ will not be honored if they do not include a self-addressed stamped envelope.





introduction



SIDEBARS

Throughout the book, you'll notice text over here in the sidebars. Sidebar text is usually concerned with giving the flavor of the world, or background on the culture and people. This material is usually not crucial rule-based information, but rather interesting little highlights on pieces of the Emerald Empire.



Introduction

Welcome to Rokugan, the Emerald Empire™. Rokugan is a place of mystery and wonder, inspired by the legends of feudal Japan and other places in the far East. It's a world of samurai and ninja and spellcasting shugenja, where dragons soar the skies and danger lurks in every shadow. The *Legend of the Five Rings Role-Playing Game* (L5R RPG) allows you to take the role of one of those legendary figures in search of honor, glory and adventure. If you're already familiar with how role-playing games work, you can skip right on to **The Book of Earth**. If you've never played an RPG before, you may want to read the following section.

What Is A Role-Playing Game?

Role: A character or part played by an actor in a dramatic performance.

Play: To occupy oneself in amusement, sport or other recreation.

— *The American Heritage Dictionary*

A role-playing game is a very unique kind of game. When players get together to play L5R, they collectively tell the story of a group of characters and their surroundings. It's kind of like you and your friends getting together to tell a story, using the combined talents of everyone in the group to make the story come to life for everyone involved. While any number of players can participate, three to six is usually optimal, including one player — called a Game Master — who will take the role of referee and storyteller.

THE PLAYERS

Each player sits down with the rules in this book and creates a character. A lot of people who play role-playing games often create characters that are very different from themselves. They have very different skills, attitudes and abilities from the player, and sometimes will do things that the player wouldn't dream of doing. That's the point of role-playing, to play the role of another person. In order to keep track of the strengths and weaknesses of your character, we've provided character sheets at the back of this book. These sheets (which you are free to photocopy, by the way) will keep track of your character's strengths and weaknesses.

THE GAME MASTER

The Game Master (called the "GM") is a vital part of the game. While each player creates a single character — the main characters of the story — the GM is responsible for creating the supporting cast the players' characters encounter. He takes the role of every character the players meet and he devises a plot for the characters to participate in, improvising plot twists when the characters decide to go a different direction than the one he planned. He is the player's senses, describing all the details of a scene.

If you are going to be the GM, don't feel overwhelmed. There is an entire chapter dedicated to helping you run L5R, including an introductory adventure to show you how its done.

THE RULES

A GM is an author and improvisational actor, but he is also a referee. Whenever a dispute arises between players, the GM must use the rules (along with a good, healthy dose of common sense) to make a decision.

L5R uses 10-sided dice (which you can find at most hobby stores). Whenever there is a question of random chance, the GM tells the players to roll a handful of dice, add up the numbers and the Game Master uses the result to determine success or failure. Dice add a sense of mystery, drama and surprise to a game.

WHO WINS?

The best thing about a role-playing game is that everyone can win. On the flipside, everyone can also lose. Role-playing is like storytelling. When all the players work in concert, they can create an incredible and breathtaking experience. Players have to be patient when other players are

in the spotlight and Game Masters have to be fair to the players, to allow everyone a chance to participate in the game. It only takes one selfish player to ruin everyone else's evening.

How To Use This Book

This book is divided into five parts. The Earth Book contains an overview of Rokugan and a summary of the rules. The Water Book details creating a character. The Fire Book tells you how to use the rules to create special effects, combat and battles and The Air Book details shugenja and their magic. Lastly, The Void Book is dedicated to the Game Master. It contains Game Mastering tips and tricks, a list of famous characters, a full-color map and an introductory adventure.

The Language of Rokugan

"ROKUGANESE"

The language used by the Rokugani is based on Japanese. While it may look intimidating, it's actually very easy to pronounce. Throughout this book, you will be encountering words in italics. These words can be found below in the Rokuganese glossary.

All letters in "Rokuganese" are always pronounced the same way. There are no "soft" or "hard" versions of consonants (such as our own "c" in cat and cipher). While there are a few diphthongs (two vowels mashed together to make a different sound), they are essentially the same two sounds pronounced together quickly.

Rokuganese is spoken in syllables. Each syllable ends in a vowel with one exception - the letter "n." "N" is the only free-standing consonant in the Rokuganese syllabary and is the only consonant that can end a word.

To give you a feel for it, here are a few words broken up into Rokugani syllables:

katana	ka-ta-na
ninja	ni-n-ja
Rokugan	ro-ku-gan
samurai	sa-mu-rai
shugenja	shu-gen-ja

No syllable is given any extra emphasis in Rokuganese. Pronounce them all evenly.

Consonants and vowels are pronounced as

indicated below.

VOWELS

A: As in "father."

I: I is never pronounced as in "sight," but rather as in "machine" or "magazine."

U: U is never pronounced as in "ugly," but as the *oo* in "boot" and "shoot."

E: Always pronounced as in "red."

O: Always pronounced as in "roleplaying" and "sold."

In practice, the U is rarely sounded out unless it is at the beginning or end of a word. When in the middle it is usually skipped, letting the consonants on either side run into each other. When at the end of a word, preceded by an S, it is also dropped. For example:

Hatsuki is pronounced as *hatski*.

Desu is pronounced *dess*.

Ikiru is pronounced *ee-kee-roo*, though, not *ee-ker*.

There are some common vowel combinations. To pronounce them, attempt to enunciate each vowel in the combination, but run them together a bit.

ai: "ah ee" which ends up rhyming with eye, alive, and sky.

au: "ow oo" which ends up rhyming with doubt and shout.

ei: "eh ee" which ends up rhyming with day and hay.

ou: "oh oo" which ends up rhyming with float and moat.

Long vowels are indicated by a macron (a dash over the vowel) and are simply voiced for twice the length. Draw the sound out, as in the difference between foil (short) and torch (long).

CONSONANTS

The consonant sounds in Japanese (k, s, t, n, h, m, y, r, w, g, z, d, b, p, ch) are pronounced just as they are in English with a few exceptions.

- "j" is always pronounced soft, as in jump and "g" is always pronounced hard, as in gallop. (Hint: there are no "shoo - jen - ja" in Rokugan, only "shoo - gen - ja.")

- The Rokuganese "r" is a strange combination of the English "r," "l" and "d." Use the tip of the



WHEN IS THIS?

Those readers who are already familiar with Rokugan are probably asking themselves "When is this?"

We set the role-playing game approximately four years before the events in the collectible card game.

of the English "r", "l" and "d". Use the tip of the tongue to pronounce it. In any case, an English-style "r" is intelligible.

- "z" is pronounced with just a hint of "d" just before it; start saying it with the tongue in the D position. There is no English counterpart. The effect can be quite subtle and an English "z", again, is good enough.

- A doubled consonant indicates something of a "stop," or pause, such as in *batch*.

- The "ts" consonant sound is as in *hats*. Never breathe it into a "t" then "s" sound. For example "tetsubo" is pronounced *te-tsu-bo*, not *tet-su-bo*.

- The last item to consider is the consonant-y compound. "Myu" would be pronounced as in music, and the other combinations follow the same pattern.

Glossary of Rokugani Words And Phrases

"Abunai!" [ah-boo-nye]: "Look out!"

baku [ba-koo]: A creature that eats dreams.

bo [boh]: A quarterstaff.

daimyo [die-mee-oh]: The lord of a family or Clan.

daisho [die-shoh]: A set of paired swords (katana and wakizashi) worn by members of the samurai caste.

"Do itashimashite" [doh eet-ah-shee-mah-shee-tay]: "You're welcome."

"Domo arigato" [doh-moh ah-ree-gah-toh]: "Thank you very much."

"Domo arigato gozaimasu" [doh-moh ah-ree-gah-toh goh-zay-mah-soo]: "Thank you very, very much."

Doro Boekisho [doh-roh boh-eh-kee-shoh]: Merchant road.

Doro Teikoku no Hito [doh-roh tay-koh-koo noh hee-toh]: Imperial road.

doro [doh-roh]: Road.

doshi [doh-shee]: A practice partner or "dojo friend."

"Dozo" [doh-zoh]: "Please."

Dozo yoroshiku [doh-zoh yoh-roh-shee-koo]: "Pleased to meet you."

eta [eh-tah]: The caste of Rokugani whose trades are unclean; outcast.

fugu [foo-goo]: Fish dinner. A delicacy if prepared correctly, poisonous otherwise.

gaki [gah-kee]: A "hungry spirit," or vampiric

ghost that eats blood, eyes, desire, etc.

"Ganbari masu" [gahn-bah-ree mah-soo]: "Try harder", "Don't give up."

geiryō [gay-ryoh]: The spirit that sleeps in items and treasures.

geisha [gay-shah]: "Art-person"; an entertainer trained in many arts.

gempukku [gem-poo-koo]: The coming of age ceremony.

"Gomen kudasai" [goh-mehn koo-dah-sye]: "Please excuse me."

"Gomen nasai" [goh-mehn nahs-sye]: "I'm sorry."

"Hai!" [hye]: "Yes."

hakama [hah-kah-mah]: A divided skirt men wear over the kimono on formal occasions.

haori [hah-oh-ree]: A garment that pronounces the shoulders.

Hayaku [hah-yah-koo]: "Hurry up!"

heimin [hey-meen]: The "middle class" or "merchant class" of Rokugan.

Hidari [hee-dah-ree]: Left.

higashi [hee-gah-shee]: East.

hinin [hee-neen]: The outsiders. The lowest class of people. Gamblers, geisha, actors are all considered hinin. The eta are also of this class.

iai [ee-eye]: The technique of drawing a sword quickly, making a clean kill, clean the blade and then replacing it in the scabbard.

ikiryo [ee-kee-reeyoh]: A family spirit, friendly or otherwise.

inkyo [een-keeyoh]: Retirement.

Iwanomi [ee-wah-noh-mee]: To be like a rock, resolute and impenetrable; to have the virtue of Earth.

kabuki [kah-boo-kee]: A type of theater that represents the samurai caste in a heroic or tragic light.

kachi [kah-chee]: Victory.

kami [kah-mee]: An honorific reserved for the founders of the Seven Clans.

kappa [kahp-pah]: A river spirit.

kata [kah-tah]: Formal prearranged movements that teach a student proper fighting techniques.

katana [kah-tah-nah]: Long sword. Only those of the samurai caste may legally carry *katana*.

kimono [kee-moh-noh]: A long-sleeved robe.

kita [kee-tah]: North.

kyuden [keeyoo-den]: Palace.

"Ma-itta!" [mah-it-ta]: "I give up!"

mamori [mah-moh-ree]: A ward, cast by a

shugenja, to protect a home from vengeful or angry spirits.

"Matte!": [maht-tay]: "Wait" or "Hold still."

metsuke [meh-tsoo-keh]: The Emerald Champion's spies.

michi [mee-chee]: Path.

migi [mee-gee]: Right.

minami [mee-nah-mee]: South.

mizu-umi [mee-zoo oo-mee]: Lake.

"Mo ikai" [moh i-keye]: "Do it again."

mon [mohn]: The symbol and colors of a samurai's clan.

mori [moh-ree]: Forest.

mura [moo-rah]: Village.

nageteppo [nah-geh-tep-poh]: An exploding egg bomb used by ninja.

naginata [nah-gee-nah-tah]: A long sword-staff.

"Nan desu ka?" [nahn day-soo kah]: "What did you say?"

ninja [neen-jah]: Assassins who are reputed to have magical powers.

nishi [nee-shee]: West.

Noh [no]: A type of minimalist theater.

numachi [noo-mah-chee]: Swamp.

obi [oh-bee]: A silk belt wrapped around the waist.

"Onagai shimasu" [oh-nah-geye shee-mah-soo]: "Please do me this favor."

origami [oh-ree-gah-mee]: The art of folding paper into animals, flowers and other shapes.

reihaido [ray-hye-doh]: Shrine.

ronin [roh-neen]: "wave man," a samurai without a lord.

sake [sah-kay]: Rice wine.

samurai [sah-moo-rye]: "servant" or "one who serves." Also the highest caste in Rokugan's social structure.

sen [sehn]: To take initiative.

seppuku [seh-poo-koo]: Ritual suicide.

shinden [shin-den]: Temple.

shiro [shee-roh]: Castle.

shite [shee-tay]: One who takes initiative/control.

shochu [shoh-choo]: A brandy made from sweet potatoes.

shugenja [shoo-gen-ja]: The holy men of Rokugan, known better for their "spell-casting" abilities.

shuriken [shoo-ree-ken]: A small, sharp thrown object, usually associated with ninja.

"Sumimasen" [soo-mee-mah-sen]: "Please

pardon my interruption."

tatami [tah-tah-mee]: A mat made from woven grass.

toride [toh-ree-day]: Keep or fort.

torii [toh-ree]: A tall, red wooden arch placed before temples and holy sights. Rokugani believe that passing under them cleanses the spirit.

toshi [toh-shee]: City.

ukemi [oo-keh-mee]: Method of falling without injury.

wakizashi [wah-kee-zah-shee]: "belt companion"; a short sword paired with the katana, collectively called daisho.

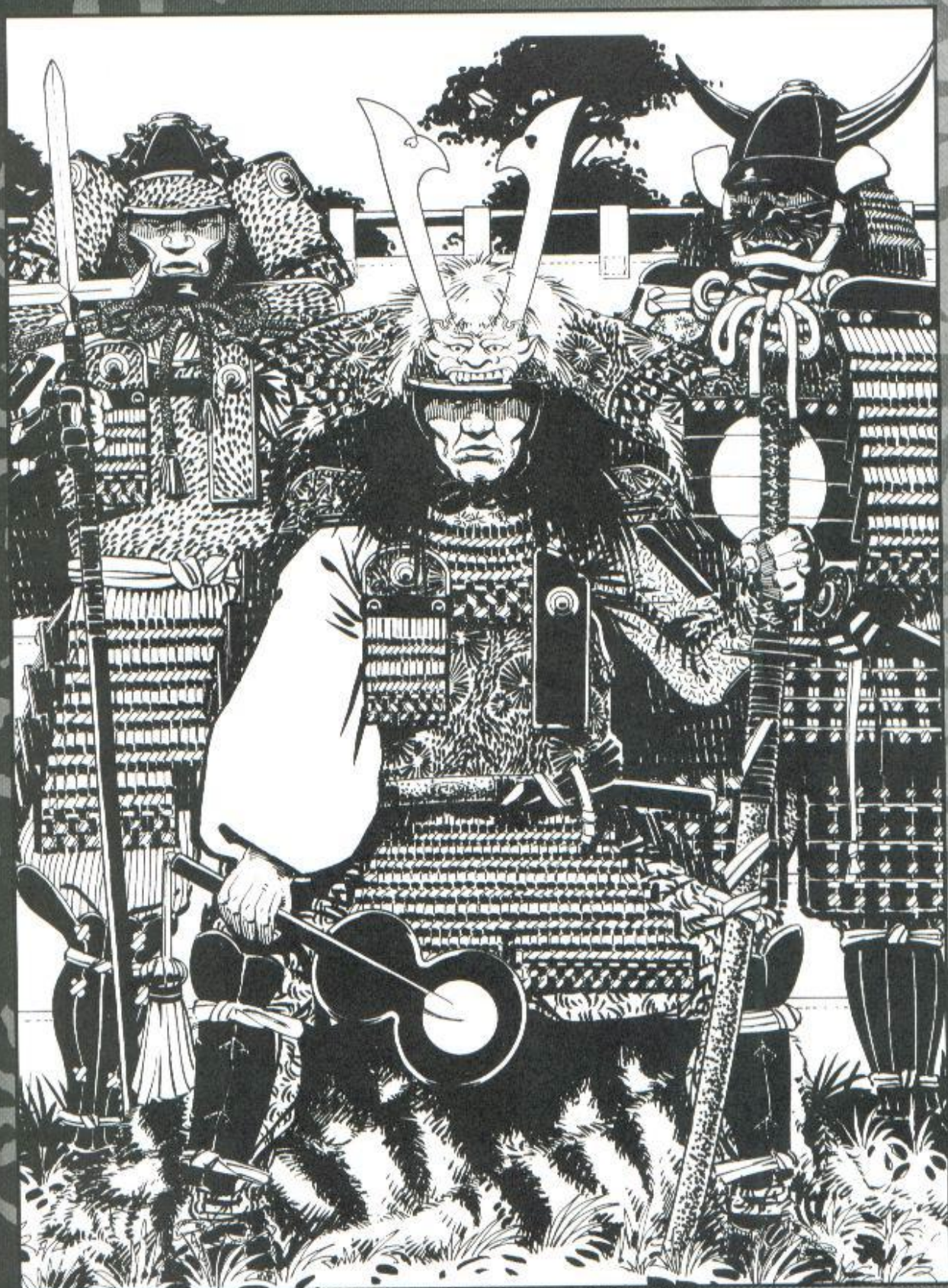
yama roka [yah-mah roh-kah]: Mountain pass.

yama [yah-mah]: Mountain.

zori [zoh-ree]: sandals made of wooden straw

zubon [zoo-bohn]: Pants/trousers.





*chapter
one*

土

earth

*Every journey begins with a single step.
Step well, and your journey will be filled with
fortune.*

*Step poorly, and it will be wrought with disaster.
— The Tao of Shinsei*



Just north and east of Beiden Pass is the province of Hamana. Ataka is this province's *daimyo*, one of the great lords of the Clan of the Lion. In Hamana, there is a village, and in the village, there is an inn. It is called Ugaido's inn, for that is the name of the man who owns it. It was Ugaido's inn five hundred years ago, and today it remains Ugaido's inn, passed down from Ugaido to Ugaido for too many generations to count. The current Ugaido is a short, bald man whose big laugh fits inside his big belly. Long ago, a group of bandits almost burned his inn down and left him with a long scar along his face. Now only half of his face moves, which makes him sound drunk all the time. But he is a clever man, this fat little fellow, and tonight, there is gambling at his tables and rain on his roof.

And it is in this little inn that our story begins.

Ginawa shook the cup hard, holding his palm over the lip to make certain the dice didn't fly free. All about him, in the dark and smoky room, samurai and merchants watched as they threw coins onto the table. He watched the money pass from hand to hand, waited until all eyes were on him, then slammed the cup hard on the table, shaking the coins from their piles. He lifted the cup and let Ugaido read the faces.

"Fortunes and Winds!" the little man with the mumbling lip called out. There were cries of anger and joy all about him. He felt his wicked

smile creep on his face and his thoughts turned suddenly to Gimiko. Even with the stink of tobacco in his head, he could still smell the perfume in her hair.

He shook his head clear of the memory. "Ha! There you have it. Fortunes and Winds. Where is my money?"

The coins were pushed across the table by reluctant hands. He heard the murmurs in the darkness, but he ignored them. *Losers will always find excuses*, he thought. *Besides, these winnings will keep me well fed for many months.* He tucked the coins into a pouch hanging from the silk belt wrapped around his waist. He took up his sake cup and felt the warm wine run down into his stomach. The wind outside shook the rafters, and he thought, *Good thing I will not need the sake to keep me warm tonight.*

He stepped from the table. "Sorry, but the sake has gone to my head. Besides, it has been three days since I have had a bath. Good night."

"No!"

He turned to find the source of the shout. It was a tall man, dressed in a fine silk kimono that deserved better respect. Tucked in his obi were the two swords: the *katana* and the *wakizashi*. His eyes were red and dancing. "No! You will play until I get my money back."

Ginawa looked for the innkeeper. "Why does this man have his swords? Aren't all expected to check their swords in at the door?"

No one said a word. He watched as the crowd parted to allow space between the two men. Ginawa looked for the boy who took his own swords away from him at the door. "It is the law," the boy explained. He knew he should have demanded to keep at least the short sword, the *wakizashi*.

"I have no quarrel with you," he said to the samurai.

"You are a coward!" the samurai spat back.

Ginawa's eyes narrowed. When he spoke next, there was the hiss of a serpent in his voice. "The sake in your stomach speaks for you, samurai."

"Then perhaps I will let my katana speak for me."

Ginawa watched the swordsman carefully, studying the steady rising and falling of his shoulders. *Give me a hint*, he thought. *Give me just a single ... NOW!*

Ginawa leapt, his whole body pushing him at the samurai with an explosion of motion just as

the drunkard's sword was coming free of its *saya*. He hurled his weight into the samurai's shoulder, grabbed the swordsman's right hand with both of his own and snapped the arm over his leg. He heard the samurai's breath catch in his throat, but the man had enough willpower left in his pickled brain to keep himself from making any sound. The sword fell to the wooden floor along with its broken master.

Ginawa stepped back, watching the fallen samurai as he did. His back bumped into a bystander and he spun about, ready for anything.

Five samurai stood before him, the rain dripping off their armor and their spears. Ginawa stepped back from them. "I do not want any trouble. This man," he pointed at the wounded samurai on the floor, "drew his sword against me. I only defended myself. I do not kill drunkards."

One of the samurai walked forward, his masked face turning toward the man with the broken arm. "Magistrate Ujikeme, are you all right?"

"Magistrate?" Ginawa asked, the consequences of his actions coming into focus.

"My arm is broken," the magistrate told the samurai like a child tells its mother he has bruised his knee.

"You must come with us, Ujikeme-sama." The samurai then turned to Ginawa. "You as well."

Ginawa opened his mouth to protest, but shut it almost as quickly. "Let me fetch my swords," he said. "Swords?" You are a samurai?"

Ginawa frowned. "*Hai*. To my shame."

The masked guard nodded. "A *ronin*, eh? Very well. Come with me. My lord will want to speak with you."

Ginawa bowed shortly just as the boy stepped up to him, his *daisho* in his hands. He took the blades, slid them into his belt and tossed a coin at Ugaïdo. "That should cover the *shugenja*'s fee for purifying the blood from your floor, old man."

"*Hai*! And then some! You are a good man, samurai."

Ginawa looked at the old innkeeper. He searched his mind for something wise to say, but all he could find was "I am a killer, old man. The only thing that makes me is enemies."

They rode through the night along the Emperor's road. By the time the rain trickled to a light haze, by the time the sun crept up in the east, Ginawa's muscles were screaming for a bath.

"Just a little while longer, old bones," he whispered. The guards turned to look at him. He smiled and shrugged.

A few hours after sunrise, they found the daimyo's pavilion. The tall circle of white sheets waved in the light wind as their horses came to a stop. The guards dismounted, and Ginawa followed their example.

"Leave your weapons with us," the pavilion's iron-masked guard told him.

"Two times in two days I will be without my swords at my side."

The guard shrugged. "This time you will be sitting before my lord, not a crowd of drunkards."

Ginawa watched the masked eyes of the guard for a long time, then took his swords from his obi and passed them over.

"Follow me," the guard told him. Ginawa obeyed.

Inside the pavilion waited three samurai. Two of them were standing. The third was sitting. Ginawa didn't need to guess whom he was here to see. He moved slowly, kneeling before the seated samurai. Then, slowly, he put each hand on the ground before him and touched his head to the backs of his hands.

The samurai looked at him, motionless in his stare. Ginawa knew better than to speak before he was spoken to. He also knew that this silence was a kind of test. He remained motionless, sitting on his ankles, staring deep into the samurai's eyes. Behind the samurai, he saw the sun rise higher. As it gained height, the pain in his ankles grew, but Ginawa allowed no sign of that pain to show in his eyes. Instead, he focused on another pain, a deeper pain that lived deep in his heart. He lived the moment in his mind over and over again. That pain smothered the ache in his ankles.

Finally, the samurai spoke. "What is your name?"

Ginawa shook his head. "My name has been taken from me."

"Is that why you travel through my lands without papers? Is that why you wound my magistrates? You are seeking your name?"

Again, he shook his head. "What I seek only death itself can give to me."

A light of understanding shone in the samurai's eyes. "You are a wave man, a *ronin*." He looked to his guards. "You say this man defeated Ujikeme?"



Daimyo – a lord, whether of a province, a family, or a Clan.

Fortunes and Winds – the best roll possible at one of Rokugan's games of chance.

"Hai" – Yes.
Pronounced "Hi."

Katana – the slightly curved samurai longsword. Only a samurai may carry a katana.

Obi – the wide belt which is worn over the kimono.

Ronin – a samurai who is not sworn to any daimyo.

Samurai-ko – a female samurai.

Saya – sheath.

Shugenja – magician, priest, or holy man; the lines are not always clearly defined.

Wakizashi – the shortsword worn by a samurai. The katana/wakizashi set is known as *daisho*.



ROKUGAN, NOT JAPAN

Before we get started, one thing should be made explicitly clear. Rokugan is not Japan. We have drawn heavily from Japanese history, culture, religion and mythology, but if you are looking for the Land of the Rising Sun, you will not find it here. When playing L5R RPG, don't get bogged down wondering how the Japanese did things or spend time arguing how "it really was" in feudal Japan. This is Rokugan. Every day, samurai debate the true nature of honor, glory and the meanings of Rokugan's philosophy and religion. Your characters should be no different.

The guard rushed forward to kneel at his master's feet. "Hai!"

"With nothing but his bare hands?"

The guard bowed shortly. "Hai!"

The samurai nodded. "You were never very fond of Ujikeme, were you, Hijiko?"

Ginawa looked to his right at the kneeling guard. Slowly, she removed the helmet from her head and placed it at her side. "He was ever devoted to you, Ataka-sama."

Ataka almost smiled. "Your sincerity does you credit, Hijiko." He removed his fan from his *obi* and pointed it at Ginawa. "And what do you think of our nameless friend?"

She looked at Ginawa, and he saw a glint of something in her eyes. "He moves well, Ataka-sama. And he shows a bit of resolve."

"Good. I am glad we are in agreement." Ataka made a motion to a servant who quickly brought two papers to the samurai. One of the papers he handed to Hijiko; the other, to Ginawa. "Hijiko, you have served me well for three years. No longer will you be a *yoriki*, a magistrate's assistant. You are now my chief magistrate, my *karo*."

Despite her best efforts, a smile blossomed on Hijiko's face, and as Ginawa watched it bloom, he realized he was looking at a hidden beauty under all that sweat and armor.

"And you, my nameless friend, I have a proposal for you. Since I am now one *yoriki* short, I was wondering if you would help me fill the gap."

Ginawa knew the question before Ataka spoke it. His gaze dropped to Ataka's knees. He could hear his breath. He felt his heart pounding against his chest. He took a breath and said, "Ataka-sama, I have been samurai to a daimyo, and when my courage was questioned, I failed. I never want that to happen again."

"Then don't let it happen again, samurai."

Ginawa's head snapped up. Again, he looked into Ataka's eyes. Moments passed. Something unspoken passed between them. Ginawa nodded. "I accept."

"Good. Then tell me your name."

"It is Ginawa."

He felt Hijiko start and saw the two samurai behind Ataka put their hands on the pommels of their weapons.

Ataka did not move.

"Then the blade you carry ..." Ataka whispered.

"Hai. It is one of the four *Iuchiban* blades."

Across the pavilion, servants stepped away from the resting sword.

"The cursed swords of the blood speakers," Hijiko murmured.

Ataka asked, "Which one is it, Ginawa?"

"The blade of revenge, Ataka-sama."

He nodded. "Then take your weapon and go to your steed. Wait there."

"Hai!" Ginawa rose quickly and went to his blade. He took it as the servants watched, their eyes filled with trepidation.

When he was out of sight, Hijiko asked, "Ataka-sama, is it wise..."

"He is strong, Hijiko. The strength of his ancestors is in his soul. I can see that. There is also a destiny in his eyes. I may be a part of that destiny." He looked directly at the samurai-ko. "And so might you."

She bowed and rose. "My life for you, Ataka-sama." Then she rushed back out to her steed.

"The Fortunes have made my house a way station on your path, Ginawa," he said as he watched them ride away. "I hope your path of blood will end in honor."

A Gaijin's Guide To Rokugan

What follows is a basic outline of Rokugan's history, culture and socio-political structure. The history is told in a narrative format to give you an idea how the people of Rokugan view their past.

The Beginning of the World

Do you see the circle I have drawn, child? Where is the beginning? Where is the ending? Of course, you cannot answer, for there is no answer to this question. There must be a beginning and an ending, but there is neither.

Just like the circle, this story has no beginning and no ending. Before this world, there was another. After this world, there will be another, and our souls will fall into that world, carried by the weight of our great and lowly deeds. This is the way of things, child, a way you must learn. Only by learning the way will you find peace in this world of sorrow.

The beginning of this world, as it has been for every world, is with nothing. Nothing was alone in the void, and so it was for countless ages. Then, without warning, Nothing realized that it was alone, and it was afraid. This created one third of the world. Then, Nothing realized it desired a companion. This created another third. Lastly, Nothing realized that its weakness had created the world, and it felt regret, wishing to undo what it had done. Nothing's regret completed the world and made it whole.

When Nothing spoke its words, the world was made. At first, the stuff of the world was like an egg whose heavy yolk had been broken and mixed together with the delicate white. The delicate separated from the heavy and the delicate rose as the heavy fell. The delicate rose ever higher, but some of it hesitated and became the sky and clouds. The rest climbed for what seemed to be forever and created the high Heaven. The heavy stuff fell deeper and deeper, forming nothing but the shapeless chaos of a jellyfish. And so it was for many, many years.

The Sun and Moon

With the creation of the Heavens came the creation of the Three Gods Whose Names Cannot Be Spoken. They recognized the need to bring form to the earth below, and so together they created a young man and a young woman to give it shape and form. In order to create the man and woman, they used their names, which is why we cannot say any more of them.

The man and woman were born in Heaven



and looked down upon the shapeless earth, seeing need to bring it shape. They descended on a rainbow and found that it was like the jellyfish. The man and woman pondered on how to give it shape, and realized that the only way to do so would be to name it. They thought long about the name to give to the world, and when it was ready, they kissed the formless earth and whispered the name. As the name was spoken, so were their own names. The woman became Amaterasu, the Sun, and the man became Onnotangu, the Moon.

Together, they floated across the sky and about the newly named earth as it took shape. The land separated from the sea and from the fertile soil, plants grew. In the warm oceans, the fishes took their many shapes. In the Heavens, the Fortunes began to take form, born in the dreams of the creatures who slept far below. The Moon and the Sun flew around the world again and again until all the creatures chose their shapes. Then they rested, and looked down to the earth. To their amazement, some of the creatures begin to build.

The Great Sleep of the Naga

These builders were called Naga. Like all creatures, they were able to change their shape into many forms. They practiced art and war much like men do today, but in the age of Naga, there were no men. They also worshiped the Thousand Fortunes who dance in the stars and on



THE THREE SINS

The Three Sins committed by Nothing are what formulates the basic foundation of Rokugan belief. All three sins – Fear, Desire and Regret – poison the mind and keep it from acting with certainty.

When the Three Sins are portrayed in temples, bowls of pebbles are provided so those who come to the temple can throw rocks at the images before they leave.

THE CHILDREN OF SUN AND MOON

The illustration at right shows Lady Sun with Lord Moon and the kami. The Children of Sun and Moon are (from top to bottom): Togashi, Akodo, Doji, Shiba, Shinjo, Hida, Fu Leng and Bayushi.



the snow-capped mountains, much as we do today. They recognized that the greatest of all the Fortunes was the Sun Goddess, the one we call Amaterasu.

They knew that a time would come when the Sun Goddess would fall to sleep, and so, too, would they. But they cared little, for their people had lapsed into quiet contemplation, content in their belief that their civilization would outlive any catastrophe that could befall them. They were proud, child, and that was their downfall. The Great Sleep did come, but not when they expected it, and when Lord Moon caught Lady Sun, the Age of Man ushered out the Age of the Naga.

Children of the Sun and Moon

Since the beginning of time, Lord Moon has chased Lady Sun about the world. One day, he caught her, and as her light faded, one by one, the Naga fell to sleep. Many months later, Lady Sun gave birth to nine children: Hida, Doji, Togashi, Akodo, Shiba, Bayushi, Shinjo, Fu Leng and Hantei. Lord Moon knew that any children whose veins carried both elements of Sun and Moon would grow to be greater than he, and so, despite the protests of Lady Sun, he swallowed the children, one by one.

Lady Sun had to think quickly. As Lord Moon swallowed her first child, she said, "My Lord, certainly you must be thirsty after such a meal," and she offered him a cup of sake. Lord Moon thanked her and drank it down. After each child, she repeated her offering and he accepted it, not knowing that each cup had a single drop of poison swimming in the sake. Down each child went into Lord Moon's stomach, and as he swallowed them down, Lady Sun's many tears fell. As they fell far down from the Heavens to the Earth, they mingled with the stuff of the air and the stuff of the wind. Finally, the tears of the Sun touched the Earth, and where each of them fell, they remained still, silent and sleeping.

Soon, Lord Moon became so drunk and numb that he did not notice when she replaced the last child, Hantei, with a rock. Lord Moon fell into a deep sleep, and as he slept, Lady Sun smuggled Hantei away and hid him from sight. Lady Sun explained to her child that he must rescue his brothers and sisters. She trained him in the arts

of combat, preparing Hantei for the moment when his father would awaken.

It is said many years passed during this time, and it is also said many centuries passed. When Lord Moon awoke, he found Lady Sun and the young Hantei waiting for him. The battle that took place was great; in the end, Hantei sliced open his father's belly, and the children and his entrails fell out to the earth below. Lord Moon reached out at the last moment to grasp the children, but caught only little Fu Leng. Hantei then sliced his father's hand, breaking his grip and causing Fu Leng (and his father's severed hand) to follow his brothers and sisters to the earth below. But as Fu Leng fell he reached out at the last moment and grabbed Hantei, dragging his brother down.

Lord Moon's blood fell to the earth, finding the puddles of shapeless form Lady Sun's tears had made. When they found each other, the blood and the tears mingled and a man and a woman formed from each of the thousands of puddles.

Fu Leng fell apart from his brothers and sisters, into a deep crevasse far to the west. Trapped under the earth, he struggled to reach the surface, but he was no longer the same. His many months under the ground had given him dark knowledge. It poisoned his mind and body, corrupting him into a twisted mockery of who he once was.

"When the Last Akodo Falls"

As soon as the Children of Sun and Moon touched the earth, they ceased being divine. While they were not mortal men, they were also no longer gods. They looked about and found the scattered beginnings of mankind, and knew what they must do. Mankind was as naked and naive as newborn children, and the Children of Sun and Moon made this promise: "We will teach you the ways of the world and we will protect you from its evils. Serve us with humility and obedience and we will keep this promise."

The Children of Sun and Moon, except for the trapped Fu Leng, decided they would hold a tournament to see who among them should rule the world. There was a contest of speed, a contest of strength, a contest of wits and many others. Togashi declined to compete in the tournament,

for he looked at his brothers and sisters and knew the outcome. The final contest was a great melee.

Lord Hida relied on his great strength to carry him through the battle, but he was swiftly overcome by the speed and accuracy of Shinjo's strikes. Lady Shinjo's quickness proved to be her undoing. Lord Bayushi used her impetuosity to catch her off guard, and with his tricks and distractions, he defeated her. Lord Shiba was too crafty for such trickery, however. He observed Bayushi's tricks and his actions were unmoved by the distractions. Then Lord Shiba turned to meet Lady Doji. The slender and beautiful Doji stood back and waited for Shiba to strike, knowing that her brother would gain too much knowledge from watching her movements. Shiba's patience ran out; he attacked and was swiftly defeated by Doji's technique. Then Akodo stepped forward. He knew Lady Doji's tactic and used it against her. Finally, only Akodo and Hantei stood on the battlefield. They fought with the love of brothers, but as the battle's intensity increased, so did Akodo's temper. At a crucial moment, Akodo's great fury overcame him. Hantei sensed his brother's rage and used it against him. It was a thoughtless mistake that caused Akodo to lose his duel with Hantei, a mistake that should have cost him his life. Because Hantei spared Akodo, Akodo swore to his brother that he and his family would serve him. Togashi, watching the battle from a distance, whispered: "When the last Akodo falls, so falls the last Hantei."

The Hantei Dynasty

At the end of the tournament, it was decided Hantei's dynasty would rule the others. Hantei declared that the Children of Sun and Moon should build a mighty Empire, an Empire that would show their devotion to their sacred mother Amaterasu. As Hantei was Emperor, each of his brothers and sisters went out into the known lands, gathered together mankind and created the Seven Clans. Hida formed the Crab Clan, Doji formed the Crane. Togashi formed the Dragon Clan and Akodo formed the Lion. Shiba formed the Phoenix Clan while Bayushi formed the Scorpion. Lastly, Shinjo formed the Unicorn Clan.

For many years, the Empire flourished as Hantei and the Clans built roads, palaces and temples. But one day, an army of foul and putrid creatures attacked the palaces and temples of the



LADY DOJI AND LADY SHINJO

Traditionally, when a woman is married, she takes the name of her husband. However, when Lady Doji and Shinjo were married, their husbands took the Lady's name to retain the family's link to the Sun Goddess. In fact, it is because of Lady Doji that the tradition of the woman being in charge of the household came about. She insisted on managing her husband's household while he went away to war and served as magistrate to their lands.

HANTEI AND SHINSEI

When Hantei was building Otosan Uchi, he demanded that it be the greatest palace in the Empire. When it was finished, Shinsei saw the palace and said, "It is the greatest palace any Hantei has ever built."

Hantei was confused. "I am the only Hantei," he said. The Master smiled. "Do you think so? Know this now: you are only one Hantei. Before you there were one hundred thousand Hanteis and after you there will be one hundred thousand more."

Hantei nodded, recognizing Shinsei's wisdom, but then the Master said, "In fact, you can see another Hantei palace from here that rivals your own. Would you like to see it?"

Hantei nodded and followed Shinsei to an empty field. Shinsei pointed to a great ant hill and smiled. "See the little ones? Every one of them a past Hantei."

Children of Sun and Moon. They were the forces of Fu Leng, who had fallen far away from his brothers and sisters. His mastery of the magic of the underworld was complete. Armed with the creatures he had summoned from the hells under the earth, he planned to destroy the Emerald Empire and claim the souls of mortal man for his own power and glory.

The New Way

Hantei and the Clans gathered an army to combat the goblins, ogres and shape-shifting Oni of Fu Leng, but no magic or steel could defeat his evil sorcery. Every battle forced Hantei to fall back. Finally, as his ragged army prepared for one final assault on the plains of Uichiman, a small man with a shaved head dressed in robes came to visit the Emperor Hantei. The man introduced himself as "Shinsei," which means "new way." He promised the Emperor that he could defeat the armies of Fu Leng, but Hantei was unimpressed. He commanded that the little man be removed, but when the guards tried to touch Shinsei, he defeated them all without using a weapon. Then, he turned to the Emperor. "Let me take seven warriors with me to your brother. There, I will stop the armies that march on your lands."

Hantei was intrigued with the little man. He spent the entire night questioning Shinsei as his brother Shiba recorded every word. The record of this conversation, called *The Tao of Shinsei*, can still be found in the Emperor's library and in the libraries of all the Clans. At the end of the evening, Hantei was convinced. He wished to send his brothers and sisters, but the little man shook his head saying, "No. It must be mortal men, for fortune favors the mortal man." Hantei saw the wisdom in Shinsei's words and sent one warrior of each of the Clans along with Shinsei. He called them *samurai*, which means "servant."

Many weeks passed, and the armies of Fu Leng gained strength and ground with every battle. But one day, their power mysteriously ebbed, and at a crucial moment, Hantei's armies charged. The ranks of darkness broke and fled.

Hantei knew then that Shinsei had somehow fulfilled his promise.

In anticipation of the heroes' return, he prepared a great feast for their victory, but only a single samurai returned. It was the Scorpion samurai, bearing twelve scrolls and an enchanted hand made of obsidian. "Hide these scrolls," he said, "for they were the doom of Fu Leng." Then, the Scorpion samurai died.

The Emperor forbade the breaking of the scrolls' seals and gave the duty of hiding and guarding them to the Scorpion Clan. He then commanded the Crab to build a great wall between the Empire and the dark lands of the underworld, now known as the *Shadowlands*, to guard Rokugan from its evil. The Crane and Lion Clans swore to protect the Emperor. Doji was selected to be the Emperor's first champion while Akodo led the Emperor's armies on the field of battle. The Dragon and Phoenix chose the paths of contemplation; both Clans took the Tao of Shinsei and incorporated it into their own understanding of sorcery. Lastly, the Unicorn Clan left the Empire to find what lay beyond its borders.





A Thousand Years of Peace

The time called the "thousand years of peace" was hardly peaceful. Clans fought for territory, gained political strength in the court, and built on the foundations of the philosophy that Shinsei left behind. Emperor Hantei and his brothers and sisters grew old and their children assumed their responsibilities and duties. As the age marched on, each Clan developed its character.

In the span of a thousand years, the population has grown to 30 million, including two million samurai. The strengths of the Seven Clans have ebbed and flowed, political boundaries have been redrawn and fought for many, many times. But some things never change, only grow and mature. Each Clan has grown from their beginnings, transforming themselves into a distinct force, each an individual power to be reckoned with. "Minor Clans" also developed, but none were as significant as the Seven Great Clans that were born of the Children of Sun and Moon.

THE CLAN OF THE CRAB

For a thousand years, the Crab have steadfastly defended the Emerald Empire from the evil hordes of the Shadowlands. Unfortunately, this duty has left them little time for courtly activities, thus making them the most blunt and uncouth of the Clans. While their courage and honor is never questioned, the other Clans often point to the fact that the evil aura of the Shadowlands lingers on everything it touches, and they wonder how many Crab samurai have gained what the Phoenix call "the Shadowlands taint."

THE CLAN OF THE CRANE

When it came time for Hantei I to wed, all the Clans offered up their most beautiful daughters for consideration. It was the daughter of Doji, from the Crane Clan, that he chose. Ever since that day, every Emperor has chosen a bride from the Crane Clan. That is how the dynasty of Doji has maintained its hold on the Imperial Court: every Emperor has a Crane he calls "Mother." Also, every Emperor has attended a Crane fencing school. The Kakita School is the most prestigious in the Empire, its students legendary for their prowess and courage. Ultimately, however, the Crane are seen by the other Clans as posers and



MINOR CLANS

Sometimes, a samurai will perform such a heroic or selfless act that his daimyo rewards him with title and land beyond that of a normal reward. The minor Clans of Rokugan are the families of these samurai. While they are not considered equals to the Seven Great Clans, they are still regarded as daimyo. The most wealthy and influential minor Clan is the Mantis Clan, whose homelands are off the coast of Rokugan near the Islands of Spice and Silk. Some of the more significant minor Clans (and families) are:

- The Hare Clan (Usagi)
- The Fox Clan (Kitsune)
- The Dragonfly Clan (Tombo)
- The Sparrow Clan (Suzume)
- The Badger Clan (Ichiro)



LITERACY

Members of the samurai caste are assumed to be able to read and write, at least at a basic level of comprehension. As a general rule, a shugenja (whose profession relies on reading and writing) will be more literate than a samurai of his clan.

The Phoenix, who have more shugenja than any other clan, and the Crane, who are accomplished courtiers, tend to be the most literate clans. Also, the Lion Clan's Ikoma family is noteworthy for its historians. Don't expect a Crab general to write moving poetry, but he will be able to cut a clear set of orders for the commander of his army's right flank. Heimin and hinin, for the most part, don't read well if at all. Their traditions and histories tend to be oral, and told as stories or songs.

sycophants for their relationship with the Emperor.

THE CLAN OF THE DRAGON

Since the earliest days of the Hantei dynasty, Togashi and his Clan have remained secreted away in the high mountains of Rokugan. Practicing their strange meditations in privacy, the Dragon Clan are the most misunderstood samurai in the Empire. Their spellcasters are fluent in the ways of war, and their samurai are familiar with the ways of sorcery. The strangest of their Clan – the *ise zumi* – shave all hair from their bodies and cover their skin with detailed tattoos. Always enigmatic, the Dragon Clan are sometimes seen as aloof and bizarre by the other Clans.

THE CLAN OF THE LION

If the Crane are the "left hand" of the Emperor, then the Lion are his right hand. The Lion Clan has always maintained a reverence for the Emperor, a devotion unparalleled anywhere in Rokugan. The samurai of the Lion Clan are some of the most brilliant tacticians the Empire has ever known, commanding small armies against large ones with legendary success. However, some would say the Lion Clan clings too tightly to tradition, and their unquestioning loyalty to the Emperor has caused much strife between them and the other Clans – especially their chief rival, the Crane.

THE CLAN OF THE PHOENIX

The word "shugenja" has many meanings in Rokugan: holy man, prophet, sorcerer, priest. The most powerful shugenja in the Empire, without any doubt, belong to the Phoenix Clan. The scribe who stood by the Emperor and wrote down his conversation with Shinsei was a Phoenix, and he brought back all the details and verbal nuances of that conversation to his Clan. No other Clan has a more fundamental understanding of the Old Religion of Rokugan and the "new way" of Shinsei. It was the Phoenix who melded the two into the current belief taught across the Empire. However, in their study of the sublime, the Phoenix samurai have suffered. Days spent in contemplative meditation and reading ancient texts are days unspent learning the finer aspects of swordplay and battle.

THE CLAN OF THE SCORPION

If there are secrets to be known, a Scorpion

somewhere knows them. They are the masters of double-dealing and subterfuge. Many say that the Scorpion is only a front for a family of ninja, but no evidence has ever been procured to prove that claim. Over the thousand years of Hantei's reign, the Scorpion have proven to be valuable allies to every Clan. There is a Clan of spies and information peddlers. Once you strike a deal with a Scorpion, however, you can never clear yourself of the debt.

THE CLAN OF THE UNICORN

Just after Hantei took the Throne, he turned to his sister Shinjo and asked her to ride into the outlands of the Empire to seek allies and look for possible dangers. Shinjo left with a small band of followers and was not heard from again for eight hundred years. Two hundred years ago, the Clan of the Unicorn returned with wealth undreamed of, fabulous treasures of foreign make, and their most valuable prize: the war-horses of the west. The Unicorn Clan also brought with it many strange customs and beliefs, making them strangers to the people of Rokugan. Their ignorance of the delicate etiquette of Rokugan has made them appear to be "barbaric" and "uncivilized" at times, but their mighty horses and valiant samurai (all trained in what the Lion call "barbarian tricks") have made them valuable allies to any who would take them.

Rokugan

Rokugan is a rocky, mountainous land, surrounded by mountains on three sides (north, west and south) and an ocean to the east. There are nearly two hundred volcanoes, approximately fifty of them active, and hundreds of hot springs dotted across the mountainous regions. Only about a fifth of the land is flat; the majority is rolling hillsides, steep gorges, narrow valleys, ravines and mountains. The closer one gets to the ocean, the flatter the land gets. This is where the farms can be found. The nobility have used the mountainous region to their advantage, building castles in tight or inaccessible passes. The flatlands are used for farms, ports, and cities.

There are many rivers running through Rokugan, flowing from mountain springs across the landscape and emptying out into the ocean. Cities and rice farms build up around the flatlands where the rivers run, on stilts for protection from the spring floods.

The climate is diverse. Winter is short, but cold. Summer is long and sultry. Fall is cool and spring is wet. Just one look at the buildings and clothing of Rokugan can tell a foreigner the Rokugani find summer's heat far more unpleasant than the chill of winter. Rokugan experiences heavy snowfall during the winter, so much so that travel nearly grinds to a halt.

The Fury of the Elements

Rokugan is no stranger to disaster. Over the thousand years of Hantei rule, the Emerald Empire has seen hundreds of earthquakes, tsunami and hurricanes.

Earthquakes occur regularly. At least once a year, a minor tremble is felt under the earth. Earthquakes can occur as slight tremors that rumble for a few moments, or as great quakes that rip down buildings and pull up the earth for minutes at a time. There have been five great earthquakes in the history of Rokugan, all of which were quickly followed by a tsunami.

Tsunami is the Rokugan word for "tidal wave." After an earthquake, Rokugani always begin preparation for a tsunami. They can usually count on the tsunami arriving within three days at the most. Even minor quakes can cause tsunami, but the severity of the quake always foreshadows the severity of the tsunami.

Hurricanes are also frequent visitors to Rokugan's shores. These great storms destroy entire villages, but also bring great bounty to the fishermen when they are over.

Another sign of nature's force takes the shape of volcanoes. As mentioned above, there are many volcanoes in Rokugan, not all of them dormant. The Rokugani people usually build their villages in the lowlands, but the nobility builds its fortresses high in the mountains, near the threat of eruption. Although the mountain fortresses are not built near the active volcano chains, most Rokugani know the (doubtless apocryphal) tale of a group of shugenja who cast a powerful ritual that awakened the fire of the earth to devour an enemy's castle...

Culture

THE CELESTIAL ORDER

While the culture of Rokugan may seem quite foreign, it is very much like the feudal Europe familiar to fans of history and fantastic literature. The following section is devoted to the regimented societal structure that makes up Rokugan. While it may appear intimidating at first, it is, in fact, quite simple. All of Rokugan is based on a hierarchical structure called "The Celestial Order." Rokugani believe that everything is part of a divine pattern. Even humanity has a role to play in this order. They believe that everyone has a destiny, and must work toward fulfilling it, even if it means displeasure, pain or death; for as terrible as one's path may be, an even more terrible fate awaits those who try to cheat their destiny.

THREE TIERS

Rokugan is very formal. The universe operates under a tiered structure: men and women are born into one of the three tiers of the Order, and must live the rest of their lives in the roles they were born to play. There are times when those of one tier move to another, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

There are three classes of people in Rokugan: Nobility (those who make war), Peasants (those who work), and Clergy (those who pray). Those who fall outside of this structure are considered "non-people" (or *hinin*) and are not protected by the Emperor's justice. For a visual representation of the social structure of Rokugan, see "The Celestial Order" on the next page.

Rokugan itself is a feudal state. There is a single Emperor who owns all the land. Everything under the sun belongs to the Emperor because his bloodline traces back to the first Hantei who won the Tournament of Sun and Moon. Lesser nobles (*daimyos*) swear fealty to the Emperor. They govern the territory they are given and make certain the Emperor's laws are obeyed and enforced. In exchange, they gain the right to tax the land they govern. Likewise, a daimyo can give some of his land in exchange for fealty. Peasants work the land in exchange for protection from other nobles. Unfortunately for the peasants, the "feudal contract" is a little lopsided in Rokugan. Daimyo and samurai are not required to protect the peasants. Those that do so act out of courtesy

NON-BUSHI SAMURAI

Those who are born into the samurai caste but are not trained in bushido are still considered samurai. They are not on an equal level with one who wears daisho, but they may still wear a katana to show that they are of the samurai station. Just because a samurai is wearing a katana does not guarantee he knows how to use it.

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THE CELESTIAL ORDER

The illustration at right depicts the Celestial Order of Rokugan.

At the top is the Emperor, the first son of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess

Just below the Emperor are the lords of the Seven Clans, lords of the Families and lords of the minor clans.

Below the daimyos are the samurai caste (*bushi* and *shugenja*), those who live and die to serve the lords of Rokugan.

Then, are the "half-people," the *Heimin*, including the farmers, craftsmen, artisans and merchants.

Lastly are the "non-people," the *Hinin*, including geisha, morticians, and torturers.



rather than obligation.

SAMURAI: THOSE WHO MAKE WAR

The highest social class in Rokugan is the warrior, or samurai. All those who are born into a samurai family are considered samurai regardless of their profession. The Emperor and his family are the first rung of the samurai ladder. The major daimyos of the Seven Clans are on the second rung and the daimyos of the families are on the third. The fourth rung are the samurai who have sworn fealty to the family daimyos, and under them on the fifth rung are those who have been born into the family, but have not taken up warrior training. Lastly are the ronin ("wave men", called so because of their wandering nature), the masterless warriors who wander the countryside. Characters created with the system in *The Book of Water* are considered within the samurai caste.

Only a samurai is allowed to wear *daisho*: two swords tucked into the belt, or *obi*. The first is a *katana* (long sword) and the second is called a *wakizashi* (short sword). Samurai live by a code of conduct called *bushido*. This complicated system governs all of a samurai's actions. See *Bushido* below for more information.

Some Clans are highly devoted to the religion of Rokugan, while others are not. The samurai of the Phoenix Clan must study many holy texts as well as learning *bugei* (fighting skills). They undergo a religious ceremony upon their receiving of the *daisho*, in which the front of their heads are shaved and anointed by a *shugenja* (priest, someone who can talk to the Fortunes and have them answer; see *Shugenja* below). The Crab Clan samurai do not hold with such frivolities. A Crab learns how to fight and how to die. That is all he needs to know.

HEIMIN: HALF-PEOPLE

Heimin, or "half-people," are the common folk. The highest commoner in the Order is the farmer, for he provides what is most necessary in life: food. Without the farmer, everyone goes hungry. Next is the artisan, for he creates things that people need. The merchant is lowest on the structure since he does not create anything; he only sells what others create. It is quite legal for a samurai to kill *heimin* if his honor has been compromised by their rudeness. What constitutes "rudeness" is usually up to the samurai who has been offended, so *heimin* always try to be as

humble as possible in the presence of samurai.

HININ: NON-PEOPLE

The *hinin* ("non-people") include criminals, entertainers (including actors, musicians and *geisha*), charlatans (stage magicians and tricksters), and gamblers. Also included are the *eta*. *Eta* are people who inherit "dirty" jobs that involve touching corpses of humans and animals. Rokugani detest touching anything dead. They believe that touching corpses (or anything relating to corpses, such as blood) stains their souls. These jobs, such as leather workers, morticians, and torturers, are left to the *eta*. While a samurai may need a good reason to kill a farmer, killing *hinin* is not considered a crime because they are not actually a part of the Order. However, killing some *hinin* (such as a samurai's favorite *geisha*) can cause serious repercussions.

NINJA

Ninja are considered *eta*, and therefore non-persons. It would not be a crime to kill a ninja, and no consequences could be derived from such an action. A samurai would lose face for dealing with a known ninja, but no one knows for sure that the ninja actually exist. The threat of ninja is all that is needed to make peasant and noble alike shudder beneath their kimono. A shuriken left behind in a dead servant's body is warning enough, but is not concrete evidence of the existence of ninja.

RELIGION

The Celestial Order does not apply to mankind alone. The gods of Rokugan – commonly referred

to as "Fortunes" – are also part of the great universal machine, and they must obey its rigid laws and codes as well.

There are many, many Fortunes. For every village, city, family, Clan, grotto, mountain, river and tree, there is a Fortune that watches and guides the life of that village, city, etc. The shugenja of Rokugan are educated in the religion of the Fortunes. They learn the names and mannerisms of the Fortunes as well as rituals and prayers to petition and appease them.

Also, to a greater and lesser degree, the shugenja are educated in the philosophy of the Five Rings that was taught to the Emperor one thousand years ago. Each Clan has a different opinion on "Shinseism," but all regard his teachings with respect.

For a complete run-down on Rokugan's religions and philosophies, see *The Book of Air*.

Women

In Rokugan, a woman's caste – not her gender – constitutes her position in the Celestial Order. Women are equal to men as far as caste; however, there are a few differences that must be noted.

SAMURAI-KO

Samurai maidens who remain faithful to their lords get their names in history books. The ones who fall find their names in tragic love songs.

– Doji Shizue

One of the favorite stories of Rokugani poets is of the sister of a murdered samurai who put on her brother's armor and took up his sword to avenge him. "Hitomi's Tale" has moved many young women to become bushi, and has justified the act in the eyes of many daimyos. The samurai ritual of changing one's name has brought many *samurai-ko* – female samurai – to take the name "Hitomi" upon taking the daisho, including the Dragon Clan samurai-ko Mirumoto Hitomi.

One of the vows that some samurai-ko take



THE STORY OF THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER

When the harvest is poor, farmers are hard pressed for cash, and a beautiful daughter can bring a pretty penny. *Geisha* madams purchase girls on contract, train them in the arts of conversation, dance and song. Many *geisha* are also accomplished musicians. *Geisha* are not "women of the night." They are entertainers.

Geisha are sometimes able to purchase their own contract, which allows them to become "freelance" girls or, if they have the business sense, to open their own tea house.



POVERTY

When the daimyo's magistrates arrive in the fall to collect taxes (see "Taxes" p. 27), all too often they find bad weather or raiding bandits have left the farmer with nothing to show for his year of labor. Some daimyos are generous, allowing the farmer a year of respite while they rebuild their crop.

Others are less forgiving, demanding tribute in other forms. Some farmers are forced to sell their daughters in order to pay the daimyo his due (see "Geisha"), while others are killed without mercy, their lands given to another family to tend.

during their initiation ceremony is a vow of celibacy (a samurai-ko cannot be devoted to both a daimyo and a lover or husband, after all). If a celibate samurai-ko is found to have a lover, she often renounces her station and joins the ranks of a monastery. Of course, the key word is "discovered." There are many samurai-ko who take lovers, and every poet's repertoire has several stories of samurai and samurai-ko who doom themselves for love. Samurai-ko are treated as samurai warriors in the Celestial Order. They are no different from male samurai in that regard.

WIVES

Marriage in Rokugan has nothing to do with love. A marriage is strictly a business matter, arranged by the parents of the couple and a middle man. One is not necessarily expected to love one's spouse. However, a slight against a samurai's wife is a slight against her husband.

A Rokugani household is very different from what one might expect. In Rokugan, the wife handles all of the money and is in charge of the household in every respect. A male samurai is given a stipend by his wife which he is allowed to spend in any way he wishes, but the wife determines how the rest of the money is allocated. She manages the finances, hires workers to repair and improve the house and handles all of the entertainment for visitors. However, other than that, a wife has little to do but gossip with the wives of other samurai and read the various romantic tales (called "pillow books") that are sold in the marketplace.

GEISHA

While there is very little romance to be found in a marriage, the same cannot be said for affairs outside a marriage. Although a samurai's extramarital affairs are ignored by society, he is expected to be discreet, so he does not insult his wife's family. When samurai seek such company, they often find it in the arms of a *geisha*. Geisha are entertainers. They are trained in the arts of music, poetry and conversation. While highly respected for their skills, they are still only hinin in the Celestial Order.

When entering a geisha tea-house, samurai are expected to leave their katana at the door (to avoid bloodshed within). Legends are filled with samurai falling in love with geisha, and the danger that such passion brings. A samurai is expected to have such passion for one thing only,

and that is the protection of his lord. Such passions compromise the samurai's devotion to his lord, and are frowned upon greatly in Rokugan.

A Samurai's Life

Like the seasons and the tides, human life travels through a cycle. To deny this cycle is to deny that one is part of the order, and to deny one's place in it. Not only is this dishonorable to the gods, but also to one's ancestors who expect better of a young samurai.

BIRTH AND YOUTH

When a child is born, it is born into the caste of its mother and father. Childhood in Rokugan is very different than childhood in the west. Children are not considered adults until they go through the *gempukku* ceremony (q.v.). A child is not a "little adult." He is a child who has not been taught the rules of adulthood, and therefore must be treated with kindness and leniency. Once he is seven, a child is sent to a school where he spends many years training in the ways of his caste and profession.

COMING OF AGE: THE GEMPUKKU CEREMONY

Young samurai are raised in schools where they are taught history, swordplay, language, battle tactics and philosophy. It takes approximately nine years to finish the training, and students rarely – if ever – see their parents. At some point between the years of 13 and 21 (typically sixteen), a child performs a rite of passage called *gempukku*, and is, for the first time, considered an adult. Children are often expected to take a new name – their adult name – at this time.

MARRIAGE

Marriages are arranged by the parents of the bride and bridegroom, and only occasionally do the two find themselves in the throes of romance. Often times, a middleman is used to arrange the marriage; this is very often a member of the Crane Clan who are always aware of births in the royal families of Rokugan. The two are usually introduced to each other sometime after their *gempukku* ceremony.

On the wedding day, the bride wears white, the color that is symbolic of death, to show that she is now dead to her family. During the



ceremony, she peels away the white vestments to show a red dress underneath, symbolizing her rebirth. After the ceremony, there is little chance for romance to bloom. The bride is taken away by the groom's mother to be taught the skills she will need to be a good wife while the husband goes on a pilgrimage to a holy place to "celebrate." The celebration usually includes the samurai meditating on this new phase of his life and the

samurai. While this may be an accepted truth in Rokugan, lovers who can overcome the odds are often seen as heroic and honorable, while those who fail are tragic and sometimes even vilified.

INKYO: COMING OF OLD AGE

In Rokugan, a samurai is considered a "young man" until he reaches his twentieth year. Then, he is "middle aged" until he is forty. On their fortieth birthday, it is considered proper for samurai to



changes he will need to make to his lifestyle.

LOVE

While the concept of love is often tragic in western literature, it is also found to be uplifting. Not so in Rokugan. Passionate love has no place in a samurai's heart; there is only room for complete, unquestioning devotion to one's daimyo. Any other emotions conflict with one's devotion, clouding loyalty. Passionate love is often frowned upon in samurai circles; it is an emotion for "lower people" such as courtesans and geisha. Only very rarely does a love story end happily for

shave their heads, change their names and become a monk to prepare for the next lifetime.

It is considered proper, but that doesn't mean it's a universal truth. Crab Clan *Daimyo* Hida Kisada, now into his fiftieth year, has no intention of shaving his head and joining a monastery. Likewise, the "Gray Crane" Kakita Toshimoko also shows no sign of wanting to prepare for the next life; he isn't done with this one yet.

When the Emperor or a daimyo retires, leaving a young samurai in their stead, they often remain in the court as an "advisor." Of course, the rest of

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HAIR

The traditional hairstyle for a samurai is the shaved pate and top knot which is doubled forward over the crown. However, there are many in Rokugan who use hairstyle to identify themselves with their Clan.

Some Crane dye their hair white and let it grow long and fine. The Dragon shave their heads completely, decorating their bald heads with tattoos.

The Lion often let their hair grow long and wild and dye it gold. The Phoenix are very traditional, shaving their pates and tying up top knots. The Scorpion Clan often keep their features hidden while the Crab Clan couldn't care less about a samurai's hair.

the court recognizes who the real authority is, which makes the youth sitting on the Throne a puppet monarch until their predecessors pass on.

DEATH AND SEPPUKU

Fear of death is not only improper, it is also dishonorable. Because the Rokugani believe in a spirit world where the souls of the departed go to await rebirth, they expect to join their ancestors in the spirit world after death. A common motto is taught to the samurai in dojos: "I have borrowed my ancestors' name. I must return it to them untainted."

This astonishing courage in the face of mortality can make for short-lived samurai.

Often, when a samurai fails in his duties, or his courage is questioned, the need to prove his mettle arises: the ultimate test of courage.

Seppuku ("chest cutting") is that test, the ritual of proving one's courage in the face of death. Before the ceremony, a samurai spends the day in a temple (dedicated to a family deity) writing poems and letters to beloved ones. At the end of the day, the samurai kneels on a mat to protect the holy soil from his blood, draws his wakizashi and makes three deep cuts in his torso. He must not cry out in pain, and often times a close friend or relative will stand behind him, his katana drawn and ready to make "the final cut" lest his friend disgrace himself with a sound.

Samurai do not commit seppuku to protect their

own honor, but to protect their family's honor. It is, perhaps, the most misunderstood aspect of samurai culture, and every game master must put great thought into including seppuku in their game.

A Farmer's Life

TROUBLES AND CHANGE

A farmer's life is very different from the life of a samurai. A farmer spends his entire life relying on the predictability of nature and the certainty of the seasons. When disasters occur, the farmer is convinced that he has done something wrong to bring misfortune to his house. Farmers are always suspicious of strangers and change, as they both disrupt the pattern; they can mean nothing but trouble.

THE SEASONS

The four seasons define the life of a farmer. Spring is full of rain making the ground good for planting. Plums and cherries mark the beginning of spring, while the falling of the cherry blossoms tells the farmer summer is on its way. Summer is a season to be endured rather than enjoyed. It is the time when rice is growing and little manual labor can be done without drawing a sweat. This is also the time of typhoons which ruin all the farmer's hard work.

Autumn is a welcome season. The temperature cools down and the rice is harvested. Winter is short in Rokugan, but bitter and cold. Snow usually only falls in the north, but extremely cold winters are known to cause snowfall in the south. Winter is the time for brewing *sake* (a rice wine that is one of the two most popular drinks in



Rokugan), weaving silk and other cloths, and practicing other industrial skills. Of course, the end of winter brings the beginning of spring when market places open and the crafts that were made in the winter can be sold and traded.

THE FRUITS OF THE FARM

Rice is not the only crop on most farms; they also produce fruits, nuts, and vegetables. The most valuable commodity of a farm is, of course, silk. Silk is so valuable that even bad silk is kept to be sold in the marketplace in the spring. Rokugan's two favorite beverages - tea and sake - are also grown and brewed in the farms of Rokugan.

Language

There are two distinct languages in Rokugan: the common parlance and the high language used only by the nobility, shugenja, and monks. All samurai are taught the common parlance, and a few are taught the high language.

The common language of Rokugan has many dialects. A samurai could travel through three different provinces and hear three different pronunciations for the word "rice." Often, a samurai's accent will give away his Clan, possibly even his family.

The high language is used exclusively in the shugenja schools and in the Imperial Court. Official documents are written in the high language (to prevent forgery from the lower classes) and common dialect is not allowed in courtrooms. Samurai do not consider it important that peasants understand the order of the court; they only need to obey.



Economy

KOKU

The basis of Rokugan's economy is called a "koku", which is approximately forty gallons of rice. A single koku is broken down into 5 bushels, or silver coins called ichibukin or "bu." Each bushel can be further broken down into ten copper pennies called "zeni."

1 koku = 5 bu = 50 zeni

TAXES

Every harvest season produces approximately 25 million koku of rice for Rokugan. It also produces tax collectors who arrive at the farms, ready to collect 60% of everything the farmer has produced that year.

Tax collectors do not always collect food. Farmers will offer silk, sake, clothing or tea to the tax collector as well. Often times, they even make such offers as bribes to the tax collector so he won't report a new field of rice to his lord.

CRAFTSMEN AND MERCHANTS

While craftsmen and merchants may fall very low in the social order of Rokugan, they are also the richest. Samurai and peasant alike always need cobblers, carpenters, coopers, smiths and other craftsmen to repair or replace their tools, weapons, houses and clothes.

In Otosan Uchi, the capital city of the Empire, a samurai can find three bladesmiths, eight sword-sharpeners, four silversmiths, three scabbard workers, two lacquerers, two fletchers, one dyer, and a hundred sake brewers. Also, a grand total of two hundred carpenters are available and ready to work, not to mention the shinglers, thatchers, paperers, tobacco cutters, tillers and mat makers. All of these craftsmen find steady work from the peasantry, the citizens of the city, and the lord of the land.

CARPENTER CREWS

The wealthiest craftsmen in Rokugan are carpenters. They are so wealthy, in fact, that many are able to afford bodyguards to protect them



HAIR (CONTINUED)

A woman of the samurai caste almost never cuts her hair. Samurai-ko sometimes emulate their male counterparts, but not often. Often, a woman's hair can reach down to the floor. A woman only cuts her hair when she is widowed and while in mourning.



CLAN COLORS

Members of the Seven Great Clans can almost always be identified by the colors of their formal clothing. The colors most often associated with the clans are:

Crab: Blue-gray, plus black, red, and brown.

Crane: Sky blue and silver.

Dragon: Gold with dark green accents.

Lion: Yellows, browns, and earth tones.

Phoenix: Red, yellow, and orange.

Scorpion: Blood-red and black.

Unicorn: Purple, white, and gold.

against bandits. It is not an uncommon occurrence for peasants to pay local carpenters a small fee to extend that protection to them as well. Of course, the carpenter must make "arrangements" with the local magistrate to ignore such activities. No daimyo wants his authority compromised, and carpenters have been killed for offering protection to a daimyo's subjects.

There are four classifications of "carpenter" in Rokugan: the plasterer (who makes plaster walls), the roofer (who makes shingles for roofs), the stonemason (who sets the foundation of the home), and the sawyer (who measures, cuts and sets wood). These four men travel in crews, led by a carpenter who is a master of all the skills. This carpenter acts as a foreman who gets jobs for his crew.

Travel

TRAVELOGUES

Travel in Rokugan can take a long time. A man on horseback can travel 20 to 30 miles a day, depending on weather, where he begins, where he is traveling to, whether he is using one of the Emperor's roads, etc.

Each of the clans has at least three travelogues: one for the daimyo, one for his chief magistrate and another for visiting dignitaries. These small booklets include maps and lists of roads, temples, inns, way stations, towns and villages as well as friendly territories and territories to avoid.

EMPEROR'S ROADS AND WAY STATIONS

Long ago, the first Hantei ordered that roads be constructed to connect the palaces of the Great Clans and the Imperial City, Otosan Uchi. For a thousand years, these roads have been maintained by the Clans to varying degrees. The Crane spend incredible sums to keep their roads in good condition, while the Crab Clan only bothers to maintain those roads that speed up troop movements along the Shadowlands border.

Along many roads are tall, wide trees to provide shade and protection from rain. Way stations are located along the Emperor's roads; they're typically guarded by samurai apprenticed to magistrates. There are many of these way stations, all of which vary in size and staff.

The officers at way stations provide assistance to travelers, act as advance scouts (looking for invading armies) and keep an eye out for general trouble. They are often staffed with a shugenja or two, just in case of emergencies.

TRAVEL PAPERS

Well-kept roads mean quick travel between cities. It also means quick travel between provinces, which is not good for clans who fear invasion. When samurai or peasants travel, they must gain permission from their daimyo and carry travel papers (indicating their destination and business) to do so. Papers are checked at Way Stations placed at the borders of Provinces.

Food

RICE

"Have you eaten rice today?"

— Common Rokugan greeting

Rokugani do not greet each other with "Hello" or "How are you?" They ask each other if they've had anything to eat, and the one product that makes its way into every meal is rice. Rice is the staple of the Rokugan diet. It is steamed and served as a main dish, boiled into a thick gruel, or mixed and shaped with vinegar. It is often crushed and made into rice cakes or ground into flour and made into dumplings and noodles. If rice is not available, or is too expensive, millet - the poor man's rice - is used instead.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Rokugani eat a variety of vegetables (always served with rice). Vegetables are almost never eaten raw: they are steamed, fried, pickled and stewed. Popular vegetables are beans (especially the soy bean which is used to make soy sauce and tofu) which are stewed or mashed into a paste.

SEAFOOD

Seafood is a delicacy all across Rokugan. Obviously, only those who live close to the coast have access to fresh seafood. Fish is boiled, broiled, fried, stewed, or served raw on vinegar-treated rice (and called *sushi*). Typical types of seafood include: abalone, bonito, clam, crab, eels, fish maw, herring, jellyfish, kelp, mackerel, octopus, oysters, pike, pufferfish (the famous "blowfish" that is poisonous if prepared incorrectly), sardines, scallops, sea bass, sea cucumber, sea urchin, shrimp, squid, swordfish, and tuna.

MEAT

Red meat is not eaten in Rokugan. Cattle are very rare and their milk is considered more valuable than meat. Both peasants and nobility eat chicken and pork regularly, while eta eat game meat such as boar and stag. Nobility stay away from eating meat; they believe it makes them smell dirty.

DRINKS

Tea is the most popular drink in Rokugan. An entire ceremony is dedicated to the proper preparation and serving of this drink. Rokugani do not add sugar to their tea (although some Unicorn still drink theirs with horse milk).

Rice wine, called *sake*, is very popular for those who can afford it. It is served hot (at body temperature) and is drunk from small cups that can be held in one hand. A more potent version of sake is called *shochu*. Only very serious drinkers partake of *shochu*.

For the lower classes who cannot afford sake, there are fruit brandies, beers, and meads.

Clothing

Clothing is designed to keep a person warm and dry. In Rokugan, clothing has another function. You can often tell a person's station by the clothes they are wearing.

The samurai caste wear silks and cotton. The *kimono* is the robe-like, full-sleeved garment that most westerners are familiar with. In summer, Rokugani wear light silk kimonos. In winter, Rokugani wear heavier kimonos, padded with cotton. During the rainy months of spring, the umbrella is employed to keep the kimono dry. Small items can be kept in the kimono's wide sleeves. A sash, called an *obi*, is worn about the waist. The obi is pleated, which serves the purpose of pockets. Also, small pouches can be

tied to the obi for larger objects. The *daisho* is tucked under the obi. A *hakama*, a pleated, divided skirt worn over the kimono, is often worn on formal occasions. A *haori* (an upper garment worn to give the illusion of larger shoulders) is also sometimes worn on formal occasions.

THE MON

Heraldry in Rokugan is less formal than heraldry in the west. The *mon*, or Clan symbol and colors, are worn by all samurai sworn to a Clan. A *kamishimo*, which is a small vest worn over the kimono that bears the *mon*, is often worn on formal occasions. A samurai will wear the *mon* of his Clan on his back, and the *mon* of his family on his left sleeve to be close to his heart, or his right sleeve to guide his sword.

A samurai usually incorporates his Clan colors into his formal clothing, while private clothing tends to be in drab grays and browns.

Samurai often wear hats for formal occasions, which can be very simple or very extravagant.

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Women also wear kimonos, but often wear a set with complementary colors. A woman does not wear a *hakama*. Her kimono is often very long, trailing behind her. Her obi is usually wider than a man's and is tied in an elaborate bow. Her complexion is often painted white, including the lips. Her eyebrows are shaved and shapely eyebrows are painted on. Usually, it is the ladies of the Imperial Court who determine "proper" style, although many women (such as those of the Scorpion Clan) often ignore the Court's attitudes on style.

Samurai-ko, on the other hand, usually follow in the footsteps of their male counterparts. They are seen wearing *hakama*, *haori* and *daisho*, but can also be seen in more feminine dress.

PEASANT DRESS

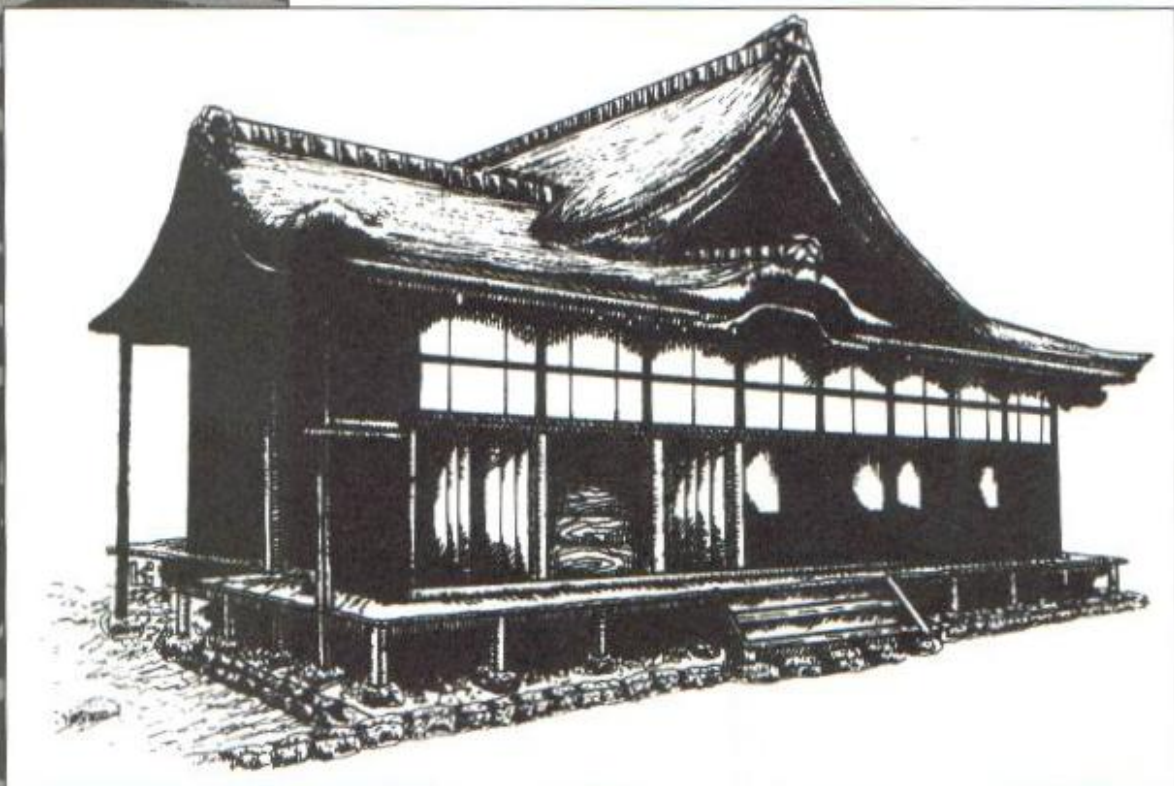
The clothing of *heimin* and *hinin* is usually



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made of cotton, hemp or wool. The colors are usually very drab (they can't afford the expensive dyes that make the nobility so colorful). Instead of umbrellas, the lower classes employ hats and overcoats made of straw. Peasant hats are very practical. They are round and wide-brimmed to

more flammable than most other wood. A quick summer brush fire can level an entire village in a single day. Valuables are kept in a stone locker in the rear of the house to protect them from fire and theft. Shoes are always removed and left in the entryway before entering the house.



ABOVE:
AN EXTERIOR
VIEW OF A
PRIEST'S
(SHUGENJA'S)
HOUSE.

keep the sun and rain out of the peasant's eyes. They wear kimonos and obi with a cotton undershirt and loincloth.

Dwellings

FARMERS

Farmers do not live on isolated farms. Farms surround a village in which all the farmers and their families live. A farmer's home is very simple. It often has two rooms: a living room and sleeping quarters for a total of approximately 500 - 600 square feet. More important villagers (such as the headman) will sometimes have a larger home, complete with a "quality room" in which he can entertain visiting samurai. The interior walls are made of paper, the floors made of wood. Homes are often built out of cedar, which is flexible (for the strong winds of storms) but also

Troughs filled with excrement can also be found along the road, which help to fertilize the fields. Travelers are encouraged to contribute.

SAMURAI

The homes of the samurai are much more extravagant than those of the peasantry, often ten times as expensive and expansive as a farmer's home. A samurai's home is always decorated with a garden, and includes three sections. The first section is used entirely for business. The least interior is reserved for guests and for sleeping. The third section is the great interior, where the food is prepared and the women have their private chambers.

THE VILLAGE

All villages are surrounded by fire ditches to help prevent the all-too-frequent fires that occur in the dry summer. They are also surrounded by trees, giving the village constant shade to protect them from the summer heat they so despise. Roads that run along a village are lined with trees (again, for shade) and tall hedges.

Castles

Each family daimyo lives in an ancestral castle which surrounds a town or city and is rimmed with farms. It is walled and moated to discourage invaders. Each castle has a number of strongholds (typically one to four) which house the barracks, the lord's residence and food stores. Each stronghold sits high on a steep stone battlement with only a narrow advance with tall steps which limits troop movement into and out of the castle to single file progress. The inner hallways of the stronghold are made of stone. It is a vast labyrinth that only allows a single man to advance at a time, making it easy to defend. Each hallway is filled with slots to shoot arrows through and holes along the ceilings to drop oil, acid and poison. Atop the stone hallways is the daimyo's home, which is a larger, more extravagant version of the samurai's home. It usually houses a retinue of forty to fifty people (in-laws, bodyguards, etc.).

Samurai who serve the lord of a castle live in either the barracks (if they are bachelors) or in the city with their wives. Samurai-ko, having lost their family during their gempukku ceremony, stay with the lord's family or in a separate barracks.

Cities

The cities that are protected by the walls and moats of the fortresses of the daimyos are the heart of Rokugan's economy. Cities are divided

into districts which are gated, walled, and watched over by the local police force (see **Yoriki** below). Identification papers are needed to pass from district to district after dark. Generally, illiterate peasants are not welcome in the city. They do their business in the village during the spring market season.

Rokugani can navigate cities by paying attention to the street names. Merchants and craftsmen reside on the same streets, and so the streets are named after their storefronts. (Need a carpenter? Go to Carpenter's Row.) Geisha houses, tea houses and theaters can be found in the same district as well (usually far away from the temple), and samurai are expected to leave their swords behind at the entryway to the geisha district.

Bushido: Code of the Warrior

Bushido is the code to which all samurai adhere. It emphasizes a life of virtue and integrity. All of these virtues are encapsulated in a samurai's Honor.

COURAGE

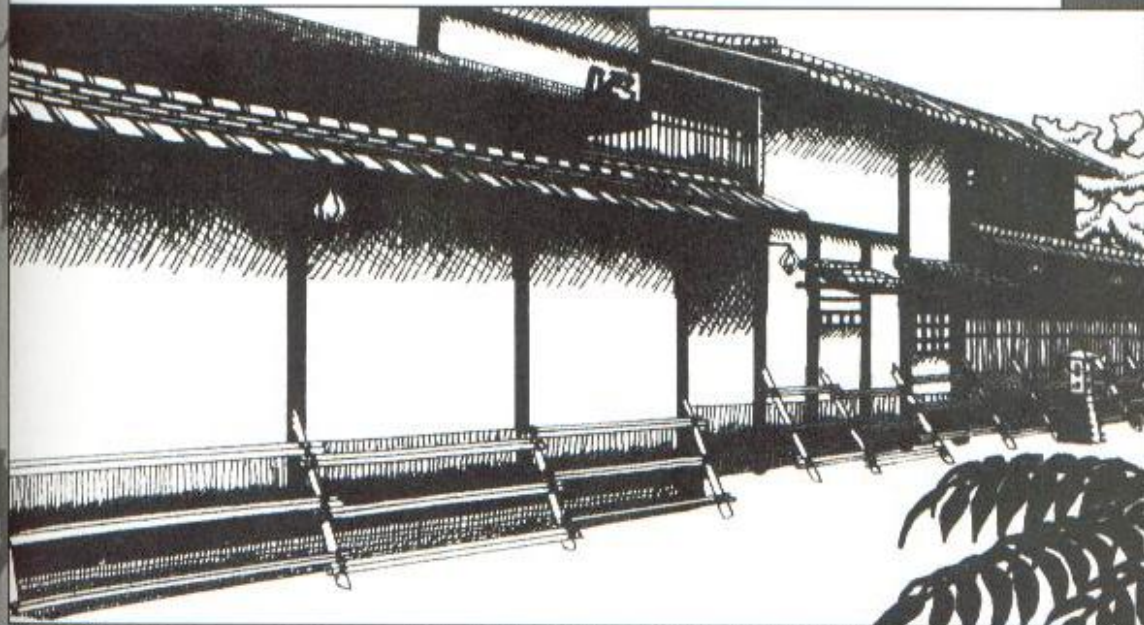
You cannot live while hiding from life.

— The Tao of Shinsei

A samurai is expected to be ready to give up his life for his daimyo at any moment. The people of Rokugan not only believe in reincarnation, but also that the actions of this life will affect a

BELOW:

**AN EXTERIOR
VIEW OF A
ROKUGANI INN.**



土

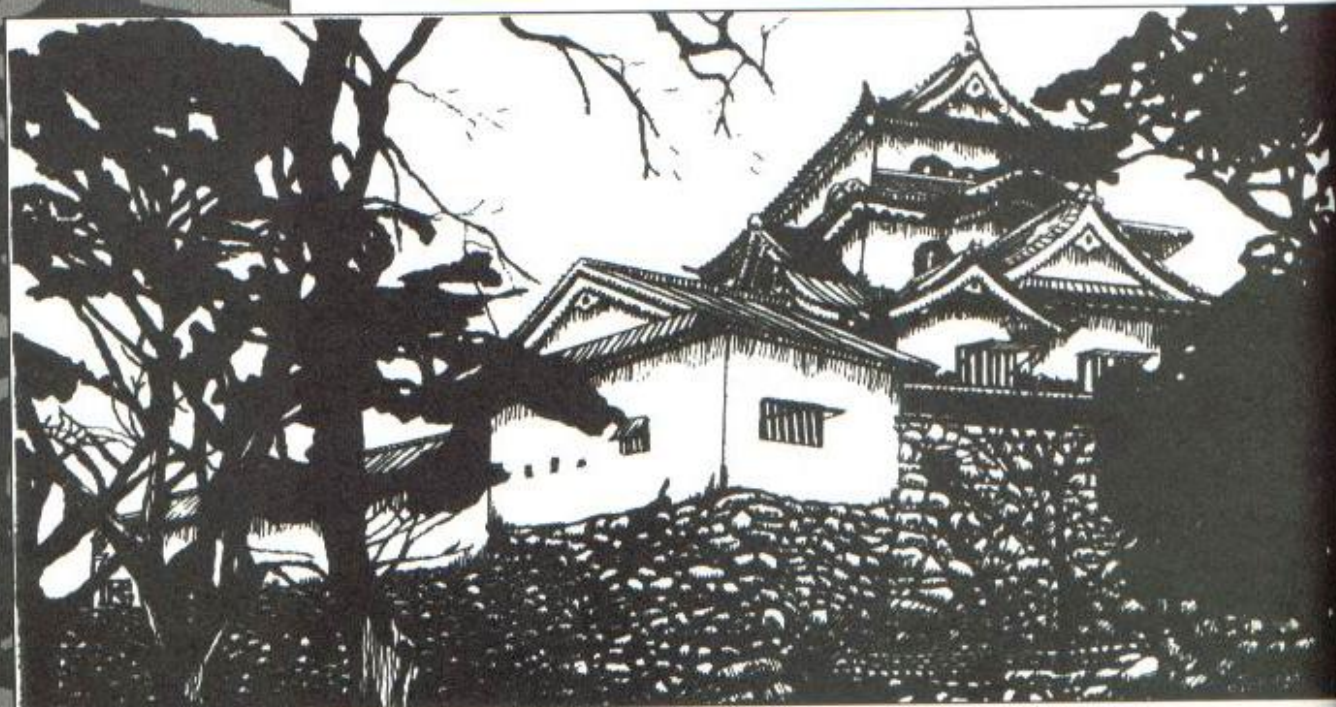
thousand lifetimes to come. This belief in *kharma* (a kind of spiritual energy that follows one's soul from life to life) shows why a samurai cares so little for his own safety. He knows that if he selflessly gives his life serving his lord, his station

SINCERITY

You own every word you speak.

— *The Tao of Shinsei*

Sincerity does not mean honesty; sincerity is the ability to appear honest. A samurai is



ABOVE:
A CASTLE
APPROPRIATE
TO A MINOR
LOCAL DAIMYO.

will be better in his next lifetime. Common folk allow fear to swallow their hearts. An extraordinary soul is the one who has the courage to truly live life to its limits, to live as if each moment is the last one.

LOYALTY

A handful of wealth is worth a handful of dust when compared to the riches a samurai's family gives to him.

— *The Tao of Shinsei*

There is another reason that a samurai is so willing to live dangerously. He knows if he gives his life for his daimyo, his daimyo will look very well upon his family. The concept of loyalty goes both ways. A daimyo will be loyal to a fallen samurai's memory by rewarding his family in return for his devotion. This concept of giving one's life to better one's family is very important. In Rokugan, nothing is as important as your family. Without family, a samurai's life (or even a peasant's life) is worth nothing.

expected to lie to protect his family's honor. That is why in court, the testimony of family members is not considered valid. A man or woman who can cry on command has a valuable skill in Rokugan. The ability to appear sincere while apologizing is highly regarded. Rokugani are more concerned with saying what people want to hear than telling the truth. To tell the truth brings embarrassment to all parties involved, and is therefore dishonorable.

On the other hand, a samurai's word is always good. If a samurai says he will do something, he will do it, or he will die trying.

ON

A courageous man has no need to be cruel.

— *The Tao of Shinsei*

Rokugan is more concerned with appearance than truth. Being considerate to others can win many favors, while being inconsiderate can cost you your life. The main reason for all this politeness is the idea of *On* (which translates best into "respectability" or "face"). *On* is literally how

well respected you are in your caste. A samurai with no On has been disgraced and may only save his On by committing seppuku. Rokugani are respectful of each other because causing a "scene" will bring a loss of On to both parties. Discipline is very important in Rokugan, and when someone shows a burst of emotion, you could say they have "lost their face."

EXCELLENCE

While you rest, your enemy practices.

— The Tao of Shinsei

A samurai must always strive to be the best in all aspects of his life, not just military matters. Every action requires the utmost concentration, because every repetition brings the practitioner closer to perfection. The Rokugani believe that the philosophy of Shinsei can be practiced in all things: swordsmanship, hunting, gardening... Even breathing is an act that can always be improved.

DUELS

The concept of the duel is not foreign to western shores. However, in Rokugan, duels can involve more than just a lethal exchange of steel...

A summer wind sweeps the green of the trees that stand beside a short bridge across a river. On either side of the bridge step two samurai. They reach the center, each of them realizing that one must stand aside for the other.

One of them says, "Let me see your stance."

The second obliges and falls into a ready position. The first follows his example.

Tense moments pass. Then, suddenly, they both stand straight and the first steps aside to allow the second to pass.

What just happened? In game terms, the two samurai made Perception rolls and compared Glory totals. But that doesn't answer what happened in the "real world" of Rokugan. The answer, of course, is that a duel occurred on that bridge, and one samurai stood aside to allow the victor to pass. The samurai evaluated each other's skill and the "loser" (who knew he would have lost in a duel with this opponent) stood aside to let the better man pass.

There are many kinds of duels that samurai engage in, and not all of them end in bloodshed. Many samurai feel that drawing blood when it is not necessary brings shame to their blade.

Samurai sometimes duel with wooden swords

BELOW:

**A RATHER
MORE
ELABORATE
CASTLE, AS FOR
A FAMILY
DAIMYO.**





AN EXAMPLE OF GIFT GIVING

The room was not dark, just lingering on the edge of twilight. The samurai knelt before Lady Kachiko, bowing low, touching his head to the floor.

"You performed well, Lord Shinjo. Here, please accept this gift as a token of my appreciation."

Shinjo Yasamura politely shook his head. "Oh, no, Lady. I could accept no gift for only performing my duty."

"I am not rewarding you for bringing me Lord Yokatsu's message, I am rewarding the speed with which you brought it.

Please accept my gift."

"I cannot, my Lady," Yasamura said. "Seeing that the tales of your beauty fall short of the truth is enough reward for me."

Kachiko smiled. "I insist, Lord Shinjo. Please, accept my gift."

called *boken*, especially if they are friendly, or from the same Clan. Clan daimyos often forbid dueling within the Clan to prevent the loss of valuable skilled swordsmen.

When a samurai goes seeking a place to test his skill, he often goes to rival sword schools, "looking for a lesson." This is done to show the superiority of one's own technique over the technique taught by the rival school. This activity occurs with regularity in Rokugan, with brash samurai trying to gain favor with their sensei by proving their worth against rival schools.

REVENGE

"No man may sleep while the killer of his father walks the earth."

— Rokugani proverb

When a member of a samurai family is slain (including a sensei or daimyo), any member of that family may go to the killer's daimyo and ask permission for revenge, although the right to do so legally falls to the first-born son. If the killing occurred between families of the same Clan, the samurai seeks out his own daimyo. If the killing occurred between families of different Clans, the procedure is different. If, for instance, a Crane samurai was killed by a Dragon samurai, the brothers of the Crane samurai must ask Doji Satsume (the daimyo of the Crane Clan) to ask Togashi Yokuni (the daimyo of the Dragon Clan) permission to authorize the duel. It may seem as if daimyos would reject such challenges, but that would show their lack of faith in their own samurai, and could also be seen as a display of cowardice.

Before such a challenge can be made, however, the family must be certain of the killer's identity, and the killing must have been "public," that is, there must have been witnesses to the killing. Once the challenge has been accepted, it is made publicly known. Magistrates are not to interfere in a blood challenge, and anyone who does so is accepting the consequences. It is considered a capital crime to interfere with a man trying to avenge the spirit of his ancestor.

Needless to say, once the challenger or the challenged (or both) are killed, the Blood Challenge is over. Death in a Blood Challenge is a rightful death, and therefore, cannot be "avenged," at least not within the confines of the Emperor's law.

BRAGGING

The samurai rode out before his army, the dew on his armor gleaming in the early morning light. He thrust his spear into the air and shouted across the field at us:

"I was at the battle of Denoben Falls! It was my arrow that slew Iuchi Kizawan! When Otomo Chizen's head fell from his shoulders, it was I who was wiping his blood from my blade! I am Matsuo Gohei! The blood of a hundred generations of Lions flows in my veins! This day, your blood will feed the grass beneath your feet."

Samurai are famous for their pre-battle bragging. Bragging allows the opposing commander to know who it is he is facing; a possible psychological advantage. Granted, a slight advantage at best, but as a samurai sees battle, a slight advantage is all that is needed to win the day.

Bragging is also a way of calling out your opponent. By stating your name, lineage and deeds, you are telling the opponent that you have no fear. You're not worried who he is; he should be worried about who you are. It also identifies a samurai who wishes it to be known he is at the battle, thus bringing prestige and honor to his family and Clan.

SWORDS

A sword is sometimes referred to as a samurai's soul. Swords are handed down from generation to generation, and the people of Rokugan believe that continual close contact with an item can leave a "spiritual echo" on it. When a samurai wields his family's sword, he is also carrying around a part of the souls of his ancestors. Thus, to show disrespect to a samurai's sword is to show disrespect to his ancestors.

What a samurai does with his sword when visiting another's home is indicative of his opinion of his host. A samurai always leaves his sword at the front door when he is visiting a friend. When visiting a stranger or an enemy, a samurai always carries his sword with him into the home. However, when he is greeted by his host (seated in the greeting hall), he can either place his sword on his left or on his right. If he places it on his left (making it easy to draw), it shows that he does not trust his host - or perhaps his host should not trust him. If he places it on his right, it shows that he trusts his host, because he cannot get to his sword quickly. Also, if he places the sword next to him with the hilt pointed

toward his host, it shows that he does not think much of the host's skill with a sword.

Touching a samurai's sword, or even breathing on it, shows great disrespect for the sword, and a magistrate would condone the samurai attempting to "cleanse the stain" by drawing the blood of the offender. Woe to the man who chose to walk over a sword rather than walk around it. A typical sign of a ronin is a samurai who has his sword on his shoulder rather than on his belt, showing his nonchalant view of "respectable" behavior.

Katana are kept in the obi "blade down" (so the saya, or scabbard, does not rest on the blade, thus dulling it). However, when a samurai is insulted, he turns the katana "blade up" so when it is drawn, the edge is pointing at the offending party.

Etiquette

Rokugan is a land obsessed with etiquette. There is a proper way to do everything. All of this stems from the Celestial Order discussed above. There are many rules that Rokugani must follow, but instead of dwelling on every individual rule, we will discuss the spirit of the rule instead, to give you a strong idea of why it came into play.

PERCEPTION AND TRUTH

It's been mentioned before, but no amount of emphasis can be placed on the difference between perception and reality.

To be honest in Rokugan is to be rude. All that matters is perception, not truth. If a samurai is a drunken, gambling, womanizing wretch, the court doesn't care, as long as he's discreet about it. To point out another's weakness embarrasses them and you, thus bringing shame to his family and your own. The same can be said of faith and bushido. If a samurai presents himself as a pious man trying to burn away his worldly concerns, the court considers him honorable. The truth is often spoken of in gossip circles, but then it is regarded for what it is: harmless gossip, and it gets ignored.

The Clans are concerned with results. A samurai who wins battles and brings his family glory is hailed for his greatness. A samurai who does not shave his head while he is young so he will not bring further shame to his family.

Once again, everyone in Rokugan knows that many samurai are wretched, spoiled brats who

need to be taught a lesson in humility, but in order to save face, they say nothing. It is the clever samurai who is able to humble brutish samurai without causing his family a loss of face that is hailed above all others.

GIFTS

While many western economies are based on the bartering system, Rokugan is based on gift giving. While this may not seem to be a great difference, it is one of the most fundamental differences between western cultures and Rokugan. The giving of gifts is a very formalized and honored practice. The way a Rokugani gives you a gift can tell you if he respects you, if he is a friend, or if he is your deadliest enemy. When you give a gift, the recipient is assumed to be able to return your generosity equitably and quickly. You must not give a gift to someone that is beyond their means to return. This tells the recipient that you know he cannot return your generosity, thus insulting him.

Also, the giving of the gift has a ritual that must be observed. When the giver offers the gift, the recipient must refuse the gift twice. This offers the giver three opportunities to show that he truly intends to give the gift. Taking the gift too soon impugns the giver's sincerity. Also, if the giver offers the gift, is refused and then fails to continue to offer the gift, that shows the recipient that the giver never meant to give it in the first place. Gifts can be of great monetary value, but the most valuable gifts are those of sentimental value.

BOWING AND KNEELING

Always bow to someone in your own social caste; i.e. samurai bow to other samurai, heimin bow to other heimin. Always kneel before someone who is of greater social standing. Samurai always kneel before their daimyos, and heimin always kneel before samurai. If bowing to someone who is of superior station (such as your father), always bow a little lower than he bows to show him respect. Samurai and eta alike kneel before the temple of the Sun Goddess.

Politics

THE EMPEROR

"There cannot be two suns in Heaven, nor can there be two Emperors on Earth."

— Rokugani proverb

At the center of the court is the Emperor. The

AN EXAMPLE OF GIFT GIVING (CONTINUED)

The Unicorn samurai bowed again and took the package that lay before him. He peeled away the paper and found a beautiful kimono, fit perfectly to his size and build. And embroidered into the silk was the mon of the Scorpion.

"I expect to see you wearing my gift the next time we meet. At your daimyo's birthday party, I believe?"

Yasamura nodded, with only a hint of emotion escaping his voice. "Aye, Lady. I would not dream of dishonoring such a... beautiful gift."

Kachiko beamed. "I know you won't, Lord Yasamura."



WHAT IS THE EMPEROR'S COURT?

There are no phones in Rokugan.

There are no televisions, no movies, no radio and no automobiles. In short, when winter comes along with its cold wind and snow, there isn't a whole lot to do. And so, during those cold winter months, Rokugani spend their hours in court.

Winter is Rokugan's social season, and at the end of the fall, nobility begin to decide where they are going to spend the winter. Invitations are sent out by all the Clans, promising the best food and entertainment. Of course, the guest who brings the most amount of honor to a household is the Emperor, and everyone tries to gain an invitation to the household he will be staying at.

Emperor creates all the laws, is the head of the church and owns all the land. He has a bureau of administrators who handle the daily affairs of state. Justice is meted out by the Emperor and his rightly appointed officials.

THE IMPERIAL COURT

Members of the Imperial Court are the direct members of the Emperor's family. They are the aunts and uncles, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of the Emperor, and while they have no real political power, they have immediate access to his ear. The Emperor's court is filled almost exclusively with members of the Crane Clan, but there are those from other Clans who have married into the Emperor's family to gain access to the privilege of the Imperial Court. The members of the court do not inherit land from their position. Without land, the Imperial Court does not have access to real resources, and they must trade political favors for money. Some members of the Court inherit cash from the Emperor, but most must rely on exchange of favor to make their living.

THE EMPEROR'S MAGISTRATES

Those who are appointed to mete out justice in the Empire are called "magistrates." These officials are given the Emperor's authority. In other words, questioning a magistrate's authority is questioning the authority of the Emperor, a crime punishable by death. Traditionally, the magistrates are drawn from the Seven Clans. The Clan who controls the most magistrates has great political power in the Empire.

The duty of the magistrates is to keep the

Emperor's laws enforced. Magistrates may employ retainers to assist in their duty, but they must be paid for by the magistrate. Magistrates meet once a month to report their activities to the chief magistrate: the Emperor's Emerald Champion. The Emerald Champion is responsible for the activities of the magistrates. The position of chief magistrate is a life-long position, determined by right of combat. When a Champion dies, a tournament is held to determine a new Champion. The winner of the tournament gains the office.

Magistrates are chosen by the Emperor and, on occasion and with the Emperor's permission, the Emerald Champion. Magistrates can be removed from position by the Emperor and the Emerald Champion. There is no fixed number of magistrates; the Emperor and Emerald Champion decide how many are needed.

A magistrate's duties are many. He is given assignments by the Emerald Champion, and he is bound by duty to perform those duties to the best of his ability. Some duties could bring much glory to a magistrate's family, such as routing a small Shadowlands army that has crept into the Empire or stopping an assassination attempt on a member of the Imperial Family. Other duties are not so glamorous. Watching over a way station on one of the Emperor's roads is a good example of the necessary duties a magistrate needs to perform in order to gain favor with the Champion.

Magistrates are rewarded for good service, and dismissed if they fail in their duties. A magistrate of the Emerald Champion can expect to earn anywhere from two thousand to four thousand koku a year, which is chiefly used to pay his own assistants.

JUSTICE

Samurai are official representatives of their daimyo and the daimyo are official





WHY THE EMPEROR'S COURT?

There are great opportunities for a samurai to gain glory and prestige in court. After all, those in attendance are the greatest daimyos in Rokugan. Impressing the Emerald Champion with your swordsmanship can get you an appointment as a magistrate, while impressing the ladies of the court with your wit and candor will win you great fame (and other rewards) across the Empire.

Lady Bayushi Kachiko of the Scorpion Clan is the most influential woman in Rokugan. She is the Emperor's most trusted advisor in matters pertaining to the court, and what Lady Kachiko is "up to" this year is always a matter of great attention and anticipation during Rokugan's social season.

representatives of the Emperor. The Emperor is the chief lawmaker in the land, and therefore, the samurai and daimyos are the keepers of that justice, just as knights were the keepers of the King's justice in feudal Europe. Villages often have heimin "police" who inherit their position from their fathers to keep the peace when samurai aren't around. However, having a drunken samurai around can sometimes be as deadly as having a gang of criminals in your tavern house. Rokugan has a very unforgiving justice system, but before anyone can be brought to justice, a confession must be made by the perpetrator, or the criminal must be caught red handed. Torture is a common method of obtaining confessions.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Murder can cause a blood feud (see *Revenge* above). Forgery and robbery are punishable by death, and the perpetrator's wife and children are slain as well. Treason against the Emperor or daimyo is also punishable by death. Samurai may escape execution (and a loss of honor to their family) through *seppuku*. Sometimes, when the crime is particularly vile, samurai are offered the chance to commit *seppuku*, but their daimyo offers them a wooden sword to complete the ritual. This shows that the daimyo does not believe the samurai has the courage to complete the act, and is only going through the motions to save face. *Seppuku* can even be denied to a samurai (a severe punishment), forcing him to live out the rest of his life in shame. Lesser crimes can be amended through public beatings, house arrest (for samurai only), fines, or "cuffing" which involves the offender being handcuffed for extended periods of time.

Often, when a villager commits a crime, the headman of the village is punished for his crime. Likewise, when a samurai's son is found guilty, the father is expected to atone for the crime.

THE CLAN DAIMYOS

While the Emperor holds the highest position in the Empire, it is held through prestige and not real military or political power. The most powerful positions in the Empire are held by the Great Lords, or *daimyos*, of the Seven Clans. The Emperor holds power because of the daimyos' respect of his position. While the Emperor lacks real power, the daimyos can take no action without his blessing. The Emperor is the final

authority in all matters.

The daimyos' main source of power is land. While the Emperor owns all the land, he has given regency to the daimyos. The daimyos tax the peasantry, giving a portion to the Emperor and keeping the rest. Through taxation, the daimyos gain real resources, while the Imperial Court must curry favor in exchange for hard cash. With their access to real money, the daimyos are able to form armies and (with political influence) use them to add to their lands.

THE DAIMYO'S MAGISTRATES

Every daimyo has a group of advisors and magistrates. The most important of these is called a *karo*. He is in charge of all magistrates and is chief advisor. The *karo* is given his position by the daimyo, and likewise, the daimyo can take his position away. This is not often done, however, because of the danger of a *karo* going to another Clan, taking his advice (and Clan secrets) with him. The *karo* can expect a bonus of approximately seven hundred to two thousand *koku* a year.

Like the Emperor's magistrates, a daimyo's magistrates are representatives of their lord. To question their authority is to question the authority of the daimyo. While it is typical practice to give each magistrate a region of authority, it is not uncommon for a daimyo to have "wandering" magistrates who walk the countryside and halt injustice where they find it. It is also not uncommon for a daimyo to have "secret" magistrates to keep an eye on the regions he feels suspicious about.

YORIKI

Each magistrate has approximately 25 *yoriki* working under him. *Yoriki* are samurai who keep the peace on a local level. There are two *yoriki* per town, each alternating a month of duty.

Yoriki are allowed "deputies" called *doshin*. *Doshin* are drawn up from the peasant class. They are not permitted to wear swords, but instead use non-lethal weapons. Most prefer to use a *jitte*, a two-pronged sword-catching hand weapon useful for disarming drunk samurai and rowdy bandits (see illustration in *The Book of Fire*, p. 125).

THE LESSER CLANS

During war, political and social rules often fall by the wayside. One side-effect of this fact are the *jizamurai*, small bands of samurai who have formed into "minor Clans." A good example of

土

jizamurai is a ronin who is given a small fortification as a reward for his servitude to the Emperor (or other lord). The ronin offers protection to the peasants of the area and also sends word out to any other ronin who wish to help him protect his lands. The ronin becomes a lord, with land, vassals and samurai at his service.

While it may sound unlikely, this occurs with great frequency during wartime. Monks and peasants who serve a lord with ferocity and valor may receive land and title for their service. They rise quickly through the ranks and become well respected members of the samurai caste.

THE FAMILIES

Under each of the clan daimyos are families. The head of each family swears fealty to the daimyo of their Clan. The samurai of the families swear fealty to the head of their family, thus swearing fealty to the daimyo, and to the Emperor. Just as the magistrates of the daimyos have many duties to perform, so do the samurai of the families. They tax the peasantry, delivering the bounty to the magistrates of the Clan daimyo. Because they deal more directly with the peasantry, they tend to be more sympathetic to the lower classes.



Rules

Quick and Dirty Rules

Legend of the Five Rings is more of a storytelling game than a board game. An entire night of L5R can go on with no one rolling dice and no rules coming into play. However, when conflict arises, the rules are there to help determine the outcome of the conflict.

In general, the rules will come into play when the outcome of one or more characters' actions are in question. Does the shugenja cast the spell successfully? Is the samurai's strike strong enough to break through the Oni's carapace? Is the Crane diplomat's argument convincing? All of these questions are answered with a roll of the dice.

The rules are designed to be flexible. All of them are suggestions to make your game run smoothly. If you're comfortable using every rule we give you (and making up a few homebrewed rules yourself), go ahead and do so. If you feel like throwing all the rules out the window, that's fine, too. You bought this book, after all. Have fun with it. Play around with the combat system or spell system if you feel like it, or perhaps devise some of your own random charts for character generation. Just remember the L5R RPG Golden Rule.

L5R RPG Golden Rule

If the rules ever get in the way of having fun, ignore the rules.

The rules are designed to let you figure out whose actions are successful and whose end in failure. But before we start talking about actions, let's talk a little bit about time.

Turns

The Game Master has the ultimate authority over the movement of time during a story. He tells the characters how long things take to happen (using his better judgment, of course). However, just to make things easier to keep track of, once combat begins, time is measured in "Turns." Generally, a Turn can be as long as five seconds or as short as a heartbeat. Under normal circumstances, a character may only perform one action per Turn.

Rolling Dice

Like many traditional board games, L5R uses dice. The L5R system uses 10-sided dice, and you'll need several; they're available at the game store where you bought this book. When you read the rules regarding dice, you will encounter two words that need to be clarified: "Keep" and "Drop." Whenever you roll a number of dice to determine the outcome of an Action, you will keep some dice and drop others. Dice that you keep are added together to make a total, while dice that you drop are not counted toward the total. When you roll a group of dice, you want to keep the ones that roll high (10, 9 and 8) and drop the ones that roll low (3, 2 and 1).

Example: Allan is rolling five dice, three of which he may keep. He has to drop the other two. Allan rolls and gets 9, 4, 3, 5 and 7. Since he can only keep three of the five dice he rolled, Allan decides to keep the 9, 7 and 5, and he drops the 4 and 3. This gives him a total roll of 21.

Rings and Traits

(NOTE: While discussing the Rings and Traits, we suggest you have a copy of the character sheet handy for visual reference. The character sheet can be found in the back of the book.)

How strong is your character? More importantly, is he stronger than the character your friend is creating? These questions are answered with a system of Traits. Just as some people are stronger, faster or more outgoing than others, so are the characters you will play. Imagine that everyone in Rokugan is ranked from 1 to 5 in a set of traits. A character with a Strength of 4 is more physically powerful than a

character with a Strength of 1, and so on.

Every character in Rokugan has a set of five Rings based on Shinsei's Five Elements: Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Void. All but one of the Rings have two "Traits" that allow you to further customize your character. A character's Ring always equals his lowest Trait associated with that Ring.

The Ring of Earth represents a character's stamina and willpower. Water is his strength and perception. His Fire Ring represents his agility and intelligence. Air represents his reflexes and his awareness. Lastly, a character's Void is his ability to draw from the strength and virtues of all five elements in a unified action.

The Two Rolls

There are two kinds of rolls in L5R: Simple and Contested.

A Simple Roll is used when a character is acting on his own, when only his own abilities are being tested.

A Contested Roll, on the other hand, occurs when another character is actively opposing (or contesting) his Action.

The Simple Roll

- Step One: The player declares an action and the GM assigns a Target Number.

- Step Two: Roll a number of dice equal to the character's Trait and add them together.

- Step Three: Compare the total generated by the roll with the TN.

- Step Four: If the roll is greater than or equal to the TN, the action is successful. If it is lower than the TN, the action fails.

A Simple Roll is an Action whose outcome is based solely on the skill and ability of the character. "Is a character strong enough to lift that large rock?" is an example of a Simple Roll. The GM decides the character's appropriate Trait and a difficulty for the Roll (the Earth Ring or Strength Trait would be most appropriate for picking up a large rock, and picking up a large rock would be considered difficult - maybe a TN of 20), and the player rolls a number of 10-sided dice equal to his Trait. Then you compare the total on the dice with the Target Number. If his roll is equal to or greater than the Target Number, then he's succeeded. If his roll is less than the TN, then the character has failed. The GM assigns Target Numbers for all rolls using the chart as a guide.

Quick and Dirty

If you ever get confused about what to do or how to resolve an action, just follow these three steps:

1. The Game Master assigns a Target Number (between 5 and 40, usually 15).

2. Determine which Trait and Skill (if any) are appropriate to the action.

3. Roll the dice and add the result. If the player rolls equal to or over the Target Number, he succeeds. If he doesn't, he fails.

The Target Number Chart

5 = Mundane
10 = Easy
15 = Average (This is the default Target Number)
20 = Hard
25 = Very Hard
30 = Heroic
35 = Never Done Before
40 = Never Be Done Again



CONTESTED ROLLS

• **Step One:** The player declares an action that involves another character or NPC.

• **Step Two:** Both characters roll a number of dice equal to their appropriate Traits. The TN is equal to the opponent's Trait x 5.

• **Step Three:** Compare the totals. One of three results occurs:

1) If only one Contestant succeeds his roll, he succeeds.

2) If both Contestants succeed on their rolls, the one who rolled higher wins, but only marginally.

3) If neither Contestant succeeds their rolls, the Contest continues to the next round.

THE CONTESTED ROLL

Contested Rolls are a little different from Simple Rolls. A character needs to make a Contested Roll when another person is resisting his Action. The GM tells him to roll a number of dice equal to the appropriate Trait, just like a Simple Test, but:

- The TN for a Contested Roll is equal to the opposed Trait times five.

- The result of the contest is determined by the success of both characters in the contest.

In a contested roll, one of three results can occur. 1) If only one contestant succeeds in his roll, he wins the contest decisively. 2) If both contestants succeed in their rolls, the one who rolled higher wins, but marginally. 3) If neither contestant succeeds in their rolls, the contest continues to the next round.

For instance, let us say a character is having an arm wrestling match with another character. Both participants would make a roll. The character has a Strength of 4, while his opponent has a Strength of 5. The Target Number for both parties is equal to the contested trait x 5. The character's TN is 25 (Strength 5 x 5) while his opponent's TN is 20 (Strength 4 x 5). Both roll their dice to beat the TN.

The character rolls his four dice and gets 4, 8, 3, and 9 for a total of 24. This is less than his TN of 25, so he fails. His opponent rolls and gets 7, 8, 5, 3, 4 and 5. His total is 32, higher than his TN of 20, so he succeeds. The Opponent wins the contest.

USING SKILLS

When a character uses a skill, the GM decides which trait best suits the situation. For instance, if a samurai is swinging his sword, the use of his Kenjutsu (Swordsmanship) skill would probably

be Agility + Kenjutsu. However, if he is evaluating the quality of a sword, he would roll Perception + Kenjutsu. The character rolls a number of dice equal to his Trait + Skill, but only keeps (counts) a number of dice equal to his Trait. Skills allow the character to roll additional dice and drop the low rolls that they make.

As these rules continue, we will use the notation "Trait + Skill." This means you roll a number of dice equal to the Trait Rank plus the Skill Rank, but only keep a number of dice equal to the Trait. There will be times when other words will replace "Trait" and/or "Skill", but you always keep a number of dice equal to the first word in the equation. Due to Contested Rolls or Wounds (physical damage a character may take during a story), a player may actually end up rolling fewer dice than are being kept. In this case, he always keeps the dice that he rolls.

RAISES

When the GM gives a player a TN that's a little too easy, or if the player wants to achieve something spectacular, the player may raise the TN by 5 point increments.

"Bidding up," or Raising the TN will increase just how impressive the success will be. Raising allows a character to complete tasks more quickly, more effectively, or with more style. A "called shot" (striking an opponent in the hand, firing an arrow into an opponent's leg, etc.) is an example of bidding up, but the GM will tell the player how difficult the called shot is, and tell the player how many raises are required to achieve the exact called shot intended. As the rules go on, you will see more references to "Raises" - they always mean a 5 point increase to the TN in order to achieve a greater success. Remember that while you increase the level of success, you are also increasing your chance of failure. If the target number is increased by the character's increments other than 5 points (through magic or special abilities), each increase of 5 above the base TN is still considered a "raise." A player can



Raise his character's TN more times than he has rank in the Void Ring; if your character has a Void of 2, you can only Raise once or twice per roll.

Occasionally a character will receive a "Free Raise." A Free Raise gives the character the results of a raise, but doesn't increase the Target Number.

You can find examples of raises in **The Book of Fire**.

QUICK AND DIRTY REVISITED

All the rules for resolution of actions in L5R follow three steps. Whenever you aren't sure what to do, just remember the three steps and you'll do fine.

1. Assign a Target Number.
2. Determine which Trait and/or Skill (if any) are appropriate to the action.
3. Roll the dice. If the character rolls equal to or over the Target Number, he succeeds. If he doesn't, he fails.

That's it. Everything else is just filling in the details.

GAME TERMS

Action: A single act taken by a character during a turn. Every character may perform one action per turn.

Character: A list of words and numbers that represents a persona. Every player takes the role of a character in the story presented by the Game Master.

Contested Roll: An action that a character takes against an opponent who is actively resisting that action.

Free Raise: When a character gains the benefit of a raise without actually raising the TN.

Game Master (GM): The player who runs the game. He doesn't play a particular character, but instead plays all the characters the other players will encounter in Rokugan. He's also the only person who gets to read the **Book of Void**, the last chapter of this book.

Glory Rank: A number that represents how well-respected a character is in Rokugan's social circles. Glory is measured in Ranks and Points. Every 10 Glory Points equals one Glory Rank. A character's Glory Rank is directly influenced by his School Rank (see below).

Keep and Drop: When a character takes an Action, the player rolls a number of dice. Throughout the rule book, the total is always listed with this formula: "A + B." "A" is the number of dice he can keep (add together) and

"B" is the number of dice he must drop (cannot add to the total).

NPC: Non-Player Character. This is a character whose part is played by the Game Master, not one of the other players.

Raise: When a TN is assigned by the GM, a player may choose to raise the TN in increments of 5. For every 5 points a player raises the TN, the quality of his success increases.

Rank: A number, usually between one and five, that represents a Trait or Skill. The higher the Rank, the stronger the Trait or Skill.

Ring: One of the five words that describe and define all living creatures in Rokugan. The five Rings are Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Void. Rings are typically listed with a Rank from one to five. The higher the Rank, the stronger the Ring.

Roll: A number of dice rolled to determine the success or failure of an action.

School Rank: A number that represents the level of accomplishment a character has achieved in his school. School Rank influences Glory Rank (see above).

Simple Roll: An action whose outcome is based solely on the skill and ability of the character.

Skill: A word that describes knowledge the character has learned. All Skills are accompanied by Ranks from one to five. The higher the Rank, the more accomplished that character is in that particular Skill.

Trait: A pair of words, one physical and one mental, that further define the five Rings of Earth, Fire, Water, and Air. Traits are typically listed with a rank from one to five. The higher the rank, the stronger the Trait.

Target Number (TN): A number assigned by the GM when a character declares an action. The higher the TN, the more difficult the action will be to accomplish.

Turns: A value of time. Each turn is approximately five seconds long. A character may take one action per turn.

Wounds: A measure of a character's overall health. A character has a number of Wounds that can be lost. The lower his Wound total, the closer he comes to death.



ZEROES

Whenever a player rolls a 0, it reads as a 10. He may re-roll the 0 and add the next roll to the first one. For instance, a player rolls a 0. He rolls the die again and gets a 5. This makes the total 15. As long as the player keeps rolling 0's, he can keep rolling and adding.



*chapter
two*

水

water

The truth of the world can be found sitting at the riverside. The river never begins, the river never ends. All of life is like the river. Lessons never begin and lessons never end.

— The Tao of Shinsei



The sunrise spread soft warmth over his face and Ginawa smiled as he scratched at the beard on his chin. He had settled into the canter of his steed and the hot rice from two hours before made his stomach quiet and content. He rubbed his belly and felt his smile grow wider as the sunlight grew warmer.

To his right, Hijiko made a sound of disgust. "Where are your manners?" she asked.

Ginawa laughed. "With my name, samurai-ko. Besides, it is a samurai's skill that keeps him alive, not his manners."

Her gaze bore into him. "You are not a ronin today, Ginawa-san. You are a representative of my lord, Ataka. You are also my assistant, *yoriki*, which means your actions reflect on me. Try to behave." She paused a moment, watching his reaction. "Or we will see if your poor manners have affected your skill more than you know."

Ginawa pulled the reins of his horse and it slowed to a stop. Hijiko followed suit.

"Let's find out," he said.

She smiled. "All right. Let's find out."

Their horses stood tied to a tree in a quiet field. Far away, a single woman picked rice from the fields as the shadow of a castle fell over her. If the woman knew they were there, she did not show it. Ginawa wondered for a moment what daimyo lived in the castle, but then he turned

back to Hijiko and nodded. "I am ready."

"Then let's begin," she said, and took three steps back.

The two samurai stood only five paces apart. All about them, the wind waved the flowery branches of the trees. Their katana were placed to the side. Long, shaved willow branches would have to do for now. Ginawa felt the impromptu *boken's* weight and made a mental adjustment. He wouldn't be using the *luchiban* blade, and that would make things different.

He let his gaze focus on the spot where Hijiko's collarbones met just under her chin. *Never trust the eyes*, he heard his sensei whisper in his ear from across the years. *Men can train their eyes to lie*. Ginawa almost felt himself nodding in agreement as he settled into his stance.

Across the field, Hijiko's right foot moved behind her and she brought her *boken* up over her right shoulder. She let it rest there, waiting to see Ginawa's response.

Ginawa ignored the posture. His focus remained on her neck and shoulders. He let his breathing fall into a slow, methodical pace, then shifted it and watched Hijiko's response.

She was unmoved.

She knows not to trust my breathing, he thought. *Good*.

He let his thoughts fall away, let the moment enter him. He had examined everything. He knew the length of the *boken*, knew Hijiko's reach, knew the ground about him. He did not know her speed. That meant he would just have to be faster.

He took one more breath and by the time he took another, it was over.

The duel was like all others. He was only barely aware of the movements. He felt them, but no organ in his body commanded them. His thought and motion were one action, no hesitation or doubt hindered him.

He charged two steps forward, further than she suspected he could move. He saw that much in her step back... no, her stance changed in mid-motion and he had to change his movement. He heard the hardwood swords sliding and he moved to the left as his *boken* continued on its deadly path. She pivoted also, bringing her own *boken* up and about, protecting her right side.

He felt the momentum of her movement and used it. He felt her pushing her *boken*, stepped aside, used the momentum of her movement to change his wooden sword's motion, from sliding

along hers to slash at the back of her neck. She spun about, swinging low toward his belly. He leapt back, dropping the tip of the boken quickly. Ginawa dropped back into his original position and watched Hijiko do the same... from five steps away.

"Very impressive," she said. "But you still lost."

Ginawa smiled. "Did I? I wasn't certain."

"You were rushed, Ginawa-san. You are out of breath. You were forced to compensate twice. You lost."

He shrugged. "Perhaps." He turned away and walked toward the horses.

She's right, the voice of his sensei whispered in his ear. *You are clumsy. Lazy. You treat discipline like an enemy.* Ginawa shrugged again. "Perhaps," he whispered.

"Talking to yourself, eh? Not a good sign."

He jumped at the sound of her voice and she laughed. He turned about and saw she had run catch up with him. "You shouldn't sneak like that," he scolded. "Only ninja sneak."

She made an annoyed sound between her teeth. "Ninja? Don't tell me you fall in for peasant superstition, Ginawa-san!"

He tossed aside the tree branch and she did the same. "No, I do not believe in superstitions, Hijiko," he said through clenched teeth. "Only what I have seen with my own eyes."

She climbed up into her own saddle. "With your own eyes? You've seen a ninja?"

Ginawa nodded. "*Hai*," he said, his voice low.

She shook her head. "Must have been a Scorpion trick. No such thing as ninja."

He just turned his horse away, saying nothing. She watched him for a moment, then rushed up next to him. "When?" she said.

"When what?"

"When did you see the ninja?"

The question made his stomach lurch and his breath quicken. "On the night my lord was killed."

He felt Hijiko's slight gasp. "My apologies, Ginawa-san. I did not mean..."

He raised his hand. "It is no matter, Hijiko-san. No matter worth dwelling upon. Come, we must ride. We have one more day until we meet with the magistrates from Lord Shojū's province. We will need all of our wits if we are to be dealing with Scorpions."

He urged his horse on and rode ahead. Hijiko watched him for a moment, then spurred her own horse onward.

The dream woke him. This time he was barely able to stifle the scream behind his lips. He looked about, trying to remember where he was. The room was dark and the shadows shifted all around him. His sword was out of its saya and into his hands in a heartbeat. Silver moonlight falling from the window glistened off the blade. His eyes darted from corner to corner, but there was nothing. Nothing but the shadows.

He sank back into the corner of the room, his body trembling. Sweat dribbled from his brow into his eyes. He wiped them clean, keeping one hand on his katana.

The door slid open and he rose slowly, matching the speed of the door. A robed figure stepped into the dark room, silhouetted by the lanterns outside.

"Ginawa-san?"

"Hijiko-san?"

"Hai. Are you all right? You called out in your sleep."

He paused. "What did I say?"

"You called out for a woman. I didn't quite catch the name."

He nodded. "A dream. I am all right."

She stood silently as the shadows danced across her. "Very well. Sleep then. We leave early in the morning."

The door slid shut and he slid down the wall back into the corner. Hours later, he watched the sun rise.

Their journey led them to a small well just along the roadside. Ginawa and Hijiko stood by the well washing the sweat from their faces.

"Lady Sun knows my sins," he said as he rubbed his face with the cool, damp rag. "And she is punishing me for them now."

Hijiko laughed. "You are a poet, Ginawa-san. Who would have thought that?"

He smiled. "No. Not a poet. Just a very convincing liar."

She nodded. "Some would say there is no difference."

"Hold!"

The command came from behind them. They both turned, hands on their katana.

At the mile marker stood four figures. The tallest was armed and armored, his sword at the ready. Kneeling just before the samurai was a smaller man, a long *yari* in his hands, and a

kneeling woman, her eyes intent on a scroll, burning (and yet, not burning) with the fire of an autumn sunset. Only barely visible behind them all was a figure that Ginawa immediately associated with the word "mouse." That thought made him smile.

"Who are you?" asked the woman.

Hijiko spoke. "We are magistrates of my lord Ataka. I assume you are the ones we are to meet?"

They did not move. "Let us see your papers," the woman commanded.

Ginawa stood still as Hijiko moved to the horses. She found their traveling papers and held them above her head. "I am Ashiryo Hijiko, magistrate of my lord Ashiryo Ataka. This is Ginawa, my *yoriki*."

Ginawa whistled. "They certainly don't look like Scorpions."

Hijiko turned to face him, her eyes on fire with rage. "Mind your tongue, *yoriki*!" He shrugged and scratched his beard.

"We are not Scorpions," said the shugenja, rising herself to her feet. "We are magistrates of the Scorpion daimyo, Shojiu."

"Scorpion in name, but not in nature," Ginawa's laugh was from deep in his belly. "I wonder how the frog would answer that riddle."

The shugenja's eyes were shadowed with suspicion. "Your *yoriki* doesn't know his manners."

"I know my manners, I just don't get along with them, so I left them behind. If you hurry, you might catch them."

Hijiko only barely managed to stifle her smile and flash Ginawa a sour grimace. "He is uncouth, but he is trustworthy."

The magistrates stood still for a moment longer, then stood at ease. "Ataka-sama must be desperate for men he can trust."

Ginawa shrugged and scratched his beard.

The shugenja bowed to Hijiko and the samurai-ko returned her courtesy. "I am Umabeko." Then she turned to Ginawa and bowed. His flamboyant bow drew a hiss from the mouse hiding behind the armored samurai. Ginawa just smiled – and stuck out his tongue when Hijiko wasn't looking.

"We will be traveling south from here," Umabeko said. "There is a small skirmish between the Lion and the Crane. My lord wishes to know the outcome of this battle."

"As does my lord." Hijiko moved back toward

her horse. "We will ride together and see what we might see."

The shugenja nodded and the armored samurai retrieved their horses from behind the mile marker and shrubbery.

Ginawa whispered, "You don't trust them, do you?"

She shook her head. "Of course not. But we are under orders, and what do they have to gain from our deaths?" She saw Ginawa's brow curl and she explained. "Whenever you are dealing with Scorpions – or any other Clan for that matter – always ask yourself, 'What do they have to gain?' You will find you can anticipate many motives with that single question."

Ginawa nodded. "Find the advantage," he whispered.

"Hai." Ginawa saw her brow curl and she smiled when she asked, "What about this frog?"

Ginawa's grin spread across his grizzled face. "You have never heard the story of the frog and the scorpion?" She shook her head. "I heard it when I was still a child. A small frog is sitting by a river when a scorpion asks him to carry her across the river on his back. The frog tells the scorpion, 'Lady, I will not, for you will sting me and I will die.' The scorpion answers, 'No, I will not. For if I do, we will both drown.' The frog sees the logic and so he agrees, but half way across the river, the scorpion stings him. As they both begin to sink into the river, he asks her, 'Why did you do that? Now we will both drown.' She answers, 'Because it is in my nature to do so, silly frog.'"

Ginawa watched her face as he told the story and when she smiled at the end, he matched it.

"By name, but not by nature, eh?" she said.

"Hai."

The magistrates rode up, the shugenja saying, "It's time to go. Are you ready?"

Ginawa opened his hand, gesturing for Hijiko to go first. "After you, lady frog. I will follow just in case you find you suddenly cannot swim."

Hijiko almost laughed, and Ginawa watched her eyes shine. She turned her horse toward the south field and rode off, the Scorpions not far behind. The mouse was last and as he passed by Ginawa, slapped his shoulder with his riding crop.

Ginawa's eyes sharpened and his hand fell to his blade.

The mouse held up his hands, palms out. "No offense, samurai. There was a spider on your

shoulder. We wouldn't want you getting stung, now would we?" He smiled and ushered his horse onward. Ginawa cursed and spat at the hindquarters of the man's horse and followed them as the sun sank lower in the western sky, filling its horizon with blood red crimson.



Often the tsuba, or hand guard, of a Samurai's sword is very ornate.

The Book of Water: Character Creation

In order to play L5R, you are going to need a character. This book covers all the information you'll need. We'll give you an outline of the steps, then fill in the details.

Character creation is accomplished in three steps. When you're done, you'll have a character sheet filled with numbers and words, but your character should be more than just pencil scratchings on a sheet of paper.

This is your opportunity to create a character, like your favorites in fiction and film. Just looking at numbers and words doesn't tell you anything about your character, except his Strength, Stamina and other Traits. There are some very important questions you'll have to answer about your samurai or shugenja, and the answers will give him a breath of life that will turn him from a two-dimensional caricature into a three-dimensional character.

Character Concept

Before you start making a character, you should consider what kind of samurai you want to play. What clan will he be from? Will he be a shugenja or a bushi? Which family will he owe allegiance to?

The rules below will give you all the information you'll need to fill in the blanks on the character sheet we've provided at the end of this book. However, it will take more than numbers to make a character.

Before an author begins writing a book, he has a rough idea about his characters. He knows their strengths and weaknesses, a few of their characteristics and a vague idea of how they would act in different situations. Before you sit down and start creating a character, give some time to think about him or her. Is he brash, easily angered, or is he shy and reclusive? Is your shugenja driven by her curiosity or merely doing her duty to her clan, wishing she could be more like her sword-swinging bushi brother?

The Game of 20 Questions

To help you get a better grasp on the kind of character you want, take a moment to look through the questions listed below. The first ten have been designed to give you a good idea of who your character might be. Answer these characters in your own voice. The second set of questions are meant to be answered by your character in his own voice to allow you to get into your character's psyche.



THE THREE STEPS OF CHARACTER CREATION

STEP ONE: CONCEPT

Get an idea in your head before you write anything down on paper.

STEP TWO: THE CHARACTER SHEET

Choose a Clan: The Clan you choose will have a profound impact on your character's view of the world.

Choose a Family: The most important aspect of your character's life is his family. Choose wisely.

Choose a Profession: Your character's place in life.

STEP THREE: OUTFIT

Once you know the strengths and weaknesses of your character, it's time find out what he owns.

WHAT CLAN DOES YOUR CHARACTER BELONG TO?

This may be the most important question. Determining your character's Clan will have a major impact on your character's understanding of Rokugan's people, society and politics. Every Clan has a different interpretation of bushido and a different outlook on the other Clans.

To help you get an idea of which Clan you may want to join, take a look at the Clan Sheets on pages 78 to 92.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER?

Start with the obvious. Is your character male or female? It's not as simple as you think. Both the genders have significant advantages and disadvantages in Rokugan. Granted, the advantages to the female gender are not as obvious, but they are there.

Once you've decided on a gender, describe other aspects of your character's appearance. Start from the head and go all the way down to the toes. Is your character tall, short, wide, or slender? Is his nose short or long? How about his eyes? Are they watchful and discerning or steady and full of the venom of vengeance?

How about their neck and shoulders, or even his hands? Does your character have any distinctive scars or tattoos? Lastly, how about your character's voice? How does it sound? You can discover a lot about a character just by making a thorough physical description.

IS YOUR CHARACTER A SAMURAI OR A SHUGENJA?

This is also a very important distinction, but not as limiting as it might seem. A samurai can be a scholar as well as a warrior, and many shugenja are noted for their courage under fire.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER'S FAMILY?

Again, take a look at the Clan Sheets and decide on a family. Then, talk about your character's early childhood. List events that would have occurred before your character would even be able to remember them. Some of these events may be influencing your character's life without him even knowing it.

Also, consider the family's social standing. A character from a rich family will certainly have a different outlook than a character from a poorer family.

WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTER'S MAIN MOTIVATION?

All great heroes have a motivation that can be summed up in a word. It is the thing that drives them, that doesn't let them fall when the pain and despair is too much. What is your character's motivation? Is it love? Revenge? Pride? Or how about just bull-headed stubbornness?

In short, when everything has turned hopeless and everyone has given up hope, what will keep your character going?

WHO IS THE ONE PERSON YOUR CHARACTER TRUSTS MOST?

This could be your character's sensei or a brother, sister or another family member. Or, it may even be someone outside of the family.

Once you've determined who it is, put some thought into why.

Why does your character trust this one person above all others? It could make for a very interesting story...

esting story...

WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTER'S GREATEST STRENGTH? GREATEST WEAKNESS?

Is it his ability to get along with others, or perhaps his ability to root out their secrets? Maybe!



is his virtue? His devotion to his daimyo? His skill at lying? His sincerity? Or maybe it's just his good strong right arm.

Conversely, anything that can be a strength can also be a weakness. A character's weaknesses, however, are what makes a reader sympathize with him. And when a hero overcomes his own weaknesses, he teaches us how we can overcome our own.

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER THINK OF BUSHIDO?

Take a look back in *The Book of Earth* under Bushido (p. 33). What does your character think of it? Is it a code that should be followed without question, or is it a list of guidelines? Should you follow its tenets only when others are looking, or does following bushido actually make your soul stronger?

WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTER'S OWN OPINION OF HIS CLAN?

This one can be tricky. Is your character completely devoted to his Clan, or does he feel doubt? Does he view the Clan's weaknesses with a blind eye, or does he strive to try and mend them? Does he have faith in the Clan's leadership and hope to one day join their ranks, or does he recognize their weaknesses and plan to exploit them for his own ends? Remember, not all Lions are honorable and not all Scorpions are treacherous.

DOES YOUR CHARACTER HAVE ANY PREJUDICES?

Of course, being a member of your Clan will give you a certain viewpoint regarding the other Clans, but have you developed any on your own? If you have, how did you get that way? What has kept the fires of hatred burning brightly in your soul for so long? What would it take to douse them, if anything?

IS YOUR CHARACTER MARRIED?

A tough question. Marriage is an arranged affair in Rokugan. If your character is married, then you have ties to another family, possibly another Clan. Your spouse's family does not necessarily have to like you, but they are certainly honor-bound to assist you when you or your family are in danger. However, sometimes (especially in the case of a bride), the ties to your spouse's family are severed completely. If this is the case, how does your spouse view his or her new family? And to bring up an even meatier question ...

do you have any children?

TO WHOM DOES YOUR CHARACTER OWE THE MOST LOYALTY?

Again, a difficult question. If you are married, who do you love most: your lord or your wife (or husband)? And, as if we couldn't muddy the waters a bit more, does your character have a secret love?

Even if there are no secret devotions in your character's life, the obvious ones can be just as troubling. Who would your character decide between: his sensei or his daimyo? How about his father or his daimyo? His mother or his sensei? All of these questions will come up sooner or later. Samurai spent their entire lives asking themselves these questions so they would be ready to make them without a moment's hesitation.

How ready will your character be?

WHAT ARE YOUR CHARACTER'S FAVORITE (AND LEAST FAVORITE) THINGS?

Everyone has quirks, the things they like or dislike for completely irrational reasons. Think about them for a while. What are your character's favorite foods? Does he have a favorite horse? How about a grove that he would play hide and seek in as a child? Find something your character loves (or hates) and remember it the next time he encounters it.

DOES YOUR CHARACTER HAVE ANY RECURRING MANNERISMS?

Think about it for a moment. Is there something your character does when he gets nervous? Does he bite his lip, pinch his fingers into his palm, or chew on his cheek? What are his favorite ways of saying "Hello" and "Goodbye?" When he curses, how does he do it?

WHAT ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER'S PSYCHOLOGY?

When it comes to emotions, which ones does he have a handle on and which ones get the better of him? Is it hard for him to restrain his anger or hatred? Does his passion always get the better of him? Does he have a deep, resounding laughter that he just cannot keep locked in his belly? What song or play always brings tears to his eyes?





HOW WOULD YOUR CHARACTER HANDLE AN INSUBORDINATE SERVANT?

This one tells a lot about your character's attitude toward the lower classes. Would your attitude change toward a different servant? Do you have a favorite servant, one that could get away with almost anything? Is there a servant who you would risk honor to protect?

HOW WOULD YOUR CHARACTER'S PARENTS DESCRIBE HIM?

This question reveals much about both your character and his relationship to his parents. Answer this one in the voice of your character's father, then go back and answer it again for your character's mother. You may come up with two very different answers.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHARACTER'S HIGHEST AMBITIONS?

Is it to be a teacher at his school or perhaps a general in his Clan's army? Perhaps all he looks forward to is retirement. Impressing a parent is a good (if frustrating) motivation as well as winning the love of a samurai from another Clan. After you've discovered the ambition, think about what lengths your character would go to gain that goal. What would they sacrifice to achieve their ambition?

HOW RELIGIOUS IS YOUR CHARACTER?

Even with the obvious influence of the Fortunes in the mundane world, many samurai ignore them. "Put faith in your own abilities, not in the stars" is a common phrase among some samurai when speaking on the subject of diviners and shugenja. However, others are devoted to the Fortunes and their religion, saying that those who mock their faith will find themselves burning in the Seven Hells when their life here is done.

IF YOU COULD, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR CHARACTER?

Take a good, long look at the other questions before you answer this one. Speak to your character as if they were sitting right in front of you, and remember to use the proper tone. You'll want to make certain your character actually listens to you when you give him this free advice.

Character Types

To give you an additional hand in getting an

idea in your head, read through the following list of character types. They are the classic samurai types of legend and history. Feel free to pick one and play it to the hilt, or throw a character quirk in the mix just for a change of flavor.

BRASH

"Hesitation is the seed of defeat."

— *The Tao of Shinsei*

A brash character acts quickly, often before he can think about the outcome of his actions. Many samurai are hot-headed, often more concerned with saving face than anything else. The samurai culture is very reactionary, allowing little time for thought.

A brash bushi is typical in Rokugan, but a brash shugenja stands out in the crowd. Shinsei teaches that one must be certain in his actions. His Book of Void is where he repeats the same phrase over and over again: "Thought and deed must be the same." While an insult to a brash samurai will get your head lopped off, an insult to a brash shugenja can turn your entire village into a smoldering heap.

NOBLE

"Every day of his life a man has only one judge, and that judge is himself."

— *The Tao of Shinsei*

Noble bushi are those who adhere to the code of *bushido*. They are not swayed by temptations or distractions. They are loyal to their lord, even onto death. They are calm and even tempered, but they are also unforgiving. The code calls for swift and merciless justice, and that is what a noble samurai dispenses.

Noble shugenja are much like their bushi kin. They are not expected to adhere to the code of *bushido* (they are not warriors, after all), but they are part of the samurai caste, and so they act as their bushi brethren.

COURTIER

"All is war."

— *Rokugani proverb*

A bushi who is a courtier is fully engaged in the activities of the Emperor's Court. While his combat skills may be lacking, he gains advantage with political maneuvering rather than maneuvering an army on the battlefield. Rokugani are very much concerned with outcome. If they can win land and title without shedding blood, so be it.

Shugenja courtiers often prove to be even

more efficient than their bushi cousins. With the use of their magic, they are often able to gain information and political favor with subtlety and ease.

RELUCTANT

"A man must find his place in life, or he is a wandering fool, never content, never at peace, bringing discord with him wherever he goes."

— *The Tao of Shinsei*

Then there are those who wish their lot in life was different. Some perform their duties with quiet dignity while others protest with all the sound and fury of thunder. To deny one's place in society is to bring dishonor and shame to one's family, so many hold their displeasure inside.

While a reluctant bushi will face many challenges in Rokugan, he will also make for stirring drama as he tries to find his rightful place in the world.

Reluctant shugenja have an even tougher time than their bushi counterparts. A bushi needs only believe in himself, but a reluctant shugenja must find faith in a religion that awakens nothing in his spirit. What's worse, the shugenja knows better than anyone else that he is denying his place in the world, and the consequences that will befall him if he does not accept his predetermined destiny.

ROGUE

"You call me a masterless man. You are wrong. I am my own master."

— *The ronin, Dairya*

Many rogue bushi are ronin. They show little concern for etiquette or tradition and are more concerned with filling their pockets with money.

While it may

seem as if rogue bushi would have it easy in

Rokugan, they do not. They are often viewed with mistrust by the peasantry and are targets for local magistrates. Landed samurai are never at a loss for money, while ronin have to rely on less steady sources of income.

A rogue shugenja can be one who has lost his faith and has started experimenting in dark arts, or who has given up his faith all together to seek the earthly pleasures his training denied him.

SCHOLAR

"If one knows only sword technique, one cannot know the true path.... It is that which must

be known from the large matters to the small matters, from the shallow matters to the deep matters."

— *Miyamoto Musashi*

Samurai are expected to be more than swordsmen: they are also expected to be scholars. They are the complete man, the warrior-poet, master of both sword and pen. The scholar bushi dedicates himself to study, learning the history of the clans, embracing the ideals and principles of the *Tao of Shinsei* and bushido. He spends most of his time in court and in the libraries of the Empire, thus sacrificing his warrior skills to sharpen his spirit.

Shugenja are by their very nature scholars. But some are driven by a deeper fire to solve the questions their studies raised. What is the true nature of the universe? What is the true nature of Void? Does mankind have free will, or does destiny and the Celestial Order rule his every





ROKUGANI NAMES

By choosing your Family, you will know your family name (which in Rokugan precedes your given name), but what about your personal name? Listed on the next page are the most common syllables in Rokuganese. All you have to do is match them up to make a name that is easy (and fun) for you to pronounce.

Rokugani names are usually between one and three syllables long. If you chose a syllable that ends in a vowel, cap it off with an "n." If you choose a syllable that ends in the same letter that the next syllable begins with (such as "hin" + "nin"), it represents a slight pause between the syllables.

Women's names usually end in "-ko" like Kachiko and Kamoko. However, some samurai-ko choose masculine names to show that they have given up a woman's life.

thought and action? These are the questions of a scholarly shugenja.

VENGEFUL

"The road of revenge leads straight to the sun, hanging on the horizon. There are no wayside inns to give the traveler rest, there are no detours, byways or deviations. It is a long, bloody path that can only end in a grave."

— The Tao of Shinsei

This bushi has only one objective: to avenge the death of his master (or brother, or father, etc.). Driven by this single passion, the samurai will not rest until he gains his objective. The vengeful samurai can be a problem in a large group, but works well in a solo or ronin game.

Playing a vengeful shugenja could be a true role-playing exercise. While shugenja are part of the samurai caste, they are not samurai bushi (warriors). Challenging a samurai bushi to a duel could prove fruitless, so they must find other ways to gain their rightful revenge.



Now that you have a picture in your head of what kind of character you want to play, it's time to transfer that idea down onto paper. Make a photocopy of the character sheet located at the end of this book. It's divided into sections; we'll go through the sections one by one, beginning with Rings and Traits.

One: Rings and Traits

You've already read about Rings and Traits in *The Book of Earth*. Here, we take a more detailed look at the five Rings, how to use them and what they mean.

All characters begin the creation process at

Rank 2 in each of the Rings and Traits. A character's rank in a Ring is equal to the rank of the lower of its two Traits, so a samurai with a Stamina of 4 and a Willpower of 2 would have an Earth of 2.

Earth

"In order for a warrior to follow the path of Heiho, it is necessary to keep in mind that the essence of Heiho is to build an indomitable spirit and an iron will; to believe that you cannot fail in doing anything."

— Miyamoto Musashi

Earth ("chi") is the element of passive strength, resistance, and fortitude. The mountain is the symbol of Earth. It is quiet, dignified and eternal. All life blossoms from the earth and one day must return to it. It is the element of healing, regeneration and renewal.

The two Traits of Earth are Stamina and Willpower.

STAMINA

Stamina represents a character's "wind." A long-distance runner has a high Stamina, as well as a champion swimmer. The higher a character's Stamina, the longer he can press his physical reserves to the limit.

Stamina 1: Weak immune system, prone to chronic illness and disease.

Stamina 2: Average health, might catch a cold every so often.

Stamina 3: Walk on a sprained ankle without a wince and run long distances before getting winded.

Stamina 4: Robust and mighty, able to perform incredible feats of endurance.

Stamina 5: Character can swim great distances with ease, recover from illness without medical attention and can ignore serious wounds.

WILLPOWER

Willpower represents a character's ability to say "No." Just as Stamina is the ability to resist physical distractions, Willpower is Stamina's mental counterpart.

Willpower 1: Timid, unassertive, easily frightened, weak-willed and easily manipulated.

Willpower 2: Average, easy to convince if goals are the same.

Willpower 3: Not a strong will, but not one easily dissuaded from action.

Willpower 4: Almost unshakable in resolve.

Willpower 5: Iron-willed, steadfast and resolute.

Water

"When strength is robust and not trapped, its justice is not thwarted and its duty is not frustrated."

— I Ching

"...using water as a model, the spirit is made to be as water is."

— Miyamoto Musashi

Water ("mizu") is the element of strength. Unlike the passive strength of a mountain, the river cuts away at the mountain. The ocean crashes on the shore, and the storm pounds down on the earth, unrelenting in its rage. But water is also the element of clarity. Water is pure, and it is this purity that washes away taint and deceit.

The two Traits of Water are Strength and Perception.

STRENGTH

A character's ability to lift, carry and push and hold fast is represented by his Strength. It is, in the simplest terms, raw physical power. Strength is the Trait that determines how much damage a character can deal out in combat.

Strength 1: Weak and physically unimposing.

Strength 2: Average, able to lift approximately 100 pounds.

Strength 3: Strong enough to lift approximately 200 pounds.

Strength 4: Your strength is well-known throughout your family. Able to lift approximately 300 pounds.

Strength 5: Your strength is legendary throughout the Empire. You are able to lift approximately 400 pounds.

PERCEPTION

Perception is a character's ability to perceive the world around him using the five senses. Characters with a high Perception are able to pick up minute details and slight differences.

Perception 1: You miss even important and obvious details.

Perception 2: You pick up on things when you pay attention.

Perception 3: You've learned how to look for important details.

Perception 4: You take one look, close your eyes and list the details of a room.

Perception 5: No matter how small or insignificant, no detail gets by you.

Fire

"Fire is beneficial for the success of the upright... Flexibility gets through successfully by clinging to balance and rectitude... Illumination doubled makes fire. Thus do great people shine on the four quarters with continued light."

— I Ching

Fire ("hi") is the element of active energy. It is the element of activity, motion, action and force. It is also the element of inspiration, illumination and clear thought.

The two Traits of Fire are Agility and Intelligence.

AGILITY

Agility is the ability to move with style and grace, to be able to control one's actions. Characters with a high Agility are able to make complicated and coordinated movements with ease.

Agility 1: Clumsy and stumbling.

Agility 2: Average coordination, require concentration for difficult actions.

Agility 3: Even your average actions are graceful.

Agility 4: You have almost a second sense for motion.

Agility 5: Even your most minute motion is like a dance.

INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge; a character's ability to gather and process information. The higher a character's Intelligence, the faster he will be able to put facts together, solve puzzles and think clearly.

Intelligence 1: Easily confused and slow thinking.

Intelligence 2: Average thinker, can follow difficult conversations with concentration.

Intelligence 3: Can figure out puzzles and decipher codes with a little work.

Intelligence 4: Intellect of a scholar, not easily deceived by even the most clever lies.

Intelligence 5: A genuine genius, clear-thinking and brilliant.



SYLLABLES

A	MU
BA	NA
BE	NE
BI	NI
BO	NO
BU	NU
CHA	O
CHI	PA
CHO	PE
CHU	PI
DA	PO
DE	PU
DO	RA
E	RE
FU	RI
GA	RO
GE	RU
GI	SA
GO	SE
GU	SHA
HA	SHI
HE	SHO
HI	SHU
HO	SO
I	SU
JA	TSU
JI	TA
JO	TE
JU	TO
KA	U
KE	WA
KI	YA
KO	YO
KU	YU
MA	ZA
ME	ZE
MI	ZO
MO	ZU

Air

"All things and beings are produced through the sensitivity of heaven and earth. The sensitivity of sages moves people's minds so much that the world is harmonious and peaceful. Be aware... and all things in the universe can be seen."

— I Ching

Air ("kaze") is the element of intuition. No one can see the air, but everyone can feel its effects. Air represents all the forces that are not seen, but are known to be present. It is also the element of storms. It is the element of both subtlety and unpredictability. Those with a high Air Ring are attuned to things that can only be felt and known (rather than understood, which is very different), and will be able to react quickly to unexpected situations.

The two Traits of Air are Reflexes and Awareness.

REFLEXES

A character's Reflexes represent how quickly he can react to sudden stimuli. A character with a high Reflexes can act almost without thinking.

Reflexes 1: You take a moment or two to make up your mind to jump out of the way of large obstacles.

Reflexes 2: Average reflexes, not well refined.

Reflexes 3: Able to react before just about everybody else.

Reflexes 4: Cat-like in your ability to sense danger.

Reflexes 5: You're out of the room before anyone knows you're gone.

AWARENESS

A character's Awareness Trait represents his intuition and empathy. If a character has a high Awareness, he will be a "quick read," sensitive to the emotional states of others. But awareness goes a little further. Because a character with a high Awareness is able to sense the moods and attitudes of others, he is also able to play off those impressions. A character with a high Awareness can be very charismatic when he needs to be.

Awareness 1: You almost always find a way to say the wrong thing.

Awareness 2: You're able to get along with people who get along with you.

Awareness 3: You can usually sense deeper emotions than those that are shown on the surface.

Awareness 4: You pick up hints even from those who are skilled at hiding their emotions.

Awareness 5: You know everyone's secrets... sooner or later.

Void

"From one thing, know ten thousand things. When one learns the principles of Heiho, one will be able to understand all things."

— Miyamoto Musashi

In essence, all Rings are the same Ring: Excellence. The five elements are like five facets on the same gem. It's difficult to pin down a single pair of virtues for each of the elements. It's easy to interpret Earth as Strength, or point out the flexibility of Water.

Void ("ku") is unlike any of the other Rings, for it represents the character's ability to use all Rings as a single Ring. The higher a character's Void, the more he understands that all elements are the same element. He sees the strength of Earth, the adaptability of Water, the intuitive action of Fire and the graceful eloquence of Air. Accordingly, Void has no Traits.

Characters start the game with a number of Void Points equal to their Void. When a player spends a Void Point to augment his character's action, it represents the one moment when all elements are in perfect synchronicity. It is never a conscious act on the character's action. The character will, more than likely, be surprised at his own skill (if the action is successful, that is), step back and say, "How did I do that?" More information on Void Points is available in **The Book of Fire** (p. 103).

Two: Skills

Just as every character has Traits, every character has Skills. Traits define what your character is, while Skills define what your character knows. Skills are abilities you learn and pick up along the long road of life, but unlike Traits, not everyone has the same Skills. In fact, each character will have many Skills, but just like real life, not everyone learns the same lessons, nor comes away with the same experiences. In Rokugan, learning is very formal. When you are born, your parents trade political and personal favors to get you into the best school they can. Of course, what defines "best" varies from Clan to Clan. A com-

plete list of Skills can be found at the end of this chapter.

Three: Clan, Family and School

Now that you know the basics of Rings, Traits, and Skills, it's time to put them to work. At the end of the **Book of Water** (pp. 78-92), you'll find the information you need to create characters from the Seven Great Clans, as well as ronin. We've devoted two pages to each of the clans to make it easy for you to decide. Each page contains the following:

Clan Description: This tells you a little bit about the clan you've chosen.

Family Descriptions: There are three families listed for each clan. Choose which family you come from.

Bushi and Shugenja Schools: Each clan has two schools: a bushi (warrior) school and a shugenja (spellcaster) school. Which one did you attend?

Attitudes Toward Other Clans: A brief quote detailing your clan's opinion on the other Great Clans of the Empire.

FIRST: CHOOSE A CLAN

Find the Clan Sheet for the Clan you want for your character. Read the description and begin to detail some of the rough ideas you came up with in Step One.

SECOND: CHOOSE A FAMILY

Choose one of the three Families from your clan and write in that family on your character sheet. Because you come from a certain family, you will gain a bonus to one of your Traits. Record this bonus in the Trait section of the character sheet.

THIRD: CHOOSE A SCHOOL

Now write "bushi" or "shugenja" for Profession on your Character Sheet. Then go down to the bottom of your character sheet and record the name of your school under "School." Your character's training in that school will give him a few bonus starting Traits and Skills. Record the Traits in the Trait section of your Character Sheet. Then write the Skills in the Skill section. Skills your character learns in his school will almost always begin at Rank 1. Every bushi school teaches its students a "secret maneuver" that only they can utilize, while shugenjas learn certain spells.

Record this Rank 1 information on your character sheet under "School."

When a character emerges from a school for shugenja, they are given a few basic scrolls to work with. Each Clan Sheet shows the number of scrolls of each element that are available to a shugenja when he graduates, but he may only select scrolls that have a Mastery Level equal to or less than his appropriate Ring plus one.

Your family does not necessarily dictate your destiny; you can, for instance, be a warrior from the Isawa family. You will almost always go to the bushi or shugenja school associated with your clan; Crab bushi tend to go to the Hida school, while Crane shugenja will almost always attend the Asahina school. It is possible to attend another Clan's school, but this is rare (see "Advantages and Disadvantages" below).

FOURTH: CHARACTER POINTS

Once you've finished with Clan, Family and School, it's time to customize your character. You have 25 Character Points to distribute. You can spend your points any way you wish, but you may not raise a Trait or a Skill by more than 2 Ranks. Also, you may not raise any of a beginning character's Traits above a 4. A Skill that you do not have any training in at all from your School is considered Unskilled. If you put a Character Point in an Unskilled Skill, you now have that Skill at Rank 1. Remember, you can only raise a Skill by 2 Ranks, so if you put 2 CP's into an Unskilled Skill, it will be at Rank 2, and you will be unable to raise it any further.

- The cost for raising a Skill is 1 Character Point per Rank.
- The cost for raising a Trait is 8 Character Points per Rank.
- The cost for raising the Void Ring is 12 Character Points.
- Raising a character's Honor Rank by one costs 3 Character Points. Lowering a character's beginning Honor Rank gives the character 2 Character Points. Honor Rank can only be raised or lowered by one.
- The cost for raising beginning Glory is 5 points per rank.
- The costs of Advantages and Disadvantages are listed in the Advantages and Disadvantages section.



PLAYING AGAINST TYPE

Perhaps the most important choice you have to make when creating a character is which Clan you choose. Not because Clan influences your character's personality the most, but because it will influence the way others see your character the most.

Over the next few pages, we'll be talking about breaking the Clan stereotypes. Breaking the Clan caricature can be difficult for both player and character, but often times, it's the one who doesn't fit rigid idealistic perceptions who becomes the legend.



"LIGHT FROM SHADOW"

A young and bold Crab samurai named Hiruma Kage has begun to make a name for himself in the ranks of the Hida family. His skill is impeccable, his courage is overwhelming, and his sense of duty is breath-taking. He is everything a young Crab needs to be to bring glory to his ancestor's name.

But there is a fire in him that burns hot and deep, and it's the fire of bushido. Kage knows his Hida cousins think he is strange because he keeps himself immaculate and practices the tea ceremony with his elderly aunt, but they say nothing because of his performance on the battlefield. He knows they whisper behind his back when he writes haiku to the Crane courtier he met and fell in love with while in court, but he says nothing.

Four: Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages and Disadvantages are a special kind of way to customize your character, even more specialized than Skills. Advantages make your character stronger in some sense, so they will cost CPs. Disadvantages make your character weaker, and so they give you more CPs to spend elsewhere. A character cannot take more than 10 points worth of Disadvantages. The list of Advantages and Disadvantages is on pp. 72-77.

Five: Wounds

Everybody gets hurt, including your character. But just how tough is your bushi? In order to determine how much damage your character can take, we use Wounds. Whenever your character gets hurt, he'll lose Wounds. To determine how many Wounds your character can lose, multiply his Earth by 2, then go to the Wounds chart on your Character Sheet. In each of the boxes, write this number down. Every time your character loses a number of Wounds equal to the number in a Wound Level, you lose that Wound level and move down to the next one. Notice that the first Wound level has a -0 next to it. This means that you aren't seriously injured, and don't lose any dice due to Wounds. However, if you lose enough Wounds to take you down to the next Wound level, you'll be at -1: this means that you roll one fewer die on each roll you attempt. Characters will naturally heal Wounds equal to their Stamina each day. For more information on healing, getting hurt and Wounds, see *The Book of Fire* (p. 107).

Six: Honor

Every character also has an Honor Trait. The Honor Trait is ranked from 0 to 5, and it measures your character's nobility of mind and the purity of his soul. A character with a high Honor Trait is one who can be trusted to keep his word, be fair in judgments and present himself with dignity. He is a man who has a high sense of integrity, while at the same time is concerned with his status when his integrity is questioned. A character with a low Honor Trait also cares about his reputation, but for different reasons. He never

gives his word on anything, because he never intends to keep it. He will always take advantage of situations, but will do his best not to catch any of the blame. While playing a character with a low Honor may seem easier, there are disadvantages to having a low Honor. Low-honor characters are easily tempted by sly Scorpion tongues and heavy bribes, while a character with a high Honor would scoff at such rude attempts to sway his ethics. Occasionally, characters will take a "Test of Honor." You can find the rules for Honor Tests in *The Book of Fire* (p. 104).

Characters with a high Awareness can sometimes gain a sense of another's Honor. Those with low Honor have the feel of a rogue about them, and there is something vaguely untrustworthy about them that others can sense. Honorable characters have a sense of nobility and trustworthiness about them that is unmistakable; they tend to get better deals in the market and attract good people to them.

HONOR RANKS AND POINTS

All characters' beginning Honor Rank depends on their Clan (see the Clan Sheets at the end of this chapter). Listed below are the five Honor Ranks. Each has a brief description of a character at that Honor Rank. Players can use these descriptions as guides for role-playing their own characters.

When a character chooses an Honor Rank, he begins with 5 Honor Points in that Rank. If he performs an action that is beneath his Honor Rank, he will lose a number of Honor Points. The number of Honor Points he loses should be decided by the GM. Minor infringements may incur a loss as small as 1 Honor, while a penalty as high as 5 Honor may accrue for a truly reprehensible act. If a character ever loses all of his Honor Points in a Rank, he falls one Honor Rank lower, with 5 Honor Points in that Rank.

Example: Allan's Lion samurai has an Honor Rank of 3. He currently has 2 Honor Points (he's been a bad samurai), and he's performed an action that would drop him 2 Honor Points. Allan's Lion is now at Honor Rank 2 and he has 5 Honor Points, representing the fact that he has to start all over again to once gain Honor Rank 3.

If a character performs an action that is above his Honor, he gains Honor Points. Again, the number of Honor Points gained depends on the GM, but it should be between 1 and 3. A charac-

ter who has 10 Honor Points increases his Honor Rank by one, and checks off three Honor Points at his new Rank.

HONOR RANK 0: "HONORLESS DOG!"

Characters with an Honor of 0 do not adhere to the principles of bushido. They mock them, knowing that bushido is a code followed by fools and idealists. These characters cannot be trusted. They would betray anyone – even their own kin – to gain an advantage.

HONOR RANK 1: "UNTRUSTWORTHY"

A Character with 1 Honor is still untrustworthy, but not to the extent of a 0 Honor character. Kinsmen still need to watch their backs around him, but when he can usually be trusted when the clan is in danger. He recognizes the importance of other people following bushido, but he considers it to be – in the most part – an inconvenience. Even though this character may gain Honor Points, he can still easily ignore his conscience when it suits him.

HONOR RANK 2: "WHAT IS EXPECTED"

This is the default level of Honor for those of the samurai caste. This character follows the tenets of bushido to the letter. He still feels qualms in his heart whenever he must put his own interests behind the interests of the Clan, and his resolve is often tested. This character believes in bushido, but sometimes finds it difficult to act on his belief. The difference between this character and an Honor Rank 1 character is that every honorable act makes his resolve stronger, making his conscience more and more difficult to ignore.

HONOR RANK 3: "EXCEPTIONAL"

The 3 Honor character was once the 2 Honor character, filled with doubt and trepidation. But now he has seen the strength of *bushido* and embraced it into his heart. While he feels the temptations of "low" character, he ignores them easily. Only the strongest temptations can disavow his resolve. Because of their devotion to bushido, these samurai tend to be a little less practical than those at 2 Honor. This samurai finds even bending rules a test of will.

HONOR RANK 4: "A SOUL ABOVE QUESTION"

Very few samurai ever reach this level of Honor. These are the samurai who cannot be swayed from their duty to kin and clan. However, as the Honor 4 samurai finds bending rules a monumental task,



水

But when others speak poorly of the Crab, he is the first to draw his katana and demand retribution. He is the lone light in the dark shadow of the Crab lands, and while the other samurai may scoff at his poetry and tea, they know that he is a man of his word, and a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield.

水

"PRETTY EYES IRON CRANE"

His name is Doji Kuwanan and he is a samurai of two masters. The first is Akodo Toturi and the second is Kakita Toshimoko. From Toturi he learned tactics, strategy and the secret strength that honor brings the heart of the just. From Toshimoko he learned the technique of "striking with no thought," and he also learned to live every moment as if it were his very last.

Kuwanan is one of the most highly respected – and feared – Cranes in the Empire. He has become an artisan of the blade as well as a tactician of great note. Recently he has gone to the Crab lands to learn the techniques of the Hida family and to get a first hand look at the Shadowlands.

At first, the Crabs told him his pretty face would do him no good in the Shadowlands. Kuwanan only

the Honor 4 samurai finds it impossible. In fact, his enemies will find him quite easy to manipulate through his rigid code of honor.

HONOR RANK 5: "STRENGTH OF A THOUSAND ANCESTORS"

Those who have reached Honor 5 are the stuff of legends. They are so far above reproach that those who question their honor are looked upon with distrust and disdain. Honor 5 characters are selfless, completely devoted to their family and clan, and are willing to give up their own life for the safety and security of others.

Seven: Insight and School Rank

Insight and School Rank are two Traits that



will have a great influence on your character's interactions within the Empire. Insight represents how well-known your character is in Rokugan, while School Rank determines how well you are treated.

INSIGHT

All characters have a total of Insight Points. These points give an estimate of how well known the character is in Rokugan. To determine a character's Insight, first add up his Rings (Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Void) and multiply that total by 10. Then, add up the character's Skills. You get one point per Skill, plus an additional point for each rank above 1.

For example, Jason is figuring his character's Insight Points. He adds up his Rings and gets a total of 11. $11 \times 10 = 110$ Insight so far. Next, he adds up his Skills. He has a total of eleven points in skills, so his total from Skills is 11. His 110 Insight from Traits plus his 11 Insight from Skills adds up to a total of 121 Insight.

KEEPING TRACK OF INSIGHT

Whenever a character gains a point in a Ring, add 10 to his Insight Total. Whenever he gains a point in a Skill, add one to his Insight. Also remember to add a point to Insight when he gains a Rank 1 in a Skill he was previously Unskilled in.

SCHOOL RANK

When a character gains Insight, he also brings glory to his School. The more famous he becomes, the more secrets the School's sensei is willing to teach him. This is represented by School Rank. All samurai and shugenja begin as Rank 1. As a samurai or shugenja gains Insight, he draws closer to Rank 2. When he reaches 150 Insight, he returns to his School and the sensei teaches him the secrets of Rank 2. Samurai learn a new Technique; shugenja learn 3 more spells, in any element or elements they wish.

When a Samurai or Shugenja wish to gain a new School rank, the character compares his current Insight points with how many he needs to gain a new School rank. If the character has enough Insight points, then the character returns to his school, and the sensei must be shown his progress. If he is impressed, he will teach him the secrets he needs to perform at the new Rank. In addition, the character will gain any special abilities conferred for increasing in rank. Some Schools will also insist that the student pass a test

in order to prove his worth. This test could include something as simple as a written exam, while others will demand more esoteric tests of the character's skill.

Rank 1	0 - 150 pts
Rank 2	151 - 175 pts
Rank 3	176 - 200 pts
Rank 4	201 - 225 pts
Rank 5	226 - 250 pts

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Everyone gets better at what they do through practice and experience. Your character is no different. At the end of each session, the GM will award your character a number of "Experience Points." These points can be used to increase your character's Traits.

It costs 1 Experience Point to learn a new skill at Rank 1.

To raise a Skill, you must spend a number of EPs equal to the Rank you are raising your Skill to.

To raise a Trait or your Void Ring, you must spend a number of EPs equal to five times the Rank you are raising your Trait to.

Eight: Glory

Glory is a Trait that will have a great influence on your character's interactions within the Empire. Glory represents how well-known and respected your character is in Rokugan. All characters have a Glory Rank between zero and ten. Their Glory Rank is directly modified by their School Rank. A character's Glory Rank is almost always at least equal to his School Rank.

Example: Matsu Turi has reached Rank 2 in the Akodo School, making his Glory Rank also a 2.

Characters can raise their Glory by gaining Glory Points. Glory is always awarded by the character's lord. When a character gains ten Glory Points in his current Glory Rank, he is eligible to rise to the next Rank. However, all promotions of Glory depend on the character's direct superior. A lord cannot advance a character to a Rank that is equal to his own. In fact, many lords may be reluctant to advance a character to a Rank close to their own.

Example: Turi gains ten Glory Points and is ready to advance to Glory Rank 3. However, his before his player can make the change on his character sheet, Turi's lord must acknowledge the advance. Until this happens, Turi is stuck at Rank 2.

GLORY RANKS

Only the Emperor has a Glory of 10.

The Seven Great Clan daimyos, and the Emperor's wife and immediate family, have a Glory of 9.

The daimyos of Great Clan families (e.g. the daimyo of the Yasuki family), the Clan Daimyos of a minor Clan, and the Great Clan daimyos' spouses have a Glory of 8.

The spouses of the Great Clan family daimyos and minor Clan Daimyos have a Glory of 7.

The ranks between 6 and 1 are held by samurai-caste characters; greater and lesser nobles, warriors, shugenja, and sensei. Player characters begin the game with a Glory of 1.

Those not in the samurai caste (*heimin*, *hinin*, and *eta*) have a Glory of 0.

THE ROKUGANI AND SHAME

The Rokugani have a very interesting attitude toward public spectacle.

They ignore it.

If a drunken samurai is acting out, those around him will tend to ignore the scene, hoping that someone of sufficient rank will put a stop to the activity. When this does occur, the samurai tends to give the offender a stern warning before he takes public action, thus allowing him a chance to save face.

Game Masters will want to use this technique when their player samurai get out of hand or decide to go on a Glory-smashing rampage. NPC daimyos or samurai of distinguished rank should allow them an opportunity to cease and desist before the GM wipes clean all that hard-earned Glory.



Each character begins with a different "Outfit"

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smiled, set out passed the wall and returned with one of the largest Oni heads ever captured. Before he proved himself in the Crabs' eyes, they called him "Pretty eyes." Since that day, the nickname has taken on a tone of respect, and he is known as "Kanari-me Tetsu-tsuru," or "Pretty Eyes Iron Crane."



HITOMI'S LEGACY

Paradoxically, the Dragon Clan is best known for their enigmatic nature. No one can truly say they understand the nature of the Dragon Clan samurai. They are mysterious, cryptic and ultimately inscrutable.

All of them, save one. Her name is Mirumoto Hitomi, and there is nothing simpler than the fire that burns behind her eyes.

That fire is revenge, plain and simple. While she has not yet graduated from the Dragon bushi schools, she has proven herself to be one of the most skilled samurai the school has ever seen. Her teachers remark on her drive, her passion, and her complete lack of fear. They also show concern for the lack of any emotion other than pure rage.

depending on their family and profession.

Bushi

BASIC OUTFIT

(All considered to be Average Quality)

Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light Armor, Traveling Pack, any one weapon, Kimono, 2 Koku

ADVANCED OUTFIT

(All considered to be average quality; Player chooses one item to be of Fine Quality)

Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light Armor, Helm, Traveling Pack, Kimono, any 3 weapons, 5 Koku

RICH OUTFIT

(All considered to be Fine Quality)

Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light or Heavy Armor, Helm, Traveling Pack, Steed, Kimono, any 4 weapons, 10 Koku

Shugenja

BASIC OUTFIT

(All considered to be Average Quality)

Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Tanto, 3 Koku

RICH OUTFIT

(All considered to be Fine Quality)

Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Tanto, 10 Koku, Steed

Crab Clan

Bushi: Advanced Outfit

Shugenja: Basic Outfit

Crane Clan

Bushi: Rich Outfit

Shugenja: Rich Outfit

Dragon Clan

Bushi: Basic Outfit

Shugenja: Basic Outfit

Lion Clan

Bushi: Advanced Outfit

Shugenja: Basic Outfit

Phoenix Clan

Bushi: Basic Outfit

Shugenja: Basic Outfit

Unicorn Clan

Bushi: Rich Outfit

Shugenja: Rich Outfit

Example of Character Creation

Richard, a new player of *Legend of the Five Rings*, has decided to create a warrior from the Dragon Clan to play in his friend's new campaign. Rich decided on the Dragon Clan because he liked the clan's mysterious nature and wanted his character's motives to always be slightly unclear to the other players.

Rich decides that a conversation with his friend (the GM) about his character's past is going to be easier than writing out the answers to "The 20 Questions". First, Rich decides that his character is going to be from the Mirumoto family, and be named Kuro. He thought about being from the more enigmatic Togashi family, but decided that the versatility of the Mirumoto was more to his liking. Kuro is going to become a very reliable samurai in the Dragon Clan – likable and skilled, an able emissary to those outside of the Mirumoto Stronghold.

With the basic idea of a strong, well-rounded samurai, Rich begins walking through the creation process step by step. The first step has

already been decided, so he writes Kuro's name, family, clan and profession on his character sheet: "Mirumoto Kuro, Dragon Clan Bushi".

By deciding to be from the Mirumoto family, he gets a +1 to any Trait, and the Mirumoto Bushi school provides another +1 to any Trait. Rich decides to add one each to his Agility and Reflexes – very basic bushi traits that will make him more accurate with his katana and harder to hit. Kuro now has a three in both Agility and Reflexes, but still just a two in his other Traits. Besides improving a few of his Traits, the Mirumoto school gave Kuro basic training in a few skills: Archery, Defense, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Shugenja Lore, and any one High or Bugei skill. Rich decides that Horsemanship is a good final skill for his character since he's going to be riding all over Rokugan. Finally, before leaving the Mirumoto school, Kuro is taught the signature style of the school: the Daisho (two-sword) technique. Kuro's TN to be hit will always be plus five when he has both of his swords because the Daisho is so hard to get past with an attack.

Now, Kuro is given 25 character points to spend to gain Advantages and Disadvantages,

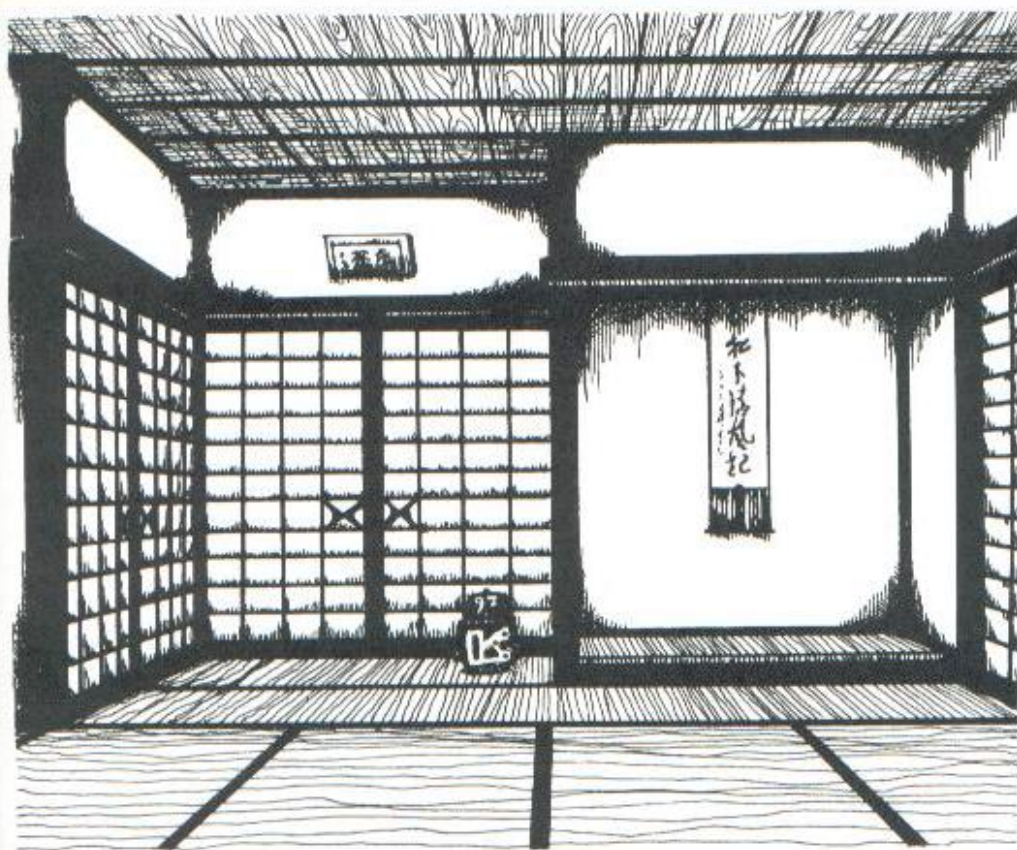
and to improve his traits and skills. First, Rich decides to check over the Disadvantages to see if any of them are appropriate for the vision he has for Kuro. He thinks about the various disadvantages for a while and decides that only an Obligation is appropriate. Rich and the GM decide that Kuro's family owes a small favor to the Asako family that Kuro is responsible for repaying. He doesn't know when the Asako family will request his aid, but he knows that fulfilling the request could make for an interesting story on its own. After taking the two point Disadvantage, Rich has 27 points to spend to fill out his character. He begins with Advantages, deciding quickly on Benten's Blessing (Kuro is going to be naturally friendly and easy to talk to) and Great Destiny. Rich wants Kuro to be an important part of the Legend of Rokugan, so choosing Great Destiny will tend to weave him into the bigger plots as well as keeping him safe in the worst circumstances.

Next, Rich is going to work on his Traits: since Kuro is going to be an emissary, Rich wants him to be charismatic. Benten's Blessing was a very good start, but he decides to add a point of

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It was not long ago that the young Hitomi watched her elder brother get cut down by a Crab samurai, Hida Yakamo. Hitomi was the only one who saw the duel, and the only one who saw Yakamo's katana strike her brother in the back as he removed his armor. She was also the only one who saw Yakamo ridicule the dying samurai, refusing to end his life quickly and mercifully. She testified to these facts in court, but it was the word of a young girl against the word of the son of the Crab Clan daimyo. Yakamo was excused and Hitomi was forced to apologize to Yakamo for her "error."

She is a woman driven by a single motive, and she will do anything to see Yakamo at her feet, begging for his life as her brother did years before.



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**THIS PAGE—
EXTERIOR OF A
TEA HOUSE.**

**PREVIOUS
PAGE— INTERIOR
OF THE TEA
HOUSE.**

Awareness as well to make Kuro very charismatic. Since he had already raised his Reflexes, the Awareness of 3 also means that Kuro's Air is now Rank 3. Also, Rich decides on an increase in Strength to give Kuro some bulk and make the sword at his side as impressive as his smile. Rich decided against giving Kuro more than a plus one in any Trait because he wanted Kuro to be well rounded rather than one-dimensional. Rich now determines that since Air is the only Ring in which he has raised both Traits, his other Rings will remain at Rank 2.

Kuro's advantages cost him seven points: three for Benten's Blessing and four more for Great Destiny. The two traits cost him 16 more, leaving only four points left to increase his skills, but

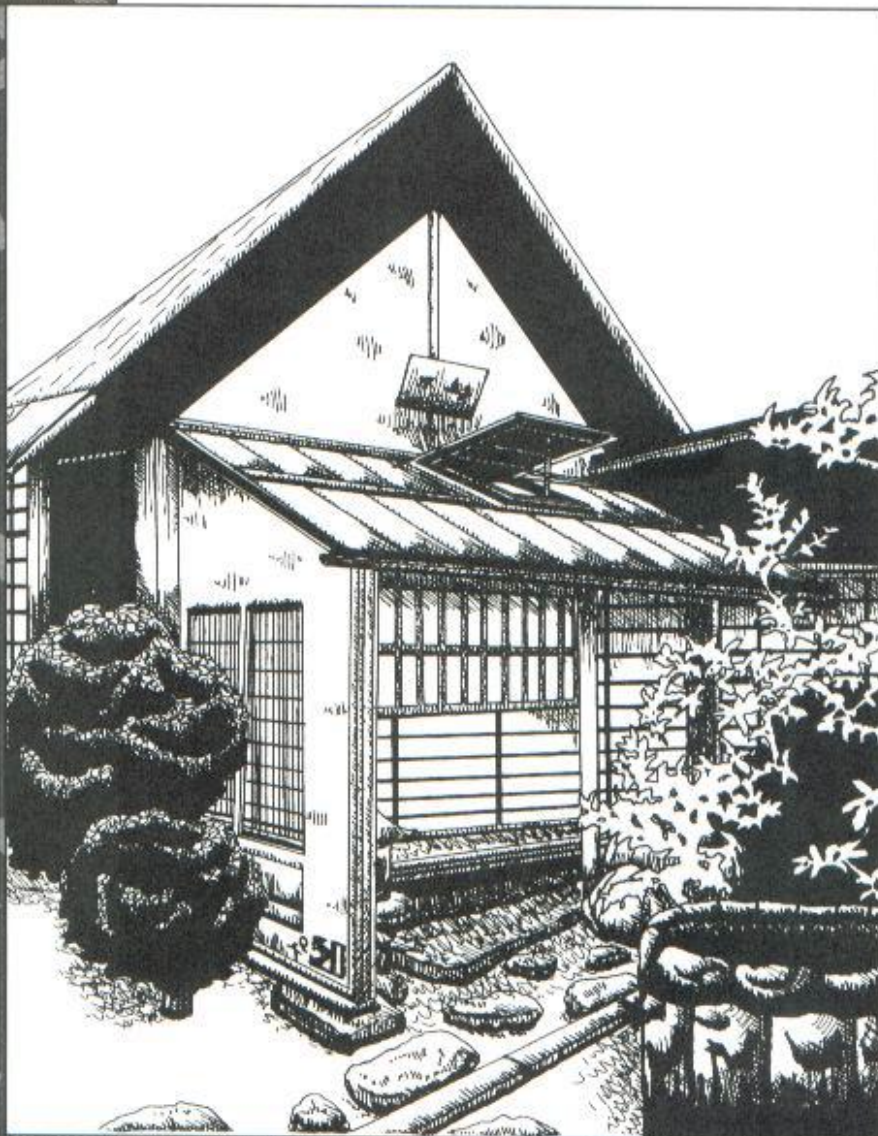
that's okay. The first place he starts is with his Kenjutsu; like any samurai, Kuro does not want to be defeated in battle. His maximum increase is two points, so Rich raises Kuro's Kenjutsu skill to Rank 3. With his final two points, Rich decides to increase Kuro's Horsemanship skill to Rank 2, and to learn the basics of Commerce (Rank 1) - those skills should help Kuro in his travels.

Kuro's character points are all spent, so all that remains is to fill out the character sheet. Since he didn't change Kuro's Honor Rank, Rich writes down Rank 2 for Honor and checks off five of the ten boxes. Kuro's Earth Rank is a 2, so he gets four wounds per level, and Rich puts a 4 in each box under Wounds. Like all starting characters, Kuro has a Glory of 1. Kuro has a standard set of

equipment, and notes his primary weapon and armor on his sheet; Kuro uses a Katana (damage 3k2; Kuro will add his Strength of 3 to this, and he'll roll six damage dice, keeping two) and light armor (+5 TN to be hit while he's wearing it). Kuro's TN to be hit is a 25 - 15 points for his Reflexes, 5 points for his light armor and another 5 points for the Daisho technique. It will be quite difficult for the bad guys to hit Kuro, but that's a good thing since Kuro can't absorb a whole lot of punishment.

The last thing for Rich to do before Kuro begins adventuring is to determine his Insight. Kuro's Ring Ranks add up to 11, so he gets 110 points from his Rings. With 10 points of skills, his total Insight is a 120.

With his Daisho under his Obi, Kuro sets out to change the future of Rokugan...



Legend of the Five Rings

Name:

Mirumoto Kuro

Clan:

Dragon

Profession:

Bushi

Fire

Agility: 3
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 3
Awareness: 3

Primary Weapon

Katana 3k2

Primary Armor

Light Armor
(+5 to be hit)

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

25

(includes +5 for Daisho)

Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 3
Perception: 2

Void

Void Points Spent:

Skills

Archery	1
Defense	1
Kenjutsu	3
Meditation	1
Shugenja Lore	1
Commerce	1
Horsemanship	2

Techniques

Daisho: +5 TN to be hit

Insight: 120

Wounds

4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

School: Mirumoto

Rank: 1

**Advantages/
Disadvantages**

Benten's Blessing	3
Great Destiny	4
Brash	-2

Glory: 1

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Honor: 2

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Experience Points:



ITEMS PICTURED THIS PAGE

- A. Wooden box
- B. Bandages
- C. Oil bottle
- D. Tent/poles/stakes
- E. Paper lantern
- F. Silk rope
- G. Fish hooks
- H. Net
- I. Iron lantern
- J. Water bottle
- K. Fire starter kit
- L. Wicker back-pack
- M. Straw hat
- N. Straw rain cape
- O. Cooking pot/
lid/spoon/fork
- P. Furoshiki sack
- Q. Iron bound box
- R. Candles
- S. Basket
- T. Straw mat
- U. Hemp rope
- V. Dried food
packets
- W. Blanket

Equipment

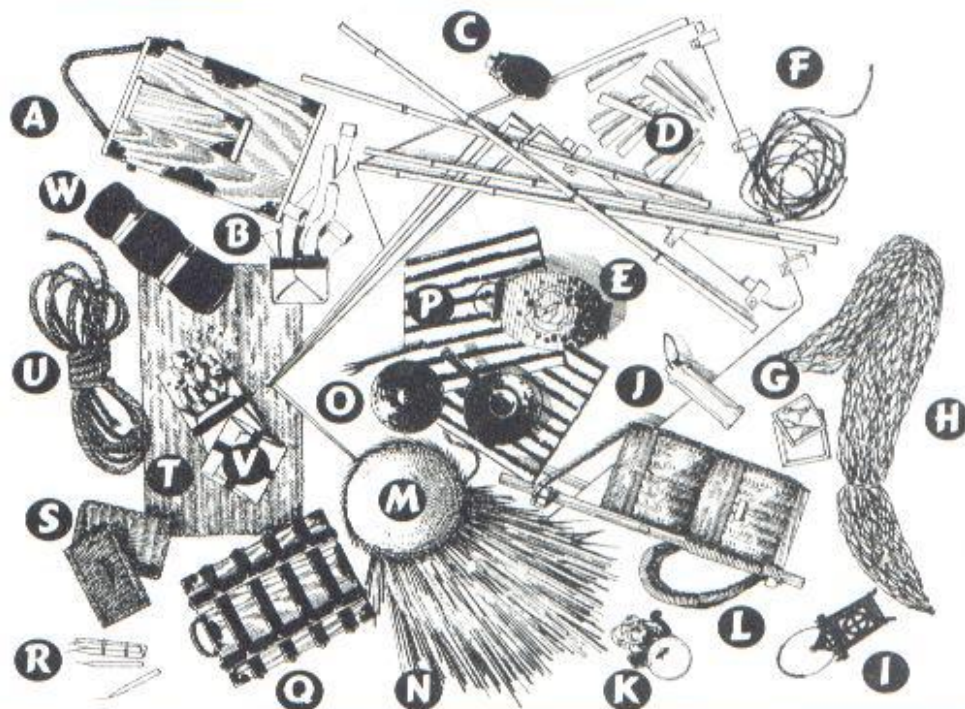
Samurai seldom pay for anything. If they want something, they take it or they command their peasantry to make it for them. However, with the rising power of the merchant class in Rokugan, items of higher quality are coming into demand. When characters receive their Outfits, they'll want to know just what a "tanto" is. Here is a list of equipment available to samurai and shugenja.

Basic Equipment

1 koku (gold) = 5 hu (silver) = 50 zeni (copper)

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Backpack, wicker	3 coppers
Basket, large	5 coppers
Basket, small	1 copper
Books and Scrolls	Average: 1-10 silver Fine: 2-10 koku (Shugenja use the fine variety.)
Bowyer's Kit	2 silvers
Candle	10 coppers
Chest, metal	8 silvers
Chest, wooden	2 silvers
Chopsticks (ivory)	8 coppers
Cloth, silk bolt	2 koku
Dice and dice cup	25 coppers
First aid kit	3 silvers
Fishing kit (includes hook, net, etc.)	10 coppers
Flint and Steel	15 coppers
Furoshiki sack	1 copper
Games (go, shogi, etc.)	10 coppers and up
Inro (medical kit)	1 silver and up
Lantern, metal	4 silvers
Lantern, paper	1 silver
Lantern oil	3 coppers
Mirror, small	3 silvers
Mirror, large	2 koku



Musical instruments	1-5 silvers
samisen	
biwa	
kokyu	
flute	
drum	
Paper, writing (pouch of 5 sheets)	1 silver
Pot, iron	15 copper
Quiver	20 coppers
Rope, braided hair	4 coppers/foot
Rope, hemp	1 copper/foot
Sumi-e (writing) box	1 silver
Sword stand	1 silver - 1 gold
Travel pack	5 coppers
(dried rice and fish wrapped in rice paper)	
Umbrella	2 silvers

CLOTHING

All clothing is listed with its "average" price. Noble clothing can be much more expensive, up to 100 times more expensive in some cases.

Tessen	40 coppers +
Hakama	75 coppers
Haori	25 coppers
Kimono (includes obi)	1 silver
Obi pouch	25 coppers
Sandals	30 coppers
Silk cloak	75 coppers

FINE EQUIPMENT

Many of the beginning Outfits list items as "fine." This means they are of higher quality than regular items.

For instance, a Fine Quality katana has a DR of 4k2 rather than 3k2, and no Crane diplomat would ever be seen wearing a "normal quality" kimono (out of fear that his GM may penalize his next Etiquette Roll).

Fine quality items tends to be 5 times to 10 times more expensive than normal quality items, but they are, at the very least, impressive, and - sometimes - more useful.

WHAT IS THIS STUFF?

Furoshiki sack: A bundle of fabric folded and thrown over the shoulder; used to carry small items.

Inro: A small, segmented box used to carry personal belongings.

Samisen: A Rokuganian guitar.

Biwa: A four-stringed lute.

Koto: A thirteen-stringed harp.

Kokyu: A three-stringed fiddle.

Tessen: Fan (often metal and edged)

Hakama: Divided skirt (only worn by men and *samurai-ko*)

Haori: A garment that exaggerates shoulders.

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ITEMS PICTURED THIS PAGE

A. Arrow quiver with rain cover

B. Sword stand

C. Drum

D. Umbrella

E. Sumi-e set

F. Mirror

G. Fan

H. Samisen and pick

I. Food bowl and lid with chopsticks

J. Dice and cup

K. Sake set

L. Scrolls

M. Silk bolt

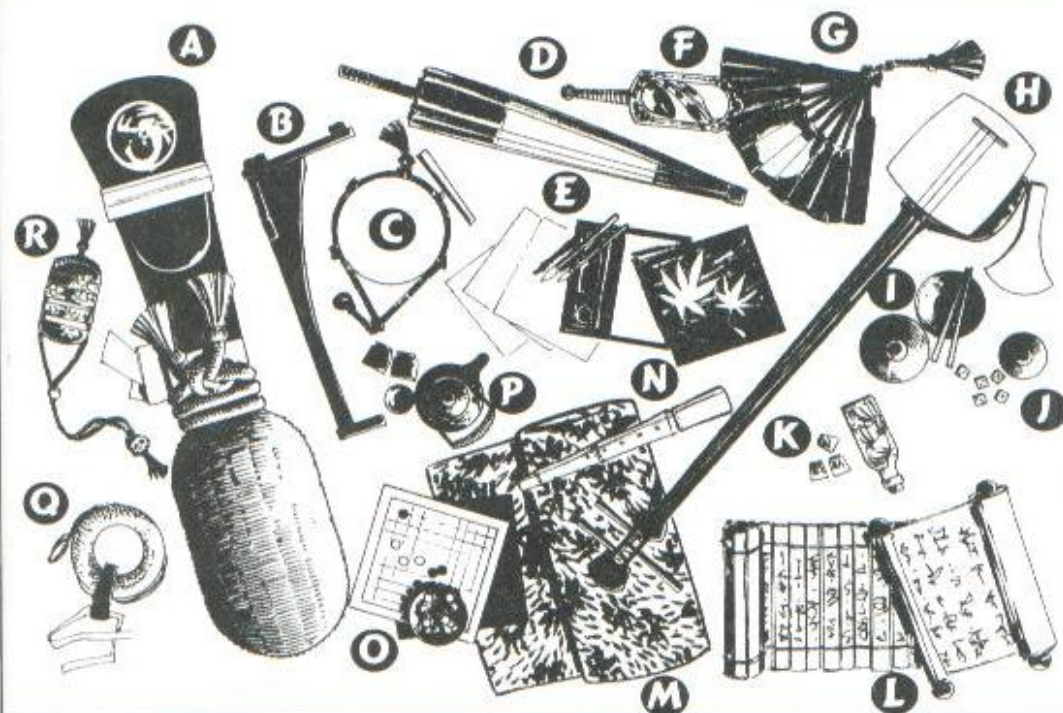
N. Flute

O. Go game

P. Tea set

Q. Bow string holder

R. Inro





ON

The Rokuganese word "on" means "face," or "reputation" (as in, "Putting on your best face").

For the purposes of simplicity and clarity, we have divided on into two traits: Honor and Glory.

A character's Honor can be best defined as his self-esteem and self-worth. It is his confidence in his own abilities. When a character takes an action that would cause him an Honor loss, he is literally destroying his own confidence in himself. Lowly acts are easy; honorable acts are hard. That's why its easy to lose Honor and difficult to gain it.

Glory, on the other hand, is how others view your character through his reputation. When your character misbehaves in public, it is a loss of Glory. Secretive shameful acts will only cause a loss of Honor.



Every skill has the Trait the Skill is most often used with and the mechanic that is implemented when the Skill is used. It will save time while playing to list the total number of dice that will be rolled along with the name of the skill on your character sheet. Remember that the listed Traits and Rings are only the most commonly used traits for a particular skill, and the gamemaster can choose any trait when asking for a roll. For more information on how to make rolls, see *The Book of Fire*.

High Skills

These Skills are honorable for those of the samurai caste to practice.

ACTING (AWARENESS)

Characters with this Skill have training in theater. There are two kinds of theater in Rokugan: Kabuki theater and Noh theater. Kabuki theater is flamboyant and full of action and color. It is "samurai" theater, telling the great and tragic tales of lords from the past. Noh theater is not Kabuki theater; it is quiet and subtle, with light music and little movement against a black backdrop. Characters must choose which form of theater they are trained in. Most characters will probably be more interested in Kabuki theater.

Characters with the Acting Skill gain the ability to disguise themselves (ninja often use Acting to disguise themselves as geisha). Characters with Acting can convince others they are not of the same caste, profession or even gender. Using Acting in this manner is usually a Simple Awareness + Acting Roll with the TN being another character's Perception x 5. If the character

has to actively engage in conversation while in disguise, the Simple Roll becomes a Contested Roll.

BARD (AWARENESS)

This is the Skill of telling a story well. Storytelling in Rokugan is an ancient tradition. Every lord has a bard in his court, telling tales of samurai of long ago.

CALLIGRAPHY (PERCEPTION)

Calligraphy, or *shogaku*, is the art of writing in the ancient language that was given to man by the Fortunes. A character with Shogaku can read and transcribe the ancient scrolls in the shugenja school libraries.

COURTIER (AWARENESS)

A character skilled in Courtier knows all the ins and outs of court life. He is aware of who is making the power plays, who is in debt and who pulls the strings.

DANCE (AGILITY)

There are two styles of dancing in Rokugan: court dancing and folk dancing. Court dances are performed almost exclusively by women. Folk dancing is performed by the peasant folk, both men and women alike.

ETIQUETTE (INTELLIGENCE)

This is the Skill of knowing what to say and how to say it. A character with Etiquette is confident in his social skills, and never makes mistakes in front of the wrong people. This is a very important Skill for those who wish to spend time at court, for the court of Rokugan is very formal. Demonstrating a lack of concern for etiquette demonstrates a person of low character.

HERALDRY (PERCEPTION)

A character with Heraldry has studied the banners and sigils of the Clans and Families. With a Simple Perception + Heraldry Roll vs. a 20, a character can know one of four things about a person when viewing their banner: 1) their name; 2) their Clan and Family; 3) their Honor Rank; and 4) their Glory Rank. With every Raise, the Herald can know an additional fact from viewing the banner. (See *The Book of Earth* (p. 41) for details on how to make Simple Rolls.)

HISTORY (INTELLIGENCE)

This character has studied history and is familiar with all the pertinent events that have led up to the current political situation.

HORSEMANSHIP (AWARENESS OR AGILITY)

Samurai are master horsemen. A character who has Horsemanship knows how to ride a horse, how to fight from horseback and how to shoot a bow from horseback.

HUNTING (PERCEPTION)

A character with Hunting is skilled in all manner of outdoor skills. He knows falconry, how to track, how to make a fire, set up camp, etc.

INVESTIGATION

When on a crime scene, this character (with Perception) knows where to look for clues, how to put disparate facts together (Intelligence) and (using Awareness) how to interrogate suspects.

LAW

(INTELLIGENCE)

This character is familiar with the inner workings of Rokugan's legal system. He may argue cases with magistrates, defend or prosecute the accused and write up legal contracts.

LORE (SHUGENJA, SHADOWLANDS, BUSHIDO, ETC.) (INTELLIGENCE)

There is much to be learned about a variety of subjects, and this skill is the general knowledge of those subjects. A character may specialize on any subject, but Shugenja Lore and Shadowlands Lore are among the most popular in Rokugan at this time.

MEDICINE (INTELLIGENCE)

This character is familiar with the medical practices of Rokugan. He may treat diseases and cure wounds to make certain they don't become infected. He is familiar with massage techniques

(used to center energies) and acupuncture.

MEDITATION (VOID)

A character with the Meditation (*Za-zen*) Skill can make a Simple Void + Meditation Roll vs. 20 to gain back all his spent Void Points. Meditation requires complete, undisturbed silence for one hour to complete.

MUSIC (AGILITY AND AWARENESS)

This is the Skill of playing musical instruments. For every Rank taken in this Skill, a character may learn another musical instrument. The *biwa* is a wide bodied flute; the *fue* is a very popular long, bamboo flute; a *hichiriki* is a double reeded flute, not unlike an oboe; a *koto* is the Japanese zither; a *sanisen* is the lute/banjo instrument; and *san-ko* are the three drums.

While playing an instrument is a demand on the character's manual dexterity (Agility), it is also a demand on his sense of tempo, pitch and harmony (Awareness). When a character plays an instrument, he must use the lower of those two Traits.

PAINTING (INTELLIGENCE)

This is the art of spontaneous ink painting. Many samurai are skilled in this painting style. It is done briskly and without forethought, relying entirely on intuition and inspiration, much like *iaijutsu*.

POETRY (AWARENESS)

Haiku is the three-line, 17-syllable style of poetry. Again, this style is very popular with samurai for its concise and impromptu nature.



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ON

(CONTINUED)

However, both private and public acts will cause a character to lose confidence in his own virtue. As he continues to perform acts viewed as lowly or base, he will doubt his ability to be honorable, thus making it even more difficult to act accordingly.

Honor and Glory are very closely linked to each other, almost to the point of being co-dependent. A samurai cannot be honorable if he does not perform deeds of great glory, and he cannot gain glory unless he performs deeds of honorable accord.



SCHOOL RANK VS. GLORY

When a samurai gains prestige in his school, he also gains prestige in society.

However, just because a samurai has great prestige in the court does not mean he gains prestige in his sensei's school.

Whenever a samurai gains a School Rank, his Glory Rank also increases by one. This reflects Rokugan's appreciation of the military arts. However, when he gains a Glory Rank, his sensei does not automatically begin teaching him the next school secret. He has to earn that through blood, sweat and bruises.

SHINTAO (INTELLIGENCE)

This is the study of the *Tao of Shinsei*, the guiding philosophy of Rokugan. **Note:** A character cannot have Traits higher than 5 without also having at least a Rank 3 in this Skill.

SINCERITY (AWARENESS)

The nobility of Rokugan do not value honesty, they value sincerity: the ability to give the appearance you believe what you are saying. Characters with Sincerity are the most skilled in this respect.

TEA CEREMONY (VOID)

The tea ceremony is far from simply brewing tea. It is a detailed ritual, designed to free the mind of outside concerns, thus liberating and cleansing it of distracting thoughts. It takes about a half an hour for a character with this Skill to perform a ceremony (a Simple Void + Tea Ceremony roll) and all involved (up to the skill Rank of the performer) will gain back a single spent Void Point.

THEOLOGY (INTELLIGENCE)

Characters with this Skill are familiar with all the rites and practices of worshiping the many gods of Rokugan. Religious services are highly formal, and improper procedure may draw wrath from the gods... at least, that's what the people of Rokugan believe.

Bugei Skills

These are the Skills taught to fighting men. Most Skills listed below are self-explanatory. Any weapon other than a "sword weapon" (such as the katana and wakizashi) must be learned as a separate Skill. The Skill "Bo Stick", for instance, is used when a character tries to strike another with a Bo Stick. Skills that require a little explanation (like Archery and Tessen) have text for clarification.

ARCHERY (REFLEXES)

Characters with Archery (*kyujutsu*) are practiced in the Skill of shooting bows. However, the



style of kyujutsu is very spontaneous, relying on instinct rather than aim. "The arrow knows the way" is a common phrase among archers of Rokugan. Characters use Reflexes + Archery when firing bows.

ARMORER (EARTH)

This is *yoroi-sei*, the Skill of making and repairing armor. While this Skill is technically a Merchant Skill (and is listed again in the Merchant Skill section), it is one of the most honorable of all Craft Skills.

ATHLETICS (VARIES)

Running, jumping, lifting and similar physical actions fall under the jurisdiction of Athletics. If a character is running, for instance, and wants to test his speed, he uses Reflexes + Athletics. However, if he wants to test his endurance, he would roll Stamina + Athletics. Athletics is a Bugei Skill for Samurai-caste characters, and a Low Skill for *heimin* and *hinin*.

BATTLE (PERCEPTION)

This is the study of warfare. Characters with Battle have studied the successful strategies and tactics of famous battles and the philosophies of war. This skill is used both for large-scale battles and for smaller skirmishes.

DEFENSE (AGILITY)

Every character knows how to get out the way (that's their Fire Ring). This character knows how to do it effectively. Any character who does not purchase at least Rank 1 in Defense cannot make the Full Defense Maneuver.

JIUJUTSU: HAND-TO-HAND (AGILITY)

Jiu-jutsu is the art of fighting with bare hands. Legend has it that Shinsei brought this skill with him from across the mountains. Damage from a Hand-to-Hand strike is Strength + 0k1 (see *Book of Fire* for details).

LAIJUTSU

Those who practice *laijutsu* practice the art of the "fast draw." *Laijutsu* is only practiced by samurai and katana are the only weapons that are used. It is a formal duel that must follow explicit rules, or the offending party is dishonored and expected to commit *seppuku*.

A samurai with his sword in its saya must use the *laijutsu* skill if he wishes to attack in the current round of combat, or must spend the round

drawing and preparing his weapon. A drawn weapon cannot be used with the *laijutsu* skill.

Two samurai stand a few feet apart with their katanas sheathed. Then, in a furious explosion of motion, both suddenly draw their swords and attack. The rules for *laijutsu* Duels can be found in *The Book of Fire* (p. 108).

KENJUTSU (AGILITY)

This Skill is used when a character is using a katana, wakizashi or any other weapon listed on page 122.

WAR FAN (AGILITY)

The *tessen*, or war fan, is an iron-ribbed fan that has two purposes. It is used as a hand-to-hand weapon, typically to parry strikes from unsuspected attackers. It is also used to give silent signals on a battlefield. To give signals on a battlefield is a Simple Agility + Tessen roll.

WEAPONSMITH (EARTH)

This is the art of making and repairing weapons. While this is also a Merchant Skill (and is listed again in the Merchant Skill section), it is one of the most honorable of all Craft Skills.

WRESTLING (STRENGTH)

This is *sumai*, the forerunner of sumo wrestling. It is a sport rather than a lethal skill. Using this Skill, a character can throw his opponent with a successful Contested Strength roll. If his opponent is thrown, he must make a successful Stamina roll at a TN of 5 x the Strength of the thrower (plus 5 for each Raise of the thrower), or he is stunned and can take no action next Round.

Merchant Skills

These Skills are used by those who are not of the samurai caste. While it is not dishonorable to use them (except Commerce) it is not honorable to use them, either.

ARMORER (EARTH)

This is *yoroi-sei*, the Skill of making and repairing armor. While this Skill can be technically a Merchant Skill (and is listed again in the Merchant Skill section), it is one of the most honorable of all Craft Skills.

COMMERCE (AWARENESS)

This is the Skill of bartering, handling currency and merchandising. It is dishonorable for a samurai to practice this Skill.

SCHOOL RANK, GLORY, HONOR, AND INSIGHT

A stratified, formal society like Rokugan has quite a few social "ladders" that people occupy. Here's the quick version of these four stats:

School Rank represents how well your character is trained. The more he knows, the more powerful spells or abilities he learns.

Glory is your character's renown in the Empire. It's based on his School Rank (prowess is respected), but can also be increased on adventures by doing great deeds.

Honor is how closely your character follows the code of bushido. Dishonorable acts can affect your character's Glory as well.

Finally, **Insight** is based on your character's stats... and when they get high enough, he can return to his school to gain the next School Rank.



"LITTLE TURTLE"

Her cousin called her that name, but Shiba Tsukune didn't mind too much that she was shy. She was always quiet, but also watchful. She preferred to stay on the edge of the room and watch rather than dance and sing and subtly flirt with the boys the way her Isawa cousins did.

When it came time for her to attend bushi school, she used her observations to learn from her classmates' mistakes. When her sensei said, "You will learn all you need to know from watching your enemy," she nodded quietly to herself.

At her gempukku ceremony, Tsukune learned much from watching. She had learned how to watch the breath of her enemy to anticipate an attack. She learned how to sense the energies of the shugenja of the Phoenix Clan –

CRAFT

This Skill covers many different areas. It is the Skill of making. Every manner of craft can be listed with this Skill, except Armorer and Weaponsmith, which are regarded above all other Crafts. Samples of Craft Skills include: Farmer, Cook, Potter, Gardener, Shipwright, Brewer, Carpenter, Cobbler, Fisherman, Seamstress/Tailor, and Mason.

HERBALISM (INTELLIGENCE)

This Skill is the peasant version of Medicine. It is used to cure wounds and heal maladies. Instead of acupuncture, it uses herbs.

LOCKSMITH (AGILITY)

This Skill not only allows a character to make locks, but to break them. When a locksmith creates a lock, he makes a Simple Agility + Locksmith roll. This sets the TN for the Lock. When another Locksmith attempts to pick the lock, he must make a Simple Roll vs. the lock's TN.

WEAPONSMITH (EARTH)

This is the art of making and repairing weapons. While this is also a Bugei Skill (and is listed again in the Bugei Skill section), it is one of the most honorable of all Craft Skills.

Low Skills

These Skills are dishonorable for those of the samurai caste to use.

ATHLETICS (VARIES)

Running, jumping, lifting and similar physical actions fall under the jurisdiction of Athletics. If a character is running, for instance, and wants to test his speed, he uses Reflexes + Athletics. However, if he wants to test his endurance, he would roll Stamina + Athletics. Athletics is a Bugei Skill for Samurai-caste characters, and a Low Skill for *heimin* and *hinin*.

FORGERY (AGILITY)

This Skill allows a character to forge official documents, letters, etc. When forging a document, the forger must make a Simple Agility + Forgery Roll. This sets the TN for the document. When another character views the document, he must make a Simple Perception Roll (sometimes supplemented by Law or Investigation, depending on the GM) to beat the TN of the document.

GAMBLING (AWARENESS)

This is the Skill of professional gambling. In other words: cheating. The Trait to use with Gambling is Awareness. To detect cheating, a character must make a Contested Perception + Gambling roll against the Gambler's Awareness + Gambling.

POISON (INTELLIGENCE)

A character with this Skill will be able to detect, analyze and use the various poisons available in Rokugan.

SEDUCTION (AWARENESS)

Honorable women do not act seductively. That activity is left to geisha. Seduction uses a Contested Awareness + Seduction Roll vs. the opponent's Awareness.

STEALTH (AGILITY)

A character with Stealth (*shinobi*) moves silently through shadows, unseen by the casual observer. To use Stealth, a character must make a Contested Agility + Stealth roll against another character's Perception.

TORTURE (AWARENESS)

The use of torture is dishonorable because it involves touching blood, sweat and dead flesh. When using Torture, a character is trying to extract information from the tortured character using pain. Torture is a Contested Awareness + Torture Skill vs. the opponent's Stamina (deducting a number of dice equal to his current Wound Level, of course).

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

Each shows how many points you need to

spend to gain the Advantage.

ABSOLUTE DIRECTION (1 POINT)

This character never gets lost. He adds two dice to any rolls involving direction, mapping or finding his way out of a Shadowlands crypt.

ALLIES (VARIABLE)

You are connected. For every 2 Points you spend on Allies, you can gain a single Minor Ally, and for every 4 you can gain a Major Ally. Minor Allies are folks who can get you legal things like food, shelter and perhaps a small amount of money. A Major Ally can get you things that are slightly less easy to acquire – like fake travel papers, audience with a daimyo or a quick mid-night ride out of the Province.

AMBIDEXTROUS (3 POINTS)

This character may use both hands without penalty. Any character who does not invest in Ambidexterity rolls two fewer dice when using his off-hand.

BENTEN'S BLESSING (3 POINTS, 2 POINTS FOR CRANE CHARACTERS)

People are attracted to you. It may be your looks or your charm, or may be both. You just have that certain "something." Whenever you make a roll involving persuasion, keep an additional die (two if they are attracted to you already).

BLACKMAIL (GLORY OF BLACKMAILEE)

You have a bit of information or evidence that you can hold over someone's head. Because of this information, you can gain advantages over the guilty party. The cost of this advantage is equal to the Glory Rank of the individual. This Advantage costs one point less than usual for Scorpion Clan characters. Keep in mind that no one likes to be blackmailed...

DEATH TRANCE (3 POINTS, 2 POINTS FOR LION CHARACTERS)

This samurai understands that death has no hold over him, and has taken the philosophy of bushido to heart. When he faces death, he enters into a thoughtless trance that gives him great courage in the face of adversity. A character with Death Trance automatically succeeds any Fear test.

CLEAR THINKER (2 POINTS)

It isn't easy to trick you. Whenever another character tries to confuse, befuddle, or lie to you,

add 10 to the Target Number.

DIFFERENT SCHOOL (5 POINTS)

This character did not go to his Clan's bushi or shugenja school, but was instead an "exchange student" at another Clan's school. This requires the prospective student's family to cash in a number of favors, and may have some effect on others' perception of him; a Crab bushi who studied at the Kakita school would almost certainly be mocked by his cousins. This Advantage may only be taken once.

GREAT DESTINY (4 POINTS)

When this character was born, it may have been that the stars were aligned just right, or a birthmark was in just the right shape, but the ancestors smiled and a Destiny was created for this child. The great wheel moves this character slowly and surely towards this destiny. If this character takes damage that would kill him, he is reduced instead to a single Wound at the Unconscious Level. The Seven Fortunes will only protect a character in this manner once per story. The GM will decide what the Great Destiny is, but need never reveal it to the character. Once the Destiny has been fulfilled, these points are turned into another advantage of the GM's choice.

HIGHER PURPOSE (2 POINTS)

You have dedicated yourself to a single goal, a single objective. Whenever you take a step toward achieving your Higher Purpose, you gain an extra experience point (see "Experience" below) at the end of the session.

INHERITANCE (VARIABLE)

You have been given an ancestral item of some sort. This item has been carried by your ancestors and its spirit has become more powerful than a normal item. The cost in points and the nature of the item must be agreed upon with the GM, but even a minor magical item would cost 2 or 3 points. A Clan's Ancestral Weapon or Armor might cost 20 points or more.

INNATE ABILITY (3 POINTS)

When a shugenja has gained mastery over a spell, he is able to complete the incredibly complex sequence of motions and meditations that are required to appease the spirits and manipulate the elements without the aid of a scroll. For 3 Points, a shugenja can begin the game with one spell as an Innate Ability. The shugenja no longer needs to have the spell scroll in front of him to

the most skilled shugenja of the Empire – for any sign of distraction or unreadiness. She had learned well, and her sensei knew it.

She was presented to Shiba Ujimitsu as a promising prodigy, and the daimyo immediately put her in command of a small squadron of samurai.

"Little Turtle" is now all grown up, and while she is still as silent as ever, those who have met her on the battlefield or on the other end of her faithful naginata have learned never to underestimate the silent samurai-ko.





MY SISTER'S KEEPER

You would not know it from looking into his eyes, but Bayushi Aramoro is a man with a troubled soul. He is a samurai uniquely skilled (see "Ninja" in the *Void Book* for further details) and highly valued by the Scorpion Clan. He is brother to the Scorpion daimyo and personal guard of Bayushi Kachiko, the high lady of the Emperor's court.

Aramoro loves his brother, but more importantly, he is also in love with his brother's wife – his sister-in-law. While he would never violate his brother's trust, he cannot soothe the passions of his desire.

He is a man torn between his duty to his clan, to his family and to the woman he loves. Such is the makings of classic Rokugan tragedy: a Scorpion whose downfall is not betrayal, but loyalty.

cast the spell. If the shugenja casts the spell from a scroll anyway, the spell is even easier and the shugenja is given a Free Raise. A shugenja can have any number of spells mastered as innate abilities, but cannot memorize a spell unless his Ring Rank plus his School Rank is equal to or greater than the Mastery Level of the spell. (See the *Book of Air* for more details on spells.)

KHARMIC TIE (1-5 POINTS)

The Rokugani believe in reincarnation, that every soul lives a hundred thousand lifetimes. When you meet someone, the relationship(s) you've had in past lives influence your reaction to them in this life. You feel uneasy around the people you've had bad relationships with while you feel comfortable around those you've had good relationships with.

If you purchase a Kharmic Tie, your character has found someone they are connected with from a past life. Your relationship depends on the amount of points you invest in this Advantage. For every point you invest (up to 5), you may, once per game session, roll an additional die when you are fighting for or protecting your tie. You do not get to keep the additional dice you roll.

LARGE (2 POINTS, 1 POINT FOR CRAB CHARACTERS)

You are big. The average Rokugani is approximately 5' 6" to 5' 8" tall. You are anywhere from 6' to 6' 3". This is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Whenever you engage in social situations, you roll one die less. However, all damage rolls are at +1 die.

LUCK (3, 6, OR 9 POINTS)

For every level of Luck, you may re-roll one unsuccessful roll during a session.

MAGIC RESISTANCE (2, 4, OR 6 POINTS)

For some reason or another, you are highly resistant to spell effects. For every two points spent on Magic Resistance, any spells that target you add 5 to their TN.

PERFECT BALANCE (2 POINTS)

You roll an additional die whenever performing actions involving balance.

QUICK (3 POINTS)

You're just faster than other folks. When determining Initiative (see "Skirmishes" in *The Book*

of Fire, p. 105) roll two dice and keep the highest.

QUICK HEALER (3 POINTS)

You heal wounds as if your Stamina were one Rank higher.

READ LIPS (2 POINTS)

With a successful Perception roll, you can read the lips of anyone you can see.

SENSEI (VARIABLE)

You and your sensei have developed a bond that makes you inseparable. You would do anything to protect your sensei and his school, and he would do the same. The cost of a sensei depends on his skill. Your sensei will not be able to accompany you on journeys (he has responsibilities, after all), but he will be able to assist you in other ways.

1 Point = A sensei with moderate skill (Rank 1 or 2)

3 Points = A sensei with great skill (Rank 3 or 4)

5 Points = A sensei of legendary skill (Rank 5)

SOCIAL POSITION (5 POINTS PER RANK)

A character who has additional Social Position gains a bonus to their Glory, and therefore to their position within Rokugan society. This can come from being closely related to a Daimyo (or even the emperor himself), or possibly from having a great omen appear when you were born, etc. The player should note exactly how this advantage is gained.

STRENGTH OF THE EARTH (2, 4 OR 8 POINTS)

A character who has the Strength of the Earth may ignore some effects of Wound Levels on their rolls. The Wound rank penalty is decreased by one die for every level of Strength of the Earth.

TRUE FRIEND (VARIABLE)

True friendship is a rare commodity in Rokugan. You and your NPC friend have gone through much together, and would do anything for each other. Having such a friend is a blessing, but also demands great devotion and loyalty. The cost for a True Friend depends on his influence and his devotion.

Influence

1 Point = A character of minor influence (a samurai without land or political position).

3 Points = A character of some influence (a samurai with land and/or political position).

5 Points = A character of great influence (a

daimyo with land and political position).

Devotion

1 Point = Your friend would go out of his way for you, but would not risk family honor.

3 Points = Your friend would risk family honor to aid you, but would do so secretly.

5 Points = Your friend would do anything to aid you.

VOICE (2 POINTS)

A character with Voice has 1 additional die for any rolls involving speaking.

WAY OF THE LAND (2 POINTS, 1 POINT FOR UNICORN CHARACTERS)

You know your home province like the back of your hand. You never get lost and know all the best travel routes. Characters may also purchase this Advantage for other provinces.

Disadvantages

Disadvantages are worth points; when your character takes one, he gains the number of character points listed. No character may gain more than ten points from taking Disadvantages.

BAD FORTUNE (1 POINT)

A character with Bad Fortune puts his fate in the hands of the GM. The Game Master makes a secret roll on the table below (or just chooses one of the options). Some of the results are obvious ("evil eye", allergy, etc.) but others are less so. You may not take this Disadvantage more than once.

Few of the outcomes on the list below have any effect on game mechanics, but all can cause role-playing challenges. You have been warned!

BAD FORTUNE TABLE

1: Someone is secretly in love with you and will go to great lengths to mess up your current love life (if any) to make room for their affections.

2: You have a disfiguring scar or birthmark: the mark of being born under a bad sign. Just touching you can cause bad luck. Good luck getting a massage.

3: You lack one item from your standard outfit.

4: You have an allergy to a common item. Tobacco smoke, sushi, silk and cotton are all good examples.

5: You have the "evil eye" (one of your eyes is discolored). People avoid your gaze and whisper about evil spirits as you pass by.

6: One of these days, one roll – a very important roll – is going to fail completely. You won't even need to make the roll. You won't get to use Luck or any other mechanic to salvage the situation. It's your destiny. Accept it.

7: You have an enemy in another Clan. You won't even know you've developed this enemy until it's far too late, of course.

8: Your father has accrued a great gambling debt that you will have to pay off. Soon. Very soon.

9: You just haven't gotten the hang of one of your Skills just yet. All TNs for one Skill are at +5. You may spend one Experience Point to get rid of this Bad Fortune.

0: Roll again twice on this table; ignore this roll.

BAD HEALTH (3 POINTS)

A character with Bad Health has his Wound Ranks figured as if his Stamina were one Rank lower. A character cannot take this disadvantage if his Stamina is 1.

BAD REPUTATION (2 POINTS)

You've already earned yourself a bad reputation in Rokugan. Whenever other samurai see you, they add a die to the recognition roll, but they begin with a bad impression of your character. You should choose a single word to define your reputation.

BENTEN'S CURSE (2 POINTS)

There is just something about you that others find repulsive. Add an additional die to any fear or intimidation attempts, but subtract two dice from any attempts at cordiality or etiquette.

BLACK SHEEP (5 POINTS)

You've been ostracized from your family. You have no family ties – although you may purchase some with the Allies advantage. Any samurai from your Clan who see you are expected to treat you as if you were *eta* (so don't go offending them or you'll find yourself in a duel). You may not attend your family school beyond Rank 1 and must find another school to attend.

BRASH (2 POINTS)

Characters with this Disadvantage are hot-headed. They seek to avenge any slight on their honor, they must make an Honor roll (TN = 20) in order to keep control.

CAN'T LIE (3 POINTS)

A character with this Disadvantage just can't

THE UNICORN WHO COULDN'T RIDE

Ido Tadaji was born with a club foot. In Rokugan, being born with such a deformity is a sign of a troubled past life, and a sign that this one will probably not be any better. His parents hid the deformity for many years, but eventually, the truth was discovered. Tadaji was forced to leave Unicorn lands, shave his head and become a monk.

When he returned to his Clan many years later, he was schooled in all the arts and sciences and was a skilled speaker. The Unicorn had use for such a man and they sent him (again) far from Unicorn lands. Now as the Ambassador to the Emperor's court, he cannot truthfully say he has no ill-will toward his Clan, but being the only "civilized" Unicorn in Rokugan does have its advantages.





THE LIONESS

The Akodo family has long held the position of military advisors and protectors of the Hantei dynasty, but their chief rival for this position is not the Crane Clan, but the Lion Clan's own Matsu family.

The Matsu family has always been an anomaly in Rokugan. To begin with, they are a matriarchy – a woman has always held the role of daimyo. Secondly, they believe fervently in the strength of a samurai's rage rather than his reason – making them quite the contrary to the analytical Akodos.

Matsu Tsuko is the current daimyo of the Matsu family and she holds a deep resentment in her heart toward the "irreproachable" Akodo Toturi. Over the centuries, her Clan has lost land and prestige to the political machinations of the Crane, and in her eyes,

tell a good lie. Whenever he tries, he fails; the party listening doesn't even need to make a roll.

CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY (3 POINTS)

This character is addicted. The two most predominant addictions in Rokugan are alcohol (sake) and opium. He needs to feed his addiction on regular intervals or he loses a die on all rolls for every day (or so) he goes without feeding his addiction.

COMPULSION (2-4 POINTS)

You have an uncontrollable urge (drinking, gambling, a love of geisha) that gets you into trouble. You must make an Honor roll every time you confront your compulsion to keep you from losing control. The cost of compulsions depends on the TN of your Honor roll:

TN 15 = 2 Points

TN 20 = 3 Points

TN 25 = 4 Points

DARK SECRET (5 POINTS)

You are keeping a secret that would jeopardize your family's standing if it was revealed. Dark Secret should not be taken lightly. If a character's secret is ever revealed, he will be expected to commit *seppuku* to clear the shame. An enemy who gains knowledge of the secret will own the character's life, holding the secret over his head with the very real threat of ruining the character's family. For examples of Dark Secrets, just look under the capital crimes in the Justice section in *The Book of Earth* (p. 39).

DEPENDENT (1-4 POINTS)

You have someone who is completely dependent upon you. Who it is (a child, grandparent, etc.) is up to you, but they are helpless without you. Good examples of dependents include small children and aged grandparents, but a naive spouse could also be included as a dependent.

1 Point = Adult Dependent

2 Points = Elderly Dependent

4 Points = Child Dependent

DRIVEN (3 POINTS)

This is the dark side of the Higher Purpose Advantage. A character who is Driven has a single goal that he will sacrifice anything to achieve. He will turn his back on his friends and family, even sacrifice his honor to gain his goal.

FRAIL MIND (3 POINTS)

Whenever you are the subject of a magical

attack, Seduction roll, or any other task that would test your Willpower. The attacker gets to roll two additional dice.

GULLIBLE (3 POINTS)

You have a soft spot in your heart for sob stories. You believe almost everything anyone tells you if they are convincing enough. The TN to convince you of anything is 5.

HAUNTED (VARIABLE)

You are haunted by the spirit of an ancestor who is not happy with you. He is distracting, insulting and irritating, but he is also your ancestor, which means all you can do is try to do better.

1 Point = The ghost only shows up once per story.

2 Points = The ghost appears up to three times per story.

4 Points = The ghost is with you at least once a day.

INSENSITIVE (2 POINTS)

The three most important things in your life are your health, your welfare and your wealth. You care little for the plights of others and you don't make any motions to keep it a secret. You must spend a Void point whenever you want to put yourself at risk for another.

LAME (3 POINTS)

You have a crippled leg. All rolls involving Agility are at -2.

LOST LOVE (2 POINTS)

You once knew true love, and now it's gone. You tend to have fits of melancholy when you are reminded of your love. Whenever your love is mentioned, you lose a die from all die rolls until you spend a Void Point to bring yourself back to the present.

LOW PAIN THRESHOLD (5 POINTS)

Whenever you get wounded, add an additional "-1" to your Wound Penalty.

MEDDLER (2 POINTS)

You cannot resist getting into other people's business. You always have an opinion and enjoy sharing it with others. You know what's best for everyone and have no qualms about telling them. This can get you in a lot of trouble. The Rokugani are a very private people, and meddling in another's affairs is considered an insult – it implies that they can't take care of their own house. Sticking your nose in other people's business could get it

cut off.

MISSING LIMB (3 POINTS)

You are missing a hand or foot. Any appropriate TNs are raised by 10.

OBLIGATION (2 OR 4 POINTS)

You owe someone a favor, and someday they are going to collect. An obligation is worth 2 Points if it is a small favor and 4 Points if it is a large favor.

A small favor would include something that would not threaten your position and/or your family's standing, but would cause you inconvenience. A major favor would discredit you and disgrace your family if it came to light.

PERMANENT WOUND (5 POINTS)

You begin the game with a wound that has never properly healed. In game terms, this means you always begin the game at the "-1" Wound Level (see "Getting Wounded", in *The Book of Fire*, p. 107).

PHOBIA (2 OR 4 POINTS)

Every time you encounter your phobia, all rolls you make lose dice equal to the number of points you gained from this Disadvantage. You may spend a Void Point to avoid this penalty for a single action. Listed below are some possible phobias for your character: Having a phobia must be approved by the Game Master.

Fear of Heights, Fear of Open Places, Fear of Enclosed Spaces, Fear of Insects, Fear of Blood, Fear of Being Alone, Fear of Dead Things, Fear of Fire, and Fear of Darkness are a few examples.

SMALL (3 POINTS)

You are below average height and weight. Whenever you make a damage roll, you cannot count the highest die.

SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE (3 POINTS PER RANK)

You have slipped from your position within the Celestial Order. For every 3 points of Social Disadvantage, the character's Glory Rank is reduced by one from his School Rank. All Ronin characters must have at least 3 Points of Social Disadvantage. Characters that fall below Glory Rank zero are hardly considered part of the Celestial Order.

SOFT-HEARTED (2 POINTS)

You have a profound respect for human life. Your conscience overcomes you whenever you are

about to commit an act of inhumane cruelty. Whenever you try to take a human life, you must make a Simple Willpower Roll against a 20 or you can't follow through with the action.

SWORN ENEMY (3-6 POINTS)

The character has a sworn enemy that desires his death. Having the sworn enemy is worth 3 points: up to three additional points can be gained if the sworn enemy is a higher rank (at one point for one rank higher). Whenever a character with a sworn enemy gains a rank, the enemy gains one as well, with appropriately increased skills and traits. The enemy can show up at any time, at the GM's whim, and while he or she may be temporarily satisfied with ruining the character's plans or reputation, the ultimate goal is death. The player should detail to the GM's satisfaction the nature and cause of the vendetta, and the GM can either have the character create the NPC enemy or create the enemy himself.

TRUE LOVE (3 POINTS)

Finding true love in Rokugan can be a painful experience. You will find yourself torn between your true love and your loyalty to your Clan, your sensei and your family. Any character who takes True Love will find himself torn between his love and duty. Whenever he must choose between his love and his duty to Clan (and/or family, sensei, daimyo, etc.) he must spend a Void Point to do so. Also, if he ever loses his True Love's favor, he may spend no Void Points at all until he can gain the favor back.

UNLUCK (3-9 POINTS)

Any character with Unluck will find himself the victim of the GM's whim. For every 3 Points the character "invests" in Unluck, the GM may - once per session - command the re-roll of any roll the character makes. It is possible to take both Luck and Unluck; a GM may not command a roll the character has just re-rolled using the Luck Advantage.

WEAKNESS (5 POINTS)

You can reduce Agility, Awareness, Intelligence, Perception, Reflexes, Stamina, Strength, or Willpower by one point to gain 5 Character Points. You may not reduce a Trait below one, or by more than two levels.



Toturi has done nothing to prevent it.

She would never allow her rage to take advantage of her devotion to her Clan and the Emperor, however. She is a Lion, after all. She would commit seppuku before she allowed her pride to tarnish her honor, loyalty and duty.

Crab Clan



Step One

CHOOSE A FAMILY

Is your Crab Clan character from the Hida family, the Kuni family, or the Yasuki family?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja. Write down the Skills your School teaches you as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Bushi) or Spells (Shugenja).

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 75).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on the following page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. This is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

The Crab Clan

For a thousand years, the Crab Clan has performed its duty of guarding the Emerald Empire against the horrors of the Shadowlands. Its samurai are among the most highly trained in Rokugan. Their schools teach the ways that a small army can defeat a larger one, for when the Shadowlands assault the fortresses of the Crab, the samurai are outnumbered by at least three to one.

Unlike other Clans, the Crab do not value sincerity as highly as they do honesty. "There are no lies between allies on a battlefield," is an old saying that every Crab samurai knows and understands. They carry this philosophy from the battlefield into the court, and are quick to be drawn into a flash of red-hot temper when they feel they are being lied to. The Crab view the political situation in very simple terms. The strong have more right to rule than the weak. Those who cannot protect the Empire do not deserve to rule it. Because of the first Hida's defeat by Hantei, they view the Hantei dynasty with respect. However, if such a time arose when a Hida could take the throne from the ruling Hantei, then they would do so without question.

The Daimyo of the Crab Clan has always been from the Hida family, directly descended from the original Hida who fell from the sky, and swore to the original Hantei that his dynasty would protect the Empire from the foul armies of Fu Leng. The Hiruma Family was the first to follow Hida to the Shadowlands. Their devotion to the Hida family is well known in the Empire. Often, the bodyguards of the Daimyo are from the Hiruma family. (The Hiruma family will be detailed in the forthcoming *Way of the Crab*.) While the Kuni family does occasionally produce samurai, the family has devoted itself to discovering the secrets of the Shadowlands, and so most of their family don the robes of the shugenja. The history of the Yasuki family is a curious one. During the first Crab/Crane war a thousand years ago, the family had sworn fealty to the Doji family. During the war, however, they betrayed the Crane and swore fealty to Lord Hida. It is a slight that has never been forgiven.

The Families

HIDA

The patriarch of the Crab Clan is "the Great Bear" Hida Kisada. Almost all Crab bushi are trained at the Hida School. **Benefit: +1 Strength.**

KUNI

The Kuni family are the only shugenja family in the Crab Clan, led by the sinister Kuni Yori. **Benefit: +1 Intelligence.**

YASUKI

The Yasuki family are the Crab Clan's link to the other Clans. The bulk of the Yasuki family are politicians and merchants. **Benefit: +1 Awareness.**

The Crabs' Views of the Other Clans



"They exploit the favor system to the extreme, to the point of ridiculousness. They rely on those favors and the Emperor's graces to save them from destruction."



"Who knows anything about the Dragon? They remain hidden away in their mountain keeps and 'contemplate truth.' Send one of their samurai out with me to the Shadowlands, and I'll show him truth."



"It is the Lion whom we respect most. Their courage and strength are the reason. They do not claim nobility as the Crane do, but allow their actions to speak for them. However, that does not change the fact that they are all pompous fools."



"They may be weak, but they are also willing to acknowledge their weakness. Still, I have seen what a Phoenix shugenja can do, and I would not mind having one on my side the next time the Shadowlands invade."



"The Crane relies on favors and the Scorpion relies on secrets. Both are cowards; the Scorpion is just more clever about it."



"There is a mighty force to contend with, but they rely too heavily on their speed. We acknowledge the right of the strong, not the lucky."

Hida Bushi School

Benefit: +1 Stamina

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Archery, Battle, Defense, Jujitsu, Kenjutsu, Shadowlands Lore, Tetsubo

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Way of the Crab

The bushi begins by learning how to tap into his own Earth energy. Every time the bushi rolls to hit and damage, he adds his Earth to the total of the roll. Also, because Crab bushi training is always done in full armor, they can ignore the penalties other bushi suffer from wearing Full Armor (+5 to all physical TNs).

Rank 2: The Mountain Does Not Move

At this Rank, the bushi learns the secret of true resilience. Once a day, the bushi may spend a Void Point to make a simple Earth roll at TN 20 to ignore all damage from a single hit.

Rank 3: Two Pincers, One Mind

At this Rank, the bushi has learned how to make two attacks per turn.

Rank 4: The Berserker Rage

There are times in Rokugan when the Earth rages. At this Rank, the bushi learns how to tap into that energy. At the beginning of each turn, the bushi may choose to sacrifice 3 Wound Points to keep an additional die to hit or damage until the end of the turn.

Rank 5: The Mountain Does Not Fall

The bushi may now spend a Void point at the beginning of a turn to make a single action, even if he cannot due to Wound Rank (Down, Out or Dead). The bushi can continue to make a single action per turn as long as he has Void points to spend.

Kuni Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Beginning Honor Rank: 1, plus 5 boxes

Kuni shugenja get a free raise for all Earth spells

SKILLS

Calligraphy, Defense, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Shadowlands Lore, any one High Skill, any one Weapon Skill

BEGINNING SPELLS

Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 Earth, 2 Fire, and 1 Water.

Your Outfit

BUSHI

(All considered to be Average Quality): Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Heavy Armor, Helm, Traveling Pack, Kimono, any 2 weapons, 5 Koku

SHUGENJA

(All considered to be Average Quality): Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Katana, Wakizashi, Tanto, 5 Koku

Crane Clan



Step One

CHOOSE A FAMILY

Is your Crane Clan character from the Doji family, the Kakita family, or the Asahina family?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja.

Write down the Skills your School teaches you as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Bushi) or Spells (Shugenja).

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 73).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on the following page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. The result is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

The Crane Clan

For centuries, the Crane have used political maneuvering to gain its position as advisors to the Emperor. When the First Hantei needed a bride, there was the Crane Clan with a host of beautiful girls for him to consider. Every generation of Hantei has been married to a woman from the Crane Clan. But Hantei is not the only one. Generations of Cranes have made their way into the dynasties of other Clans, thus providing the Crane Clan with sympathy in each and every Clan. Because the mother of every Emperor (and many Daimyo) has been a Crane, this has provided the Clan with many advantages. They are able to call upon favors on nearly every occasion from nearly every Clan.

The Crane Clan also managed to attract the finest swordsmen in the Empire to its dojos to train the Crane samurai in the art of kenjutsu, and now, the Kakita School of Kenjutsu is the pre-eminent fencing school in Rokugan. Attending the school is considered one of the greatest honors a samurai can receive. Of course, attendance is by invitation only, which means many samurai must pay highly to have their sons and daughters receive the finest kenjutsu training in the land.

As the Emperor's political and economic advisors, the Doji are able to keep an eye on all the other Clans. They are the first to hear any news, the first to hear of troops being moved across provincial lines and the first to speak to the Emperor about his actions. The Asahina family were originally from the Phoenix Clan, but when an Asahina shugenja was saved by a Kakita samurai-maiden, a marriage was struck and the Crane inherited all the wisdom of a Phoenix family.

The Families

DOJI

The Champion of the Crane is Doji Satsume, perhaps the most famous warrior-poet of the Empire. **Benefit: +1 Awareness**

KAKITA

The "Gray Crane" Kakita Toshimoko heads the Crane fencing school, the most prestigious school in the Empire. **Benefit: +1 Agility.**

ASAHINA

The shugenja of House Asahina are peaceful and introspective. They also house one of the most extensive libraries of shugenja lore in the Empire. **Benefit: +1 Perception.**

The Cranes' Views of the Other Clans

 "There is more to bushido than swordplay. Their strength and courage is admirable, but their lack of respect for civilization is their downfall. A stubborn, arrogant and uneducated brute you must pacify with a pretty wife: that is a Crab."

 "I would not pretend to understand their ways. All I know of the Dragon is their devotion to mystery and their tattoos. We are seldom able to procure favors from the Dragon, for they are reluctant to step outside their monastic temple."

 "The Lion are our most dangerous rivals. They despise us for our position and how we gained it. Their lack of skill in the court has not improved their position at all, and neither has their hot-headed pride."

 "Of all the other Clans, we respect them most of all. They are a civilized Clan who understands the necessity of our ways. Never lose favor with the Phoenix, for the knowledge of a single shugenja can be worth more than a thousand samurai."

 "Our most brilliant enemy. There is nothing more convincing than the smile of a Scorpion. Once they discover your secrets, you are never free from their manipulations."

 "Their distance from us is unfortunate for there is much we can gain from them. They have only returned to the Empire in the past two hundred years, and they are eager for allies in our uncertain Empire. Any man who is eager for allies owns something you can gain."

Kakita Bushi School

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Beginning Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Archery, Etiquette, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu, Sincerity, any High Skill, any High or Bugei Skill

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Way of the Crane

The Kakita School emphasizes the more traditional and ritualistic fighting styles. Bushi from the Kakita School may add their Iaijutsu Skill to any Initiative roll and may also use Iaijutsu in the place of their Kenjutsu Skill.

Rank 2: The Sudden Strike

The bushi now learns the famous "sudden strike" of the Crane Clan. When engaged in an Iaijutsu duel, the samurai can raise the TN by any value, not just multiples of five. He may still only Raise a number of times equal to his Void.

Rank 3: Strike From The Void

At this Rank, Crane bushi learn how to spend more than one Void Point when engaged in an Iaijutsu duel.

Rank 4: One Strike, Two Cuts

The bushi learns how to move so quickly that he can make two attacks per turn.

Rank 5: Strike With No Thought

At the very beginning of combat, before Initiative is even rolled, the bushi makes a Void vs. Void Contested Roll with his opponent. If he succeeds, he gains one attack before combat even begins. Usually, the TN to hit a motionless target is 5.

Asahina Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Beginning Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

Asahina shugenja get a free raise for all Air spells

SKILLS

Buquette, Meditation, Shintao, Calligraphy, any three High Skills

BEGINNING SPELLS

Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 Air, 2 Earth, and 1 Water.

Your Outfit

BUSHI

(All considered to be Fine Quality): Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light or Heavy Armor, Helm, Traveling Pack, Steed, Kimono, any 3 weapons, 10 Koku

SHUGENJA

(All considered to be Fine Quality): Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Tanto, 10 Koku, Steed

Dragon Clan



Step One

CHOOSE A FAMILY

Is your Dragon Clan character from the Togashi family, the Mirumoto family, or the Agasha family?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja.

Write down the Skills your School teaches you as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Bushi) or Spells (Shugenja).

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 75).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on the following page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. This is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

The Dragon Clan

There is so little that can be said with certainty about the Dragon Clan. They were founded by the samurai Togashi a thousand years ago, a samurai who refused to fight against his brother for the right to rule. His refusal was seen by Hida as an act of cowardice, but Hantei was wise enough to know that Togashi refused because he already knew the outcome: his own defeat at the hands of his brother. Togashi then retired to the mountains and built a monastery where he remained for many years. It wasn't until three samurai - Mirumoto, Kitsuki and Agasha - joined him in his temple that the Dragon Clan was actually born. Since then, the remainder of what is known is only speculation.

There are rumored to be many secret Orders in the Clan. One Order, the *Ise zumi*, has gained great recognition in Rokugan. Their practice of tattooing their entire bodies with elaborate designs, symbols and pictures is better known than understood. Tales of the *Ise zumi* leaping over horses, breathing fire, spitting poison and shapeshifting are as prolific as they are entertaining. (The *Ise zumi* will be included in *The Way of the Dragon*, the first Clan sourcebook.) Their shugenja are equally mysterious. They use powers that no other shugenja can explain, and yet, when they speak to shugenja from other Clans, those shugenja say that the Dragons do not understand the basic principles of magic. The Dragon always seem to defy definition.

The Dragon Clan was also the first Clan to teach the "two sword technique." The Dragon samurai are famous for their katana/wakizashi style, and while Kakita School students may mock it, they do so out of concern for the honor of their school rather than out of genuine disrespect for the style. Of all the Clans, the Dragon samurai are regarded as the most devout followers of the religion of Rokugan. They are literally "warrior-poets," masters of both the sword and the pen.

The Families

TOGASHI

The mysterious Togashi Yokuni is the Champion of the Dragon Clan. Also included in this family are the mysterious order of tattooed men known as the *Ise zumi*. **Benefit:** +1 Agility.

MIRUMOTO

The Mirumoto family are often known for their adaptability to any situation. **Benefit:** +1 to any Trait.

AGASHA

The most "traditional" of the families, they often represent the Dragon outside their fortress walls. **Benefit:** +1 Awareness.

The Dragons' Views of the Other Clans

 "The Crab hides in his shell. The seagull lifts him into the sky and drops him and then eats the crushed remains. The badger turns him over and eats him inside out. His shell is his weakness. If he casts away his weakness, he can use his pincers."

 "Relying on the weaknesses of others is ignoring one's own strengths."

 "The Lion is sleepy until roused, and then it is ferocious. If you keep the Lion sleepy, it is of no danger to you, but also reluctant to come to your aid."

 "They are brothers reborn in the fires of knowledge. We are both seeking the same thing, but our roads are different. Sometimes they cross, however, and then we regain our bearings, learn how close we are and - sometimes - decide to switch paths."

 "Do not be misled. It is not the pincers that can kill you. It is the tail it keeps hidden behind its back."

 "They say the sighting of a Unicorn is good luck. Fortune is theirs, but she is a fickle mistress, easily turned against you with baubles and empty praise."

Mirumoto Bushi School

Benefit: +1 any Trait

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Archery, Defense, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Shugenja Lore, any one High or Bugei Skill.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Daisho Technique

The Mirumoto School teaches bushi a radical technique that uses both the katana and wakizashi. Because opponents have to deal with 2 weapons instead of one, the TN to hit an initiate of this school is raised by 5 any time he's using both weapons.

Rank 2: Strong and Swift

At this Rank, the bushi has become so attuned to his style that he may make 2 attacks per turn.

Rank 3: The Blood of My Brothers

Unlike the bushi from other Clans, Dragon bushi are not segregated away from their shugenja kin. Because of this, Dragon bushi may spend a Void Point to aid (or hinder) spells that are targeting them, thus giving the caster a Free Raise (or Raise the TN by 5).

Rank 4: The Unrighteous Will Fall

The bushi has mastered the meditative "no-mind" techniques taught to him by the Mirumoto School. If this bushi's damage roll kills his opponent, that strike does not count as one of his Attacks this Round and he may attack again immediately.

Rank 5: The Heart of the Dragon

A true master of the blade, the bushi now may make 3 Attacks per Round.

Agasha Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 any Trait

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Shintao, History, Calligraphy, Meditation, plus any High or Bugei Skill

Agasha shugenja get a free raise for all Fire spells.

BEGINNING SPELLS

Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 Fire, 2 Earth, and 1 Air.

Your Outfit

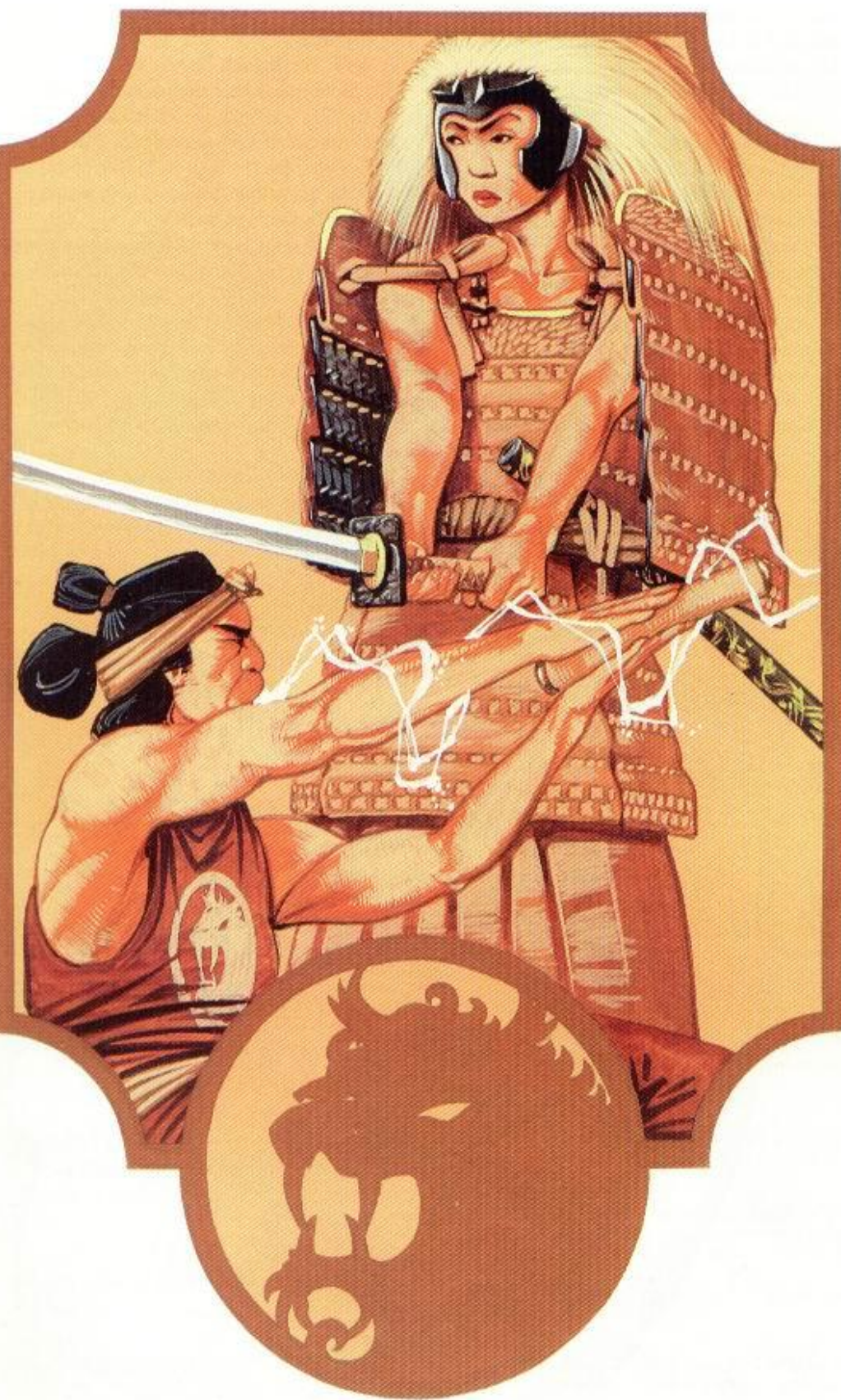
BUSHI

(All considered to be Average Quality): Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light Armor, Traveling Pack, any 1 weapon, Kimono, 2 Koku

SHUGENJA

(All considered to be Average Quality): Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Wakizashi, Tanto, 3 Koku

Lion Clan



Step One

CHOOSE A FAMILY

Is your Lion Clan character from the Akodo family, the Matsu family, or the Kitsu family?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja.

Write down the Skills your School teaches you as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Bushi) or Spells (Shugenja).

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 75).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on the following page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. This is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

The Lion Clan

The Lion Clan was founded by Akodo, child of the Moon and Sun. When Akodo sought a bride, he did not seek out a pretty Doji girl, for he did not wish to be a servant to the Crane Clan. He found a beautiful strong-willed woman named Matsu and tried to woo her for his own. Matsu was a proud woman who would have nothing to do with the samurai and took his courtship as an insult. She challenged him to combat and Akodo agreed. The duel between Akodo and Matsu is a classic tale that is told again and again by storytellers, and often depicted in art and theater. The winner, it is said, would also win the Clan. Each of the combatants, however, added a condition. Akodo added the condition that if she won, Matsu would have to marry him. Matsu added the condition that if he won, she would not have to marry him. The ending of the duel depends on who tells the tale, but the outcome is always the same: Akodo wins, and Matsu swears fealty to him but does not have to marry him.

The Lion Clan is the traditional defender of the Emerald Throne. A Matsu samurai is known for his passion and his temper. He is quick to judge and quick to take insult, and he never takes insult lightly. An Akodo samurai is also known for passion and courage, but he is also known for his knowledge of tactics and leadership. No army that has had an Akodo as a general has ever lost a battle. While the Matsu win with fierceness and fearlessness, the Akodo is the master tactician. Both are regarded as the bravest of all the samurai of Rokugan. A tale is often told about a famous ambush against the First Hantei. The Emperor's bodyguard, Akodo Sato, threw himself from his horse and gave it to the Emperor so he could escape while Sato stayed behind to keep the enemy occupied. The shugenja family of the Lion Clan – Kitsu – is not highly regarded in shugenja circles. They regard the Kitsu school as "old fashioned" and too entrenched in tradition. This complaint could be made about many Lions, however.

The Families

AKODO

Akodo Toturi, the Empire's greatest strategist, is Champion of the Lion Clan. The Akodo school teaches the benefits of forethought compared to pure action. **Benefit: +1 Perception.**

MATSU

The Matsu family has always been led by a samurai maiden. Matsu Tsuko is the proud, beautiful and ferocious daimyo of the Akodo family's chief rival. **Benefit: +1 Strength.**

KITSU

Lions do not put a lot of faith in shugenja magic during battles, but the Kitsu family still does research to educate the samurai on the supernatural tactics of their enemies. **Benefit: +1 Intelligence.**

The Lions' View of the Other Clans



"They are courageous and fearless in their duty, and we owe them much for the protection they have given us. We respect them for their strength and cunning on the battlefield (even if their manners are a bit uncouth), but we do not trust them."



"They are quick to gather their gold and their favors, but are slow to move to the battlefield. If they are so unwilling to part with their money, how unwilling will they be to part with their lives?"



"Like the Crane, they spend too much time in their temples and not enough time learning the ways of the world. If they truly wished to find wisdom, they will come down from their mountains, for they cannot find it up there."



"What can be said of the Dragon can be doubly said of the Phoenix. Their samurai are soft, relying on shugenja to support their courage. Distrust any who speak of peace when the battle has already been engaged."



"A Scorpion is to be despised, but never underestimated. Trust a Scorpion to betray you, and betray you in such a way that you have no choice of recourse. That is their way, and it is as deadly as any other."



"Their horses are mighty and their tactics are sound, but they are not used to our ways. They have spent too long a time from the Empire, and they have much to learn, and we should be the ones who teach them."

Akodo Bushi School

Benefit: +1 Strength

Beginning Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Archery, Defense, Kenjutsu, Battle, Bard, History, any one High Skill

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Way of the Lion

The Akodo School is one of precision. Bushi of this School may ignore the effects of their opponent's armor or gain a Free Raise when attacking (to gain an additional die of damage, strike a specific location, etc.).

Rank 2: The Strength of Purity

At this Rank, the Lion is taught how a righteous heart guides a righteous strike. When rolling to hit and damage rolls, the Lion adds his Honor to the total of the roll.

Rank 3: With the Strength of My Ancestors

Lion bushi truly believe that their ancestors guide their every action. At this Rank, the bushi may attack twice per turn, once for himself and once for the ancestor guiding his hand.

Rank 4: The Hand of Destiny

By this time, the Lion bushi understands that there is no such thing as luck, and that all actions are pre-ordained. At Rank 4, the bushi no longer needs to raise his TN for any called shot. The bushi must still raise if he wishes to do additional damage.

Rank 5: The Final Lesson

The Lion bushi has learned the final secret of the Akodo technique: there are no failures. If the bushi raises his TN, misses the raise but rolls greater than the original TN, the roll succeeds, but he does not get the benefits of his raises. This advantage can be used in both physical and mental contests.

Kitsu Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Beginning Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

Kitsu shugenja get a free raise for all Water spells

SKILLS

Etiquette, Heraldry, History, Calligraphy, Meditation, any one High Skill, any one Bugei Skill

BEGINNING SPELLS

Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 Water, 2 Fire, and 1 Earth.

Your Outfit

BUSHI

(All Average Quality; Player chooses one item to be of Fine Quality): Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light Armor, Helm, Traveling Pack, Kimono, any 2 weapons, 5 Koku

SHUGENJA

(All considered to be Average Quality): Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Wakizashi, Tanto, 3 Koku

Phoenix Clan



Step One

CHOOSE A FAMILY

Is your Phoenix Clan character from the Isawa family, the Shiba family, or the Asako family?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja.

Write down the Skills your School teaches you as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Bushi) or Spells (Shugenja).

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 75).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on the following page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. This is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

The Phoenix Clan

The mysteries of the universe are the domain of the Phoenix Clan. Long ago, before Shinsei arrived in Rokugan, the people worshiped the Seven Fortunes. They were fickle gods who were easily pleased and easily angered, who provided blessings to any who asked properly and curses to those who did not. The secret chants and rituals that were used to communicate with them were kept by an order of holy men called shugenja. These shugenja practiced their arts in a language known only to them, written on scrolls which were passed down from parent to child.

When Shinsei arrived in the Empire, the shugenja embraced his philosophy of the Five Rings and incorporated it into the religion of the Seven Fortunes. This fusion created an entirely new philosophy for shugenja to ponder, and no one ponders the nature of reality quite like the Phoenix Clan.

There are three families in the Phoenix Clan, and only one of them has a school of bushido. The other two are devoted to the training of shugenja, and no other shugenja schools in Rokugan can match them. Of all the other Clans (even Crane), Phoenix is the least militant. They prefer peace over warfare and enter battle only if forced to do so. A Phoenix shugenja will always look for a peaceful solution to a problem, even when his enemy is knocking down his walls with siege engines. A Phoenix samurai, on the other hand, is a bit of a different story. The Shiba family is responsible for guarding the walls of the Phoenix Clan, and while they are also the Daimyos of the Clan, the real decisions are made by the five Elemental Masters of the Isawa family. Shiba samurai have often had difficulty getting permission from the Council of Masters to use military force; so while the other Clans view the Phoenix as reluctant to fight, their attitude is only half correct. The samurai are willing to fight; it is the shugenja that are difficult to convince.

The Families

ISAWA

The Elemental Masters school the most prestigious students of the shugenja arts.

Benefit: +1 Awareness.

SHIBA

While Shiba Ujimitsu may be the Champion of the Phoenix, there is no doubt it is the shugenja and not the samurai who dictate the destiny of the Phoenix. **Benefit:** +1 Intelligence.

ASAKO

The Asako family are the greatest historians in the Empire (although the Ikoma family of the Lion Clan may debate that fact). **Benefit:** +1 Perception.

The Phoenix' Views of the Other Clans



"They perform a necessary duty for the Empire, but that does not make them noble. They would take the Empire if they could, which makes them selfish, brutish and short-sighted. Only together can we survive."



"They also understand that philosophy cannot be practiced during war. Their efforts to keep Rokugan at peace are admirable, and we should help them whenever we can."



"Their way is a different way. They know secrets that would take us a lifetime to learn. We have much to gain from an alliance with them, and yet, they are so reluctant...."



"We and the Lion serve the same purpose. If only they could recognize that. They see us as weak, but we are not. We must maintain truce with the Lions lest we fall prey to their anger."



"They are Masters in their own right. They have learned the rules of society and have exploited them to their own means. No other Clan in Rokugan understands the subtleties of power as they do, and that is why we are so much alike."



"They are young, brash and foolish. They rely upon a single advantage and hope that fortune will carry them the rest of the way. But their strength coupled with our wisdom can prove to be a powerful alliance."

Shiba Bushi School

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Archery, Defense, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Naginata, Shintao, Tea Ceremony

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Way of the Phoenix

Shiba bushi are trained in the "no-thought" technique of this school. As such, Shiba bushi may add their Void Rank to any to hit or damage rolls. Also, they may spend up to their maximum Void points on a single action.

Rank 2: Dancing With The Elements

Because the Phoenix bushi are trained with the Phoenix shugenja, they have become trained to be more attuned to the manipulation of the elements. The bushi may spend a Void point to increase or decrease the TN of any spell targeting him by 5.

Rank 3: One With Nothing

At this Rank, the bushi learns to fall into a "no-mind" trance. The bushi may spend a Void point to gain an additional action per Round. This ability cannot be used to gain an additional attack.

Rank 4: Everywhere and Nowhere at Once

At this Rank, the bushi has learned to let his Void flow to such an extent that he gains two attacks per turn.

Rank 5: One With All and Nothing

The bushi has finally learned to release the full power of "no-thought." By spending a Void point, the bushi may substitute his Void Rank for any Trait or Skill until the end of the turn.

Isawa Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 Void

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

Isawa shugenja may use any number of Void points when they are casting spells.

SKILLS

Calligraphy, Investigation, Meditation, Shintao, Theology, any other 2 High Skills

Isawa shugenja get a Free Raise for all rituals.

BEGINNING SPELLS

Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 of one Element, 2 of a second and 1 of a third.

Your Outfit

BUSHI

(All considered to be Average Quality): Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light Armor, Traveling Pack, any 1 weapon, Kimono, 2 Koku

SHUGENJA

(All considered to be average quality; Player chooses one item to be of Fine Quality): Kimono, Travelling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Wakizashi, Tanto, 4 Koku, First Aid kit, 2 books (blank)

Scorpion Clan



Step One

CHOOSE A FAMILY

Is your Scorpion Clan character from the Bayushi family, the Soshi family, or the Shosuro family?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja.

Write down the Skills your School teaches you as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Bushi) or Spells (Shugenja).

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 75).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on the following page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. This is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

The Scorpion Clan

If there is something you do not wish to be known, some Scorpion somewhere knows it – and he makes certain that you know he knows. That is how they survive: by keeping the secrets of others. The Scorpion have never had the strongest samurai or the most skilled shugenja, and so they made up for the difference with the only advantage they had. They made certain that the other Clans would not trust them, and then they turned that lack of trust into a weapon. You never know if a Scorpion is telling you the truth, or if he is telling you a lie, because he can gain an advantage with either one. In a society that values sincerity over honesty, you can never fully understand the machinations of the Scorpion.

All Scorpions wear masks. Each mask is unique to the individual, but the intent is still the same. The mask is telling the world, "You cannot trust me." And yet, the Scorpion wield so much temporal power, many find that they must. There are many stories of samurai who find themselves trapped in a Scorpion plot, and once they discover the truth, they commit *seppuku* to avoid furthering the scheme. But in the end the reader discovers that is exactly what the Scorpion wanted to happen all along.

With its reputation for treachery and deceit, one wonders why the Scorpion Clan still exists, why the other Clans simply did not rise up together and smash them. The simple fact of the matter is: the Scorpion have the Black Scrolls. After the Fall of the Children of the Sun and Moon, a great war was fought between the Clans and the Shadowlands army of Fu Leng. Only Shinsei and his Seven Thunders were able to destroy Fu Leng, and the secret of his demise is written on twelve scrolls that are guarded by the Scorpion Clan. Only the Daimyo of the Clan knows the location of all the Scrolls. Also, being caught in a Scorpion plot is perhaps the greatest shame a bushi or shugenja could bring upon his family. Everyone knows that the Scorpion have something on everyone and no one is willing to admit it.

The Families

BAYUSHI

The Bayushi family are notorious for their reputed associations with ninja. Nonetheless, they are known as clever and crafty swordsmen. **Benefit: +1 Agility.**

SOSHI

The shugenja of the Scorpion Clan almost always train at the Soshi shugenja school, which has a sinister reputation throughout Rokugan. **Benefit: +1 Perception.**

SHOSURO

The Shosuro family are noted diplomats who make keen use of subterfuge in the Emperor's court. **Benefit: +1 Awareness.**

The Scorpions' Views of the Other Clans



"The Crab (much like everyone else) would destroy us if they could. They are as ambitious as we are, but are undisciplined and untrained in the arts of subtlety, and that is why they make such excellent allies."



"A Crane is more afraid of shame than any other, and also has many secrets to keep. They hide behind masks as much as we do, but theirs are made of paper and easy to strip away."



"They are unashamed of what they are, which is why they pose the greatest danger to our plans."



"A Lion is more like a dog than a cat. He is easy to train and quick to dispose of when you have no more need of him."



"Like the Dragon, they are difficult to manipulate because of their introspection. You cannot tempt them with greed or flesh, for they love only their precious knowledge."



"They are young, strong, fast and naive. Could you ask for a better ally?"

Bayushi Bushi School

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Archery, Defense, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu, Poison, Sincerity, Stealth

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Way of the Scorpion

The Bayushi School's motto is *Strike First, Strike Last*. This bushi rolls two dice for initiative, keeping both.

Rank 2: Pincers and Tail

The bushi has learned the infamous Scorpion feint. The bushi makes a Simple Agility + Kenjutsu Roll against his opponent's Reflexes x 5. If he is successful, the TN to hit his opponent next turn is 5.

Rank 3: Strike At The Tail

Scorpion bushi know that there's more than one way to defeat an opponent. Instead of making a normal attack, this bushi can make a simple Agility + Kenjutsu roll against his opponent's Weapon Skill x 5. If successful, he has disarmed his opponent. If he raises the TN twice, he can end up with the weapon in his own hands.

Rank 4: Strike From Above, Strike From Below

The bushi has gained enough skill in the art of distraction that he may make 2 attacks per turn.

Rank 5: The Pincers Hold, The Tail Strikes

Finally, the Scorpion learns how to use his distractive techniques to spend a precious moment before the strike to make it as deadly as possible. This bushi may declare Raises after his strike roll.

Soshi Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

Soshi shugenja get a free raise for all Air spells

SKILLS

Calligraphy, Courtier or Etiquette, Sincerity, Meditation, Theology or Shintao, plus any other 2 High Skills

BEGINNING SPELLS

Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 Air, 2 Water, and 1 Fire.

Your Outfit

BUSHI

(All considered to be Average Quality): Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), light Armor, Traveling Pack, any 1 weapon, Kimono, 2 Koku

SHUGENJA

(All considered to be Average Quality): Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Wakizashi, Tanto, 3 Koku

Unicorn Clan



Step One

CHOOSE A FAMILY

Is your Unicorn Clan character from the Shinjo family, the Otaku family, or the Iuchi family?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja.

Write down the Skills your School teaches you as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Bushi) or Spells (Shugenja).

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 75).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on the following page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. This is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

The Unicorn Clan

When Hantei first took the Emerald Throne, he commanded his sister Shinjo and those who would follow her to go out into the world and explore. She was to bring back news of what was on the other side of the great mountains that lay to the North, and Shinjo did so. She brought with her three samurai: Otaku, Iuchi and Ide, and together, the four went into the unexplored realms. They would not return for eight hundred years.

Two hundred years ago, the descendants of the four returned with mighty horses (the horses of Rokugan are much like ponies) and a way of combat that was very different from the descendants of the Children of the Sun and Moon. Everything about them was different. Their dress, style of clothing, speech and tactics were all learned from different cultures and adapted to fit the religion of the Seven Fortunes and the philosophies of Shinsei.

Now that they have returned, the descendants of Shinjo have found it very difficult to fit in with the other Clans. Eight centuries of positioning have created a delicate balance among them and the arrival of a new Clan has caused much friction. Being inexperienced in subtleties of Rokugan society, they have found it very difficult to adapt. Some see them as uneducated youths while others see them as uncouth barbarians who are only nominally Rokugani.

The one thing all Clans do agree on is the power of their horses. The overwhelming advantage of Unicorn cavalry in a general's army is one factor that cannot be overestimated. The Unicorn Clan has picked up on this and uses it to its advantage. The Crane Clan has treated the Unicorns with respect, and so their borders are patrolled by Unicorn cavalry. The Lion Clan has turned a cold shoulder to the newcomers, and are not so fortunate.

The Families

SHINJO

"The Master of the Four Winds" Shinjo Yokatsu is the Champion of the Unicorn Clan. The Shinjo school teaches speed and agility and the benefit of ranged combat. **Benefit:** +1 Reflexes.

OTAKU

The Otaku family has much in common with the Matsu family in its belief in the virtue of a swift attack. **Benefit:** +1 Agility.

IUCHI

Spending 800 years dealing with barbarian tradesmen taught these shugenja many tricks other shugenja are not privy to. **Benefit:** +1 Awareness.

The Unicorns' Views of the Other Clans



"We have much in common with them. Many disdain the Crab because the duty they chose makes them 'dirty'. Those who make such judgments must also feel that we are 'dirty'. Remember what Shinsei said, 'Find allies in your enemy's foes.'"



"The Crane have welcomed us with open arms since the first day we arrived. They could have done as the Lion has done, but they took the risk of bringing shame to themselves for our sakes, and so we protect their borders from those who would covet their rightful position."



"They have never been kind to us, but they have also never been cruel. They are just as much strangers to Rokugan as we."



"They despise us because we are not like them and envy what we have. If they could, they would destroy us and take what they want. They are the enemy of the Crane, and so they are also our enemy."



"The Phoenix have acknowledged our rightful place in the Empire, but that is all. They speak to us kindly, as if we were children. If they value knowledge, then they should treat us with more respect, for who else has seen the lands to the North? Certainly not them."



"We are told to mistrust them and they tell us not to trust others. Who shall we listen to? Both of them, of course."

Shinjo Bushi School

Benefit: +1 Agility

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

SKILLS

Archery (based on Agility rather than Reflexes), Defense, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Horsemanship 2, Naginata.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Way of the Unicorn

Unicorn bushi are almost raised on horses. When on horseback, the bushi may add his Horsemanship to any Skill when making a roll.

Rank 2: The Dance of the Blade

The Unicorn fighting style involves techniques the Clan learned while on the other side of the mountains. The samurai may choose to "parry," a skill unheard of in Rokugan. The TN to hit a parrying bushi is (Reflexes + Defense + Kenjutsu) x 5. This is a Full Defense Maneuver.

Rank 3: The Four Winds Strike

At this Rank, the bushi learns the sweeping style that allows him to make 2 attacks per turn.

Rank 4: One Spirit

The link between the bushi and his steed is complete. When performing any physical acts (fighting, riding, jumping, etc.) his steed can make up for any imperfections in the bushi's technique. If he raises his TN, misses his raise, but makes the original TN, the roll succeeds, but he gains no benefit from his raises.

Rank 5: Dancing with the Fortunes

Some call it luck; the Unicorn call it "dancing with the Fortunes." After any roll, the Unicorn bushi may choose to roll again to get a better result. (The bushi may not re-roll this second roll; he has to keep it.) The bushi may even re-roll a success if he wishes to try for a better result.

Iuchi Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 Perception

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

Iuchi shugenja get a free raise for all Water spells

SKILLS

Calligraphy, Defense, Herbalism, Horsemanship, Hunting, Meditation, any one Bugei Skill

BEGINNING SPELLS

Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 Water, 2 Fire, and 1 Earth.

Your Outfit

BUSHI

(All considered to be Fine Quality): Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 20 Arrows of any type(s), Light or Heavy Armor, Helm, Traveling Pack, Steed, Kimono, any 3 weapons, 10 Koku

SHUGENJA

(All considered to be Fine Quality): Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Wakizashi, Tanto, 10 Koku, Steed

Ronin

Ronin ("wave men") are samurai who, for one reason or another, have no family and no Clan, and so they have no family name. Ronin are considered to be just above non-warrior samurai in the Celestial Order. The most common reason for a samurai to become ronin involves losing a Lord. Either in a battle or by an assassin's blade, ronin who have lost their lord are in disgrace because they were unable to give up their life for his. They wander the countryside looking for the one who stole their honor. Ronin have the advantage that they have no lord or honor to answer to, but will find great difficulty in finding a teacher. Few wish to stain their family honor by teaching their family's art to a fallen man.

As far as these basic rules are concerned, there are two kinds of ronin character. The first is called the "Clan Ronin." This is a character who once belonged to one of the Great Clans, but has lost favor with his Lord. The second kind of ronin is called the "True Ronin." True Ronin have never had a Clan.

Clan Ronin

- Create a character from one of the Seven Great Clans.
- Then, take the **Social Disadvantage: Ronin** Disadvantage on pg 77.
- Clan Ronin gain the Rank 1 Technique, but may not gain further Ranks in their School. They must seek out other Schools to gain further Ranks.

True Ronin

- True Ronin have no Clan or Family Advantages.
 - They must also take the **Social Disadvantage: Ronin** Disadvantage.
 - Instead of 25 Character Points to customize their character, True Ronin have 45.
 - Ronin may still only raise a Trait or Skill by 2 Ranks with Character Points.
 - True Ronin Shugenja start with Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus any seven other spells with Mastery Level less than or equal to their Ring Rank plus one.
 - Ronin begin with Hunting, and any six Skills. Ronin may also use Low Skills without losing Honor.
- Ronin Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes.

Your Outfit

CLAN RONIN TAKE THE OUTFIT OF THEIR CLAN.

TRUE RONIN BEGIN WITH THIS OUTFIT:

(All considered to be Average Quality; two items of Poor Quality)
Katana, Wakizashi, Bow, 10 Arrows of any type, Light Armor, Traveling Pack, Kimono, 10 silvers

RONIN SHUGENJA BEGIN WITH THIS OUTFIT:

(All considered to be Average Quality)
Kimono, Traveling Pack, Scroll Satchel, Wakizashi, Tanto, 3 Koku

Step One

CHOOSE A BACKGROUND

Did your ronin once belong to a major clan, or is he a True Ronin?

CHOOSE A PROFESSION

You are either a bushi or a shugenja. Write down the Skills your School taught you (if any) as well as your Rank 1 Technique (Clan Ronin Bushi) or Spells (Clan Ronin Shugenja). True Ronin have no particular technique or spells.

Step Two

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHARACTER

Your character's Traits and Rings all begin at a 2; his Glory is a 1. You may now spend 25 Character Points to customize your character. You may spend points on Traits (pg 54), Skills (pg 68), or Advantages (pg 72). You may gain additional Character Points by purchasing Disadvantages (pg 75).

CHARACTER POINT COSTS

Raise a Trait: 8 CP

Raise Void Ring: 12 CP

Raise a Skill: 1 CP

Raise Glory: 5 CP

Lowering and Raising Honor: It costs 3 CPs to raise your character's Honor. Lowering your character's Honor gains you 2 Character Points. Honor can only be raised or lowered one Rank.

DETERMINING WOUNDS

Multiply your character's Earth by 2 and fill in each Wound box with that number. These are your character's Wounds.

OUTFIT

Your outfit (beginning equipment) is listed on this page. The Equipment List is on pg 66. List your possessions and money on the back of your character sheet. Choose your Primary Weapon and how many dice you'll roll and keep when using it, your Armor and its protection, and your TN to be hit.

Step Three

DETERMINING INSIGHT

- Find the sum of all of your Rings. Multiply that total by 10.
- Then, find the sum of your Skills.
- Finally, add the totals together. This is your Starting Insight.
- Whenever your Skills or Rings increase, re-adjust your Insight.

High Skills

Acting (Awareness)
Bard (Awareness)
Calligraphy (Perception)
Courtier (Awareness)
Dance (Agility)
Etiquette (Intelligence)
Heraldry (Perception)
History (Intelligence)
Horsemanship (Awareness or Agility)
Hunting (Perception)
Investigation
Law (Intelligence)
Lore (Shugenja, Shadowlands, Bushido, etc.) (Intelligence)
Medicine (Intelligence)
Meditation (Void)
Music (Agility and Awareness)
Painting (Intelligence)
Poetry (Awareness)
Shintao (Intelligence)
Sincerity (Awareness)
Tea Ceremony (Void)
Theology (Intelligence)

Bugei Skills

Archery (Reflexes)
Armorer (Earth)
Athletics (Varies)
Battle (Perception)
Bo Stick (Agility)
Defense (Agility)
Hand-to-hand (Agility)
Iaijutsu
Kenjutsu (Agility)
Knife (Agility)
Naginata (Agility)
Tetsubo (Agility)
War Fan (Agility)
Weaponsmith (Earth)
Wrestling (Strength)
Yarijutsu (Agility)
"Weapon-jutsu" (Agility)

Merchant Skills

Armorer (Earth)
Commerce (Awareness)
Craft
Herbalism (Intelligence)
Locksmith (Agility)
Weaponsmith (Earth)

Low Skills

Athletics (Varies)
Forgery (Agility)
Gambling (Awareness)
Poison (Intelligence)
Seduction (Awareness)
Stealth (Agility)
Torture (Awareness)

Advantages

Absolute Direction (1 Point)
Allies (Variable)
Ambidextrous (3 Points)
Benten's Blessing (3 Points, 2 Points for Crane characters)
Blackmail (Glory of Blackmailee; -1 for Scorpion characters)
Death Trance (5 Points, 2 Points for Lion characters)
Clear Thinker (2 Points)
Different School (5 Points)
Great Destiny (4 Points)
Higher Purpose (2 Points)
Inheritance (variable)
Innate Ability (3 Points)
Karmic Tie (1-5 Points)
Large (2 Points, 1 Point for Crab characters)
Luck (3, 6, or 9 Points)
Magic Resistance (2, 4, or 6 Points)
Perfect Balance (2 Points)
Quick (3 Points)
Quick Healer (3 Points)
Read Lips (2 Points)
Sensei (Variable)
Social Position (3 Points per Rank)
Strength of the Earth (2, 4 or 8 Points)
True Friend (Variable)
Voice (2 Points)
Way of the Land (2 Points, 1 Point for Unicorn characters)

Disadvantages

Bad Fortune (1 Point)
Bad Health (3 Points)
Bad Reputation (2 Points)
Benten's Curse (2 Points)
Black Sheep (5 Points)
Brash (2 Points)
Can't Lie (3 Points)
Chemical Dependency (3 Points)
Compulsion (2-4 Points)
Dark Secret (5 Points)
Dependent (1-4 Points)
Driven (3 Points)
Frail Mind (3 Points)
Gullible (3 Points)
Haunted (Variable)
Insensitive (2 Points)
Lame (3 Points)
Lost Love (2 Points)
Low Pain Threshold (5 Points)
Meddler (2 Points)
Missing Limb (3 Points)
Obligation (2 or 4 Points)
Permanent Wound (5 Points)
Phobia (2 or 4 Points)
Small (3 Points)
Social Disadvantage (3 Points per Rank)
Soft-Hearted (2 Points)
Sworn Enemy (3-6 Points)
True Love (3 Points)
Unluck (3-9 Points)
Weakness (5 Points)



*chapter
three*

火

fire



*Held in a hand you trust, it is your ally.
Held in a hand you do not trust, it is your enemy.*

Learn the way of fire and you learn the way of the world.

— The Tao of Shinsei



The soft breeze gently pulled at the hair that fell down his back and filled his nose with the smells of spring. He looked down from the hillside into the valley and shook his head. It was going to be a massacre.

An army of yellow and gold stood to the north while blue and silver samurai stood in the south. Two riders stood before each army, the *mons* of the Crane and Lion flying on their banners. As he watched, the Lion general rode before his army to the center of the battlefield. He raised his spear and shouted at the hundreds of Cranes. Ginawa bent forward to hear the Lion's words.

"I was at the battle of Denoben Falls! It was my arrow that slew Iuchi Kizawan! When Otomo Chizen's head fell from its shoulders, it was I who was wiping his blood from my blade! I am Matsu Turi! The blood of a hundred generations of Lions flows in my veins! This day, your blood will feed the grass beneath your feet!"

Ginawa smiled. "Matsus and their bragging," he whispered.

Hijiko looked at him. "What do you know of Matsus, Ginawa-san?"

"Enough." Then he looked at the samurai-ko. "Perhaps too much."

The Crane general rode forward, meeting Gohei at the center. Ginawa chuckled. "Now it is time to watch the strategy of the Crane."

"What strategy would that be?"

"You will see." He pointed at the two samurai. "The Crane is telling the Lion that fighting here will only bring bloodshed, not glory. His army is greater and the Crane are willing to make concessions to see that no men waste their lives here today."

On the battlefield, the Lion samurai raised his spear and thrust it in the direction of the Crane.

Ginawa continued. "Now the Matsu is telling the Crane that there is always glory in warfare, and that the Crane is a coward for suggesting otherwise."

The Crane samurai threw his spear to the ground and pointed at the Lion and then at his katana.

"Now the Crane is telling the Matsu that if he thinks he is a coward, he is willing to prove it with his steel."

The Lion shook his fist at the Crane and dismounted, slapping his horse, sending it back to the Lion army. The Crane followed suit.

"They are going to fight here?" Hijiko asked.

"*Hai*. Honor has been questioned."

She watched the two samurai standing five paces apart and remembered her duel with Ginawa only a day before.

"Look at them carefully, Hijiko-san. Can you see it now?"

She looked at the Lion, his body trembling with fury, his hands shaking with anticipation. Then, she looked at the Crane, his body poised and steady. The Lion shifted his stance twice while the Crane stood still.

"He doesn't stand a chance," she whispered. "The Lion will die at the Crane's hands and his army will be routed."

Ginawa looked at her and nodded. "That's Crane strategy. Coax the Lion into a frenzy, question his courage and get him to challenge you to a duel. The army is considerably weakened by the loss of their general. The Cranes offer them a chance to surrender. The Lions refuse and fight without their commander."

"A giant without a head," Hijiko said.

"Exactly. Now watch."

As before, the duel was over in a heartbeat. The Lion charged the Crane. The Crane waited until the last moment, struck as he leapt back and the bleeding body of the Lion fell at his feet.

Shouts erupted from the Lion army as the Cranes charged, arrows flying over their heads. The Lions scrambled to raise wide, flat shields to

protect themselves from the arrows as the Cranes reached the halfway point where their general stood, wiping Lion blood from his blade. Suddenly, an arrow shot across the field and plunged into the soft flesh of the Crane general's neck. He staggered for a moment, then his sword dropped and he fell onto the body of the Lion general.

"Where did that come from?" Hijiko asked, her eyes darting around.

"From somewhere close. Too close." He stood and before he knew it, his sword was free from its saya, the blade flashing in the morning light.

Hijiko looked to the woods just west of their position. "Where are the Scorpion magistrates?"

Ginawa nodded. "I think you are right, Hijiko-san."

He ran by her, straight into the forest. She tried to catch him, calling out his name as he ran, but he was already too far away. She looked down at the battle far below them as the armies crashed together. It was going to be a massacre.

The thick branches of the trees cut at his face, but he kept his eyes ahead of him.

You are charging into the nest of your enemy,

said the voice of his sensei, but the blood pounding in his head made the voice a distorted whisper.

Finally, he broke through the trees into a small clearing where the magistrates stood, looking over the battle from their hidden position. The shugenja and samurai turned to look at him, but the others kept the attention on the battle.

Umako eyed him suspiciously. "Why are you here and where is Hijiko?" she asked.

"You killed him," was his only response.

The samurai stood slightly before Umako and drew his katana. The shugenja shook her head. "I'm certain I have no idea what you are talking about."

"The Crane general. You killed him."

Umako shook her head. "I'm afraid you are gravely mistaken. We had nothing to do with that arrow."

"A lie is still a lie, no matter how pretty it sounds."

The samurai stepped forward. "You call my mistress a liar, ronin?"

"Scorpion by name, scorpion by nature," Ginawa said through clenched teeth, his hands twisting on the handle of his katana.

"I hope your soul is ready for death, dirty one."





"It's ready."

Ginawa set himself into his stance, letting all the thoughts in his mind fall away. His eyes focused on the samurai's chest, hips and shoulders. He felt the tensions in his muscles sink into nothing and his feet stood ready to propel him at



any moment.

He was as the leaf that falls to the earth, as the child who paints or sings, as the mother bringing life into the world. He never saw the samurai move. He never felt his own body respond. All was one motion, one fluid moment that seemed to last forever.

The samurai's blade swept up and his own blade met and they kissed... sparks flew between them, his own blade riding on the steel of his opponent... his blade moving along the steel, singing as it did a strange song of hunger and pain... the fear of his opponent told in the jerking movements he made... his sword swinging down, bitingcuttingtasting the skin of his opponent... and the blood... the blood... the blood....

He didn't know if it was him or the blade, but someone was laughing.

Using the System

This book is about rules. You learned the very basics of how the rules work in **The Book of Earth**, but here, we're going to offer some suggestions to help you make the rules work for you. We'll offer you suggestions, but in the end, it's up to you to adapt these rules to your own taste.

We'll show you how to use the Skills with each of the Traits, offer a bidding system for iaijutsu duels, fully detail combat (and offer a whole bunch of examples) and give you a chart system for dealing with mass-combat battles.

Traits

We've designed the L5R game system to be easy and flexible. The resolution system of Trait + Skill is adaptable to just about any situation. Any

Skill can be used with any Trait, allowing any kind of roll, simulating just about any kind of situation. Listed below are the eight Traits and how to use them with the Skills. We've also taken a few lines under each Trait to show you how it compares, contrasts and complements the other Traits.

STAMINA

Whenever the physical determination of the character comes into question, the GM can call for a Stamina roll. Stamina can be used with just about any physical Skill to test a character's resolve over long-term actions. Stamina + Dance, for example, can be used when a dancer must perform while injured, while Stamina + Horsemanship can be used to test a rider's dedication over a long ride across the Empire.

But Stamina can also be used for less physical activities. Consider Stamina + Bard. Sometimes the demands of an audience can tax even the most resolute storyteller. Often times, bards are called upon to perform for hours at a time. Such activity can test the bard's stamina, especially if said bard has been taking in too much of the wine, women and song. Or how about Stamina + Shugenja Lore? Imagine an apprentice of one of the Phoenix Elemental Masters studying late into the night, poring over ancient texts, trying to find the answer to some cryptic riddle his master has challenged him with.

WILLPOWER

On the other end of the determination scale is Willpower. As Stamina is the testing board for a character's physical endurance, his mental endurance is measured by his Willpower. Any circumstance listed above could also call for a Willpower test.

Temptation is the key word when speaking of the difference between Willpower and Stamina, especially temptation from external sources. Temptations of wealth, influence and power (as well as some more carnal temptations) are those that call for a test of a character's will.

Can a character add a Skill to his Willpower? Certainly. The most common Skill to add to Willpower is Etiquette. This coupling reflects the ability to act properly despite the emotion building inside. Meditation is another Skill that could be coupled with Willpower, which would reflect the character's attempt to focus on his meditations despite environmental distractions.

STRENGTH

Strength is almost never used with Skills. Strength rolls mainly entail using raw muscle.

PERCEPTION

This Trait is used whenever a character is trying to observe details. Perception can be used with just about any Skill when the character is trying to gain information. He could use Perception with any weapon Skill to determine a weapon's quality, if it has been damaged, or any other minute details. Any time a character is trying to gather information, use his Perception. When he is trying to recall information he's already gathered, he uses Intelligence.

AGILITY

A character's Agility reflects his ability to control his movements. The more delicate the movement, the more he needs to rely on his ability to control it. Agility checks can be made when the character's ability to control his movements are in question. Agility complements many physical skills including Stealth, Painting, Kenjutsu, and just about any other Bugei Skill.

INTELLIGENCE

Whenever memory or reasoning ability is called into question, a character's Intelligence is used. Almost any Skill can be coupled with Intelligence to test a character's knowledge of that particular Skill.

For instance, a character is trying to remember certain facts about another character or NPC. He can use Intelligence + Heraldry if he is using the character's *mon* as a reference point, or if he is trying to recall a character's kenjutsu style, he could use Intelligence + Kenjutsu.

The main difference between Intelligence and Perception is that Perception is used to gather facts and clues. Intelligence is used to recall information that Perception has gathered and to put it together into a logical and reasonable format.

REFLEXES

Like Strength, Reflexes is almost only used as a test for physical prowess. It represents quickness and reaction time. It is the body reacting on an unconscious level, without the conscious mind giving it commands. Agility, on the other hand, represents conscious use of the body. Reflexes is coupled with a Skill to reflect the body's intuitive reaction to a situation.



AWARENESS

Awareness is a measure of a character's intuition. It is used when the ability to think quickly is brought into play. Awareness is also the character's ability to sense the emotional states of others.

Any time a character is caught off-guard, you can judge his response with an Awareness roll. For instance, a character is questioned in the court about his opinion on a topic he wasn't prepared for, the GM can ask him for an Awareness + Courtier roll. Or, if the character is trying to convince someone of a particular point, have him roll his Awareness + Sincerity.

Awareness is different from Perception in that

Keeping and Dropping

Players roll a lot of dice, but almost always only keep a number equal to their Trait.

The words "keep" and "drop" appear many times in this book, so let's make clear what those terms mean. When a player or gamemaster rolls dice, he'll count up some and ignore the others. The dice that are counted up are "kept" and those that aren't are "dropped." So if a player rolls six dice and "keeps four," then he adds the top four rolls and "drops" the bottom two.

A player will almost always roll dice equal to their Trait plus their Skill, "keeping" dice equal to



Awareness judges a character's ability to sense things that are not immediately evident. You could classify a successful Awareness check as a "hunch," telling the player, "You get a very bad feeling about this." Perception, on the other hand, has everything to do with the senses and physical evidence.

their Trait, and "dropping" the rest. There are some situations where the equation "Trait + Skill" will have other words instead of Trait and Skill, but you always roll dice equal to the sum, only keeping a number of dice equal to the first and dropping the rest. The higher you roll, the better your chance of success.

Example: Mirumoto Kuro wants to show off his skill with the katana for his new lord. He demonstrates a difficult kata in his lord's court.



Kuro has a 3 Agility, and a 3 Kenjutsu, so he will be rolling 6 dice, keeping the best three (because his Agility is three). Kuro rolls the following: 3, 5, 7, 7, 8, and 9, making his total 24 (7+8+9 are the highest three rolls, so Kuro keeps those).

Some rolls will only involve a single Trait, and not involve any Skill (lifting a heavy rock would be simple roll of Strength, for instance). In this case, the number of dice being rolled and kept are the same. A character's rank in one of the five Rings can sometimes be called upon instead of one of the traits, but the roll is made normally.

Example: Kuro is trying to lift a very heavy rock over his head in a continued display for his new lord. The GM tells Kuro to roll his Strength. Kuro rolls three dice because of his strength and gets only a result of 12 (2+5+5). Kuro's lord will probably want to find a Crab Samurai if he wants some brute strength to back up Kuro's skill.

Simple Rolls

A Simple Roll tests the abilities of the character by making him roll dice equal to his Trait plus any relevant Skill.

Simple rolls are used when there is no one actively resisting the character's actions. Whether this is picking a lock, looking for the correct herb that will heal a wound, or trying to leap across a gap, only the character's ability and resolve is in question. When a character performs an action calling for a Simple Roll, the GM announces the Target Number of the action, and what Traits or Skills will be used. The player may suggest the Trait and Skill that he thinks should be used and perhaps give a quick explanation why, but the GM's decision is final.

A Simple Roll can be made with or without skills, and is always simply a roll trying to beat the Target Number (TN) declared by the GameMaster.

Example: Later, Kuro is examining a horse in the market, trying to determine if it meets his discerning tastes. The GM decides that in order for Kuro to determine the quality of the horse, he will have to make a Perception roll. Kuro's player says that Kuro's Horsemanship Skill should also play a factor in this test, and the GM agrees, allowing Kuro to make a Perception + Horsemanship Skill. The GM could justify using Awareness if there is something that Kuro would have to 'sense' rather than notice. The GM tells Kuro that

the TN for this roll is a fifteen. Kuro has a Perception of 2 and a Horsemanship of 2, so he will be rolling 4 dice, keeping 2.

DIFFICULTIES

When you want to make an action, you have to roll equal to or higher than the Target Number which is typically a 15.

The GM can announce any Target Number he wishes, using this list of standard TNs as a guide. Remember that the difficulty is only based on a marginal success, and that the players will be able to make raises if they want to be more effective. While TNs do not have to be in multiples of five, they tend to be, and it keeps things simple. Still, this is only a guideline and there is no reason for the GM not to ask for TNs of 14 and 23 if the situation calls for it.

TARGET NUMBERS

- | | |
|----|---|
| 5 | Mundane (juggling one ball) |
| 10 | Easy (juggling two balls) |
| 15 | Average (juggling three balls) |
| 20 | Hard (juggling four balls) |
| 25 | Very Hard (juggling five balls) |
| 30 | Heroic (juggling six balls) |
| 35 | Never Done Before (juggling eight balls) |
| 40 | Never Done Again (juggling nine balls while a geisha nibbles on your ear) |

TENS

If you ever roll a ten, roll that die again and add what you roll to the ten.

Any die that comes up with a '10' (or a '0' on dice marked 0-9) is rolled again. The second roll is added to the ten to get the value of the roll. If the second roll is also a ten, it is added and rolled again. There is no limit to how high a single roll can be (although you can stop when you reach your TN).

Example: Kuro decides to ride the mare briefly to get a feel for the horse. He rolls his Agility plus his horsemanship (3+2): His first roll is a 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 10. He picks up the two dice that rolled tens and rerolls them. The first rolls a 5, and the second another 10. The die that rolled double tens finally rolls a 7 on its third roll and the final rolls look like this: 1, 4, 6, 15, 27. Since Kuro is keeping three dice, his total is an amazing 48! (6+15+27).

RAISES

Players and GMs can Raise the TN in increments of 5 to gain more dramatic or spectacular



EXAMPLES OF RAISES

1 Raise - Striking the torso.

2 Raises - Striking the arms or legs, draw blood without doing significant damage

3 Raises - Striking the Head, Neck, or hands. Disarming attempts. Striking the joints in the opponent's armor.

4 Raises - Trim the opponent's mustache

effects.

When the GM has announced a TN for a roll, skilled characters may realize that they have an easy roll to make, and may wish to make their potential success more spectacular. A player can voluntarily increase the TN in order to achieve a greater, or more dramatic success. This is called a "Raise." The player announces how many Raises he is taking and rolls normally.

Players may not make more Raises on a given roll than their Void Rank - i.e., a bushi with a Void of 2 may make one or two Raises to a roll, but not three.

For every Raise, the TN is increased by five, but the level of success increases as well. Rolling against the TN announced by the GM will give the character a successful result, but more can be achieved with one or more Raises. Keep in mind that before declaring a Raise, if the roll ends up less than the new TN, it is a failure, even if it is higher than the original TN.

Raises can have all sorts of different results, and they are dependent on the GM and player. When making Perception rolls or any other roll about gaining information, a successful Raise results in more information, more reliable information, more relevant information, and/or more detailed information. In combat, raises result in more powerful and more accurate strikes, as well as successful special maneuvers (disarms, called shots, etc.).

Raises are also used when a character wants to achieve a more specific result. If a player wishes a particular result, the GM tells him how many Raises are required to achieve the player's desired effect. The player can then either make the attempt (at the new TN) or try something less difficult.

Example: Kuro, who is rolling 5 dice, decides to announce two Raises. He is intending to spend a lot of money on this horse for his lord and doesn't want to dishonor himself with an animal in poor health. With two raises, he should be able to find out all sorts of important information about the mare.

FREE RAISES

A Free Raise gives you the benefit of a Raise without raising the Target Number.

In some circumstances, the GM may award a character a Free Raise for a roll. This means that if the player makes a successful roll, he will be awarded the effects of a Raise without actually

raising the Target Number (or an additional one if he is making Raises on his own as well). Free Raises can be the result of magic items, spells, the blessing of the Seven Fortunes, praying at the Temple of Amaterasu, being in a familiar tactical situation, having made a successful Perception roll to analyze your opponent's technique, or many other situations. This free raise does not change the TN in any way, and it doesn't count against his limit if he wants to make Raises on his own.

Example: It is certainly possible that the GM could have given Kuro one or more Free Raises for his Perception roll due to his overwhelming success with his riding the mare.

BLIND ROLLS

When players roll without knowing the Target Number, they are rolling blind. Sometimes, the GM will not want the players to know the outcome of a roll.

If a poison has been slipped into a player's tea, then telling the player to make an Awareness plus Poison roll is a pretty strong give-away, and the player won't want to drink the tea regardless of the results of the roll. This is a good time for the GM to make a blind roll.

Whenever the GM wants to make a blind roll, he may either roll the dice himself, or have the player roll them, but does not announce the TN. If the GM does not wish to announce the TN, however, he must give the player credit for as many Raises as the player could have made successfully. Obviously, the GM must still have a TN in mind for this roll.

Example: Instead of declaring the Perception + Horsemanship roll to be a 15, the GM tells Kuro that he wants a blind Awareness plus Horsemanship roll. The GM decides quietly that the TN for Kuro to find out this horse's secret is a 20. Kuro rolls a 34 (a total of two raises), so the GM tells Kuro that not only does this horse seem to like him, but she is pregnant - probably by a strong sire. Quite a find! This could bring some Glory to Kuro.

Contested Rolls

Contested Rolls occur when you have to test your abilities against the abilities of another.

When no one is resisting a character's actions, all the rolls should be Simple Rolls. But character's don't live in a vacuum and eventually, they

will end up in a confrontation where they must test their own skill against the skill of another. In this situation, the GM calls for a Contested Roll. The other person in the contested roll could be another player, or just a character in the story. Regardless, both characters roll their dice to determine their individual success. The TN for each character's roll is their opponent's Trait times five. This roll can be Raised normally by either or both sides. If the GM requires it, it can also be made blind, but this can be slightly confusing (we don't recommend it for beginning GMs).

The result of the contest is determined by which side makes their roll successfully:

- If neither side is successful, then the contest continues another round. Perceptive observers may be unimpressed by the lack of skill being shown.

- If only one side is successful, then the successful character wins the contest quite decisively. Any Raises that the character may have made can increase this "margin of victory" even more.

- If both characters are successful, then someone manages to win the contest, but only marginally. If one character makes more Raises, then that character wins the contest, otherwise the marginal victory goes to the character with a higher total roll.

Example: Having found that the horse is acceptable, Kuro begins to haggle with the merchant over the price of the mare. The GM announces that this is a roll based on Awareness plus Commerce. Kuro has an awareness of 3 but only a Commerce of 1. The merchant also has an Awareness of 3, but a Commerce of 4. Both sides have a TN of 15 (their opponent's Awareness times 3), but the merchant decides to use 2 Raises. Kuro knows his chances are too small if he Raises twice, so he's simply going to try to make the 15. Kuro rolls a 1, 4, 8, and 9 for a total of 21 (9+8+4). The merchant rolls an amazing 35 (keeping an 8, 9, and 18) and easily beats his adjusted TN of 25. The merchant wins, and the selling price of the mare ends up being quite high. He can obviously tell how badly Kuro wants the horse.

TEN DICE PER ROLL

Sometimes, a character is given extra dice to roll because of magic items, successful Raises on a previous roll, or by other means. However, no roll ever is made with more than ten dice.

Working Together

There will be occasions where more than one person is working together to perform an action. This can be several shugenja working together to perform a ritual, it can be a group of bushi trying to pull a large rock up the hill, or perhaps just a group of singers performing for the court.

In all of these situations, the group must choose a primary character. The roll is made based on the primary character but adjusted for the other characters in the group. The group's primary character is the character with the highest Rank in the appropriate Trait. Every character other than the primary character will add their skill level to the roll. With an unskilled roll (only rolling a Trait, for example), the primary character will roll an additional die for each person assisting.

Example: A group of shugenja are casting a ritual. The primary shugenja has an Earth of 4 (the spell's element). Since there are no skills involved, the shugenja will be rolling (but not keeping) an additional die for each assisting shugenja. There are three other shugenja who are assisting him, so he will be rolling seven dice, keeping four.

Example: The master smith is preparing a katana for the Crane Daimyo. The smith has an Earth of four and a Weaponsmithing of five so he will be rolling 9 dice keeping 4. He has two assistants who are helping him with the minor details. They have Weaponsmithing skills of three and two, so the smith could roll 14 dice if he were able (4+5+3+2). Since the most he can roll is ten dice, he will roll all ten, keeping four.

Void

Spending a Void Point raises one of your Traits by one for that one roll.

People in Rokugan can occasionally touch that place where the other elements come together perfectly and perform beyond their normal capabilities. Whenever a character is making a roll, he may choose to "spend" a Void Point in order to increase the value of the appropriate Trait by one. This will mean the character is rolling and keeping an additional die for that one roll.

Under normal circumstances, a character may only spend one Void Point per roll. Under extreme circumstances (up to the GM) a character could

COMPLICATIONS

Some things that can make hitting an opponent more difficult can be represented by increases in the Target Number to hit the opponent.

- +5: Bad footing, or difficult vision.

- +10: Partial cover, a quickly moving target, or long range.

- +15: Nearly full cover, or extreme range.

- +20: Blinded.





spend additional Void Points, but never more than their Skill Rank. If no Skill is involved, then the Trait rank is the most Void Points that could be spent. The extreme circumstances that could move a character to such great exertions should appear once or at most twice per story and be the difference between success and failure, life and death.

A character can only spend as many void points as their rank in Void. Spending void points does not decrease their Void in any way, it is simply a maximum to the number of void points that are available to the characters. At the beginning of each story, the characters have their Void Points restored to their full level. At the end of a night's sleep or after two hours of uninterrupted medita-

roll against the character's Willpower). If that roll fails, as a last ditch attempt, the player can announce an Honor Test to resist the temptation.

Example: Mirumoto Kuro is eating rice at a Lion Clan palace. A very pretty Lion samurai-ko has secretly passed him an invitation to her private chambers later that evening. The samurai-ko successfully made a Seduction roll earlier in the night, and the GM tells Kuro's player that he would be hard pressed to not accept the offer. Kuro announces he will make a Willpower check to resist the temptation. Unfortunately, he fails. The GM tells him he now has very little (if any) choice in the matter. Kuro's player announces that he is now going to make an Honor Test.

If a character takes an Honor Test, he may roll



tion, a character also has a void point restored to them.

Tests of Honor

Whenever a character is forced to make an action that he feels is dishonorable, the player may choose to make an Honor Test. Often times, a Willpower roll is used to resist temptation (or the source of the temptation makes a Contested

a number of dice equal to his Honor Rank to beat a TN assigned by the Game Master. If the roll succeeds, the character resists the temptation and gains an Honor Point, but if he fails, he loses ten Honor Points! The GM should use the source of the temptation when determining Target Numbers for Honor Tests.

Example continued: Kuro's player picks up two dice (Kuro's Honor). The GM decides to use the samurai-ko's Awareness x 5 for the TN, which

makes it a 20. Kuro's player makes a gulping noise and announces he'll be spending a Void Point. He makes his roll and gets 7, 3 and 27 (10+10+7!) for a total of 37. Kuro successfully resists the samurai-ko's offer and enjoys a cold bed tonight.

Talent vs. Skill

It's natural for new players to take a look at the system (rolling a Trait + a Skill, keeping the Trait) and figure that it is much more important to have high Traits than high Skills. After all, Traits allow you to keep dice while Skills just add more dice.

This is true, but it can be misleading. Players will want to raise their Traits as high as possible, but they will not want to ignore their Skills. Skills give you more dice to roll, giving you more choices when it comes time to decide which ones to keep and drop. In short, the more dice you roll, the higher chance you have of rolling a ten, which is the equivalent of rolling yet another die.

Consider two characters for a moment: a Crab samurai who has invested all of his points in his Traits, and a Phoenix samurai who has invested many of his points in Skills. The Crab gets to keep more dice, but when he gets hurt he will lose dice that he could have kept while the Phoenix samurai has a wide variety of dice to pick and chose from. For instance, let's say both characters are at -2 Wounds. The Crab usually gets to roll 6 dice for his attack roll (5 Agility + 1 Tetsubo), but now he only gets to roll 4. On the other hand, the Phoenix usually rolls 7 dice (3 Agility + 4 Kenjutsu). Even down two dice, he's rolling more dice than the Crab (4), and he gets to keep the same amount (3). In other words, the Phoenix has a greater choice of dice, and perhaps a 10 snuck in there somewhere.

Characters who have high Traits and low Skills will be affected by Wounds to a higher degree than characters with higher Skills. This is how it should be. Characters with more experience are able to handle damage better than characters who are still a little wet behind the ears.

Combat: Skirmishes

When a two small forces face each other, it is called a Skirmish. Skirmishes can involve as few as two combatants or as many as a dozen. Skirmishes are handled with three steps:

Step One: Determine Initiative

Step Two: Declare Actions

Step Three: Resolve Actions

Step One: Determine Initiative

At the beginning of a combat round, the GM asks all players to roll one d10 and add their Reflexes Trait to the result. As always, if a 10 is rolled, roll again and add the result. The GM makes a similar Reflexes+d10 roll for all NPCs involved in the combat. The GM then records who rolled highest to lowest. The player or NPC who rolled highest will get the first action, followed by the person who rolled next-to-highest, and so on. The person who rolled lowest gets the last action. Players declare actions from slowest to fastest, so the character with the highest initiative roll gets to hear what everybody else is planning to do before deciding.

Step Two: Declare Actions

In order to keep things orderly, a Skirmish is broken down into Turns. Each Turn is approximately five seconds long, enough time to give each character one Action. A character who wishes to engage in hand-to-hand combat must do so with one of three maneuvers: Normal Attack, Full Attack or Full Defense.

HOW ABOUT HAND-TO- HAND COMBAT?

Although almost all combat in Rokugan is conducted with weapons, occasionally (by design or misfortune) one or both of the combatants will be without a weapon. When this occurs, the relevant roll is Agility + Jiu-jitsu, and the Damage Rating is 1k1.





FALLING DOWN

Characters who fall (with no control over their fall using the Climbing or Athletics Skills) will take 1 die of damage per 10 feet they drop.

EXAMPLE:

Kuro is jumping from one rooftop to another, chasing a black-clad assassin (who may or may not be a ninja). On his third leap, he slips (fails his Agility roll) and plummets to the ground. The GM tells Kuro that he's going to be falling twenty-three feet, so he'll have to take two dice of damage. Kuro's player rolls two dice and rolls a 1 (whew!) but he also rolls a 17 (10+7).

Kuro decides that he'll be lying down for a while.

MANEUVER: STANDARD ATTACK

When a character is trying to hit someone, the unadjusted TN to get a successful hit is the target's Reflexes times five. Many things can modify this TN (such as armor, combat conditions, etc), and some monsters have a fixed TN to be hit that may have nothing to do with their Reflexes. However, if the character is able to succeed on the simple roll of [Trait] + [Weapon skill], then he will get to make an additional roll to determine how much damage was caused. Many times the roll will be a simple Agility + Kenjutsu roll, but of course this is not always the case.

MANEUVER: FULL ATTACK

If a character chooses a Full Attack, he gains an additional two dice to roll – but not keep – when he attacks. The TN to hit a character who is making a Full Attack is only 5.

MANEUVER: FULL DEFENSE

The Full Defense maneuver is used by characters who simply want to get out of the way of another character's attack. Their only Action this Turn is to dodge. The TN to hit a character under Full Defense is Reflexes x 5, but the attacker must drop any dice that roll lower than the character's Reflexes + Defense Skill.

RANGED WEAPONS

Using a ranged weapon in the L5R RPG is not very different from using a hand-to-hand weapon. The GM may call for a higher TN due to cover, range, or the movement of the target. Like melee weapons, it is simply a matter of rolling to hit, and then rolling for damage if you hit.

There is one difference, however. Rokugani do not "aim" their bows. They rely on instinct rather than certainty. When firing a bow, samurai use their Reflexes + Archery rather than their Agility + Archery. The one exception to this rule is that samurai from the Unicorn clan have learned this "aiming" trick from the barbarians and may use Agility instead of Reflexes if they wish.

OTHER ACTIONS

A character can take any Action they wish during a Turn. The default TN to hit another character is that character's Reflexes x 5 unless the character is not actively protecting himself. If a character is just not bothering to get out of the way, the TN to hit them is 5.

For example, a Scorpion samurai is trying to strike at a Lion samurai. The Lion is trying to

recover a ~~stolen~~ misplaced message from Akodo Kage to the Emperor. The message lies on the floor between the two samurai. The Lion leaps at the scroll and the Scorpion draws his katana.

The GM asks both players what their characters are doing. The Scorpion player declares that he is going to strike at the Lion. The Lion declares he is diving for the scroll. The GM thinks for a second and allows the Lion to have his full Reflexes x 5 as a defense against the Scorpion's cut. Since the Scorpion player knows the Lion won't be striking back this Turn, he declares a Full Attack. The Scorpion player will get to roll an additional two attack dice this Turn, but the TN to hit him will be 5. The Scorpion isn't concerned, since the only action the Lion is taking this Turn will be to snatch up the misplaced scroll.

Step Three: Resolve Actions

Once all players (and NPCs) have declared their actions, go around the table from the highest Initiative to the lowest and resolve their actions. One by one, the GM has the players roll the dice appropriate to their action and determine if they are successful.

If your character failed to beat the TN, his Action failed. If your character beat the TN, his Action was successful.



**Raises,
Damage, &
Taijutsu**

Raises

Raises are one of the most exciting aspects of

playing L5R. It allows players and the GM to manipulate their own Target Numbers to gain the effect they are looking for. Here are a few examples of what you can do with Raises in combat.

CalLED SHOTS

Rather than simply trying to hit their opponent, a character can try for a more difficult target by making Raises. Typically, the result of this type of "called shot" is left to the GM's discretion, but a player can always use Raises to do more damage. For every Raise to hit an opponent, the character gets to roll an additional die when rolling for damage. For the most part, Raises are used in order to do greater amounts of damage to the opponent. However, sometimes a character will want a more specific effect than just doing more damage. This is referred to as a 'called shot'.

A called shot can be anything from "I want to hit him in the head" to something as unusual as "I want to carve my initials into his helm without hurting him." When a player declares their called shot, the GM will tell the player how many raises will be necessary to perform the desired action.

For the most part, the end result of each of these called shots will be determined by the GM (many will simply be the standard increase in damage), but disarming attempts deserve a quick note: if a disarm attempt is achieved, then the character and target make a contested roll of the disarmer's Water + [weapon skill] versus the target's Earth + [weapon skill].

Damage

All weapons have a 2 number rating to indicate how much damage they do with each blow. When one character hits another, he uses his Strength to determine the damage, or Wounds, he delivers with his blow. The stronger a character is, the more Wounds he can deliver.

All weapons are listed with a Damage Rating (DR) that looks like this:

Katana 3k2

When your character is dealing damage, add his Strength to the first number in the Damage Rating and roll that many dice. The second number (the one that follows the "k") tells you how many dice you keep from your roll. For instance, the standard katana listed above, with its DR of "3k2", is telling you: "Roll (Strength + 3) dice and keep 2 of them." The unfortunate on the other end of the katana marks off those two dice worth of

wounds on his Wound Track. (See "Getting Wounded" below.)

Damage that is caused from spells, or poisons, or by other means will have a DR as well. Unless they say otherwise, you roll and keep that many dice to determine the amount of damage.

GETTING WOUNDED

When a character takes Wounds, the player marks down the Wounds on his character sheet. He begins at the top (at -0) and begins marking off Wounds. If he reaches a number of Wounds equal to the number in the box (his Earth x 2),



then he moves down to the next Wound level and continues marking down Wounds.

When you've been Wounded, everything becomes more difficult to do. When you've got a wicked sword cut down your arm, it's hard to





can roll is reduced by your Wound level.

If a character's Wounds ever reach the "Down" Level, the pain is so great that they cannot stand, move faster than a crawl, or speak louder than a whisper. The TN to hit a character who is "Down" is 5.

If a character drops to "Out," the pain has overcome them and they fall unconscious for a number of hours equal to the number of Wounds they have taken at the "Out" Level. In order for a character to be killed by his greivous wounds, he must completely fill out the "Dead" Wound Level.

Example: Kuro has an Earth of 2, so he only has 4 wounds per wound level. Kuro's Agility is a 3 and his Kenjutsu is 3. When Kuro is hit by an Ogre for 23 points of damage, the first 5 wound levels are filled completely and he drops down into the -4 Wound Level. During future sword attacks, instead of rolling 6 dice keeping 3, he will roll 2 dice (7 minus 4 for his Wounds), keeping 2. If Kuro takes 2 more points of damage, he will will drop to his knees and be unable to defend himself. If he were to take eight more points, then he would drop down to the "Out" level and take two more Wounds. Because he took two Wounds at "Out," he becomes unconscious for the next two hours.

HEALING

Every morning, after a restful night's sleep, a character heals a number of wounds equal to his Stamina rating. Simply erase a number of wound marks equal to the character's stamina, working your way back to uninjured status. The most serious injuries ("Down" or "Out" levels), may have more lasting effects, but those are up to the GM and are dependent on the injury sustained as well as the character. There are magical ways to heal damage other than nature's processes, but these work in exactly the same way: simply erase the wound marks (see **Magical Healing** on pg. 150).

Iaijutsu Duels

One of the most exciting elements of samurai fiction is the iaijutsu duel. Two samurai stand only a few feet apart, each beginning to focus his chi for a dramatic and powerful strike. One will win and the other will die.

The L5R RPG uses a unique mechanic to reflect the tension and drama of iaijutsu. As both samurai take their stance, either or both may make an Awareness + iaijutsu roll with a TN of 15. If the roll is successful, they may determine one of three facts:



- The Agility of their opponent;
- The Iaijutsu of their opponent; or
- The Void of their opponent.

The contestants may Raise this TN. For every Raise, they can discover another fact about their opponent.

Example: *Otaku Hori is about to enter an Iaijutsu duel. He wants to know more about his opponent, so he decides to make an Awareness + Iaijutsu roll. His Awareness is 3 and his Iaijutsu is 2, giving him a total of 5 dice, keeping 3. At a TN of 15, he decides he would like to know the Agility of his opponent. He also decides to bid up the TN by 5 to learn the Iaijutsu of his opponent. He rolls a 23, enough to beat the TN of 20 (base 15 + one Raise for additional information). Hori discovers his opponent has an Agility of 4 and an Iaijutsu of 3.*

After the Awareness rolls have been made, but before any other action takes place, either opponent may declare his opponent the victor. This is not a cowardly act; recognizing the winner without spilling blood is always a noble act. If both opponents disengage after one has declared the other the winner, the duel is over. However, if one opponent does not disengage, the duel continues. If a duelist disengages when his opponent refuses to disengage, he shows his cowardice and loses Honor (see Honor, pg 58).

If both opponents agree to continue, the duel proceeds as follows:

During a duel, the TN for a samurai to strike his opponent is 5.

The opponent with the highest Reflexes announces "Strike" or "Focus." If Reflexes is tied, consult the duelists' Iaijutsu, and if there is still a tie, use Void.

If the first opponent chooses Focus, he voluntarily Raises the TN by 5.

After the first opponent announces "Focus," the second opponent also has the opportunity call Strike or Focus. If he Focuses, he Raises the current TN by 5.

Focusing continues until one opponent announces "Strike." When a duelist announces "Strike," his opponent rolls his Agility + Iaijutsu against the last TN he Raised to.

If the attacker rolls under his TN, he misses. In this case, or if the first attack was not fatal, his opponent now has an opportunity to strike. The second duelist rolls his attack dice at the last TN he Raised to (which should be 5 points lower than

his opponent's TN).

A duelist may not Raise more times than he has ranks in Void. You may spend Void Points before you roll your attack dice.

When a duelist makes a successful Iaijutsu roll, he will roll damage as if he had hit someone in normal combat. Remember that Raises will increase the # of damage dice that are rolled.

If both sides of the duel are still conscious after they trade their first blows, what happens next depends on the combatants. If the duel is to the death, then they will continue their fight using Kenjutsu instead of Iaijutsu. If the duel is to first blood or is simply a contest of skill, then there may already be a winner, and the duelists may be satisfied.

Example: *A Phoenix samurai and a Crab samurai enter into an Iaijutsu duel. The Crab has an Agility of 3, an Iaijutsu of 1 and a Void of 2. The Phoenix has an Agility of 2, an Iaijutsu of 1 and a Void of 3.*

Because the Crab has the highest Agility, he may choose to Strike or Focus first. He chooses to Focus. He Raises the TN, which starts at 5, making it a 10.

It is now the Phoenix samurai's turn. He may choose to Strike or Focus. If he chooses to Strike, the Crab will get the first opportunity to roll at a TN of 10. He chooses to Focus, Raising the TN to 15.

Both duelists have Raised once. They may only make a number of Raises equal to their Void Trait. The Crab may only Raise once more (Void 2), while the Phoenix may Raise two more times (Void 3).

The Crab samurai chooses to Focus once more (making the TN a 20), as does the Phoenix (TN 25). The Crab is out of Raises and must choose to Strike. Because the Crab called "Strike," his opponent get the first opportunity to roll his attack dice. The Phoenix must roll against the last TN he Raised, which was a 25. If he misses, the Crab will get a chance to strike him at the last TN he Raised to, which was 20. The Phoenix decides to use his Shiba school Technique, and spends 2 Void Points. He now rolls a total of (Agility 2 + Iaijutsu 1 + Void Points 2) 5 dice, keeping 4. Unfortunately, he only rolls a 15. He misses his strike and now it is the Crab's turn to roll at his TN of 20...

At the end of the duel, the winner gains Glory equal to the School Rank of his opponent + 1. The loser gains only 1 Glory.



THE DEADLY DUEL

When samurai engage in an Iaijutsu duel, one will draw first and the other usually dies. This is the way duels end in samurai literature, and it is also the way they usually end in the L5R RPG.

When figuring damage in an Iaijutsu duel, the samurai determines damage normally: Strength + Katana, plus 1 die per Raise.

EXAMPLE:

Kuro is engaged in an Iaijutsu duel. He has raised the TN to 25 (4 raises) and he successfully strikes his opponent.

Kuro rolls his Strength (2) + Katana DR (3k2) + 1 die per raise (4). That's a total of 9 dice, keeping 2 (the normal number of dice kept for a katana). He rolls 1, 4, 6, 6, 9, 9, 15 and 16. He keeps the 15 and 16 for a total of 31 wounds.

Kuro's opponent crumples up his character sheet and grabs a pencil.



Example of a Skirmish

What follows is the tale of a samurai and a shugenja and their encounter with an ogre at Beiden Pass. In the left column is the dialogue between a GM and his two players as they resolve the combat. In the right column is the tale itself.

Mirumoto Kuro and his friend Isawa Tadaka, a Phoenix Clan Shugenja who is known for his earth magic, have been traveling through Beiden Pass. Without warning, an ogre has leapt from cover and is ambushing the pair.

GM: Okay, Kuro. You and Tadaka have very little you can do but fight or run.

Kuro: We fight, of course!

Tadaka: Absolutely.

GM: Okay, let's roll initiative. [The GM rolls a 7 for the Ogre, plus 1 for his Reflexes is an eight. Kuro rolls a 6 and ends up with a nine. Tadaka only has an Reflexes of two, so his roll of 3 means he'll go last.]

Tadaka: He's Shadowlands, right?

GM: Do you want to try to sense his taint?

Tadaka: Nah. Don't want to take the time. I'll just get behind Kuro and start casting Strike at the Roots – let's drag him down to size.

GM: Any raises?

Tadaka: Well, his Earth is going to be pretty high, so I'd better just stick to the normal TN. No raises.

GM: Ok. The Ogre has the trunk of a small tree in his hand so he's going to swing at Kuro. You're showing an obvious weapon, and while he isn't very smart, he's seen a katana before.

Kuro: Okay, normal attack, but I want to stay in between the Ogre and Tadaka so that he can't get to the shugenja.

GM: Well, that shouldn't be too hard since he's mostly focused on you – one raise. Your Target Number is 25.

Kuro: No problem. [Kuro has an Agility of 3 and a Kenjutsu of three. He rolls the six dice: 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10. He rerolls the 10 and gets another 4.

The two magistrates stopped in their tracks. Kuro smelled the ogre a moment too late. Tadaka took a single step back, his hands reaching for a scroll tucked away in his shoulder pouch.

"Stay behind me," Kuro said to the shugenja. "Just get that spell ready."

Kuro's only answer was quiet mumbling.

He saw the morning light shining on the steel of his katana and wakizashi as he watched the ogre pluck a tree from the earth like it was a bothersome weed in his garden. Saliva glistened on the ogre's grin. Kuro did not wait for its attack. Speed was his advantage – perhaps his only advantage.

His charge caught the ogre off-guard. Kuro knew Shadowlands creatures were used to sniveling goblins and dodgy ratlings, not skilled and fearless samurai. Kuro's sidestep kept the ogre's makeshift club from making contact with his head and his cut sliced through its tough hide. Black blood ran freely from the open wound on the ogre's leg and it screamed loud enough to cause dust to fall from the cliffs high above them.

From behind him, Kuro could hear Tadaka's words, but more importantly he could feel the energies swimming about him as the shugenja began to bind them into his own body. The spell was almost ready. Kuro looked at the ogre's wound and heard the snarl from its lips and hoped the spell would be in time ...

Kuro suddenly realized that his charge had

His total is $6+8+14 = 28$. He hits! Got him. My katana has a DR of 3k2 and my Strength is 3. [Kuro rolls 6 dice, keeping 2, and gets a 22.] I do twenty-two points of damage!

GM: That would drop a normal human, but this thing seems to hardly notice the deep cut in its leg. [It is at the -1 wound level.] Well, now it's certainly not paying much attention to the shugenja. He swings back at you.

Kuro: Reflexes of 3, light armor, and the Daisho technique: my TN to be hit is a 25.

GM: All right, he swings. [The Ogre only rolls 3 dice to attack now, and his roll of 21 (4,8,9) isn't quite enough to hit Kuro]. He missed. Looks like that wound might have kept him just off balance enough.

Kuro: Whew.

Tadaka: Well, I'm spending my turn preparing the spell.

GM: Good point. We're done with round one. Initiative for the second round?

Kuro: Only a six.

Tadaka: (who rolled a 16) Eighteen!

GM: Yikes! I guess you're first. The ogre will be second.

Kuro: Well, I know he has the advantage, so I'll go on the defensive. I still want to protect the shugenja, though.

GM: Well, you can't raise since you're not rolling. Still, if you're going to stay between the two of them that gives you less room to maneuver yourself out of the way of attacks. Will you take a drop to your TN to be hit?

Kuro: I've got to protect the shugenja. Sure.

GM: Okay. Tadaka, the Ogre is going to bury Kuro with that tree trunk. Good luck with that spell. The TN is the Ogre's Earth times five, so that's a 30.

Tadaka: Thanks. I'll spend a Void Point, so my Earth is raised to Five for this roll. [Tadaka is shugenja rank 2, so he rolls 7 dice keeping 5, but gets no tens and ends up at a 28.] Ug. Not quite.

GM: You feel the energy slipping away from you and the spell fails. The Ogre felt something start to happen, but he's pretty stupid, so he's still attacking Kuro. [Rolling 3 dice again, the Ogre gets 3, 6, and 13. Kuro's maneuver drops his TN to be hit down to a 20, but he's performing a full defense maneuver. The Ogre is forced to drop the '3' since it's smaller than Kuro's Reflex + Defense (3 + 1).] Missed again. Kuro's defending this round, so we continue to the next. Initiative?

left him no room to retreat. The ogre's failed strike had put him in such a position that he could not fall back without exposing Tadaka to an attack. He heard Tadaka curse behind him and he made a split second decision. If the shugenja was under attack, Tadaka would need his steel to help protect him. He moved just enough to catch the



shugenja in his peripheral vision, and he saw what happened.

The shugenja had failed to summon enough energy to cast the spell. Kuro could almost feel the energies flow from the shugenja as he dropped the scroll and pulled another from his pouch.

Then, from his right side, he caught sight of the swinging tree. He ducked, feeling the branches scrape at the skin on his face, drawing blood. Kuro had fallen to his knees, and now he looked up at the ogre, who was looking curiously at his improvised club...





Kuro: Ten.

Tadaka: Seven.

GM: The Ogre is acting first. Tadaka, what are you doing?

Tadaka: Well, that didn't work too well. I'm switching to Tomb of Jade. I have this spell as an innate ability and I have the scroll, so I'll use the Free Raise and add a regular Raise to reduce the casting time to a single action.

GM: You really want to cast it this turn, don't you?

Tadaka: I'm not sure how much luckier Kuro can get. The Ogre will connect pretty soon, and I certainly can't take him on one-on-one.

GM: Good point. Kuro, still protecting Tadaka?

Kuro: Of course. Normal attack this time, though. It's time to go for it.

GM: If you say so. The Ogre is fed up with this tree trunk – he thinks it's cursed. He throws it away over your head and just reaches out with both hands to grab you.

Kuro: He what!?!

GM: He's grabbing at you. [He rolls 3 dice: a 4, 7, and a 16. The total is 27 – Success!] He's got you, and he's squeezing.

Kuro: Ow. I can't swing my sword, can I?

GM: Nope. He's got your arms pinned. And he smells foul.

Kuro: Swell. Well, can I try to break out?

GM: In a second – he's squeezing right now, and he's strong. [The GM decides that a bearhug is only DR 1k1, but the Ogre is still rolling six dice: DR 1+Strength 6–Wound 1. His highest die is a nine.] Nine points. You can hear a rib snap.

Kuro: I try to break free!

GM: Contested strength rolls. The Ogre has a strength of 5, but is only rolling 4 dice. Your TN is twenty-five.

Kuro: My strength is 3, and I'm at Wound Level -2, so I'm only rolling one die. The Ogre's TN is 15. I'm spending a void point – I can't take much of this!

GM: Okay. The Ogre will raise once.

Kuro: Fine. Maybe he'll fail. [Kuro's two dice are an 8 and a 15] Twenty-three. Not quite.

GM: The ogre only got an 18. He would have succeeded without the raise, but it really doesn't matter since the status quo still involves you in a painful bear hug.

Tadaka: Not for long! It's my turn to protect my friend: I want to spend my last 3 Void points to cast the Tomb of Jade. I'm using 3 total raises:

"Hurry!" Kuro cried.

"I'm trying!" Tadaka called back.

"Broken!" the ogre grunted as it threw away its tree club and grabbed at the kneeling samurai.

Kuro scrambled to put distance between himself and the ogre's wide hands, but the ogre showed a sudden burst of speed, and before he could do anything about it, he was in the ogre's grip and slammed against its chest, his breath being squeezed from his lungs. He heard and felt something snap in his chest, but he caught the scream just before it moved past his teeth. It escaped as a painful hiss.

The ogre grinned, slobber dripping from its lips. "Eat!" it said. Kuro felt and smelled the wretched breath of the ogre pour over him and he had to swallow his sick back down his throat.

From somewhere behind him, Tadaka was attuning and summoning energies, but no matter how quickly he did it, Kuro was certain it would not be quick enough.

The ogre squeezed again and this time, Kuro's scream was only stopped by his teeth sinking into his lip. He tried to rip at the ogre's flesh with his fingers, but the hide of the ogre was too tough.

A dim realization suddenly came to him. He could not rely on the shugenja's spell. He was going to have to try to escape himself.

He tried to take in the stale air, but the pain in his chest was too great. He felt his strength fading with every squeeze of the ogre. His throat began to thicken from the lack of air. Another minute and the minute gasps he was gaining would not be enough to keep him on this edge of consciousness. He made one last attempt, but it was in vain. The sides of his vision began to blur into darkness. He felt his hands fall limply to his side, but he managed one small curse on the smiling face of the ogre before ...

... before he felt the familiar wash of energy over his body and saw the ogre's eyes begin to shine with a pale green, smoky light. The ogre's grip loosened and Kuro felt the air wash in over his lips, between his teeth and into his bruised lungs. He saw its mouth and the same pale light emitted from the black maw. The leathery skin became hard like stone and all motion ceased.

From behind him, he heard Tadaka's voice raise to a thundering level. More energy passed over him and he heard something inside the ogre crack. Another moment passed and its struggles almost ceased.

two of them to be able to cast the spell this turn, and one to increase the damage.

GM: Wow. Okay, go ahead. Your base TN was a 30, but with two raises, it's a 40.

Tadaka: Whew. All right, here goes nothing. I'm rolling 9 dice, keeping 7 of them. [Earth 7 + Rank 2. His roll: 1,3,3,4,4,5,8,9,9 = 42] It works!

GM: Congratulations. The DR is 2, plus one for the raise.

Tadaka: First round damage is... [2,3,8]...only eleven.

GM: Still, he's starting to feel it, and he won't be attacking anyone while he's entombed.

Kuro: Hey, what about me? Am I free?

GM: No, you're stuck. I'm afraid you are about to be witness to a contest of wills between Tadaka and the Ogre.

Kuro: Go get 'im, Tadaka!

GM: There really isn't any reason to keep track of rounds since everyone has only one thing they can do. The ogre is trying to break the spell, Tadaka is trying to maintain it, and Kuro is just... hanging there.

Kuro: Very funny.

Tadaka: Let's do it. This is contested Earth plus rank versus Earth. The Ogre's TN is 20.

GM: Okay, yours is a 30. The ogre tries to break free, but he's down 2 wound levels. [The Ogre is rolling 4 dice against a 20 and rolls a 24]

Tadaka: I'm rolling 6 dice, keeping 4. [Tadaka rolls a 33.] I succeeded.

GM: So did the Ogre. Did you beat a 24?

Tadaka: Yes, a thirty-three.

GM: He comes to close to breaking free, but you held him in. Roll damage again.

Tadaka: Hah! Damage this turn is [2,4,15] nineteen points.

GM: You hear a muted roar from inside the green-skinned ogre. Next round... The Ogre is down 3 dice now [and rolls only a 17]. He is trying to fight out, but isn't strong enough. You don't even need to roll to hold him in. How much damage this time?

Tadaka: [3,7,8] Fifteen points.

GM: The roar from within falls silent and the statue becomes darker and stops moving. He's dead.

Kuro: What about me?

Tadaka: Well, the jade will turn to dust in a few days.

Kuro: Very funny. What do I do until then?

GM: I don't know, what do you do?

Another cry from Tadaka and another blast of energy. The ogre's slobbery face was now completely transformed into a mask of perfect jade.

Finally, Kuro heard a tiny meeping cry from deep in the ogre's chest and then there was nothing more.

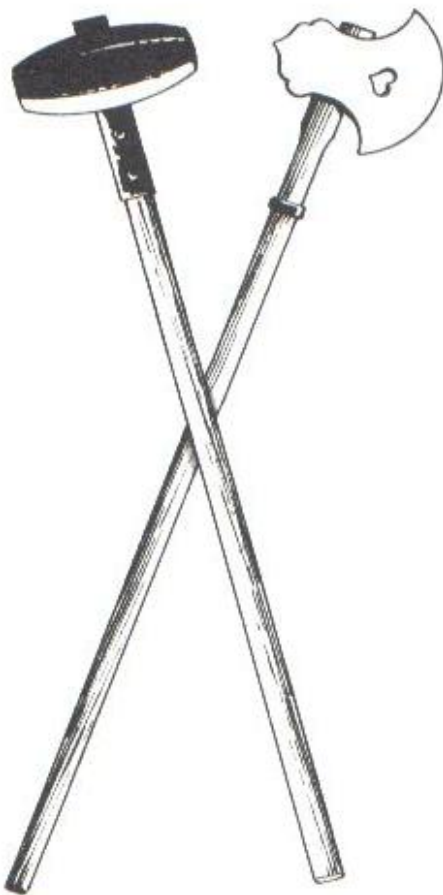
He turned his head to see Tadaka wiping his brow, his hand quivering from the exertion. It must have cost the shugenja dearly to gather and release so much energy in so little time. Tadaka stepped toward him, shakily putting the scroll back in his pack. The shugenja had to make two attempts before he was successful.

"Are you all right?" he asked.

"Something's broken in my chest, I think," he managed to say. "The pain is... significant."

The shugenja smiled. "Dragon samurai. You are all masters of understatement."

Kuro grimaced and shut his eyes. "And if you don't get me down from here right this moment, I will hurt you... oh so slightly."





BUT WHO'S WINNING?

While this battle system lets you know how your samurai is faring during the battle, it doesn't address the issue: "Who's winning?"

It's easy.

Each general makes a contested Perception + Battle roll. The winner of the roll is "Winning" this Round. The loser is "Losing." If neither of them succeed their roll, assume they are "Even."

If one general wins three times in a row, he wins the battle.

Combat: Battles

The system below gives the Game Master a simple mechanic for determining the course of battles. Like everything else in this book, this system is only a guideline. The GM can use all, part, some or none of it. If your GM would like to use a more narrative approach, he could ignore this system entirely. It is not represented to simulate "realism"; it is meant to help the GM determine the outcome of a battle with only a little book-keeping, while at the same time, allowing some drama to come into play for those involved.

Much like Skirmishes, Battles are resolved in Rounds. Each Round is approximately thirty minutes to one hour. Every Round, players will make a decision regarding where they will fight in the battle, and the GM will determine their success and whether they get a chance to make a significant contribution to the battle's outcome.

Here is the technique for resolving Battles.

Step One: Declaration

Every Battle Round, each player indicates how his character will be fighting this round. The players must choose between the four levels of activity: Reserves (farthest from the actual fighting), Disengaged, Engaged, Heavily Engaged (in the thickest part of the fighting).

Step Two: Advantage

After the engagements have been declared, the GM announces how the battle is going in this round. The current advantage can be even, or favoring one of the sides of the battle. If the bat-

tle is going against your army, there is more danger, but there is also more opportunity for heroic action. The Tides of Battle can be determined randomly, through the story, or perhaps even be affected by the players' actions in previous rounds.

Step Three: Determination

Each player will find the sum of their Water Trait + Battle Skill, then roll a 10-sided die. The die roll is added to the Trait plus skill to find the final result in the left hand column. Using the table and reading across the row from the result until the column is reached that corresponds to the Tide of Battle and Level of Engagement, the player will find their result for the round.

Step Four: Resolution

In each round, the characters will take a certain amount of damage (e.g. 2d) – they must roll a number of dice equal to the damage taken. Subtract the character's Reflexes plus Defense skill from the total. The final result is how many Wounds the character takes during this hour of fighting from blows that he could not avoid. You will notice that shugenja always take less damage than their bushi brethren; this is due to the standard strategy in Rokugan of having a guard of soldiers to protect the comparatively fragile and valuable shugenja.

Step Five: Reward

A character will accumulate a certain amount of glory during the battle each round, and should keep a tally of their total.

Example: Kuro is fighting under Lord Togashi against an army of Crabs. In the first round of battle, the young bushi declares that he will be heavily engaged. The GM announces that Yokuni's superior tactics are giving his army the advantage in this round, so the result will be found in the fourth column (Winning, Heavy Engagement). The sum of Kuro's Water + Battle + die roll is a 11, so he looks up on the table to see how things went for him. Kuro discovers that he takes 2 dice of damage, but gains 3 Glory points.

Wounds Taken and Glory Gained During Current Battle Round

**YOUR
ARMY IS:**

**WINNING
EVEN
LOSING**

Reserves

**Disengaged
Reserves**

**Engaged
Reserves**

**Disengaged
Engaged**

**Heavily Engaged
Engaged**

Heavily Engaged

① YOU ARE IN THIS PART OF THE FIGHTING:

1-3	2 dice of Wounds 0 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 0 Glory Points	4 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	4 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	5 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points	6 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points
4-6	2 dice of Wounds 0 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	3 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	4 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	4 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points	5 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points
7-9	1 die of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points	4 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points	4 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points
10-11	1 die of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points	4 dice of Wounds 6 Glory Points
12-14	0 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	1 die of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 6 Glory Points
15-17	0 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	1 die of Wounds 2 Glory Points	1 die of Wounds 3 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 6 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 8 Glory Points
18+	0 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	0 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points	1 die of Wounds 4 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 7 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 10 Glory Points

④ MODIFIERS:

- Bushi, not wearing armor: +1 die of Wounds
- Bushi, wearing heavy armor: -1 die of Wounds
- All Shugenja: -1 die of Wounds

③

ROLL ONE
DIE. ADD
THE RESULT
TO YOUR
WATER+
BATTLE, AND
FIND THAT
NUMBER IN
THIS COL-
UMN. READ
ACROSS.



DUELING ETIQUETTE

Here are some of the more frequently asked questions about duels.

What happens if both duelists miss? It depends on the duelists and the circumstances. Sometimes, they simply fall into a regular kenjutsu duel. At other times, however, both duelists consider themselves defeated (there was no winner, therefore, we both lost). Some samurai would bow to their opponent and declare him the victor: "I did not defeat you, therefore, I lost."

Do iaijutsu duels occur during a battle? If so, isn't it silly to put away your sword and hope your opponent does the same thing? Yes, duels do occur during battles. Remember, it is dishonorable to interfere with a duel, even if it's occurring in the middle of a few thousand other guys fighting.

Since Kuro is wearing heavy armor, he will only have to roll one die for damage. Since the roll is low (3), after he subtracts his Reflexes and Defense he finds that his combination of armor and skill has kept him unharmed this round. However, there is also a "Duel" at that position, so the GM tells Kuro that Hida Sukune (a Crab hero) is nearby and trying to get to him for a duel. Kuro may be able to avoid the duel, but decides to attack Sukune, and they begin a combat at a skirmish level of detail. Besides the possible gains from the duel, Kuro has already gained 3 Glory from this battle.

Duels and Heroic Opportunities

Sometimes, a character will run into another important samurai, or a creature of note during the midst of the fighting. Other times, the character will have the opportunity to create a dramatic shift in the course of the battle or storyline. These situations occur when the result indicates a "Duel" or "Heroic Deed". In these situations, the GM and player will probably have to roleplay the scene in more detail (often at the skirmish level), but it may result in great amounts of glory for the character.

Duels

When you roll a "Duel" on the Battle Chart, you have encountered a hero of the opposing army. Your eyes meet, and you must face him in single combat.

Handle the encounter as a Skirmish. Another Battle Round does not occur until one of these samurai falters (is killed or knocked unconscious).

Listed below is a chart for keeping track of the significant personalities for each side of a Battle. When your character enters into the duel, your GM will roll on this chart to see which character you've encountered.

Refusing the duel is an act of cowardice, and while a battle is a chaotic event, someone may see the refusal, thus setting up the character for all sorts of mischief in the future.



List of Heroic Opportunities

This is a list of some heroic opportunities to use in any Battle. The GM is encouraged to make a specialized list for each battle, thus making each battle unique. The GM can use an opportunity more than once, if he wishes.

PICK UP THE BANNER

The character sees the banner carrier fall to arrow shot. He has the opportunity to carry the army's banner during the battle, bringing an additional 1 Glory Point each round. However, all actions the character takes during the battle are at -1 die.

PROTECT THE GENERAL

The character suddenly comes across the army's general who has lost his personal guard. The general commands the character to stand at his side and protect him from attack. The character must follow the general wherever he goes (some generals are more courageous than others), but he gains an additional Glory Point every round. The GM will direct the character's level of

Engagement for the rest of the battle.

ATTACK THE ARCHERS

Suddenly, the character sees a path that leads directly to the reserves of the opposing army. He has an opportunity to attack the archers, thus making an opportunity for the reinforcements to charge. This can give the character's army a strong advantage in the future rounds of the battle if he can fight his way to the opposing archers.

ATTACK THE SHUGENJA

A break opens in the battle and your character has the opportunity to attack the reserves. The shugenja suddenly stop their battle rituals as you charge into their ranks! Again, a successful attack on the opposing shugenja, while dangerous (they will begin directing their attacks at the character), can be key to victory.

"HOLD THIS GROUND!"

Your leader tells you to hold the line! You must remain in your current Engagement, but if you make a successful Water + Battle roll, your troops hold their position, and you gain the following additional Glory:

Reserves & Disengaged: N/A

Engaged: TN = 20; +2 Glory

Heavily Engaged: TN = 30; +4 Glory

BREAK THE LINE

You get the command to charge the front line! Next round, subtract two from your roll, but add two Glory to the result.

A CLEAR SHOT

The front lines break and you have a clear shot at the commander of the opposing army with a Ranged Attack! The TN of the shot depends on the commander (typically TN 30). A successful hit is worth 3 Glory, but will likely only wound and not kill the commander.

DRAW THE LINE

You've been commanded to try and draw the opposing army's front line further away from their reserves. Next round, you will be Heavily Engaged, but you also gain an additional 2 Glory.

SAVE A WOUNDED COMRADE

In the midst of battle, you notice a kinsman has fallen! You have the opportunity to save him if you wish, but you will be considered Heavily Engaged for the next two rounds if you do. Gain an additional 2 Glory for each round you pull your ally to the reserves (and your ally may wish

to bestow gifts on you in return for his life!).

SAVE A WOUNDED OPPONENT

Between breaths you notice a wounded enemy. He calls out to you to help him. If you ignore him, you lose no Honor or Glory (he is acting cowardly, after all), but if you aid him, he is morally obliged to you. What do you do? Use the same rules for **Save a Wounded Comrade** above.

TAKE THE ENEMY BANNER

Between the blood and carnage you spot the standard bearer of the opposing army. You have the opportunity to take the enemy's banner! You must kill the bearer in combat to take it. If you take it, you must try to get it back to your reserves. You may only move one step closer to reserves each round, and the increased attention means that your roll is reduced by four. You gain 3 additional Glory each turn, and a bonus of 5 Glory after you get to the reserves.

TAKE A UNIT

In the chaos and alarum that surround you, you suddenly notice that you are the highest ranking samurai in your unit! You have command of a single unit of 3-5 samurai. Add an additional 1 Glory for every round you remain in the battle.

THE STRENGTH OF MY ANCESTORS

The heat of battle has possessed you! You have an additional 3 Void Points to spend until the end of this battle.

SHUGENJA'S GIFT

One of the shugenja of your army has targeted you with a spell. The GM will determine which spell it is, or alternately, consider one of your Traits and Skills to be one Rank higher until the end of this battle.

AVOID FATE

The Fortunes are watching you. Ignore all Wounds this round.

BE PREPARED TO DIG TWO GRAVES

You see a samurai from the enemy's army cut down one of your kinsmen. You may spend the rest of this battle looking for that one samurai. At the end of each round, you may choose to move horizontally or vertically on the above chart to an entry that has a Duel (to meet that samurai).

DUELING ETIQUETTE (CONTINUED)

Samurai learn a special technique for sheathing their blade that allows them to do it without putting themselves in danger. It involves spinning the blade, stepping backward and sheathing it without taking your eyes off your opponent.

When both samurai begin their taijutsu technique, all combatants know it is best to leave the two alone, because interfering is an insult to both of them (you interfered in an opportunity for each to test their skill and courage).

What if one duelist gets hurt, but not killed?

He lost. If he wants to keep fighting, that's up to him. Sometimes (especially during blood feuds), it's even appropriate.



MONSTERS AND GLORY AWARDS

When a samurai defeats a Shadowlands creature (and other unwholesomeness), he deserves Glory for his actions.

Defeating Shadowlands creatures is considered less Glorious than more "pure" activities. After all, just stepping into the Shadowlands is enough to taint a samurai's soul.

Defeating minor annoyances (such as goblins and their kind) might be worth 1 Glory.

Defeating more significant threats (such as ogres) can gain a samurai 2-3 Glory.

Supernatural creatures (such as Oni and Gaki) can gain a samurai 3-4 Glory.

Samurai should not expect to go "hunting for oni hides" for the sole purpose of gaining Glory. Glory is awarded when courage is demonstrated, not as a reward for collecting pelts.

Glory Awards & Losses

Glory Awards

The awards below are suggestions for the GM when he is faced with the task of awarding Glory. A daimyo may choose to give a smaller award, or even (on very rare occasions) a greater one. Use the awards below as guidelines rather than steadfast rules.

AVENGING A BLOOD FEUD

When a character avenges a blood feud, his lord is obliged to award him Glory. The amount depends on the Glory Rank of the enemy.

- Rank 0-3 = 1 Glory
- Rank 4-8 = 2 Glory
- Rank 9 = 3 Glory

BATTLES

There is much Glory to be gained in a battle. See *Battles* (pg 114) for more details.

COMPLETING A QUEST

When a samurai returns successfully from a quest assigned by his daimyo, the daimyo is obliged to reward him with Glory.

Minor Quest (Involved little travel and danger) = 1 Glory

Standard Quest (Involved travel and danger) = 3 Glory

Great Quest (Involved great travel and little chance of survival) = 5 Glory

CRAFTSMANSHIP

Generally, samurai can only gain Glory for craftsmanship when it involves making weapons and armor. Samurai gain one Glory Point for creating a weapon or armor of quality for every Raise above the original Target Number to create the item.

DEFEATING ENEMIES

There are two kinds of enemies: enemies of the Clan and enemies of the Family. Defeating enemies of the Clan will gain a samurai greater Glory rewards, but defeating enemies of the Family will earn a greater degree of respect in one's own Family. Again, the amount of Glory depends on the Glory Rank of the Enemy.

- Rank 0-3 = 1 for Family/2 for Clan
- Rank 4-8 = 3 for Family/5 for Clan
- Rank 9 = 5 for Family/7 for Clan

DEFEATING NON-HUMAN ENEMIES

Defeating monsters and creatures from the Shadowlands also gains a samurai Glory. Look in the *Book of Void* for further details.

GIFTS

Giving and receiving are prime opportunities for gaining Glory. However, when a samurai is receiving a gift, he can only gain Glory if it was given by someone with a higher Glory Rank. The monetary value of the gift does not determine its value; only the Glory Rank of the gift giver matters.

The Glory listed below is given to both the presenter and the recipient. The gift must be given in public and for a specific purpose.

- Gift from Rank 0-3 Samurai = 1 Glory
- Gift from Rank 4-6 Samurai = 2 Glory
- Gift from rank 7-9 Samurai = 3 Glory
- Gift from the Emperor = 5 Glory

GETTING MARRIED

While marriage may not be a romantic affair, it is a glorious one.

The bride and groom gain Glory differently. The bride's Glory is automatically shifted to represent her new station. She gains a Glory Rank one Rank lower than her husband. The husband, on the other hand, gains Glory Points equal to the bride's father's Glory Rank.

HONORABLE ACTIONS

Samurai can gain Glory whenever they gain Honor. If a lord publicly acknowledges a samurai's action that has gained him Honor, he gains a number of Glory Points equal to the number of Honor Points he gained.

COURTLY GLORY

Generally, all Glory is allotted in the court of the daimyo. Samurai who present themselves at court have many opportunities to gain Glory. Noteworthy and honorable actions (see above) are

almost always awarded in court. Failing to award due Glory (see above) often draws unwanted attention, ridicule and scorn to the lord of the court.

ROMANCE

While romance is generally not considered honorable, it is certainly glorious. Tales of samurai and their romantic affairs are some of the most potent tales told in the courts of Rokugan.

Romance is a special circumstance when Glory is concerned. A daimyo would never publicly acknowledge one of his samurai was engaged in a romance, and so he cannot award the samurai Glory. In fact, if a daimyo must publicly acknowledge the romance, it may mean a loss of Glory for the samurai (see below).

Glory from romance is awarded by the home court of the samurai's amour. Glory is gained when the samurai publicly proclaims his love. A samurai must be careful about how he does so, however. Samurai are known for their skill in publicly proclaiming their love while hiding the identity of the subject (by hiding the name of his lover in the poem, for instance).

Samurai gain Glory Points when they publicly show devotion. The amount of Glory is equal to the Glory Rank of their amour. However, if the affair is ever publicly revealed, both the samurai and his lover are subject to the wrath of their respective lords (and, in the case of a wife, the lover's husband). Punishments can be as simple

as a loss of one or two points of Glory to banishment and even a command for *seppuku*. Samurai-ko are especially vulnerable to punishment. Often times, the samurai-ko is expected to shave her hair and retire from a worldly life.

SKILL SUCCESS AND PERFORMANCE

The successful use of a Skill in and of itself is not cause for Glory award. However, there comes a time when a single action can mean the difference between victory and defeat. At these times, awards are in order. Rewards for a moment of courage and valor depend greatly on the daimyo in question, but generally range from 1 to 3.

Successful Skill use in the court is also cause for Glory award. When a samurai composes a moving poem, paints a striking portrait or performs a song that brings the ladies of the court to tears, the awarding of Glory is in order.

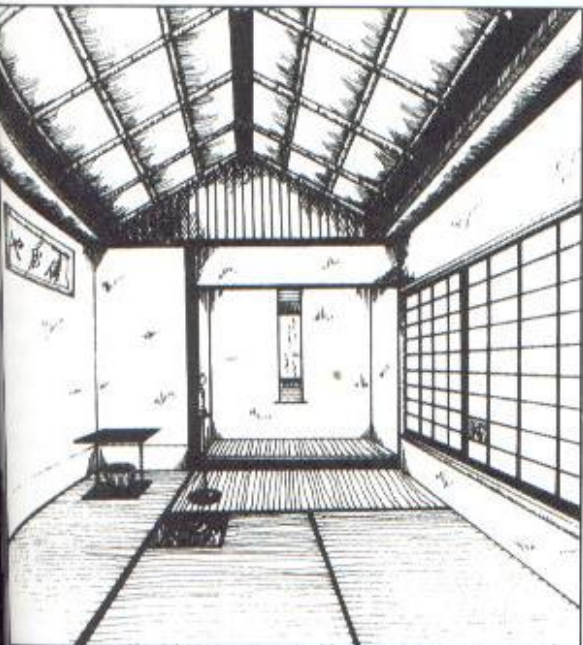
If a samurai makes a truly impassioned performance, he is eligible for Glory, depending on the performance. The quality of performance is judged by the success of the player's roll. Generally, the TN for success is 15. Based on this value, a samurai gains 1 Glory for every Raise he gained.

For example: Kuro is playing his samisen for the Phoenix court. He's declared two Raises and now has a TN of 25. Kuro's player rolls the dice and gets a 27. Since this is two Raises above the TN (15), Kuro may receive 2 Glory from Ujimitsu. Being a wise daimyo, Ujimitsu awards Kuro his Glory.

Glory Loss

Needless to say, it is incredibly difficult for a samurai to gain Glory, but when he loses it, he loses greatly. The loss of Glory is a terrible punishment for samurai. It means a loss of social status as well as public shame. Many samurai would rather commit *seppuku* than face a loss of Glory. As a matter of fact, *seppuku* is the only way to negate Glory loss. If a samurai is allowed to commit *seppuku* (he must gain permission from his daimyo to do so), his Glory loss is negated completely.

Like the awards above, the losses listed below are suggestions for the GM. It is much easier for a daimyo to take away Glory than it is for him to give it. A samurai is expected to be completely devoted to



LEFT:
INTERIOR VIEW
OF AN AVERAGE
INN.



**RIGHT: THE
VIEW OF THE
COURTYARD IN A
SMALL CASTLE.**

his lord, to obey his every request, and to do so without question. Even the slightest hint of insubordination could result in a loss of Glory, banishment, or even a command to commit seppuku. Even worse, a samurai's request to commit seppuku could be declined, forcing the samurai to carry his shame with him for the rest of his life—even into the afterlife.

Again, these crimes must be publicly acknowledged by the samurai's lord in order for a loss of Glory to take place. A daimyo who refuses to acknowledge an obvious crime jeopardizes his own Honor and Glory.

Unlike gaining Glory, a samurai can lose



Glory without his daimyo acknowledging his actions. Speaking poorly of one's daimyo in his own court, wandering around the streets of his city drunk and making public romantic gestures to his wife will bring shame on a samurai's head even if the daimyo is unaware of them. The court has eyes of its own and can distribute shame just as well as the court's lord. Of course, when the daimyo accuses the samurai of his crimes, the shame is escalated dramatically.

The Glory losses listed below assume the samurai commits the acts in public. A samurai can only lose Honor performing dishonorable actions privately. The only time a samurai loses Glory is when he dishonors himself publicly (public drunkenness, display of affection for a married woman, declining a duel in court, etc.) and if he is publicly confronted with his actions by a samurai of higher Glory Rank.

Example: *Ginawa likes to drink. At the*

favorite tea house of Akodo Toturi, he drinks a bit too much sake and begins to sing loudly (and poorly) to a geisha. Because he is committing a shameful act in public (drunkenness), he loses 1 Glory Point.

In a moment or two, he is confronted by Toturi, who chastises him for his shameful behavior. The GM rules that Ginawa now loses an additional three Glory Points because he was publicly chastised by a high-ranking superior.

Samurai may lower the loss of Glory by making an apology. Apologies (like everything else in Rokugan) are formal, ritualized activities. In order to make a successful apology, a samurai must

make an Awareness + Sincerity roll. The TN for the roll is the offended party's Awareness x 5. The samurai prostrates himself before the lord (or any other offended party) and explains the shame pounding in his heart. He does not do this quietly. In fact, it is considered good form for the samurai to scream at the top of his lungs while making this apology.

It is also considered good form to cry. The point of this exercise is for the samurai to prove his sincerity, to prove that he truly is sorry for the shame he has brought to himself and his family. A successful Sincerity roll reduces the Glory loss by half, rounding up.

Example, Continued: *Ginawa does not wish to lose so much Glory, so he tries to make a Sincerity roll. Ginawa's Awareness is 2 and his Sincerity is 1. He gets to roll three dice and keep two. His TN is 20 (Toturi's 4 Awareness x 5). He knows he doesn't have much of a chance, so he spends a Void Point to aid his attempt. Ginawa's player rolls 18 (10 + 8) 9, 9, and 3, giving him a total roll of 36. Toturi is convinced of Ginawa's sincerity and his Glory loss is reduced by half.*

FAILING TO AWARD GLORY

There will be instances when a lord will deliberately choose not to award Glory Points to a samurai. Take for example a Lion daimyo who

finds he must award Glory to a despised Crane samurai who defeated all of the daimyo's best bushi in a tournament. He must award the Crane Glory, but chooses not to out of spite.

If a samurai ever fails to award a Glory Rank to a deserving subordinate, he loses a number of Glory Points equal to the Glory Rank of the samurai.

HONOR LOSS

It is very safe to assume that any action that would cause a samurai to lose Honor will also cause him to lose Glory. If a samurai ever publicly loses Honor for an action, he loses an equal amount of Glory.

REPRIMANDS

If a character is reprimanded in public by a superior, he loses Glory Points. This loss can range from a single Glory Point up to the difference in their Glory Ranks.

BRASH BEHAVIOR

Samurai are expected to be hot-blooded, but only when their honor has been questioned or compromised. Samurai should show no or little emotion, and keep a calm face at all times. When a samurai loses control of his emotions, he is said to have "lost his face," which can cost him greatly. A samurai who is especially violent for no good reason can expect a loss of Glory. Each incident of brash behavior costs a samurai at least one Glory. Unnecessary violent acts against samurai will cost him Glory equal to the Glory Rank of the samurai in question. Acts that not only compromise his own honor, but the honor of his lord will cost him even greater losses of Glory.

BREAKING A PROMISE

If a samurai breaks a promise, he loses Glory equal to the Glory Rank of the character he made the promise to.

COWARDICE

There is no way for a samurai to clean the shame of cowardice from his soul other than seppuku. Once a samurai has demonstrated his fear, he must remove that stain by demonstrating the greatest act of courage. A samurai who is afraid to die for his lord is worth nothing in the eyes of the Rokugani.

If a samurai refuses a formal duel, or retreats from a fight or a battle, he loses half his current Glory.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Theft, burglary and other petty crimes are great offenses for a samurai. If a samurai is found guilty of breaking the law, a daimyo has almost no choice but to discipline the samurai severely. Often, samurai are disowned, making them ronin. At the very least, the samurai will be cuffed (expected to walk about with handcuffs on) for a week, month or even longer if he wishes to keep his status with his lord.

OVERINDULGENCE

Temperance is one of the great virtues Shinsei taught the Emperor, and samurai are expected to follow in his example. A public act of over eating or drunkenness causes a loss of one Glory.

PERFORMING A LOW SKILL

Samurai who show knowledge of Low Skills lose Glory equal to the Rank of the Skill they perform.

REFUSING A CONTEST

When samurai are challenged to a contest, whether it is martial or otherwise, refusing to participate indicates a fear of failure. Samurai do not fear failure, they fear bringing shame to their family. A samurai who refuses to participate in a contest will lose at least one Glory. If the opponent is of lower Rank, he loses an additional Glory for every Rank he is greater than his opponent.

REFUSING A LORD'S REQUEST

Refusing a daimyo's request can be a serious offense, depending on the samurai and the daimyo. Many daimyo respect the opinions of their samurai, while others expect them to obey orders without question.

Publicly refusing a *daimyo's* request can lose a samurai Glory up to the Glory Rank of the *daimyo*.

TREASON

There is no greater crime than treason. A samurai found conspiring against his daimyo is immediately reduced to zero Glory and is often refused the opportunity to commit *seppuku*. Worse, he could be given a wooden sword to perform the deed, indicating that the daimyo believes his samurai to be too chicken-hearted to complete the ritual.



Swords

AIGUCHI **2 KOKU** **1k2**

A short knife without a hilt.

KATANA **20 KOKU** **3k2**

A long sword, the sword of the samurai, the symbol of his caste. No samurai is ever seen without his katana and wakizashi, collectively known as daisho. It is slightly curved ending in a chiselled point. A katana is forged from two steels: one soft and one hard. These two metals are heated and folded many times, providing a blade that is both rigid and sharp. The length of the pommel differs, depending on the social climate. During times of peace, the pommels are short, more difficult to use and less cumbersome in an obi. During times of war, however, the pommels are longer, providing greater leverage on the blade and much more difficult to carry. The total length of the weapon is approximately 3 feet long.

NO-DACHI **30 KOKU** **3k3**

The no-dachi is a great sword, typically 5'-7' long. (The no-dachi is the longsword on the left of the page.)

TANTO **3 KOKU** **1k2**

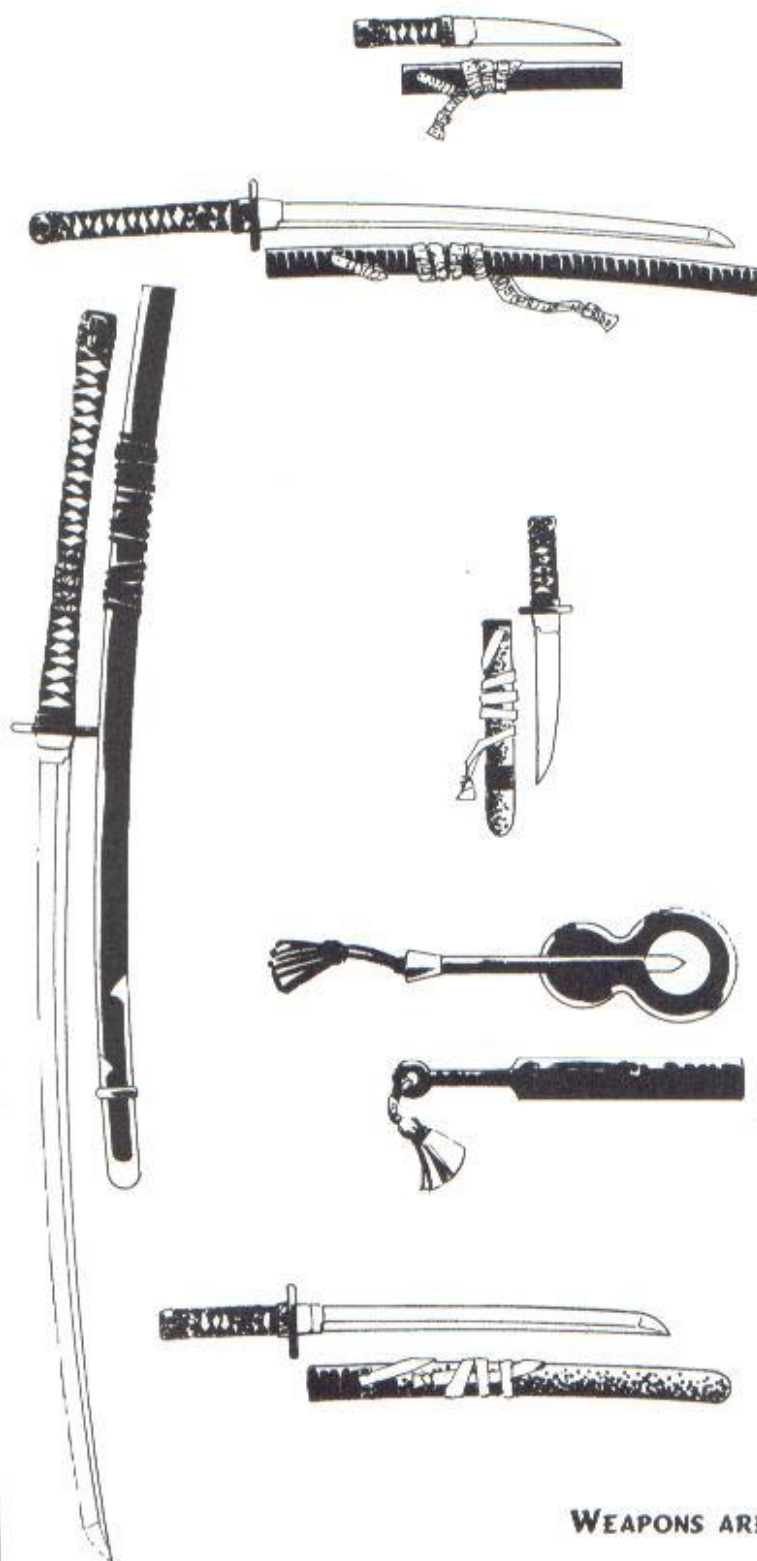
A short knife with a hilt, often used by women, easily hidden in a kimono or the pommel of a katana.

TESSEN **2 KOKU** **Ok2**

The tessen is not a sword, but it has become so associated with the samurai, it seemed natural to list it next to the katana and wakizashi. The tessen is the "war fan", a metal ribbed fan that serves as both a shield (that deflects the blades of assassins) and as a general's tool (used to command units across the battlefield). If the situation is particularly dire, you can swat somebody with it.

WAKIZASHI **15 KOKU** **2k2**

A short sword, the companion piece to the katana. When together, they are referred to as *daisho*.



WEAPONS ARE TO SCALE - 1" IS APPROXIMATELY 1'

Pole-arms

A character using a pole-arm has a slight advantage over a character using a shorter weapon. To represent this, all characters using pole-arms against opponents who are using shorter weapons may roll an additional die for their Initiative Roll and keep the higher roll. Pole-arms cannot be used in an Iaijutsu duel.

DIE TSUCHI 4 KOKU 2k2

The Rokugani equivalent of a war hammer. This weapon is used almost exclusively by the Crab Clan.

NAGE-YARI 3 KOKU 2k2

A 3' javelin. It can be used as a hand weapon or thrown.

NAGAMAKI 4 KOKU 4k2

A shorter version of the Naginata, this pole-arm is a long, wooden shaft (approximately 3½' long) with a long (3') sword-like end.

NAGINATA 5 KOKU 3k3

A pole-arm with a large blade on the end. Samurai-ko are often trained in its use.

ONO 5 KOKU 3k3

A battle axe with a wooden shaft approximately 4' in length. Its steel head is often double-headed.

SASUMATA 4 KOKU 0k2

"The man-catcher" is a 6' long pole-arm with a double-pronged hook at the end, the insides of which are barbed. It is designed to catch a body within and rake it against the prongs. On a successful hit, perform a contested Agility roll against the target. If you win the roll, the target is trapped, and you will do damage every turn that the target is caught. The target can escape the Sasumata with a simple Strength test, TN = 25.

SODEGARAMI 5 KOKU 0k1

"The sleeve-entangler" is a 6' long pole-arm with a series of wicked barbs designed to catch the sleeves of kimonos and the loose edges of armor.

TETSUBO 6 KOKU 2k2

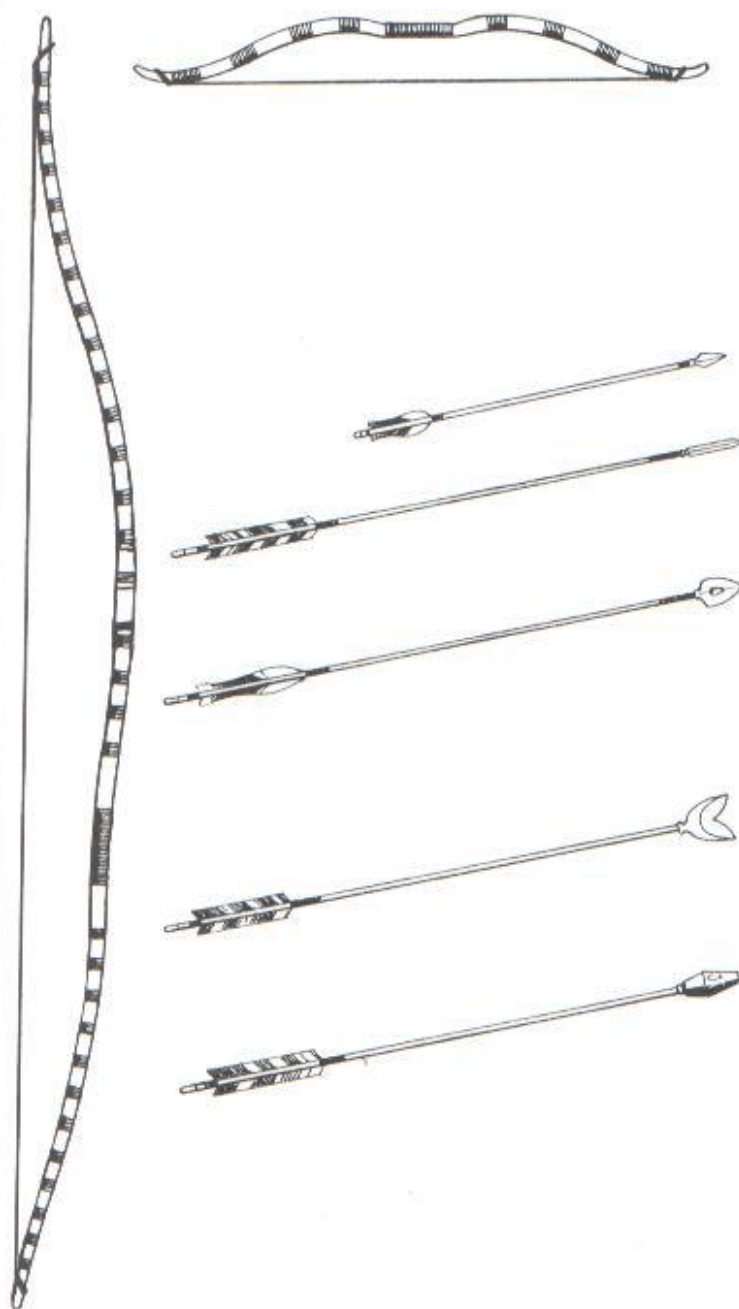
An iron rod, much like a mace, used with two hands. The end is often ribbed or tipped with metal studs. This weapon does not get the polearm bonus for initiative.

YARI 4 KOKU 4k2

A straight spear approximately 6' in length.

WEAPONS ARE TO SCALE - 1" IS APPROXIMATELY 2'





WEAPONS ARE TO SCALE - 1" IS APPROXIMATELY 1'

Bows

DAI-KYU 4 KOKU AS ARROW

The "long bow". It is seven feet long and designed to be fired from horseback. The dai-kyu can hit targets out to about 200 yards.

YUMI 4 KOKU AS ARROW

The yumi is designed to be fired while standing. As with the dai-kyu, its range is about 200 yards.

Arrows

YA 1 SILVER 2k2

This is the standard arrow. Also in this category is the yanagi-ba, or "willow leaf" arrow.

ARMOR PIERCER 2 SILVERS 1k2

An arrow with a narrow, spiked tip designed for punching through armor. Ignore the target's armor when calculating the TN.

WATAKUSI 3 SILVERS 3k3

This arrow is known as the "flesh cutter." It spins as it leaves the bowstring and augers into unprotected flesh. It is particularly ineffective against armored targets, however; if the target is wearing armor, double the protection it gives when figuring the TN to hit.

KARIMATA 5 SILVERS 1k1

The "fork" arrow. This is a very specialized arrow, used for cutting through ropes or cords. Its points are not very sharp, but the interior curve is sharpened so that it cuts more effectively.

"HUMMING BULB" 5 SILVERS 0k1

A hollow-tipped arrow that whistles as it flies through the air. It is generally used to signal troops. The tip is rarely if ever sharp, and tends to glance off whatever it hits.

"Peasant" Weapons

All of these weapons were developed by monks and taught to the peasantry so they could defend themselves against bandits and drunk samurai. Samurai do not use these weapons. To do so would bring shame to their katana.

Bo **5 COPPERS** **2k2**

A long hardwood staff about 6' to 7' long. A character using a bo may roll an extra die for initiative as with a polearm. (The bo is the long vertical staff on the right of the page.)

JITTE **10 SILVERS** **1k1**

Similar to the sai (see below), the jitte has only a single prong. It is rarely sharpened and is used as a defensive weapon. Any character attempting a disarm with this weapon gets a Free Raise to do so.

Jo **1 COPPER** **Ok2**

A smaller version of the bo, often used in pairs (one in each hand). The jo is usually about 3' long.

KAMA **3 SILVERS** **2k2**

A short scythe-like weapon that is easily overlooked as a weapon. It is reputed to be a favorite weapon of the ninja.

NUNCHAKU **25 COPPERS** **2k2**

Originally intended to be a wheat flail, the nunchaku is two short (2') hardwood poles connected by a short chain less than a foot long.

Sai **10 SILVERS** **1k1**

A two-pronged knife used to catch weapons and pull them out of their wielder's grip. It is usually not sharpened and is essentially a defensive weapon. Any character attempting a disarm with this weapon gets a Free Raise to do so.

TONFA **1 SILVER** **1k2**

This weapon was originally the handle of a millstone. It is a short wooden staff - approximately 2' long - with an offset handle. This weapon is swung in a swirling motion.



WEAPONS ARE TO SCALE - 1" IS APPROXIMATELY 1'

ABOUT ARMOR

Armor is only worn during wartime or while on military duty. Bushi who wear their armor into villages are assumed to be bandits.

Just like the armor of the knights of Europe, samurai armor is incredibly complex. To simplify things, we've broken down armor into two classifications: Heavy and Light.

Heavy armor is full samurai armor. The samurai is heavily guarded against attacks with shoulder guards, hip guards, shin guards and even armpit guards. Light armor is worn by samurai who want more maneuverability, thus sacrificing protection.

It is assumed that no one purchases "pieces" of armor. If you are a bushi, you are given a suit of armor upon your gempukku ceremony. When it is damaged, your Clan repairs or replaces it.

The Rules

Armor makes you more difficult to hit (a sword stroke which hits an armored part of the body may as well have not hit at all), but it also restricts your movements. A bushi who is wearing Heavy Samurai Armor has the TN to hit him increased by 10, but he has a +5 to his TNs on all physical actions. A bushi wearing Light Samurai Armor has the TN to hit him increased by 5, but has no associated TN penalty.

2 LIGHT ARMOR

Like the light armor being tried on by the samurai to the right (#9), this set of light leather armor has no protection for the arms or legs.

3 FULL FACE MASKS (MEMPO)

These are made of metal, and not only afford protection, but also make their owner look particularly fierce.

4 FULL HELMET (KABUTO)

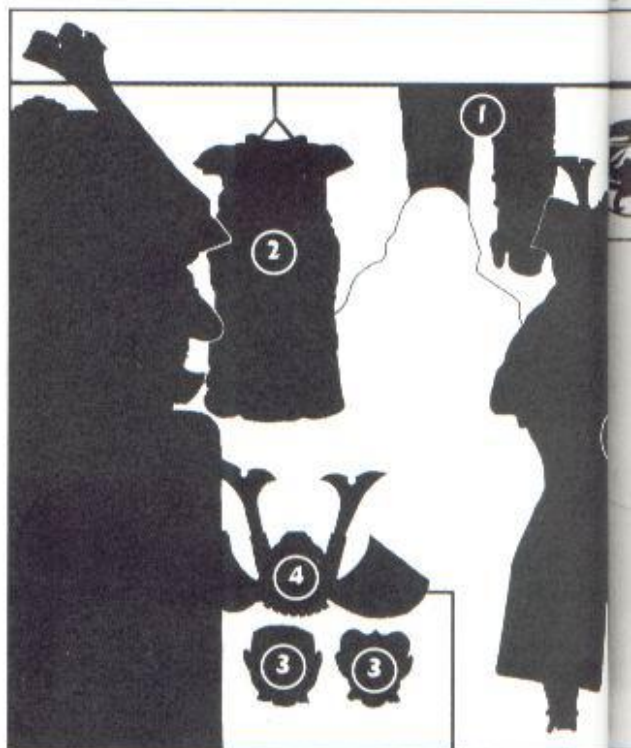
This is also metal, and is quite heavy. Again, the stylized horns and teeth are supposed to intimidate the enemy. This has variable success, and tends to be less effective when the enemy – like most *Oni* – has scarier horns and teeth built in.

A Visit To

Overleaf there is a picture of the Crab Clan's

1 ARMORED SLEEVES (KOTE)

The armored sleeves associated with heavy armor are known as *kote*. They're usually chain mail with leather pads along the forearm. These sleeves match up with the heavy *haramaki-do* and *sode* to the right (#7), the *kabuto* below (#4), and some leg protection (*haidate* for the thighs, *suneate* for the lower leg – not shown) to make the major pieces of a set of heavy armor.



5 HEAVY ARMOR

This is a full suit of heavy armor. This suit is made of quilted leather (unlike the metal pieces hanging on the walls) and takes a couple of hours to put on. The TN to hit a samurai in Heavy Armor is increased by 10.

Crab Clan Armory

number of pieces of armor spread about. Here's the key.

6 FLAT HELMET (JINGASA)

These are the wide, flat metal or metal-and-leather helmet. It keeps the sun off, but isn't as intimidating as the *kabuto*.



9 LIGHT ARMOR AND HELMET (JINGASA)

This bushi is trying a set of light metal armor and its associated flat helmet, the *jingasa*. Light armor tends to cover the torso only, often leaving the arms and legs unprotected (and unencumbered). The helmet not only affords protection, but also a measure of shade. As a bonus, a traveling samurai can cook his meals in his *jingasa*. The TN to hit a samurai in Light Armor is increased by 5.

7 HEAVY ARMOR PIECES

This is a set of heavy armor pieces, made out of metal. The shoulder guards are called *sode*, this body armor, which opens at the back, is known as a *haramaki-do*. (If the body armor opened at the side, it would be called *do-maru*). There is often a strip of back which is left unprotected by the *haramaki-do*. "Since the enemy is never going to see your back, why carry around the extra weight?" say the Crabs.

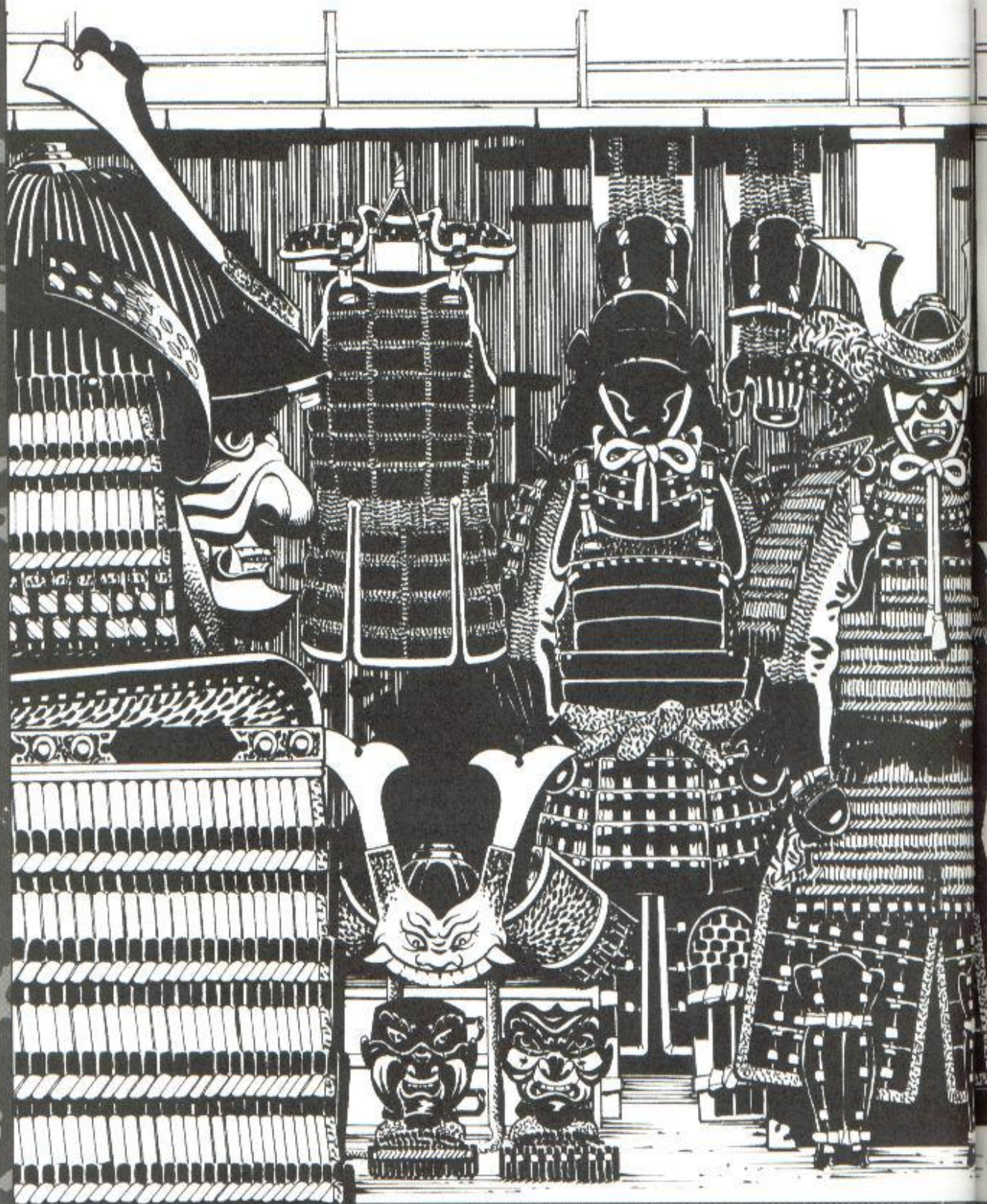
8 MASTER ARMORER

As can be seen by his shaved forelock and topknot, the armorer is of the samurai caste. While he's technically a bushi, his talents have proven that he can better serve his clan in a support role.

Also evident in the picture: swords. The armorer is wearing his *wakizashi* while he's working; the samurai admiring the *kabuto* is wearing the full *daisho*, while the bushi trying on the light armor has put down his *katana* while gearing up. A samurai is rarely without his swords.

ABOUT ARMOR (CONTINUED)

It's considered inappropriate for shugenja to wear armor. This doesn't mean it doesn't happen – especially in the Crab Clan, which tends to produce the greatest number of war shugenja – but many bushi consider it an insult to their station to have a non-bushi samurai wearing armor. A shugenja who goes around in armor had better be confident that he can handle any challenges from aggrieved bushi.







chapter
four

風

ain

The wind moves with such subtlety, you do not even notice your own breathing.

Be aware.

Only a fool knows the wind is empty.

— The Tao of Shinsei

Path of Blood

Part 4

He awoke with rain on his face and aches in his limbs. Wet grass was on the back of his neck. He wiped his eyes clear and licked his lips. The rain was thick and tasted ...

His body bolted up faster than he could think. He opened his eyes and looked at the corpses that surrounded him, covered in crimson. He looked down at his own hands and realized that it was not rain on his face or on his hands or in his mouth. At his feet, the Iuchiban sword sat in the wet grass, making a sound that could only be described as an ecstatic whisper.

He kicked away from the blade and he slid across the wet grass into what could only be a body. He turned and saw the fear-frozen face of Umako, her skin as white as porcelain and her lips a pale, pale blue. He shoved the body and it rolled until her face was no longer in sight.

He tried to stand but his body refused. He tried again with greater success, but his legs could not hold him. He held on to a tree and felt a scream build in his chest and escape his lips. A new wetness had found his face: the salty wetness of tears. His eyes tried to avoid the bloody clearing, but he could not peel them away from the bone white corpses. He screamed again and sank to the damp grass just as he heard movement behind him.

He spun about and found he had moved too quickly. His feet skidded on the grass and he fell. A form stepped from the wood with words as soft

as pillows.

"Do not fear, my friend. I am here to help."

Ginawa kept moving. "Go away," he said.

"Please," the shadow said. "Please let me help you."

"Go away or I will kill you!"

The figure stopped its advance. From the other side of the clearing, another voice spoke out.

"Ginawa-san?"

He spun about. Hijiko stood at the edge of the bloody mess, her hand on the pommel of her katana and her eyes and mouth open with surprise. "Ginawa-san, what - what happened here?"

"I - I do not ..."

"The Iuchiban blade is the cause," the hidden figure interrupted.

Hijiko's blade was free from its saya in a heartbeat. "Who are you?"

The figure stepped forward into the light. He was tall and his eyes flashed with a dark light. "I am Tadaka, magistrate of my lord Shiba Ujimitsu."

"Phoenix," Hijiko muttered.

"Go away!" Ginawa shouted. His hand reached down for his sword, but he pulled it away as if it were reaching without his permission. "Leave me! Go now!"

"He has awakened the spirit of the blade," Tadaka said, stepping toward the sword. "It must be put to rest."

"NO!" Ginawa leapt between Tadaka and the sword. "Stay away!" Again, he leaned to the ground to lift the blade, but at the last moment, pulled his own hand away.

"Your soul is in conflict. I can sense that. Let me help you." Tadaka put his hand forward and Ginawa tripped backward, stumbling into the blood-soaked grass. "Be calm. Only together can we master the spirit of the blade."

Ginawa's body was shaking beyond his control. He could not move away from Tadaka's touch. He put his palm on Ginawa's forehead and began a long, slow chant that was like thunder in his throat. A soft glow grew around them and Hijiko could almost see the tension flowing from Ginawa's body.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Purifying his spirit. It has been corrupted by that abomination behind me." Tadaka motioned to the sword lying in the bloody grass.

"What is it?"

"It is an Iuchiban blade. I do not know which

of the four it is, but that does not matter. It is a weapon of evil and it has tainted his soul with its powers."

Hijiko watched as the glow grew about them. Flares of red smoke and fire spilled from Ginawa's eyes and mouth and palms and chest as Tadaka continued the chanting. Finally, after many minutes, the samurai's body fell completely limp and Tadaka sighed. He almost fell, but Hijiko caught him.

"I thank you, samurai-ko," he said to her.

"No, I thank you. If what you say is true, you have done me and my *yoriki* a great service."

He shook his head. "Let me rest a moment, samurai-ko. Then I will tell you what I have done."

The fire was hotter than any Hijiko ever remembered. Tadaka had summoned it up from a branch of wood, and now, they sat before the single branch burning with heat that even the great hearth in her lord's home could not compare to.

"You are a shugenja?" she asked.

"Hai. I am."

"I have never spoken to a shugenja before."

Tadaka smiled. "Afraid he might turn you into something unpleasant? Like a toad or a spider?"

She laughed. "No, I just - well, I mean." She thought about it for a moment, then answered, "Your kind never looks like they're interested in talking."

Tadaka's smile grew. "I can understand that. We can seem a bit distant at times. We're studying."

"Studying what?"

Tadaka settled in, like a storyteller preparing for an all-night tale. "You are familiar with the stories of Lady Sun and Father Moon, are you not?"

She shrugged. "Certainly."

"And the Fortunes?"

She shook her head. "I only know the Seven. And my ancestors."

Tadaka smiled. "I know prayers for one hundred and forty two Fortunes," he said. "And I am also an Acolyte of Earth."

Hijiko frowned. "Acolyte of Earth?"

He nodded. "Certainly you read the *Tao of Shinsei* while you were in school?"

An embarrassed smile crossed her face. "Yes... but I only paid attention to the bushido parts."

"Tsk, tsk," Tadaka scolded, a smile on his lips. "I can recite any chapter from any book, but the

one I am most fluent in is the Earth book."

Hijiko's eyes lit up. "Yes! I remember the Earth book. The mountain is immovable and so shall I be."

He nodded. "Very good."

She leaned in a little bit, her curiosity showing in her eyes and voice. "So when you say you are an 'Acolyte' of Earth, what does that mean?"

Tadaka put his palm down and looked her in the eyes. "This," he whispered.

Suddenly, the ground beneath them began to tremble. Hijiko grabbed hold of a nearby tree and looked at Tadaka whose eyes had turned as white as a geisha's face. Then, just as suddenly, the trembling ceased and the color of his eyes faded back.

"D - did you ...?"

He nodded. "Yes, I did."

She tried to mumble something, but he cut her off. "How?" Hijiko nodded, still trying to find her breath.

"It's simple, really. All you have to do is become aware of your own energies. Of course, that only takes a few years."

She took a deep gasp then flashed a dark look at him. "Don't do that again without warning me," she said sharply.

"Of course," he said, his lips curled into a sideways smile.

There was no sound to warn either of them. He moved like a cat made of shadows, and before Tadaka could move, a wakizashi was at his throat and a rough hand was over his eyes and mouth.

"Don't move, shugenja," Ginawa whispered. "Even a hint of a spell from your lips and your blood will mingle with the blood of Scorpions this night."

"Ginawa-san! Put your weapon away. This man saved your life!"

His eyes flashed across the darkness. "Did he?"

"Hai! Now do as I say, yoriki."

Ginawa didn't move. His eyes didn't blink. He licked his lips. The edge of the blade touched the shugenja's neck.

In one gesture, he pushed the shugenja away and flung himself down in front of the fire. Tadaka fell forward, but the fire of the branch fell with him as if the flame refused to burn him. He pulled himself up and shook the wrinkles from his kimono.

"You owe me nothing, samurai," Tadaka said,

"if that is what you fear."

"There is only one thing in this world I fear, shugenja," Ginawa spat, "and it has nothing to do with you."

Tadaka turned to Hijiko. "Your yoriki has a strange way of showing gratitude."

She shot a poisoned glance at Ginawa who sat silent, wrapped up in his kimono. "I know, Tadaka-sama."

A moment of silence passed between them, then Tadaka said, "Where are you off to now?"

"Back to my lord to report what has happened here."

Tadaka smiled. "That is precisely where I am headed. Do you mind if we share the road?"

She shook her head. "Not at all, Tadaka-sama." She stared at Ginawa. "I am certain my yoriki has no objections."

"None that he'd say in public," Ginawa grumbled.

"Good."

"Where is my sword?"

Tadaka and Hijiko looked at Ginawa with frowns. "Wrapped up and tied into its saya," she told him. "I do not think you need to see it again."

Ginawa's eyes grew dark. "We will see," he whispered.

"What did you say?" Hijiko snapped.

He shook his head. "Nothing, Hijiko-san." He sunk deeper into his kimono and shut his eyes. "Nothing at all."

Magic

If you are playing a shugenja character, you will want to become well acquainted with the information in this chapter. Within, you will find everything you need to know about Rökugan's religion, magic and superstitions. You will also



find a vast list of "spells" your shugenja character will be using.

Despite a thousand years of research and study, magic is still a mysterious force in Rokugan. Shugenja from across the Empire dispute almost every point, each claiming that their school teaches the only truth – or at least the most complete version of it.

In order to understand how magic works in Rokugan, you must first understand her religion. The Rokugani view many things differently than we do in the west, including the fundamentals of nature, the soul and the individual. After the Religion section is a brief discussion of the shugenja and his role in Rokugan's society and belief. Then, we will cover how shugenja cast their spells, and lastly, we will cover the game mechanics of spell casting and offer you a sample of the kind of spells that are available to a shugenja in Rokugan.



The Celestial Order reflects the Rokugani belief that the universe is structured and ordered. The Rokugani can see this in the changing of the seasons, the patterns of star movement and the phases of the moon. If nature is structured and man is a part of nature, then he should be structured as well. Those who try to deny their part in the structure are branded as outcasts and barbarians.

The Rokugani put a great deal of belief in the patterns of nature, and so fortune telling is a very popular activity. There are many forms of fortune telling, including astronomy (a high art practiced by shugenja), cartomancy and tea reading (to mention just a few).

Reincarnation

A fundamental belief in Rokugan's religion is reincarnation. The Rokugani believe that this world is one of a hundred thousand million worlds that were once and will be again. When their souls depart this world, they go to a place to prepare for the next. In the spirit world (unlike the spirit worlds of the west), the spirits are faceless, without identity. This is because the material world is temporary and unimportant, having very little impact on the eternal soul.

A soul has two aspects that change according to the life the soul has been born into: dharma and karma. Dharma is the soul's duty, or role in this life. All lives in the world have a duty, and they would not have been born into this dharma if their soul was not prepared for it (another reflection of Rokugani belief in the ordered universe). Karma, on the other hand, is the energy the soul gathers for performing its duty. A soul that gathers enough energy earns a better life in the next world, the most advanced souls reaching the status of divinity ...

The Individual and the Universe

The Rokugani see the individual in a very different light than that of most western cultures. In our culture, an individual is expected to wear a social mask and a private mask. Outside of his home, he wears his social mask, which reflects his position in society, his profession and his social obligations. At home, he takes the mask off and wears his private mask. We view someone who wears their social mask at home with some trepidation, as someone who "takes their work home with them."

In Rokugan, there is only the social mask. Every moment of every day, a samurai wears his status. He never lets his mask – or, more properly, his "face" – fall. An individual is the face that he wears in this life, and there is nothing else.

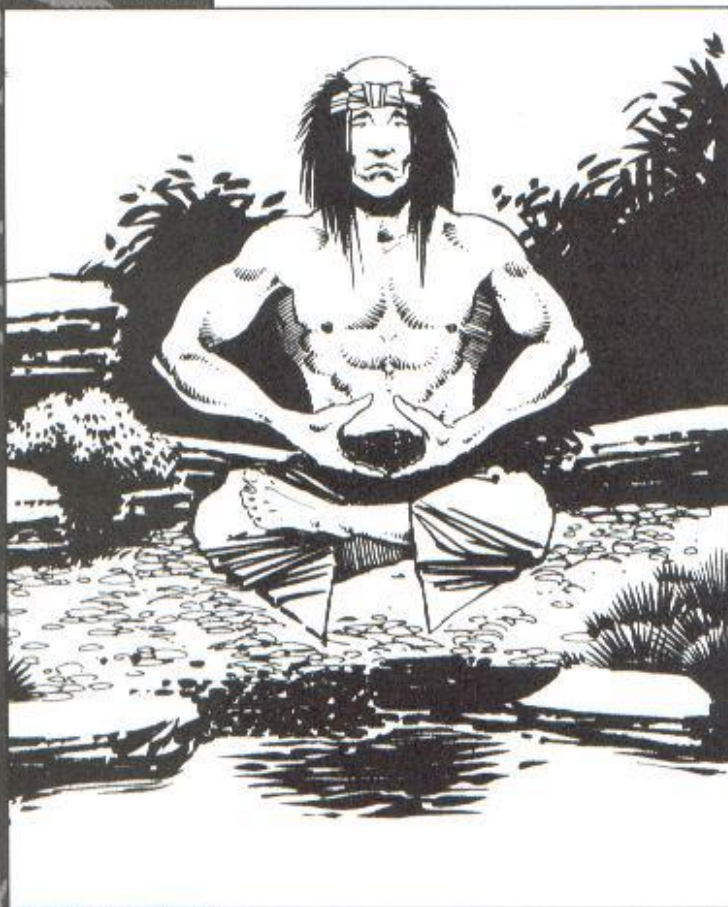
The Religion of the Seven Fortunes

Rokugan's religion is not formally organized the way many of the churches of the western



world are. The Emperor is the symbolic head of the church (being the one who is closest to the Sun Goddess), but each of the Clans follows its own religious structure. This collage of metaphysical thought causes great debates among the shugenja schools on the nature of the Fortunes, the soul and the teachings of Shinsei.

The native religion of Rokugan contains many, many gods, structured in much the same way their mortal counterparts are. There are many tiers of divinity, beginning with the Sun and Moon, who are the rulers of the universe. Just below them are the Fortunes who commune regularly with mortal man. Below the Fortunes are



the thousands of ancestors whom the Rokugani look to daily for advice and direction.

The Fortunes of Rokugan are not kind deities, and one must cajole them to win their favor. They are easily insulted and quick to temper, but they are also very vain and easy to win over with compliments and sacrifices. The shugenja are diviners

who can communicate with the gods. They also know the rites of purification (performed at birth and at death) and the secrets of dispelling evil spirits. When Shinsei came to Rokugan and impressed the Emperor with his Tao of the Five Rings, many shugenja applied the Tao to their native religion. For a thousand years, the shugenja have mingled the religion of Rokugan with the philosophy of Shinsei until now, the two have become inseparable. Children are baptized with blessings from the Seven Fortunes while the deceased are buried with rites prescribed by Shinsei.

THE SUN GODDESS

The greatest of all fortunes is Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. It was she who gave birth to the founders of the Clans. Creating images of the Sun Goddess is forbidden. Even in her temples, the only representation of Amaterasu is a mirror.

CHILDREN OF SUN AND MOON

The arrival of the Children of Sun and Moon ushered in the Age of Man. They taught humanity all the arts and crafts, the concept of the ordered society and have directed mankind's destiny for a thousand years.

Hantei Jimmu Tenno is the first Hantei. He is the ruler of the invisible world of spirits. Those who seek good harvests and protection from the spirits of the invisible world pray to him.

Hantei's brothers and sisters are also worshiped by the Clans that they founded. Like their mother, it is forbidden to portray them in paintings or sculpture. Instead of a mirror, each clan uses the sword of their founder to decorate the shrine.

THE SEVEN FORTUNES

The most popular of the Fortunes are the "Seven Fortunes of Good Luck." They ride through the sky on a golden chariot that bestows good luck on whoever sees it. Most prayer in Rokugan is directed to them to gain their favor. The Fortunes have both a peaceful and a wrathful aspect. The peaceful aspect is that of a large, pleasantly smiling figure sitting on a pillow. The wrathful aspect is pictured with black skin, flaming eyes and fangs, often swinging a sword.

Daikoku is the Fortune of Wealth.

Ebisu is the Fortune of Honest Work.

Benten is the Fortune of Romantic Love.

Bishamon is the Fortune of Strength.

Fukurokujin and Jurojin are the Fortunes of

Wisdom and Longevity.

Hotei is the Fortune of Contentment.

THE LESSER FORTUNES

While most prayer is directed to the Seven Fortunes of good luck, there are countless others. Their divinity was granted by the Emperor after their deaths, thus making them "lesser" fortunes in the eyes of the others, but their power and influence is just as great. Many of the lesser Fortunes were actually mortal men and women whose souls were "elevated" to Fortune status by Imperial decree.

Inari is the fortune of rice and good grain. He is also the patron of foxes, and so people who take his name in vain are often visited by his cunning tricksters. Inari was a rice farmer who caught a fox in a trap, but released it when the fox promised to provide a good wife. The wife, of course, was the fox in her human form. When the son of Hantei II grew ill near Inari's home, his wife cured his illness. After his death, Hantei elevated his soul to become the guardian of good grain and foxes.

Suitengu is the guardian of the waters. Sailors and fishermen pray to him for calm seas and profitable catches, and for deliverance from storms. It is said that he was a fisherman who happened across a young Hantei IV and saved him from drowning. His soul was elevated to Fortune status when Hantei V was saved from a storm after he prayed to Suitengu.

Tenjin is the fortune of writing and literacy. Akodo Tenjin was a cunning and clever poet who wrote a story that Hantei III found offensive. He commanded that Tenjin be executed, and immediately thereafter disease and pestilence fell on the court. Hantei III begged the spirit of Tenjin for forgiveness and created a temple to honor his memory. Since then, poets have prayed to him for inspiration and guidance.

Osano-Wo is the fortune of fire and thunder. He is the most wrathful of all the fortunes (he is never portrayed in his peaceful aspect). Osano-Wo was one of the first Crab samurai, a man with a temper that matched the thunder. It is said that when he met an enemy in battle, he could call down the lightning into his sword and strike down a thousand warriors at a time. The Rokugani pray to him for protection from disaster.

The Guardians of the Four Winds are often pictured standing on a platform which represents the world. Under each of their heels is an oni and

in their right hands are flaming swords that can dance on the winds. The Rokugani pray to them for safe, speedy travel. Jikoju rules the East, Zocho rules the south, Komoku the West and Tamon the North.

Ancestors

Rokugan also reveres the spirits of its ancestors. Honorable spirits of the past have great power, and to offend them is to tempt doom. The Rokugani worship their ancestors as they worship the Fortunes.

Every Clan worships the founder of the Clan. Also, there is a shrine devoted to the oldest ancestor of the family. For instance, a typical Isawa house will usually have a shrine to the original Shiba as well as a shrine to the original Isawa. A house would also have a shrine devoted to revered members of the immediate family.

The rituals for worship include placing food before the shrine, lighting incense and deep meditation. It is during meditation that family members can gain guidance from their ancestors.

The Role of the Shugenja

The role of the shugenja is the most misunderstood in Rokugan. As mentioned above, the people of Rokugan view nature with reverence. Nature is a force that should not be tampered with, and when they view the "spellcasting" of the shugenja, they feel shivers run up and down their spines.

However, shugenja are much more than just spell-slinging sorcerers: they are the very foundation of Rokugan's religion. They are priests who teach the rituals the Rokugani practice; they keep the names of the Fortunes, measure the passage of time and are the most literate class of people in Rokugan.

A shugenja begins his career (as all Rokugani do) at a very early age. They are apprenticed to shugenja schools where they spend the next five to nine years cleaning, washing, carrying water and firewood, and performing other manual labors. They also learn how to read and write. When an apprentice is judged worthy, he is initiated into the first level of school secrets. At this level, the shugenja begins to understand how to



commune with the Fortunes and perform basic rituals.

These rituals and prayers are written on scrolls that the shugenja carries with him. The scrolls are written in a cipher that only shugenja trained by his school can read. When he wishes to perform a ritual or prayer, he reads the scroll. Some rituals require chanting and incense, while others list simple meditation techniques. These activities look an awful lot like *maho* (black magic, *q.v.*), which is why the peasantry view some shugenja with fear and even distrust.

Shintao — The Holy Order of Shinsei

When Shinsei brought his wisdom to Rokugan, a young shugenja wrote down his conversations with the Emperor, thus providing us with the fabled Tao of Shinsei. Many shugenja saw the wisdom of the little man's words and devoted their lives to pursuing his enigmatic wisdom. They shaved their heads and built isolated mountain temples, retreating to lives of deep contemplation. Some samurai, such as the esoteric Dragon Clan samurai, also have embraced Shinsei's wisdom, and over the thousand years since his arrival, many factions of "Shinseism" have developed. While the isolationistic ideal of the Shinsei Order appeals to many retiring samurai (more often than not, upon their forty-first year, samurai shave their heads and retire to a monastic life of contemplation), a recent branch of Shinseism makes the claim that wisdom cannot be found in isolation. Only by interacting with the all the temptations and evils of the world can true wisdom be found. This new branch of Shinseism — called Shintao, "Way of Shinsei" — has become popular with many samurai and monks across Rokugan.

Monks are treated as Farmer Heimin. Many samurai give up their family name upon taking up the monastic life, thus leaving behind their station.

TEACHINGS OF SHINSEI

Earth is the virtue of resilience and temperance. Only by understanding how to hold one's strength can one release it properly. Fire is the virtue of purity of action. Only action without the weight of thought will be as that of fire. Water is deep and strong and fluid. Only by understanding

the strength of water can one's mind be pure and deep and fluid and strong. Air is the subtle touch. Only by understanding the shifting winds can one understand the shifting pulse of the heart and the world around him. Void is the last. It is all and it is none. You cannot understand the secret of void; you must know it.

The purpose of Shinsei's teachings was to free the soul of ignorance, greed and the passions (anger, desire, hatred, grief and joy). Only by understanding and separating one's soul from these vices could a samurai gain enlightenment. The world is a place of sorrows, and only by overcoming your perceptions and seeing beyond the world's illusions can you gain enlightenment. Once a soul gains enlightenment, his name adds the suffix "-noshin." The departed souls of those who have achieved enlightenment are another source of prayer and blessing, but the ritual for praying to the *noshin* is much less formal than praying to the fortunes. The shrines devoted to Shinsei and the *noshin* are very simple, using the natural landscape rather than manmade structures to emphasize Shinsei's lessons of "losing one's sense of the world."

Shinsei taught that weakness came from having one's mind fixed on the material rather than the eternal. The five elements are eternal, while flesh is material and temporal. Passion is a symptom of the flesh while temperance and wisdom is gained from the eternal (one's ancestors). By focusing on the eternal, a student can free his soul from the material. A radical aspect of Shinsei's teachings was that anyone — if they were willing — could reach enlightenment. Even though it may take a thousand lifetimes, enlightenment is attainable to any soul who is willing to seek it.

Maho: Black Magic

We stood there, watching the sorcerer as he sliced his palm with the knife and blood oozed from the open wound. "Stay back," he whispered. "Stay where you are, samurai." We could do nothing, uncertain of what manner of black magic he could be summoning ...

Maho (black magic) is a forbidden practice in Rokugan. Sorcerers (*maho-tsukai*, literally "servant of magic") use blood — their own and the blood of others — to give power to their magic. In exchange for their power, *tsukai* swear fealty to an Oni in exchange for knowledge and power.

forswearing any former allegiances. Many tsukai keep their dark practice secret, however, so they can gather knowledge from both sources and spread troubles in accordance with their true master's will.

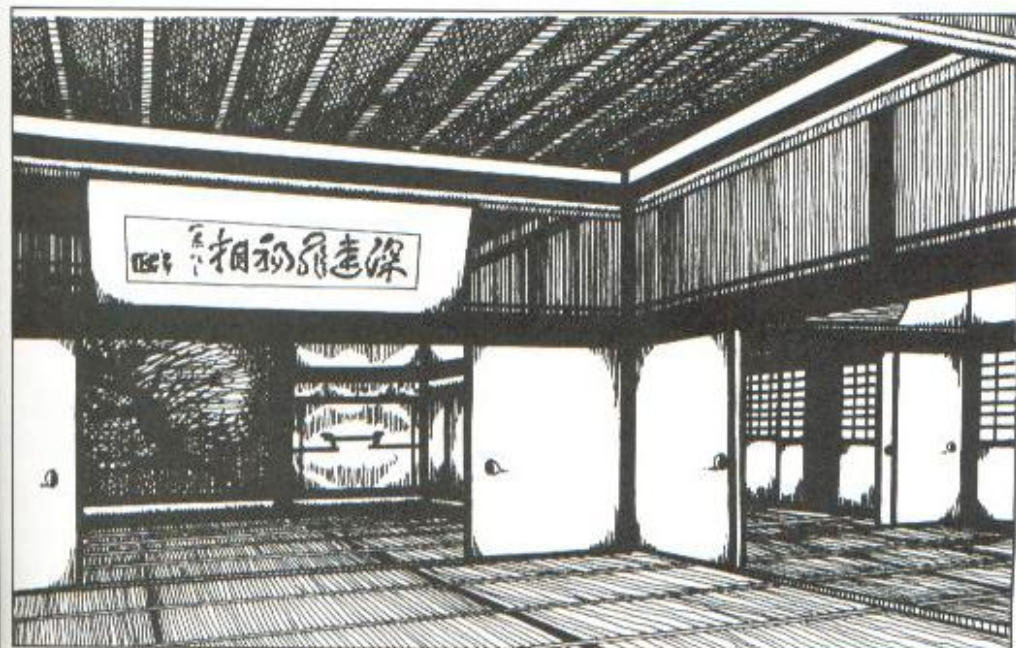
Maho involves curses, raising the dead, scrying, divination and enchantments. Blood is used in sacrifice to the Oni to gain its favor. The Oni also gives his tsukai enchanted weapons and items to fulfill the Oni's own dark agendas. It is a dangerous agreement, for the Oni does not wish the tsukai to gain too much knowledge. The story of Iuchiban, a tsukai of incredible powers, tells of

astrology, casting stones and coins. The peasantry views divination as a less offensive practice because it is only reading the elements rather than manipulating them.

SUPERSTITIONS

Superstition is a series of practices that cannot be proven to be truly influential or effective in matters that pertain to magic and the spirit world. Some of the following superstitions are actually effective while others are simply irrational practices for the naive.

Travelling in a north-east direction is bad luck, because you are travelling against the direction of



LEFT: THE INTERIOR OF A PRIEST'S (SHUGENJA'S) HOME.

a shugenja who made such a pact and gained enough power and knowledge to trap his master and steal his power.

The practice of maho is a capital crime in Rokugan. All tsukai have stained their souls by practicing maho and are considered eta in the eyes of the Emperor. Not even a tsukai's family will protect him if they discover his secret.

Folk Magic

Rokugan's common folk are also known to practice their own brand of magic, although they make a distinction between "folk magic" and the shugenja of the clans and the dark magic of the tsukai. Folk magic involves divination through

the turning universe. When characters find they must travel in a northeast direction, they must zig-zag their movement from day to day, so they avoid the taboo.

When settling down for bed, a samurai who is experiencing bad dreams often turns his sleeping clothes inside out.

If someone sneezes while they are talking, they are lying to you.

On the night before a wedding, the mother and father of the daughter carry the husband's shoes to their bed – sympathetic magic to make certain he does not wander.

The spirits of a family are known to distract bowmen who are firing at their descendants. Bowmen often twang their bowstrings to scare

RIGHT: A SMALL
TEMPLE TO
SHINSEI.

away those spirits to make certain their aim is true.

Keeping doors open at night invites ghosts into your home.

Loud drums keep away troublesome spirits.

Enchanted Items

The Rokugani believe that everything in the world has a soul, even precious or holy objects. Legendary objects – such as ancestral weapons, holy artifacts and the like – contain a sleeping spirit that can be awakened with the proper ritual. Cursed items – those that contain angry, vengeful or wrathful spirits – must also be treated with care lest their sleeping spirits are awakened.

Legends of swords that drink blood, dance in the air, sing and even turn into wind are regarded as fact in Rokugan. Even though these weapons are very rare, word of their appearance is never taken lightly.

NEMURANAI

While there are countless shugenja in Rokugan, magical items are not as abundant. Enchanted items are rarely found “wandering” the countryside. They are held by families and passed on through generations. The chance of a wandering ronin stumbling across a cache of magic items is close to zero. The reasons for this scarcity of magical items are many.

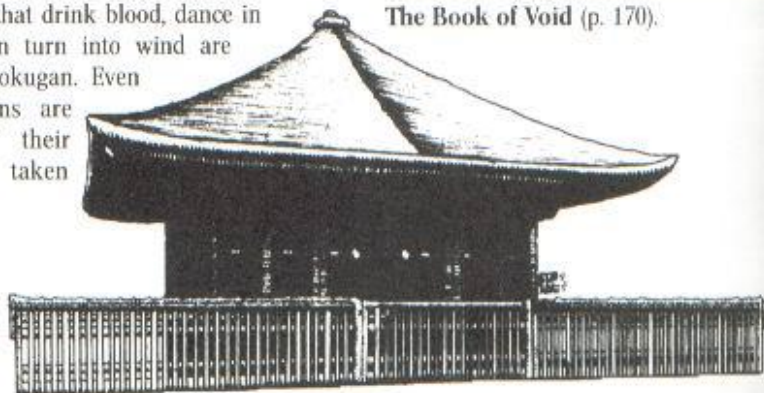
To begin with, if a magical item is one that has supernatural properties, then every item is already “magical.” Every sword, every fan, every leaf, rock and volcano all have a soul that can be awakened if the proper ritual is known. One look at the spell list will show you that shugenja know many spells that can awaken a slumbering sword spirit for a short period of time. However, truly powerful items are those whose spirits are not sleeping, but active and aware. These items are called nemuranai (or “awakened”).

All awakened items are hundreds of years old. Nemuranai are not created by shugenja, but are awakened by their proximity to those of great honor and glory. It has been suggested by the Phoenix that the sleeping soul recognizes the soul

of its owner from a past life, which awakens the soul within the item. There is some evidence to prove this theory. It has been noted that when nemuranai are passed down from one generation to the next, the soul remains awakened and loyal to the owner, while certain nemurani – when stolen – fail to operate or even turn on their thief. Other shugenja disagree, but no one has proven any theories to be any more correct than the one suggested by the Phoenix.

Every nemuranai is unique. Each one has a personality and temperament. If an awakened item is treated with disrespect by a character, that character may very well be on the end of some nasty critical hits, or possibly, even a fumble or two.

More on enchanted items can be found in *The Book of Void* (p. 170).



Ghosts

Perhaps the most important aspect of Rokugani metaphysics is the concept of the departed soul. If a body does not receive a proper burial, the soul does not depart to be reincarnated, but travels to Meido, the dark underworld of woe. There, the spirit is tortured with memories of his life, both pleasurable and painful, until it is filled with fury. It then returns to the world of living men in a form dependent on the sorrow it carries.

There are thousands of types of ghosts in Rokugan. Any time a tragic death occurs, one can be assured that the deceased will return as a ghost. Usually, a ghost must fulfill a purpose in the Living Lands before it can pass on. Those who are deeply in love often return to guard those they love from harm. Mothers often return to protect their orphaned children, or if they died in childbirth, can return to steal the children of others. See *The Book of Void* for further descrip-

tions of ghosts in Rokugan (p. 182).

What Magic Can Do

"Magic" is a catch-all term to describe the seemingly supernatural effects generated by shugenja. In fact, all the shugenja are doing with their scrolls and chanting is tapping in to the elemental energies that swirl about all Rokugani at every moment. Shugenja are also able to create supernatural effects by petitioning spirits (ancestors and Fortunes) with prayer. If they are properly cajoled, they can bestow incredible powers to shugenja.

Tapping into the power of the elements allows shugenja to influence and alter the world around them. By petitioning the Fortunes, they are able to produce more elaborate effects, including weather and earthquakes. By invoking the names of ancestors, shugenja are able to create wards against evil spirits, oni and other creatures of the Shadowlands.

What Magic Can't Do

Even with their fantastic powers, there are things that shugenja cannot influence. Humanity cannot change destiny. Not even a shugenja will dare tamper with the celestial pattern.

When the last breath has slipped out of a body, the soul goes with it. The Rokugani hold no misconception about death. To bring a spirit back to its body is sacrilege and asking for severe troubles. A soul dies when it is time for it to die, and to dabble with corpses is dark work (see **Maho**, above), punishable by death. On the other side of the coin, magic cannot create life, either.

Also, mortal magic cannot influence tides, the moon and the stars. These are all "celestial" and not to be tampered with by man. Shugenja ask their ancestors (who have much more authority) to create these effects, and do not question a "NO" when they hear it.

The Elements

You can not command the elements any more than you can command the stars in heaven. You must learn to hear the music of the celestial chorus. Once that is done, you must learn to dance.

— The Tao of Shinsei

Shugenja do not manipulate or command the elements, they allow their own energies to mingle

with the element, thus gaining its favor and influence. Spells are grouped into Shinsei's five elements, each with an effect that corresponds with the nature of that element.

As you read descriptions of each of the elements below, you will notice that many of them overlap. As masters of Void can teach you, each of the elements is like a many-faceted jewel. There is strength in Earth as certainly as Water can be a symbol of stamina and resilience (as it carves its way through the mountain).

EARTH

Spells that invoke the quiet strength of the Earth are those that effect resilience and resolve. Earth also represents health and growth. All things grow from the earth, and must return there one day. The body falls apart and returns to the dust that it once came from.

WATER

The element of Water represents many things. Water washes away stains and tarnish, and so it is the element of clarity. But water is also adaptable. Water can fit into any container which is why water also represents transformation.

FIRE

Of all the elements, fire is the least subtle. Almost all of the fire effects are destructive. But fire is a symbol of intelligence as certainly as it is of destruction. Fire spells can invoke raging firestorms as well as inspiration and creativity.

AIR

Counter to fire's blatancy is Air, or Wind. Air cannot be seen directly, but its effects can. Air is the element of storms, although a shugenja's ability to influence storms is minor at best. Air is also the element of birds, and therefore the element of travel. Lastly, air is the element of intuition and influence.



COPYING SCROLLS

Allowing a shugenja from another Clan to copy your scrolls is a serious offense. A shugenja who allows such activity can expect to see his name mysteriously disappear from the school's charter, or at least be tested very severely by his senseis.

Also, all scrolls are encoded with a magical cipher, thus making it very difficult for spells to be copied if they are stolen.

SHUGENJA AND THE SPIRIT WORLD

The most common misconception about shugenja is that they are "spell-casters." This is not entirely true. Shugenja are more aptly described as "communers." A shugenja does not possess any innate magical ability, he is simply taught the proper techniques for speaking to Elemental spirits and the Fortunes. However, they do spend most of their lives studying the technique. Anyone can speak to a spirit that is willing to listen. The trick is getting the spirit to listen.

Casting A Spell

Using the spells inscribed on the scrolls of his schools is a multi-step process. Shugenja spend years perfecting these techniques; the words on the scrolls are simply mental, physical and spiritual reminders. Eventually, a shugenja becomes so accustomed to casting a particular spell he no longer needs the reminders, but that takes even more time and practice. Here are the steps a shugenja goes through to cast a spell. This method of spellcasting can be incredibly draining for a shugenja's mind and body. The more powerful the spell, the more physically and spiritually exhausting it is.

Step One: Attune

In order for a shugenja to cast a spell, he must first read the scroll on which the spell is inscribed. The spell instructions include chants and gestures that allow the shugenja to focus his mind to a certain state so he can align himself with the elemental energy that surrounds him. He is literally attuning his own energies (Earth, Fire, etc.) to the energies in the plants, waters and wind around him.

Step Two: Focus

Once that is accomplished, the shugenja must draw the energy into himself and shape it with his mind into the form he wishes it to take. This takes utmost concentration, and can be dangerous if done improperly. Imagine drawing the raw power of fire into your mind, body and spirit and then losing control of that energy.

Step Three: Release

Finally, when the form of the energy has been chosen, the shugenja releases that energy from his body in a (hopefully) controlled manner. Again, if a shugenja loses his concentration at this point, he may cause severe damage to himself or anyone else who is standing beside him.

Mechanics

In order to successfully cast a spell, a shugenja must completely read the scroll on which it is inscribed. All spells have a Target Number and an Element (Earth, Water, Fire, Air).

CASTING A SPELL

To cast a spell successfully, the shugenja must meet or exceed the Target Number of the spell by rolling a number of dice equal to the appropriate Ring + his School Rank, keeping a number of dice equal to his Ring.

Example: Isawa Tsuke wants to cast an Earth spell with a Target Number of 10. Tsuke's Earth Rank is 3 and his School Rank is 4. He rolls 7 dice and keeps 3: 8, 8 and 5, giving him a total of 21. He successfully casts the spell.

Again, casting spells can be incredibly draining. A shugenja may only attempt to cast a number of spells in an element equal to his Rank in that Element. Each time that shugenja character tries to perform a spell (successful or not), the player puts a tally mark next to the appropriate Ring. After sleeping peacefully for one night (eight hours of restful sleep) or meditating for two hours, the character restores enough energy to cast one spell of each Element (the player erases one mark from each of his Rings).

Example: Tsuke has cast one Earth spell, two Fire spells and an Air spell today. He meditates for two hours and his player erases one mark from all of Tsuke's Rings.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SPELLS

The spell scrolls of the clans and their contents are closely guarded. Listed below are some of the more common spells that are available to the shugenja of all the clans. Each spell is listed according to the element it is associated with. Spells are listed in the following format:

Name: the name of the spell.

Element: the name of the Element the spell is associated with.

Target Number: the difficulty of casting the spell.

Casting Time: how many Actions (not Turns) it takes to cast the spell.

Duration: how long the effects of the spell will last.

Mastery: a general indicator of the elemental power of the spell. The rules for mastering a spell are under **Mastery Level** below.

Raises: A shugenja may choose to Raise the TN of any spell. This section lists the effects that can be gained by Raising the TN of the spell.

Effect: what occurs when the spell is successfully cast.

Concentration: once the spell has been cast, how difficult it is to maintain.

MANIPULATING MAGIC

A shugenja is not limited to what is written on the scroll. Any shugenja can alter the effects, sometimes only slightly, to meet his desires. The scroll only gives the shugenja a basic understanding; it is up to the shugenja to master the spell and make it his own. Most of this manipulation is represented by Raising the Target Number of the spell. If you are going to use a Raise to effect the spell, you must declare the effect you want to create with your Raise before you roll.

PREPARATION

By taking extra time to cast a spell, the shugenja can gain a greater effect. The more time a shugenja takes casting a spell, the more energy he can gather to himself to increase the power of the effect. On the other hand, a shugenja can also hasten the preparation of a spell. It is a dangerous option, but sometimes speed is necessary.

By doubling the casting time of a spell, the shugenja gains a Free Raise when he rolls to see if he is successful. On the other hand, if a shugenja Raises the TN, he lowers the casting time by one Action.

DAMAGE

Spells that do damage have a Damage Rating (DR) just like weapons. When determining damage done by a spell, the roll is $DR + \text{School Rank}$, keeping dice equal to the DR. A shugenja may take Raises to be able to roll additional damage dice (but not raise the DR of the spell).

Example: Tsuke has successfully cast a DR 2 spell. Tsuke's Rank is 4 and he performed 4 Raises, so he will roll 10 dice ($DR 2 + \text{Rank } 4 +$



SENSE

COMMUNE

SUMMON

INITIATE, ADEPT & MASTER

The Isawa shugenja school uses three ranks of achievement: the Initiate, the Adept and the Master.

An Initiate is a shugenja who has learned the fundamentals of all the Elements (has achieved at least Rank 3 in one Ring and 2 in the rest). Most player character shugenja are considered Initiates.

An Adept has passed that level of achievement and has gained a deep understanding of one of the Elements (reached at least Rank 4 in one Ring and 3 in the rest).

There are only five acknowledged Adepts of each Element at a time.

The Isawa school has only five Masters, one for each Element. A Master must prove that he has attained the deepest understanding (Rank 5 in one Ring and 4 in the rest).

4 Raises) for damage, keeping only 2.

RITUALS

Some spells are designated as rituals, in which any number of shugenja are able to participate. Each of the participating shugenja will add their School Rank to the number of dice that are rolled to perform the spell, still only keeping a number of dice equal to the Shugenja's appropriate Ring. A ritual can be performed by a single shugenja if necessary, but a standard spell cannot be performed as a ritual.

Example: Tsuke is preparing an Immortal Steel spell for Tsukune's katana, and enlists three other Phoenix shugenja to assist him. Tsuke's Earth of 3 and School Rank 4 are joined by the trio of participating shugenja of Ranks 1, 3 and 3. Tsuke will be rolling 10 dice (Earth 3 + Rank 4 + Rank 1 + Rank 3 + Rank 3 = 14, but he can only roll 10, remember?), keeping 3 (Tsuke's Earth).

COPYING SCROLLS

If a shugenja can actually find another shugenja that will allow him to copy a spell, it will take a number of hours equal to the Mastery Level of the scroll.

CONCENTRATION LEVELS

Spells with a continuing effect typically require some degree of concentration from the shugenja to keep the spell active. The shugenja may need to continue chanting and pouring energy into the control of the elements, or may simply need to keep his vision on the target, depending on the spell.

Assume that a shugenja has the willpower to maintain a spell if he is not distracted and tries no other action while maintaining the spell. However, if the shugenja is harmed, distracted, or tries to do something else while maintaining a spell, check the table below. The number in parenthesis is the TN he must meet with a Simple Willpower Roll in order to keep the spell active.

Total (20) – The Shugenja is only dimly aware of his/her surroundings and cannot take any other actions, including movement. The Shugenja rolls 4 fewer dice for Awareness and Perception checks. The TN to hit the shugenja with a weapon is a 5.

Full (15) – The shugenja can walk very slowly and is aware of his/her general surroundings, but cannot pick out details. The shugenja rolls 1 fewer die for Awareness and Perception checks. The TN to hit the shugenja is reduced to a 10.

Focused (10) – The shugenja can interact with people, walk, and talk. The maximum TN to hit the shugenja is a 15.

Casual (5) – The shugenja cannot fight, make a Full Defense, or cast another spell, but is otherwise unhampered. The TN to hit the shugenja is unaffected.

None (0) – This spell does not need to be maintained by the shugenja and would continue to the end of its duration even if the shugenja were killed.

MASTERY LEVEL

There comes a time when a shugenja has learned how to sufficiently attune his energies and no longer needs the scroll to cast a spell. Every spell is listed with a **Mastery Level**. A shugenja may gain mastery over any spell, thus making it an "innate ability." Mastery Level doesn't affect whether a shugenja can cast a spell, just whether it can be mastered.

In order for a shugenja to make a spell an innate ability, his Element + School Rank must be equal to or greater than the Mastery Level of the spell, and he must spend 3 Experience Points.



The Basics

There are three spells that are the basis for a shugenja's initiation into Rokugan's spirit world. "Sense", "Commune", and "Summon" are different from the rest of the spells because they are not linked to a single Element. A shugenja may use these three spells to sense, commune or summon Earth, Water, Fire and Air.

In other words, a shugenja can use his Sense scroll to sense Earth, Fire, Air or Water. He does

not have a separate scroll for each Element.

The first spell taught is Sense, the second Commune, and the third Summon. This way, the shugenja can learn to sense the Elements about him, then he can learn to speak to them, and lastly, he can command them into forms and shapes.

SENSE

First, you must learn to bring your own Elements in tune with those around you. That way, you will feel the cool of the water, the heat of the fire, the subtlety of the wind and the stalwart strength of the earth, and you will feel their virtue running through your veins.

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 2 actions

Duration: instantaneous

Mastery: 1

Concentration: none

Raises: accuracy, casting time

Effect: The shugenja can use these spells to attempt to sense a particular material or item of the appropriate element. For example, a shugenja sensing Earth could sense gold or a path through the mountain in his immediate vicinity. A shugenja concentrating on Water could sense a source of fresh water, and a shugenja sensing Air could notice the smell of a deer or the voice of a particular person.

COMMUNE

Once you have learned to sense the Elements about you, learn their language. Once you know how to appease their needs, you can learn to ask favors...

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 1 Round

Mastery: 1

Concentration: focused

Raises: amount/clarity of info, casting time.

Effect: This spell allows a shugenja to speak to the spirit sleeping in a campfire, lake, mountain, tree or other element. The duration is only a few moments (1 Round), allowing only a single question.

The shugenja can ask any question he pleases, but the nature of the shugenja's augury (was he polite? respectful?) will greatly influence the answers he gets. The spirits of each element will answer questions differently:

The Earth spirits that reside in mountains, stones and plants are blunt and to-the-point. They

can often be too precise and end up being misleading.

Air spirits are those that travel on the wind. When they are divined, they usually give impressions and emotions rather than actual events. They also tend to speak in cryptic whispers, referring to what was spoken rather than what was done.

Fire spirits are angry. They do not like to be disturbed and if they are not properly cajoled will be destructive. Those that are given a small sacrifice (such as spell parchment) are very helpful.

Water spirits do not speak. They also can only show visual reflections of the past and cannot convey sound. They can offer no opinions, only facts.

SUMMON

You have learned how to sense the Elements around you, and you have learned how to speak their tongues. Now it is time to bring your own Elements in tune with those around you, to make them one with your own. Once that is done, you will be one with all the world, and you will be dancing with the universe.

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: variable

Duration: permanent

Mastery: 1

Concentration: None

Raises: Volume, casting time.

Effect: This spell allows the shugenja to create a small volume of the appropriate element. The object that is "created" in this fashion can be in any shape or composition within the volume limit. The amount of the element created is about the size of the shugenja's fist and can be increased by a like amount for each raise. Summoned earth can include metals and stones. Summoned air can be nearly any type of gaseous substance (which will hold the shape of a small ball for several seconds before beginning to disperse). Summoned fire can be applied to flammable substances such as wood and paper that the shugenja can touch (with more raises, the shugenja can ignite material that isn't quite as flammable). Summoned water can be any liquid, from pure drinking water to a noxious poison.

Void cannot be summoned in this way.

Whatever the shugenja summons in this fashion is in actuality "stolen" from somewhere else in Rokugan, and the casting time will depend on how close by such an item can be found. Items



THE FIVE ELEMENTAL MASTERS

Isawa Gojinwa
(Earth)

Isawa Uona
(Air)

Isawa Tsuke
(Fire)

Isawa Tomo
(Water)

Isawa Ujina
(Void).

COUNTERSPELL

While Counterspell is one of the most common spells taught to shugenja, it is not universal. Characters who wish to begin the game with Counterspell may choose to take it in lieu of one of their school-learned spells.

Example: Isawa Tomaru, an aspiring Phoenix shugenja, wishes to begin the game with Counterspell. He looks at the spells allowed him from the Isawa School – he's decided to take 3 Air, 2 Water and one Fire spell – and chooses to replace his Fire spell with Counterspell.

that are nearby can be summoned in seconds, whereas something that is only found on the opposite side of Rokugan will take many hours of concentration.

COUNTERSPELL

The fourth spell taught to all shugenja is Counterspell. Counterspell is like the three spells above, in that it can be used with Earth, Water, Fire and Air, but it must be used in a very specific manner.

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 1

Effect: When cast, a shugenja must target another shugenja who is in the process of casting a spell. The shugenja must summon energies that directly oppose the Element of the spell being cast.

Opposing Elements:

- Earth and Air
- Water and Fire

If cast successfully, this spell raises the TN of the spell the opposing shugenja is casting by 10 plus five per raise.

Earth Spells

BENEVOLENT PROTECTION OF SHINSEI

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Sunrise

Concentration: None

Raises: Radius

Mastery: 7

Effect: **Ritual.** This ritual, once completed, prevents any creature from entering within a thirty foot radius of the lead Shugenja unless it succeeds in a contested skill roll of the Shugenja's Void Ring + the Ranks of the participating Shugenja vs. its Willpower x 5. The radius of the spell can be increased by 15 feet per Raise. The range of this spell is magnified tenfold if cast within a temple. The Shugenja's Void is increased by 3 for the purpose of keeping away evil if cast within a temple.

CALLING THE ELEMENTS

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 8 Rounds

Concentration: Casual

Mastery: 4

Raises: area of effect, duration.

Effect: **Ritual.** This spell calls forth groping weeds and brambles from a 10' by 10' square area of earth which hinders movement. For every Raise, this spell covers an additional 10'-square area. Anyone in this area must make a simple Agility roll each action at a TN equal to the TN of the spell when cast, or be ensnared within the brambles. Anyone ensnared can move by making a simple Strength roll with a TN of 10 to move 1 foot per action. Unintelligent beasts panic if ensnared, and if unsuccessful in breaking free may injure themselves.

COURAGE OF THE SEVEN THUNDERS

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 10 Actions

Concentration: Full

Mastery: 7

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, (2) Additional Target

Effect: **Ritual.** The shugenja casting this spell summon the Earth about and within them and cast it into the target of this spell, thus elevating the target's Earth to supernatural levels.

For each Shugenja participating in this ritual, one target Samurai reduces any damage taken by three points per round. This spell has no effect when the target is not from one of the seven Great Clans. Reduce the damage by a further 3 points if the foe is Shadowlands tainted. The shugenja in the ritual can use two raises to add an additional Samurai to the effect, protecting both.

EARTHQUAKE

The Earth is silent and still, a sleeping giant who does not wish to be disturbed.

– The Tao of Shinsei

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: 5 Rounds (see below)

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Total

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Area of Effect, Penalties.

Effect: With this spell, the shugenja causes great upheavals in the Earth with the aid of rest-

ing Earth spirits.

When cast, the shugenja calls up the destructive forces of the Earth, causing the ground to shake and roll. All Actions are at -2 dice for the duration of this spell for those within the range of the spell. Also, characters in the range of the Earthquake may be subject to falling objects and other hazards. The earthquake affects everything within 50 yards of the target plus 10 yards per raise. Each raise may impose an additional -1 penalty to characters within the earthquake's area of effect. The center of the earthquake can be any point that the shugenja can see clearly.

EARTH'S STAGNATION

I watched the Crab samurai begin to strain with every movement, as if invisible chains had suddenly been summoned all about him. The shugenja's hands pressed down against empty air as he continued his soft chant: "The mountain is immovable, headstrong and obstinate."

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 1 action

Duration: 1 round

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Penalty, Duration

Effect: When casting this spell, the shugenja is summoning the sleeping Earth within the target, weighing him down to the point of immobility.

The weight of the earth is pressed upon the target of this spell, as footing is made more difficult, and even the air around the target is difficult to move through. Any roll involving movement by the target will be at -1 die, with an additional -1 die for each raise spent in this fashion.

ELEMENTAL WARD

Master the Way of the Earth, and you will find the virtue of the eternal mountains.

- The Tao of Shinsei

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 2 Action

Duration: 4 rounds

Mastery: 2

Concentration: none

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, spell difficulty.

Effect: The shugenja casting this spell summons the virtue of Earth into his mind and body. Invasive magic is less effective against a soul who is empowered by the strength of the Earth.

When cast, this spell protects the target from spells. Any spells that are cast against the target



have their difficulty raised by five points, plus 5 points per raise.

FIRES FROM THE FORGE

Base TN: 5
Casting Time: 1 Action
Duration: Permanent
Mastery: 3
Concentration: None
Raises: none.

Effect: This spell repairs any man-made item or piece of equipment to its original state. Any magic contained in the item before it was broken is lost. This spell will have no effect upon an item that is intact.

FORCE OF WILL

Base TN: 10
Casting Time: 2 Actions
Duration: 3 rounds
Mastery: 4

Effect: When cast, the shugenja selects a target (which may be himself). The target has a wound penalty of one less for the duration of the spell. The wound penalty can be further decreased by 1 level per raise. The shugenja does not need to maintain this spell and may act freely for its duration.

HANDS OF JUROJIN

Base TN: Variable
Casting Time: 10 actions
Duration: Instantaneous
Mastery: 3
Concentration: Total
Raises: Casting time

Effect: This "spell" is actually a prayer to the Fortune of Mercy, Jurojin. If successful, it allows the shugenja to heal and cure disease and poison that afflict the target.

The Shugenja must touch the target when casting this spell. The TN to neutralize the ailment is reduced by five per Raise. The Shugenja is not harmed by any disease or poison that is being worked on. The target number to neutralize is dependent on the strength of the disease or poison and how long it has gone untreated. A powerful poison that has been untreated for a week or more may have a TN of 40, while a mild disease caught recently would have a TN of 5.

IMMORTAL STEEL

Running his fingers along the blade, I could see the metal shine like a moonlit pool at mid-

night. Then, his lips touched the blade and I could almost hear the metal sing.

Base TN: 30
Casting Time: 1 hour
Duration: Permanent
Mastery: 6
Concentration: None
Raises: none

Effect: Ritual, Single Use. This spell adds a little of the shugenja's own Earth to a weapon. If cast properly, this spell raises the DR of a weapon by one, permanently. Thus, if it were cast on a katana with a 3k2 DR, the DR would be raised to 4k3. Immortal Steel can only be cast on a weapon once. This spell will only affect metal weapons.

JADE STRIKE

Base TN: 10
Casting Time: 1 Action
Duration: Instantaneous
Mastery: 4
Concentration: NA
Raises: Damage, Number of targets

Effect: A Shugenja may only use this spell against a character or creature with the Shadowlands Trait. The shugenja summons the power of the Earth from the environment around him and from his own inner energies and unleashes them to assail a Shadowlands creature. Jade Strike has a DR of 3 against a single target. The number of targets can be increased by one per Raise.

SHARING THE STRENGTH OF MANY

Base TN: 15
Casting Time: 3 Actions
Duration: 10 rounds
Mastery: 7
Concentration: Full
Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Bonuses

Effect: Ritual. The shugenja casting this ritual give some of their own Earth to the target of this spell. The target glows with the energy and gets to keep an additional die on all rolls for the duration of the spell. For every Raise, the target can keep an additional die, but he may only gain a number of additional dice equal to the number of shugenja participating in the ritual.

STRIKE AT THE ROOTS

Take away your enemy's foundation, and you will find he is not as threatening as he once was.
— The Tao of Shinsei

Base TN: Target's Earth x 5



Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 10 rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Duration, casting time

Effect: This spell separates the target from his own Earth energies, thus throwing his soul into a subtle imbalance. If successful, the target of this spell must roll all Earth rolls as if his Earth Rank is 1 for the duration of the spell. The target's damage levels are unchanged.

TETSUBO OF EARTH

The shugenja's words rumbled low in his throat and the weapon rose up from ground into the samurai's hands. His fingers twisted around the base of the tetsubo forming in his hands, and he smiled at me ...

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 actions

Duration: 10 rounds

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None.

Raises: casting time, duration, weapon type, weapon damage.

Effect: If properly cast, the shugenja creates a tetsubo formed from the Earth. The Earth weapon has a DR of 3k3, and can be wielded using the Tetsubo skill. For each raise, the shugenja can increase the number of damage dice that are rolled (and dropped) when the Tetsubo of Earth hits successfully. If the shugenja becomes unconscious or is killed, the elemental weapon vanishes.

TOMB OF JADE

Purity is the anathema of the corrupted soul.

Base TN: Target's Earth x 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: variable

Mastery: 6

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting time, damage.

Effect: A shugenja may only use this spell against a character or creature with the Shadowlands Trait. The shugenja casting this spell attempts to draw out the impure Earth of the target, replacing it with his own Earth. If successful, the target's skin turns to jade and he may not move. Every Turn, he must make a Contested Roll against the shugenja. The Contesting Traits are the shugenja's Earth + School Rank and the opponent's Earth. Every time the target fails, he is

injured by a Damage Rating of 2. Over the next 4 to 7 days, the jade will turn to dust and disappear, leaving nothing behind.

Because this spell requires the shugenja to transfer his Earth to the target, it is incredibly draining. The shugenja can only maintain this spell for a number of rounds equal to his Earth. Additionally, the shugenja will be near collapse after using the spell. The shugenja's Earth is reduced to one for a number of rounds equal to the number of rounds that the spell was maintained.

Water Spells

BO OF WATER

The monk chanted and a long shaft of water appeared in his hands. In half a breath, the three samurai who were threatening him with their swords were at his feet, burns on their skin from his weapon of water.

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 actions

Duration: 10 rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None.

Raises: casting time, duration, weapon type, weapon damage.

Effect: The shugenja creates a bo stick formed from water. The Bo of Water has a DR of 3k3, and can be wielded using the Bojutsu skill. For each raise, the shugenja can increase the number of damage dice that are rolled when the elemental weapon hits successfully. If the shugenja becomes unconscious or is killed, the Bo of Water vanishes.

BLESSING OF PURITY

Evil spirits are the result of an impure life. Live your life with certainty and justice, and you will be free of fortune's curses.

— The Tao of Shinsei

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 20 minutes (minus 3 minutes per raise)

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Aid for the Honor check.

Effect: Calling upon blessings of Amaterasu and the other Fortunes, the shugenja attempts to cleanse the target of this spell of any diseases or illnesses that are infecting the body. This will also

MAGICAL HEALING

The spell "Path to Inner Peace" allows a shugenja to heal Wounds, but that is the extent of magical healing.

In Rokugan, magical healing does not mend broken bones or restore lost limbs or extremities. In other words, if you've taken a wound that has cost you seventeen Wounds and an eye, you can get the Wounds back, but you're going to be wearing an eyepatch for the rest of your life.

neutralize any poisons that are currently afflicting the target. If the spell is successful, the target makes a Honor roll against a TN of 10. The shugenja can give the target an additional die to roll with each raise. If the target's Honor roll is successful, the poisons and illnesses are purged from the body.

This is a very physically draining process for the shugenja and the target as the evil spirits must be moved through the shugenja and then out into the air to be purged. If this spell is performed in the sunlight or at a shrine of Amaterasu, the shugenja gets a free Raise. This spell has some effect against evil spirits that are bothering the target, but the honor roll becomes contested against the spirit's Earth.

CALM MIND

Just as water washes away the stains of the earth, so does it wash the soul clean of the stains of fear.

— *The Tao of Shinsei*

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 4 actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Additional Targets

Effect: When this spell is cast successfully, the target is rid of the effects of fear and other mind-altering effects produced by a third party. The shugenja can extend the beneficial effects of this spell to additional targets with one raise per target.

CASTLE OF WATER

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 5 minutes

Mastery: 6

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Moat's Radius, depth

Effect: When cast, this spell creates a moat of water centered upon the Shugenja. The moat takes the full casting time of the spell to manifest and will not manifest beneath man-made foundations. The moat is 10' deep and wide (plus 5' per raise). The radius of the moat is (Shugenja's Water x 5)' and can be increased an additional 10' for each Raise. The water is normal in every respect and is even drinkable if necessary.

HEART OF NATURE

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 4 Actions

Duration: one month

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: Duration, casting time

Effect: Establishes a mental link with an animal in the shugenja's sight. The animal will then not stray more than 3 hours' travel from the shugenja. It will then come, once, whenever the caster summons it. When summoned, the animal will be generally friendly towards the shugenja and will certainly be violent if the shugenja is in danger, but it still considers its life valuable and will not risk itself unnecessarily. If the summons is not made within one month, the spell fades. This 'deadline' can be extended by one month per raise. The shugenja may make an Awareness roll against a TN of 15 to get an idea of how far away and in what direction his animal is. The spell does not impart the ability to communicate with the animal.

This spell was once a Unicorn Clan Secret Spell.

THE PATH TO INNER PEACE

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: Permanent

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Wounds Healed.

Effect: This spell allows the shugenja to use his own energies to heal the wounds of another. When cast successfully, it will send a healing flow of life force (*Chi*) through the target that heals one Wound Rank. Each Raise allows the Shugenja to heal an additional Wound Rank. Each Raise increases the casting time by one action.

REFLECTIONS OF PAN KU

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: 5 Actions

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Full

Raises: Casting Time

Effect: This spell teaches the shugenja how to align his Water (Perception) to the magical energies that swirl about an enchanted item. Once cast, the Shugenja's vision becomes distorted, as if looking into water. In this state magical items

reveal their nature, shimmering like light reflecting off water with an intensity paralleling their power.

REFLECTIVE POOL

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: 3 minutes

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Casting Time, Duration

Effect: The shugenja must cast this spell into a pool of still water. If cast successfully, the shugenja may visually observe any area that he is familiar with. The shugenja will not get any sound from the observed location, but can see anything that could be viewed through a clear pane of glass in the ceiling.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNES

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 10 Actions

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: N/A

Effect: This is a blessing which allows the target to re-roll one unsuccessful roll during the duration of the spell. The duration can be increased by ten actions per Raise.

SYMPATHETIC ENERGIES

Base TN: Target Ring x 5

Casting Time: 3 actions

Duration: 3 rounds

Mastery: 5

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Duration

Effect: When cast successfully, this spell reduces the Ring (and Traits) of one character by 2 and increases the same traits of another character by the same amount. A Ring and/or Trait cannot be reduced below one. The TN is equal to the Ring x 5 of the character that is losing the trait. The shugenja does not need to maintain this spell and may act freely during the duration of the spell. This spell does not transfer any Void Points.

TORRENTIAL RAIN

Base TN: 30

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: 1 hour

Mastery: 6

Concentration: Focused



Raises: Casting Time, Duration, Penalty, Area of Effect.

Effect: **Ritual.** This spell, if successful, calls down a violent storm centered on the shugenja and covering one square mile. Visibility drops to 1 foot, and all physical actions taken in the area of effect are at -3 dice. Raises can be used to increase the penalty by an additional -1 die per raise, or to increase the area of effect by 1 square mile per raise.

THE TIES THAT BIND

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 10 Actions

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Full

Raises: Casting Time, Duration, Location Accuracy, Range

Effect: Waters run deep under the ground, reaching out to all corners of the earth. This spell allows the caster to attune himself to those waters and locate one individual or one manmade object.

If cast successfully it gives the caster a vision of the item's whereabouts, or even leads him to it if it is within a mile. The caster must be somewhat familiar with the item or hold something associated with the item or person. Range of this spell is one mile plus one mile per Raise.

Fire Spells

AMATERASU'S ANGER

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 5

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time

Effect: This "spell" is actually a prayer to Amaterasu. If it is successful, the Sun Goddess unleashes her anger in a blinding flash originating with the Shugenja and expanding outward. All who can see the Shugenja, even peripherally, must make a simple Reflexes roll at a TN equal to the shugenja's Fire x 5 or be temporarily blinded. Anyone blinded has a penalty equal to the shugenja's Fire Rank imposed on any dice rolled (including damage). The penalty is reduced by one die per minute.

Example: Isawa Tadaka's Fire of 3 would cause all who failed their Reflexes roll to roll 3

fewer dice in the first minute, 2 fewer dice in the second minute, and 1 fewer die after 3 minutes, returning to normal in four minutes.

The casting shugenja can use raises to delay recovery by one minute per raise (2 raises = 3 minutes before the penalty decreases by one).

AMATERASU'S BLESSING

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: see below

Mastery: 2

Concentration: None

Raises: Duration, area of effect, Casting time.

Effect: This spell provides illumination of the noon-day sun anywhere, in any conditions other than magical darkness. It creates enough light to fill a small to medium-sized room, but larger rooms and outdoor locations will need raises to avoid dark, shadowed areas in the edges and corners. The duration of the spell is based on the number of raises used for duration:

0 raises - 1 minute

1 raise - 5 minutes

2 raises - 15 minutes

3 raises - 30 minutes

4 raises - 1 hour

5 raises - 3 hours

6 raises - one day

7 raises - one month

BITING STEEL

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 2 actions

Duration: 2 rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Full

Raises: Duration, Casting Time

Effect: This spell can only target weapons. For the duration of this spell, the target weapon's wielder gets to roll (but not keep) an extra die when using this weapon, both while rolling to hit and while rolling for damage. If the subject is already rolling ten dice, then the subject can instead keep an additional die. The shugenja can make additional raises to give the target more dice. The shugenja must raise twice to give the target an additional die.

EVIL WARD

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: 1 day

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: Area of effect, Duration, Casting Time, Damage

Effect: The shugenja inscribes upon the ground (or on any immobile surface) a symbol to ward off evil. Once completed, any creature with the Shadowlands trait within a thirty-foot radius of the symbol erupts into flame (DR 2) for every minute they remain within the area of effect. The radius of the spell can be increased by 10 feet per raise.

THE FIRES THAT CLEANSE

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 6

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Damage

Effect: When cast successfully, this spell creates a tremendous gout of flame that engulfs the spellcaster as well as the intended target up to 100' away. The Damage Rating is 5. The spellcaster receives half as much damage as the target. Anyone within 10' of the target that does not meet a TN 20 Reflexes + Defense roll takes half as much damage as the target.

FIRES OF PURITY

I stood only a few paces away from him, and as I made ready with my blade, I saw his eyes begin to glow with a holy fire ...

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: rounds equal to target's honor rating

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Duration

Effect: When cast, the target of this spell bursts into a magical fire. He may add and keep an additional die for all rolls (including damage rolls) during the duration of the spell.

THE FIRE FROM WITHIN

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 5

Concentration: None

Raises: Number of targets, damage.

Effect: This spell hurls a ball of pure fire from the shugenja's hand towards one or more targets within sight. With a Raise, the shugenja can send a second ball of fire towards another target. This

spell has a DR equal to the shugenja's Fire rank.

THE FIST OF OSANO-WO

Base TN: 25

Casting Time: 1 Hour

Duration: 1 Hour

Mastery: 7

Concentration: Total

Raises: Casting Time, Damage

Effect: Single Use. The target of this spell is a building in the Shugenja's sight. While being cast, the skies above the target fill with dark, ominous clouds. For the duration of the spell, the building is struck continuously by lightning strikes in the form of a massive fist. These strikes weaken the structure until it collapses (usually very near the end of the spell's duration). This spell is rarely used against a protected target due to its long casting time and concentration requirements, which make it susceptible to interference. This spell is more effective against smaller structures which it destroys quickly and easily. Larger or stronger structures may be only slightly damaged by the spell.

THE FURY OF OSANO-WO

We saw lightning flash across the sky and fall into the shugenja's hands. With his eyes still closed and his lips chanting his whispered words, the fury of the Fortune of Fire and Thunder leapt across the courtyard into the Lion samurai.

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 5

Concentration: None

Raises: Damage, Casting Time

Effect: This "spell" is actually a prayer to Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Fire and Thunder. When cast properly, Osano-Wo sends lightning from the skies – even if there isn't a cloud to be seen. If this spell is cast during a rainstorm, the caster gains a Free Raise. The Damage Rating of this spell is 2.

Casting this spell often causes violent storms to erupt in the skies above the caster, lasting for weeks at a time.

HEART OF THE INFERNO

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 7

Concentration: None

Raises: Damage, Casting Time, Radius of





Effect, Difficulty of Defense

Effect: Single Use. When cast successfully, the shugenja hurls a blast of fire that strikes a visible target and all people and objects within 10' of the target. The Damage Rating of the blast is 6 to anyone in the spell's area of effect. Anyone in the target area may make a Reflexes + Defense roll at a TN of 15 to escape the brunt and only take a DR 2 hit. The shugenja must burn this scroll (as his final Action) in order to cast the spell. The shugenja can increase the radius of effect by 5' per Raise, and may increase the TN of the defense roll by 5 per Raise.

INFLAME

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Flammability of Target

Effect: This spell targets only non-living objects. The shugenja attunes his own Fire to the Fire within the target item in an attempt to awaken it. Success ignites the item. If it is in someone's possession, the TN of this spell is increased by the possessor's Water x 5. The base version of this spell only affects paper, kindling and other fire-starting materials, but other, harder to burn materials can be affected with one or more raises (see below). By tradition, shugenja do not use this spell against another shugenja's scrolls – doing so would be the cause of a blood feud and word of it could get the shugenja removed from his school's lists.

One Raise - Dead wood, cloth, etc.

Two Raises - Hardened (but flammable) materials, non-metallic armor, leather.

KATANA OF FIRE

It slashed, it burned, it was like a star in the samurai's hands, cutting down the goblins where they stood.

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 actions

Duration: 10 rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None.

Raises: casting time, duration, weapon type, weapon damage.

Effect: The shugenja creates a katana formed from fire. The Katana of Fire has a DR of 3k3, and can be wielded using the Kenjutsu skill. For each

raise, the shugenja can increase the number of damage dice that are rolled when the elemental weapon hits successfully. If the shugenja becomes unconscious or is killed, the Katana of Fire vanishes.

WINGS OF FIRE

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 2 minutes

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Full

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Carrying Capacity.

Effect: The target of this spell suddenly manifests fiery wings along and under their arms. These mystical wings are approximately eight feet long. The target may fly at a slow rate – roughly the Shugenja's Fire rank times five feet per round. The target cannot fly if greatly encumbered: the shugenja must use a Raise for every 30 pounds of additional material being carried or worn by the target, else the target will be unable to achieve enough lift to get off the ground.

Air Spells

ACCOUNTS OF SHORIHOTSU

Base TN: See below

Casting Time: 5 actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: Greater Understanding, Casting Time

Effect: By casting this spell, the shugenja becomes one with the energies that are being gathered to create a spell that the shugenja is watching. The shugenja identifies and analyzes the spell and its effect, as long as the duration hasn't expired. The TN of this spell is the mastery level of the targeted spell times five. If the spell being targeted is instantaneous, the shugenja must use a raise to be able to analyze it, even though it does not have a "duration". The shugenja will be able to tell:

- The element involved
- The style of the caster (clan and school)
- The intended target
- The spell's duration
- Any other details the shugenja may come up with.

With raises, the shugenja can get more infor-

mation about the spell being analyzed.

BENTEN'S TOUCH

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 1 Hour

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Full

Raises: Duration, Bonuses

Effect: The target of this spell has their Air amplified by the caster for one hour. The target may keep an additional die for any Awareness rolls when made in social situations. The duration may be increased by one hour per raise. Also, the target may keep an additional die for every raise, but the shugenja may not raise a number of times greater than his own Air.

BY THE LIGHT OF LORD MOON

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 5 Actions

Mastery: 2

Concentration: Full

Raises: Duration, Casting Time.

Effect: This spell causes items deliberately hidden (traps, false bottoms, etc.) to stand out clearly in the Shugenja's vision. Anything "hidden" that the shugenja can see normally will have a faint blue glow about it that draws the shugenja's eyes. The exact nature of the item will not be understood, just that it has been hidden. An item hidden from view will not be highlighted, however (e.g. a sword hidden within a large jar). Things that are magically hidden (illusions, etc.) are more difficult to see, and require a Perception + Shugenja Lore roll with a TN equal to the spell's Mastery times five.

CALL UPON THE WIND

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 4 rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Air speed

Effect: The shugenja summons a number of wind spirits who carry the target through the air. The target may only move slowly, and does not have control over his movements – the shugenja is the one in control of the spell. The target may be moved a number of feet per round equal to the shugenja's Air + School Rank. If the target is unwilling, the TN to use this spell is the target's



Earth x 5.

CLOAK OF NIGHT

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 1 day

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Casting Time, Duration, Difficult items

Effect: This spell conceals a target item upon the target character. The Shugenja must be able to touch both item and target to cast the spell. If successful, the item become visually imperceptible to others so long as the target item is not readied or used. The item must be able to be carried without the use of the target's hands. The TN of this spell is increased if the GM judges the item to be difficult for people to ignore (a screaming child, the Emperor's crown, etc....)

COMMAND THE MIND

Base TN: Target's Willpower x 5

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 1 command

Mastery: 6

Concentration: Full

Raises: Difficulty of Perception.

Effect: By using the subtle influence of his Air, the shugenja is able to implant thoughts. The shugenja must be able to look into the eyes of the target of this spell in order to send thoughts from his own mind into the mind of his target.

If he is successful, the target of this spell gets to make a Perception roll against the shugenja's Air x 5. If he is successful, he notices the shugenja's attempt to implant the thought and the spell fails. If he fails his Perception check, the spell is successful, and the target will believe the thoughts to be his own. This will allow subtle suggestions, but thoughts that are very different from the target's beliefs will be unconvincing.

The shugenja may use one or more raises to increase the TN of the Perception roll by five per raise.

ECHOES ON THE WIND

First he made a mark on the stone by the river, a mark that was large enough to be seen across the field. Then, he whispered softly into the stone a message I could not hear. He stood and smiled at me. "Tosuri will understand," he said.

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 6 Actions

Duration: Special (see below)

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Message length, Duration.

Effect: When this spell is cast, the shugenja places a whisper that will remain dormant for a time. The whisper will awaken when a specific person, identified by the spellcaster at the time of casting the spell, arrives in the area. Messages hidden in this way can be (at most) ten words long. Only the target person of the spell will hear the message, as if whispered into the target's ear by the shugenja. An additional ten words can be added to the message per Raise. The spell ends after the message is delivered. The target can specified to be "anyone" rather than a specific person. With two raises, the shugenja can make the spell permanent, so that the message is delivered forever, or until the effect is dispelled.

ESSENCE OF AIR

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 1 minute

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Full

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Concentration

Effect: By casting this spell, the shugenja decreases the physical aspects of all of his Elements but Air down to Rank one. The Shugenja becomes imperceptible to others' vision, just like the air. If the Shugenja takes an action whose results could be noticed (talking, opening a door, picking up an object), anyone can make a Perception check with a TN equal to the Shugenja's Air x 5 to penetrate the spell and notice the Shugenja. Anyone who has pierced the veil of this spell can easily see and track the shugenja until his or her attention is diverted, even briefly, at which point they lose complete track of the shugenja's location. If unsuccessful, all they note is a motion of the wind. The shugenja can use raises to reduce the level of concentration needed to maintain the spell by one level per raise.

KNOW THE MIND

Base TN: Target's Willpower x 5

Casting Time: 3 actions

Duration: 30 seconds

Mastery: 6

Concentration: Total

Raises: casting Time, Duration, depth of

thought

Effect: By attuning his own Air with the Air of the target, the shugenja casting this spell can read the surface thoughts and emotions of the target.

The standard version of this spell will give the shugenja vague impressions of the target's thoughts, but with additional raises, the shugenja can read deeper and receive more distinct thoughts. Reading deeper thoughts can be extraordinarily distracting and confusing for the target as the foreign mind rummages around inside his or her head. The GM may require a Willpower roll by the target to keep from being 'stunned' for a short period of time by the trauma.

Surface thoughts are those that concern the situation that the character is in, while the deeper thoughts will include memories, beliefs, and other ideas that are not currently relevant.

KNOW THE SHADOWS

I watched the shugenja step backward as she chanted, fading into dim moonlight and shadow.

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 4 actions

Duration: 10 rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Duration, Concealment

Effect: The shugenja bends shadows, blending them to her own Air, making her one with the darkness.

In order to use this spell properly, there must be shadows near the caster. This spell is useless in direct sunlight. The TN to see the target (or hit the target with Ranged Weapons) is raised by 5 for every raise in the casting of the spell.

MISTS OF ILLUSION

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 1 minute

Mastery: 7

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, see below

Effect: Using the subtleties of light and shadow, the shugenja creates a very convincing illusion. The illusion may be as large as an adult man and makes no sound. Anyone within the vicinity of the illusion may make an Awareness roll with a TN of 15 to see its true nature. The illusion cannot come in contact with anything or its plausibility is ruined. The shugenja may use raises to add the following effects to the illusion:



- Motion – Slow, simple movements: 1 raise. Complex or fast motions: 2 raises.

- Sound – The caster may have the illusion make a single sound per Raise. A sentence would require 2 raises.

- Size – The caster may increase the size of the illusion by 50% (a man and a half) for 1 Raise.

- Number – The caster may increase the number of illusionary objects by 1 per 2 Raises (both together limited to one man's size, however).

- Duration – 1 extra minute per raise.

- Precision – Raise the TN to see through the illusion by 5 per raise.

NATURE'S TOUCH

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 1 question

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Duration, Questions

Effect: This spell allows the shugenja (or another target) to speak to the creatures of Rokugan. Once cast, the spell allows the target to ask one question to a creature and comprehend the answer. Each raise permits the shugenja to ask an additional question.

QUIESCENCE OF AIR

It was if all the sounds around us were suddenly sucked away and we stood in a circle of silence.

Base TN: 5

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 10 Actions

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Area of Effect, "bubble", Duration.

Effects: This spell generates an inert area of air five feet around the caster which silences all noise produced within its radius. The silent area's radius can be increased by three feet per Raise. This will ruin any further spell casting within the spell's area of effect. A variation on this spell can be performed with 2 raises that creates a "bubble" that dampens any sound going in or out, thus keeping conversations private and keeping outside noises from bothering those inside.

SECRETS ON THE WIND

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 6 Actions

Duration: 10 minutes

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Full

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Range

Effect: By casting this spell, the shugenja gains favor with the wind spirits, allowing him to listen in on conversations in other areas he is familiar with. He may listen in on any area (about the size of a room) that he is familiar with for 10 minutes plus 10 minutes per Raise. The target location must within 10 miles, plus 10 miles per Raise. The sounds that can be heard are those that the shugenja could hear as if he or she were standing in the center of the location being targeted by the spell. Hearing soft or indistinct noises may require a Perception roll by the shugenja.

TEMPEST OF AIR

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 6 Actions

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Total

Raises: Casting Time, Duration, Targets, Wind Strength.

Effect: This spell sends a strong gust of air from the Shugenja at a target. No projectiles from the target aimed at the Shugenja will succeed. Make a Contested Roll of the Shugenja's Air vs. the target's Earth each Action until the spells ends. If successful the target is knocked off his/her feet and begins to tumble away from the Shugenja at ten feet per turn. The number of targets of this spell can be increased by one for each Raise.

WAY OF DECEPTION

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 30 minutes

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Detail, Duration, Casting Time, see below.

Effects: Way of Deception creates an illusionary costume and mask which covers the target and imitates the target's actions. The illusion will not endure if touched, and may also be detected as an illusion (but giving no clue as to the real identity of the person behind the illusion) if those in its presence make a Perception + Shugenja Lore roll against a TN of 20. The difficulty of the Perception roll can be increased by five per raise. If the target and the illusion are significantly different, a number of raises will be required to cre-

ate a believable illusion.

Normal – If appearance is minor in change, i.e. portraying another human with similar facial features and same tonal qualities.

One Raise – for increased or diminished size by greater than 10%, or additional appendages (wings) that require animation, or greater detail (i.e. trying to fool someone with an illusion of someone they know well.)

Two Raises – for different physique and posture, or difference in size greater than 50%, or inhuman sounds, etc...

WHISPERING WINDS

I told the shugenja what my Lord wished me to say, but she just smiled and said, "Don't lie to me again."

Base TN: Target's Intelligence x 5

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery: 3

Concentration: None

Raises: The depth of the lie.

Effect: If successfully cast, this spell informs the shugenja if the last thing the target said in the shugenja's presence was a lie. The spell will only tell the shugenja what the target believes to be true. Using raises, the shugenja can find out roughly how great a lie (little white, moderate, big whopper) and possibly even whether the statement was true regardless of the target's beliefs.

WIND-BORNE SLUMBERS

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 1 hour

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Duration, Difficulty of resistance

Effect: When cast successfully, the shugenja sends placating air spirits into the target who mollify the target's own Air into a deep slumber. The target of this spell must make a simple Earth roll against the Shugenja's Air times five. If he fails, he falls into a magical slumber for one hour. For every raise, the target's TN for the Earth roll is increased by five. If anyone comes within a foot of the target, or if the target is damaged, he or she will awaken immediately.

WIND-BORNE SPEED

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 4 Actions

Duration: 12 Actions

Mastery: 6

Concentration: Full

Raises: 10' per round

Effect: The target of this spell is lifted by the winds and may move quickly through the air at (Shugenja's Air x 10) feet per round. The target moves along at up to 30' above the ground (movement through a dense forest may be dangerous). The Shugenja may use a raise to add additional targets up to his/her Rank in Air. With an additional raise, the targets move with an additional 10' per round.

WIND'S DISTRACTIONS

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 5 Rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Focused

Raises: number of spirits summoned, Duration.

Effect: This spell summons a troublesome spirit of air whose acrobatic displays and constant taunts distract the target. The shugenja may use raises to summon additional spirits on a one-for-one basis, either increasing the horde that is distracting a single target, or splitting them up between several targets. All TNs of a target are increased by 5 for each spirit that is distracting him. Air spirits are particularly distracting to shugenja whose TNs for spells are increased by 10 per spirit.

YARI OF AIR

The spear had no form or substance that I could see, but it left a welt on my cheek that didn't fade for a week.

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 3 actions

Duration: 10 rounds

Mastery: 4

Concentration: None.

Raises: casting time, duration, weapon type, weapon damage.

Effect: The shugenja creates a Yari formed from the air. The Yari of Air has a DR of 3k3, and can be wielded using the appropriate weapon skill. For each raise, the shugenja can increase the number of damage dice that are rolled (and dropped) when the elemental weapon hits successfully. If the shugenja becomes unconscious or is killed, the elemental weapon vanishes.

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ADVENTURE HOOKS

Throughout the Book of Void, you will find "Adventure Hooks" here in the sidebars. Hooks are bare-bones adventures designed to give you ideas for your own adventures when you run L5R RPG. Twist them up, change their endings, change the

Supporting Cast, whatever you like. If they spark a couple of ideas for your own campaign, they've done their job.

Adventure hooks are written with the "Challenge, Focus, Strike" format. "Challenge" gives the GM the general gist of what's going on and a suggestion on how to get the players involved in the hook.

"Focus" develops the plot further and puts a spin on the preconceived notions listed in "Challenge."

"Strike" lists the climax of the story (the final conflict) as well as any further plot twists.

There are no secrets. There is no understanding. Void is all and nothing. It is the dance of the elements.

—The Tao of Shinsei



When they knelt before Ataka, all three of them were given plates of steaming rice. Ginawa's was empty first. He leaned back, patted his stomach and took another cup of sake as Hijiko and Tadaka quietly watched.

After all three of them had finished, Ataka dismissed his council. He waited for them to slide the door shut, then he waited a moment longer. Finally, he placed his hand on his knee and turned to Hijiko. "So, what of our cousins to the south?"

Hijiko bowed slowly, then spoke in a soft voice. "Ataka-sama, on the road, we met with the magistrates of Bayushi Shoji. They traveled with us to the sight of the battle. When we arrived ..."

"When we arrived," Ginawa interrupted, "the Scorpion assassins put an arrow through the Crane commander's neck."

"YOU WILL BE SILENT, YORIKI!"

Hijiko's shout seemed to make the room's wood panels shudder. She turned to Ataka, her voice still booming. "Ataka-sama, you sent this man along with me. I have never questioned your judgement before, but I must tell you he is nothing but an unwashed, undisciplined oaf."

Ginawa shrugged. "Would you waste good water on an oaf, Ataka-sama?"

Hijiko stood, letting her hands fall to the katana in her obi. "I have had enough!"

"HIJIKO!"

The samurai-ko fell to her knees at the sound of her master's voice. "Forgive me, Ataka-sama. Forgive my outburst. I forgot my place."

Ataka said nothing to her. He turned to Ginawa. "You say Scorpion assassins killed the Crane general?"

Ginawa nodded. "Hai."

Ataka scratched his beard. "Curious. Very curious." He faced Tadaka. "Tell me, shugenja. Did you see what occurred?"

Tadaka bowed low. "I did, Ataka-sama. I did not see who shot the arrow, but I can tell you that it was guided by a shugenja proficient in the art of Air magic."

Ataka nodded. "Thank you, shugenja." He bowed his head for a moment, then looked at each of them. "Hijiko, I have considered your complaint against Ginawa, and ..."

He stopped. His eyes grew wide and his jaw dropped.

Hijiko leaned forward. "Ataka-sama?"

Ginawa leapt to his feet, his wakizashi free from its saya and in his hands.

Tadaka didn't know what to do.

Hijiko asked again, her voice hinting at her panic. "Ataka-sama, what is wrong?"

Ginawa ran forward to the daimyo, just as blood began to drip from his lips.

Hijiko's scream rang in Ginawa's ears as he grabbed Ataka and pulled him close. He saw the shuriken and his teeth bit deep into his lip. His voice spoke low and guttural like a growl. "Ninja," he said.

Hijiko was next to him as he looked up. There was no time. Another breath would bring another shuriken.

"Ginawa, what's wrong with him? Tell me!" She was looking at her daimyo, her eyes filled with tears.

He looked at the shugenja. "Tadaka, where is my sword?"

Tadaka said nothing, his eyes glazed over with fear.

"Where is my SWORD?"

The shugenja pointed to the corner. "There, wrapped in cloth."

Ginawa's feet slipped on the paneled floor. "Protect him!" he called to Hijiko. He knew the samurai-maiden would do what he said. The shugenja was useless. His hands fell on the wrapped sword and with a single touch, the binds broke and the cloth slid away from the weapon as if whipped by winds.

His hands jerked back, but then he heard Hijiko screaming from behind him. He looked and

saw a shuriken in her arm and another hit the floor at her feet.

"Ginawa! Where are they? I can't see them? Help me!"

He turned back to the luchiban blade. "I need you," he whispered. "Damn you, I need you."

His hand was on the saya before he could say anything else and he heard the steel sing as it tasted the night air ...

"...and the sword sings as it tastes the night air." "Wow," says one of the four figures sitting at the table.

The girl picks up her dice. "I want to make an Honor roll!"

The game master smiles. "Want to try to break through the ninja's fear magic?"

"The Willpower roll failed me last Turn, so yes, I want to make an Honor roll."

"Go ahead," nods the GM, "but you know if you fail, you'll drop an entire Honor Rank, right?"

She nods. "Yup. No problem. What's the Target Number?"

The GM pauses for a moment. "The TN is 20. Still certain?"

The girl shakes her dice. "Not a problem. Hijiko's got a 3 Honor and I'm spending a Void Point." The dice fall on the table and all four figures lean in to take a look. The girl re-rolls her ten and smiles triumphantly. "Read 'em and weep. Twenty-five."

"All right," says the GM. "You've broken the spell. You can take an action ... next turn."

A sad moan from the girl and the GM moves to Tadaka's player. "How did you do?"

Tadaka's player shrugs. "Got a nine."

The GM grins a sadistic grin and turns to Ginawa's player. "How about you? What are you doing this Turn?"

"I've got the bloodsword, right?" he says expectantly with a hand-full of dice.

"Yes," answers the GM. "You feel its power coursing through you. You know what to do."

Another roll of the dice and the player smiles. "Not a problem. This time, Ginawa's got full control."

The GM turns to the players. "All right. Here's what's happening. Hijiko just broke out of the spell the ninja cast on all of you ..."

"When did ninja get to be shugenja ...?" mumbles Tadaka's player.

The GM continues. "Tadaka, on the other hand, is still under the sway of the ninja's magic.

Ginawa has his bloodsword, and has full control of his actions ..."

"Unlike last time," says Hijiko's player with a grin. Ginawa's player keeps his eyes on the GM.

"Where's the ninja?"

"You don't know. You'll have to make a Perception roll. In fact, since the ninja is trying to remain hidden, it's gonna be a Contested Roll. Ready to make the roll, buddy?" The GM picks up a handful of dice, counts them out, drops out two and looks to see if Ginawa's player is ready.

"What's the TN?" asks Ginawa's player.

"Thirty," says the GM and he flinches when the players hiss at him. "Hey, he's a ninja! He's trained in this kind of stuff!"

"Just roll the dice, and get ready to be seen," says Ginawa's player.

The dice roll and everyone leans in. The cheer tells you who wins the roll.

"Ginawa shouts to Hijiko," Ginawa's player says.

"Hijiko! Look! Up there!"

"Can I see?" she asks the GM.

"Yes," the GM answers. "Next Turn. Now, everyone roll Initiative."

Everyone does. The GM reads the rolls and turns to Ginawa's player. "What are you doing?"

"The ninja is up high, right?"

"Yes."

"I throw the sword at him."

The silence of the table is deafening.

The GM scratches his head. "Okay ... that's a pretty tough action. The TN to hit the ninja is already a 20. I'd say it would be a 35."

Ginawa's player picks up the dice and smiles. "I'll be spending a Void Point now."



Players have it easy. They've got one character



THE FURY OF OSANO-WO

Challenge:

The samurai are travelling on a mission for their lord. They stop at a small village and stay in the home of the village headman.

Focus:

In the middle of the night, they are awakened by the sound of the village bell. A storm is on its way, but the shugenja in the party (or in the village) can tell that it is the work of dark magics. Why would a shugenja want to drive the villagers out of their homes? What is he looking for?

Strike:

Two years ago, he was deceived by a ninja who seduced and killed his daughter. Now, the shugenja is looking for revenge, but in an effort to hide his shame, he will not let anyone help or explain his actions.

WRONGFUL SEPPUKU

Challenge:
A daimyo has been accused of a terrible crime. The Emerald Champion has commanded that he commit seppuku to save his family's honor.

Focus:
As the daimyo is preparing, the players discover a clue that leads them to believe the daimyo is innocent of the crime.

Strike:
They have until the end of the day to gather enough evidence to prove the daimyo's innocence to the Emerald Champion.

to keep track of. A GM has an entire world. Not only that, but he also has to be the arbitrator of the rules, the player characters' senses, and all the supporting characters while making sure that all of the players are having a good time. If you are reading this section, you should be the Game Master (GM), the player who plans to run adventures for your friends. Players who read this section will spoil a lot of the suspense and surprise that awaits them in the world of Rokugan.

Gming is not an easy task, but it can be broken down into three specific roles.

THE THREE HATS

The Game Master wears three very different hats: a Referee Hat, an Author Hat and a Storyteller Hat.

When he is wearing his Referee Hat, he is the moderator, the arbitrator and interpreter of the rules. If there is a dispute, the GM has the final word. But the GM also gets to wear an Author Hat. He sits at home during the week and dreams up elaborate plot twists to throw at the players every Friday night. He draws maps of abandoned castles and creates characters for the players to interact with. But it doesn't stop there. Finally, the GM also wears a Storyteller Hat. He must take the role of all those characters he's created and describe with vivid detail the ruined keep the players have to investigate.

If the job sounds a little daunting, don't worry. The GM's job may be the most difficult, but it's also the most rewarding and the most fun. This next section is devoted entirely to you. It's a kind of operator's manual, designed to help you run L5R cleanly and smoothly.

"Building Your Campaign" shows you how to plan ahead for your first game session. Theme gives you a general feel for what kind of campaign you want to run, while Character gives you some suggestions on what roles your players will take in your campaign. Lastly, Plot offers some suggestions on how to begin and end your story.

"Running L5R" teaches you some tricks and techniques to use during the gaming session you planned for in Part One.

"Advanced Techniques" shows you how authors create stories and how you can implement literary techniques into your campaign. This last section is entirely optional, and has more to do with personal style than rules.

"The Rokugan Sourcebook" contains a list of important people in Rokugan, creatures of the

Shadowlands and an introductory adventure to get you started.

Good luck!

Building Your Campaign

Even experienced GMs can find Rokugan to be a real challenge. It's not like traditional fantasy settings where the players take the roles of ne'er-do-well rogues wandering the countryside looking for dungeons and random adventures. Rokugan is a highly ordered society that demands fealty from its subjects. The players' characters are going to be in the servitude of lords who demand obedience. So what do you do?

Listen To Your Players

Before you start planning your campaign, have a talk with the players. They'll tell you what kind of character they want, what goals they'll have and what kind of adversaries they'll want to face. This will give you hints to which direction you should take. Players who want characters with a lot of combat skill want a game with a lot of combat. Players who are intrigued with the Emperor's Court are going to be looking for a more conversational game.

PLAN LIMITS

Once you have a good idea what kind of game the players want, start considering limits. What clans will you allow them to join and what clans are going to be off limits? Where will most of the action be taking place? It is very important to let your players know what kind of characters you won't be allowing. That way they will be able to create characters that fit into your story.

THEME

Stories have themes. A theme is a single word or phrase that can sum up the main action of the story. Listed below are a number of "story seeds" that cover many of the classic themes. Take a look below and see if any interest you.

War

This is the main theme of the L5R card game. War can devastate millions of lives. It has no remorse. It is unthinking, unfeeling and unforgiving. Throwing characters into the middle of a clan war can truly test their mettle. Obviously, characters will need severe combat skills to survive this kind of story.

Quest

The characters' daimyo sends them out to perform some heroic deed. Perhaps they have been ordered by the Emerald Champion to bring the Emperor's daughter across the countryside, guarding her from villains and rogues, or maybe they must go into the Shadowlands to procure an artifact that was lost by a previous expedition. Generally, quests demand high combat skills and low social skills, but when on a quest, there will

always be times when the characters will need to talk, rather than fight their way out of trouble.

Exploration

Exploration of the Shadowlands will provide you with an endless source of high action adventure. The characters would definitely have ties to the Crab Clan, but would not necessarily have to be Crab samurai. A Lion samurai could want to prove his courage to his lord by going out on a patrol into the Shadowlands, or an ambassador from the Phoenix could be looking for a lost artifact. Exploration campaigns usually demand characters with high combat and survival skills (those Shadowlands creatures don't talk too much).

Mystery

Mysteries usually involve a dead body and no witnesses. However, solving the mystery of "who stole Kachiko's funny jeweled egg" could also provide players with a few nights of tense searching. Mysteries tend to work better when there is a deadline, thus making the players a little frantic when their time begins to run out. A classic twist on the mystery involves murdering the characters themselves. Having them awaken to find poison

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SEVEN CARPENTERS

Challenge:
Seven carpenters,
arrive in villages
looking for work.

Focus:
They are actually
bandits looking for
travellers and farm-
ers to ambush.

Strike:
Perhaps they spot
the characters and
figure a way to
ambush them when
they aren't expecting
it. Or maybe they
decide to travel with
the characters. After
all, the samurai look
like they can handle
any bandits that may
try to take advantage
of seven poor car-
penters.

on their lips and only ten hours to find the assassin (so they can get the antidote) is a classic twist on the murder mystery. Mysteries tend to demand high social and mental skills, but a good bruiser can always come in handy.

Romance

Romance can be tricky, but can also be very rewarding. The occasional love story can provide the players a breather from all that breath-taking action. A samurai-ko's secret affair can lead to a whole campaign involving intercepting letters, Scorpion spies (out to dishonor the samurai-ko) and the questions of duty and loyalty.

Tragedy

Imagine being a lieutenant under Macbeth or Richard III. Have your players be witness to their lord's downfall. Have them hold off his blood-thirsty enemies as he wallows helplessly in his despair. Or better yet, have them be the blood-thirsty enemies! Imagine a group of Scorpions who work their wicked ways on some daimyo, only to watch the repercussions of their actions come back to haunt them.

The Characters' Roles

Once you've decided on a theme for your campaign, think of what your players' roles will be in that story. Once again, we've provided you with a list to inspire your imagination.

SOLDIERS

The simplest answer is to make them soldiers in a daimyo's army. This gives you complete control over their actions, but it also gives the players no control over their own. However, if you make them soldiers during a war, then kill their daimyo, they become ronin, which sets up an entirely different situation.

RONIN

If the characters are ronin, they have many advantages and many drawbacks. They have complete freedom to go wherever they wish, serving whoever pays the most. However, as ronin, they have very little impetus to stick together. They are truly wave men, wandering wherever they wish. They have no loyalty but to themselves, which makes intraparty conflict a severe danger. But if you talk to your players before you

begin a ronin campaign, you can stress that they should all have reasons for being together and staying together. Perhaps they are siblings, the last remainder of their fallen family, or even samurai whose lord has been killed by a ninja's poison shuriken, looking to avenge their lord's death.

COURTIERS

As courtiers, your players will be representing their clan in the Emperor's Court, trying to stay ahead of the other Clan's political machinations. While this may sound like a somewhat stale campaign, remember that the Japanese consider business and war to be one and the same. Players will have to deal with spies stealing important letters from their daimyo, ninja killing off important allies, ronin bandits on the road robbing casks filled with gold for bribes and other similar intrigues. And every courtier needs a bodyguard, after all.

MAGISTRATES

Making your characters magistrates may be the best answer for the "multi-clan" group. They are still representatives looking out for the best interest of their clan, but they are also under the direction of the Emerald Champion, whose authority will not be questioned. Characters can wander the Emperor's roads dealing with bandits and rogue Shadowlands creatures, protect diplomats and Imperial relatives, or even get sent out to deal with a mad shugenja or two. Even a mundane mission, such as collecting taxes, could lead to an adventure that might mean the doom of the Empire.

Plot

Once you know the theme of your campaign and the roles your characters will play, the next thing to consider is the plot. Listed below are some classic fantasy plots that we've adapted to Rokugan. Have a look.

RESCUE THE PRINCESS

Here's a classic. All you have to do is get a sibling of one of the characters (or one of the characters' lord), and kidnap them. It could be a princess, a prince, a husband, a daughter, whatever. It could even be a daimyo's favorite geisha. Whomever it is, snatch her away and have the players go and get her back.

DEFEAT THE EVIL SORCERER

Another classic of fantasy literature is the quest to defeat the evil sorcerer. Of course, he lives in a tower, far away (the Shadowlands) and has many evil minions at his disposal (oni, goblins, ogres) and his magic is mighty (he's a shugenja).

OVERTHROW THE TYRANNICAL OVERLORD

"Absolute power corrupts absolutely." Imagine a daimyo who has gained too much temporal power and is now disregarding the rules of honor and etiquette. He has a mighty army to back him up, and somebody's got to put him down. The other daimyos could throw an entire army at him, thus wasting thousands of lives in what may prove to be fruitless combat... or they could send a small number of samurai to take care of the situation.

REDEEM THE LOST FRIEND

As a counter to the last example, perhaps that mad overlord is your brother? Bringing a loved one to redemption is a dramatic and personal tale that requires skilled players and GM alike.

Any of these archetypes can make a stunning story. However, if you put them all together, they can make an epic saga. Take a look at the archetypes above. Recognize them? You should, because they are all facets of the jewel that is Star Wars. The characters begin by rescuing the princess. Along the way, they must confront an evil sorcerer, overthrow a tyrannical overlord, and finally, redeem a lost soul. That's how good stories become great.



The planning time is over. It's Friday night and you're friends are sitting at your kitchen table and they're all looking at you, expecting you to make Rokugan come to life for them. It's time to put away the Author Hat and take out your Referee and Storyteller Hats. Let's deal with each of them separately.

Being A Referee

First thing: Know your rules.

Notice it doesn't say "the" rules, it says "your" rules.

Everything in this book is a suggestion, even the rules. If you come across a rule you don't like, don't use it. Just throw it out and forget about it. The only rule that you shouldn't throw out is: "Have Fun."

QUICK AND DIRTY

Remember at the beginning of this book, we gave you the three steps to Quick and Dirty L5R?

1. Assign a Target Number.
2. Determine which Trait and Skill (if any) are appropriate to the action.
3. Roll the dice. If the character rolls over the Target Number, he succeeds. If he doesn't, he fails.

These three steps are really all you need to know to be a referee. Whenever a question of failure or success comes up, just follow those steps and you'll do fine. Everything else is just style, which is the way you choose to handle the rules.

THE FINAL WORD

L5R RPG is a storytelling game. If you don't like the rules, throw them out. However, there must be a voice of authority in this game, and it's you. When you make a ruling, it's final. No argu-



THE DAIMYO'S GOLD

Challenge:

The samurai are hired by a daimyo to help move a shipment of gold from his mine to his castle.

Focus:

He's had some trouble with bandits lately and wants to make certain they don't get away with any more of his gold.

Strike:

The problem is, the "bandits" are actually his magistrates. The gold is delivered by the magistrates in secret so when tax time comes around, the daimyo will have an excuse not to pay the full taxes due.

AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

At the end of each game session, the GM should award Experience Points (XPs) to the characters.

The amount of XPs the GM awards depend on the degree of success the characters achieved.

If a player showed up to play the game, they deserve one XP.

If a player roleplayed well, he deserves a bonus XP.

If the entire group worked well together and made progress toward a common goal, they all deserve a bonus XP.

Some GMs like awarding more or less XPs than we've allotted above. If you're one of them, you know what to do: go ahead and ignore our advice. More XPs make for rapid advancement, while less XPs make the characters work harder for their rewards. It's up to you.

ments, no discussions.

Unfortunately, you're human and you're going to make a mistake from time to time. When you do, you're players will either pick up on it, or they won't. If you make a mistake and your players don't notice, you don't have any problems. If they do notice, admit you made a mistake, fix it and move on to the next action so the game doesn't get bogged down in arguments.

THE TWO GAME MASTERS

Whenever a situation arises that involves dice, the GM is faced with a decision. It is the GM's duty to interpret the outcome of that die roll, and often times, it can mean the difference between life and death. There are really two schools of thought when it comes to die rolls, and most GMs fall somewhere in between.

The Dice GM regards the dice as law. Dice add a random element to the story that is beyond the control of the GM and the players and, for this GM, that's the way it should be. This is a game, after all, and sometimes the players lose.

Running a game with the dice in charge has its drawbacks and its advantages. The drawback is that sometimes disaster strikes at the worst opportunity. The characters are crushed by fate, and there's nothing anyone can do about it. On the other hand, having such an arbitrary force in the game that can really make the players sweat.

The Story GM, on the other hand, uses dice as a guideline. (Some don't even play with dice at all!) Every die roll suggests the outcome to him. In other words, failure does not always mean failure and success is only a relative term. For example, a player fails a roll while his character is trying to leap across a pit, the character slams into the other side of the pit, grasping on to a vine at the last possible second. The benefit of playing in the Story GM's game is that he is in complete control of the story, while the downside is the same. Playing in a Story GM's game doesn't have the same edge as playing in a Dice GM's game, with disaster lurking behind every corner.

BE FAIR

Wherever you fall on the GM scale, every GM should be fair. If you are going to change something about the rules, let your players know about it before you implement it. Don't change rules under the players' noses or they'll start to lose confidence in you. When your players lose confidence, you lose your voice of authority, and the

whole game suffers.

It is very important to be fair. It isn't your job to "beat" the players. You may be taking the roles of their adversary, but you - the GM - aren't their enemy. You will provide them with obstacles and NPCs that will try to ruin their lives, but when the players outsmart the bad guys, let them.

Being a Storyteller

When it comes time to put on your Storyteller Hat, you've got to make a complete shift of gears. Rules, numbers and counting are done on the left side of your brain. Storytelling is done on the right side. You will be asked to switch between these hats constantly.

When wearing your Storyteller Hat, you'll be trying to make Rokugan as real as possible for your players. In order to do that, you'll have to remember the oldest rule in storytelling.

SHOW, DON'T TELL

There are two ways to describe a scene to a group of players. You can tell them about the scene or you can show it to them. Here's how the two work out.

(Telling)

"You walk into your lord's audience hall. It's big. He's in the center of the floor, sitting on a mat. He's angry. He's very unhappy you guys messed up. He says you shouldn't have lost that letter from his brother. He jumps up, yelling. What do you do?"

The players now have a chance to react to the scene. They know their lord is angry with them, and they know he's about to attack them. But does this really get across the emotion of the scene? Now let's take a look at showing.

(Showing)

"As you step into the still air of the room, you see that it is nearly empty, except for the thin shadow of your lord, sitting alone in the center. A cool wind passes through the open door on the far side. The only thing you can see in the dim lamplight is a quiet fury, burning in his eyes. 'You have failed me for the last time,' he says, his voice trembling with anger. 'Now you will answer for your failure with your steel!' He leaps at you, his kimono flowing about him as if it were trying to keep up with his incredible burst of motion. You hear his katana sing as it comes free from its saya, the metal gleaming with the red lamplight. You have only seconds to respond. What do you

do?"

The second passage conveys the same information as the first: it tells the players their lord is angry with them and they know he's about to attack them. But it also shows them a great deal. It shows them the room is dark, lit only by lamps. They can sense that they are surrounded with shadows. They hear the katana as it comes free from the saya and they hear his scream as he springs toward them for his attack. They can even feel the cool night air gently passing through the room.

That's the very first thing to remember about being a storyteller: show, don't tell.

USE THE FIVE SENSES

Whenever you have the Storyteller Hat on, you should be keeping the five senses in your mind. Write them down on a sheet of paper if you have to, and whenever you have to describe anything to your players, run down the five senses. Don't rely on sight alone.

For example, let us say the players meet with a Crab shugenja, Kuni Yori.

Sight:

"Yori's skin is pallid and thin, like a cave fish that has been left out to dry."

Sound:

"You can hear the swish of his kimono as he moves closer."

Smell:

"As he approaches, you can smell a foul odor about him, as if he is carrying goblin droppings in his kimono."

Touch:

"You can feel your palms grow sweaty as you see his eyes, black as coals."

Taste:

"Your tongue goes dry as he bows before you and you return his bow. Your mouth feels as if it was stuffed with moldy cotton balls."

By invoking all the senses, you will truly give a three dimensional image of Rokugan to your players.

CHARACTERIZATION

Whenever the players encounter a character they do not control, it's your job to portray that character for the players. There are two tools you have at your disposal to do this: your voice and your body.

Voice

Whenever the character speaks, speak like the

character. Raise or lower your voice. You can emulate a young samurai by speaking quickly and loudly, while a Scorpion diplomat would speak quietly and slowly, making certain you understand everything that is being said. A geisha would speak with a higher voice while a samurai may intentionally lower her tones to sound more masculine.

Whenever you design an NPC, makes notes regarding his voice. How does he speak? Does he use florid language, or grunts, speaking only when necessary. If you use consistent voices, your players will begin to recognize NPCs from their voice alone.

Body

Likewise, when you portray a NPC, make certain they can see them. Show them the character's stance and body language. If it is an old Phoenix shugenja, perhaps he is bent over from the weight of his years. A Crab samurai would stand nonchalant with his katana thrown over his shoulder while a Dragon would stand proudly with his hand on the pommel of his katana, always ready to act.

Again, whenever you design an NPC, make notes regarding his body language. Ask yourself how he stands, walks and gestures. Ignoble characters will scratch themselves, make rude gestures and be flamboyant with their hands. "Proper" characters will move only when necessary, and every gesture is careful and elegant.

NARRATIVE

When you read a book, narrative is the author's voice. When you run *L5R*, the voice you use as you describe bloody battles, sweeping landscapes and beautiful, treacherous Scorpion shugenja will be your narrative voice.

As you prepare for an evening of role-playing, consider your voice. Go over every scene you've planned and determine what kind of scene it's going to be.

Action scenes, like movies, are fast. George Lucas said *Star Wars* was an exercise in speed. He wanted to see how fast he could make the movie without losing the audience. That's what your action scenes should be like. Whenever combat arises, the tone of your voice should change. Your body language should be abrupt. Point quickly when asking for initiative and speak forcefully. Give your players the feeling of being in the face of an ogre. Everything speeds up to a frantic pace



SPENDING XPS (REVISITED)

Everyone gets better at what they do through practice and experience. Your character is no different. At the end of each session, the GM will award your character a number of "Experience Points." These points can be used to increase your character's Traits.

It costs 1

Experience Point to learn a new skill at Rank 1.

To raise a Skill, you must spend a number of EPs equal to the Rank you are raising your Skill to.

To raise a Trait or your Void Ring, you must spend a number of EPs equal to five times the Rank you are raising your Trait to.

BLACKMAIL

Challenge:
One of the samurai receives an anonymous letter. The letter tells them that unless they perform the actions dictated by the letter, a dark family secret will be made public. A secret so horrible that it could mean seppuku for everyone with the family name.

Focus:
The samurai has little choice. He must perform the deed or his entire family will pay the price.

Strike:
This adventure has great potential for splitting up the samurai. While one or two of them stay behind to aid the samurai being blackmailed, the others go out to find the identity of the blackmailer.

— without losing your audience. Details get sketchy because the players are focused on the danger and not on their surroundings. If someone wants to take their time doing something, let them see just how slow they are going.

Mystery scenes, like their silver screen counterparts, are just the opposite. Half the horror of a horror movie is the wait in between the flashes of violence. As the samurai trudge through the wastelands, every shadow seems to hold a hidden threat. Describe the surroundings slowly as they inch along, not knowing if the next moment will be the one when the monsters fall upon them.

But don't limit yourself to your voice. Use your body to tell the story as well. When the wind comes sweeping down from the hills, use your body to give the impression of movement. When the body of the oni falls dead to the ground, slam your fists against the table. Excitement and enthusiasm are contagious. Give yours to your players, and you will have one dynamic evening of role-playing.

Putting It All Together

The first time you run *L5R*, you're going to encounter a whole bunch of problems. Players who have never played the game before will have questions about rules, spells, their allies and enemies and anything else they don't understand. You're going to have to think quickly and creatively and be fair all at the same time. Don't worry. Here's some tips on how to get by.

"I'M A BEGINNER, TOO!"

For your first session of *L5R*, let your players know that this may be their first time playing the game, but it's your first time, too. Tell them you'll probably make some mistakes, but if they're patient, you'll get this thing down to a science as fast as possible. Remember, these are your friends. They'll understand.

CHEATING

Remember the Golden Rule? As long as everyone has fun, you haven't broken any rules. Whether you are a Dice GM or a Story GM, every GM cheats. This is politely called "fudging" in role-playing circles, but don't be deceived, it's cheating. But, hey, it's okay to cheat every once in a while, just make sure you're fair with your

cheating.

So what is that supposed to mean? Well, here's how it works. Let's say the samurai are in the Imperial Palace and they're visiting the Emperor. One of the players decides to have a bit of wicked fun and pulls out his wakizashi and throws it at the Emperor's head. You tell the player he's out of line, but he insists that his character's gone through with the action and he's already rolling dice. He gets a really great roll and starts jumping up and down, shouting "I've killed the Emperor! I've killed the Emperor!"

What do you do now?

You cheat.

Agree with the player that he's hit the Emperor, but you get to roll damage. Roll the dice secretly, look over them with scrutiny ... and completely ignore them.

You describe to the player how his wakizashi found its way into the Emperor's side. The Emperor buckles with pain, his eyes tearing and his hand grasping at the blade. Suddenly, there are fifty samurai in the room. They don't ask questions, they don't wait for a command, they just charge the smart guy who just attacked the Emperor.

Then, with a wicked grin on your face, you remind him that he threw away his only weapon.

Congratulations, you just cheated. You didn't apply the damage dice to the Emperor and you filled the room with samurai you didn't know were there a moment ago. So what? Here's another example.

The samurai are fighting a big, nasty oni. It leaps through the air and attacks the helpless shugenja digging through his scroll bag looking for Tomb of Jade. One of the samurai bravely leaps in the oni's way to protect the shugenja. The oni takes a roll at the samurai, does a palatable hit and you roll damage. You roll three tens and re-roll them. Then you roll three more tens. And three more.

Fate has just killed one of your players' favorite characters.

So, what do you do?

You cheat!

Ask the player how many Wounds he has left. He'll answer. You look at the dice, shake your head sadly and notify him that he has exactly one Wound left. He falls to the ground unconscious and can't do anything for the rest of the combat. The samurai has just bought enough time for the

shugenja to find his scroll and start casting the spell.

Yes, again, you've cheated. But this time you cheated in favor of the players. So what? The samurai got wounded nigh onto death instead of getting killed outright. You adjusted things to the player could keep playing, even if it was from a stretcher, and that's all right.

ILLITERATE BARBARIANS

It's tough to get around in Rokugan if you are an illiterate, round-eyed barbarian. Often times, your players will be stretching their memories trying to remember the exact etiquette of a situation so they won't lose face. As a GM you have a choice. You can make them sweat it (making you a real mean GM), or you can tell them to make an Etiquette roll to remember the right thing to do. You can even assume their characters know the right thing to do and just do it. You can also allow other players to kibitz (that's when they give each other advice "out of character") which is sometimes useful, but can also break the mood of the game.

The important thing to remember is that your players were not born in Rokugan. They don't know how to get around very well. Letting etiquette get in the way can bog down role-playing. Unless the proper etiquette of a situation is vital to the continuation and plot of the story, you can usually skip it.

However, there may be times when the plot depends on the etiquette of the characters. In these situations, you have to make a judgement call. Some players just aren't equipped to handle etiquette. That's why their character has the skill: so the player doesn't have to. Other players love role-playing court scenes, which is why you let them role-play them out. Letting a charismatic player bask in the spotlight for a short while (as long as it doesn't detract from the other players' time) can be a lot of fun for everyone involved.

TEACHING ETIQUETTE

You can only ask a player to make an Etiquette roll so many times, however. Sooner or later, the player is going to have to learn to take his destiny in his own hands. It's perfectly proper to give someone some time to get acquainted with Rokugan's social rules, but it's also not fair to let one player get away with just rolling dice while another has to improvise their way through sticky situations. This is "role" playing after all,

and not "roll" playing. Besides, ten minutes of a player talking his way out of trouble is a lot more dramatic than a single die roll.

In order to teach your players etiquette, make certain they read the Etiquette section in *The Book of Earth* (p. 37). It's not fair to test people on rules they don't understand. Once that's done, show them how its used. If they are in court, have an NPC address the Emperor so they can see what's expected of them before they have to do it. You can also talk them through it. As they are performing the tea ceremony, you describe a memory that's flashing through their head from the first time they learned it.

Etiquette can be a pain in the rear, but it also adds a lot of flavor and drama to the game. If you enforce the rules, you will find your players speaking softly, moving with small gestures and treating each other with formal respect.



This section is for experienced Game Masters and those who want to add a little spice to their sessions. If you feel confident in your ability to run the game, or you want to try something a little different, read on.

Prologues and Epilogues

A prologue is action that occurs before the story begins. Often it sets up the action in the story, giving it a deeper significance. For instance, before you begin running your story, you describe a little girl living in a small village. You paint the scene with a light tone, speaking softly and gently. Then suddenly, an army of Shadowlands mad-



SHIPWRECK

Challenge:

A ship wrecks on the shores of Rokugan.

Focus:

The samurai investigate and discover the ship is from the gaijin lands far across the sea. All hands aboard were killed, but the ship's belly is bursting with gaijin gold and plunder.

Strike:

Of course, other daimyos have seen the shipwreck, and now armies are beginning to loom on the horizon. Can the samurai recover the gold and treasure before the armies of their rivals arrive?

WEDDING DAY

Challenge:

This adventure is best when a samurai who is particularly popular with the geisha is its focus.

It has come time for the samurai to wed his bride.

They've never met, but they have written letters. She is witty and charming and quite lovely and constant correspondence has made them quite close friends.

Focus:

There's just one catch... she's in love with someone else. She's ready for marriage and to play her part and does not want to dishonor her Clan, but she is in love with someone else.

Strike:

The night before the wedding, her beloved kidnaps our samurai's bride. Now the samurai must go to free her, knowing that he will probably have to challenge the man she loves to a duel.

men descends on the village, killing everything in sight. The little girl runs and hides, but she turns just as the shadow of a madman falls across her tiny form and...

That's when you start the story, with the samurai before their lord as he tells them of the attack. He wants them to investigate, to find survivors and to find the creatures responsible. Is the little girl still alive? The characters will have to find that out when they reach the village.

An epilogue is action that occurs after a story ends. Like the prologue, it gives a deeper meaning to the story that the characters are not privy to. Imagine the samurai having to deliver a small package to a Lion lord. They know the Scorpion clan is looking for them, so they have to dodge ninja, spies and assassins all the way. They have a terrible time, arriving at the home of Akodo Kage, the venerable sensei of the Lion clan. They deliver the package and return back to the Emerald Champion, content in their success.

The epilogue occurs after you've divvied out experience points.

As Akodo Kage watches them leave, he turns to a sliding door and pulls it aside. There, standing in the darkness is a dark, slinky silhouette whom Kage calls, "Lady Bayushi." He puts the package into her delicate fingers and she opens it to reveal a intricately carved egg that glows with a sinister green light...

The action in a prologue or epilogue usually takes place outside the players' perspective, so while they may know all about the little girl, their characters won't know a thing. This technique requires a little bit of role-playing on the players' part (they've got to feign ignorance), but if you've got a group of players who are willing to play along, these techniques can add a lot of drama to your game.

Parallel Plotlines

This technique is used when you want your players to know something that's going on in a different part of Rokugan. Let us say that our samurai are wandering around the Shadowlands, trying to find an oni who stole the ancestral sword of the Crab clan. As they search, an army of goblins, oni and other nasty things is assaulting the fortress of the Hida family. Here we have a classic quest story along with a time limit. They have to find the sword in time to save the Hida

castle. But as they are searching the Shadowlands, you show them a few minutes of the action back at Hida castle. You show them Kisada fighting on the fields before the home of his ancestors. He's fighting bravely, but he must fall back or his army will be overrun. The Shadowlands army marches closer.

The tone of the adventure speeds up as the army is storming the walls. The characters have found the oni's lair, but it's not there. Then you flash back to Kisada watching the south wall blasted away with eldritch fire. He commands his shugenja to return the volley as he looks to the Shadowlands, wondering if the characters will return in time.

Parallel plotlines can be used to add suspense, intrigue and mystery to any story.

Flashbacks

Flashbacks can be handled in many ways. They can be in the head of a single character, the collective memory of many characters, or may even be storylines that occur in the past that have significant influence on the story at hand.

An individual flashback occurs entirely in the mind of a single character. Between the action of the present, the character in question recalls events that have occurred in his past, possibly inspired by the events of the present. Perhaps the character is witnessing a duel between two characters, one of whom is his young brother. Watching his brother's first duel brings back the memory of his own first duel, and you stop the action of the present to bring him back to the past. This technique is used to show the truth of the old cliché: "History repeats itself."

A weird twist on both the parallel plotline and the flashback is showing the characters a bit of history as the current story progresses. For instance, if the samurai are investigating a "haunted castle," you flash back to the past to show the players the tragic events that led up to the fall of the family that once inhabited the house. The flashbacks you show them give them clues to solve the puzzles of the house, the history of the ghosts they encounter and the dangers to avoid. Once again, the players will have the knowledge, but the characters will not, adding another level of tension to an already spooky situation.

Environment

If you are feeling really industrious, why not go to a little extra trouble to make your players really feel like they are in Rokugan. The kitchen or living room or wherever you play L5R is going to be familiar to them. If you remove the 20th century trappings around them, you'd be amazed how easy it is for all of you to slip right into character.

LIGHTS

In the 20th century, we have invented many clever gadgets to circumvent our preternatural fear of the dark. We have light switches right next to the door to light an unfamiliar room, flashlights and even night lights.

Rokugan does not have any such luxury. They must face their fears in the dark. If your players are up to it, let them role-play for real. Turn down the lights a little. If you can find them, light up some Japanese lanterns. Or, if they step into the Shadowlands, light up some candles. Take away the lights, and the 20th century seems very far away indeed.

SOUND

There are a lot of sources of traditional Japanese music, and most of them are very inexpensive. You can find CDs in the larger music stores for ten dollars or even less. Music for Noh Theater is very appropriate. It's subdued and subtle so it won't distract from your narrative, but it also fills the quiet moments, providing great atmosphere.

FOOD

You can get cheap Japanese food anywhere. Ten dollars worth feeds a whole lot of people. There are even home kits nowadays that are even cheaper (but require some extra preparation). Nothing makes a gamer happier than munchies at the game table. Most of the traditional Japanese food was finger food (the Japanese used chopsticks, of course), and it's much better for you than potato chips.

PROPS

Props add a tactile element to the gaming experience, however, before we go any further, a couple of words about swords:

Never bring a real sword to the gaming table.

No amount of drama is worth getting hurt.

Other props can provide a great deal of atmos-

phere. The Japanese often use fans to gesture, and so should you. You can provide letters from the character's daimyos, maps of cities and castles, and even a magical artifact or two.

Live Action L5R

Live action role-playing (LARP) is a new style of role-playing that has become popular in the last few years. When engaged in a LARP event, players leave their character sheets and dice behind on the table, put on costumes and use props and sets to make the session feel like an improvisational acting/role-playing experience. It involves less rules and more acting, and it is definitely not for everyone. Often times, the GM will set up a room to resemble the scene from a room and the players walk about, encountering NPCs (played by assistant GMs) and engaging them as if they were their own characters. The intent of LARP is to make the atmosphere as real as possible, so rules often go by the wayside.

If you are interested in doing live action role-playing, you should definitely check out L5R Live which should be available sometime in the future. While LARP de-emphasizes rules, there are a two specific rules that all players must universally obey.

RULE ONE: No Touching

No touching means just that: no shaking hands, no tapping shoulders, absolutely no touching.

RULE TWO: No Weapons

This *really* needs to be emphasized. Despite the enthusiasm of the players to carry around their beautiful katana they spent hundreds of dollars for, there should be no weaponry at all involved in a game of L5R, LARP or otherwise. Combat should never be resolved in the LARP environment. If combat ever ensues during a LARP session, action should immediately return to the table.



A QUESTION OF DUTY

Challenge:

The samurai (best if they are ronin) are hired by a prestigious daimyo to be bodyguards. They live in the lap of luxury and are treated well.

Focus:

However, they cannot help but notice that their lord is anything but kind to the peasants who serve him. He taxes them too much and doesn't report his earnings to his own daimyo. He beats them when he feels they get out of line and takes his pick of the girls when his fancy strikes him.

Strike:

The bodyguards are approached by an anonymous assassin with a bag full of koku for each of them. All they have to do is turn their backs and keep their mouths shut.

What do they do?

STOLEN ANCESTRY

Challenge:
The ancestral shrine of the samurai's daimyo has been stolen. The samurai are assigned to the task of discovering the identity to the thief.

Focus:
Of course, the daimyo must remove the shame of losing his ancestor's shrine, and vows to commit seppuku.

Strike:
The shrine could have been stolen by anyone, but as it turns out, it has been stolen by the daimyo's wife. She seeks revenge against her husband because of his public love for a geisha.



This section details the most prominent NPCs in Rokugan by clan. Following the clans is a section of ronin. Each character is listed with Traits, Skills, Advantages, etc. along with role-playing tips.

Crab

HIDA KISADA

Known as "The Great Bear" of the Crab Clan, Kisada is an old man, far passed the usual retirement age for samurai. He is, however, one of the greatest tacticians in the Empire. His skills are constantly tested against the raids of creatures from the Shadowlands.

Kisada recognizes the right of the Emperor to sit on the Emerald Throne, but he also believes Rokugan needs strong leadership. The "Old Man on the Throne", as he calls him, needs to recog-



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nize this fact, and Kisada can think of no one better suited to lead than the Crab Clan. He knows the raids from the Shadowlands have grown recently in intensity and frequency. He believes it

is time for the Empire to unite and destroy the Shadowlands once and for all. A thousand years living in the shadow of fear is long enough.

Kisada has two sons: Yakamo and Sukune. His wife grew deathly ill after the birth of their second son and has never recovered. Kisada's advisors have suggested that this is an omen of bad things to come. He looks at his sickly second son and wonders if they are right.

Image: Kisada is a huge man, over 6 feet tall with a deep grey beard, iron grey eyes and many scars from his countless battles with the Shadowlands. He always dresses in the dark colors of his clan and almost never travels without a weapon (not including his daisho).

Role-playing Kisada: Kisada's voice is quiet and subdued and full of threat. He almost never moves unless it is necessary, but when he does, it is a flurry of motion and might.

HIDA YAKAMO

Yakamo is the eldest of Kisada's children and the most like his father. In fact, many compare Yakamo to the Great Bear in his days of youth.



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Just as Kisada was a hot-tempered samurai in his early days, so is his son. Yakamo proves his bravery as often as he can, leading expeditions into the Shadowlands to ambush raiding parties before they get a chance to strike. He also is a very capable duelist, never refusing a challenge from an opponent.

Image: It could be safely said that Yakamo is nearly a mirror image of his elderly father. His actions, demeanor and temperament are identical.

Role-playing Yakamo: Yakamo is big, brutish and burly. "Subtle" is not in his vocabulary and neither is "sincere." Yakamo says what he means and lives by his word. He makes wide gestures with his arms when he speaks and barks orders. He is not polite or considerate and does not see

why he should be. He protects the Empire, and they owe him respect for that.

Crane

DOJI HOTURI

The newly married Doji Hoturi has found himself thrown into a position of responsibility. His father's recent ascension to Emerald Champion status has put him – unofficially – at



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the head of his Clan earlier than he would have hoped, but the guidance of Toshimoko, his sensei and gohei, has proven to be invaluable. He is a master diplomat and one of the most skilled swordsmen in the Empire. He had a reputation as a ladies' man before his marriage, and there is great speculation in the court as to what a wife will do his reputation.

Image: Hoturi is tall and slender. His face is long and thin and his skin is pale. His hair is dyed pure white, contrasted by his black eyes. He is quick and agile, moving with graceful ease and poise.

Role-playing Hoturi: Growing up the student of Kakita Toshimoko (see below) has taught Hoturi many things. He is quick to laugh and show emotion in private, but in public, he is cool, calm and controlled. Some day, he will be the Champion of the Crane Clan and he must maintain a constant air of dignity and respectability. This is quite a change for Hoturi who is used to going out to geisha houses with his gohei Toshimoko, and he is obviously not quite comfortable with his new "unofficial" station.

KAKITA TOSHIMOKO

The "Gray Crane" Kakita Toshimoko is the venerable head of the Toshimoko Iaijutsu school, and sensei to Doji Hoturi, son of the Champion of

the Crane Clan. In his earlier days, he was the archetypical young, hot-blooded samurai. He challenged as many swordsmen as he could, loved as many women as he could and proved his courage time and time again as *yojimbo* (bodyguard) to his master, Hoturi's father Satsume. His most famous exploits involved his affair with a young woman and a father who did not approve. The father was a minor lord who challenged Toshimoko to a duel. Toshimoko was forced to kill the lord and the lord's daughter was obliged to seek revenge for her father's death. She disappeared for many years, then reappeared as a fully trained samurai-ko. She challenged Toshimoko to a duel, and once again, Toshimoko was forced to accept. He killed his love and immediately attempted to commit seppuku, but Doji Satsume forbid it.

Many decades later, Toshimoko would become Doji Hoturi's sensei. He taught the young lord everything he knew about the duel, and saw much of himself in the young samurai. When Hoturi gained control of the Crane Clan, Toshimoko was placed in the position of high advisor.

Image: Toshimoko is of average height and build. Although age has crept up on him slowly, it shows no sign of slowing him down. His long, white hair is thinning at his pate and his cold eyes are beginning to show gray.

Role-playing Toshimoko: Smile. Laugh. Toshimoko is an old man who has learned to



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drink deeply from the cup life has offered him. He knows how to appreciate the beauty of a woman, the sweet nectar of sake and the perfume of a windy hilltop. His indulgence in pleasures is a complete contrast to his nearly fanatical devotion to swordplay. When it comes time to draw steel, Toshimoko's entire visage changes. He



THE CODE OF BUSHIDO

Challenge:

The samurai encounter a young samurai weeping over the corpse of his sensei. He is wounded, but he refuses medical aid. He introduces himself as Jimojo, the son of a peasant who saved the life of a samurai. In return for the act, the samurai took the peasant's youngest son (Jimjo) as his apprentice.

Focus:

That was seven years ago, and now, on the anniversary of his apprenticeship, he has failed to protect his sensei from a group of bandits. He begs the samurai for help, and if they refuse, then he will avenge his sensei's life on his own.

Strike:

The bandits are well-equipped and their attack was not a random one. The sensei is an old enemy of a ruthless daimyo, perhaps from the same Clan as the samurai ...

UBUME

As a lone samurai walks down a dark, lonely road, he meets with a woman dressed in white, her wild hair whipping in an invisible wind. She is obviously a ghost, and she is weeping. She begs the samurai to hold her child. "It is freezing to death. Please, hold my child," she says.

If he accepts the ghost baby, he must make three successive Strength Tests against TNs 10, 15 and 20. If he succeeds, he finds himself with a newborn child in his hands, three XP's to put toward Strength and 3 Honor Points.

If he fails, or refuses to hold the child, she screams as blood sprays from the darkest patches of night, covering the samurai and the ghost as she fades from view. The sight leaves him with pale skin and white hair for the rest of his days.

becomes the perfect swordsman. No emotion emanates from him. He is an ice cold killing machine. When he takes a life, he shows a moment or two of regret that could be seen a mile away. He often says a quiet prayer over the bodies of those he has defeated before his smile returns and his laughter finds his lips once again.

Dragon

TOGASHI YOKUNI

The only thing that can be said with certainty of Togashi Yokuni is that he is a silent, masked man. No one has ever seen him eat or sleep. Only a few have heard him speak, and when they do, they only remember impressions, and not com-



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plete sentences or phrases. They always get a chill when they bring the memory to mind.

Image: Yokuni has never been seen without his helmet. He only appears at times that are convenient to him, spending the rest of his time in isolation. His armor and daisho are ancient, showing the ages that have passed since the first Togashi wore them a thousand years ago.

MIRUMOTO HITOMI

Mirumoto Hitomi is the golden jewel of the Dragon Clan. Her skill and precision – that have proven superior to all the other bushi at the Togashi school – are matched only by her beauty. At her *gempukku* ceremony, Yokuni himself bestowed upon her Dragon Clan's ancestral katana, a sword that had been wielded by her brother before his death at the hands of Hida Yakamo.

Image: Hitomi is slender, yet muscular. Her speed and strength are an incredible balance of finesse and style. Upon hearing of her brother's death, she shaved her head and buried the discarded locks with him at his funeral. She carries



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the ancestral sword of her Clan, making her an even deadlier foe. Hitomi does not wear "feminine" clothes. When she is not in her armor, she is dressed in white.

Role-playing Hitomi: Anger is in her eyes, in her breath, in her words, in her body. She speaks quickly with little patience and moves with forceful gestures. She growls when discouraged and howls when victorious. Hitomi has only a single thought on her mind, and that is to avenge her brother's death. Anything else that demands her attention is in her way. The best solution to any problem (as far as Hitomi is concerned) is to cut it down. Her skill in swordplay makes many problems easily solvable this way.

Lion

AKODO TOTURI

Without a doubt, the most honored general in the Empire is Akodo Toturi, the Champion of the Lion Clan. The blood of one thousand years of Akodo ancestors runs through his veins. He is proud of his position as the Emperor's general



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and chief military advisor. While he has been able to keep military victories from claiming Lion territory, he is not a skilled diplomat. A Crane gen-

eral, Daidoji Netsu, seized Lion lands to the north of the great river road which had been in dispute; Crane Daimyo Doji Satsume, using his influence as the Emerald Champion, then consolidated the gains politically in the Imperial Court. Out of respect for the Emperor and his childhood friend Hoturi, he has not yet responded with force, but political pressure from the Matsu family may force his hand soon.

Image: Toturi is above average height, wide shouldered and handsome. He dresses in modest clothes that are not indicative of his station. His voice is deep, trained to call commands over the clamor of a battlefield. His body language is minimal and his eyes are piercing and dark.

Role-playing Toturi: Speak quietly and deeply. Make certain that you listen to everyone's advice before you make a decision. Look thoughtfully and concerned about issues of even the smallest detail. When asked why, answer "If one arrow can strike down a general, then one arrow can strike down an army."

MATSU TSUKO

As a counterpart to Akodo Toturi, "the Lady of Lions" Matsu Tsuko is as hot-blooded as a lioness can be. Her strength lies in the purity of her emotion, her ability to channel her rage into power to destroy her foe. She resents Toturi's position as the head of the Clan, and knows that it will be only a matter of time before her family is recognized for its complete and utter devotion to the Emperor.

Image: Because Tsuko is not the perfect picture of womanhood - delicate and petite - she is often considered to be not as attractive as she



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truly is. Her hair is worn long, and her skin is a smooth tan. She speaks in a low voice (a skill she has been trained in since she was very young) and moves with quiet menace.

Role-playing Tsuko: Tsuko is quick to anger and slow to forgive. Bushido consumes her life, and she is quick to point out the faults of those under her command. She is also quick to reward the virtuous, however. She is never seen in feminine clothing and considers amorous offers an insult (to her vow of celibacy) that must be quickly expunged.

Phoenix

SHIBA UJIMITSU

The Phoenix Clan Champion is a quiet, thoughtful man. He is also a bushi in a Clan most



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noted for its shugenja. He is quick to admit that he does not understand the Tao of Shinsei as do the shugenja of his Clan, but he is the descendant of the original Shiba and the shugenja of the Isawa family treat him as such out of respect for the celestial order. He is the final authority in matters involving Clan safety and political strength, but that is where his authority ends.

Ujimitsu often awakens in the middle of the night from terrifying dreams. These dreams often prophesy about the future or reveal secrets from the past. All the Champions of the Phoenix Clan have shared these dreams. Their source is unknown.

Image: Ujimitsu is of average height and slightly slender build. His eyes are dark and dreamy. He follows the example of Shinsei by shaving the pate of his head and curling the rest of his hair into a queue at the top.

Role-playing Ujimitsu: He is quick to smile and sometimes even laugh, but there is always a haunted look to his features, as if his mind is not always on the task at hand, but on some darker matter.

ISAWA TADAKA

When they meet, the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix Clan all have equal voice in the proceed-



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ings, but an Adept's voice has begun to make itself heard, and it is the voice of Isawa Tadaka. He was the most promising student of the Isawa School and has shown exceptional insight into the metaphysical. His discourses on the nature of the elements are shadowed only by his writings on the Shadowlands, which he is an authority. Only the Master of Void - who has dedicated his life to the subject - knows more about that dark land's secrets. Tadaka has often longed to find the Black Scrolls of the Scorpion Clan to gain an even deeper understanding of that land, so he may one day march an army of bushi and shugenja against it.

Image: Isawa Tadaka is bigger than the average shugenja. His understanding of the element of earth has made him as large as (and in some cases larger than) many bushi. He is inquisitive and humble, eager to share his knowledge and add the knowledge of others to his own. Mention of the Shadowlands raises something disturbing in him. His eyes grow dark and his voice gains a tension that is not present at any other time.

Role-playing Tadaka: Tadaka is fascinated with the Shadowlands. Any mention of the dark land will awaken his attentions. Move deliberately and slowly, making certain that everything you do conserves the deep energies that are at your command. Show respect and courtesy for all, but when ogres and goblins enter into the equation, show nothing but scorn, contempt and violence.

Scorpion

BAYUSHI SHOJU

His is the clan of secrets, and Bayushi Shouju is

the master of his clan. Akodo Toturi may be the master of the battlefield, but Shouju knows some tricks that could turn the Great Lion's hair white. No man has ever seen his face, nor has he ever been seen wearing the same mask twice. He is a cunning and crafty opponent in all aspects. Even though his clan is vilified throughout the Empire, no-one dares show disrespect to the Scorpion Champion for fear of retribution. Not from his blade, but from a more indirect attack that will always be noticed a little too late.

Image: Shouju is a dashing man, but, with the tradition of his clan, he keeps his face hidden behind an elaborate mask. His clothes are always exquisite and slightly deceptive. They are cut and weighted to give him the illusion of movement even when he is standing still.

Role-playing Shouju: Distance yourself from who you are speaking to. Answer cryptically, as if everything you say could have many meanings. Move slowly and deliberately with a smile playing on your lips. You know everyone's secrets. Make sure they know that with your tone, body language and eyes.

BAYUSHI KACHIKO

In the Emperor's Court, no intrigue escapes the attention of Bayushi Kachiko. She sees and hears everything that occurs. Her spies are the highest paid in the Empire, and every secret that passed through every gossip's lips eventually makes its way to her ear. It is rumored she holds enough evidence to blackmail every family in the Empire. Whether the rumor is true or an invention of her own is not known, but no family is willing to test it.

And perhaps, that is her greatest strength.



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Image: Kachiko is always dressed in the finest silks. The thin veil across her eyes is a mask in name only. Her kimono are always cut to hint at

the sleek figure that moves under the silken robes.

Role-playing Kachiko: Much like her husband, Kachiko answers every question with another question or a cryptic answer that could be taken in many ways. She is fond of flirting with the Rokugani aversion of touching. She knows her limits, however, and makes certain that she can never be held accountable for any of her actions. Kachiko is a cautious and clever woman who plays subtle games that toy with people's comfort zones.

Unicorn

SHINJO YOKATSU

Known to his Clan as "Master of the Four Winds," Yokatsu is a gray haired wild eyed man who was born in Rokugan, but whose soul cries



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out to ride the wind-swept plains of his ancestors. He longs to return to those lands, but recognizes his responsibility in Rokugan. He feels more comfortable on horseback than on his own two feet.

Image: Yokatsu is growing old, but has been set in his ways for a long time. His black hair is peppered with gray and his wide, calloused hands often fidget when he must stand still. He is not as well-groomed as the other champions and he does not mind a bit. When in private, he casts off the clothes of his station with a curse and a complaint.

Role-playing Yokatsu: Yokatsu always looks uncomfortable. He looks uncomfortable in his kimono, uncomfortable kneeling, uncomfortable with a tiny cup of tea in his wide, calloused hands. He fidgets, mumbles and curses when he makes a mistake.

OTAKU KAMOKO

One division of the Unicorn cavalry are the

"Battle Maidens," led by Otaku Kamoko. These fearless samurai-maiden charge into battle with a frenzy that rivals the most bloodthirsty Crab



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berserker. The tradition of the battle maiden goes back seven hundred years when the Unicorn were in the desert wastelands that lie to the north and west of Rokugan. Kamoko is the commander of the battle maidens and the most fearsome of them all. Her reckless courage is in sharp contrast to the calculating Rokugani who rely on strategy and tactics rather than bloodlust.

Image: Kamoko is a pretty girl, just on this side of lovely. She refuses to do anything about her image and is waiting for a suitor who can keep up with her on horseback.

Role-playing Kamoko: Kamoko is a headstrong girl. She doesn't like to be told she's wrong, but is willing to listen to those she respects (not a large crowd). She is reluctant to speak on matters personal, and does not handle flirtation well. She prefers suitors who show their worth rather than talk about it.

Others

DAIRYA

Villagers whisper about the grungy ronin who



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wanders the countryside, killing samurai and bandits alike wherever he goes. He says his name

is "Dairya," which means "stands alone," an obvious pseudonym. None who meet him recognize him as a fallen samurai from one of the Clans. One peasant reported that when asked about his eye patch he replied, "A Crane."

Dairya is one of the most skilled kenjutsu and iaijutsu masters of Rokugan. Some samurai seek him out just to match their own skill against his. Dairya has been known to decline duels with inferior opponents.

Image: Dairya is a tall samurai, poorly dressed and shabby. He smells as if he has not bathed in months. If he notices, he doesn't care (or believes it distracts his opponents). He carries an arsenal of weapons, including katana, wakizashi, tetsubo, and tanto, and rides the horse of the last man who challenged him to a duel.

GINAWA

Another ronin who has gained significant fame in Rokugan is called Ginawa. No one is certain who Ginawa was before he became a ronin, but some evidence has led courtiers to believe he may have been a Lion or perhaps a Scorpion. He pays little - if any - attention to his appearance. He is a skilled swordsman, but more importantly,



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he has also acquired one of the four Iuchiban blades.

Ginawa seems to prefer his anonymity, and if there are any who do know the true identity of this samurai, they are either too wise or fearful to say so.

His desire to find and kill the assassin of his lord is deep, as well as his hatred of liars and deceivers. He has been known to fly into a bloodthirsty fury if he feels he is being deceived or lied to.

Image: Ginawa's face, arms and chest bear many scars. The most significant is along his back. Shugenja - or those who have the Medicine Skill - who get a glance at this scar will recognize that it has been healed with magic. His clothes are near

tatters and he needs a shave and a hair cut. His eyes are ever watchful, and his smile and voice drip with sarcasm.

Roleplaying Ginawa: Be rude. Be smarmy. Scratch when you itch. Drink and eat to excess. Laugh with your belly and then get mean when you hear about Scorpions and assassins. Get quiet when others ask about your past. No one recognizes you, even if they think they do.

Nemuranai- Enchanted Items

All information the players know about magic items can be found in **The Book of Air**. Information found here relates to the game mechanics that pertain to those objects.

Nemuranai and Their Effect on the Game

If you have a group of four samurai and they all have magic items, that makes a magic item rather mundane, doesn't it?

Depending on your own taste and style, you will have to determine how to handle enchanted items. The more you add, the more fantastic your game becomes, and consequently, the less realistic. Magic makes characters much more powerful than their NPC counterparts and takes away a bit of combat's gritty and lethal edge.

However, if you add only a few *nemuranai* to the campaign, the players who don't have them may begin to get green eyes.

Nemuranai should be rewards to players who perform consistently well game after game. Hand them out with careful judgment, and you can use them as encouragement for good role-playing.

Nemuranai as Characters

Treating an enchanted item as a character is entirely appropriate. Each enchanted item is an individual, perhaps even a family ancestor. Take care to watch the way a character treats an enchanted weapon under his charge. Those who treat the weapon dishonorably will lose the benefit those weapons give. Those who treat the weapon honorably may discover abilities no one even knew it had.

Famous Nemuranai

Some of the most famous *nemuranai* can be found below. Of course, we'll be listing more in future supplements, but feel free to create your own. A Game Master's *nemuranai* should be unique to his world.

SWORDS

When a blacksmith forges a sword, he empowers it with his own soul, sometimes awakening the spirit within the steel. Swords are created from all Five Elements: Earth (the steel), Fire (the forge), Water (that the red-hot steel is cooled in), Air (used to fan the fire) and Void (from the blacksmith himself). This makes the sword the most perfect and honorable weapon.

Enchanted swords have a long history in Rokugan. Each of the Clan *daimyo* wields a katana that has been passed down through the generations from the kami themselves, and each samurai who wielded the sword passed on a bit of their own soul into the steel.

Reflecting an enchanted sword in game mechanics can be as simple as giving the sword a bonus die to the DR. An enchanted katana could be 4k2 or 3k3 or even 4k3 (or higher), depending on the enchantment. Enchanted swords can also have benefits such as "re-roll all 1s," or "read all 1s as Fire when striking." It is up to the GM what kind of bonus an enchanted sword will give.

KENCHI: THE BLOODSWORDS

It is rumored that four of these deadly weapons exist, each hungry for the blood of mortal men. Each appears as a katana of fine quality, although stories have said the steel of a bloodsword resonates with the hue of a crimson sunset. It is also said that kenchi moan when they draw

blood, that spectral figures can be seen looming over the wielder when he takes a life – reportedly the souls the sword has stolen.

Kenchi are powerful weapons, but they also bear a terrible hunger for blood. Samurai who wield bloodswords often find themselves at the end of their tempers, as if the hunger of the sword could be passed on to the wielder.

Whenever a kenchi takes a life, the power of the weapon grows. The more that it kills, the more power it gains, and the more influence it gains over its owner. A kenchi's strength is measured in power levels. All kenchi begin at power level 1, but if it takes a number of lives equal to its current power level, it rises to the next power level.

For example, a kenchi at power level 1 kills one samurai. Consequently, the bloodsword is now at power level 2. A power level 2 kenchi must take 2 lives in order to reach level 3, and then it must kill 3 times in order to reach level 4.

The power level of the sword has both an advantage and a disadvantage. Whenever the wielder of a kenchi rolls damage, he may re-roll any dice that roll lower than the level of the sword. On the flipside, whenever the wielder finds himself in a stressful situation, he must make a Willpower roll against the current level of the kenchi x 5. If he fails, he draws the sword and attacks and cannot sheathe the sword again until he makes a successful Willpower roll.

CRYSTAL KATANAS (AND OTHER WEAPONS)

For centuries, Crab shugenja have been experimenting with crystal weapons and their effects on the creatures from the Shadowlands. Apparently, crystal has a profound effect on Shadowlands creatures. It is said that crystal items – when purified by a shugenja – shine brightly when they are in the presence of Shadowlands creatures. It is also said this halo of pure light causes them severe pain.

The spirits sleeping in crystal react when in the presence of the Shadowlands Taint. The crystal begins to glow with a powerful white aura. The strength of the aura depends on the strength of the spirit within the crystal. Crystals have a strength rating from 1-5. The strength of the crystal determines the radius of the crystal's power, which is one foot per point of strength. When a crystal encounters someone (or something) with the Shadowlands Taint, both make a roll: the

空

YOUR GRANDFATHER'S SWORD

In Rokugan, a samurai carries his grandfather's sword and wakizashi. That's it. Nothing else.

After all, the souls of your ancestors are sleeping within the steel of the sword. Do you want to dishonor them by choosing another weapon?

The Crab Clan are an exception: while the Crab recognize that it is important to honor the ancestral weapon, the denizens of the Shadowlands are below such honorable actions.

Therefore, many Crabs wield a variety of weapons to use against the foul beasts, but when they face a human opponent, they draw their grandfather's sword.

crystal against a TN of 15, and the creature against the crystals strength rating x 5. If the strength of the crystal is not enough to overcome the Shadowlands Taint, the crystal has no effect on the creature. If the strength of the crystal overcomes the creature, however, it will keep the creature out of the aura of the crystal.

If crystal ever comes in contact with a creature with the Shadowlands Taint, another contested roll is made. This time, if the crystal succeeds, the wielder of the crystal rolls a number of damage dice against the creature equal to the strength of the crystal. If the crystal fails, it does no damage at all.

ANCESTRAL SWORDS

The most famous swords in all of Rokugan are the ancestral katana of the Seven Clans. The might of these weapons is incredible. You will learn of their power in future supplements detailing the Clans.

"BITTER" - A SWORD OF LEGEND FORGED BY TOGASHI NYOKO

Togashi Nyoko, famed shugenja and sword smith, was said to have forged five swords which she called the "Swords of Legend." Where she got the steel for them is a matter of much speculation, as is the final resting place of three of the five swords. However, the katana named "Bitter" is still owned by the Dragon clan, though no one currently wields it. Although a powerful weapon against iniquity, it is well known that those who carry Bitter are subject to compulsions from the sword's angry spirit.

This katana has a damage rating equal to 5 - the Honor of its target. Thus, it has a DR of 5 against most Shadowlands creatures, a DR of 3 against the average Honor 2 samurai, but would do no damage against someone with Honor 5. However, when the bearer encounters someone with Honor 0 (and even most peasants have Honor 1), Bitter's owner must roll Willpower against their own Honor x 5, or feel compelled to attack immediately. For example, a samurai with Honor 4 and Willpower 3 who met an Honor 0 Crab clansman at an Imperial feast would have to roll 3 dice and beat a 20 to avoid attacking the man on the spot - regardless of social consequences.

Furthermore, if Bitter's owner should ever drop to Honor 0, he or she must immediately make a Willpower roll against TN 30. If this roll

is failed, the owner will be subject to nightmares, depression and (usually within three days) and inexorable compulsion to commit suicide with Bitter.

"HONORABLE" - A SWORD OF LEGEND FORGED BY TOGASHI NYOKO

This wakizashi is the companion sword for the katana named "Bitter." It was this sword that Nyoko used to deliver a final blow to Hida Raiden when he mocked her for trying to be a shugenja, a samurai and a swordsmith all at once.

It is well known that the blade literally reflects the soul of its holder - bright and burnished when the bearer's heart is true, dull and tarnished if held by someone without honor.

In several instances when Dragon samurai were ordered to commit seppuku, they were given this blade to complete the task. It is well known that Honorable gives a swift-edged suicide to the virtuous, while presenting a dull and painful edge to the shamed.

The number of dice the wielder keeps when rolling damage is equal to his Honor Rank.

OTHER WEAPONS

Generally, other weapons are not prevalent enough to "awaken," but there are instances of *tetsubo nemuranai*, *yari nemuranai* and even *tessen nemuranai*.

Other Items

ISAWA GURAGU'S ORIGAMI CRANE OF GOOD FORTUNE

The legendary shugenja Isawa Guragu gave this item as a gift to a Crane clan maiden with whom he'd become smitten. Though she spurned him for a handsome Crab clan warrior (which led to an unforeseen series of events ending with the deaths of all three lovers, immortalized now in a famous poem) the Crane clan kept the gift, which has brought good luck to anyone who carries it. (The central irony of the abovementioned poem, "Three Corned Heart", is that the unlucky events which befell all three would never have happened if she'd only been carrying the Origami Crane with her.)

The bearer of the Origami Crane may re-roll any 1s once per roll.

THE RING OF NIGHT

The ninja of myth are reputed to have an oni-



created ring that allows its bearer to change into a living shadow. The stories tell that this living shadow can slip through the thinnest crack, or pour down a wall like smoke, all the while insubstantial – unable to strike or be struck with any weapon, even magic weapons. However, this living shadow often finds the world of shadows confusing and disorienting – it is easier for one wearing the ring to see the shadows of the living than their own bodies. There are no odors, sounds are muffled (and the shadow ninja is, of course, perfectly silent himself) and travel is only possible across surfaces – no leaping or jumping is possible.

Despite these deficiencies, the Ring of Night is a powerful tool for spying and even for assassination – though the second can be quite problematical, because no clothing or objects (other than the ring itself) can be changed into shadow. Furthermore, the man who would change himself must first be completely drenched in blood. (The stories differ on one point; some claim it must be human blood, others say any blood will do.) Every transformation requires a fresh immersion, so an assassin who would use the ring to both get in and out of his target's presence would have to find a weapon on site, and then coat himself with blood again before changing into a shadow and fleeing.

THE SHARING RINGS OF SOSHI JIRO

This pair of powerful rings is also very dangerous. Whoever accepts one of these rings is bound to it, and to the owner of the other ring, until death. The ring can be taken from the hand, thrown away, even buried – but the next time the ring bearer wakes up, the ring will be somewhere on his body. (Usually a finger, but one Lion samurai who went mad from the ring and cut off all his fingers and toes found himself waking with the ring in his mouth.)

Each ring binds itself to its owner, but the rings will not both bind to a single owner for reasons that will become obvious; the two rings form a resonance between the two owners. If one ring owner looks through the ring with her right eye, she will see what the other ring owner sees through his right eye. If she puts the ring by her ear, she will hear what he hears. If she puts it on her right or left hand and concentrates, her hand will go through the same motions as the hand of the other wearer.

This communication goes both ways, of course, which is why the Scorpion clan are care-

ful, when they give one ring away, to not inform the recipient of the ring's true nature.

An unavoidable side effect of the rings are that the two wearers become close and closer psychologically, until they share dreams. (The Lion samurai who went mad began to suspect there was something strange about the ring when his dreams were populated with strange Scorpion women and men that he felt were his relatives.)

The danger of the rings is that if both wearers know of their properties, it becomes possible that both will try to look through the other's eye at the same time, or both will try to hear through the same ear. When this happens, their two minds and souls are flung together in a terrible confusion that leaves both forever insane.

It has also been documented that if one of the ring-holders kills the other, the shock of release can be deadly to the slayer as well.

THE BONSAI PINE OF IUCHI RAMATSU

Bonsai, the art of growing miniature trees, was cultivated first by the Crane clan, but was much admired by the Unicorn clan during their long journey outside Rokugan's borders. One of their cleverest shugenja painstakingly spent forty years raising a pine tree in a thimble – though by now it appears to have the dimensions and form of a massive, elder tree, it is still the size of a delicate woman's smallest finger.

What is more remarkable about Iuchi Ramatsu's bonsai pine is that the spirit of the tree can bring human people down to its own size. All that is required is a somber contemplation of the tree, accompanied by the ardent wish to be with it. The looker will suddenly find him- or herself standing on rough soil next to a giant pine tree – while all around, grotesquely huge giants observe the tree as well. One must only bid the tree farewell to return to normal size.

At the battle of Malka Oasis, the Unicorn shrank an entire unit of mercenaries and hid them within the tiny tree. When their enemies thought they had the Unicorn surrounded with superior numbers, the mercenaries suddenly appeared.

In another instance, the tree was essential in providing provisions during a lengthy journey; it was simple for all who were traveling to take turns shrinking down into the thimble, which was leaned against a single fig. In time, the whole caravan could be fed from a single piece of fruit.

THE MIRROR OF DUELING SOULS

An item of ancient and unknown origin, this mirror is flat and round, set in a carved wooden frame. The reflecting surface has a strange, pearlescent color to it.

Its function is engaged when two hostile individuals stare at each other's reflections within it. The two immediately begin a duel, not of body, but of soul.

Few who have used the mirror are eager to describe what occurred during the duel; it is only known that many who engage in such duels undergo remarkable personality changes. Asako Sugi said that the duel of souls takes place in your deepest memories – those events that make you who you are. She believed that she had won her duel, but said there was really no way to be sure; since the winner could control the recollections of the loser, there's no way she could be sure that the other duelist (Shosuro Akihiko) had not simply made her believe she had won.

First, the duelists make a contested Willpower roll. The loser must describe a critical situation in the character's life. Then the memory is replayed, with the "host" of that recollection taking on the role of himself in that situation, while the "visitor" takes the role of someone else in the event. The players play the event out. The visitor is trying to make the event come out differently, in some way that will be psychically traumatic to the host, while the host either tries to remain unchanged or tries to change the situation to come out better.

The GM can assign free raises to duelists who roleplay a particularly damaging turn well. Then, when both have played the scene out (in cases of physical conflict, use the normal combat rules – but use Intelligence instead of Agility, and Willpower instead of Strength), the duelists match wits to try to impose their own vision of events – either the original or a modified one – in the host's mind. Resolve this as a contested Intelligence roll.

Once that memory has been defended, changed or improved, the scene shifts to the other duelist's memory; the visitor is now the host for another attempted "edit".

One crucial memory from each duelist is visited. A third round consists of their first memories of each other, with each playing the role of him- or herself.

The key to winning in the mirror is to keep your own key memory the same, while changing

the memory of your opponent. Even if the change appears beneficial, it ultimately changes who you are – and reveals regrets that weaken you. The third match is a little different, because both will remember it as it plays out in the mirror, *not* as it happened in real life. This can be essential to resolving (or exacerbating) an argument. (If either duelist tries to kill the other in the third match, run it like a real world combat; the loser loses the third match.)

Whoever won the most matches can partially change the loser's personality – the scope of these changes is up to individual GMs. Note that "winning" the third match is highly subjective; it's possible for a duel in the mirror to be a tie in which both participants remain unchanged, or in which each modifies the other.

Finally, it is up to the GM if the players retain control of characters who have lost mirror duels and been "modified." If the GM decides that PCs who lose become NPCs, this should be made abundantly clear to the players before they decide whether to duel or not.

Good examples of critical situations include:

- Being insulted and degraded by a drunken parent.
- The practice duel at your iaijutsu school where you were overcame the sensei's favorite student, earning lavish praise from both your sensei and the defeated opponent.
- Arriving at a dying parent's bedside just in time to hear a last piece of cherished wisdom, or a long-sought expression of parental pride.
- When you almost, but not quite, saved your sister from drowning.
- When you ran away from a duel in fear.
- Your father's heroic sacrifice – facing certain death at the hands of a hungry ghost to give you and your siblings a chance to escape.

Rokugan's Calendar

There are six hours in the Rokugan day and 6 hours in the Rokugan night. The six daylight hours are Hare (5 AM - 7 AM), Dragon (7 AM - 9 AM), Serpent (9 AM - 11 AM), Horse (11 AM - 1 PM), Goat (1 PM - 3 PM) and Monkey (3 PM - 5 PM). The six night hours are Rooster (5 PM - 7 PM), Dog (7 PM - 9 PM), Boar (9 PM - 11 PM), Rat (11 PM - 1 AM), Ox (1 AM - 3 AM) and Tiger (3 AM - 5 AM).

Rokugan uses a "lunar calendar" which

employs twelve months. Odd months have 29 days and even months have 30 days. The full moon arrives on the fifteenth of every month which divides the month into two "seasons." The new moon arrives at the end of the month on the last day. The months are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

The Rokugani use two calendars and two clocks; the one described here is used by the peasants. It's based on the old religion, and uses animals for its nomenclature. The one you'll see in the adventure is used by the samurai caste, and uses the *kami*.



The method by which enlightened rulers and sagacious generals moved and conquered others ... was with advanced knowledge

Advanced knowledge cannot be gained from ghosts and spirits, inferred by phenomena, or projected by the measures of Heaven, but must be gained from men

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

One of the most fascinating and enigmatic aspects of Rokugan culture is the ninja. They are Rokugan's foremost experts on espionage and deception, two elements of battle that every general must know and employ in order to achieve victory. No *daimyo* would ever admit to employing ninja, but it is almost certain that every *daimyo* has — at the very least — considered using their unique talents.

The ninja of Rokugan have a very distinct history, beginning one thousand years ago with a conversation between Hantei and his brother Bayushi. Since then, the "ninja clan" has grown from its humble beginnings. While they still maintain strong contacts with their Scorpion cousins, they have become a force of their own in the Emerald Empire.

A Warning to Game Masters

Before you read through this information, we should tell you the one thing it does not contain: information on player character ninja.

We recommend against players taking the role of ninja. Ninja are the most mysterious individuals in Rokugan. Even the Scorpion Clan doesn't know all their secrets. Allowing players to take the roles of ninja lifts their highly protected veil of mystique.

A future supplement, *The Way of Shadow*, will provide you with even more information on Rokugan's ninja, along with rules for playing a "ninja campaign."

A Warning to Players

All information in the *Book of Void* is intended for the GM, especially the following information. Continued reading will spoil all the surprises that await you when — and if — you encounter the enigmatic ninja of Rokugan.

Beginnings

All it took was a handful of gold, a willing servant and the command: "Watch." That is how the ninja cult began in Rokugan. The Scorpion Clan would approach the servant of another Clan, put gold in their hands and tell them to watch, listen and remember.

The seeds had been planted, and the branches of the Scorpion information network began to grow. Once a servant learned how to watch and listen, they began to learn how to move through the house at night without being detected. Once they learned how to move, they began to learn how to climb. The Scorpion spies became quite industrious and inventive. They began paying geisha and actors to teach them acting and make-up techniques in order to give them the "invisibility" they would need. A proverb quickly became popular amongst the spy network: "The best place to hide is in plain sight."

After decades of practice and experimentation, the Scorpion spy network was one of the most powerful organizations in Rokugan. While it

HANTEI'S COMMAND

The history of Rokugan's ninja begins, oddly enough, with a command from Hantei I. After Fu Leng's defeat, the Emperor knew he would need a system of gathering information from the other clans to ensure his dynasty's tenure on the Emerald Throne. But whom could he trust to create and develop such an order?

After careful consideration, Hantei turned to his brother Bayushi. Out of all of his brothers and sisters, only Bayushi had the talents to accomplish what Hantei needed. Hantei told his brother of his plan and told him who he wished to organize the order of spies, but also informed his brother that if he betrayed his trust, he would make certain that his dynasty would be erased from the Empire. Bayushi accepted, and the Emperor's spy network was born.

could be said that its power came from the skills of its agents, rumors began to circulate amongst the other Clans that the Scorpion spies were employing black magic rather than mundane means to achieve its goals. The Emperor (now Hantei X) was concerned by the rumors. He confronted Bayushi Hajioki - the daimyo of the Clan at that time - regarding the accusations, and instead of making excuses, Hajioki declared he would officially dismantle the organization immediately.

Hantei was pleased with the swift decision of the Scorpion, but he did not trust him. He ordered that all members of the spy network would report to the Emerald Champion for questioning. Those who disobeyed the order would be put to death. Only twenty percent of the Scorpion spies reported. All were found guilty by the Emerald Champion of performing forbidden magics and put to death, including the head of the network, Hajioki's own brother, Aramoro. One of the greatest plays of the famous playwright Akodo Jimonen tells the tale of the two brothers with

such emotion that Emperor Hantei XXI outlawed the play for the sympathy it created for the famous spy.

With the death of Aramoro, the spy network was assumed to be broken. Without the support of the Scorpion Clan, individual spies would have no resources or safe havens to fall back upon, and no system of reward for their actions. However, only twenty percent of the network turned themselves in, and there was no subsequent investigation to round up the other spies. The Empire assumed that because the network's leadership had been killed, the network itself would fall apart.

The Empire was wrong.

The Birth of the Ninja

In fact, the actions of the Emerald Champion and the Emperor gave the network its deadliest weapon. Now, they were truly invisible.



The Scorpion Clan could no longer officially acknowledge the network of spies, but decades of missions made the structure nearly self-sufficient. They no longer needed the resources of the Scorpion Clan to continue. While the Scorpion Clan still maintained connections to the network (many of them were family, after all), it had become its own entity. Many of the spies were Scorpions, but now that they were independent, they began to draw talent from all across the Empire.

After they had recovered from their losses, the network decided upon one solid course of action: revenge for their fallen lord, Aramoro. His sacrifice convinced the rest of the Empire that they were no longer a force to be feared in Rokugan. Their next action would prove the Empire wrong.

One year to the date after the death of Bayushi Aramoro, the Emerald Champion was found dead in his home. His head and hands were missing: the traditional punishment for those who are found guilty of practicing black magic. From that day forward, the network was known as the ninja.

The Families of Shadow

Shadow has no substance. It is liquid darkness, spilling across a room and retreating from the light as the tide washes ashore and then pulls back to the ocean.

The ninja are shadows. A ninja has no true identity, only pseudonyms. A ninja is able to shift from persona to persona with ease. As quickly as a ninja changes clothes, he can change identities. So is the way of the ninja, the Way of Shadow.

After one thousand years, the ninja are now, more than ever, their own distinct Clan. They do not bring members of the Great Clans into their ranks, but they have been known to recruit from the ranks of the peasant class. Moving from peasant to ninja can certainly be viewed as a step up in Rokugan's social ladder, but moving from samurai to ninja... well, that's a different story.

There are many ninja families in Rokugan, but three are the most prominent. At the forefront is the Bayushi family. While they share a family name with the chief family of the Scorpion Clan, they are no longer directly related. It is rumored that the Bayushi ninja take children of the Scorpion Bayushi for training, but if this does

occur, it is a very rare event.

The second family is the Goju family. The voracious research of this family created the rumors of black magic amongst the Clans. If the Goju are not practitioners of black magic, then they are truly masters of illusion.

The Ninube family are masters of disguise and infiltration. When the storytellers of Rokugan tell their tales of a ninja entering a town and impersonating twenty people in one night, they are more than likely telling the tale of a Ninube ninja.

The Training of a Ninja

Ninja are trained in many different skills, some of which are unique to the ninja school. A fully trained ninja must know sleight of hand, disguise, mimicry, impersonation, lock picking, stealth, subterfuge, demolitions, poisons, climbing, falling and tumbling in addition to a wide variety of bugei skills. In short, a ninja spends his entire life learning the career of his parents.

A single ninja character is trained to be able to distract, confuse and befuddle an entire party of player characters in order to make his escape. He is trained in the arts of espionage, disguise, sabotage and assassination. He is not the super martial artist depicted in modern films. He doesn't have time to learn the fine arts of kenjutsu or kyujutsu; he is too busy learning other skills.

As a ninja develops his mundane skills (climbing, impersonation, etc.), he is readying his mind for the advanced skills he will learn later. Some whisper that these mundane skills prepare the ninja's mind for accepting the dark energies generated by black magic while others say the ninja drink Oni blood to gain shapeshifting abilities. The truth may never be known, and may also be irrelevant. However the ninja gain their skills, they are still one of the most dangerous forces in the Empire.

The Ninja Character

Listed below are the Skills available to ninja characters, presented in the same format as characters from one of the Great Clans. While this could be used to allow players to create ninja characters, we must stress again that allowing a

THE WAY OF SHADOW

While we may discourage players from taking the roles of ninja, it is because ninja characters are skilled and resourceful - much more powerful than samurai characters.

Allowing one player to play a ninja can cause strife among the other players.

The Way of Shadow, a sourcebook devoted entirely to the ninja families of Rokugan, will tell you everything you need to know about the warriors of shadow. Information on the skills and tools of the ninja will be included as well as information their unique "shadow magic" called *shinobi*. *Game Masters* will also find useful tips on how to run a "ninja campaign."

空

THE NINJA MYSTIQUE

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of running LSR RPG is convincing the players that their characters don't believe

ninja exist. Many of the Clans believe that ninja are the boogymen of Rokugan. They are the products of peasant stories and paranoid (or incompetent) magistrates.

After all, how difficult is it for a group of peasants to ambush a samurai, knock him unconscious, throw a couple of shuriken into his back and cry "NINJA"?

While we have included rules for ninja here, it is important for you, the GM, to decide the real truth about ninja. Do they exist?

Are their powers mystical or mundane? Are the legends of ninja families just a ruse for some other conspiratorial group?

player to take the role of a ninja is unbalanced at best.

THE FAMILIES

Bayushi: The Bayushi family of the ninja clan are the chief organizers and administrators. They are the oldest family and maintain their old contacts with the Great Clans. **Benefit:** +1 Reflexes.

Goju: The Goju family are the shugenja of the ninja clan. However, the magic they practice is very different from the magic of the Great

Clans.

It involves rites and practices that have been forbidden by the Emperor for a thousand years. **Benefit:** +1 Intelligence.

Ninube: The Ninube family have perfected infiltration to a fine art. The Ninube are not raised with a single identity, but several. **Benefit:** +1 Awareness.

The Schools

BAYUSHI NINJA SCHOOL RANK I

Requirements: None

Benefit: +1 Agility

Skills: Acrobatics, Acting, Defense, Explosives, Mimic, Poison, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, plus any 3 Ninjutsu.

Technique: Distraction. Through the ninja's unusual movements (and using the ninja-to as a defensive weapon), the ninja is a very difficult target to hit. The ninja may, during the declaration phase, decide to use Distraction instead of one of the Three Maneuvers. By using Distraction, the ninja raises the TN to hit him by either 10 or 20 (Reflexes x 5 + 10 or 20). However, any actions he chooses to take also have their TNs raised by 10 or 20.

NINJA SKILLS

Acrobatics: All ninja are trained in Acrobatics.

Specialties: Climbing, Leaping, Falling

Acting: This skill is known by geisha, actors and (of course), ninja.

Specialties: Disguise, Comedy, Tragedy, Noh, Kabuki

Disguise: The ninja version of disguise is much more sophisticated than the skill allowed to

player characters. Every Rank of Disguise gives the ninja an entirely new persona to adopt.

Explosives: This skill represents the ninja's experience with the small explosives used in stink bombs, smoke bombs, flash paper, etc.

Sleight of Hand: This skill allows the ninja to perform many sleight of hand tricks such as palming small objects, picking pockets, etc.

Shinobi (Stealth): The ninja version of stealth (shinobi) is vastly superior to the Stealth skill available to player characters. Shinobi allows the ninja to "hide in plain sight"

When looking for a Ninja using Shinobi, it is usually a Contested Roll using Perception vs. the ninja's

Willpower + Shinobi.

Ninjutsu

Ninjutsu is a broad term that includes all of the ninja weapons and equipment. Instead of forcing ninja to take a different skill for each piece of equipment (about 14 different skills), we've made Ninjutsu a single skill, allowing ninja to specialize in their favorite weapons. Listed below are the typical items that can be found in a ninja's repertoire. Game masters should not consider this a complete list. All ninja items can be used as both equipment and a weapon.

kaginawa: The grappling hook.

kusari-fundo: A chain with weights on each end.

kusari-gama: The sickle and chain

kyoketsu-shoge: A hook weapon with a rope and ring used to ensnare attackers

ninja-to: The ninja equivalent of the katana, the ninja-to is often a sword of poor quality. It is not meant to be used as a practical weapon (it would shatter if it was used against a katana of any degree of quality) but a tool for carrying smaller weapons and equipment.

shinobi-zue: hidden weapons

shuko: climbing claws

shuriken: small throwing stars and spikes,



used to distract a pursuer

tetsubishi: caltrop

yawara: little sticks held in the hand for punching vital areas

Three Ninja

Listed below are three ninja NPCs, one from each of the families.

BAYUSHI ARAMORO, "THE WHISPER OF STEEL"

EARTH 3
Willpower 4

WATER 2
Perception 2

FIRE 3

AIR 4
Reflexes 5

Honor: 1 (7)

Skills: 3 Acrobatics, 1 Acting, 2 Defense, 1 Disguise, 1 Explosives, 3 Poison, 3 Sleight of Hand, 4 Shinobi, 4 Kenjutsu

Ads & Disads: Quick, Danger Sense, Perfect Balance, Dark Secret (in love with brother's wife)

Notes: Bayushi Aramoro takes his name from the Aramoro of legend. He is a ninja of high regard and the brother of the Scorpion Clan daimyo, Shoji. At just over six feet tall, he is very large for a Rokugani.

It has been a long standing tradition of the Bayushi family to give their second-born son to the ninja Bayushi. At his gempukku ceremony, he was given the choice of which family to serve. He took one look at the young wife of his brother and knew that he must put as much distance between himself and Kachiko as he could.

He is now the master of security in the Scorpion stronghold with twenty ninja under his command.

GOJU EDEDEI, "THE THIEF OF EYES"

EARTH 2

WATER 2

FIRE 3

AIR 3

Honor: 0 (3)

Skills: 1 Acrobatics, 1 Acting, 2 Defense, 1 Disguise, 1 Explosives, 2 Poison, 3 Sleight of Hand, 4 Shinobi

Spells Known: Secrets on the Wind, Know the

Shadows, Way of Deception, and several others.

Ads and Disads: Bente's Curse, Reputation (The Thief of Eyes)

Notes: Looking at Ededei is not pleasant. Goju Ededei is a small, wiry man. His blotted skin and coarse hair make him stand out in a crowd. His voice is slight and high pitched and his right eye is a bit cloudy. Ededei has overcome his physical appearance and has become one of the most dangerous shugenja/ninja in Rokugan.

Ededei has a bit of a reputation in Rokugan, even though no-one can really associate him with it. Whenever Ededei makes a kill, he collects one of the eyes of his victim. He has quite a collection and keeps them in a magical container that keeps them frozen.

NINUBE HIRARIKO, "THE SILKEN SHADOW"

EARTH 2

WATER 2
Perception 3

FIRE 2
Agility 3

AIR 3
Awareness 4

Honor: 0 (1)

Skills: 4 Acting, 3 Defense, 4 Disguise, 3 Explosives, 3 Poison, 4 Shinobi, 2 Ninjutsu (2 Ninja-to)

Ads and Disads: Bente's Blessing, Quick

Notes: Hirariko is an expert infiltrator. She has four different personae, allowing her to gain information from all across the Empire. She is a Lion courtesan, a Crane diplomat, a peasant servant to Isawa Uona and (her greatest achievement) the Crane daimyo's favorite geisha.



THE KOLAT

Players of the Legend of the Five Rings CCG will recognize that name, but the question remains ... who are the Kolat?

All we can say here is that over the next year or so, you will learn their ways, one secret at a time. You will discover their origins with the Yasuki family in *The Way of the Crab*, and you will meet the Kolat Master himself in *The Way of the Lion*.

But beware! The closer you get to uncovering the secret of the Kolat, the more dangerous the truth becomes.

FU LENG AND THE SHADOWLANDS TAINT

The vast wasteland known to the Rokugani as "The Shadowlands" is where Fu Leng landed after his fall from the heavens. It is a source of complete mystery; not even the Crab Clan have maps for the deepest and darkest sections.

Almost all of the creatures of Rokugan (the vile, disgusting, evil ones) originate from the Shadowlands and almost all of them have "the Shadowlands taint." In fact, many Crab samurai have become tainted by the evil aura of this land.

In the Game Master's Pack, we'll be fully discussing the Shadowlands taint as well as its effects on those who fall under its influence.



Most of the monsters have no Traits listed. Many of these monsters are only going to be sword and spell-bait for the PCs, so they shouldn't need that level of detail. If a monster becomes an important NPC, you will certainly want to develop it more fully with Skills and Traits. This is certainly not an all-inclusive list of the creatures that are inhabiting Rokugan during the clan wars, but it should help get you started.

Special Abilities

Many creatures will have special abilities unique to their species. However, some are common amongst many of Rokugan's bestiary. They are explained fully below.

FEAR

When characters encounter a creature with Fear, all who view the creature must make a Willpower roll against the creature's Fear Rating x 5. Those who fail cannot use Void Points while combating the creature and also must drop dice lower than the Fear Rating while taking actions against the creature.

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

Some creatures may attack more than once per round. A creature which has the Multiple Attacks ability will have the number of attacks it may make per round listed.

INVULNERABILITY

Creatures who have this Trait are immune to the effects of normal weapons. When struck by mundane weapons, a creature with Invulnerability only takes a single Wound of damage. Only weapons of crystal or jade, or *nemuranai*, may harm it fully. Particularly nasty GMs may

decide that only one of the vulnerabilities (crystal or jade) will affect the creature.

Monster Format

All monsters are listed in this format:

Monster Name: This is the name of the monster.

Traits: A complete list of the monster's Traits.
Rolls When Attacking: This is the number of dice a monster rolls when it attacks.

Rolls For Damage: This is the standard damage roll that the monster will be making. The standard attack form is also listed. If a monster that uses a weapon loses it, its damage should drop significantly.

TN to Hit: This is the Target Number a Character has to roll in order to hit the monster.

Armor: any damage dice rolled to damage the monster that are below this rating are reduced to a '1'.

Wounds: Monsters still have Wound Levels, but they are a little simpler. A Monster's wound levels are listed by how many Wounds it must lose before it reaches the next wound level and the size of the dice penalty. Larger monsters (like ogres or giant oni) have more wound levels.

Example: Goblins' wound levels are 6-1, 12-Dead. When a goblin takes 6 points worth of Wounds it is at 1 fewer die for all rolls. When it takes 12 Wounds, it dies.

Goblins (Bakemono)

When Fu Leng's army was defeated by Shinsei, the dark lord realized that enslaving mankind was going to be a difficult and lengthy task. So he decided to create his own race to serve in the interim. Lacking the skills of Lord Sun and Lady Moon, however, he could not achieve man's quality. His "men" were twisted mockeries, with pointed features and misshapen limbs who spoke in shrieking giggles. Nonetheless, they were adequate for his purposes, and he named the new beings goblins.

Goblins are the foot soldiers of the Shadowlands, the lowest rung on the Oni's ecological ladder. They are typically found in loose-knit tribes of several dozen, led by a single shaman or warlord. Goblins delight in harassing the forces of humanity, who they feel occupy their rightful place in the universe. Goblin mythology

centers on the inevitable overthrow of man, when Fu Leng will ascend to heaven and his creations will be left to rule earth.

Intertribal warfare and the ruthless Darwinism of the Shadowlands has kept goblins from being more of a threat than they are. They often conduct raids against Rokugan, but their attacks are usually small and ill-conceived. Occasionally, a charismatic leader will forge several tribes into a legitimate army, but such incidents are uncommon. The more powerful Oni often use goblins as cannon fodder, or as probes to locate weaknesses in their enemies' defense. Outside of the Shadowlands, they usually travel in "war bands" of twenty or thirty. In battle, they are heedless of their own safety, counting on swarming tactics and strength of numbers to overcome more skilled adversaries. Their fighting

techniques are based on overwhelming one individual at a time, and they often ignore all other threats until their "target" has been killed. Needless to say, they breed like rabbits to keep their population up.

ORDINARY GOBLIN

EARTH 2

FIRE 2

WATER 1

AIR 1

Rolls When Attacking: 5k2

Rolls For Damage: 4k2 (sword)

TN to Hit: 10

Armor: 3

Wounds: 6: - 1; 12: - Dead



FEAR

Listed below are the Fear Ratings for all creatures with the Fear Trait:

Gaki: Fear 5
Ubume: 2
Goryo: 3
Kumo: 5
Ogres: 2
Zombie: 4
Skeletons: 4
Pennagolan: 4
Kyoso no Oni: 5
Oni no Shikibu: 5
Oni no Akuma: 4
Oni no Tsuburu: 4

Goblin Warmongers are bigger and smarter than their counterparts. They are clever enough to figure out how to put on the armor and swing the swords, and when the Goblins raid Crab Castles, in front of the army are the Warmongers.

GOBLIN WARMONGER

EARTH 3
FIRE 3
WATER 2
AIR 1

Rolls When Attacking: 5k3
 Rolls For Damage: 5k2 (sword)
 TN to Hit: 15
 Armor: 5
 Wounds: 10 - 1; 20: Dead

Yorei (Ghosts)

There are many kinds of ghosts in Rokugan, but the most common are Gaki ("the Hungry"), Shi-ryo ("Ancestors"), Ubume ("the Restless") and Goryo ("the Vengeful"). Shugenja are trained to deal with ghosts, troublesome and otherwise. To test a shugenja's knowledge, use the Lore (Ghost) Skill.

Ghosts have many powers, almost none of which can be reflected by game mechanics. Some Gaki, for instance, eat dreams, while hearing the scream of an Ubume is said to turn a man's skin, hair and eyes white.

Yorei are very predictable. A samurai or shugenja wise in the ways of ghosts will recognize a Yorei when he sees it, and will know how to handle the situation. Curing a household or a village of a troublesome Yorei takes more wits and compassion than swordplay.

A Yorei cannot be touched if it does not wish to be. They can pass through solid objects, fly or sink into the earth. They can also interact with the living world while remaining insubstantial.

There are exceptions to this rule. Jade is often noted for its ability to inhibit the movements of Yorei. Yorei cannot move through jade, nor can they lift jade objects - even tiny ones such as jade coins. In fact, a Yorei can be held in place by tossing a jade coin onto its kimono or by putting it in their hand.

Every Yorei is unique, however. Many have "rules" specific to themselves. If a GM wishes to use Yorei in his campaign, he will need to deter-

mine an individual solution to each one. There are hundreds of different "species" of Yorei. Listed below are four of the most common.

GAKI, THE HUNGRY DEAD

The gaki are "hungry spirits," vampires who prey on the sleeping bodies of the living. Their forms are ephemeral and ghost-like, barely visible to the naked eye. Moonlight, however, makes them glow softly. They can easily move through solid objects, and are impervious to normal weapons. Objects of jade or crystal, or Spirit Ward magics, are the only things that can harm them.

Gaki prefer to strike while their victims are asleep, fading or fleeing when others become aware of them. Not all of them subsist on blood, and gaki have been known to devour people's eyes, tongues and even emotions. Reports of Gaki attacks have come from as far north as the Dragon fortresses.

EARTH 5
FIRE 4
WATER 3
AIR 2

Rolls When Attacking: 5k4
 Rolls For Damage: 6k1 (hands)
 TN to Hit: 20 (only hit with magical or crystal weapons)
 Armor: 5
 Wounds: 15 - 1; 30 - 3; 45: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Eat Blood: This is the Gaki's most important ability. Eating blood is a regular combat strike. If successful, the Gaki deals out 6 Wounds which are immediately transferred to the Gaki. For every 6 Wounds the Gaki steals in this manner, it gains 6 Wounds.

Invisibility: A Gaki is quite nearly invisible. Gaki cannot be viewed with Perception rolls unless they are in full moonlight. Only Awareness rolls can view Gaki. The TN for both rolls is 25.

Insubstantial: Gaki can easily move through solid objects. However, they cannot move through jade or crystal.

SHI-RYO, THE ANCESTORS

Ancestors are spirits from the past who help guide their descendants in time of trouble and need. Not all ancestors are benevolent, however. An ancestor may find his descendant incompetent and quite incapable of living up to his name.

A Shi-ryo can offer guidance (or ridicule) to his descendant. He can choose to be completely invisible, appear only to his descendant, or be completely visible. He has the same Traits as he did when he was alive, but also gains the usual Yorei special abilities (see above).

UBUME, THE MOURNING ONES

Ubume are ghosts of women who have died in childbirth or while the child was still in her womb. The mother and child cannot pass into the Afterlife until the child is born. The most common tales of Ubume tell of a woman who stands at a roadside, asking passers by to hold her child. If they accept, the child grows heavy with each passing second. If the holder drops the child, the woman wails and disappears. All within the sound of the woman's grief are usually the recipient of curses, especially the one who dropped the child. If the holder manages to keep hold of the child as its weight increases (making the holder a kind of "surrogate mother" for the Ubume), the child and mother disappear and the holder feels a warm touch or kiss on his cheek (the Ubume's gratitude). Those who assist Ubume are sometimes rewarded by the spirit (perhaps a small silver bauble or one or two experience points that are put directly to raising the samurai's Strength Trait).

Some Ubume are hateful creatures. Depending on the circumstances of their death, they may be driven to cut off other women's hair (which never again grows to its original length), steal children (and feed them "ghost milk" that scars them spiritually and physically) or other malicious acts.

GORYO, THE VENGEFUL

Goryo are the spirits of those who have been murdered. Often, Goryo return to haunt the one who is responsible for their death or work toward bringing the murderer to justice. Often, the goal of the Goryo is to drive its victim to confession or suicide, but there are times that the spirit will keep the victim alive, just so it can continue its tortures.

Goryo are invisible, but when they travel at night, the light of the moon gives them an eerie red or green aura. Their spirit will linger in the living world, haunting the victim (and possibly his family) until he is confronted with a scroll that names his killer and describes his death or a shrine is built and the scroll is placed within.

Shapeshifters

Shapeshifters, called hengeyokai by Rokugani, are forest spirits able to take physical form. Most of the time, they appear as woodland animals, such as foxes, badgers and hawks, but they can also appear as trees, flowers, and almost anything else they take a mind to. Hengeyokai can also appear as humans if they wish, and occasionally walk amongst the Rokugani unseen.

Most shapeshifters are skittish about others seeing them change form (it reveals their true nature). They can take any shape man-sized or smaller, and keep their Traits no matter what form they take. Most of them prefer their animal forms.

KITSUNE

The Kitsune, or foxwives, are clever beings who enjoy playing harmless tricks on hapless humans. Stealing chickens, snatching clothing, exacerbating the feuds of squabbling neighbors... these are the lifeblood of the kitsune. They are clever liars and can spin stories that the even most jaded samurai would believe. Such lies often allow them to exist among men with no one suspecting their true origin. Kitsune almost always appear as stunningly beautiful women. They delight in goading foolish men into ridiculous acts of bravery. Despite their mischievous nature, however, they are by and large benevolent. Their tricks are designed to make humans look foolish, not to harm or injure them. In the right mood, they are capable of extreme kindness, and legends abound of foxwives falling in love with those they harass.

EARTH 2

FIRE 3

WATER 3

AIR 2

Rolls When Attacking: 2k2

Rolls For Damage: 4k2 (bite)

TN to Hit: 15

Armor: 2

Wounds: 8: - 1; 15: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Charm: Kitsune can be quite convincing. When they are speaking to a member of the opposite sex, consider them to have an Awareness of 6.

Industry: Kitsune are also rather industrious around the home. Leave a Kitsune alone in a household and she will have the entire place spotless in no time. In addition, she will have a full meal (for you and any company you wish to bring) in the blink of an eye. All of your clothes will be immaculate and your sword will always shine. A Kitsune can also demolish a home in the blink of an eye. It all depends on how you treat her that day.

KUMO

The Kumo are a man-sized race of shapeshifting spiders. Unlike the Kitsune, they shun human contact, and can only be found in the deepest forests or loneliest vales. Kumo spin webs of

mammoth size, and will eat any creature which becomes ensnared in their strands. They can spit a vicious poison which burns through unprotected flesh.

When they must take human form, it is usually a dusky old man or spindly peddler. They are not averse to human contact, but prefer their own company to that of other creatures.

EARTH 1
FIRE 4
WATER 2
AIR 1

Rolls When Attacking: 5k4
Rolls For Damage: 3k2 (bite)



TN to Hit: 20

Armor: none

Wounds: 6: - 1, 24: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Webs: Only Kumo can climb their own webs. All other creatures get caught in the sticky tangled mess. Webs have a Strength of 5. It is a Contested Roll to get free of webs once a Character comes in contact with them. A Kumo can spit webs up to 30 feet as a regular strike.

Poison: Kumo may spit poison up to 10 feet as a regular strike. Poison strikes with a Strength of 5. The target must make a Contested roll against the strength of the poison or become paralyzed for 10 Rounds.

Ratlings (Nezum)

The ratlings are a race of rodent-like people who originally lived in the area now known as the Shadowlands. When Fu Leng fell from the sky, their homeland was ruined and their tribes scattered to the four winds. They learned to survive as scavengers, feeding off of other races for their own needs. They have since spread across the length and breadth of Rokugan, flourishing both in and out of the Shadowlands. While they are often found in their ancient homelands, they are not creatures of Fu Leng, and therefore do not have the "Shadowlands taint" that affects so many of his minions.

Ratlings appear as furry bipeds, roughly man-sized, with pink tails and the heads of rodents. They travel in nomadic packs (with the strongest among them leading) and never stay in one place for long. They are able to wear human clothing and make use of human weapons whenever they can. Often, they will steal what they need from nearby villages and slink off into the night, avoiding confrontation. When cornered however, they fight with a ferocity equaling the greatest Crab berserker. Smarter and more cautious than goblins, ratlings are capable of tactical thinking, making them wily and effective opponents.

Many members of the Crab clan can speak the ratlings' chattering language, and the Crab often employs ratlings as scouts into the Shadowlands.

TYPICAL RATLING

EARTH 2

FIRE 3

WATER 2

AIR 1

Rolls When Attacking: 4k5

Rolls For Damage: 4k2 (spear)

TN to Hit: 15

Armor: 3

Wounds: 9: -1; 18: Dead

RATLING "SHUGENJA"

EARTH 2

FIRE 2

WATER 3

AIR 2

Attack: 2k2

Rolls For Damage: 3k1 (knife)

TN to Hit: 10

Armor: none

Wounds: 7: - 1; 15: Dead

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Spell Casting: Ratling shamens use barbaric rituals (such as bleeding) rather than scrolls to cast their spells. A Ratling shaman may know three spells whose TNs cannot exceed 15, all of which can be cast without scrolls.

RATLING BUSHI

EARTH 4

FIRE 4

WATER 2

AIR 2

Rolls When Attacking: 6k4

Rolls For Damage: 6k2 (sword) (Some have superior weapons which give them 7k3.)

TN to Hit: 20

Armor: 6 (some Ratling Bushis have 5s or 7s depending on their armor)

Wounds per Level: 10: - 1, 20: - 2, 30: Dead

Ratling Bushi can (and often do) use the armor and weapons of men that they've scavenged from fallen Crab samurai.



Ogres

Some time after the creation of the goblins, Fu Leng made a second attempt to conceive his own race of men. This time, he wanted to improve upon the original, making them strong and monstrous with great tusks and bristling horns. He called them ogres, and set them against the hated humans as he had the goblins before.

While huge and strong (and far more clever than their smaller cousins), ogres still lack certain advantages that human beings take for granted. They have no social structure and cannot organize into large groups. They lack the skills to make tools, surviving instead on hunting and banditry. And their battle tactics – while terrifying – have no finesse, and skilled samurai can usually find ways to defeat them.

Ogres are solitary creatures, only gathering together in times of great upheaval. They subsist

by waylaying travelers, or by hunting the great beasts that prowl the Shadowlands. Of all Fu Leng's creatures, they are the most likely to be found in Rokugan proper, since their small numbers make it easier for them to penetrate Crab defenses.

EARTH 2

Stamina: 6

FIRE 3

WATER 1

Strength: 6

AIR 1

Rolls When Attacking: 4k4

Rolls For Damage: 8k2 (big club, maybe small tree)

TN to Hit: 20

Armor: 7

Wounds per Level: 15; - 1, 30; - 2, 45; - 3, 60; Dead



Zombies & Skeletons

Certain sorcerers have the ability to bind a minor evil spirit into a human corpse. The resulting animated body will move and obey the commands of its master; fighting, marching, etc. according to his or her whims. Zombies are mindless automatons, and have no will of their own. They move slowly and deliberately, but have unnatural strength in their limbs, and can tear a man apart if given the time. While under control of the sorcerer who created them, they can be made to follow another (through the use of talismans or incantations).

Zombies appear as they did when their bodies die, with whatever wounds or injuries were present at that time. They use tools as commanded and can swing weapons as well or as poorly as they did in life. Like all corpses, they rot after a certain, and their stench is usually apparent from some distance away. Eventually, through time or deliberate scouring of the flesh, nothing is left of the zombie but bones (a skeleton, then, is merely a zombie with nothing left to rot). Zombies are unaffected by normal injuries, and must be almost totally dismembered to cease functioning. Beheading has become the standard means of disposing of them. Rokugani consider animated corpses abominations against their ancestors, and seek to destroy them at all costs at all costs.

When a human dies within the Shadowlands, it also rises as a zombie, this time under control of Fu Leng himself. Like the human magicians who ape his magic, Fu Leng can grant control of these abominations to certain trusted minions. Entire armies of skeletons and zombies have launched attacks against Rokugan.

EARTH O

Stamina: 3

WATER I

Strength: 3

FIRE I

AIR O

Rolls When Attacking: 1k1

Rolls For Damage: 5k2 (improvised weapons - many do only 4k1)

TN to Hit: 5

Armor: 7

Wounds per Level: 60: Dead (see below)



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SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Immune to Pain: Zombies take half damage from slashing weapons (round down) and 1/4 damage from crushing weapons.

Invulnerable: Whenever a Zombie loses a Wound Level, it loses a random limb:

- 1-2 Left arm
- 3-4 Right arm
- 5-6 Left leg
- 7-8 Right leg
- 9 Cut in half
- 10 Decapitated

If it loses an arm or leg, the arm or leg slither behind the zombie, keeping up the best it can. The zombie cannot reattach the limb. If it is an arm, the hand will try to attack anyone within reach.

If the zombie is disemboweled (cut in half), the top half will continue to claw after Characters.

If the zombie is decapitated, the zombie collapses and dissolves into black ooze the next morning.

If the porcelain mask is ever taken off the

zombie, it collapses and dissolves. This attack is at TN = 25.

Kenku

The Kenku are a race of raven men who have lived in Rokugan since the time of the Naga. Like the ratlings and the kappa (*q.v.*), they predate the coming of Hantei by many centuries. Kenku appear as man-sized bipedal crows with feathered arms, pointed beaks and huge wings. They are capable of extended flight, and their fingers can manipulate weapons and tools as skillfully as human beings. In battle, they use their wings to buffet and disorient their opponents.

Kenku are inquisitive and curious, and over the centuries have developed a huge repository of knowledge. While not outright spellcasters, they understand a great deal of the universe, and can apply their learning in a way that seems almost magical at times. They serve as scholars and teachers, imparting their wisdom to those who choose to seek them out. While they shun large





cities and are uncomfortable around groups of people, they will happily tutor individuals who take the time to listen to them.

Like the ratlings, Kenku are nomads, and travel from place to place as the mood strikes them. Unlike ratlings, however, they never steal, preferring to barter knowledge for what they need. They have a fondness for bright objects, and will often accrue a large collection of baubles after a time. Their weapons, if they carry them, are always polished to a high shine.

EARTH 2

WATER 4

FIRE 3

AIR 3

Rolls When Attacking: 4k4

Rolls For Damage: Beak or claws: 1k1

TN to Hit: 15

Armor: none

Wounds per Level: 8: -1; 24: -3; 50: Dead

Special Abilities: Kenku are capable swordsmen, and many *kenjutsu* masters of the past have had kenku as teachers. Legends also speak of their mysterious magical powers. Assign any Kenku NPC a number of spells, but they do not need scrolls to cast them. Most of the spells a Kenku would know would be illusionary (*Mists of Illusion* would be appropriate), but they may also know Fire and Water spells as well.

Kappa

The Kappa are mischievous beings who plague travelers with their dangerous tricks. They





are roughly the size of a small child, with man-like features and a rough shell like a turtle's. All Kappa have a strange indentation at the top of their heads, which is always full of water. If the water is drained, the Kappa immediately become weak and powerless (all scores at 1/2).

Kappa live in lakes, streams and rivers, and tend to stay close to human constructions such as docks and bridges. They thrive on blood, both human and animal, and will try to trick passers-by into coming close so that they may feed on them. They delight in riddles and have been known to challenge those they meet into puzzle-solving contests. Despite their predatory nature, they are not entirely evil, and can even be strangely polite to their potential victims. They have a reputation for honesty, and a promise exacted from one of them is honored until death. They have little need for human possessions, and seem uninterested in wealth or power. If confronted with superior numbers, they will flee rather than fight.

EARTH 1

Stamina: 2

WATER 3

FIRE 1

AIR 3

Perception: 3

Rolls When Attacking: 1k1

Rolls For Damage: 1k1

TN to Hit: 15

Armor: 10 (due to hard shell)

Wounds per Level: 6: -1; 12: Dead

Special Abilities: Kappa have been known to use illusionary magic to fool their prey. If a kappa does use magic, use the spell *Mists of Illusion* and consider his *Shugenja Rank* to be 1.

Pennaggolan

Pennaggolan are among the most fearsome undead creatures in existence. A type of vampire, they prey on the weak and sickly, attacking lone farmhouses or small bands of travelers while they sleep. The Pennaggolan's natural form is of a horrid floating head, with intestines and entrails hanging down from the neck. They can manipulate these gruesome tentacles with great power, whipping around throats and limbs, and squeezing the life out of their victims before feeding on

their blood.

Pennaggolan prefer to use stealth and guile to search for food. They can appear as normal humans when it suits them, and will often infiltrate isolated communities disguised as travelers or peasants. They must assume their "natural" forms when feeding, however, and can easily be spotted while traveling sans body. After drinking, their entrails are engorged with blood, and it takes several days for them to squeeze back into their human shells. Soaking the entrails in vinegar speeds the process up considerably, and smarter Pennaggolan will maintain secret locations well-stocked with vinegar jars.

Most Pennaggolan appear as female, although males do exist and are every bit as terrible as their counterparts. If a Pennaggolan's body is destroyed while its head is elsewhere, then its essence is severed, and it will weaken and die after a few days.

EARTH 3

WATER 3

FIRE 2

Perception: 3

AIR 2

Reflexes: 4

Rolls When Attacking: 2k2

Rolls For Damage: Bite: 2k1;

Constricting: 3k1+Immobility (see below)

TN to Hit: 20

Armor: none

Wounds per Level: 6: -1; 18: -3; 30: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear, Invulnerability

The standard Pennaggolan attack involves wrapping its bloody entrails about the victim's body and biting. The enveloping attack is considered a Full Attack. If it is successful, the Pennaggolan inflicts automatic damage (3k1) each round until its grip is broken (Contested Strength roll - The Pennaggolan's Strength is considered 3 for this roll).

Oni

The oni are the principal servants of the god Fu Leng, and among the most terrible adversaries Rokugan has ever faced. Oni are powerful evil spirits who have been granted corporeal form by the whim of their master, or through the dark

magic of evil sorcerers. Oni appearance and abilities vary from individual to individual, but all are hideous, and have powers equal to the greatest human shugenja. Very little beyond jade and powerful magic can harm them.

When an oni takes physical form, it must be granted a name; the essence of someone who participates in the ceremony. Sometimes, only a single body part or personal item can be enough to summon the being. Once named, the oni is under control of the summoner, and must obey his or her wishes. The namer and the named share a common link, and each will experience the emotions and feelings of the other. Eventually such a link will wear down the chi of the human partner, leading to exhaustion, amnesia and even possession. If the oni is not eventually dismissed, it will absorb the entirety of its host's essence, and gain control of his or her soul. Such oni are no longer bound to their summoner, and may enter the physical world whenever they please. They gain the ability to spawn lesser imitations of themselves, and entire "species" of oni have risen from their egocentric self-replication.

Below are the appearance and abilities of several of these species. The founder of each line is unique, and far more powerful than the lesser spawn. All Oni are shapeshifters, capable of taking nearly any form they wish. Many of them have a "natural" shape, however, which is described below. Oni may take shapes that are smaller than their natural shape, but it cannot take a form that is larger.

Fu Leng has the ability to create oni much more easily than human sorcerers, without imbuing them with names. Such oni are usually found only in the Shadowlands, and are irrevocably bound to the Fallen God.

Kyoso

Kyoso no Oni appear as dark pillars of vaguely female-shaped flesh, sprouting four monstrous arms and crowned by a great rack of horns. They move by traveling through solid rock, and can rise up out of the ground whenever they take a whim to it. They attack by launching great bolts of power from their arms, and often seek to destroy their opponents from a distance.

EARTH 3

Willpower: 4

FIRE 3

Intelligence: 4

WATER 3

Perception: 4

AIR 3

Awareness: 4



Rolls When Attacking: 5k3

Rolls For Damage: HTH: 2k1; Unholy Fire: 3k2 (see below)

TN to Hit: 15

Armor: 10

Wounds per Level: 12: -1; 24: -3; 60: Dead

Shugenja Rank: 2

Spells Available: 4 Earth, 4 Fire, 2 Water, 1 Air

Special Abilities: Fear, Invulnerability, Multiple Attacks (3 attacks per round), Unholy Fire

Kyoso may attack up to three times per round. They are known for the "Unholy Fire" they throw from their many limbs. This black fire does not burn the flesh, but the soul of the target. The fire ignores armor penalties. When a character is hit by the fire, he must make a Simple Void roll vs. 10. Void Points cannot be spent on this roll. If successful, there is no effect. If he fails, he loses a Void Point. If a character's last Void Point is taken in this fashion - or if he cannot lose a Void Point from a successful hit - he is knocked unconscious regardless of Wound status.

SHIKIBU

Oni no Shikibu raid tombs and grave for the bodies of the recently deceased. Their normal form appears as a squat, orange fanged dwarf with a bright blue beard and piercing green eyes. They have the ability to twist the flesh of dead bodies to match their forms, and if one of them is destroyed, it can easily reform if a corpse is nearby. For this reason, they prefer to lurk near graveyards or battlefields, enticing opponents to fight them where "fresh supplies" are in abundance.

EARTH 2

WATER 2

Strength: 3

FIRE 2

Agility: 3

AIR 1

Reflexes: 3

Rolls When Attacking: 2k2

Rolls For Damage: 2k1

TN to Hit: 15

Armor: 7

Wounds per Level: 8: -1; 24: -3; 50: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear, Invulnerability

If Shikibu's Wounds reach zero, it can send

his spirit into another body, twisting the body into a shape that can hold it. It must find a body to transfer its essence into, however. In its spirit form, Shikibu can move very quickly, but it cannot move through jade while in its spirit form. It can only remain in its spirit form for a number of rounds equal to its Willpower x 5. Gaining control over a prepared body takes only one round, while taking control over an unprepared body takes anywhere from one to five rounds (roll one d10 and divide by 2, rounding down).

AKUMA

The Oni no Akuma are truly terrifying beasts, sinewy monsters with three blazing eyes and three probing tongues. They live to destroy and have been known to destroy entire villages when the whim takes them. When summoned, they lay waste to the landscape surrounding them, and many presumptuous shugenja have found themselves flattened by their would-be servitors. Their overlord is rumored to be Fu Leng's chief advisor, and obsessed with destroying all traces of humankind.

EARTH 5

FIRE 4

Agility: 5

WATER 5

AIR 4

Reflexes: 5

Rolls When Attacking: 6k5

Rolls For Damage: HTH: 5k3; Burning Tongues: 2k2 (see below)

TN to Hit: 25

Armor: 8

Wounds per Level: 20: -1; 40: -3; 80: Dead

Shugenja Rank: 3

Spells Available: 5 Fire, 4 Earth, 3 Water, 2 Air

Special Abilities: Fear, Invulnerability, Fire Tongues

When they touch flesh, the fire tongues of the Akuma leave a burning saliva that causes an additional die of damage each round until the saliva is washed away. Simple water will not wash off the saliva; vinegar or alcohol are usually applied to the burning solution.

TSUBURU

The great living gullets known as Oni no Tsuburu have sprouted like leeches from their master, the self-styled "Lord of Gluttony," Fat, purple,

and with a belly the size of a horse, Tsuburu will grasp opponents in their greedy claws and swallow them whole. Their sharp fangs and tearing fingers rip through flesh easily, but most prefer their prey undamaged; they delight in listening to the dying screams emerging from their stomachs.

Once in place, an Oni no Tsuburu is very difficult to move. It takes a great effort to shift them from their position, and their dead have been known to rot where they squat, spreading smell and disease for miles.

EARTH 1

Stamina: 7

FIRE 1

Intelligence: 2

WATER 1

Strength: 7

AIR 1

Rolls When Attacking: 1k1

Rolls For Damage: HTH: 3k2; Teeth: 3k1;

Stomach: 1k1

TN to Hit: 5

Armor: 20

Wounds per Level: 28: -1; 56: -3; 150: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear, Invulnerability, Teleportation

Tsuburu's most common attack is a grappling attack. He must win a successful Contested Strength roll with its opponent in order to grapple them. Once grappled, Tsuburu may devour them. Once in Tsuburu's belly, a character takes one die of Wounds for every round he remains there. He may do nothing while in Tsuburu's belly but scream for help from his comrades.

Dying in Tsuburu's belly means the Oni has also devoured the character's spirit. Tsuburu gains much from devoured spirits. Despite its weight (or, perhaps because of it), Tsuburu has found a more convenient method of moving. Tsuburu may vanish from its current location and reappear in another. Tsuburu may only transport himself to a location that is within sight.

Torii

Torii (prayer gates) are found in many parts of Rokugan. Torii are raised for a number of reasons, but the most common are to petition the blessing of a god, thank a god for aid, as payment for a debt owed to a temple, or to honor an esteemed person (normally one recently deceased).

The raising of a torii involves rituals to sanctify the ground and purify the materials. Different gods and occasions require sacrifices to be placed in the foundations of the torii. The sacrificed are thought to stand guard over the pathway of the torii.

Torii come in a wide variety of constructions. The simplest are made of common wood, while the lavish are made from rarest materials, or plated in rare metals or shells. It is believed that the richer the torii, the more likely the prayers are received favorably.



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"Ceremony of the Samurai" is an introductory adventure that takes place during one of the seasonal gatherings that induct young nobles into their clans as adults. Its purpose is to introduce the players to the basics of the game's mechanics and provide a setting that can be the launching point of a campaign.

WARNING! ANY PLAYERS READING THIS MUST EITHER STOP NOW, OR COMMIT SEPPUKU!

While each clan holds its own festival for Gempukku, some prestigious festivals are open to members of any clan. The clans send only their best and brightest; although the rewards are greater, the competition is fierce. The most prestigious festival is the Kakita family's Festival of the Topaz Championship, held each spring in the town of Tsuma. The characters are assumed to have chosen (or been ordered) to attend this prestigious event to make a name for themselves.

Synopsis

The PCs journey to the Topaz Championship in the town of Tsuma in the Kakita Family lands near the ocean. The Topaz Championship is a prestigious tournament for the Gempukku

(Coming of Age) ceremony of young Samurai, which they attend between their 15th and 21st years. On their journey and within the town, the PCs encounter characters that test their skills while the players gain experience with the rules system and role-playing. The Tournament provides even greater opportunities for the players to win honor, or die trying.

Tsuma, the Tournay, and the NPCs provide numerous story hooks, which allow this adventure to spawn into a full campaign. Within the story the players take part in the complexities of Rokugan Politics, make contacts, friends, and most certainly enemies. The end can involve them in the greatest plot against the empire it has ever known.

Gamemaster's Notes

Any good introductory scenario tests as many facets of the game as possible, but should especially reveal those concepts that make each RPG unique. For L5R the strict social structure of the setting is its most unique aspect for most Americanized players. To test and remind the players of the subtleties of Rokugan culture, the characters are challenged in role-playing situations with farmers, merchants, equals, and those of higher status. Each of these encounters gives you the opportunity to reinforce the unique setting to the players.

The players may feel their characters are out of their element at this festival. If so, reinforce the primary concept of all role-playing games to them: the characters are heroes. Budding heroes, yes, but they are the focus of the campaign. While the world around them moves forward, their actions will change its course.

If you and your players know the story line of the L5R Collectable Card Game, you'll find references to plots and subplots found there within this adventure. These add to the enjoyment of the adventure for those who are familiar with the CCG and adds to the concept that the PCs are also prominent heroes in Rokugan.

PCs who generate enemies in character generation, but do not specify one, could easily make one here.

How We Present the Material

Most of the information in this adventure is for the eyes of the gamemaster alone. Text that you should read or paraphrase to your players appears like this:

I want another piece of pizza. Give me one or your characters die.

Also, throughout this adventure we provide 'hooks' for you. Use them to increase the complexity of this adventure, introduce subplots, or provide a starting point for subsequent adventures; or else use them later in other adventures. None of them are vital to Ceremony of the Samurai or the PCs' success. Each hook is detailed as follows:

TITLE OF THE HOOK

Challenge: How the PCs become embroiled in the story.

Focus: The plot and background including events and likely encounters.

Strike: Complications the 'challenge' provides, suggestions for play, general information, and resolution.

Introducing the PCs to One Another

It is best if the characters know and like each other from their childhood. If there are too many characters for this to be feasible or they come from hostile clans, it is up to you to incorporate other reasons why the group is traveling together peaceably. Where possible allow pairs of characters to know one another and know one other character from a different pairing. This creates a chain effect where A+B know C and C+D know E and E+F know B.

Introducing Card Game Players to the Setting of Rokugan

It is strongly suggested that you use the Personality cards from the CCG as props. Their use during playtesting was a great asset and

added depth and imagery to the NPCs. For those personalities without a CCG card use a similar card. For example, use Yasuki Taka for Yasuki Jodeiga, and Suzume Mukashino for Megumi.

The Road to Tsuma

The characters begin the adventure together on the road about three hours outside of Tsuma. Provide the players with the background information on the Topaz Championship, and any other details you feel are important.

As you roam down the road towards the town of Tsuma, it is a beautiful morning. And why not? After all, would the Asahina shugenja of the Crane Clan allow this spectacular event to be rained upon? You all know better. The river valley is green and lush with spring. The stalks of orange wul are filling out for harvest. You made only a quick stay at the last way station, and today your anxious feet carry you as swift as any pony through the orchards—and without warning you suddenly come up behind an old man dressed in peasant clothes topped by a brilliant blue scarf. He is laden by a large chest resting upon his greatly bent back. At your unexpected approach, he scrambles to get out of the way, tumbling off the short embankment of the roadway and landing in the shallows of the river reeds. He is slow to push his face from the water.

Secretly make Awareness checks at a TN of 15 for the PCs. Anyone who makes it notices that the cranes feeding nearby are not at all flustered by the peasant's splash – very odd, indeed.

MEGUMI

PCs who hurry and help the old man find favor with him. Their effort does not prove worthless, for secretly the old man is Megumi, one of The Fortunes – divine spirits – of Rokugan (players should not be aware of this and only know that he is an unusual old man). Megumi is the Fortune of Heroic Guidance. He often takes the appearance of a crane, or when taking human form, that of an old man. His appearance to the PCs at this point gives the GM an in-character way to answer the PCs' questions on Tsuma and the Topaz Championship.

Megumi is dressed in a typical peasant kimono of very light tan coloring. His brilliant

WUL PLANTS

Mainly used as animal fodder, this plant is a popular crop in Rokugan, second only to rice. Specially treated – hardened wul is also used to form padding for armor. While somewhat similar to corn or wheat, wul grows only three feet high and is orange in color. The kernels of the wul plant are large and sometimes are dried to make dice.



HOLDINGS

Although clans have holdings to increase their resources, it is unreasonable to assume that all holdings of a clan are found upon its own lands. Often a holding is all the more valuable when on enemy soil. Two examples are found in Tsuma.

HONOR GUARDS

Persons of high social rank are allowed honor guards at all functions. The number of guards allowed is equal to the person's Glory. Above a Glory of four, the number normally allowed is doubled.

blue scarf looks to be made from the finest silks. Megumi carries an odor about him reminiscent of honey. His long, white hair is tied in a queue, which hangs down his back. Megumi is always deferential to any PC, addressing them as lord (add the suffix *-san* to their name) and kneeling and bowing copiously.

After he is 'saved' from drowning by the PCs, Megumi profusely thanks the group of samurai and offers to perform for them a tea ceremony. If accepted, Megumi opens the chest he's carrying and performs the ceremony as described below. If no PC participates, Megumi humbly asks the PCs' destination and from there you can use Megumi to answer questions the PCs may have on the Topaz Championship.

It is possible that the characters don't help Megumi at all. They suffer no penalties; he is, after all, posing as a peasant. But they won't get any help, either.

TEA CEREMONY

The old man lifts the lid to the heavy chest and withdraws a small carpet, which he lays out upon the ground. Although a slight smell of mold comes from the carpet, its sky-blue imagery catches your notice, for the mural upon it depicts the life of a heroic man. Before you can look over it further, Megumi kneels upon the center of the carpet and smooths the folds. As he does so, he asks you to get the box containing the tea set from the chest.

Characters who make an Awareness check at a TN of 10 notice that while their own clothes remain wet from the river, Megumi's blue scarf and kimono are already dry from their soaking. The PC who collects the tea set from the chest notices two items tucked away amongst the clothing and other goods: a ribbon-bound katana and a small mahogany chest, sealed with wax, about the size of a shoe box. The PC should make a Law test at a TN of 5 to realize that it is illegal for a peasant to own a katana. If confronted about the weapon, Megumi denies ownership, saying instead that it doesn't belong to him, but was given to him for safe keeping by his lord. He provides no further details.

Once allowed to proceed, Megumi lays out the tea set and asks one PC to mix the powdered contents of two bags contained within the box into the teapot along with water from the river. Soon after the tea is mixed, the water within the pot

begins to boil. A simple Herbalism test at TN of 5 is required to know that the two mixes would never create such a reaction. If asked about it, Megumi says, "It always does that. Please, there is no worry."

Each participating character is expected to perform a portion of this Tea Ceremony, requiring a skill roll with a TN of 9 to complete. If successful, the PC gains a Void Point.

Megumi then turns to the PC who first came to his rescue in the river and offers either the katana or the mahogany box, as a gift. By Rokugan etiquette it is customary for the PC to refuse the gift twice before accepting. It is also appropriate for the character to give a gift of similar value in return. Should the character fail to do either, the gift quickly decays and disappears onto the winds shortly after they depart Megumi. The katana is an exceptional blade with a DR of 5k2. The box contains a spell scroll (of your choice).

After the ceremony, the PCs can ask Megumi questions about Tsuma or the Topaz Challenge. In a parting gesture of goodwill, Megumi offers the PCs the use of his home in Tsuma while he is away. He provides directions to his home and excuses himself to continue his journey along the road. Shortly after the characters lose sight of him, Megumi transforms to his crane form.

Megumi appears again at the end of the adventure, signaling to all that witness that this group is favored by the gods.

YASUKI JODEIGA, "CRAB CLAN TRADER OF MANY THINGS"

With the town in sight, you spy a curious small man sitting beside the road with a number of wares spread out upon a blanket in front of him. Behind him two ponies are tied to a stake, munching grass. The man, setting up what could be a display of trinkets, is dressed as a common merchant in a short earth-tone tunic and britches.

Should the characters stop and trade with the merchant, he introduces himself as Yasuki Jodeiga, "Crab Clan trader of many things." He is a shrewd man with a cunning skill at Commerce (6k3). He has a nervous habit of wiping his forehead with the back of his sleeve and speaks quickly with a strange dialect. Should the characters approach him in trade for anything, each needs to make a contested roll of his Awareness vs. Jodeiga's Commerce. Note that each player can make an honor test if he/she wishes at a TN of 30 (Jodeiga's Awareness + Commerce times five).

Characters failing their contested rolls leave the small market of the 'trader of many things' one bushel (1/4 of one Koku) short, but holding a good-luck charm made of glass and low-grade copper.

The PCs arrive in Tsuma in the afternoon, two days before the tourney is set to begin.

The Town of Tsuma

Only a little larger and more active than most villages in Rokugan, Tsuma is a fishing town containing a few dozen small homes, barns, storehouses, and a few artisan shops. The town lies along the Tangu river a few miles from the coast (where a flourishing city lies as the main port-of-call for this area), and has only one small wharf. Most people make their living from fishing and farming (rice, tea, wul, silk and cotton), though a small few are skilled artisans (weavers, builders, painters, and gardeners). However, Tsuma does hold several interests for the characters.

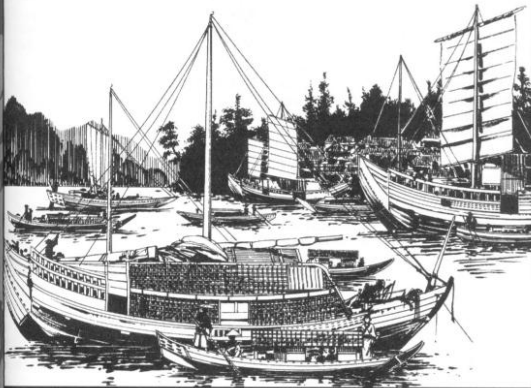
TEMPLE TO THE SEVEN FORTUNES

Just inside the town's fire ditch you spy a welcome sight: a temple to the Seven Fortunes. The temple is a large, square, white stone building, with slightly angled walls that

tower fifty feet into the air. Atop these walls, stacked like towers of a small pagoda, are two circular rooftops of brilliant blue-painted wood. Each is flanged eight times. Atop the entire structure is a large mirrored ball representing Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. A long flight of white marble steps, arched by seven Torii, leads to the mammoth arched iron twin doors of the temple, each over thirty feet high. Beneath each of the Torii you note offerings to the gods.

PCs choosing to visit the temple are welcomed by the monks and shugenja who reside therein. The occupants number only just over a dozen and can be found studying, contemplating, or performing menial tasks to keep the temple up. Any of them welcome talk from those who desire it, but the PCs must be on their best form (Etiquette roll at TN of 15) or receive only minimal respect and the briefest answers to their questions.

Food, shelter, and healing can be had from the monks and shugenja within the walls in exchange for gifts or services rendered to the temple or the gods.



HELP. I'M BEING HELD CAPTIVE IN A SCORPION SAKE WORKS

Challenge: A PC notices a folded note on the bottom of a shochu bottle. The note is from the geisha waitress serving them, not their private geisha (if they rented a room). All it reads is, "HELP!"

Focus: There are two possibilities: 1) The geisha truly needs help, or 2) she is a Scorpion spy.

Strike: Getting the geisha free is tricky, as she lives within the building. Freeing her shouldn't be hazardous, and the difficulty of the rescue depends on whether she is a spy or really needs help. If it's assured the other geisha are watching for such an attempt. Since all weapons are checked at the door, freeing the geisha involves a clever plan rather than brute force. However, once she's freed, how will they hide her in town?

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

Challenge: When one of the PCs return to their lodging, a fellow clan member calls the character aside to show the gaijin shirt he's stolen from the Merchant House.

Focus: The clansman is a poor soul who suffers from covetousness and kleptomania.

Strike: Again, what do the PCs do?

They must keep knowledge of the dishonor within the clan, lying to outsiders if necessary. Family honor can play a part here, as well, forcing the character to lie to others within the clan. Since the character was successful in the theft, no action is required... unless the thief has a habit of drinking sake and bragging. Or just insists on wearing the thing.

MEGUMI'S HOUSE

You easily find the small home of the pleasant old man, Megumi. It is a pleasing home with a small fenced garden. In the midst of the garden is a clear pond where a blue-collared crane appears to be fishing. The house has only four rooms: two sleeping, one for meal preparation and eating, and a room with a sunken floor and comfortable furnishings for resting. There are two paintings in the last room. Both show heroic figures with images of their deeds behind them.

If the PCs can pass a Bard skill test at a TN of 7, they can identify the two figures as the heroes Akodo Masashi and Mirumoto Puhabo-Natsumu. Akodo Masashi was a Lion Clan hero who died while leading an expedition into the Shadowlands to destroy the oni known as Kusatte Iru. Mirumoto Puhabo-Natsumu is said to be the first soul to gain enlightenment since the arrival of Shinsei.

SAKE HOUSE: A SCORPION HOLDING

The Sake banner hanging from this large one-story building is sure to attract the notice of the PCs before its freshly painted surface does. Under the pretense of this lucrative business, the Shosuro Ukio and his family (the political faction of the Scorpion Clan) conduct their clandestine operations for the Scorpion Clan.

The building contains a large common room with pillows and short tables. Geisha serve the sake to visitors in small porcelain flasks, heated to their preference. A number of small private rooms, separated from the common by rice doors, are available for 1 bushel (silver). Each private room is equipped with many luxurious conveniences and a private geisha. Extra services cost extra, but are readily available.

Prices: Shochu (potent sake): 5 zeni; sake: 2 zeni; brandy, beer, or mead: 1 zeni.

Hida Fujizaka is found within the sake house when the PCs arrive. If the PCs aren't going to enter, have Fujizaka invite them in, in a way that is difficult to refuse. Hida Fujizaka loves shochu (especially at these prices) and wants to share with the PCs his great find. The toasting to each others' fortunes quickly becomes a contest to drink the other under the table. To avoid passing out (or worse, throwing up) after each round of toasts, the PCs and Fujizaka must make a simple

Stamina check beginning with a TN of 10 and increasing by 5 each round. (Due to Fujizaka's head start, his TN is 15, but his iron constitution for hard drinks means his TN only increases by 2 each round.) For the PCs, failure of a roll results in the loss of 1 die for all rolls (just like being wounded). Failure where the die total is less than half of the TN results in the PC passing out. A fumble is a loss of face, as the PC retches and then passes out. A PC can make a Test of Honor to avoid this shame and carry himself with dignity (right to his bed). The honor test is held at the same TN as the last Stamina test failed.

MERCHANT HOUSE OF THE EXOTIC: A UNICORN HOLDING

If the building's unorthodox architecture isn't testimony enough; the magnificent beast upon the purple banner of this building bespeaks its ownership by the Unicorn Clan. Patterned after barbarian buildings, the building looks much like a Greco-Roman rotunda. Within the building, a nephew of Ide Daikoku runs the profitable business of selling imports to a closed culture. Many of the treasures come from far beyond the borders of Rokugan. The PCs can find barbarian merchandise: artworks, statues, paintings, clothing, snow shoes, miniature of dwellings, ships, glass balls with snow, jewelry, currency, place settings, cutlery, etc. Note the distinct lack of weapons and armor: the Unicorn Clan restricts the sale of most barbarian weapons to keep their secrets within the Clan.

KAKITA SCHOOL OF KENJUTSU

The school sits across the Tangu River from the town of Tsuma. It is rumored that the site is located upon the grounds on which Hantei and his brothers and sisters held their contest to decide which amongst them should rule. In honor of that contest, the Kakita family holds a number of tournaments each year, one of which is the paramount contest for those entering adulthood, the Topaz Championship.

The school itself is a walled enclave of interconnected buildings. Its structures, like most in Rokugan, are made entirely of wood and plaster. The entire network of buildings is raised on stilts, two feet from the ground (to prevent damage from the Tangu River's flooding; the Tangu is dry riverbed three months of the year, and floods after the snowmelt). The opulence of the school's buildings, gardens, and training facilities testify to



THE STAKES

Challenge: Yasuki Jodeiga (the Crab Merchant) recognizes the PCs as contestants in the tournament. He asks the PCs for a public demonstration of their skills by having them cut oranges in half in mid-air, asking them tricky questions, etc.

Focus: Yasuki Jodeiga is taking bets on the tournament. He knows a good demonstration by the PCs is likely to lower their odds. Due to the nature of the tournament, Jodeiga cannot take bets on individual contests, only on the outcome of the entire tournament.

Strike: PCs wishing to bet on themselves encourage the crowd to do so as well, in proportion to the amount of koku the PC bets. Odds on the PCs or others should favor bushi over shugenja and those with the ken-jutsu skill over those without.

the wealth of the Crane Clan.

The rooms have few interior walls except those separating the interconnected buildings, and their ceiling tower fifteen and twenty feet into the air. The interior walls are painted with brilliant murals in rich colors, depicting much of Rokugan's history.

The school has many gardens. Its most famous, the Higashi Garden, is located within the Sensei quarter of the school. The gardens are cared for by the students and sensei, under the watchful gaze of Shizuka, the head gardener, who is ceaseless in her work and has been for thirty years.

Sixty students and twelve sensei live, eat, work and train within the school. They are mostly from the Crane Clan, although others (those with money or influence) are not unheard-of. The sensei who instruct the students are some of the best warriors of Rokugan. Each year, after twelve year of teaching, a sensei retires to the monastic life and the master of the school selects a new sensei. The current master is Kakita Toshimoko.

Fifteen new students are inducted each quarter into the school. Each group of fifteen is known collectively by a name, taken from the time of year they enter the school: winter, spring, summer, and fall. Tradition holds that spring (the time of good planting) is the auspicious time to enter. Each group lives together for the year, eating, working, toiling, and training within the school, learning the lessons their sensei put forth.

Encounters and Events

THE ARRIVAL OF THE IMPERIAL BARGE

The afternoon before the tournament begins, word arrives via runners that the Imperial Barge has entered the river delta and is making its way upstream. Excitement abounds that the Emperor has come honor the games with his presence. Doji Satsume – The Emerald Champion – looks over the frantic preparations to receive the Emperor.

The first sign you see of The Imperial Barge is the reflection of the sun glinting off the crystal staff atop the mast, which holds the Imperial sigil. The ponderous barge glides

into view around the bend in the river, its hundred oars rhythmically beating, stirring the waters about its golden decks. Its emerald sail furls as it positions itself in the river's heart, its decks swarming with men maneuvering around the catapults to belay the ropes and prepare for docking. The dragon-carved battering ram at its prow swings towards the wharf and with deft skill the Master of the Barge sideslips the behemoth closer. Spray erupts fore and aft as stones are cast to anchor the craft. Workers on both dock and ship secure the heavy ornate plank upon the wharf. The Imperial Guard forms up, and as the Imperial Standard is raised all but the Guard kneel. Most actually prostrate themselves. A murmur courses through the crowd as the Imperial entourage disembarks.

PCs who look to discover the reason for the commotion must make a Heraldry skill at TN of 12 to notice that the Imperial Standard denotes that not only is the Emperor here, but his son and heir has come as well. If they fail, the news soon reaches them from the crowds.

Positioned among the ranks of samurai, you catch a glimpse of the royal entourage. The Emperor, lean hard features scowling beneath a frazzled mane of gray, stalks through the crowd. He stops to speak with Bayushi Shoji, the tall and powerful daimyo of the Scorpion Clan, whose steely eyes are the only feature visible above his emblazoned mask. The Daimyo's wife, Lady Kachiko, follows behind. You are caught off guard at her alluring beauty. Her kimono is of the deepest orchid hue and is far from traditional in cut. Her face is veiled by a mask that only accentuates her features.

[Insert chosen character's name], you feel someone lean close to your ear. Stealing a glance, you see that a veteran Crab samurai with a long puckering scar has moved to your side. He nudges you again, and gestures very subtly towards the entourage. "And of course," he whispers, "here comes Calamari-sama." Aghast, you look back to the entourage as the pale and haughty face of the Emperor's Son simpers past. He's not easy to see, being easily a head shorter than his bodyguards, who hold ranks in exquisite emerald armor. Each of the guards scowls at the crowd, looking for any slight against the Imperial honor.

RUNNING THE CONTESTS

Contestants are paired against one another randomly. An easy way to do this is to have the players select a CCG personality card to represent themselves. Shuffle these in with the CCG cards of the other contestants. Flip up the first two cards and place them head to head. Continue until all contestants are matched. Resolve the contests in the order flipped. This system was one of the highlights while playtesting the adventure. Players waited in anxious anticipation to see whom they would face. "Oh, great! You get to wrestle Toki and I get Hida Yakamo!"

As the Emperor takes greetings from the nobles, including the minor daimyo Ichiro Akimoto of the Badger Clan, you note a young Scorpion bushi in the entourage, resplendent in rich red-and-black armor. His attention falls upon yourself and your companions, and perhaps the other contestants as well. You dread that you will see much of this young warrior in the days to come.

The character can challenge the Crab samurai if desired, but as the character is a novice and the Crab is a veteran, the result of a duel is obvious. The character can also accuse the Crab of disrespect, but since no one else heard the comment, it'll be a matter of the word of a child versus the word of a respected soldier. Again, the result is obvious, but the Crab is likely to take great umbrage at the accusation (never mind that it's true) and issue a challenge to save face. Eeek.

After the reception ends, the PCs hear the following rumors around the school and town:

1. War is likely between the Lion and the Crane, as the Crane are looking weak.
2. The Emperor is refusing the step down from the throne for his son.
3. The Scorpion bushi is Bayushi Sugai, a nephew of Kachiko. At Kachiko's behest, Sugai has been allowed to enter the Topaz Championship, even though the deadline for entry has passed.

Add any hooks that you wish from your own campaign plans.

Bayushi Sugai is the party's nemesis for this adventure. He is an integral part in both the tournament story line and the machinations of Kachiko. He sabotages the PCs' efforts and those of other major competitors, and seeks to produce embarrassment for everyone and hostility for a treasured few.

THE PEDDLER

The PCs encounter Ichiin (CCG) on a road in town. Seemingly an elderly man begging for alms, Ichiin is much more. Who exactly he is is unknown, but Ichiin always has information available. For the right price, that is.

The well-kept streets of Tsuma are contrasted by the appearance of an elderly beggar who rests under the torii to Fukurokujin, the Fortune of Wisdom. The white bearded man's eyes open and with a decrepit voice, he calls to you... by name!

Ichiin offers to sell information on the PCs' competitors for one bu (silver). For that amount he is willing to provide information on the contestants' skills and general ability. Ichiin is a useful device for you to provide information to the players. However, he is resistant to passing on information about the machinations of Shoji and Sugai or any other Scorpion... not unwilling, just resistant.

OPENING CEREMONIES

The night before the challenges begin the town of Tsuma is alive with celebration. Paper lanterns hang from the buildings, trees, and torii. Iris blossoms are cast upon the Tangu River. The revelers watch costumed shugenja act out epic events in Rokugan's history: Hantei's battle with Lord Moon, Shinjo Saburo's doomed Unicorn charge into the Shadowlands, and the teachings of Shinsei. A parade follows with dragon costumes, fire crackers, dancers, and jugglers. The revelry continues into the wee hours.

You can make this last as short as reading the paragraph above, or stretch it out by adding in hooks or other encounters. Sure, nothing much is happening, but what to do when no one is being mean is a good challenge for any role-player.

The Topaz Championship

ORGANIZATION

The Topaz Championship is broken into five parts spread over three days. Contests within each part test contestants' skills and knowledge against another contestant. A point is awarded to the winner of each pairing. A contestant must score five points to attain adulthood, and only those attaining adulthood are allowed to participate in the third day's Iaijutsu challenge and fealty ceremony below. Those who do not win at least five points must try another Gempukku ceremony again next quarter. A record sheet is provided for you to keep track of points scored for each contest.

There are no written rules for this tournament. Contestants who cannot behave honorably without guidance have failed the primary test: that of maturity. Shugenja are allowed their magic to aid them, though they may not direct their magic against their opponent.

SIGNING IN

All contestants are required to sign in by noon of the day before the tournament opens. The roster of contestants is available to anyone for preview, and includes their childhood name, clan, and profession. For the other contestants, see the NPC list.

THE SPECTATORS

An important aspect of this adventure is the reaction of the spectators to the contestants after each contest. Each of the VIPs greatly favors their own clan members and PCs who win contests should note mild approval from their superiors. Those who lose, and lose often, may note glaring disapproval from the same.

Day One

Bayushi's hour has just ended. The earth has barely shed its dampness as you find yourselves assembled in the Kakita School's courtyard. Your heart beats quickly as you survey the spectators. Rokugan's most honorable stand witness this day to your exploits. For the honor of your clan, you must not fail!

FIRST ROUND

All of the spectators who hold seats within have entered. You and the other contestants prepare to make your entrance, forming two single-file lines. Students from the school stand erect in four small lines of just over a dozen, lining your pathway. Each group wears a different color obi. Their kamishimo bear their mon – most are from the Crane Clan, but two Unicorns, a Lion, a Dragon, and a Phoenix are also present. Under their gaze, you feel each of them questioning your skill, just as you question it yourself. Without a word, your assembly begins its march towards destiny.

SUMAI

The First contest of the tournament is sumai (wrestling). The contest is held within the primary dojo of the Kakita School. Spectators encircle the matted arena. As the contestants enter, a hush falls over the crowd and, one at a time, Master of Ceremonies Miya Yoto calls each contestant to kneel at the center of the mat, and once all the contestants have been called, he begins the contest. Yoto is presented with a golden vessel in

which are the small tiles with the chop of each contestant. He draws two, selecting by lottery the paired contestants.

A contested roll between the paired opponents decides this trial.

HERALDRY

Next, the contestants are required to identify a person by viewing their sigil, chop, banner, or standard. Each contested pair is presented emblems to identify. The first to best his/her opponent by successfully rolling their skill (or if both succeed, the one who raised higher) wins. The TN of this simple Perception + Heraldry roll is 20. For each Raise an additional fact can be known from viewing the item.

ATHLETICS

This is a foot race through an obstacle course, set up in the woodlands surrounding the school. This test requires multiple skill rolls to complete. Keep track of who is ahead by recording points awarded after each skill test along the path. The greater the point spread, the greater the lead. Points awarded are:

unsuccessful roll: -1

successful roll: 0

each Raise successfully made: +1

Start: Simple Stamina + Athletics roll at TN 10.

Obstacle One: A log bridges a muddy riverbed some twelve feet across. A simple agility + athletics roll at a TN of 12 is required to cross the log. Should the contestants be tied after the initial run, roll initiative (d10 + Fire) to see who makes it to the log first.

Anyone falling lands in the mud requiring a simple check of Agility check at TN of 12 to make the opposite bank. However, anyone falling in the mud automatically loses a sandal and may opt to lose one additional race point to recover it.

Contestants may try to shoulder the opponent from the log. This requires a contested Agility roll. To shoulder the opponent the contestant must either have reached the log first, tie the initiative roll, or make a number of raises equal to the point spread between the opponents when rolling to cross the log.

Contestants may forego the log and jump the riverbed with a Strength + Athletics roll at TN of 20.

Run: Simple Stamina + Athletics roll at TN of 10.

Obstacle Two: Covering the path for the next

THE LION'S ROAR

Challenge: Matsu Tsuko, the Matsu Family Daimyo, gathers those of her family together. She informs them that it is a manner of honor that they attain their gempukku.

Focus: Tsuko explains that one of the four walls that uphold House Lion has weakened. While the other three – tradition, power, and courage – are undamaged, the Crane has tarnished their honor. The Doji have used their political position to thwart the Matsu's claim to land bordering between them.

Strike: The pressure is on. Matus must succeed. To wit, if a Lion PC or NPC fails to win half their contests, they must perform seppuku, demonstrating to all that they do not consider themselves worthy of being a Matsu.

KUWAGA TREES

A type of pine, the kuwaga is the largest of Rokugan's trees. Kuwaga trees grow a hundred feet high and their branches lie flat, fanning out like ferns. Kuwaga trees shed their sharp blue needles twice a year. During this time the forest floor becomes a dangerous trespass for unprotected soles. The resin from the tree's needles can be made into a napalm-like substance called Isawa's Fire.

twenty feet are kuwaga needles. Any contestants who fell in the mud and failed to recover their sandals take damage equal to DR 1. The only means to avoid this obstacle is a -6 point trek through the underbrush or finding Bayushi Sugai's hidden rope. To find Sugai's rope (which he plans to use to get over the needles) the players must roll their Awareness blind. The TN is a 15. If Sugai has already raced and used the rope, it is useless as it's draped on the far side of the needles.

Run: During the running contest between obstacles two and three (another simple Stamina + Athletics roll at a TN of 10), Sugai has placed a paper sack holding six bureli wasps (see sidebar) overhanging the path. If ahead of his opponent, he trips the small wire, set to the far right of the path, causing the sack to fall and release the wasps. Anyone stung by a bureli wasp loses one contest point.

Should Sugai not use the trap during his own competition, he hides here during another race and springs the device upon whoever has the most points in the contest.

Obstacle Three: A wooden wall, fifteen feet high, stands across the path. The boards are slightly offset allowing the wall to be climbed: simple Agility + Athletics at a TN of 15.

Final Sprint: The last simple Stamina + Athletics roll at a TN of 10, but the way here is lined with spectators watching the finish.

INTERMISSION

Two hours are allotted for contestants to rest, meditate, and receive treatment. This occurs during the hour of Hantei (11 A.M. to 1 P.M.). The second round begins at Akodo's hour.

SECOND ROUND

The second round of Day One has only two events: Horsemanship and Conduct (Law, Etiquette, and Bushido).

HORSEMANSHIP

This test of horsemanship is held in the main practice field. Contestants maneuver their horses through a simple course and strike two targets: one with a sword, one with an arrow. The contest involves the same point system as the Athletics competition.

- 1) Ride to first target: TN of 5.
- 2) Strike first target with katana: TN of 10.
- 3) While at gallop, shoot second target: TN of 20.
- 4) Ride back to the start: TN of 5.

LAW, ETIQUETTE, AND BUSHIDO

Contestants are interrogated by superiors about a point of law, etiquette, or the code of bushido in Rokugan society. Randomly select a VIP to ask each pair. The TN of this simple Intelligence + Law test (or Etiquette or Bushido Lore test) is 15. The first to beat his/her opponent by successfully rolling the skill (or if both succeed, the one who raised higher) wins. Each Raise contributes additional detail to the answer. You should use this opportunity to familiarize PCs with Rokugan society by providing some of the answers below:

- 1) Testimony of those of greater rank outweighs testimony from those of lower rank.
- 2) To give one's life serving one's lord is to be reborn with equal or higher station.
- 3) I have borrowed my ancestors' name. I must return it to them untainted.
- 4) The testimony of family is not considered valid.
- 5) To draw blood when it is unnecessary is to bring shame to your blade.
- 6) All that matters is perception, not truth. What can be deduced is not as important as what is known.
- 7) Never accept a gift before it is refused twice.
- 8) Bow to those of equal social caste; kneel to those of higher station. Within a caste, bow more deeply to those who are your senior.

Murder for Two

Kakita Yuri, host of the Topaz Championship, invites all dignitaries and contestants to a dinner hosted in the school's main dojo. Make it clear that this is not something any of them can refuse to attend.

This episode illustrates the Rokugani idea that justice lies not in deductive reasoning, but in fact and testimony. The importance of that distinction is made clear. Although you may include any of the social interactions or introduce other plot lines to this scene, the dinner itself is of little importance to the plot. What is of importance is what occurs thereafter.

At each stage of the dinner you live in fear that you'll misstep or make an error in etiquette. But your fears of spilling a teacup in high company are unfounded, as no one in the room pays attention to you or the other contestants. Everyone is focused on the polit-

ical maneuverings at the main table where sit The Emperor, Bayushi Shoji, Lady Kachiko, Doji Hoturi, Matsu Tsuko, Kakita Yuri and his beautiful daughter Asami, and a rather minor daimyo, Ichiro Akitomo of the Badger Clan.

Although your seats at the rear of the room leave it difficult for you to witness much of the social subtleties, you notice that Ichiro Akitomo is receiving much more attention than his due from both the Lion Daimyo Akodo Toturi and the Crane negotiator Kakita Yuri. You can't help but wonder what politics are occurring that would cause two such major clans to cater to one so minor.

Many guests have already left before etiquette permits you to excuse yourselves to rest for tomorrow's competition. You are pleased when the young and beautiful samurai-ko, Otaku Shiko, asks to share your journey across the river back to the town. Small lanterns throughout the shadow-filled courtyard illuminate the path to the docks. Somehow the sound of clashing blades in the gardens to the west seem more than a little amiss...

Duty requires that the PCs investigate. As they approach the garden read the following:

Blood. There is blood upon the wind. The gardens nearest the bridge have become a battlefield. The bloody corpses of five men lie strewn amongst the cherry blossoms. Four are bushi of the Badger Clan, two with their katanas still sheathed; the last you recognize is Ichiro Akitomo, their daimyo – and buried in his chest and neck are shuriken, still glistening in the moonlight with vile poison!

The demanding voice of Bayushi Sugai abruptly breaks the silence. "What are you doing there?" He approaches from the bridge, a bloody katana in his hand.

Ichiro Akitomo came to this festival at the behest of Matsu Tsuko, the Matsu Daimyo, who seeks to enlist the Badger as allies for the Lion. Tsuko wishes war with the Doji over disputed lands and seeks allies in the Badger Clan. Bayushi Shoji has other plans. To prevent the alliance, Shoji sent Bayushi Sugai to kill the Daimyo and counterfeited evidence implicating a member of Badger Daimyo's own staff. The Lion are thwarted and the Crane dishonored for failing to protect

a guest.

Sugai (with the help of the ninja, Bayushi Aramoro) has just assassinated the Badger Clan Daimyo at Shoji's direction. Sugai chased the daimyo's last bodyguard across the bridge and onto the island, to finish him before he could escape. Sugai then planted evidence on the bodyguard's corpse, marking him as a ninja and implicating the Daimyo's karo (chief adviser) in a ninja assassination plot. Sugai is momentarily startled when he finds the PCs on the scene.

Sugai attempts to intimidate the PCs into answering him. The hotheaded samurai-ko is quick to require a similar answer from Sugai. He refuses to answer any of their questions himself, stating clearly that he is under no requirement to do so. An impasse eventually occurs and Sugai moves off with the clearly spoken intention of summoning the Guard. PCs likely join him in enlisting the guards. They find one already heading their way, apparently on patrol. The guard marshals Sugai, the PCs and Shiko together and brings them before the Emerald Champion and the other VIPs.

You enter the dining hall. Students of the school are finishing improvising a rearrangement of the table for your hearing with the Emerald Champion. As you take your seats, Doji Satsume, Bayushi Shoji, and the daimyos of the Lion and Crane enter. Shoji and the Emerald Champion are in whispered discussion. Satsume and the daimyos take their seats, although Shoji stands behind the Emerald Champion. He quickly gets to business.

Everyone is quickly interrogated. Sugai spins a tale of hearing battle sounds while returning from a walk in the grove. He could only barely discern what had transpired in the garden before noting the fleeing assassin, pursuing him across the bridge and slaying him.

With no witnesses to counter his story, the fact that even Sugai could not kill six men alone, and evidence pointing to the treachery of the Badger karo and the involvement of ninja, the Emerald Champion praises Sugai for the killing of the ninja assassin. It is obvious to many that Sugai was somehow involved, but Rokugan justice concerns itself with direct evidence and eyewitness accounts, not suspicion or deduction. Doji Hoturi is obviously displeased with the judgment and the assassination, but knows there is no means to prove what he suspects. Unfortunately for Otaku

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BURELI WASPS

Bureli wasps have biting mandibles and a thin stalk attaching the thorax to the abdomen. They come in three sexes: male, neuter, and female. Females can grow to four inches long and have a stinger, which they use repeatedly for paralyzing prey. Males are smaller and are responsible for construction of the hive and maintenance of the queen. The neuters tend the eggs and young, and rarely leave the nest. Bureli nest underground in complex hives sometime reaching six feet deep. Bureli wasps come in mixes of purple, red, and white. The distinctive patterns of these colors distinguish hives from one another. Attack 3k2 (Swarm: add +1k0 die to Attack per Bureli Wasp) Damage from Bite & Sting: DR 2k1

INDECENT PROPOSAL

Challenge: Kakita

Asami pursues a romantic involvement with one of the PCs.

Focus: Doji Kuwanan and Kakita Asami were childhood sweethearts until Kuwanan left the Crane lands with his father. Now that he has returned, Asami is making him jealous.

Strike: An intelligent PC can make the most of this situation, parlaying himself into the good graces of a powerful Crane one way or another. Those who don't think may soon find themselves making an enemy of Kuwanan, Asami, or even Yuri. Perhaps Sugai can be recruited to help – by either the PC or by Kuwanan...

Shiko (the brash, impulsive, Unicorn Clan samurai-ko), she is not so diplomatic.

It is clear to you that Sugai was somehow involved in the assassination. You see in many of the faces around you a similar thought, but to voice such without evidence would be a loss of face and an insult of honor. Tradition demands you let the matter drop.

Unfortunately, Otaku Shiko has other ideas about tradition. "But he is the killer," she protests loudly to the Emerald Champion's judgment.

The room becomes as silent as a crypt. All eyes lock onto Shiko as she begins to realize her error. Only the hiss of the Emerald Champion's breath is heard, as he decides the fate of the impetuous young samurai-ko. Sugai, however, utters the challenge: "You have insulted the honor of my Lady and her servant! Your insolence can only be answered with your death!" A nod from the Emerald Champion and the duel is sanctioned.

Shiko is outlasted in the duel. Sugai easily cuts her down.

Day Two

ROUND THREE

The faces of the spectators show no signs of the events of last night as they watch you enter the main dojo of the Kakita School. They know that destiny has set each of them a fate. They accept that fate, just as Shiko accepted her fate to be your example – that you should learn the importance of perception over truth.

WEAPON

The second most prestigious event of the Topaz Championship is the test of arms. The test is conducted in the primary dojo of the school, with two pairs of contestants competing simultaneously in nearby rings. The test uses practice weapons (real but blunted; roll the usual number of dice for damage, but keep only one). First blood ends the match. The choice of weapon is strictly up to each contestant, although no missile weapons are allowed. All contestants wear light armor.

The crowd is large and talk incessant. While this contest is worth no more than any other is,

you know it commands the attention far more than examinations in heraldry. To win here, in the eyes of many assembled, is the mark of a fortunate destiny.

(This is a fairly straightforward contest. In playtest one PC used his Void to up his initiative die roll, just so he could attempt the first strike. It worked.)

Be sure to employ the special bushi school techniques known to Fujizaka, Uriko, and Sugai.

POETRY

Contestants create a haiku on a subject chosen by Kachiko. Highest skill roll wins each paired contest. Give the player two minutes to actually create a haiku: an unrhymed lyric poem having a fixed three-line form consisting of 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively. Some ideas: Oni, honor, betrayal, Hantei, Shintao, loyalty, bushido.

COURTIER

Questions are presented about the roles of clans in Rokugan society. The TN of this contest is a simple Perception + Courtier roll of 15. The rules to win are the same as "Law, Etiquette, and Bushido" above.

- 1) The Crab Clan guards our borders against the horrors from the Shadowlands.
- 2) The Emperor's protection is the sole duty of the Lion.
- 3) All power derives from the Emerald Throne.
- 4) Beyond the borders of the Empire lie only barbarian cultures that have little to offer Rokugan.

INTERMISSION

Again, two hours are allotted for contestants to rest, meditate, and receive treatment. This occurs during the hour of Hantei (11 A.M. to 1 P.M.). The fourth round begins again at Akodo's hour.

ROUND FOUR

Go

The games are played out in the Dining Hall. Contestants are paired in a match of the popular game. Resolve the game by a contested roll of Intelligence + Battle.

ARCHERY

This contest begins with the sun high overhead and is over quickly. The PCs and other contestants are given bows and arrayed on the practice field in front of targets forty yards away. All pairs of contestants fire their arrows for each

flight, then the targets are moved another twenty yards back. Another flight of arrows is fired, and the targets are moved another twenty yards to their final flight position. The first flight is a TN of 10, the next 15, and the final flight at 20.

Sugai cannot let such an event pass him up without toying with his competition. Sugai sabotages the leading competitor's bow by slightly fraying the string. Secretly add five to the TN for the user of the sabotaged bow. When he asks why he missed, just shrug and smile. "Bad karma." A blind Perception check of 25 reveals the sabotage, and the contestant can quickly restring the bow without loss of face.

HUNTING

In this contest, the characters are required to retrieve three 'Tsu Fish eggs (see sidebar) from the neighboring woodlands. Unlike the other contests, this one is not paired. All contestants have the hours of Togashi and Shiba (from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.) to locate, obtain, and return with three Tsu Fish eggs. Only three eggs are allowed; the Kakita family is careful to moderate their harvest.

The PCs may decide to kill or harm Bayushi Sugai during this event (the feeling is mutual, see below). Sugai is aware of the PCs' feelings and quickly and silently makes his escape into the woods.

PCs may realize this can become a cooperative effort. Unlike the other contests, all participants can succeed. You are not obliged to point this out, but you may if you feel your players need some help.

There are a number of steps involved in a successful hunt.

Finding the tsu fish requires a Perception + Hunting roll at difficulty of 14. Use this roll to determine which contestants find the tsu fish first. Note the rules under Assistance if the PCs work together.

The first sign that you have found your quarry is the strong smell of the sea. While the coast still lies at least a league further downriver, the scent of fish assails your nose. The late afternoon sun glistens off the sapphire scales of a score or more tsu fish. Only a handful of them patrol the riverbank on their six emerald legs, a gentle sound on the silty soil. Three times that number languish in the nearby trees, slothful and likely sleeping, or splash in the shallow water at the bank.



空

TSU FISH

Tsu fish are brilliant blue with iridescent emerald fins and tail and weigh up to 60 lbs. They are nocturnal for three-quarters of the year, preferring deep waters and moonless nights, but during spring the tsu fish spawns; its fins grow into three sets of primitive legs ending in sloth-like hooked toes. They then abandon their water habitats and seek tall trees in which to hide their eggs from the river predators. During spawning, tsu fish become socially organized. A school of tsu fish typically numbers twenty or more. They share the burdens of protecting the nests and foraging for worms and insects, periodically retiring to the water to keep their gills wet. The large teeth and pack instincts of the tsu make stealing eggs a treacherous endeavor. Tsu fish eggs are a rare delicacy (much like turtle eggs). Attack 4k2 (Swarm: +2k0 per additional tsu fish attacking) DR 3k2 (+1k0 per additional fish)

TAKE A DIVE

Challenge: A townsman approaches one of the PCs with a sealed letter addressed to the PC. The letter offers 200 Koku if the PC "takes a fall" during the final rounds.

Focus: Sugai had the letter drawn up by a scribe in town. He doesn't expect the PC to accept, nor does he pay up if the offer is taken.

Strike: Should the PC read the letter before the townsman leaves, they may wish to respond to this insult by taking the messenger's head. But then they'll have to explain. If the PC doesn't destroy the letter and loses in one of the rounds, the letter could resurface and cause great dishonor to the PC.

Each set of three eggs requires the following two rolls.

1) To get past the patrolling tsu fish requires an Agility + Stealth roll at a TN of 16.

2) Climbing the trees requires an Agility + Athletics roll at TN of 13. Two raises are required to climb without provoking any tsu fish found in the tree.

Once the PCs have the eggs and head back, they encounter the last and most dangerous obstacle. Accidents are known to occur during this event, and Bayushi Sugai has taken appropriate steps to ensure that such an accident occurs to those who stand in his way of gaining the Topaz Championship.

As you make your way into the woods, Shiba has begun his contemplation of the coming void. The deepening shadows and stillness of the forest are suddenly cut by the whistle of an arrow. Ronin rise from the underbrush. One of them calls out, "Surrender or die!"

Give the PCs no hope. They are outnumbered and surprised, and the Ronin have bows at ready. Amongst their number is a shugenja (Air 3) prepared to cast Wind-Borne Slumbers. His first target is a holder of tsu fish eggs.

The bandits have been hired by Sugai to intercept anyone carrying tsu fish eggs. If the PCs leave the eggs and withdraw, they'll not be harmed. If they attempt to escape, fight, or destroy the eggs, they are attacked.

The PCs may decide to fight the bandits, although the only reasonable excuse for attacking would come from a character with four accumulated points and three eggs. Courage in the face of overwhelming odds is a laudable samurai quality, but not when there is no honor to be gained by it. If the PCs persist in pressing their disadvantageous position, fight it out, kill the PCs, and then restart from the point just before they made their fatal decision. (It happened in playtesting.) Remember that this is a learning scenario for both your players and yourself – there is no shame in turning back the clock.

Sugai is the only one to return with tsu fish eggs. All other contestants may save face by simply acknowledging that they failed to return with any eggs, making no mention of bandits. Sugai invites several Scorpions to feast that evening on the rare delicacy.

The Coming Dawn

The PCs know if they have scored the requisite five points and attained their adulthood. Those who succeeded face the last contest at noon followed by their Gempukku ceremony. Those who failed sit, watch, and learn from the actions of their companions. And for the Matsus who failed, it is a time of final preparation (see "The Lion's Roar").

Those of you who succeeded have gained glory in the eyes of your clansmen, and on the morrow will duel for the Topaz Championship. This day's contests have gone too long to allow for celebrations. This is a time to dream the dreams of heroes. For those that failed this is a time of contemplation, to reflect on what this bend of life's river has taught. And for some, it is a time for their final preparation.

Matsu Shorisuro has likely failed to receive her Gempukku. She, along with any other Matsu family members who failed are required to commit *seppuku*. This is a venerable ceremony, witnessed by most attendees. The players may need to be reminded (especially if one of them is involved) that they are removing the stain of dishonor they brought upon their family by failing the task that was set before them. The ceremony and preparation in the temple beforehand allows them to heal their wounded karma and keep themselves from returning in their next life at a lower station.

To reflect their state of karma, allow any PC who commits *seppuku* to create another character comparable to the one lost. Then allow the player to receive character points at the adventure's end equal to what his/her previous PC would have received.

Day Three

The players should already be excited about this contest. The stakes here are more tangible than those of winning adulthood are. This is a single-elimination contest – only the winners advance. Here the PCs face the best and each other.

THE TOPAZ CHAMPIONSHIP

As the hour of Hantei approaches, the shugenja have finished their blessing of the courtyard grounds. Their prayer drums echo



from the temple across the river. The golden barge of the Emperor lies at anchor in the river's center, many on its deck straining to gain a glimpse of the coming contest. The Asahina shugenja have cleared away the clouds to ensure Amaterasu's blessing. Those who have attained adulthood enter the circle of spectators and encircle the ground where, some say, Hantei dueled with his brothers and sisters. The shugenja have smoothed a five-foot circle of earth at the center. Opposite you, the Emperor sits upon a small throne while Lady Kachiko waits nearby with the bowl full of chops that are used to decide the pairs.

Again, the competition uses practice weapons (real but blunted; roll the usual number of dice for damage, but keep only one). Contestants are given no time between rounds in which to meditate or regain spent Void. Whoever wins the championship is greeted with a triple "banzai!" cheer.

FEALTY CEREMONY

The day has been spent in celebration of each adulthood gained. The last to be celebrated is that of the Topaz Champion. As with each samurai before, the Topaz Champion approaches the altar where stand his clan's daimyo and a shugenja. The clan daimyo turns to the samurai and holds out a small bowl covered by a cloth emblazoned the samurai's mon, on top of which rests the samurai's own wakizashi, blessed by the attending shugenja. The samurai lifts the blade in the cloth and carefully wraps the blade just below the pommel. With a small motion the samurai's palm is cut and the clan daimyo catches drops in the bowl.

Using the blood, the shugenja prepares a scroll pledging the samurai's loyalty and obedience to his clan and family. The scroll is read aloud by the samurai before being burned by the shugenja, its ashes dissolved into a tea and given to the clan daimyo. Kneeling before the daimyo, the samurai takes the cup and drinks the mixture. Upon rising, the clan daimyo loudly proclaims the name of the newest member of his clan.

As the ceremony comes to its end you gather together with your friends to reflect upon your successes. Your attention turns to

a bent old man wearing a brilliant blue scarf. Megumi smiles upon each of you and in a voice louder than you could believe could come of his aged frame he proclaims to everyone, "Bear witness, for these are among the chosen." And where the old man stood a blue-collared crane leaps into the sky, heading for the sun.

Epilogue

The mystery of Megumi lingers with you. His strange proclamation and exit have heightened your renown amongst the powerful of Rokugan and you expect offers for your service to be forthcoming, but something bothers you. Megumi spoken of you being 'amongst the chosen' - chosen for what?

The PCs have drawn the attention of many in power. Each may seek to use them in their own way in the coming conflicts:

- The Emperor could give the Topaz Champion a magisterial position.
- Bayushi Sugai is still alive and now that the competition is over he is more vulnerable... and more deadly.
- Each PC's clan has taken notice of the new adult. Their risk at choosing the Topaz Challenge for their rite of passage to adulthood raises their prestige within the clan. Missions that otherwise would pass them by are now offered to them.
- They are sure to have the attention of their daimyo upon their return.

Awards

The winner is declared the Topaz Champion, and holds the title for one season. The winner also receives 4 Koku, an exceptional katana (DR 4k3), 10 Honor Points, and 8 experience points.

Second place: Fine Katana (DR 4k2), 3 Koku, 10 Honor Points, 6 experience points.

Others: 1 Koku, 4 experience points.

NPCs

VIPs

The Emperor: An aging man who is revered by the people as the cherished son of the sun goddess. Hantei is just, fair and firmly in control of his empire - with the aid of Bayushi Shoji.

STOP, THIEF!

Challenge: One of the PCs mysteriously finds him/herself in possession of a unique item from the Unicorn's Merchant House of the Exotic. The item could be one of the glass balls, a book, or a shoe.

Focus: Someone (Sugai?) has planted the item to embarrass the PCs later by pointing them out as thieves. The bastard awaits them across the street with the town's peasant sheriff.

Strike: What the item is and whence it came is of little import. What the PCs plan to do with it is. Do they return it straightaway, factlessly pointing out to the merchant he did not notice he had been robbed, or do they attempt to secretly return it? Their actions may well determine how successful Sugai's frame-up is.

Bayushi Shoji: An intimidating man. He is daimyo of the Scorpion Clan, and as such he is the ears and eyes of the Emperor. There is little that goes on within the Empire that Shoji does not know. He has the complete trust of the Emperor.

Bayushi Kachiko: The Lady Kachiko adores her husband and is widely regarded in the empire for her wit and cunning. She is a favorite of the Emperor, who dotes upon her every whim. The Emperor has proclaimed these games to be in her honor for the devotion she has shown to him and his son after the death of the Empress.

Kakita Asami: The beautiful daughter of Kakita Yuri (the Crane Clan Negotiator) is to present awards to the winners at the end of the ceremony.

Kakita Toshimoko: The master sensei of the Kakita School of Kenjutsu, and personal advisor to Doji Hoturi.

Doji Satsume: The Crane Clan Daimyo. Due to his recent appointment as Emerald Champion, he has been forced to - reluctantly - delegate some of his responsibilities (he isn't a man who enjoys giving up any degree of power).

Doji Hoturi: Son of the Crane Daimyo, Hoturi has found himself at least nominally in command of the Crane Clan. He is young, handsome, and has a reputation for being popular with the ladies at court. His recent marriage, however, has put a damper on such activities.

Akodo Toturi: The Lion Clan Daimyo. He is noble in bearing. He cares for the Emperor deeply and his sense of duty is without question.

Matsu Tsuko: The daimyo of the Matsu, she stands second to Akodo Toturi in power amongst the Lion Clan. She desires war with the Doji over disputed lands, but is forbidden to war by Toturi. Duty and honor are her life.

Ichiro Akitomo: Daimyo of the Badger Clan. Expended in the first night's festivities.

Miya Yoto: He is Judge of Games, and as his loyalties lie above the politics of Rokugan, his decisions are not questioned.

TOURNAMENT CONTESTANTS

There are nine contestants, not counting the PCs. The number of contestants needs to be an even number. Remove Asahina Tadamo if there are an even number of PCs.

BAYUSHI SUGAI, SCORPION BUSHI

The festival is neutral ground. The shedding of

blood outside of the contest is forbidden. Sugai has chosen the Kakita Festival for his Gempukku Ceremony at the bequest of Shoji. Sugai's method is to cheat as often as possible without getting caught.

EARTH 2

FIRE 2

Agility 3

WATER 2

AIR 3

VOID 2

Kenjutsu 1, Archery 1, Poison 1, Stealth 2, Iaijutsu 2, Conceal 2

The Way of the Scorpion: Sugai rolls two dice for initiative and keeps both.

DOJI KUWANAN, CRANE BUSHI

There are great expectations upon this young Crane. The crowd favors Kuwanan and the characters may experience some disapproval if they defeat Kuwanan in any contests.

EARTH 2

FIRE 3

WATER 2

AIR 2

Awareness 5

VOID 1

Kenjutsu 2, Archery 1, History 1, Iaijutsu 2

Way of the Crane: Kuwanan may add his Iaijutsu Skill to any Initiative roll and may also use Iaijutsu in the place of his Kenjutsu skill.

MATSU SHORISURO, LION SHUGENJA

Schooled by the Kitsu family.

EARTH 2

FIRE 3

WATER 2

AIR 2

Awareness 5

VOID 1

Courtier 1, History 1, Shintao 1

Shorisuro receives a Free Raise on Water spells.

ISAWA OROKU, PHOENIX SHUGENJA

Shugenja have always had problems at the Kakita Family Festival. Oroku wishes to prove that a Shugenja can win this year.

**EARTH 1****FIRE 2****WATER 2****AIR 3**

Awareness 4

VOID 2

Meditation 2, History 2, Shintao 2

Oruko may spend as many Void Points as she likes when casting spells.

MIRUMOTO URIKO, DRAGON BUSHI

She has traveled far to show the strength of the Dragon Clan.

EARTH 2**FIRE 2**

Agility 3

WATER 2**AIR 2****VOID 2**

Sumai 1, Kenjutsu 1, Archery 1, Meditation 1, Shintao 1

Daisho Technique: While wielding Katana and Wakizashi, opponents' TNs to hit Uriko are 5 higher.

HIDA FUJIZAKA, CRAB BUSHI

A typical Crab. He strongly believes in the value of size and strength and the value of sake as an aid for any samurai. This ceremony not only looks to begin his adulthood, but most of his troubles.

EARTH 3**FIRE 2****WATER 2**

Strength 4

AIR 2**VOID 1**

Sumai 1, Kenjutsu 2, Tetsubo 2, Archery 1

The Way of the Crab: Fujizaka adds his Earth Rank to his To-Hit rolls.

OTAKU SHIKO, UNICORN BUSHI

She is brash and impulsive – much like her clan.

EARTH 2**FIRE 2**

Agility 4

WATER 3**AIR 2****VOID 1**

Kyujutsu 1, Horsemanship 3, History 1

The Way of the Unicorn: Shiko adds her Horsemanship to any Skill when making a roll.

ASAHINA TADAMO, CRANE**SHUGENIA**

He wishes to make a good showing, but isn't ambitious to win. He can be a good ally for the PCs.

EARTH 2**FIRE 2****WATER 2****AIR 2**

Awareness 3

VOID 2

Yari 1, History 1, Shintao 1, Painting 1

Tadamo receives a Free Raise on Air spells.

TOKU, UNALIGNED BUSHI

This young man is looking to impress a Clan enough to be offered fealty.

EARTH 2**FIRE 2****WATER 2****AIR 2****VOID 2**

Kenjutsu 1, Shintao 1, Poetry 1, Iaijutsu 1



Here's a record sheet to help you keep track of contest totals. Blank spaces are provided for you to enter the names of the PCs.

Day One

	SUMAI	HERALDRY	ATHLETICS	HORSEMANSHIP	ETIQUETTE	TOTALS
Doji Kuwanan						
Matsu Shorisuro						
Isawa Oruko						
Hida Fujizaka						
Mirumoto Uriko						
Otaku Shiko						
Asahina Tadamo						
Bayushi Sugai						
Toku						

Day Two

	WEAPON	POETRY	COURTIER	GO	ARCHERY	HUNTING	TOTALS
Doji Kuwanan							
Matsu Shorisuro							
Isawa Oruko							
Hida Fujizaka							
Mirumoto Uriko							
Otaku Shiko							
Asahina Tadamo							
Bayushi Sugai							
Toku							

L5R RPG Probability Chart

TRAIT	+SKILL	TN=10	TN=15	TN=20	TN=25	TN=30	TN=35	TN=40
1	0	9%	5%	<5%	...	...	...	...
	1	19%	12%	<5%	...	...	...	...
	2	27%	17%	<5%	...	...	...	...
	3	34%	21%	<5%	...	...	...	...
2	0	64%	29%	12%	6%	<5%	...	...
	1	84%	48%	20%	9%	<5%	...	...
	2	93%	61%	29%	14%	5%	<5%	...
	3	>95%	72%	37%	21%	8%	<5%	...
3	0	90%	67%	37%	16%	9%	<5%	...
	1	>95%	84%	56%	29%	15%	6%	<5%
	2	>95%	93%	70%	42%	24%	10%	<5%
	3	...	>95%	81%	54%	31%	15%	7%
4	0	>95%	90%	70%	42%	24%	11%	<5%
	1	>95%	>95%	84%	61%	40%	25%	11%
	2	...	>95%	93%	76%	53%	31%	18%
	3	...	...	>95%	86%	64%	39%	22%
5	0	>95%	>95%	89%	70%	48%	30%	16%
	1	...	>95%	>95%	85%	66%	47%	27%
	2	...	...	>95%	93%	80%	60%	39%
	3	...	...	...	>95%	88%	70%	50%
6	0	...	...	>95%	89%	74%	53%	34%
	1	...	...	>95%	95%	87%	70%	50%
	2	...	...	...	>95%	94%	81%	65%
	3	...	...	...	...	>95%	90%	75%
7	0	...	...	...	...	>95%	94%	81%
	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

This chart is intended to aid GMs who don't yet have a feel for assigning Target Numbers. "OK, an average-difficulty roll ought to have a TN of 15 – but how often will the character succeed?"

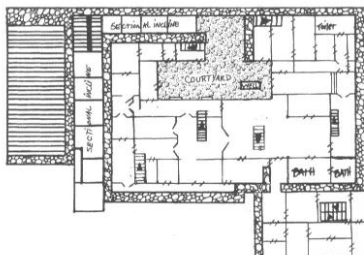
To use this chart, find the number of dice corresponding to the character's Trait in the first column, and then the number of dice corresponding to his skill in the second column. Read across on that line; the percentages indicate how often the character will succeed at various Target Numbers.

Example: Mirumoto Kage has an Intelligence Trait of 2 and a Shugenja Lore Skill of 1. If his GM assigns him a Target Number of 10, Kage will have an 84% chance of succeeding, but at a TN of 15 he will succeed only 48% of the time, and at a TN of 20 he'll succeed only 20% of the time.

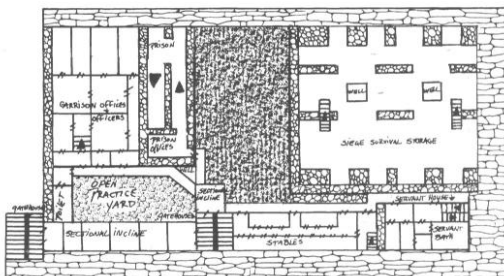


LARGE (SEVEN-STORY) CASTLE

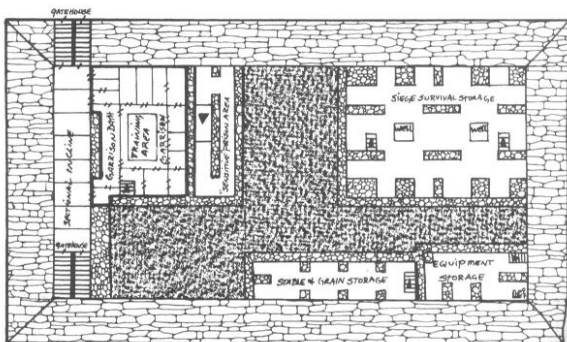
Third Level



Second Level



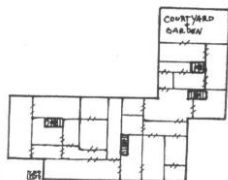
Ground Level



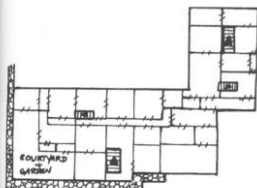
KEY TO MAPS



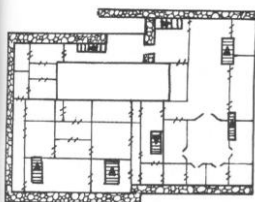
Seventh Level



Sixth Level



Fifth Level



Fourth Level



Solid Stone Wall



In fortified village, dirt gully;
in castle, packed dirt & timbers



Trees



Wood Flooring



Wood Awnings



Roofing
(peak of roof
in center)



Elevated area
(Tea House)



Solid Interior Wall



Sliding Shoji Screen



Entrance



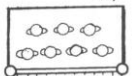
Stairs (arrow
down slope)



Wooden fence



Stone water basins



Podium w/statues
of Fortunes



Rock garden



Window



Table



Storage cabinet



Koi carp pond



Large stones



Swinging panels



Hearth/fire pit



Stone lantern



House entrance step



Grass yard



Counter



Door



Fortified stone wall

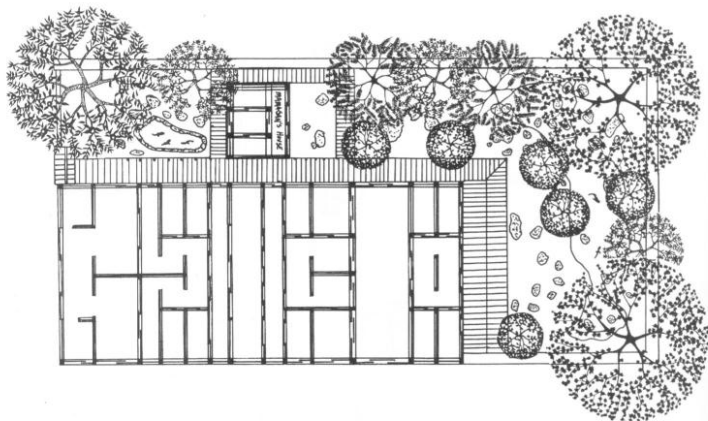


Iron cooking pot

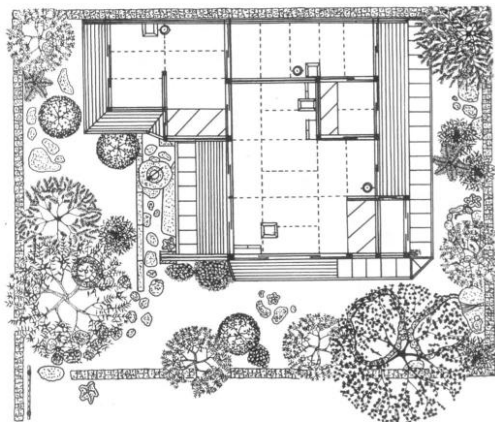


Tatami mats

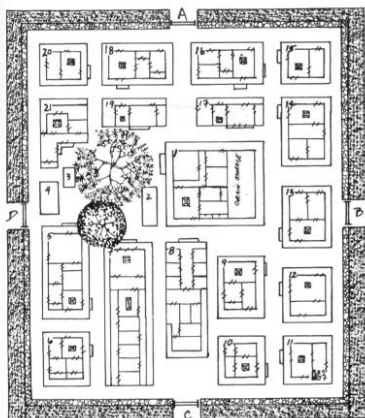
GEISHA HOUSE



TEA HOUSE



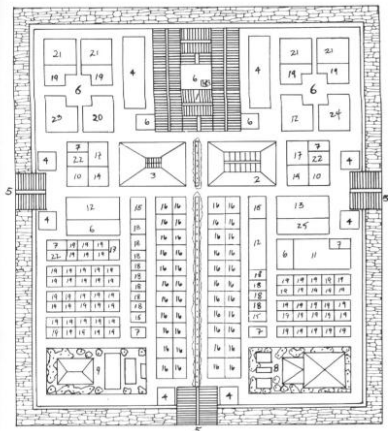
FORTIFIED VILLAGE



KEY

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. North Gate | 9. Healer's House |
| B. East Gate | 10. Herdsman's House |
| C. South Gate | 11-12. Farmer's House |
| D. West Gate | 13. Tradesman's House |
| 1. Hetman's House | 14. Scribe's House |
| 2. Public Announcement Board | 15. Farmer's House |
| 3. Village Well | 16. Village Elder's House |
| 4. Public Toilet | 17-18. Craftsman's House & Workshop |
| 5. Merchant House & General Store | 19. Merchant's House & Store |
| 6. Farmer's House | 20. Farmer's House |
| 7. Inn & Public Bath | 21. Merchant's House & Store |
| 8. Tea House & Geisha House | |

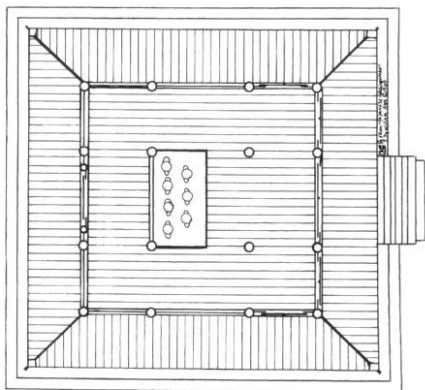
FORTIFIED CITY



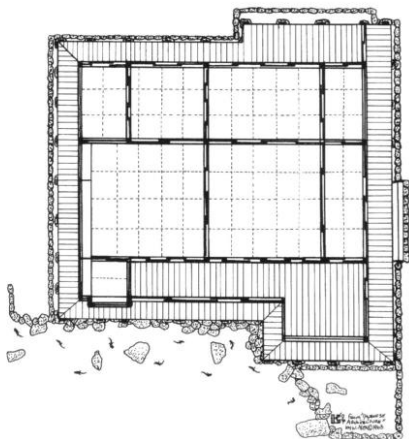
KEY

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Magistrate's Castle | 12. Inns |
| 2. Hetman's Mansion | 13. Geisha House |
| 3. Civil Hall | 14. Tea Houses |
| 4. Garrisons & Stables | 15. Noodle Huts |
| 5. Gatehouses | 16. Merchants |
| 6. Gardens or Courtyards | 17. Calligraphers |
| 7. Public Toilets | 18. Craftspeople |
| 8. Temple to Fortunes | 19. Private Houses |
| 9. Shrine of Sun Goddess | 20. Treasury |
| 10. Trading Houses | 21. City Siege Supply Houses |
| 11. Public Bath House | 22. Public Laundry |
| | 23. Dye House |
| | 24. Paper Maker |
| | 25. Sake Brewery |

TEMPLE



SMALL PRIEST (SHUGENJA) HOUSE



A hand-drawn floor plan of a house, likely a residential development. The plan features a central courtyard with a circular feature, possibly a well or a small pond. The layout includes several rooms and areas:

- Suite 1:** Located on the left side, containing a **CHIMNEY** and a **STAIRS** area.
- Suite 2:** Adjacent to Suite 1, containing a **PRIVATE ROOM**.
- Suite 3:** Located at the top left, containing a **PRIVATE ROOM**.
- Storage:** A central storage area.
- Private Rooms:** Multiple rooms labeled **PRIVATE ROOM** are distributed throughout the plan, including one in Suite 4 and Suite 5.
- Pool Room:** A room labeled **POOL ROOM** with a **POOL VENT** is located near Suite 5.
- Stairs:** A **STAIRS** area is located near Suite 5.
- Other Features:** A **CHIMNEY** is located near Suite 1, and a **POOL VENT** is located near Suite 5.

The plan is drawn with simple lines and includes various symbols and labels to identify different areas and features.

A hand-drawn floor plan of a house, likely a sketch for a game or a story. The plan includes the following rooms and features:

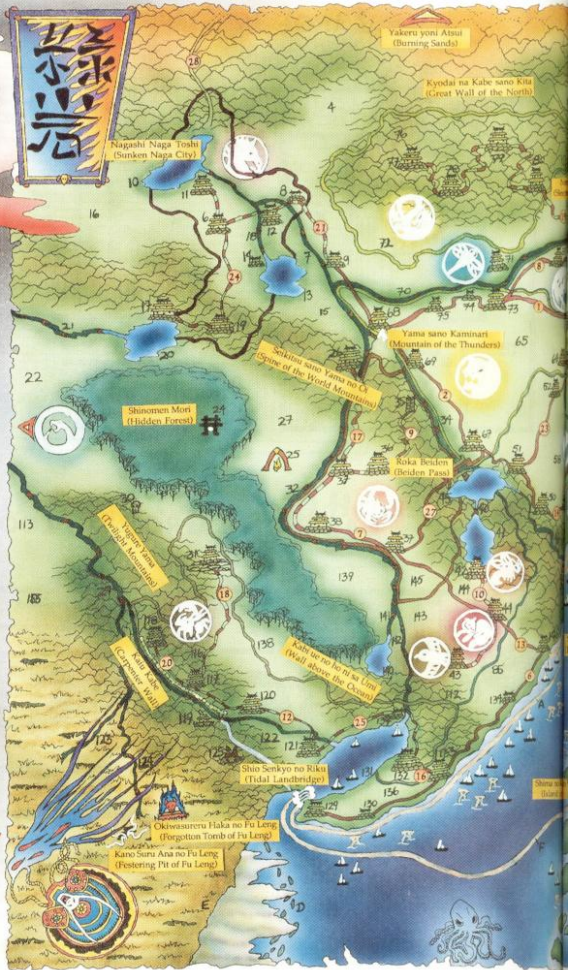
- Top Left:** A **TOILET** and a **STAIRS** area with a **step up** and **SHOE STORAGE**.
- Top Center:** A **STORAGE** room and a **SERVANT'S QUARTERS** with a **closet** and **linens**.
- Top Right:** A **STAIRS** area leading to the **OWNERS' QUARTERS**.
- Middle Left:** A **STAFF STATION** with a **HEARTH** and a **STAIRS** area. There are several **T** (table) and **C** (chair) symbols.
- Middle Center:** A large **BATHING AREAS** featuring a **SOAKING POOL** and a **SAUNA**. There is a **step up** and a **door** labeled **DOOR**.
- Middle Right:** A **PRIVATE DINING ROOM** with a **door** and a **sign**.
- Bottom Center:** A **KITCHEN** with a **door** and a **sign**.
- Bottom Left:** A **STAIRS** area with a **step up** and a **door**.
- Bottom Right:** A large open area with a **door** and a **sign**.

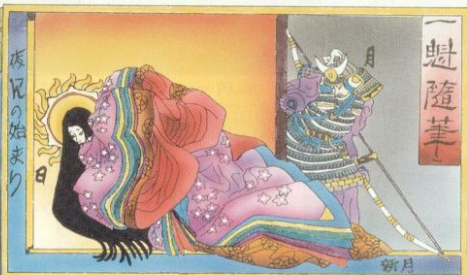
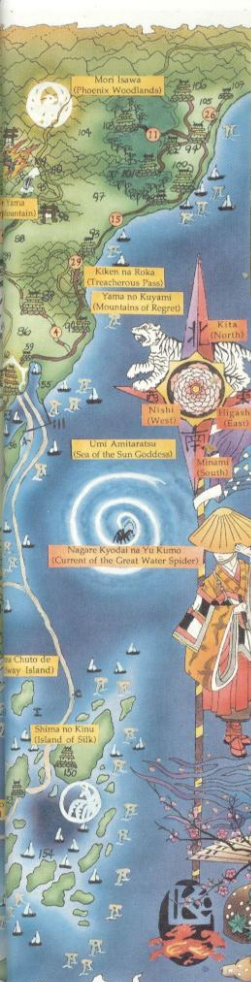
The plan is decorated with various symbols: **T** for tables, **C** for chairs, **H** for hearths, **D** for doors, and **S** for stairs. There are also several **step up** and **step down** labels indicating elevation changes. The drawing is done in a simple, sketchy style with black lines on a white background.

AT: Attendant's station

喜

壽
和
平
喜
福
女





象徴的なかき

Kagi no Shochoteki In (Symbology Key)

- 村 (Village) Mura
- 城 (Keep or Fort) Torii-e
- 都市 (City) Tochi
- 官邸 (Shrine) Shiro / Kyuden
- 礼拝堂 (Temple) Reihaido
- 申殿 (Shinden)
- ポータス州 (Port State) Portu
- 道貿易 (Merchant Roads) Michi
- 道貿易 (Merchant Roads) Dore Bockisho
- 山 (Mountain) Yama
- 川方向と (Directional River) Kawa Hoku
- 湖 (Lake) Mizu-umi
- 川方向と (Directional River) Kawa Hoku
- コースの運送 (Major Shipping Lanes) Juyo na Uroo Shasen
- 重要な魚場 (Major Fishing Area) Sakana Juyo na Chiku
- 山通路 (Mountain Pass) Yama Roka
- 目印 (Forest) Mori
- 沼地 (Swamp) Numachi

マイルの寸法



Mairuru Surpo (Mileage Measurement) Itooru-Issuu - Toe - (Five - Five - Ten - Fifty)

Ni meirei no Teikoku no Heika, (suru Hito wa suwaru de Oza sano Kin-no Kikkō); Jassumin no Ken sano Mamori Shika Kaede, Teikoku no Chizutsukuru Hito ni sa Reihaido sano Ki-rin, (yoku ue ni Shukufuku Suru no Mizu-umi Sakura Yuki).

By order of His Imperial Majesty, (He who sits upon the Throne of the Golden Sun); Sword of Jasmine of the Deer & Maple Talisman, Imperial Cartographer at the Shrine of the Ki-rin, (and often at the Blessed Lake of Cherry Blossom Snow).

帝国の地図作者
命の皇帝陛下
シヤスミンの力
守シカとカエテ

Geography

The snow was high and the sky was dark as Uki approached the forest with an axe in his hands. He stepped up to a tall tree, stopped and bowed low, putting his face into the snow at the foot of the tree. Then he stood and readied his axe.

"Thank you, tree-sama," he said as he positioned the axe against the base of the tree. "Thank you for your wood. It will keep my family warm tonight on our fire. My wife thanks you, my children thank you. Be well and remember us as we will remember you." Uki paused only a moment more, then he began his work.

Every mountain in Rokugan has a name. Every stream, every river, every tree. All things have a soul sleeping deep within them, and to treat a mountain or river disrespectfully brings that spirit's wrath down upon your head and the heads of your family. For this reason, great reverence is paid to the geography of Rokugan.

1 KANASHIMI NO KOMICHI (SORROW'S PATH)

This natural mountain pass leads to the lands far north of Rokugan's northern mountain range. It is called "Sorrow's Path" by the Unicorn who returned from the barbarian lands.

2 YAKERU YONI ATSUI (BURNING SANDS)

The Unicorn tell of a people who live in the grassy steppes just beyond the mountains, and beyond them lies a vast desert they call the "burning lands."

3 KYODAI NA KABE SANO KITA (GREAT WALL OF THE NORTH)

These mountains isolate Rokugan from the

north. The Unicorn have said there are steppes and a vast desert to the north where barbarians ride on great steeds, killing and pillaging without mercy.

4 HEIGEN KORI (ICE PLAIN)

Surrounded on three sides by mountains, Heigen Kori is always a plain of snow and ice in the winter and barren waste in the spring and summer. It is a desolate place, devoid of any life save the sparse grasses that grow only to be covered with snow when the winters come.

5 NAGASHI NAGA TOSHI (SUNKEN NAGA CITY)

At the bottom of a great lake in the north, there is said to be a city that remains perfectly preserved. Statues suggest it may have once been a city of the Naga, but none but those who visit (with magic, of course) can say for certain.

6 SHIRO OTAKU SHOJO (BATTLE MAIDEN CASTLE)

The home of the Otaku family has been placed to allow the freedom of movement for defending troops, while at the same time inhibiting the movement of advancing armies. It has none of the splendor or grandeur of the Crane or Scorpion castles, but it is one of the most well-fortified.

7 KAWA NEMUI (SLEEPING RIVER)

The river that runs down from the Lake of the Sunken City is called the Sleeping River. It is named for the sleeping city from which its waters run. The local peasantry insist that if sand from the bottom of this river is placed in a sake bottle, any who drink from the bottle will fall into a magical slumber.

8 MURA NISA KAWA NEMUI (VILLAGE BY THE SLEEPING RIVER)

The small village that rests on the shores of the Sleeping River has a small traveler's inn for those walking or riding to the cities of the Unicorn families.

9 TOSHI SANO KANEMOCHI KAERU (CITY OF THE RICH FROG)

It is said that a traveling merchant was passing by when he encountered another merchant catching flies. When the first merchant asked why the second merchant was catching flies, the second merchant replied that the flies were far more

valuable than any gold could ever be. The first merchant laughed at such a thought, and before he knew it, the second merchant had changed him into a frog. Then the second merchant asked, "How valuable is your gold now?" The first merchant was changed back into human form and, blessed with this wisdom, gave all of his gold to the second merchant, shaved his head and became a monk. The second merchant (who was a frog all along) founded a small village on the site which soon became a rich and prosperous city.

10 MIZU-UMI RYO (DRAGON LAKE)

The locals call the lake in the northwest "Dragon Lake" because of the shrine to the Guardian of Water that is on the south side of the lake. Some say the Dragon of Water can be drawn to the shrine by those who are worthy.

11 SHIRO SHINJO (FAR TRAVELER CASTLE)

It is here the Shinjo family of the Unicorn Clan make their home.

12 TOSHI NO AIDA NI KAWA (CITY BETWEEN THE RIVERS)

This castle guards the two river ways that flow from the Unicorn lands. Only once has an invasion force tried to move against the Unicorn by moving up-river. It was such a dismal failure, it has never been attempted again.

13 SHIROI KISHI MIZU-UMI (WHITE SHORE LAKE)

Shiroi Kishi Mizu-umi is called "White Shore Lake" because of the white sands on its shores.

14 SHIROI KISHI MURA (WHITE SHORE VILLAGE)

Just to the west of White Shore Lake is a small village that shares the lake's name.

15 SHIROI KISHI HEIGEN (WHITE SHORE PLAIN)

A great battle was fought here 150 years ago. A force of Scorpions attacked the recently returned Unicorns, but the Unicorns (and a contingent of Lions) fought them off. According to the Unicorns, the Scorpions thought them to be weak, uneducated barbarians, and were swiftly shown the error of their thinking. Ask a Scorpion about it, and he'll concede the point and change the subject.

16 HEIGEN YUKI (SNOW PLAIN)

This far north in Rokugan, there is a great deal of snow that drifts down from the mountains into the plains. "Snow Plain" (as it was called by the Unicorns) leads away to lands far to the west, details of which are only known to Unicorn scholars.

17 SHIRO IDE (GREAT DAY CASTLE)

Less of a fortress and more of a school, the Ide palace is regarded for its unorthodox magical teachings. The Ide family specializes in spatial magic.

18 HAE MOETE KAWA (FIREFLY RIVER)

Firefly River is important for the Unicorn Clan's commerce with the rest of the Empire. The Unicorn are the least agrarian of the Clans, but it is along this river where all of their farms are focused.

19 SHIRO IUCHI (GATHERER OF WINDS CASTLE)

Called the "Gatherer of Winds" castle because of the violent winds that cut across the plains and mountains, Shiro Iuchi is the home of the Iuchi family. Protected by a mountain pass, any army that wishes to attack Unicorn lands from the south must try and pass the well-protected Shiro Iuchi.

20 MIZU-UMI KIKU HANABIRA (CHRYSANTHEMUM PETAL LAKE)

Hundreds of chrysanthemum bushes line the shores of this lake. Every year, a chrysanthemum festival is held. Those who attend choose a tree and sit under its branches, meditating, eating nothing and drinking only water. Great favor is bestowed to the one who sits under the first falling chrysanthemum.

21 KAWA SANO FUI NO DANSEI WO SASU (RIVER OF THE UNEXPECTED HERO)

It was here one hundred and seventy-three years ago that the Unicorn battled against an army of Shadowlands creatures that had moved north far from their homeland. The creatures tried to despoil the Chrysanthemum Petal Lake, but the courage of a farmer proved to be the crucial factor in the battle. He saved the Unicorn army and the river at which the battle was fought



NUMBERED ROAD KEY

1 Way of the
Elements - Michi sano
Genso

2 Way of
Righteous Vengeance
- Michi sano Tozen na
Fukushu

3 The Fierce Road
- Domo na Doro

4 Way of the
Radiant Warrior -
Michi sano Hikari
Senshi

5 Road of the First
Emperor - Doro sano
Daiichi no Kotei

6 Lucky Road of
the Blue Iris - Yoium
Doro sano Buru na
Ayame

7 Road of Fatal
Purification - Doro no
Judai na Joka Suru

8 Way of the
Bloody Orchid -
Michi sano Dasheda
Ran

9 Road Once
Hidden - Doro Ichido
Kakusu

10 The Bandit
Road - Tozoku Doro

11 Way of
Perpetual Shade -
Michi nano Taenai
Hikage

has been given his name.

22 NAGA DORO HEIGEN (NAGA ROAD PLAIN)

Remnants of Naga civilization can be found on this plain. Abandoned and crumbling buildings dot the landscape. Shugenja are often found here, looking for clues as to the fate of the Naga.

23 SHINOMEN MORI (HIDDEN FOREST)

The Shinomen Forest is the most expansive and mysterious forest in Rokugan. A story tells that it is enchanted and that all manner of giant creatures (including the dreaded *kumo*) can be found here. The outer edges have been explored, but there are hundreds of miles that no man has ever seen.

24 REIHAIDO SHINSEI (SHINSEI (CROW) SHRINE)

The one animal most associated with Shinsei is the crow. When he and his Seven Thunders needed a scout, the crow - then a bird with a white chest and beautiful colorful wings - volunteered. By the end of the journey, the crow survived, but he was blackened by the powerful forces that passed between Shinsei's Thunders and Fu Leng. It is now regarded as a bird of omen, a watchful and helpful animal that warns when troubles are ahead.

Only those who have a pure heart and true devotion can find the Shinsei shrine, but it is said that those who do learn the deepest secrets of his teachings from the Kenku (see p. 188).

25 SHINDEN OSANO-WO (TEMPLE OF OSANO-WO)

The Fortune of Fire and Thunder is Osano-Wo, and his greatest temple is here. The monks who keep the temple are known for their rituals of scarring and secret magic. Constant thunder storms cause the terrain to be green and plush, but also rocky and difficult to traverse. Moss grows over the rocks, and the area is humid, even in the driest seasons.

26 SHIRO NO SOSHI (CASTLE OF ORGANIZATION)

The castle of the Soshi family overlooks the lands of the Lion. It is here the shugenja family of the Scorpion practice their dark rituals of deception. Those who do not know the secret path to the castle can wander the treacherous, twisting

mountain passes for days without finding Shiro no Soshi.

27 HEIGEN NO KAMINARI (PLAIN OF THUNDER)

The plain of thunder is dedicated to the Fortune of Fire and Thunder, Osano-Wo. It is here the Test of the Emerald Champion is held in honor of the Fortune who is the patron of all samurai.

28 SEIKITSU SANO YAMA NO OI (SPINE OF THE WORLD MOUNTAINS)

This is the mountain range that splits Rokugan in two. The Seikitsu mountains contain the tallest peaks in Rokugan (including the legendary Mountain of the Seven Thunders), and the few trails through it are narrow and fraught with peril. The only pass large enough to move an army through is Beiden Pass, and many of Rokugan's greatest battles have been fought to determine who controls it.

29 KAWA SANO SAIGO NO KAMAE (RIVER OF THE LAST STAND)

For generations, the Crab Clan had lost ground against the steady advance of the Shadowlands. It was at this river that Hida Banuken made his final stand against a great army of unspeakable creatures. For months, a single shugenja created and maintained a raging torrent to keep the Shadowlands at bay while Banuken and an army of Crab engineers raised the Great Kaiu Wall. When the shugenja's will broke, Banuken's wall and army were ready. At the beginning of the battle, he swore he would not take a single step back, and since that day, the Shadowlands have been contained to the south of the River of the Last Stand.

30 HAKA NO IUCHIBAN (TOMB OF IUCHIBAN) (ORDER OF THE BLOOD SPEAKERS)

Five hundred years ago, Iuchiban and his Order of Blood Speakers were put down by the Seven Clans. Iuchiban's body was placed in a tomb and his Blood Speakers put to death. Not all the Blood Speakers were captured, however, and so those who entombed Iuchiban set traps all through his tomb to keep his servants from restoring the evil sorcerer to life.

31 SHIRO KAOTSUKI NO HIGASHI (FACE OF THE EAST CASTLE)

All diplomatic relations with the Crab are conducted here. The Crab navigate through Shinomen from here with the assistance of the Ratlings of the forest.

32 KAWA NO KIN (RIVER OF GOLD)

This river fords the Scorpion provinces, and the Scorpion own it. All Scorpion trade and commerce run along this river. The river is wide, moving with a slow, lazy pace, allowing for ships to move with safety along the shorelines.

33 YAMA SANO KAMINARI (MOUNTAIN OF THE SEVEN THUNDERS)

The tallest mountain in Rokugan is named after the Seven Thunders who went with Shinsei to face the dark lord Fu Leng. There is a shrine at the highest peak dedicated to their memory, kept by the Brotherhood of Shinsei.

34 KAWA MITTSU KISHI (THREE SIDES RIVER)

Perhaps the most contested body of water in Rokugan is the Three Sides River. It provides the heart of trade and commerce for three Clans (the Scorpion, the Lion and the Crane) in the heart of the Empire.

35 KAKUSU KEIKAI TORID-E (HIDDEN WATCH KEEP)

High in the mountains, the Hidden Watch Keep overlooks Beiden Pass. The shugenja high in the tower send signals to the Scorpion Clan, informing the Bayushi family of all traffic through the Pass.

36 YOGO SHIRO (CASTLE OF LEARNING)

The great shugenja school of the Scorpion Clan is isolated from the rest of the Empire. It is located in the foothills of the Spine of the World Mountains. Its head teacher, Yogo Junzo, secretly guards the first of the Twelve Black Scrolls.

37 RYOKO OWARI TOSHI (JOURNEY'S END CITY)

If you are looking for gambling dens, geisha houses, opium parlors or any other illicit activity, Ryoko Owari is the place to go. Of course, all of this activity occurs behind the city's "legitimate"

face, and great deal of legal trade goes on here as well. But behind the closed doors and open faces lurk indulgences of all varieties.

38 SHIRO NO SHOSURO (CASTLE OF PRETENDING)

The Shosuro family of the Scorpion Clan are famous for their herbalistic skills and alchemical experiments. Far beneath the entertainment halls, the Shosuro distill their brews both fair and foul.

39 KYUDEN BAYUSHI (SCORPION CLAN PALACE)

Located on the River of Gold and three roads, the Bayushi family castle is located just south of Beiden Pass, the cross-roads of the Empire. The palace is one of the three most extravagant family palaces in the Empire (the other two being the Doji palace and the Mantis Clan palace). It is also guarded by one of the largest standing armies in Rokugan. But Bayushi palace is guarded by more than men: it is guarded by the secrets of the Scorpion Clan.

All travel along the three roads and the Golden River are patrolled and taxed by the Scorpion Clan, which brings heavy revenue into the coffers of the Bayushi family. The land just south of Beiden Pass is also owned by the Scorpion, but the actual pass itself is owned by the Emperor. Samurai stand at the ready to notify the Clan of any heavy military force that moves through the pass, and tax collectors stand ready for any merchant caravans that happen to come through.

40 KAWA SANO OKAMI IJAN (RIVER OF THE HOUR OF THE WOLF)

Named for a battle in which ten thousand samurai died within one hour - the hour of the wolf. The battle took place at Beiden Pass between the Scorpion and the Lion. The blood of the samurai ran down into the river and made it the bloody crimson of the sunset.

41 AKA MIZU-UMI (RED LAKE)

The lake that the River of the Hour of the Wolf feeds into is known as the Red Lake. After the battle of the Hour of the Wolf, the blood ran into the river and down into the lake many miles south. For months afterward, the lake remained as red and as thick as blood. On the anniversary of the battle, in the dark hour of the wolf, the

NUMBERED ROAD KEY (CONTINUED)

12 Road of
Descending Evil -
Doro no Oriru Warui

15 Road of False
Deceit - Doro no Uso
no Itsuwari

14 Maiden of
Glass Road - Shoji
no Garaso Doro

15 Road of the
Golden Coast - Doro
sano Kin Kaigan

16 Road of Brief
Pleasure - Doro no
Mijikaki Kairaku

17 Mountain
Goblin's Rest Road -
Tengu Yasumi Doro

18 Road of the
Shattered Vow - Doro
sano Waru Chikai

19 Fresh Soul's
Road - Shinsen na
Hito Doro

20 March of Pain
- Demo Koshin no
Hama

21 Way of Lengthy
Commerce - Michi no
Nagai Shogyo

22 Fragrant Silk
Road - Kaoritaka
Kinu Doro

NUMBERED ROAD KEY (CONTINUED)

23 Way of the
Faint Echo of Glory -
Michi sano Kasuka
na Eiko

24 Horses of the
Plum Blossom Road
-Uma sano Umebachi
Doro

25 Maple Leaf
Road -Momiji Doro

26 Lotus and
Balloon Flower
Road-Hasu oyobi
Kikyo Doro

27 Beiden Pass
Road-Beiden Roka
Doro

28 Path of Woe -
Komichi no
Kanashimi

29 Treacherous
Pass Road-Kiken na
Roka Doro

lake's waters turn red and blood washes up on its shores.

42 KYUDEN ASHINAGABACHI (WASP CLAN PALACE)

The samurai of the Wasp Clan are the finest archers in Rokugan. The defenses of the castle are based on this. The road to the castle cuts through a steep mountain pass, allowing Wasp samurai to cut down any advancing armies with impunity.

43 KYUDEN SUZUME (SPARROW CLAN PALACE)

The Sparrow Clan is one of the oldest of the minor Clans, formed several hundred years ago when a number of Crane Clan members interpreted Shinsei's philosophy as calling for a renunciation of wealth. Accordingly, they set themselves apart from their money-conscious Crane brethren and declared themselves the Sparrow Clan, taking a more humble bird as their inspiration. The Sparrow Clan "palace" is quite spartan and functional, providing a fortified position which the Sparrows and their *heimin* can defend in time of war.

44 KYUDEN KITSUNE (FOX CLAN PALACE)

When Lady Shinjo left Rokugan, some of her Clan remained behind. Some of these remnants became the Fox Clan. While they do not have the same affinity for cavalry as their Unicorn cousins, their skills in hunting, herbalism and woodsmanship are unparalleled in Rokugan.

45 MIZU-UMI NO FUKO (LAKE OF SORROWS)

Stories say that this lake is haunted by the souls who died at Beiden Pass and were not properly buried. Small shrines dot the shore line in homage to those who fell whose names are not remembered.

46 KAWA SANO ZATU SHUDOSHI (RIVER OF THE BLIND MONK)

This river gains its name from an old monk who lives in a small shrine by the riverbed. He will ferry any who can answer a riddle. He has lived in his little shrine for at least two hundred years now, and when passengers ask his age, they get a knowing smile from the monk and a bath from the river.

47 KYUDEN DOJU (CRANE CLAN PALACE)

Only Otosan Uchi itself is more luxurious than the home of the Doji family. Built on the gentle shore of the Sea of the Sun Goddess, the grounds abound with rock gardens, dozens of shrines and vast flocks of cranes. Diplomats and nobility from all across Rokugan come to politics, but also to experience the splendor of the magnificent surroundings.

48 UMI AMATERASU (SEA OF THE SUN GODDESS)

The sea where the Sun Goddess rises every morning is usually quiet and calm. Buoys line the coast to help sailors guide their ships from harbor to harbor and to keep them from sailing too far out to sea.

49 YUFUKU NA HEIGEN TOSHI (PROSPEROUS PLAINS CITY)

The greatest marketplace in Rokugan, Yufuku na Heigen is teeming with merchants from all the Clans. It is the only open air market in the Empire, protected by the Daidoji from the west and the Doji from the south. Even the Yasuki - hated enemies of the Crane - come here to bargain and haggle with the merchants of the Crane.

50 SHIRO DAIDOJI (SON OF THE CRANE CASTLE)

While they are not as cultured as the Doji or Kakita, the Daidoji are the rank and file soldiers - the "strong arm" - of the Crane Clan. The Crane put little emphasis on military might, relying on the strength of their ambassadors and diplomats, making the smaller Daidoji family less influential than their cousins.

51 KOSATEN SHIRO (CROSSROADS CASTLE)

The Daidoji's first line of defense against a Lion invasion is Kosaten Shiro. It is well fortified, but not as nearly as strong as they would like. Crane political maneuverability and the gruff honor of the Lion Clan are often enough to keep the northwest borders safe from invasion.

52 SHIRO SANO KAKITA (THE DUELING SCHOOL OF THE CRANE CLAN)

The Kakita family are noteworthy for two reasons: their fencing school and their unparalleled

diplomatic skills. Their palace is very close to the borders to Otosan Uchi and about two miles from Shiro no Yojin, held by the Matsus (#64).

53 WAN SANO KIN TAIYO (BAY OF THE GOLDEN SUN)

The port harbor of the Imperial City and center of naval commerce is the Bay of the Golden Sun. Fishing boats and pleasure craft intermingle in the deep, calm waters as peasant and nobility alike take in the beauty around them. Every evening, the setting sun filters through the ramparts of Otosan Uchi, lighting the bay with a brilliant yellow shine. The Imperial Guard patrol in boats through the bay to discourage smugglers and other riff-raff.

54 OTOSAN UCHI (ROKUGAN CAPITAL)

Otosan Uchi is the capital of Rokugan, and the greatest testament to the power of the Hantei. The walls guarding the city are so wide that horses can ride along the ramparts. The guards are chosen from Rokugan's finest samurai. The entire capital exists solely to support the Emperor and his court. Diplomats from all seven Clans (and many of the minor ones) reside in the Emperor's palace, plotting, bickering and seeking the favor of the Son of Heaven. Policy for the entire Empire is determined here, and those without an invitation may not pass through the gates.

When the city and palace were built, Crab engineers and Phoenix shugenja worked together to make the palace impossible to infiltrate. Some shugenja say that the walls are enchanted with a powerful spell that renders its streets and passageways an impenetrable maze; only those with Hantei blood may find their way around.

55 HANTO NO YOAKE (PENINSULA OF DAWN)

56 HANTO NO NICHIBOTSU (PENINSULA OF SUNSET)

At the tip of each of these peninsulas is a light-house, guiding ships into the bay, welcoming them to the home of the Emperor (and watching for pirates and smugglers).

57 HEIGEN NO HAYAI MONDAI (PLAIN OF FAST TROUBLES)

The plains surrounding Otosan Uchi are known as the "Plain of Fast Troubles" because of its reputation. It is illegal to move armed men

through this area. Those who do soon find the whole of the Empire moving against them.

58 HEIGEN SANO DOJI (PLAIN OF THE CRANE)

The plush lands of the Doji family are dotted with rice farms and merchant caravans.

59 MURA KITA CHUSHIN (NORTH HUB VILLAGE)

60 MURA MINAMI CHUSHIN (SOUTH HUB VILLAGE)

61 MURA NISHI CHUSHIN (WEST HUB VILLAGE)

62 MURA HIGASHI CHUSHIN (EAST HUB VILLAGE)

Each of the "hub" villages are filled with inns, tea houses and shops to feed, supply and equip those who have come to visit Otosan Uchi. They are the "little capitals" of the Empire, where those who have no invitation can meet and discuss politics and strike deals. The bureaucracy lives and breathes here. When the Emerald Champion's magistrates bring in the collected taxes, they are counted in the hub villages.

63 SHIRO AKODO (LOYALTY CASTLE)

Keen observers will notice that Akodo castle is not what it once was. The daring and glorious acts of the Matsu family have begun to eclipse the history of the Akodo family. Akodo Toturi, the Emperor's general and military advisor, commands the Lion armies from here.

64 SHIRO NO YOJIN (CASTLE OF VIGILANCE)

Fifty years ago, this castle belonged to the Crane Clan, but now it belongs to the Matsu family. The Crane abandoned the castle when they saw an advancing Lion army, marching to avenge a slight made by a Crane diplomat. Today, no one is certain what the comment was, but the Matsu family remains in Shiro no Yojin, breathing down the Kakita family's neck.

65 HEIGEN NO OTAKU (PLAINS OF BATTLE)

This is the heart of Lion country, guarded intensely by Lion samurai. However, the Lion have no protection from the Emerald Champion's



HITOMI'S TALE

The tale of the first Hitomi is one of the most famous in Rokugan. You can follow her adventures in the sidebars near the following entries.

#57
#72
#95
#106



**HITOMI'S TALE
- THE PLAIN
OF FAST
TROUBLES
(#57)**

It was on the Plain of Fast Troubles that Matsu Hitomi was forced by love to break her vows and begin the long, painful path to her ruin (and her immortalization in tragic drama for the next thousand years).

She took the life of her leader (a disreputable samurai of the Dragon Clan) rather than aid him in the attack on her lover's palace. The duel itself is legendary, with Hitomi entering the Dragon's tent at night, casting aside her clothing, and battling him without weapons or armor. It was the only way she could see to initiate a fair duel without giving him time to alert everyone. Once the Dragon was dead, she and her loyal followers slipped out of the camp before dawn.

taxes. For five hundred years a Crane has worn the Emerald Armor and has taken full advantage of his ability to tax the Lions. Through taxation, the Crane have profited from Lion labor.

66 ROKA BEIDEN (BEIDEN PASS)

Beiden Pass is often referred to as the crossroads of the Empire. It is the only pass in the Spine of the World Mountains that is wide enough to move an army through. The Lion, Scorpion and Crane constantly feud over control of the pass. There have been hundreds of battles fought over the right to administer the pass, giving the lake just south of the pass its reputation for being haunted.

67 SHIRO MATSU (LAST BREATH CASTLE)

This is the ancestral Matsu home, where the first Matsu met with the first Akodo. The largest contingent of Lion samurai are here, making certain the supply lines are not cut by Scorpions or Cranes. The armies are made up of all the Lion families: Akodos, Matsus and Ikomas alike.

68 KYUDEN IKOMA (SACRED WATCH PALACE)

The traditional Ikoma homeland is located at the base of the Mountain of Thunders, where the Seikitsu mountains divide the Empire in two. The Ikoma have long been the peacemakers between the militant Matsu and the shrewd Akodo, ensuring that neither family becomes too dominant. The fortress serves as an informal meeting place for the leaders of the clan to discuss internal issues. Once the farthest outpost of Rokugan civilization, it now serves to defend the Lion from possible incursions from the Dragon or Unicorn (although the Dragon has not expanded its borders since the founding of the Empire).

69 KENSON GAKKA (HUMILITY'S LESSON)

Just as the Scorpion watch the Lion, so do the Lion watch the Scorpion. Shiro no Meiyo - the Castle of Honor - stands as a reminder to the Lion's southward neighbors. Six hundred years ago the Scorpion tried to take Ikoma Castle, but their effort was not successful. Responding to Scorpion aggression, the Matsu attacked the Scorpion's nearest castle, previously called "The Lion's Shadow." When the Matsu overtook the castle, they killed every man, woman and child inside, and claimed it for the Lion Clan, renaming

it "Humility's Lesson."

70 OBORESHINU BOEKISHO KAWA (DROWNED MERCHANT RIVER)

Three hundred years ago, a prominent merchant was attacked by bandits near this river. They tortured him and his family, eventually drowning them in the river. Local peasants say that their ghosts wander the bank, looking to bring justice to the bandits who drowned them.

71 KYUDEN TONBO (DRAGONFLY CLAN PALACE)

The Dragonfly Clan was born from a marriage contract between a samurai from the Phoenix Clan and a shugenja from the Dragon Clan. The Dragonfly Clan's castle is not formidable, but is protected by enchanted walls and the cousins of the Dragonfly: the Dragon and the Phoenix.

The Dragonfly Clan serves as emissaries and go-betweens for the Dragon and the rest of the Empire. If you wish audience with the Dragon, you must first seek audience with the Dragonfly.

72 KYODAI NA JOSHO SURU (THE GREAT CLIMB)

These are the foothills that lead to the mountain palaces of the Dragon Clan. They are tight, twisting and confusing and easy to get lost in, eventually reaching impossible heights. There is a single pass that climbs the mountains, and that is guarded by the Mirumoto family.

73 SHIRO SANO KEN HAYAI (CASTLE OF THE SWIFT SWORD)

This is the school of the Akodo family, teaching its samurai both the pen and sword aspects of bushido. This is where the great and noble history of the Lion Clan is kept. This is also the ancestral home of the Kitsus family. Normally, the Kitsus serve as the historians of the Lion Clan, but currently, Ikoma Kaoku serves as the Clan's historian.

74 MURA SANO EIYU NI SURU (VILLAGE OF THE REINSTATED HERO)

Ikoma Teidei was a young, handsome and promising samurai... before his daimyo was killed by an assassin. Teidei became a ronin and spent seven years seeking out his daimyo's killer. He finally cornered the assassin in this village. A shrine stands today where the ronin killed the assassin and then committed seppuku to join his

master.

75 TOSHI NO MEIYO GISEI (CITY OF HONOR'S SACRIFICE)

A young samurai maiden – whose name has been forgotten (erased from the Lion histories) – made the ultimate sacrifice in the home of the headman of this village. She kept a secret lover here, and when her daimyo discovered her secret, she vowed to commit seppuku to show her loyalty to her lord. The daimyo agreed, but at the ceremony, he gave her a wooden sword to perform the act. The samurai-ko took the wooden sword and performed the ceremony, despite the insult. A shrine dedicated to her memory still stands in this village.

76 HINABASHO SANO MITTSU SHIMAI (REFUGE OF THE THREE SISTERS)

High in the mountains above the Dragon keeps, Rokugan's only shrine to the Moon God sits on at the end of a treacherous path called "The Climb of the Moon." Those who are diligent and discover the hidden path will find the shrine occupied by three sisters who have tended the shrine for as long as mortal memory has recorded. Speculation has made the sisters out to be ghosts, but none can say for certain. The three sisters speak in riddles, answering any question put to them. Legends say that any question put to them is answered truthfully, but ruin befalls any who ask.

77 KYUDEN TOGASHI (HIGH HOUSE OF LIGHT)

The final fortress along the Dragon Way is the fortress of the Togashi. The Togashi are not so much a family as an order of samurai who have devoted themselves to a strange religion/philosophy. The "tattooed men" of the Togashi sect are popular figures in Rokugan's literature. The *ise zumi* rarely venture outside their monastic castles, but when they do, their bizarre actions reflect their unexplainable attunement to the Five Elements. This castle is also the home of Togashi Yokuni, head of the *ise zumi* order and the daimyo of the Dragon Clan. The road that leads to this castle is a sharp-angled steep climb. An armored man trying to make the climb would certainly fall.

78 SHIRO KITSUKI (LAST STEP CASTLE)

Called "Last Step" because of the steep climb that leads away from this castle to the High House of Light (77), Kitsuki castle is the home of the most "orthodox" of Dragon Clan families (almost all diplomats of the Dragon Clan are from the Kitsuki family). Some say there is a secret path from the flatlands to Kitsuki castle, but if there is, it is hidden well.

79 SHIRO AGASHA (AGASHA CASTLE)

The Agasha are the keepers of the Dragon Clan library and their castle is the home of the Dragon shugenja school. Well fortified deep in the mountains, Agasha castle is one of the deepest mysteries in Rokugan. Shugenja from other clans have spent months in the castle, but when they leave, they find they can recall nothing of their stay.

80 SHIRO MIRUMOTO (LAST GLANCE CASTLE)

The home of the Mirumoto family stands high at the entrance of the Great Wall of the North. The road spirals upward into a wide ravine and the castle looks down into the ravine. Those who wish to visit the castle must climb the steep path. Invaders must avoid arrows, pitch and fire from above with no way to retaliate. The lord of the castle died shortly after his first-born son was killed in a duel by a Crab samurai. The lord's only remaining child – Mirumoto Hitomi – inherited the Dragon Clan's ancestral sword and the castle, but she has left it behind to seek revenge for her brother's death.

81 TOSHI RANBO WO SHIEN SHITE REIGISAHO (VIOLENCE BEHIND COURTLINESS CITY)

This castle, and the land surrounding it, once belonged to the Lion Clan, but recent events have brought it under the Crane's control.

Two years ago, the castle's lord and master was dislodged by an ambitious and skilled Crane general. While many in the Crane Clan thought the action was reprehensible, the daimyo had no choice but to reward the general. The daimyo's acknowledgment of the deed has heightened tensions between the Crane and the Lion, almost to the point of military action.



HITOMI'S TALE – CONTINUED

Just when she thought she had safely escaped the whole situation, Matsu Hitomi's train was harassed by Mujina on this plain. The creatures first tricked her into revealing her secret, then tormented the column while others ran off on their speedy inhuman legs to pass the word.

HITOMI'S TALE - THE GREAT CLIMB (#72)

Hotly pursued by the Dragon Forces (along with some of her fellow Lions),

Matsu Hitomi's forces were eventually pinned against this imposing cliff. While the Dragons waited for their daimyo, who wanted to take

Hitomi's head personally, her followers started a brush fire. The Dragon forces thought Hitomi was burning her caravan to leave nothing for salvage, but it was actually a smoke screen to conceal her forces climbing the cliffs and hauling up their weapons and armor with ropes.

Seeing this, the Dragon daimyo wept, for he grieved to be forced by his own vow to slay someone so driven by love and courage.

82 HEIGEN RYO KOKORO (DRAGON HEART PLAIN)

This high plain overlooks the Dragon fortress to the Southwest and the Shrine of the Ki-Rin to the Southeast.

83 REIHAIDO SANO KI-RIN (SHRINE OF THE KI-RIN)

A thousand years ago, the samurai who would become the Unicorn Clan left the Empire following a mysterious creature called "ki-rin." For eight hundred years, this creature was not seen in Rokugan until the return of the Unicorn Clan. This shrine marks the spot where the Unicorn Clan first saw the Ki-Rin and where the returning Unicorn were first spotted by Phoenix Clan scouts.

84 KYODAI NA TAIYO (THE GREAT FALL)

Due to heavy volcanic activity, there are many rock slides in this area, making it quite dangerous. The Dragon Clan use this area to train their new samurai (to keep them on their toes).

85 KIN TAIYO HEIGEN (GOLDEN SUN PLAIN)

The Plains of the Golden Sun have been declared sacred by the Emperor and no blood has ever stained this sacred place.

86 ROKUGAN YOGASHA HEIGEN (EMERALD CHAMPION PLAIN)

87 ROKUGAN YOGASHA SHIRO (EMERALD CHAMPION CASTLE)

For a thousand years, the lands just north and to the west of the Imperial Capital have belonged to the Emerald Champion. No army has ever dared threaten its borders, as all daimyo are painfully aware that such an action is an invitation for the other Clans to raise their own armies against the invader.

The castle sits on a high hill surrounded by a wide, empty plain. Any army marching on the sight would be seen days in advance of their arrival. A chrysanthemum - the mon of the Emerald Champion - is proudly displayed at the front gate of the castle.

88 TANIMA SANO FUTATSU TAISHO (VALLEY OF THE TWO GENERALS)

It was here that two of the Empire's greatest commanders - Matsu Kijoruko and Daidoji

Wasutsubo - fought the Seven Day Battle. In the end, the commanders faced each other on the battlefield, surrounded by the bloody corpses of hundreds of hours of constant combat. Although Kijoruko was the victor, her wounds from the duel overcame her moments later. The battlefield remains a holy sight with a shrine dedicated to both generals located where they fell.

89 MAMORU KYOTEI TOSHI (HONORED TREATY CITY)

Seven hundred years ago, a great war was held between the Phoenix and Lion. The war raged many years, ending only when both sides sued for peace. Within the City of the Honored Treaty, the peace treaty between the Lion and Phoenix is held.

90 KIKEN NA ROKA TOSHI/RYU BANNIN TOSHI (TREACHEROUS PASS CITY/DRAGON'S GUARD CITY)

A slight and narrow pass through the mountains gave this city its name. It sits in a valley on the sea shore surrounded by high mountains. A famous storyteller once said a small child gave a dragon a rice ball at the site of the city, and the dragon promised the child that her family and all of her descendants would know peace for a thousand years. Since that time, the descendants of that little girl have become some of the most prominent fishermen in Rokugan.

91 KIKEN NA ROKA (TREACHEROUS PASS)

A story tells of a merchant who lost his life in this pass hundreds of years ago, and his ghost still haunts the mountainsides. At night, haunting winds whip through the gorges, making it sound as if the mountains themselves weep. It is a long and dangerous pass, but it is also the shortest route from the Phoenix lands and the lands of the Emerald Champion and the Emperor.

92 YAMA NO KUYAMI (MOUNTAINS OF REGRET)

This range is called Regret because of the many lives lost in the only pass through the mountains. In the red light of the sunset, the snow on the tips turn red, making it look as if the mountains bleed with the setting of the sun.

Sightings of ogres and goblins in this area lead some shugenja to suspect an ancient breeding ground somewhere in the caves, but if they exist,

the Phoenix have yet to find them.

93 TOSHI NO OMOIDOSO (CITY OF REMEMBRANCE)

See sidebar, p. 230.

94 KYUDEN ISAWA (PHOENIX CLAN PALACE)

The castle that houses the Isawa family is located on the shoreline. It is surrounded by sand, making it difficult for an army to move against it. The walls have been enchanted with runes to protect it from both magical and physical attack. It is here the Isawa library can be found. It is the greatest library in all of Rokugan, containing the researches of a thousand years of Phoenix shugenja.

95 NEMUI KAMINARI YAMA (SLEEPING THUNDER MOUNTAIN)

The volcano just south east of the Shrine of the Ki-Rin rumbles from time to time, but has yet to fully erupt.

96 & 97 REIHAI DO UIKKU (UIKKU SHRINE) & YOGENSHA HEIGEN (PROPHET PLAIN)

A shrine has been erected here in honor of the Phoenix shugenja who recorded the Tao of Shinsei.

98 MORI KAGE TOSHI (FOREST SHADOW CITY)

When a bride from the Dragon Clan was scorned by her Shiba husband, her mother put a curse on Mori Kage. Today, it looks as if the limbs of the forest have reached out to claim the castle. It is completely deserted, save for the ghostly court that walks the castle's halls.

99 MORI ISAWA (PHOENIX WOODLANDS)

There was a reason the Phoenix settled in this area of Rokugan. The wood of the Isawa forest has a particular quality that is particularly beneficial for their shugenja's scrolls.

100 SHIRO SHIBA (SHIBA CASTLE)

Located in the far northern reaches of Rokugan, it is a maze of courtyards, donjons and walls put together in a seemingly haphazard fashion, with the main donjon rising at its center. There are those who say the entire castle is an elaborate puzzle. Crab engineers say it is the result of simple bad planning.

101 SHIRO ASAKO (MORNING GLORY CASTLE)

Also called "Castle of the White Phoenix," it stands at the top of black rocks and its white walls are so high that the first rays of sunlight make it a shining beacon to the rest of the land.

102 SHINSEI NA SUMAI MURA (HOLY HOME VILLAGE)

Once a pilgrimage spot when the followers of Shinsei were not yet an organized order. Several manor houses and the shrine were constructed by Shiba Esade, a Master of Earth. Pilgrims would bring a stone from many miles away which would then be added by the master to a building. The stones fit together perfectly and have lasted these many hundreds of years.

103 & 104 AOJIROI OKU SHIRO (PALE OAK CASTLE) & AOJIROI OKU HEIGEN (PALE OAK PLAIN)

Disregarding tradition, on his deathbed, the seventeenth Hantei demanded that he be buried – not cremated – in an empty field near where the woman he loved was born. From his grave, a tall pale oak grew. A castle has been erected about the oak to protect it. Many believe that bark from the tree has healing abilities.

105 NANI-AKU HEITAI HEIGEN (700 SOLDIER PLAIN)

It was here that seven hundred soldiers were victorious against an army of seven thousand (at least, that is what the history books say).

106 SHIRO SANO CHUJITSU NA SHINPU (CASTLE OF THE FAITHFUL BRIDE)

See nearby sidebar.

107 DORO OWARI MURA (ROAD'S END VILLAGE)

An entirely unremarkable and inhospitable village. Many avoid it.

108 KANAWA TAKI (IRON RINGS CASCADE)

One thousand years ago, Shinsei stopped at this waterfall and quenched his thirst at the waters. Since that day, the waters have been considered holy and blacksmiths from across Rokugan come to this waterfall to use the pure waters for quenching their steel.

HITOMI'S TALE - THE CASTLE OF THE FAITHFUL BRIDE (#106)

The Castle of the Faithful Bride was built by Matsu Hitomi's lover. The first stone was laid on the anniversary of her death, and it was completed after 27 years, which was her age when she died. The samurai lord never married, and his line ended with his death. Even his family name is the subject of controversy.



HITOMI'S TALE - THE CITY OF REMEMBRANCE (#93)

Matsu Hitomi spent her last full day of life in this city. It is not known what she said or did, but after she died, the civilians would not divulge the secrets.

In a rage, the Lion daimyo ordered fully three-fourths of the population to be executed for their insolence, until he at last relented. Thereafter, plagued by the spirits of the aged and the young alike, he took to heavy drinking, and died within three years. Some think that the civilians still know the secrets. In fact, the city has prospered with people moving here hoping to be privy to her last words and actions, but apparently only those directly related to the villagers who survived ever know the truth.

109 TAKARA-MUSUBI TAKI (TREASURE KNOT WATERFALL)

It was here an Akodo samurai maiden was courted by a Matsu samurai. The maiden gave him a knot, telling him that when he could untie the knot, he would win her love. The Matsu took one look at the knot and sliced it with his wakizashi. The maiden took the rash act as an insult and one of the greatest Akodo/Matsu rivalries began.

110 MASAKARI TAKI (BROAD AXE WATERFALL)

At the head of the waterfall, an axe remains stuck in a stone. Legend has it that the stone and the axe are enchanted, and that the stone was an oni. As long as the axe remains, the oni remains trapped in his stone form.

111 TSUNO SANO SHIROI OIKA (ANTLERS OF THE WHITE STAG)

The two peninsulas that make up the outlet of the bay on Otsan Uchi are called the Antlers of the White Stag, an animal that has often been associated with the Hantei Dynasty. The first Hantei was with his brothers and sisters on a hunt when they spotted the stag. They hunted it all day, and all day it eluded them. Only when Hantei rode alone into the woods did he find the beast. Some say a promise was spoken between them, but what manner of promise, none can say.

112 SUZU SANO SHINDA (BELLS OF THE DEAD)

Twelve shugenja died in this field fighting a blood-drinking oni. Every full moon, a bell is rung to bring peace to the spirits of the shugenja who wander the countryside.

113 HEIGEN YORI UE NI WARUI (PLAINS ABOVE EVIL)

This broad expanse of wilderness remains untouched after nearly a thousand years. Even the wide-ranging Unicorn haven't settled here, and Shadowlands creatures seem to fear the area like the plague. Many strange ruins jut up from the plains, built by inhuman hands an incalculable time ago. Rumors abound about the true nature of the ruins, but the most credible attribute them to the mysterious Naga who vanished from Rokugan before the dawn of man. It is considered extremely bad luck to even approach the crumbling buildings; most Rokugani refuse to go near them.

114 YUGURE YAMA (TWILIGHT MOUNTAINS)

Smaller than the mighty Seikitsu mountains, the Yugure range covers the southern half of the ancestral Crab lands. Tough and rocky, the mountains and littered with elaborate Crab defenses against the Shadowlands. There are many passes through the Yugure, but most are either garrisoned or booby-trapped. Wise samurai traveling the mountains will first announce their presence to the Crab, and then arrive by the Kaiu pass, one of the few places travellers can move about unmolested.

The northern half of the range supports a large number of tea plantations, and the bulk of the Empire's tea supply comes from Crab lands.

115 KAIU KABE (CARPENTER WALL)

It is called the Kaiu Miracle, perhaps the strongest structure built by man. It stands almost one hundred feet high, enforced by buttresses and garrisoned by the fiercest warriors the Crab Clan can produce. Situated on the northern side of the Last Stand River, it is the Empire's greatest defense against the horrors of Fu Leng.

The wall was built over three hundred years ago, through a combination of Shugenja magic and Kaiu engineering. A huge Shadowlands army had launched an attack against Rokugan; all looked lost until a young Kuni magician cast a spell upon the river. The waters surged and crested, preventing any from crossing it. For sixty days, she held the spell in place, while the forces of the Crab built the wall. Many died during its construction, and more than a few shugenja sacrificed every ounce of energy to speed up construction, but the waters held. By the time the magician finally died from the exhaustion, the Crab were ready, and the wall was enough to repel the invaders. Since then, it has been strengthened and built upon, and entire armies have spent themselves trying to breach its walls. It is a testament to the power and resolve of the Crab Clan, and the Hida family has sworn that it will never surrender it to the Shadowlands. Thus far, no force has been enough to topple it.

116 KAIU ROKA (CARPENTER PASS)

The Kaiu Pass is the largest passageway through the Twilight Mountains, and the easiest means of moving troops through it. Soldiers coming to man the Kaiu walls always travel through

the pass, as well as countless individual samurai hoping to test their mettle against the forces of Fu Leng. The road through the pass is wide and well-maintained; the Crab understand the need for open supply routes. Many merchants, peddlers, and hucksters frequent the road, plying their wares to any who pass by. Anyone who wishes to sell anything here must pay a tithe to the Yasuki, and indeed most of the traders along the pass belong to the family. The Crab tolerate their presence for this reason and this reason alone.

117 KAIU SHIRO (CARPENTER CASTLE)

Kaiu Shiro houses the Kaiu family and is home to the largest smithy in Rokugan. The Kaiu engineers work at maintaining the great wall from here, upgrading their defenses and building new and wondrous siege machines. Plans and schematics adorn the walls of the palaces, and a huge forge dominates the main courtyard. The plains around Kaiu Shiro are covered with ballista and catapults, waiting to be moved to their positions on the wall.

Beneath the castle lies a complex series of passages and catacombs; they run throughout the Kaiu walls, opening in several discreet locations in the Shadowlands. Crab scouts use the passages to enter the corrupted realm, reporting any significant developments to the daimyos on the other side of the wall. The entrances also serve as bothholes for spies trying to get back to the lands of the sun.

118 KAMISORI SANO YOAKE SHIRO (RAZOR OF THE DAWN CASTLE)

The western edge of the Kaiu wall is anchored here, a stout rock of a fortress squeezed between two steep hills. Shadowlands attacks are rarer at the Razor of the Dawn than elsewhere, and troops quartered here serve mainly as reservists. Samurai from other Clans looking to make a name for themselves are often stationed at the Razor Dawn; the Crab is loath to permit outsiders deeper into its defenses.

The rocky terrain and hidden vales surrounding the castle make it an ideal location for infiltrating the Shadowlands. Spies and scouts are often quartered here, and meetings with tribes of Ratlings take place just outside its walls.

119 HAIKYO NO HIRUMA (RUINS OF DAYLIGHT)

The ruins of the ancestral Hiruma homeland lie here, swallowed up by the evil of the Shadowlands. Three hundred years ago, a marauding army of Oni laid the castle waste, destroying its defenses and scattering the Hiruma to the winds. Although the army was eventually stopped at the Battle of the Cresting Wave, the Hiruma lands have never been reclaimed. The shame of that loss haunts the Hiruma to this day, and their samurai are known to enter battle with headlong abandon, hoping that death will remove their dishonor.

The castle now serves as a rough marshalling ground for oni and goblins wishing to attack the Crab lands to the north. It has no permanent inhabitants, and a squatter's rights rule permeates those who spend any time here. Small groups of Crab samurai often come to the castle to "clean house" and young bushi going through their rite of passage will often come here for a quick kill, but no force has been able to hold it for any length of time. The denizens of the Shadowlands seem to consider its possession a point of pride. Its walls have been broken in dozens of places, and little of value is left after three centuries.

120 SHIRO KUNI (CASTLE OF THE NATION)

This fortress lies at the heart of the Crab defenses against the Shadowlands. While not physically imposing, it is very large – able to accommodate an entire army of troops – and commands an imposing view of the surrounding countryside. The Crab generals plot their strategies here, while messengers stand ready to relay their orders down the road which spans the length of the Carpenter wall. A small army of bushi is always stationed here, serving as an anchor for the great wall and a deterrent to any Shadowlands creature who perceives the castle as a weak link in the Crab defense.

121 KYUDEN HIDA (CRAB CLAN PALACE)

At the mouth of the Last Stand river, lies Kyuden Hida – the ancestral home of the Hida family and the mightiest fortress in Rokugan. The Crab Clan palace has the largest standing army in Rokugan. The walls are hewn from pure granite reaching into the living rock of the land beneath





it. The gates are constructed of thick steel, requiring ten men to open. The skull of a huge Oni lord hangs above the ramparts, as a warning to any who would challenge the castle's might. A standing army of almost a thousand men is quartered here, ready to defend the Crab from any attack.

The castle is also the home of the Hida bushi school, where samurai are trained in the harshest techniques. Students train in full armor, and graduates must venture into the Shadowlands and slay one of its denizens before they are given their wakizashi. The Great Bear, Hida Kisada, and his children live here, coordinating the defense of the Empire with ruthless precision.

122 KUNI ARENO (KUNI WASTES)

Once conquered by the Shadowlands, the Kuni wastes have been retaken by the Crab over centuries of brutal warfare. It is a flat plain of cracked mud and blowing dust, where no living thing will grow. The odd Shadowlands creature wanders about, looking for lone travelers to prey upon. The only humans who live here are the mysterious shugenja of the Kuni family, who practice their fell arts in lonely seclusion. They live alone in ramshackle huts which dot the landscape, and rarely seek the company of outsiders. Rumors abound about the terrible experiments they conduct on the Oni they manage to capture, and the unnatural screams sometimes heard echoing across the wastes lend credence to such speculation.

123-124 THE BLACK FINGER RIVER AND THE RIVER OF THE DARK MOON

Just to the north of the Crab holdings, the River of the Last Stand forks into two. The eastern fork winds its way through the mountains, splitting again before finally entering the Shadowlands. Its waters become dark and stagnant, twisted by the corrupting magic around it. The two forks have been named The Black Finger and The Dark Moon by the few Rokugani who have seen them. Unwholesome plants grow along their sides, and unspeakable things come down to drink from their impure banks. Beneath their stagnant surfaces, frightening monstrosities have spawned; not even the oni know for certain what dwells within them. No being who has fallen into the rivers – man, beast, or oni – has ever emerged again.

The Black Finger is the furthest into the

Shadowlands any Rokugani has ever travelled. Beyond that lies the unknown horrors of Fu Leng's realm.

125 HAIKYO SANO KAPPA (RUINS OF THE KAPPA)

Once a strong fortress of the Crab clan, the Kappa palace fell long ago to the Shadowlands. Now, it houses a great goblin city, shabbily rebuilt to ape the style of the original. Dozens of tribes gather here to meet, haggle, debate, and fight in a hideous mockery of human society. The goblins claim that a great king rules all goblinkind from here, but the highest authority anyone has ever seen are the squabbling tribal warlords.

The occasional Kuni magician can be found here, negotiating with the individual goblins for their own sinister purposes. In return for free passage to and from the palace, the Kuni have masked the city's presence from the other Crab families; should the Hida ever learn of it, they would destroy it without a second thought.

126 KANO SURU ANA NO FU LENG (FESTERING PIT OF FU LENG)

When Fu Leng was cut from his father's hand and fell from the heavens, he landed here. The resulting crater stretched deep into the underworld, releasing all manner of foul creatures into the world. The Pit is the center of the Shadowlands, focusing Fu Leng's power and hatred into solid form. Evil emanates from it in palpable waves, and the darkest spirits congregate around its surface. Crab scouts say that it stretches all the way to Fu Leng's resting place, and that he uses it as a window to spy on the world of men. No human has ever seen the Festering Pit without going mad, but the largest and most fearsome oni often travel here to worship their dread master.

127 OKIWASURERU HAKA NO FU LENG (FORGOTTEN TOMB OF FU LENG)

After his defeat at the hands of Shinsei, Fu Leng was banished beneath the earth. Soon thereafter, the Forgotten Tomb appeared, the representation of Fu Leng's power on earth. All of the creatures which he gave life to – the goblins, the ogres, the oni granted physical form – emerged from the tomb, spreading across the length and breadth of the Shadowlands. A squat structure of ancient stone, it is decorated with hideous sym-

hols and terrifying statues depicting the foretold return of the Dark God. Unlike the Festering Pit, no creature is found near the tomb; its halls belong to Fu Leng and Fu Leng alone.

128 SHIO SENKYO NO RIKU (TIDAL LANDBRIDGE)

The Landbridge is a small strip of turf on the entrance to Warm Springs Bay. At low tide, it is nearly a half-mile across, allowing large groups of men to pass from one side to the other. At high tide, it is swallowed beneath the waves. Ships wishing to pass through the strait must wait for the tide to rise, and both the Crab and the Crane regulate the traffic that passes through it. Both Clans have squabbled over ownership of the bridge, but the rolling waves have the ultimate authority over its possession.

129 NIWA SHITA NO KAGE TOSHI (GARDEN UNDER SHADOW CITY)

The home of the Daidoji family. At the battle of the Last Stand, the daimyo watched as Crab samurai stood valiantly against the raging masses of Shadowlands creatures. He took up his armor and sword and a handful of samurai and charged across the landbridge into the horde, knowing that at dusk when the landbridge faded under the waves, he would not be able to retreat. To this day, the Daidoji family are the only Cranes the Crab hold with any kind of esteem. The Crabs call them "tetsu-tsuru" ("iron cranes").

130 AISO NI RYOKOSHA MURA (FRIENDLY TRAVELER VILLAGE)

A simple, small fishing village just south and east of the tidal Landbridge. It is modest and friendly (as its name suggests) and produces the best sake in the Empire.

131 JINSHIN SAKANA WAN (EARTHQUAKE FISH BAY)

The bay that separates the Crane and Crab provinces has a rather amazing history. First off, it's hot. That is, it is warmer than it should be. This is because of volcanic activity occurring beneath the waves. Secondly, when an earthquake does occur, the waters become so hot, it kills many of the fish in the lake, causing a great mess of dead fish to wash ashore. This has only happened three times in Rokugan's one thousand year history, but each time it has happened, it has been an omen to an event of disastrous portent.

132 YASUKI YASHIKI (BLACK CRANE ESTATES)

The Yasuki Palace was once owned by the Crane Clan, but no longer. The Yasuki family turned on the Crane many hundreds of years ago to serve the Crab Clan.

The palace is quite modest (they don't want to look like they are competing with the "decadent" Cranes), and at the same time, is riddled with secret hallways and rooms that visitors are not allowed to enter. This Crab stronghold is the closest to civilization, and for many samurai and shugenja, it is the closest they wish to get to the Shadowlands.

133 SHINDEN ASAHINA (TEMPLE OF THE MORNING SUN)

Shinden Asahina are a small cluster of temples located just south of the Yasuki estates. The Asahina shugenja are completely devoted to a peaceful existence. There are no samurai assigned to protect the temples, and no army would dare draw the wrath of the Emperor by attacking these pacifistic shugenja.

134 YAMA UE NO HO NI UMI MURA (MOUNTAINS ABOVE OCEAN VILLAGE)

Located just west of the foothills of Rokugan's southmost mountain range, this small village is noted for its friendly inns and taverns. It is an ideal travel stop between the central and southern Crane estates.

135 KABI UE NO HO NI SA UMI (WALL ABOVE THE OCEAN)

The lowest of Rokugan's mountain regions, it is settled right between the Crab and Crane border, which makes it a heavily disputed piece of territory.

136 BUNYA SANO ASAHINA (FIELDS OF THE MORNING SUN)

Samurai and monks are often found meditating in the peaceful field along the coastline just south of the Yasuki Palace.

137 SUNDA MIZU MURA (CLEAR WATER VILLAGE)

This is the most significant port in the south. It is one of the oldest settlements in Rokugan, and has kept its old village name, even though it has become one of the largest trading centers in the



SHIPPING LANES

A - Kotet Michi
(Emperor's Way)

B - Michi sano
Shukufuku Suru
Amaterasu (Way of
the Blessed Goddess)

C - Michi no Kinu
Kin (Way of Silk and
Gold)

D - Noroi Kaikyō
(Cursed Strait)

E - Kaigan no
Kurai Nomu (Coast
of Dark Mist)

F - Michi no Kurai
Ashi (Way of Dark
Tentacles)

G - Nagare Kyodai
na Yu Kumo (Current
of the Great Water
Spider)

H - Suiro Kyodai
na Ebi (Giant Shrimp
Channel)

I - Suiro Roku no
Hanshō (Channel of
the Six Bells)

Empire.

138 HEIWA NA KAZE HEIGEN (QUIET WIND PLAIN)

Soft winds come from the Shinomen Forest blow across the Quiet Wind plain, and sometimes, haunting music can be heard.

139 NANATSU HI OTAKU HEIGEN (SEVEN DAY BATTLE PLAIN)

Three hundred years ago, the ronin who called himself "Usagi" assisted the Emerald Champion to defeat Iuchiban and his Order of Blood Speakers. Usagi was granted a small castle and the lands that surrounded it. The battle with Iuchiban lasted for seven days, thus the name of the plain.

140 MIZU-UMI NO SAKURA YUKI (LAKE OF CHERRY BLOSSOM SNOW)

Cherry blossoms line the lake, and when they fall in the autumn, they cover the waters, making the lake look as if it is covered in snow. Many monks and devout samurai come to this lake during the Cherry Blossom Festival. Each of the devout sit under a tree and meditate until the blossoms fall from the tree. Tradition says that he who sits longest (his blossoms fall last) is the one who is most pure.

141 SHIROI KIN KAWA (WHITE GOLD RIVER)

The small river that spills into the Lake of Cherry Blossom Snow is called "white gold" because of the white rocks that line the riverbed and the golden leaves that fall into its waters in the fall. During many festivals, monks and devout samurai can be found on the shores fasting and meditating.

142 SHUKUFUKU SURU JIMEN HEIGEN (BLESSED GROUND PLAIN).

143 MITTSU OTOKO RENGŌ HEIGEN (THREE MAN ALLIANCE PLAIN).

144 TAKAI KUSA HEIGEN (TALL GRASS PLAIN).

145 RONIN CHIIKI ("RONIN PLAINS")

All of these lands are owned by the Three Man Alliance (the Wasp, Sparrow, and Fox minor Clans; see 42, 43, and 44). The Ronin Plains are the most heavily guarded, for they are bordering the estates of the Scorpion Clan.

146 MURA SABISHII TOSHI (LONELY SHORE TOSHI)

A lonely city in the Crane's trade and supply lines, Mura Sabishii sits on the south side of the Spine of the World mountains, with roads leading to Yama ue no ho ni Umi (134) and Kyuden Kitsune (44). Most trade comes from Samui Kaze (147), but that is strictly nautical trade. Mura Sabishii is a flourishing port town. The main reason is because of its proximity to Sumai Kaze. If travellers wish to go from south of the Spine of the World mountains to the north, they must travel many hundreds of miles on foot, or they can commission a ship and arrive in Sumai Kaze in less than a week.

147 SAMUI KAZE TOSHI (COLD WIND CITY)

Named for the cold winds that blow in from the mountains, Samui Kaze is one of the main trading ports of the Crane. Most of the trading is done with Mura Sabishii (see 174, above). The Spine of the World Mountains forbid any travel over land with the village, and so most trading must be done over the waves.

148 MICHİ NI MAYOTTA MUSUME IRIE (LOST DAUGHTER INLET)

This is the famous island where the first Hantei found his bride. The most famous telling of this tale was as a play by the famous Lion playwright, Akodo Taberu. Acknowledged as his masterpiece, the play manages to tell the tale in such a way that makes villains of the Crane characters

without portraying them as villainous.

149 SHIMA CHUTO DE (HALFWAY ISLAND)

Halfway island is devoid of man-made structures, except for an abandoned lighthouse that sits high on the cliffs. It is said a young woman threw herself from the lighthouse when she saw her lover's ship crash on the shores, and some even claim to see her ghost on stormy nights.

150 KYUDEN MANTIS (MANTIS CLAN PALACE)

Perhaps the most untraditional palace in Rokugan, the home of the Mantis Clan is also one of the most splendid. Unconcerned with simple gardens and expressions of Shinsei's teachings, the Mantis palace looks like a treasure trove. Objects of gold, silver and other precious stones and metals adorn the walls. A sharp contrast from the simple, plain homes of the Seven Clans. It is also here that the mighty fleet of the Mantis Clan guard the Mantis islands.

151 SHIMA NO KOSHINRYO (ISLAND OF SPICE) & 152 SHIMA NO KINU (ISLAND OF SILK)

The islands of Silk and Spice are, obviously, named for the two chief exports of the Mantis Clan. They are heavily guarded by the fleet of the Mantis, the largest standing fleet in Rokugan.

153 TOSHI NO INAZUMA (CITY OF LIGHTNING)

At least once a year, the tall towers of this city are struck by lightning. The temple of Osano-Wo - one of the most extravagant and beautiful temples in Rokugan, and the tallest building in the city - is usually the site.

154 WAN NO ASAGUROI MIZU (BAY OF DARK WATER)

Only those who put no stock in superstition cross the Bay of Dark Water. Some claim a city of horrible creatures lies at the bottom of the bay, and those who do not throw rice over the side when they cross bring doom and curses on their heads from the creatures below.

155 HEIGEN NO HISSHI NO WAROI (PLAIN OF DESPERATE EVIL)

Here a force of Crane pikemen caught up with a Shadowlands force. The Crane shugenja summoned sunlight, and the Shadowlands forces

attacked in a frenzy to kill the wizards. The pikemen stood firm as the horrid creatures charged relentlessly, impaling themselves up to five or six deep on the long, sharp pikes.



In many of the more recent roleplaying games, authors have used the last page to indulge their opinions, philosophies and complaints. When I first started this project, I promised myself that last page would be the last thing I wrote for this book.

And here I am. We have only a few hours to go before the game is supposed to be finished, and it's time for my single page of self-indulgence, where I get to tell the reader what's what and unload massive unspoken truths on the roleplaying community.

Well, here's "The Truth"TM:

I'm tired and I want to go to bed.

But before I can do that, I have to mention a few personal thank you's that deserved their own page (and wouldn't fit onto the already crammed credit page at the front of the book).

Special thanks are in order to these folks for these reasons:

Mom and Dad - Because if you don't thank your mom and dad in your first published work, you go to hell. Besides, if they didn't tell me roleplaying games were a waste of time, I wouldn't be here writing this "thank you."

My little brother Jason - Because he was my first player in my first campaign and he's just a great guy.

Julie B. - Because one day, she'll publish a book and she'll feel guilty if she doesn't thank me in *her* Afterword.

PLAYTESTING & ADVICE

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COLOPHON

This book's body type is Adobe's Concorde Nova, a compressed but readable roman serif typeface from Adobe's TypeOnCall collection. It's the same typeface as the body text in the LSR CCG. The header font is Lefcadrio, a marvelous freeware typeface by simla@aol.com available at your finer shareware repositories; the subheads are Caricature, from Softkey's Key Fonts Pro collection. The display font on the character sheet is Reinhard, also from Key Fonts Pro. The layout was done in QuarkXPress and Adobe Photoshop on a Power Macintosh 9500. The ink came out of a 55-gallon drum.

The AEG crew (you can find them on the credits page) – just because.

I'm tired and I'm ready to go home. And when I get there, I'll cuddle my dog and snuggle the cat, take my dinner out of the oven and cozy up in front of the fire with a good book and my beloved Jennifer.

I'm going to marry her on the day 1997 turns into 1998.

When it's all said and done, my work in this book has been for her.

Until we meet again,
– John Wick

Suggested Reading

THE ESSENTIALS

Miyamoto Musashi. *A Book of Five Rings*.
Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*.

STORIES

McAlpine, Helen & William. *Japanese Tales and Legends*.
Mackenzie, Donald A. *Myths of China and Japan*.
Murasaki Shikibu. *The Tale of Genji*.
Roberts, Moss. *Chinese Fairy Tales & Fantasies*.
Russel, Sean. *The Initiate Brother and Gatherer of Clouds*.
Sakai, Stan. *Usagi Yojimbo*.
Tyler, Royall. *Japanese Tales*.
Yoshikawa, Eiji. *Musashi*.

PHILOSOPHY

Doubleday, Tony & Scott, David. *The Elements of Zen*.
Inazo Nitobe. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*.
King, Winston L. *Zen & The Way of the Sword*.
Lao-Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*.
Sadler, A.L. *The Code of the Samurai*.
Suzuki Shosan. *Warrior of Zen*.

HISTORY

Hiroaki Sato. *Legends of the Samurai*.
Morris, Ivan. *The World of the Shining Prince*.
Ratti and Westbrook. *Secrets of the Samurai*.
Sawyer, Ralph D. (trans.). *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*.
Turnbull, Stephen. *Samurai Warriors*.

We've Made Some Changes ...

Here are the changes mentioned on page 2. If you have any questions drop us a line! Our address is listed right there on the same page.

SKILLS

We've clarified the Bugei Skills. Now, you can actually use the Naginata Skill, and Survival has been replaced by Hunting. The Hand-to-Hand and Wrestling Skills have also been cleaned up.

CLANS AND SCHOOLS

A quick peek at the color Clan sheets will show you that we've clarified a few things there as well. The Techniques needed to be cleaned up as well as the starting Skills and Spells. Specifically, we've clarified the "add X to the roll" for Crab and Lion, specified the Unicorn's parrity ability and the Scorpion's distraction Technique. Also, the Crab and Crane shugenja schools have been clarified.

SPELLS

The spell section has been dramatically changed. Now all spells have the same format. The listing has also been changed to fit the chapter order (Earth, Water, Fire and Air). We've also lowered the Mastery Levels of the Inflamm spell from 4 to 3 and the missing Counterspell sidebar on page 146 has been replaced.

THE RETURN OF THE FEAR

We've added a sidebar on page 192 that details the Fear Ratings of Rokugan's creatures.

A WORD OR TWO ABOUT HEALTH

We changed Bad Health and added a sidebar on page 150 about magical healing. Also, we've clarified how to get killed on page 108.

IAIJUTSU DUELS

We've added a phrase that should help determine who gets to go first during an iaijutsu duel on page 109.

A quick red-faced "thank you" to all of our fans and playtesters who spotted these ... um, errors (why didn't you notice them *before* we went to press??). Also, a very special thanks to our playtesters, who got left out in the first printing (durn page 246) and are now listed on page 245 (just in case this one disappears, again).

AEG Emerald Empire Design Team

RYAN DANCEY

"Be strong, be wise. Know that even though I may fall, I will rise again to stand beside you."

MARCELO FIGUEROA

"The only thing swifter than my steeds is my revenge."

STEVE HOUGH

"I may not be the deadliest with the blade or the most skillful on a steed, but I have seen the face of death and I wear it always."

RAYMOND LAU

"They told me it could not be done. I replied with maniacal laughter."

DAVID SEAY

"For the coward, there is no life. For the hero, there is no death."

MATT STAROSCIK

"At the moment of their victory, that is when they shall learn the cost of dark alliances."

D.J. TRINDLE

"When you eat, just eat. When you read, just read. When you eat and read, just eat and read."

ROB VAUX

"We were hundreds against thousands. I looked at him and watched his face twist into an insane grin."

JOHN WICK

"Sleep? My bushi need no sleep! They need battle to awaken their souls and *bushido* to feed their bellies!"

DAVID WILLIAMS

"There is no loyalty but to the Emperor. There is no honor but to die in his name."

JOHN ZINSER

"A silent, painful, honorless death awaits those who do not know the secrets of shadows."

We at AEG want to thank our customers for the opportunity to bring the world of Rokugan to life in this RPG. Without your support and enthusiasm, this product would never have come to pass.



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Weapons

Weapon Name Price DR Length/Range

SWORDS

Aiguchi	2 Koku	1k2	1'
Katana	20 Koku	3k2	3-4'
No-dachi	30 Koku	3k3	5-7'
Tanto	3 Koku	1k2	1'
Tessen	2 Koku	0k2	18"
Wakizashi	15 Koku	2k2	2'

POLE-ARMS

Characters using pole-arms against opponents who are using shorter weapons may roll an additional die for their Initiative Roll and keep the higher roll.

Die tsuchi	4 Koku	2k2	5'
Nage-yari	3 Koku	3k2	3'
Nagamaki	4 Koku	4k2	6'
Naginata	5 Koku	3k3	7'
Ono	5 Koku	3k3	4'
Sasumata	4 Koku	0k2	6'
Sodegarami	5 Koku	0k1	6'
Tetsubo	6 Koku	2k2	4'
Yari	4 Koku	4k2	6'

BOWS

Dai-kyu	4 Koku	As Arrow	200 yards
Yumi	4 Koku	As Arrow	200 yards

ARROWS

Ya	1 Silver	2k2
Armor piercer	2 Silvers	1k2
Watakusi	3 Silvers	3k3
Karimata	5 Silvers	1k1

"PEASANT" WEAPONS

Bo	5 Coppers	2k2	6'-7'
Jitte	10 Silvers	1k1	18"
Jo	1 Copper	0k2	3'
Kama	3 Silvers	2k2	2'
Nunchaku	25 Coppers	2k2	2'
Sai	10 Silvers	1k1	3'
Tonfa	1 Silver	1k2	2'

Armor

A bushi who is wearing Heavy Samurai Armor has the TN to hit him increased by 10, but he has a +5 to his TNs on all physical actions. A bushi wearing Light Samurai Armor has the TN to hit him increased by 5, but has no additional TN penalty.

Basic Equipment

1 koku (gold) = 5 bu (silver) = 50 zeni (copper)

Backpack, wicker	3 coppers
Basket, large	5 coppers
Basket, small	1 copper
Books and Scrolls	Average: 1-10 silver Fine: 2-10 koku
Bowyer's Kit	2 silvers
Candle	10 coppers
Chest, metal	8 silvers
Chest, wooden	2 silvers
Chopsticks (ivory)	8 coppers
Cloth, silk bolt	2 koku
Dice and dice cup	25 coppers
First aid kit	5 silvers
Fishing kit	10 coppers
Flint and Steel	15 coppers
Furoshiki sack	1 copper
Games (go, shogi, etc.)	10 coppers and up
Inro (medical kit)	1 silver and up
Lantern, metal	4 silvers
Lantern, paper	1 silver
Lantern oil	3 coppers
Mirror, small	3 silvers
Mirror, large	2 koku
Musical instruments	1-5 silvers
Paper, writing (pouch of 5 sheets)	1 silver
Pot, iron	15 copper
Quiver	20 coppers
Rope, braided hair	4 coppers/foot
Rope, hemp	1 copper/foot
Sumi-e (writing) box	1 silver
Sword stand	1 silver - 1 gold
Travel pack	5 coppers
Umbrella	2 silvers

THE TARGET NUMBER CHART

5 = Mundane
10 = Easy
15 = Average
(This is the default Target Number)
20 = Hard
25 = Very Hard
30 = Heroic
35 = Never Done Before
40 = Never Be Done Again

EXAMPLES OF RAISES

- 1 Raise - Striking the torso.
- 2 Raises - Striking the arms or legs, draw blood without doing significant damage.
- 5 Raises - Striking the Head, Neck, or hands. Disarming attempts. Striking the joints in the opponent's armor.
- 4 Raises - Trim the opponent's mustache.

School Rank

RANK INSIGHT

Rank 1	0 - 150 pts
Rank 2	151 - 175 pts
Rank 3	176 - 200 pts
Rank 4	201 - 225 pts
Rank 5	226 - 250 pts

List of Spells

Spell Name	Base TN	Casting Time (in Actions)
------------	---------	---------------------------

The Basics

Sense	5	2
Commune	5	1
Summon	10	variable
Counterspell	10	1

Earth Spells

Benevolent Protection of Shinsei	10	1
Calling the Elements	10	1
Courage of the Seven Thunders	15	2
Earthquake	15	5
Earth's Stagnation	5	1
Elemental Ward	5	2
Fires From the Forge	5	1
Force of Will	10	2
Hands of Jurojin	variable	10
Immortal Steel	30	1 hour
Jade Strike	10	1
Sharing the Strength of Many	15	3
Strike At the Roots	Earth x 5	2
Tomb of Jade	Earth x 5	3
Weapon of Earth	10	3

Air Spells

Accounts of Shorihotsu	Mastery x 5	5
Benten's Touch	10	3
By the Light of Lord Moon	5	2
Call Upon the Wind	10	3
Cloak of Night	10	2
Command the Mind	Willpower x 5	1

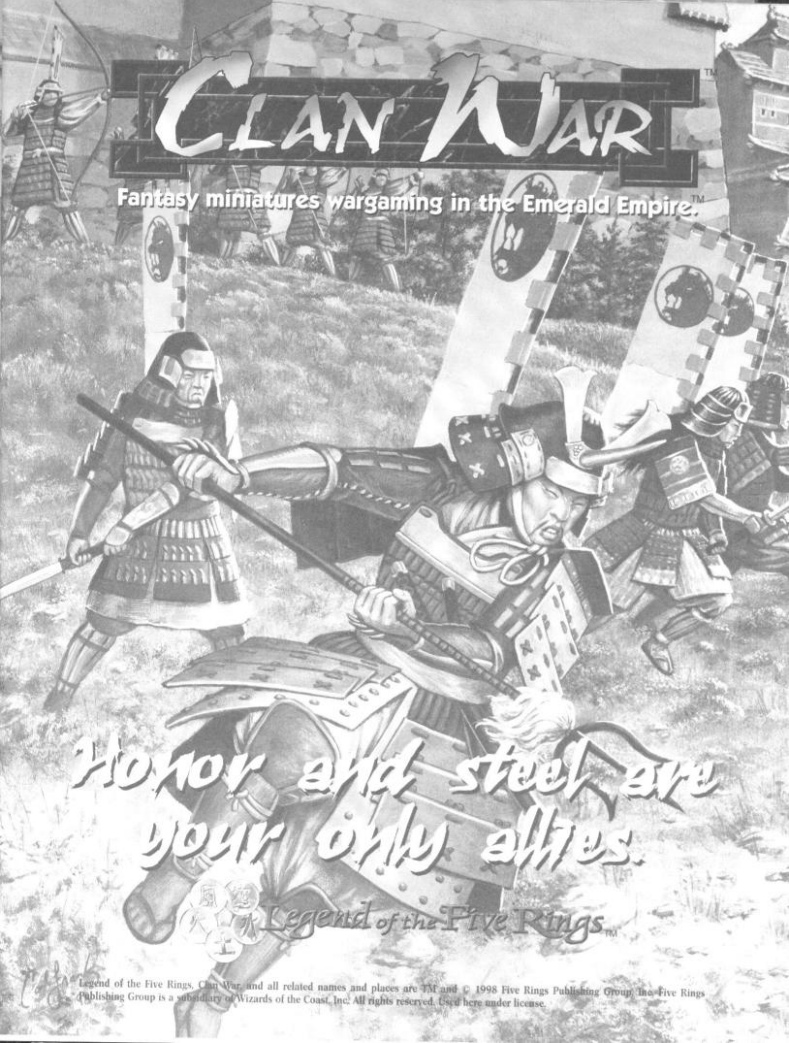
Echoes on the Wind	15	6
Essence of Air	15	3
Know the Mind	Willpower x 5	3
Know the Shadows	5	4
Mists of Illusion	10	2
Nature's Touch	10	1
Quiescence of Air	5	1
Secrets on the Wind	10	6
Tempest of Air	15	2
Way of Deception	10	3
Whispering Winds	Intelligence x 5	1
Wind-Borne Slumbers	15	1
Wind-Borne Speed	15	4
Wind's Distractions	15	1
Yari of Air	10	3

Fire Spells

Amaterasu's Anger	10	2
Amaterasu's Blessing	5	3
Biting Steel	5	2
Evil Ward	10	5
The Fires That Cleanse	10	2
Fires of Purity	10	2
The Fire From Within	15	3
The Fist of Osano-Wo	25	1 Hour
The Fury of Osano-Wo	5	2
Heart of the Inferno	15	5
Inflame	5	3
Katana of Fire	10	3
Wings of Fire	10	3

Water Spells

Bo of Water	10	3
Blessing of Purity	10	20 mins.
Calm Mind	10	4
Castle of Water	10	2
Heart of Nature	15	4
The Path to Inner Peace	5	2
Reflections of Pan Ku	10	5
Reflective Pool	10	5
Reversal of Fortunes	10	3
Sympathetic Energies	Ring x 5	3
Torrential Rain	30	5
The Ties That Bind	10	3



CLAN WAR

Fantasy miniatures wargaming in the Emerald Empire.™

*Honor and steel are
your only allies.*



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Legend of the Five RingsTM



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Best Roleplaying Game of 1997

Inquest Magazine Fan Awards Winner

Best Roleplaying Game of 1997

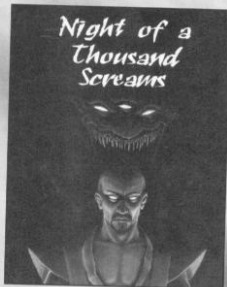
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Best Roleplaying Game of 1997

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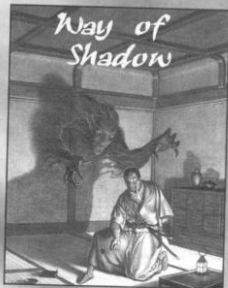
The Future of Rokugan.™

Night of a Thousand Screams



"Before this night is over, this city will hear the echoing of a thousand screams..."

Way of Shadow



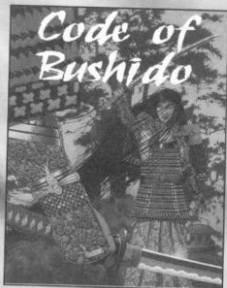
"I will find the truth, even if it costs me my soul."

Walking the Way



"Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the wise. Seek what they sought."

Code of Bushido



"You fight honorably. Will you die the same way?"

Join the Imperial Assembly!

The Imperial Assembly is an organization of *Legend of the Five Rings* players who have an important voice in the Saga of Rokugan. Through contests and tournaments, these players' decisions will have a direct influence on the outcome of the *L5R* storyline.

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Legend of the Five Rings

Name:

Clan:

Home Province:

Allies and Enemies

History and Glorious Deeds

Weapons & Equipment

Gifts, Bestowments and Recognitions



Legend of the Five Rings

Name: _____

Clan: _____

Profession: _____

Fire

Agility:
Intelligence:

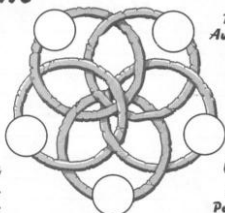
Air

Reflexes:
Awareness:

Primary Weapon _____

Primary Armor _____

IN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)



Earth

Stamina:
Willpower:

Water

Strength:
Perception:

Skills

Void

Void Points Spent: _____

Techniques/Spells

Insight: _____

Wounds

☐	-0
☐	-1
☐	-2
☐	-3
☐	-4
☐	Down
☐	Out
☐	Dead

School: _____

Rank: _____

Advantages/
Disadvantages

Glory:

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Honor:

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Experience Points: _____

Legend of the Five Rings™

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