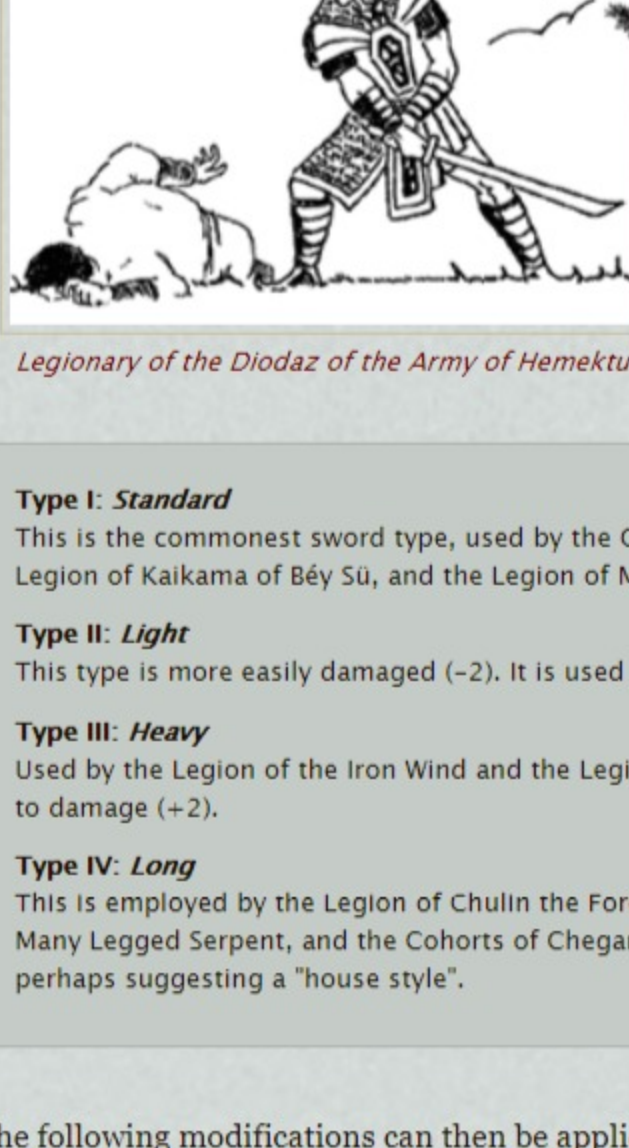


Issue One | Autumn 1992

Tusmnikang Khawenlitusmi!

Patrick Brady compares schools of swordsmanship



Legionary of the Diodax of the Army of Hemektu

The cutting edge

We begin by considering the possible designs of the Tsoyláni sword. There are four basic types and five modifications. Any modification could theoretically be applied to any type. In practice, the Standard sword is the one most commonly modified. The Long sword is rarely modified.

Type I: *Standard*

This is the commonest sword type, used by the Omnipotent Azure Legion, the Battalions of the Seal of the Worm, the Legion of Kaikama of Béy Sú, and the Legion of Mengano the Jakállan, among others.

Type II: *Light*

This type is more easily damaged (-2). It is used by the Legion of the Twelve Paths of Avanthe.

Type III: *Heavy*

Used by the Legion of the Iron Wind and the Legion of Heketh of Pirdimal, this type is reinforced to be more resistant to damage (-2).

Type IV: *Long*

This is employed by the Legion of Chulin the Foreigner, the Squadrons of Tlaneno the Steersman, the Legion of the Many Legged Serpent, and the Cohorts of Chegarrá the Hero King. These are associated with the Military Party, perhaps suggesting a 'house style'.

The following modifications can then be applied to these types:

Modification I: *Curved blade*

Curving a blade optimizes its value for swinging attacks. This is favoured by the Legion of Hnálla, the Legion of the Mighty Prince, and the Phalanx of Durrilamish. Advantage: A swing attack does +1 damage on an attack roll of 9. Disadvantage: A thrust attack does -1 damage on an attack roll of 11+.

Modification II: *Jagged-edged blade*

Jagged blades give the possibility of an unpleasant and hard-to-treat wound. Such weapons are used by the Legions of Mirkittani the Hero of Victories, Mnashu of Thrí'll, and the Forest of Hh kk-Ssa. Advantage: A thrust attack does an additional +1d3 damage on a base damage roll of 5 or more. Disadvantage: If extra damage is done this means an edge has caught in the wound, requiring a ST roll to dislodge; if this is failed, the weapon is free but unready. (The scalloped edge swords used by the Legion of Lord Kurukaa is a limited version of the above: edge catches on a damage roll of 3+ for additional +1 point; pull free on roll of ST+2.)

Modification III: *Short chopping blade*

A shorter heavier blade makes for a handier weapon—a fact recognized by the Givers of Sorrow and the Sweet Singers of Nakome. This modification is often applied to the Liviányi uniform. Advantage: The impressive decoration gives +1 to reaction rolls, if appropriate. Disadvantages: Cost is at least four times higher than for an undecorated sword. There are also slight increases in weight and tendency to be damaged.

Modification IV: *Broad blade*

This variant has been the traditional choice of the Legion of Gusha the Khirgari. Advantage: Inflicts a broader wound, increasing bleeding rolls by +4. Disadvantage: Swing attacks are at -1 damage on an attack roll of 10+.

Modification V: *Elaborate blade*

Such weapons are wielded by the First Legion of Ever-Present Glory and the Phalanx of Heretlekká of Sokatis, as well as by many senior officers of other legions as part of their dress uniform. Advantage: The impressive decoration gives +1 to reaction rolls, if appropriate. Disadvantages: Cost is at least four times higher than for an undecorated sword. There are also slight increases in weight and tendency to be damaged.

Sword type	Attack	Amount	Reach	Weight	Min ST	Notes
Standard	cut	sw+1	1	21/2 lbs	10	
	imp	th+2	1			
Light	cut	sw	1	1 lb	9	
	imp	thr+1	1			
Heavy	cut	sw+1	1	3 lbs	11	
	imp	thr+2	1			
Long	cut	sw+1	1,2	21/2 lbs	11	becomes unready
	imp	thr+2	2			

Quality comes extra...

The table on the next page lists the prices for swords of different quality. The price modifiers add together, so an ornate sword of excellent quality would cost forty times the regular price.

Edge Quality defines the ability of the blade to retain its sharpness. All chlén-hide weapons will lose their edge with use. After every major combat, reduce Edge Quality by 1. Also roll against current Edge Quality; a failed roll reduces the weapon's damage by 1. Reductions in Edge Quality can be retarded by regular visits to your armourer, removing a single 1 for each day's work (at a cost of 1-3 Kaitars).

Ornamentation takes the form of styling, colouration and giltwork, jewelled inlays, etc.

The available level of workmanship varies, and you will not always be able to find a sword of fine or excellent quality. Master swordmasters never have trouble finding customers and may not bother with you if you aren't of high clan. In addition, there are season and regional variations in the quality of chlén-hide. Weapon ornamentation is easier to come by, Assuming you have the money to pay for it; but you can't buy taste.

Quality	Price	Damage	Edge Quality	Ornamentation
Poor	x1/2	normal	1d6+11	None: x1/2
Average	x1	normal	1d6+13	Average: x1
Fine	x10	+1	1d6+17	Ceremonial: x4
Excellent	x20	+2	1d6+21	Ornate: x20

Styling	Price	Available	Delivery	Use by others	Custom Points
Personal	x10	10+	3-18 days	-1	4d6
Custom	x20	8+	6-36 days	-1	7d6
Unique	x40	special	3-18 weeks	-2	10d6

What's the damage?

Standard swords have a base cost of 2d6+3 Kaitars. Any armourers' clan will stock the basic types; modified versions are less easily come by. Any modification could be ordered, taking 2-12 weeks to complete at 1-6 times base cost. (Even if the armourers' clan don't have the local expertise to prepare the modification you want, they will often send for a swordmaker from another city rather than admit defeat and take a loss of face.)

The Curved Sword

For historical reasons, this modification tends to be the most expensive: add 1d6 Kaitars to the purchase price. Availability is automatic in any city except Katalan, where it is seldom found.

The Jagged-Edged Sword

Common in outlying areas of the Imperium such as Vra, Thrí'll and the Chakas, where it is automatically available. Rarer in central Tsoylánu, where it is available on 8+.

The Short Chopping Sword

Common in areas where Vimuhla predominates. Uncommon in Paya Gupa and Bey Sú; available on 11+. Rare in Jakállá and Penom: available on 7+.

The Broad-Bladed Sword

Specific to the province of Daikan and the city of Khirgar. Rare anywhere else: 6+ for availability.

	Hit	Parry	Dodge	Damage	Notes
EASY					
Slash	+2	-2	-2	+Sk/10	cut only
Thrust	+1	0	-1	-	thrust only
Downward Cut	+1	0	0	-	cut only; not A-O attack
The 4 Measures	0	+1	-2	-	not A-O attack
Set Up	0	0	0	n/a	the Feint
Lock Blades	0	0	0	n/a	wpn bind, ST +Sk/2
Distract	0	0	-1	crush	opponent defends at -1
Edge Sideways	0	0	0	-	lateral 1 hex; not A-O attack
Long Stroke	0	-1	0	-	forward 1 hex
Lunge	0	0	-1	+Sk/10	thrust only
Sacrifice Lunge	0	-2	-1	+Sk/10	thrust only; parried at -2
Short Strike	-1	+1	0	-	
Evade	-1	0	+Sk/5	-	
Disarm	-5	0	0	n/a	disarm, ST +Sk/2
Defensive Strike	-2	+2	0	-	
AVERAGE					
Skewer	+1	+1	-1	+Sk/10	thrust only
Stop Thrust	0	+1	0	-	the Feint
Circle	0	0	+Sk/5	-	lateral 2 hexes
Blade Wall	-1	+2	-2	-	no DR
HARD					
Sweep the Sky	+1	0	+Sk/5	+Sk/5	
Fast Strike	+1	0	0	+Sk/10	parried at -2
Pierce Weakpoint	-1	-2	-2	-	NO DR

But I want it with stripes!

Swords can be customized to the personal requirements of the buyer, thereby enhancing the handling for him alone. This requires a series of "fittings" for you to test the weapon during construction. A high level of ornamentation would be expected.

The lower table shows price multipliers for personalized weapons. For each 20 Custom Points, add +1 to your skill when using the weapon. If the advantage can only be used for either swing or thrust (not both) then the cost is halved. If the advantage only works on 11+ then the cost is halved.

Autso goes shopping

An example will show how the whole system adds together. Autso hiKharsan buys a fine, personalized chopping sword of average weight and decoration. This adds to price 210 (having rolled a base price of 10), damage +1, Edge Quality 20, Custom Points 20; swing attacks get +1 to hit and do +1 damage on 10+, thrust attacks are -1 to hit and do -1 damage on 10+. Anyone else using this weapon suffers -1 on their chances to hit, parry, etc.

Getting stuck in

So much for the design of the sword. It is after all a tool of battle, and so we pass on to the use of this tool...

These rules are a variant on GURPS. In this variant, there is no single skill in a weapon such as the sword. Instead there are a number of kata, or techniques, each constituting a different manoeuvre with the weapon.

Kata are usually Easy skills. The kata you use in a turn will apply modifiers to your attack and defence chances, etc—some kata reduce your chance of hitting but inflict extra damage, for example.

The other variant used here involves the extended use of professional skills. (These are skills which subsume a smattering of everything a character needs to know in his chosen career: eg, Soldier, Bureaucrat, Paramour, and so on. See GURPS B58.) A professional skill can be used to assist a primary skill roll—so, having Soldier could modify a Psychology roll if you're trying to predict where a group of enemy soldiers will be heading. The procedure starts with a roll against the professional skill. For every two points you succeed by, take a temporary +1 modifier to the primary skill. But a critical failure of the professional skill subtracts the amount you missed the roll by from the primary skill.

There are a number of universally available sword kata. These are the techniques that anyone might learn. I have also selected twelve Tsoyláni sword styles, which are presented as 'package deals' comprising several kata. Each style has some universal kata along with some kata unique to that particular style. The advantage to a character in selecting a school style is twofold. Firstly the Tsoyláni set great store by an impressive display: it is the elegance of your swordsmanship, rather than mere effectiveness, that is admired. Secondly (and more crucially in game-terms) it is easier to learn several related techniques. This is why the points cost for graduating in a style is less than the sum total of all the kata learned: in effect, the package deal gives you a points rebate.

The Military Style

Package cost: 9 points

A brutal style designed to deal with armoured opponents

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
2 pts	DX+1	Cleave	-1	-1	-2	+Sk/10	1/2 DR
1	DX	Hilt Punch	0	n/a	+Sk/5	+Sk/5	close reach
1	DX	Lock Blades	0	0	0	n/a	weapon bind, ST+Sk/2
1	DX	Short Strike	-1	+1	0	-	
1	DX	Disarm	-5	0	0	n/a	disarm, ST+Sk/2
1	DX	Downward Cut	+1	0	0	-	cut only; not A-O Attack
1	DX	Shield					
2	DX	other legion weapon (eg Polearm)					TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS
2	IQ	Profession Skill: Swordsman			(a) Lock Blades followed by step to close combat for Hilt Punch		
1/2	IQ-	Armoury					
1/2	IQ-	History (Legion)			(b) Cleave & Disarm against heavily armoured foes		



Comparison of the Vindicating Blade and Military styles | The Hilt Punch—melee and conclusion

The Method of the Soaring Hunter

Package cost: 9 points

'The Turning Style', very mobile and fast

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
4 pts	DX+1	Talons of the Kūini	0	0	2	-	step 3 hexes forward
1	DX	Set Up	0	0	0	n/a	feint
1	DX	Lunge	0	0	-1	+Sk/10	
1	DX	Edge Sideways	0	0	0	-	lateral step; not A-O Attack
1	DX	Long Stroke	0	-1	0	-	step 1 hex forward
2	DX+1	Running					TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS
1	DX	Jumping			(a) Repeated use of Talons to get behind foe should...		
2	IQ	Professional Skill: Swordsman			...force him to move instead of Attack		

The Jakállá Technique

Package cost: 9 points

Urban style; encourages accuracy and defensive options

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
2 pts	DX+1	Diagonal Upeut	+1	-1	0	+Sk/10	cut only; not A-O Attack
1	DX	Defensive Strike	-2	+2	0	-	
1	DX	Evade	-1	0	+Sk/5	-	
1	DX	Set Up	0	0	0	n/a	feint
1	DX	Edge Sideways	0	0	0	-	lateral step; not A-O Attack
1	IQ	Area Knowledge (City)					
2	DX-1	Sleight of Hand					TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS
2	IQ	Professional Skill: Swordsman			(a) Upeut to the legs		
2	DX+1	Fast Draw (Sword)					

The School of Silent Infliction

Package cost: 9 points

Stylists fight in silence, which can be unnerving and makes a good Quirk.

A style that attacks the weapon before attacking the man

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
2 pts	DX+1	Advancement	-4	0	-2	-	disarm ST+Sk/2, Hit +1
1	DX	The Twining Vine	0	+1	-2	n/a	weapon bind, ST+SK/2
1	DX	Lunge	0	0	-1	+Sk/10	
1	DX	Distract	0	0	-1	Cr	thrust only, opponent defends at 2
1	DX	Long Stroke	0	-1	0	-	step 1 hex forward
1	IQ-1	Sign Language					TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS
2	IQ	Profession Skill: Swordsman			(a) Twining Vine followed by A-O Distract		
4		Strong Will 1 lvl			(b) Advancement		

The Long Style

Package cost: 6 points

Specifically for the longsword, and intended to ameliorate the tactical drawbacks of that weapon.

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
2 pts	DX+1	Crouching Thrust	+1	2	+Sk/5	+Sk/10	thrust only; not A-O Attack
2	DX+1	Bladestrike	+1	-2	+Sk/5	-	feint; thrust only, not A-O
1	DX	Evade	-1	0	+Sk/5	-	
1	DX	Disarm	-5	0	0	n/a	disarm, ST+Sk/2
1	DX	Edge Sideways	0	0	0	-	lateral step; not A-O Attack
2	IQ	Professional Skill: Swordsman			TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS		
					(a) Bladestrike followed by Crouching Thrust		
					(b) Versus heavily armoured foes: Evade, sw/cut (dodge)		

Duelling Academy

Package cost: 6 points Package cost: 6 points

Enables a stylist to look good in the Hirilakke. The emphasis on one kata limits flexibility

Specifically for the longsword, and intended to ameliorate the tactical drawbacks of that weapon

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
8 pts	DX+3	The Four Measures	0	+1	-2	-	not A-O Attack
4	DX+2	Disarm	-5	0	0	n/a	disarm, ST+Sk/2
1	IQ-1	Gambling					
2	IQ	Professional Skill: Duellist					
2	IQ	Professional Skill: Swordsman					
1	IQ	Savoir-Faire					
-10		Code of Honour: the Manifesto of Noble Deliverance					

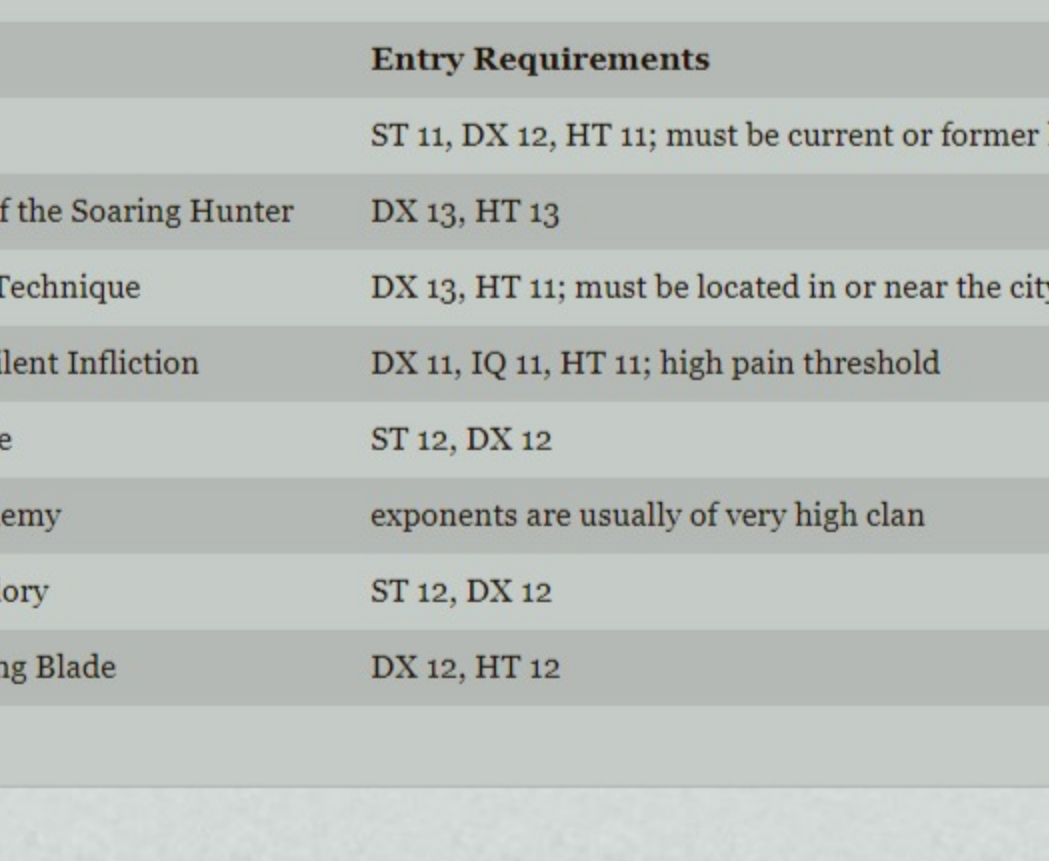
The Way of Glory

Package cost: 6 points

An ancient style incorporating the use of spiked cesti for infighting. Some stylists carry shields

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
2	DX+1	Hard Cut	0	0	-2	+Sk/10	no move; cut only; 1/2 DR, not A-O
pts							Attack
2	DX+1	Angular Lift	+1	-1	+1	n/a	weapon bind ST+Sk/2, must step forward
1	DX	Edge Sideways	0	0	0	-	lateral step 1 hex; not A-O Attack
2	DX+1	Cestus Punch	+1	-1	-2	+Sk/5	
2	IQ	Professional Skill: Swordsman			TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS		
4		Strong Will 1 lvl			(a) Angular Lift followed by Cestus Punch		

SMALL CESTUS: +1 punch damage; -1 to weapon skill with that hand. On 10- a spike digs in for +1 damage. CESTUS: +2 punch damage; -2 to weapon skill with that hand. On 10- inflicts extra +1 damage.



The Way of Glory: a right then a left | The Vindicating Blade: Sapling Vs Vindication

The Vindicating Blade

Package cost: 6 points

Exponents are usually lightly armoured and shieldless (a possible Quirk). Vindication is difficult to deliver past a shield.

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
1 pt	DX	The Sapling	-1	-1	+2	+Sk/10	
1	DX	Vindication	-1	-1	+1	+Sk/5	cut only; foe gets 11/2 PD
1	DX	Set Up	0	0	0	n/a	feint
1	DX	Lock Blades	0	0	0	n/a	weapon bind ST+Sk/2
1	DX	The Four Measures	0	+1	-2	-	not A-O Attack
2	IQ	Profession Skill: Swordsman			TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS		
					(a) Feint: Four Measures (parry) followed by Vindication		
					(b) The Sapling (dodge)		

The Edge of Kureshma'a

Package cost: 5 points

A forthright, indomitable style

cost	level	the kata	hit	parry	dodge	damage	notes
1 pt	DX	Standing Strike	-1	0	+2	-	feint; no move
1	DX	Swordline	0	0	-2	-	weapon bind ST+Sk/2
1	DX	Set Up	0	0	0	n/a	feint
1	DX	Long Stroke	0	-1	0	-	step 1 hex forward
1	DX	Thrust	+1	0	-1	-	thrust only
2	IQ	Profession Skill: Swordsman			TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS		
					(a) Step into reach with Swordline		