

Kaigaku Second Edition



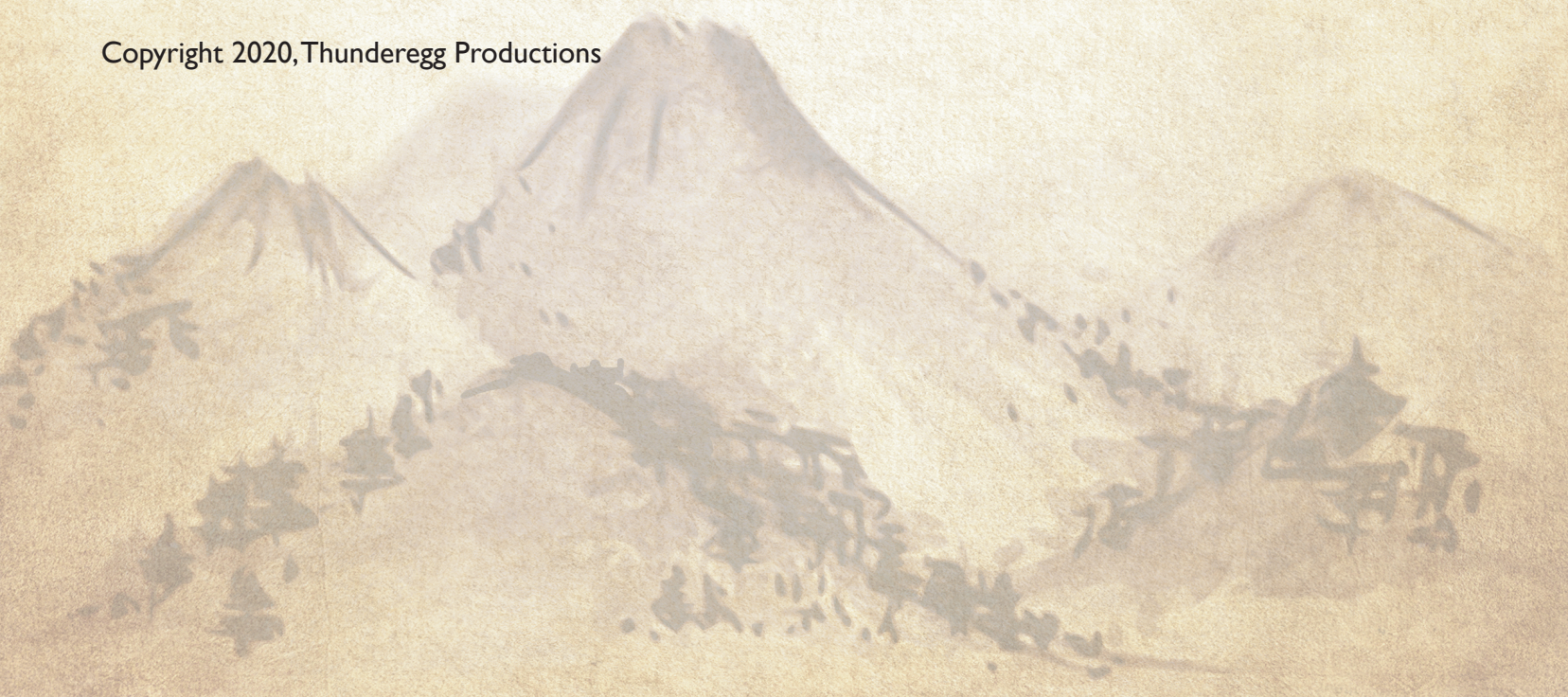
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Introduction

Hi,

If you've played the first edition of Kaigaku, you might be wondering why I wrote up a second edition. I wanted to bring Kaigaku to more people. It was the better part of three years ago when I started working on the First Edition. It found a lot of success because it came out at a time when there wasn't much else going on in samurai RPGs. Kaigaku existed to fill a specific void.

I'll be specific in saying that this version does not replace First Edition. As the new rules are OSR-based, all future adventure supplements for Kaigaku are going to be compatible with both editions. The idea is that I want all adventures and many of the other supplements to work with any OSR game, not just Kaigaku.

Since the original version was based on David Black's The Black Hack, it was very easy to write for. But the simplicity of The Black Hack works against you when you want to make stuff compatible with other OSR systems. The Black Hack can handle NPCs from virtually any game. Other games just do not have enough information to use Black Hack NPCs.

There are a few other reasons for the change. The original schools in Kaigaku's First Edition are five-rank features that you plug into your class. They make your character able to do one or two things very well. If you're familiar with famous samurai RPGs, you get the idea.

I was pondering over ninja, realizing that I wanted to be able to play one who is good at all the ninja things. This includes leaping, sneaking, mimicry, and all that, and not one school that can only impersonate and another is good at athletics. So I looked around and found the perfect setup.

This edition of Kaigaku runs on the engine from Stars Without Number Revised, by Kevin Crawford. Mr. Crawford was gracious enough to let me play with his toys. In this iteration of the game, you've got the freedom to make your character the absolute best in the world at one, or maybe two things. You can also generalize a bit, being famous for perhaps three things, or reasonably good at four or more.

In this game we call Stars Without Number's Foci Techniques, as they usually represent training at a formal dojo. I've added a few dozen to the list, and reused any from the core book that just seemed too important to leave out.

Thanks one more time,
Jacob DC Ross

Character Creation and Advancement

Character creation is the first thing that you do when starting up a campaign in Kaigaku. The numbers and words that you put on your character sheet represent the abilities and aptitudes of the concept in your head.

The Character Creation Process

The process of making a character consists of several steps:

Determine starting attributes. Roll 3d6 six times and record the results in order to your Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. If you want a non-random method, assign the following values to any attributes that you wish: 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14. If you choose the random method, you can, after recording your scores, improve one attribute to 14. Ronin may choose which attribute to increase, clan members increase a specified attribute, or choose one if their clan's favored attribute is already 14.

Record your attribute modifiers for each attribute. This number is a bonus or penalty to all rolls you make using its attribute. The value ranges are:

3: -2

4-7: -1

8-13: +0

14-17: +1

18: +2

Select or create your Clan, if any, and take a Background from the Character Background List. Each Background describes where your character comes from. Gain the Primary Skill listed for your Background at Rank 0, as well as the equipment listed.

You can choose to simply pick 2 of the named Skills, not Any Skill, from your Background's Learning Table at Rank 0. There are 2 Quick Skills to take if you don't want to spend time choosing.

Instead of picking your skills using the step above, you can roll randomly. The benefit to this is that you get 3 rolls, as opposed to 2 picks. As a trade-off, you have no control over the Skills you have when you start the game. Select which of your rolls to make on the Growth Table and which to make on the Learning Table. If you get a result that reads "+2 Physical" or "+2 Mental", you get to increase your attribute scores. Physical attributes are Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Mental attributes are Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma. For each of these results, you can choose to put both points into a single attribute, or 1 point into 2 attributes.

Select a Class. This is the framework around which you build your character's special abilities. The four classes in Kaigaku are Ascetic, Courtier, Bushi, and Ninja. You can also choose to be an Adventurer and combine any two of the classes into a new class.

Select your Techniques. Your Class determines how many and which kinds of Techniques you take. You also get to choose a single Technique of your own, independent of your Class options. If you want to play as a Henjin or Half-Henjin, choose a Henjin Heritage in place of your free Technique selection.

Choose one non-Ascetic Discipline Skill to gain at rank 0.

If you're an Ascetic or Partial Ascetic Adventurer, you now choose your Discipline. Full Ascetics get to choose 2 Disciplines at rank 0 or one a rank 1. Partial Ascetics get to choose one Discipline at rank 0. If your Discipline rank is 1, you can begin the game with an appropriate ability from your Discipline.

Record Effort. Ascetics, Ninja, Partial Ascetics, and Partial Ninja get an Effort score. This is equal to 1 plus the better of your Intelligence or Wisdom modifier, plus the highest rank of your Ascetic Disciplines or your Ninja Skill rank, as appropriate for your class. Effort powers Ascetic Disciplines and Shinobi abilities.

Record your Hit Points, or HP. Roll 1d6, adding or subtracting your Constitution modifier. You start with a minimum of 1 HP. Bushi and Partial Bushi get an additional +2 HP on top of this.

Record your Hit Bonus. This is a bonus to your attack rolls. At level 1, it's +1 for Bushi and Partial Bushi, and +0 for all other PCs.

Record your total hit bonus. This is the total of your relevant attack skill, such as Unarmed, Bows, or Swords, plus an appropriate attribute modifier, which is usually Strength or Dexterity. Finally, add your Class' base hit bonus. For a level 1 PC, the total attack bonus can be as high as +4 and as low as -2, though it's probably between 0 and +2. You can record this value for each of your attack skills to avoid having to total it up when you attack.

Record the damage that you do with each of your weapons. Weapons have a damage value listed. This is that value, plus the attribute modifier that you use for that weapon. Unarmed attacks do 1d4 plus your Unarmed skill rank and attribute modifier in damage.

Record your Armor Class. An unarmed person has an AC of 10. When you wear armor, it changes your AC to a listed number. When you're unarmored you add your Dexterity modifier to your AC. Higher is better, as attackers hit you if they roll over your AC.

Record your Saving Throw scores. There are three Saving Throw types: Evasion, Mental and Physical. Each starts at 15. Subtract the better of your Strength or Constitution from your Physical Saving Throw, the better of Dexterity and Intelligence from Evasion, and the better of Wisdom or Charisma from Mental. When you make a Saving Throw, you roll 1d20, hoping to beat your relevant Saving Throw rating.

Name your hero and maybe write a bit about them. That's it, you're ready to go!

Attributes Explained

Attributes measure your character's broad potential and abilities. Each attribute imposes a penalty or imparts a bonus to many different rolls.

Strength

Strength governs how much you can lift, how hard you can hit, how high you can jump, and more. It's common to use your Strength in melee attacks and making Exert skill rolls.

Dexterity

Dexterity measures your physical adeptness. Dexterity is commonly used to roll for melee and ranged attacks, Exert, Sneak, and with many other skills.

Constitution

Constitution measures how much you can take before you collapse. It's not very common among skills, usually modifying Exert. High Constitution also improves the HP that you get at each level

Intelligence

Intelligence is your ability to solve puzzles and see patterns. It's useful for a variety of different skills.

Wisdom

Reason and knowledge are part of Wisdom. Wise characters are harder to fool and better at certain skills.

Charisma

Charisma is the attribute most commonly associated with the Talk, Lie, and Connect Skills. You use it for most social interactions.

Skills

Skills are smaller and more focused proficiencies than attributes. Your skills are one of the things that make your character unique.

Skills range from rank 0 to 4, with rank 0 representing being base proficiency and rank 4 being the highest degree possible for mastery.

The skills are as follows:

Administer: The ability to run a business, clan, or other organization or holding. You can also use it to navigate the red tape of the court system.

Connect: This is the ability to make new friends and to schmooze with movers and shakers.

Craft: Use this skill to make or fix items. It's technically multiple skills, such as Craft Swords, Craft Bows, or Craft Clothing.

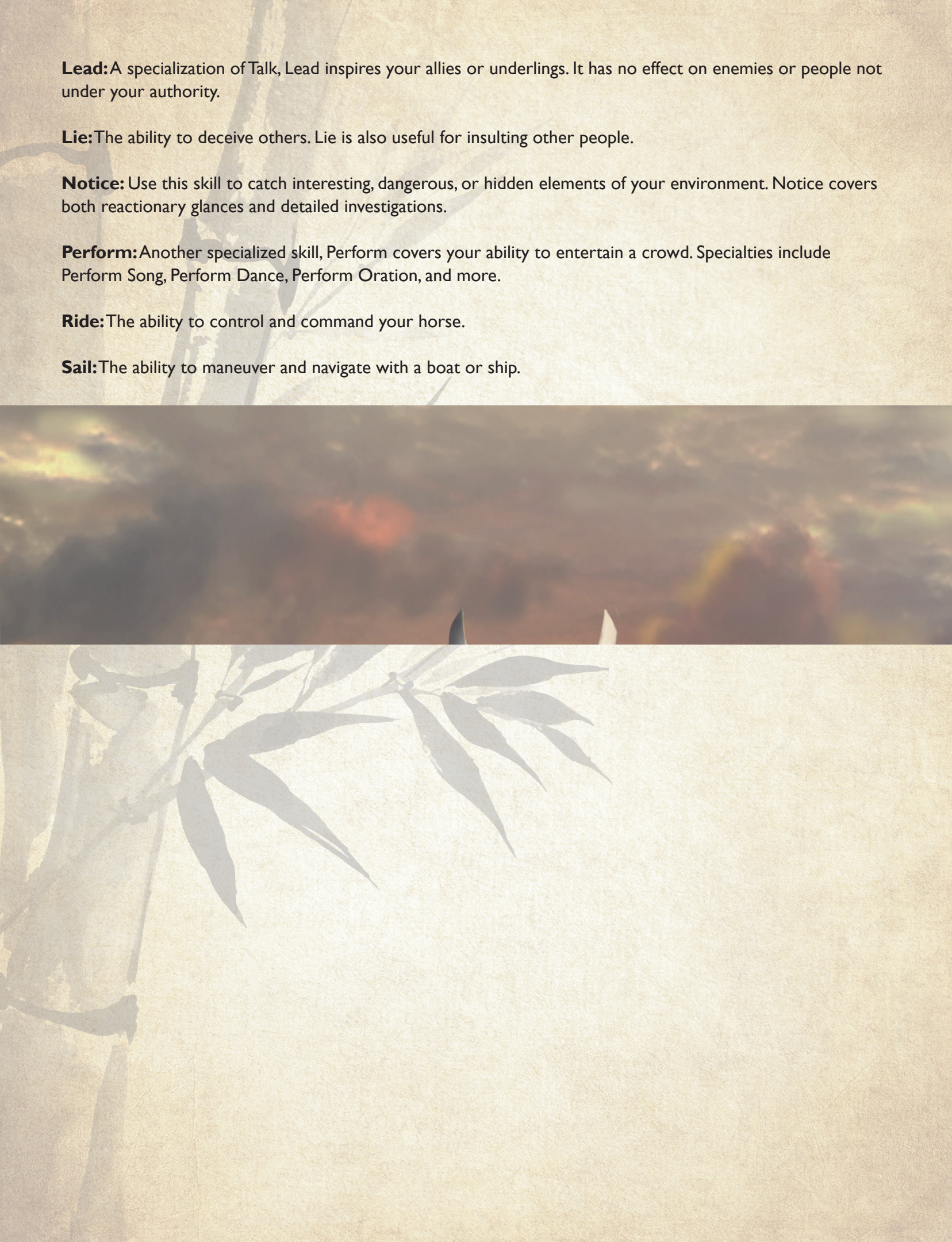
Exert: This skill is the catch-all for athletic displays and for feats of strength or endurance. You can also use it to throw weapons in combat.

Explosives: This skill teaches you how to craft or disarm granada or to make gunpowder for your firearms.

Heal: The ability to use medicine to heal someone of their wounds, poison, or illnesses. The default ability is Intelligence or Dexterity plus Heal against a difficulty of 8. You heal 1d4 HP +2 for each Intensification on the roll. A character can only receive this attention once per day.

Iaido: The art of the quickdraw. Iaido is the skill that samurai use for formal duels.

Know: Know is several different skills, such as Know History or Know Botany. It's the ability to recall useful or interesting facts about a subject.

The background of the page features a light beige, textured surface. On the left side, there is a faint, dark illustration of a bamboo branch with several long, slender leaves extending towards the right. In the upper middle section, there is a horizontal band depicting a sunset or sunrise sky with soft, blended colors of orange, yellow, and brown, and some wispy clouds. Below this band, the bamboo branch continues its path across the lower half of the page.

Lead: A specialization of Talk, Lead inspires your allies or underlings. It has no effect on enemies or people not under your authority.

Lie: The ability to deceive others. Lie is also useful for insulting other people.

Notice: Use this skill to catch interesting, dangerous, or hidden elements of your environment. Notice covers both reactionary glances and detailed investigations.

Perform: Another specialized skill, Perform covers your ability to entertain a crowd. Specialties include Perform Song, Perform Dance, Perform Oration, and more.

Ride: The ability to control and command your horse.

Sail: The ability to maneuver and navigate with a boat or ship.

Trade: Trade is conducting business and buying and selling. It's not very common among samurai. The simple system is that you can, once per week, in addition to Work, if you're a peasant, stake 10 zeni, using either Charisma/Trade or Intelligence/Trade against a difficulty of 8. If you succeed, you gain 20 percent of your stake.

For each successful Intensification, you increase the gain by another 20 percent of the wagered amount. Failure loses half your stake, plus 10 percent more for each unsuccessful Intensification. You can also set aside money, purchasing valuable items that have no other purpose but to trade or give as gifts, and barter these items in trade. You sell the item or items for 25 percent more than what you paid for them on a successful roll, with 25% gained for each Intensification. If you fail, after taxes, fees and extortion, you lose the whole stake.

Unarmed Attacks: The skill that governs your ability with martial arts. It normally can't penetrate Heavy Armor or Gaijin Armor, but you do add your skill rank to unarmed damage. No one can disarm your bare hands.

Weapons: There are many different weapon skills:

Batons: Small sticks, such as tonfa.

Bows: Ranged weapons including the hankyu and daikyu.

Chain Weapons: Weapons that feature a chain component, such as the weighted kusarifundo

Firearms: Guns such as the pistola or arquebus.

Heavy Melee Weapons: Large clubs or axes, such as the kanabo or ono.

Knives: Daggers and throwing knives, including the aiguchi and tanto

Long Swords: Very large blades like the o-dachi.

Polearms: Staves with a blade on the top, such as the naginata.

Spears: Long staves with blades that are usually weighted for throwing, including the yari and magari-yari.

Staves: Thin, long weapons, such as the bo staff

Swords: This covers both short swords like the wakizashi and medium swords like the katana.

Work: This governs your ability to do your job. It's many different skills, each of which is separate from the others, such as Work Farm and Work Forge

Whenever you get a new skill, it starts at rank 0 unless otherwise stated. If, during character creation, you ever get to pick Any Skill, you can choose a new one or increase a rank 0 skill to rank 1. No skill can start above rank 1 at character creation. Should you somehow get Any Skill during play, this instead translates to 3 free skill points to spend on a specific skill. Skill points are explained in the character advancement section.

Other Skills

Other skills, such as Ninja, or the various Ascetic Disciplines, are explained in the sections on Ascetics and Ninja.

Clans

Clans are the samurai dynasties that dominate Kaigaku. Each clan is led by a daimyo who has several retainers to enforce their will. Daimyo are under the authority of the Emperor and high-ranking Imperial officials, but the clans as a whole are more powerful than the Imperial Families. There are many Major Clans and dozens or hundreds of Lesser Clans.

To be a Major Clan your daimyo has to have Imperial Ancestry. Many clans lobby for Imperial spouses for this reason. Only Imperial descendants are eligible for certain offices. Not all clans with Imperial blood are Major Clans. Some simply don't have large enough holdings or armies.

The main Major Clans in this region of Kaigaku are as follows:

Atsumichi: An ancient clan with deep ties to the Imperial Families. They produce well-connected Courtiers and Bushi who are noted for their speed and dueling ability. Their Ascetics focus on summoning and studying the elements. The Atsumichi Favored Attribute is Dexterity.

Chisaten: The local Imperial Family. Their rank and file are devoted to justice and knowledge, but their leadership is notorious for backhanded politics. Chisaten Bushi are usually magistrates and their Courtiers are scholars. The few Ascetics in this family tend to be craftsmen who make beautiful gifts for the daimyo to give to clans. The Chisaten Favored Attribute is Charisma.

Kakujima: A clan of island-dwelling sailors. They used to be an independent kingdom until they were annexed several generations ago. Their Courtiers are savvy merchants and their Bushi are capable sailors who fight with knives or chain weapons. Kakujima Ninja are deadly snipers. The Kakujima Favored Attribute is Dexterity.

Kondo: This reclusive clan dwells in dense forests at the base of a mountain. Their Bushi tend to fight with spears or even bo staves in addition to the katana. Kondo Courtiers are noted for their investigative abilities. Their famous Ascetics implant kiseki stones within their bodies in order to become capable of amazing feats. The Kondo Favored Attribute is Wisdom.

Morimoto: A rebellious clan, they flaunt tradition and openly experiment with gaijin innovations. Morimoto Bushi are brash and heedless of danger, while their Courtiers are clever tacticians. The clan's Ninja are astounding infiltrators who can penetrate even the most vigilant defenses. The Morimoto Favored Attribute is Strength.

Shirai: The descendants of exiles from a foreign nation called Myoung Yea, the Shirai were absorbed into Kaigaku near the dawn of the Empire. They treat their peasants much better than the other clans do and are famous for their simple writing system. Shirai warriors fight with polearms or swords, and usually in groups of two or three "sworn brothers". Their Courtiers are walking fonts of knowledge. Shirai Ascetics master unarmed combat that draws upon the power of the elements. The Shirai Favored Attribute is Intelligence.

Toguchi: A devious and secretive clan. The Toguchi produce feared duelist Bushi and Courtiers who do little else but spy. There are rumors that they foster Ninja, but nobody knows for sure. The Toguchi Favored Attribute is Intelligence.

Watanabe: Gruff, martially inclined samurai who guard the Western Border against incursions from the dreaded Kherin steppe riders. Many are of mixed Kherin heritage. Their Bushi fight with heavy weapons and long swords. Watanabe Courtiers have a reputation as bullies. Their Ninja operate as special forces troops on the field of battle. The Watanabe Favored Attribute is Constitution.

Backgrounds

Your background is a way of instantly explaining where your character came from. They're very handy for helping you to flesh out your character's concept and identity.

Each Background has a Primary Skill, which you automatically gain at rank 0 upon selecting the Background.

To determine the other skills that you gain from this Background, either select 2 from the Learning Skills Table, except for Any Skill, or leave it to chance. If you opt for chance you get 3 skills, but you have to roll randomly. Roll three times in any combination of the Growth or Learning Skills Tables. If you get a result that states +2 Mental or +2 Physical, you can add +1 to two appropriate attributes or +2 to a single appropriate attribute.

Peasant Artisan

These artisans are the crafters of almost any item in Kaigaku. It's a life of toil, but they can find fame and prosperity if they make samurai weapons or beautiful artwork. Equipment: Toolkit, Clothing (Inferior), 1d10x2 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Lea
	Craft 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Craf
		2	+2 Mental	2	Craf
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Kno
	Craft 0	4	+2 Physical	4	Talk
	Know 0	5	Connect	5	Con
	Work 0	6	Any Skill	6	Trac
				7	Woi
				8	Wee

Peasant Ascetic

Peasants who've taken up the way of the wanderer. They go from village to village hoping to help their	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Lea
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Peasant Criminal

The peasant criminal gangs started out as community police and you feel as if you're a neighborhood hero. Or you might be a bandit. Common weapon skills besides Heavy Weapons include Chain Weapons, Firearms, and Knives. Equipment: 1 Heavy Weapon (Inferior), Clothing, 1d12x2 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learnin
	Weapon 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Weapo
		2	+2 Physical	2	Heavy
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Physical	3	Lie
	Weapon 0	4	+2 Mental	4	Exert
	Lie 0	5	Connect	5	Sneak
	Sneak 0	6	Any Skill	6	Work
				7	Know
				8	Notice

Peasant Magistrate

You're a doshin, or patrol police officer. You can arrest and beat criminals, but if the matter involves samurai, you need to get your supervisor, a yoriki. Equipment: Baton, Clothing, Badge of Office, Ashigaru Armor 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learnin
	Notice 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Notice
		2	+2 Physical	2	Notice
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Physical	3	Know
	Notice 0	4	+1 Mental	4	Batons
	Know 0	5	Connect	5	Talk
	Batons 0	6	Any Skill	6	Lie
				7	Sneak

Peasant Merchant

Considered the lowest on the food chain because you take from the samurai, you eke out a living as a shop proprietor or seller of things. Equipment: Clothing, Pack, 10 zeni of wares, 1d10x4 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learning
	Trade 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Trade
		2	+2 Mental	2	Trade
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Work
	Trade 0	4	+2 Mental	4	Talk
	Work 0	5	Connect	5	Lie
	Connect 0	6	Any Skill	6	Weapon
				7	Sneak
				8	Administe

Peasant Ninja

You're a descendant of the first ninja tribes, who came about to protect peasants from the samurai. You use your skills in furtherance of your masters' and their clients' goals. Common weapons include knives, granadas, and chain weapons. Equipment: Weapon, Ninja Garb, Change of Clothes, 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Lear
	Sneak 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Sneak
		2	+2 Physical	2	Sneak
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Physical	3	Wea
	Sneak 0	4	+1 Mental	4	Lie
	Weapon 0	5	Connect	5	Perfo
	Lie 0	6	Any Skill	6	Exert
				7	Knov

Peasant Performer

You might be a geisha, a kabuki actor, kamishibai peddler, wandering acrobat, or something else. Your goal is likely to attract the patronage of a wealthy samurai. Equipment: Costume, Props, 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Lear
	Perform 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Perfo
		2	+2 Mental	2	Perfo
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Talk
	Perform 0	4	+2 Physical	4	Knov
	Connect 0	5	Connect	5	Worl
	Talk 0	6	Any Skill	6	Conn
				7	Lie
				8	Sneak

Peasant Warrior

You're an ashigaru, a peasant farmer whose ancestors could afford weapons but not horses. You're now a full-time or part-time foot soldier, either in a mercenary company or beholden to a clan. Common weapons include spears, swords, heavy weapons, or firearms. Sailors use chain weapons or knives. Equipment: 2 Common Weapons (Inferior), Ashigaru Armor (Inferior), Clothing (Inferior), 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Lear
	Weapon 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Weap
		2	+2 Physical	2	Spear
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Physical	3	Exert
	Weapon 0	4	+2 Physical	4	Notic
	Exert 0	5	Connect	5	Knov
	Notice 0	6	Any Skill	6	Lead
				7	Sail
				8	Worl

Ronin

You live the life of a masterless samurai. You might have been born into it, exiled from your clan, or taken up a warrior's pilgrimage. You likely make your living as a mercenary or hired yojimbo for samurai or prosperous peasants. You might also be a bandit. Common weapon skills include Swords, Bows, Long Swords, Firearms, and Heavy Melee Weapons. Equipment: Katana and Wakizashi, Ashigaru or Light Armor, Clothing (Inferior), 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Weapon 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Weapon
		2	+2 Mental	2	laido
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Physical	3	Performance
	Weapon 0	4	+2 Physical	4	Knowledge
	laido 0	5	Connect	5	Bows
	Survival 0	6	Any Skill	6	World
				7	Survival
				8	Any Skill

Samurai Artisan

You're a high-born person with an artistic calling. You might make weapons or armor, paintings, poems, plays, or novels. Some samurai artisans are also actors, singers, or dancers. Equipment: Wakizashi, Fan, Clothing, Calligraphy Set, Chop, Change of Clothes, 1d10x2 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Craft 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Craft
		2	+2 Mental	2	Craft
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Performance
	Craft 0	4	+2 Physical	4	Performance
	Perform 0	5	Connect	5	Knowledge
	Connect 0	6	Any Skill	6	Connect
				7	Talk
				8	Lie

Samurai Ascetic

As a member of the samurai caste, you're more respected than a peasant ascetic. You likely have more access to kiseki stones and might be appointed as head of an order. Equipment: Clothes, Kiseki Stones	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Unarmed 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Unarmed
		2	+2 Mental	2	Unarmed
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Know
	Unarmed 0	4	+2 Physical	4	Survival
	Know 0	5	Connect	5	Stave
	Survival 0	6	Any Skill	6	Talk
				7	Exert
				8	Perfo

Samurai Bushi

You're the classic samurai. You serve as an elite troop for your lord, a yojimbo, or in some other martial capacity. Common weapon skills include Bows and Polearms. Equipment: Katana and Wakizashi, Bow or Naginata, Light or Medium Armor, Clothes, Horse, 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Sword 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Swor
		2	+2 Physical	2	laido
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Physical	3	Weap
	Sword 0	4	+2 Mental	4	Ride
	Weapon 0	5	Connect	5	Lead
	Ride 0	6	Any Skill	6	Know
				7	Notic
				8	Exert

Samurai Courtier

While others fight, you get things done with your words. The government and clans all revolve around your actions. Equipment: Fan, Multiple Sets of Clothing, Horse, Chop, Calligraphy Set, 1d10x3 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Talk 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Talk
		2	+2 Mental	2	Talk
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Lie
	Talk 0	4	+2 Mental	4	Connect
	Connect 0	5	Connect	5	Know
	Lie 0	6	Any Skill	6	Admir
				7	Lead
				8	Trade

Samurai Magistrate

You enforce the will of the Emperor or your clan's lord. You might even be a ronin with an appointed position. You're probably a yoriki deputy overseeing a squad of doshin patrollers. Common weapons include Swords, Polearms, and Batons. Equipment: Katana and Wakizashi, Common Weapon, Light Armor, Badge of Office, Chop, Clothing, Horse, 1d10x2 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Notice 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Notice
		2	+2 Physical	2	Notice
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Know
	Notice 0	4	+2 Mental	4	Weapon
	Know 0	5	Connect	5	Lead
	Weapon 0	6	Any Skill	6	Exert
				7	Sneak
				8	Ride

Samurai Ninja

You're an elite special forces soldier for your clan. The samurai gained their ninja skills from some peasant ninja who forsook their original oath to protect the peasants. Many such tribes now work almost exclusively for samurai. Common weapons include Swords, Spears, Knives, Firearms, Chain Weapons, and Bows. Equipment: 3 Common Weapons, Ninja Garb, Ninja Armor, Clothing, 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Sneak 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Sneak
		2	+2 Physical	2	Sneak
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Physical	3	Exert
	Sneak 0	4	+2 Physical	4	Weapon
	Exert 0	5	Connect	5	Surviv
	Weapon 0	6	Any Skill	6	Know
				7	Perfo
				8	Lie

Kuge Courtier

You are a scion of the original Imperial Families that used to dominate Kaigaku. With the rise of your former samurai conscripts, the Imperial Families lost power to the clans. You are an important Imperial agent. Equipment: Wakizashi, Fan, Calligraphy Set, Several Outfits, Chop, Horse, Imperial Documents, 1d10x2 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Administer 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Admin
		2	+2 Mental	2	Admin
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Know
	Administer 0	4	+2 Mental	4	Talk
	Know 0	5	Connect	5	Lie
	Talk 0	6	Any Skill	6	Conne
				7	Perfor
				8	Ride

Kuge Magistrate

You serve the will of the Imperial government. You're a full magistrate who has no more than 1 yoriki and 3 doshin. Equipment: Katana and Wakizashi, Light or Medium Armor, Badge of Office, Chop, Clothing, Horse, 1d10x2 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Know 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Know
		2	+2 Physical	2	Know
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Notice
	Know-0	4	+2 Mental	4	Weapon
	Notice-0	5	Connect	5	Admin
	Weapon-0	6	Any Skill	6	Lead
				7	Sneak
				8	Ride

Kuge Officer

Not all Imperials are courtiers. You make your name as a leader of men on the field. You might work for the Emperor directly, another Imperial Family or be attached to a clan as a sign of favor. Common weapons include swords and batons, usually fans. Equipment: Katana and Wakizashi, Fan, Horse, Any Armor, Clothes, 1d10 zeni	Core Skill	1d6	Growth	1d8	Learn
	Lead 0	1	+1 Any Stat	1	Lead
		2	+2 Physical	2	Lead
	Quick Skills	3	+2 Mental	3	Ride
	Lead 0	4	+2 Mental	4	Weapon
	Weapon 0	5	Connect	5	Know
	Ride 0	6	Any Skill	6	Talk
				7	Admin
				8	Notice

Leveling Up

As your PC gains experience and knowledge, they become more capable. This section explains the process of leveling up.

Experience Points

Experience Points, also called XP, are a measure of your progress from one level to the next. The number of XP that you need to level up increases as you hit higher levels.

Earning XP

There is no one right way to earn XP. It depends on the theme of the campaign. As the GM, you should make this clear to the group before play. Are you going to be fighting battles? Exploring? Engaging in subterfuge? Upholding the tenets of Bushido?

One way to help hook the players, especially if they're new to RPGs, is to give 3 XP at the end of the first session, which provides an immediate level up. After this, 3 XP is the standard for if the players had a moment where they were able to roleplay the quirks of their characters and worked towards their goals. If they meet with failure, you can reduce this to 2 or 1. At the end of a major and successful leg of the campaign, you can increase it to 4 or 5.

Level Up Process

Upon reaching the requisite XP, you level up immediately. This is the fruit of your labors and training.

HP: Roll 1d6, plus your Constitution modifier, and add that many HP to your total. You always gain at least 1 HP, and Warriors gain +2 HP on top of this.

Attack Bonus: If you're a Bushi, add +1 to your Hit Bonus. If you're a Partial Bushi at level 5, gain +1 to your hit bonus. If you're a Partial Bushi or non-Bushi and this is an even level, gain +1 to your Hit Bonus.

Saving Throws: Reduce your Saving Throw ratings by -1 each.

Techniques: At levels 2, 5, 7, and 10, you gain a new Technique or you can take a higher rank in a technique you already know. At levels after the first, any time you take a Technique that gives you a bonus skill, gain 3 Skill Points to spend on that skill. If you don't have the skill at all yet, this brings you up to rank 1. If you already have the skill at rank 1, this is enough to increase it to rank 2. You can get this rank in the skill even if your character's level is otherwise too low for it. If you already have the skill at rank 2 or 3, you get 3 skill points to save and upgrade that skill later. Should you get a bonus rank in a skill you already have at rank 4, then you instead get to spend the 3 skill points on an other skill.

Skill Points: Gain 3 skill points to spend on skills according to the table.

Skills have a maximum rank of 4.

Improving Attributes: You can also spend skill points on improving your attributes. You can only attribute increases up to a maximum of 5 times per character, and the cost increases with each purchase.

Ascetic Disciplines and Effort: If you're an Ascetic, Ninja, or partial member of those classes, you might improve your Effort and/or Discipline rank. If you increase your Ninja skill or a skill associated with an Ascetic Discipline to a rank that's higher than your highest Discipline, use that new skill rank to calculate your Effort. If you increase your relevant Attribute high enough to increase its modifier, you also get to recalculate your Effort. Your Effort is equal to 1 plus the better of your Wisdom or Intelligence modifiers plus your highest rank in the Ninja skill or an Ascetic Discipline skill.

Character Classes

Character classes are a framework that dictates how your character progresses and gives them powerful abilities.

There are four main classes in Kaigaku: Ascetic, Bushi, Courtier, and Ninja. While the default assumption for most samurai RPGs is that you play members of the samurai caste, you don't have to do that in Kaigaku.

It's perfectly valid to start off the game at a lower social rank than samurai, and in fact, it might be a lot more fun. Instead of playing a bully with the power of life and death over 90 percent of the population, try challenging yourself by playing as the underdog.

While only members of the samurai caste can hold the bushi social role, members of the lower castes can take the Bushi class when they play the game. Such characters should only refer to themselves as soldiers or fighters, not bushi or samurai.

Non-samurai Courtiers can be merchants, magistrate assistants, performers, artists, and more. Ninja come from all social backgrounds. Ascetics can, too. Peasants and samurai alike can become ascetics, but the heads of the orders are almost always samurai.

While you do stay in the class that you chose at the beginning of the game during your character's entire life, you can combine two classes at the beginning of the game. This alters the Techniques that you can choose, how many HP you gain at every level, your attack bonus, and other factors.

Ascetics

Ascetics are the wandering scholars and martial artists who study mysterious kiseki stones. They eschew material prosperity in the quest for knowledge and bodily perfection.

Class Abilities

Ascetic characters have the following abilities:

You may learn Ascetic Disciplines and their associated skills.

At level 1, choose either 2 rank 0 Ascetic Discipline skills or a single Ascetic Discipline skill at rank 1

Your Effort score, which powers your Disciplines, is equal to the better of your Wisdom or Intelligence modifiers, plus your highest Ascetic Discipline skill, plus 1.

HP and Attack Bonus

You gain 1d6 plus your Constitution modifier HP per level, to a minimum of 1. Your attack bonus begins at +0 and increases by +1 at every even-numbered level.

Bushi

Bushi are warriors who make their name through valor on the field of battle, as duelists, yojimbo, or through other martial means.

Class Abilities

Bushi characters have the following abilities:

Gain 1 Combat Technique that makes sense for your background.

Once per scene, you may take an Instant Action to negate a successful attack roll against you or convert a missed attack that you made into a hit. You can use this ability after the dice roll. It only works against actual attacks against you and not environmental attacks or attacks against your horse or a vessel you happen to be riding.

You get +2 maximum HP per level.

HP and Attack Bonus

You gain 1d6+2 plus your Constitution modifier HP per level, to a minimum of 1. Your attack bonus is equal to your character level, meaning that it's +1 at the first level.

Courtier

A Courtier is any person who makes their living through words and deals. They actually hold the highest level of power in the Empire.

Class Abilities

Courtier characters have the following abilities:

Gain 1 Non-Combat Technique that makes sense for your background.

Once per scene, you can roll an extra d6 on a Connect, Lie, or Talk roll, keeping the 2 highest dice.

You gain one extra skill point per level that can only apply to non-combat skills.

HP and Attack Bonus

You gain 1d6 plus your Constitution modifier HP per level, to a minimum of 1. Your attack bonus begins at +0 and increases by +1 at every even-numbered level.

Ninja

Ninja live in the shadows. They aren't all assassins. The majority are simple spies.

Class Abilities

Ninja characters have the following abilities:

You gain one Ninja Technique that makes logical sense for your background.

Once per scene, you may reroll one Ninja roll, keeping the better result.

You gain Effort for Shinobi Ninja Technique abilities equal to your Ninja Skill rank, plus the better of your Wisdom or Intelligence modifiers, plus 1.

HP and Attack Bonus

You gain 1d6 plus your Constitution modifier HP per level, to a minimum of 1. Your attack bonus begins at +0 and increases by +1 at every even-numbered level.

Adventurer Hybrid Classes

Not every character concept fits neatly into one of the classes above. If you have a different idea in mind, start with the Adventurer Class below, then apply the modifiers from two of the other classes to it.

Adventurer Class

Your Attack bonus begins at +0 and increases by +1 at every even-numbered level. You gain 1d6 plus your Constitution modifier HP per level, to a minimum of 1.

Partial Ascetic

Choose a single Ascetic Discipline as a bonus skill. This is the only Ascetic Discipline that you can learn. You gain Effort equal to your chosen Ascetic Discipline Skill, plus the better of your Wisdom or Intelligence modifiers, plus 1.

Partial Bushi

Begin the game with one Combat Technique that makes sense for your background. You gain +1 to your Attack bonus at levels 1 and 5. You also gain +2 HP per character level.

Partial Courtier

Begin the game with one Non-Combat Technique that makes sense for your background. You gain 1 extra skill point per level to spend on any non-combat, non-Ninja, non-Ascetic Discipline skill.

Partial Ninja

Begin the game with Ninja as a bonus skill at rank 0, and 1 Ninja Technique that makes sense for your background. You may learn this Technique's Shinobi ranks when you get to higher levels. If you learn other Techniques with Ninja options, you have to use any other skills listed in that Technique's flavor text, and you can't learn any other Shinobi rank abilities.

Techniques

This section details Techniques that PCs use to become more powerful as time goes on. You begin the game with two Techniques, chosen to meet certain criteria. When you reach levels 2, 5, 7, and 10, you gain another Technique. If a Technique lists a skill in bold text and you have a rank of 0 or less in that skill when you take the Technique, gain a rank in that skill. Any Techniques that require kiseki stones only work for Ascetics or for characters who risk Kiseki Madness.

Ninja Techniques

Any Technique that mentions the Ninja skill in its flavor description is a Ninja Technique. You don't have to be a ninja to use most of them, but ninjas get the added bonus of having multiple Techniques and actions run from a single skill. Non-ninja characters have to use a different skill for each such Technique that they know. Some ninja Techniques are Combat Techniques and some are not.

Ninja Techniques have a third ability, which is called Shinobi. Shinobi and ninja are two names for the same concept. Here, though, shinobi refers to powerful abilities that are available specifically to ninja or half-ninja hybrid classes. Unless otherwise stated, such ninjas can take the Shinobi ability for a Technique if they've already learned the rank 2 ability. Shinobi abilities use Effort much like Ascetic Techniques do.

Combat Techniques

These Techniques are for warriors and anyone else who wants to be more effective in a fight. Unless otherwise stated, Combat Techniques that list one or more weapons or weapon groups, including Unarmed, only work with those specific weapons or weapon groups. Bonuses from Techniques that add your skill rank in a certain weapon group to either damage or attack rolls don't stack with the bonuses from Techniques that give the same bonus.

Note that both short swords and medium swords use the Swords skill, while long swords use the Long Sword skill. Short swords and medium swords are both compatible with the laido skill unless otherwise specified.

Badger Lashes Out

Your prowess with a single group of Melee Weapons makes you a threat to mobs of enemies. This Technique doesn't work with Unarmed Attacks.

Rank 1: At the end of your turn, apply Lethality damage to all adjacent enemies whom you haven't attacked this round and whose AC is low enough for your weapon to affect.

Rank 2: Once a specific melee foe hits you, no other opponents can hit you with melee attacks for the rest of the round. If the opponent who hit you has multiple attacks, they can still damage you with any successful rolls for the rest of this round. You're still vulnerable to Ranged attacks.

Bear's Heavy Smash

You are a master of wielding Heavy Melee Weapons. Just a single blow from you is enough to fell a lesser man.

Rank 1: You suffer no penalties to your actions if you're using a heavy weapon whose Encumbrance is greater than your Strength modifier. Add your skill rank in Heavy Weapons to the Lethality of your attacks with heavy weapons.

Rank 2: Victims hit by your heavy weapons have to make a Physical Saving Throw to keep from falling prone. Failure means that they cannot get up on their turn this round. If they fall, your attack next round against them is an Execution attack.

Blade Turned Aside

Your reflexes allow you to dodge laido strikes.

Rank 1: When you get hit with an laido strike in a duel or an Execution Attack, make an Evasion Saving Throw. If you succeed, the opponent has to roll damage as with a regular attack, instead of doing maximum damage normally associated with Execution Attacks.

Rank 2: If you succeed on your Evasion Saving Throw for this Technique, your opponent can't apply Lethality as the minimum damage, but must instead accept whatever he rolls.

Brothers in Arms

You and a sworn brother live and die for one another.

Rank 1: Choose a willing PC or NPC. When fighting with no more than 1 hex between you, you both roll +1 for one attack per round and have +1 AC.

Rank 2: When your brother in arms is the target of a melee attack, as an Instant Action you can move up to 5 hexes in his direction. If you end within range of the Rank 1 ability of this Technique, then he gets the bonus to AC.

Dog Against the Lion

Using your Long Sword, dominate against opponents wielding shorter weapons.

Rank 1: Your extended reach allows you to add your Long Sword skill rank to your Initiative so long as no adjacent enemies are wielding spears or long swords.

Rank 2: Add your Long Sword rank to the Lethality of your long swords. This bonus to lethal damage stacks with the same bonus from Master Warrior, but not with any other bonuses.

Eagle's Glare

You can stare down opponents in an laido duel, unnerving them.

Rank 1: Add your Charisma modifier to your AC in an laido duel

Rank 2: Double your bonus from rank 1.

Falling Stars

Your mastery of Chain Weapons is enough to frighten even hardened samurai.

Rank 1: Gain a bonus equal to your Chain Weapon skill when you try to disarm or trip a foe. Disarming them using this Technique does not cause the disarmed weapon to roll for breakage.

Rank 2: When making an attack with a chain weapon, you can choose to roll the attack twice, taking the higher roll. Make the choice to roll twice before making the attack. If you do, then you leave yourself open to attack, and the first successful melee attack against you this round after your attack does double damage.

Fate's Arrow

Your ability to make impossible shots with Ranged Weapons is unparalleled.

Rank 1: You may attempt to disarm an opponent by using a ranged or thrown weapon. The attack does no damage.

Rank 2: You can intercept an enemy's shot with your own. When an enemy makes a ranged attack against an ally of yours within range, use an Instant Action to make an appropriate Ranged Weapons or Thrown Weapons roll. If your result is higher than the attack roll, then you stop the shot. Grenades intercepted this way or thrown to intercept the shot explode in any one hex within your range that's also in the path of the enemy's attack. This action also takes up your next Main Action, either in this round or the next.

Flurry of Hail

Your training with Ninja weapons or Knives allows you to rain death on the field of battle.

Rank 1: When you ready a Stowed knife or shuriken, add +1 to the number that you can ready for every rank in the Knives skill.

Rank 2: You can make two attacks per round, so long as both are with throwing knives or shuriken.

Shinobi: Commit Effort for the day to gain extra control over your thrown weapons. Any shuriken or throwing knife streaks on after its first attack of the round, attacking another person within your throwing range. No character can get hit by the same projectile more than once per turn.

Fool's Heroism

You think of yourself as brave. Everyone else calls you crazy.

Rank 1: Gain a +2 bonus to any feats of athleticism, so long as the stakes of failure include bodily harm to yourself. Take an additional 1d4 of damage if you fail.

Rank 2: Once per scene, you roll 3d6 when attempting a task using this technique's Rank 1 ability, dropping the lowest die.

Hare's Vigilance

You are trained to Notice threats and hidden things. This makes you exceptionally aware of your surroundings.

Rank 1: You are immune to surprise and Execution attacks, besides those done in an laido duel. When you roll initiative, roll twice and take the best result.

Rank 2: You can automatically act first in every combat round, unless the enemy force includes a practitioner of Hare's Vigilance. If more than one PC knows this Technique, decide among yourselves who goes first, who goes second, and so on.

Harmony of Contrasts

You use an improvised style that combines two disparate one-handed melee weapon types. This unique Two-Weapon skill, with a name of your choice, governs the use of both weapons, one of which is in your dominant hand and the other is in your weaker hand. Techniques that you know for one weapon only apply to rolls made using that specific weapon. Techniques that use either of the skills that you combined into the Two-Weapon Skill or which use any weapon skill now use the Two-Weapon skill for you.

Rank 1: When using the Two-Weapon skill, you can replace the required skill for a Technique that uses either of your chosen weapons with the Two-Weapon skill.

Rank 2: The first time per round that an opponent misses you in melee combat and you're wielding your weapons, you can take an Instant Action to make an attack using any of your other Techniques that use a weapon covered by your Two-Weapon skill.

Heron's Strike

You can bring your laido training to bear during a pitched battle.

Rank 1: When you have a sheathed sword, besides those listed as being incompatible with laido duels, you can make an attack using laido instead of Swords. The first attack has Lethality AC 10/ 8 Damage. Once you draw the weapon, you switch to using Swords for your attacks.

Rank 2: Your laido strikes impart a -4 penalty to the opponent's Saving Throw to avoid an instant mortal wound in a duel. A target who successfully saves still takes double damage from the attack.

Hidden Viper

Your training in Ninja abilities or in regular Sneaking makes you even more deadly.

Rank 1: You can Stow a knife, pistola, or object of that size or smaller so that no one can spot it without a complete strip search. Drawing this item only requires an On Turn action. Point blank attacks made with Ranged Weapons of this size or smaller can't miss if you're attacking from a position of surprise.

Rank 2: You can move on the same turn that you make an Execution attack. You can take any or all of the move before or after the attack, splitting it as you like. You can attack a target so long as they aren't completely surrounded by bodyguards.

Shinobi: Commit Effort for the day to be able to phase through matter for the rest of the scene. This doesn't have any effect on incoming attacks, but it allows you to move through one standard wooden, paper, or steel wall per Move Action. You can also move through other people when you make an Execution attack using this Technique's Rank 2 ability.

Lion's Courage

Your training with any non-laido Attack skill focuses on running through crowds and diving into the fray.

Rank 1: You can go through a crowd using a normal Move Action without risk of getting attacked as you pass enemies. You suffer no penalties for ranged attacks made at point blank with pistols, blow guns, or smaller weapons. You're immune to Lethality damage outside of laido duels.

Rank 2: A Fighting withdrawal is an On Turn action for you. You treat all opponents as having AC 10 for the purposes of Lethality.

Master Marksman

This Technique works with one Ranged Weapon per selection. You may use it with thrown Melee Weapons, but you can't also apply Master Warrior to that roll.

Rank 1: Drawing or putting away Stowed ranged weapons is an On Turn action for you. Add your relevant skill rank to damage with your chosen ranged weapon.

Rank 2: You can fire an additional arrow or make one more thrown weapon attack per round. You make them both with the same Attack Action, rolling once for each attack. Reloading a gun takes one fewer Main Actions, but it always takes a minimum of a single Move Action if you manage to reduce the reload time to zero Main Actions. Even if you miss with a Ranged Weapon attack, roll 1d4 and inflict that much damage on your target. For granadas, this only applies to your original target and only if the granada drifts to where your original target is within two hexes beyond the blast radius and passes their Evasion Saving Throw.

Master Warrior

You are exceptionally deadly with a single group of Melee Weapons. You may use this Technique with thrown melee weapons, but it doesn't stack with Master Marksman. This technique doesn't apply to ludo.

Rank 1: Drawing or Stowing your chosen Melee weapon is an Instant Action for you now. Add your skill rank with that weapon group to its damage and Lethality rating if it has one.

Rank 2: Thrown weapons and improvised weapons can now overcome Heavy Armor. Your Melee Weapon attacks do an extra 1d4 damage on a miss.

Monkey's Agility

You're adept at dodging attacks in melee.

Rank 1: If an enemy makes a surprise melee attack, you can make an Evasion Saving Throw once per round. If successful, the attack doesn't count as an Execution attack and it gains no bonus to damage if it hits. Its Lethality can be no more than the weapon's base Lethality.

Rank 2: If you dodge a surprise melee attack, you can use an Instant Action to immediately take your Main Action against that opponent with a +2 bonus to hit. If you do this after taking your Main Action for this round, you instead sacrifice your Main Action on the next round. Once per scene, you can use this ability on any attack, not just one made from surprise.

My Hands are My Sword

You are very formidable with Unarmed Attacks. You can use your bare hands, if you have at least one free, in an attempt to bind up an opponent's weapon as if you were using a melee weapon yourself.

Rank 1: Your Unarmed damage scales with your skill level as follows:

0: 1d6

1: 1d8 Lethality 1/AC 15

2: 1d10 Lethality 2/AC 15

3: 1d12 Lethality 3/AC 15

4: 1d12+1 Lethality 4/AC 15

Rank 2: Your Unarmed Attacks can now penetrate Heavy Armor. You don't use your unarmed Lethality against Heavy Armor and there is no minimum damage when you roll damage. However, you do 1d6 unmodified damage when you miss an opponent who's wearing Heavy Armor.

One True Shot

As a marksman for either Bows or Firearms, but not both, you become far more deadly when making Execution Attacks.

Rank 1: When you roll for a ranged Execution Attack, you roll 3d6 and take the two highest dice.

Rank 2: Impose a -4 penalty to the Physical Saving Throw to avoid an automatic mortal wound from your ranged Execution Attacks. On a successful save, the target still suffers double the normal damage.

Ox's Tenacity

You become as hardy as the lumbering ox..

Rank 1: You gain +2 extra HP per level, including retroactively if you don't select this Technique at character creation. You are automatically stabilized when hit with a mortal wound, so long as the hit comes from something smaller than a Heavy Weapon or cannonball.

Rank 2: The first time each day that you get taken down to 0 HP, gain 1 HP and stay standing. This doesn't work against Heavy Weapons or artillery fire.

Reverse the Flow

Your focus on Batons gives you an advantage to technical maneuvers.

Rank 1: You gain +1 AC versus weapons-based melee attacks when wielding a baton. Add your rank in Batons as a bonus to disarm an opponent's melee weapon if they missed their last attack against you with that weapon.

Rank 2: If you choose to try and break a disarmed weapon, add one to the range on which the breakage roll succeeds. This usually means increasing the minimum from 1 to 2. You now gain the bonus to disarming attempts even if your opponent didn't miss their last attack against you. You can attempt to disarm them with this technique even if they haven't attacked you at all.

Rolling Wave

You're a master of fighting on the decks of boats or in other unfavorable conditions.

Rank 1: You never suffer penalties due to fighting on a rocking boat or uneven terrain.

Rank 2: When on a boat or uneven terrain, you roll two dice, taking the better roll, whenever you make a melee attack against an opponent who doesn't know the Rolling Wave Technique.

Shadow of Night

You are among the most fearsome of Ninja, or a very disciplined Sneak.

Rank 1: Any type of cover or shadow as small as one quarter of your size is large enough for you to hide behind or within.

Rank 2: Once you successfully hide in cover or shadows, you can remain hidden as long as you like. Patrols or investigators can only make one roll to find you per day per instance of hiding.

Shinobi: As a Move Action, commit Effort for the day to teleport between a shadow in which you're hiding and another shadow within 20 hexes. You can freely teleport back to your first shadow from the second shadow once if you do so within 10 minutes of the first teleportation. This is true even if you leave the shadows and come back during the time limit. Teleporting back takes a Move Action. You can do it as part of your Move Action, walking or running through some hexes, teleporting, and continuing your movement, if you wish.

Shell of the Tortoise

Years of training in armor make it less cumbersome for you.

Rank 1: Reduce the Encumbrance of any armor you wear by -1.

Rank 2: Reduce the Encumbrance of any armor you wear by a further -1.

Skin of Stone

Through constant discipline, you've developed an innate resistance to damage. This Technique only works when you're not using armor or in a quickdraw duel.

Rank 1: Your AC is now 15.

Rank 2: You count as wearing Heavy Armor for the purposes of immunity to Unarmed Attacks.

Soaring Heights

After training yourself in Exertion or the Ninja arts, you can take to the skies, almost flying like a bird.

Rank 1: Increase your jumping distance, from 3 hexes standing and 6 hexes from a running start by a number of hexes equal to your Exert skill.

Rank 2: Increase your vertical jumping distance, which is normally 2 hexes, by 2 hexes per rank of the Exert skill.

Shinobi: Commit Effort for the day to be able to hover in the air for the scene. It takes your Move Action to keep from falling. You fly at a walking pace if you use your Main Action and your Move Action to do so. While you're flying, you stay out of melee range.

Serpent Finds the Bushes

You've mastered the Ninja art of disappearing from sight by using torinoko smoke bombs.

Rank 1: Subtract your rank in the Ninja skill from enemy Mental Saving Throws to avoid being distracted by your torinoko explosions.

Rank 2: If at least one person gets distracted by your torinoko, you may, as an Instant Action, move up to your regular movement rank, even if you've already moved this round. Nobody sees this movement or can interfere with it. You can't move through walls or other dense obstructions.

Shinobi: Commit Effort for the day as an On Turn Action to be able to use this Technique without sacrificing your Main Action to throw the torinoko.

Sweeping Wing

You are a master of making broad strokes with either Polearms or Staves.

Rank 1: Once per scene, you may attack an extra number of opponents with your chosen weapon equal to your rank in the relevant skill. You can't move this round and all of the opponents you strike at must be adjacent to you. This attack can't skip a target. If you have an ally between two enemies, you have to stop the attack or strike at the ally to hit the enemy that's standing past them. Make one roll and compare it to all targets individually to see whom you hit.

Rank 2: You can now skip any enemies or allies when making this sweeping attack. You may choose to try and trip the enemies instead of harming them, adding +2 to the roll.

Tiger's Ferocity

Your Unarmed or Melee Weapons-based attacks (choose a single weapon group or Unarmed) are exceptionally savage.

Rank 1: You treat your opponents as having AC 10 for the purpose of vulnerability to Lethality damage. This doesn't count with Unarmed Attacks versus Heavy Armor if you don't have an ability that allows your Unarmed Attacks to penetrate Heavy Armor.

Rank 2: Add +2 to the Lethality of all your melee attacks. You never do less than your Lethality rating in damage on a regular hit.

Two Heavens

You focus your training on dual-wielding a specific pair of weapons, such as two sai or a katana and a wakizashi.

Rank 1: You have +1 AC when dual-wielding your chosen weapons.

Rank 2: You no longer suffer the -1 penalty to hit when dual-wielding your chosen weapons.

Unstoppable Charge

There is no way to slow you down when you set yourself on a goal. This technique highlights the acrobatic prowess of ninja.

Rank 1: Your movement is not halved when you run on rocky or uneven ground and obstacles no greater than half your height do not obstruct you; you simply roll or leap over them.

Rank 2: When making regular melee attacks, you can use any or all of your move before the attack, and take the remainder of your move after the attack.

Shinobi: Commit Effort for the day. For the rest of the scene you never need to make a Fighting Withdrawal.

Untouchable Breeze

You can move through the battlefield like the wind.

Rank 1: Increase your base speed by 2 hexes per Move Action.

Rank 2: You increase your speed by a further 2 hexes per Move Action.

The Widest Net

You're a master of using Spears catching enemies and keeping them from moving.

Rank 1: When you make an attack, even one that damages the opponent, you can force them to make a Physical Saving Throw. If they fail, they can't move on their next turn and have to use a Move Action to dislodge themselves from your weapon. You can release them with a Move Action.

Rank 2: Opponents caught by your weapon now have to make a Physical Saving Throw every turn that they try to escape. If they fail, they stay stuck. You can use your Main Action to automatically hit the caught opponent with an attack. It's now an On Turn action to release them.

Wind Rider

You can Ride better than your fellow samurai.

Rank 1: Increase your horse's move speed by 2 hexes per Move Action

Rank 2: You may use your Ride Skill in place of Swords, Spears, or Bows while mounted.

Non-Combat Techniques

These techniques are useful outside the field of battle.

Air of Command

Something about you makes everyone realize that you were born to Lead. You have the ability to inspire the people under your command to be better. You don't have to be a samurai to take this Technique. Maybe you're an ashigaru squad commander, a peasant criminal boss, a noble clan leader, or something else.

Rank 1: Once per day, roll Charisma/Lead versus an NPC's Morale. They have to have a neutral or better disposition towards you. If you succeed, they obey one non-hazardous order that doesn't conflict with their beliefs or deepest loyalties.

Rank 2: Your NPC followers gain a bonus to attack or Morale rolls equal to your Lead skill. They also gain a +1 bonus to other skill rolls and are completely loyal to you except under the most dire circumstances.

Black and White Eyes

You live to test yourself in Games of strategy and wits. Your play is something beautiful to behold.

Rank 1: When you play go, shogi, or other games, you roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die. Characters must make a successful Mental Saving Throw with a -4 penalty to decline your challenge to a game.

Rank 2: You can use Wisdom in place of Charisma for dealing with others, and if you've won a game of go against a character in the last week, you also add your rank in Games as a bonus to Wisdom rolls against them.

Cat's Mewlings

You're an expert at exquisite Lies and slander. When you insult a target, you can break their reputation.

Rank 1: If you make an insulting statement about a target, roll Charisma/Lies, with a difficulty of 8. If successful, the parties you're talking to have to make a Mental Saving Throw to avoid having their impressions of your target tainted in a way that you choose. Impose a -2 penalty to the Saving Throw equal to the number of Intensifications that you made.

Rank 2: When using the Rank 1 ability, you can affect not just your immediate listeners, but also a nearby crowd, everyone at court, or an entire army unit. For each Intensification that you make on this roll, impose a -2 penalty on rolls made to find out if you're the source of these rumors. Before rolling, specify how many Intensifications are dedicated to making a more negative impression and how many are dedicated to shielding yourself from being found out.

Dance Among Clouds

You can use your fans as both props for your dance Performance and in combat as Batons. This is considered a non-combat technique for Courtiers, even though they can use it in combat.

Rank 1: Gain a free Intensification towards impressing your audience when you dance with fans. You may use your Perform: Dance skill in place of the Batons skill when attacking with fans.

Rank 2: While wielding a fan, add your ranks in Perform: Dance to your AC.

Fortune's Flow

You see the world as a river, where goods, services, and money flow like water. It's a river in which you swim better than anyone else as you ply your Trade.

Rank 1: Once per day, you can roll Intelligence/Trade against a difficulty of 8 or higher to locate an item that someone needs, if that item is available for sale. You can also, once per day, make an Intelligence/Trade roll against a difficulty of 8 to use your resources or those of your clan to procure an item or service worth 10 zeni or less. You have to use this for bribes or gifts. For each intensification on the roll, the item you procure can cost up to 5 zeni more.

Rank 2: Once per scene, you can receive a +1 bonus for every 5 zeni worth of the highest-cost gift that you gave a given person in the last week. This can only affect a person once, after which you have to give them another gift before you can use this effect on them again. The bonus can apply to a Connect, Lie, or Talk roll made against your gift's recipient.

Fox' Eyes

Your eyes Notice everything. You use your powers of observation to your advantage in social situations.

Rank 1: Once per scene, whenever you enter a room, roll Intelligence/Notice against a difficulty of 8 to get a sense of the general disposition of everyone in the room towards you and your group. You can ask the GM one question, which they must answer honestly, about the thoughts of someone else here.

Rank 2: You can now ask the GM 2 questions when you use the Rank 1 ability.

Grace of the Ape

You manage to use your physical presence to cow others. It's up to you whether or not you benefit more from Talking tough or subtly Exerting your body to impose on people.

Rank 1: You can use your Strength in place of Charisma when making a hostile conversation.

Rank 2: Impose a -2 penalty on anyone who makes a Mental Saving Throw against your intimidation, or on anyone who makes a Morale roll in any situation in which you menace them.

Hands of Mercy

You are compelled to Heal the sick and patch up the wounded. This technique works both in and out of combat.

Rank 1: Stabilizing an adjacent, mortally wounded character is an On Turn action. You roll 3d6, dropping the lowest result, for all Heal rolls.

Rank 2: You can heal anyone for 1d6+Heal HP once per day from your basic medicine kit. This takes only 10 minutes and you can take care of up to 5 people at a time this way. Your specially prepared potions and other remedies heal twice as much HP as normal.

Honeyed Words

You have the uncanny ability to get virtually anything through Talk. Your words come across as reasonable and fair.

Rank 1: You speak Kaigakugo, High Kaigakugo, Tianjin, and either Cordovan or Albarish. You can learn new languages well enough to converse in just a week. You get to reroll any 1s on rolls for negotiation or diplomatic communication.

Rank 2: If you spend 30 seconds talking to someone who isn't a sworn enemy, you can, once per week, shift their attitude more positively towards you by one degree without a roll.

Many Faces of the Tanuki

You are trained in the Ninja arts of Performing and impersonation. With enough practice, you can become anyone. Ninja incorporate this Technique as part of their Ninja skill, and others use Perform.

Rank 1: Whenever you attempt to take on a role or impersonate a given individual, you gain additional temporary skills. These are at rank 0, or rank 1 if you already have that skill at 0. You get a number of these skills equal to your Perform Skill rank. These skills only last as long as you maintain your role, fully committing to the character's personality and characteristics. You may only take on a single role per day. It takes 15 minutes of preparation to get into character, but you can drop the pretense as an Instant Action whenever you wish.

Rank 2: Rolls to detect your deceit when you're acting require a number of Intensifications equal to your Ninja or Perform Skill rank. You can now assume one role per scene, and it only takes a minute to change.

Shinobi: Commit Effort for the day to assume a role as an On Turn Action. This requires no cosmetics or prosthetics. Your physical features change in that instant. Taking on the role of a specific individual using this shinobi ability requires a Move Action.

Master of the Forge

Your ability to Craft and repair specific items is unparalleled. This applies to a single group of weapons, armor, or another Craft specialty. You can take this Technique multiple times, choosing a different specialty each time.

Rank 1: Double your overall Maintenance score. Reduce the cost of modifications by half when using your chosen Craft specialty. This doesn't reduce the need for any kiseki stones.

Rank 2: Increase your chosen Craft specialty by 1 for determining your Maintenance score or for which modifications you can make and maintain. When you create a Normal or Masterwork item from your specialty, it can have one additional non-kiseki modification that requires no maintenance. This means 1 maintenance-free modification for Normal items, and 2 for Masterworks.



The Moth's Lantern

You can Lead others to you, making them willing to take up your cause. This Technique generally attracts peasants, rather than anyone who's part of a clan.

Rank 1: Within 24 hours of arrival in a location willing followers start to show up, providing such a thing is plausible. You're not going to draw many people to you while staying in the castle of an enemy clan, for instance. They don't fight for you, except when they need to defend themselves in a life or death situation. You can have 3 followers for every character level. Treat them as peasant hirelings from the Equipment Chapter, as if you're paying for the lowest rate of their service. In general, this includes laborers, equipment artisans and repair workers, grooms, valets, and the like.

Rank 2: You can now attract fighters as well as peasants. This includes ashigaru, ronin, and the odd ascetic. Treat your followers as peasant or ronin hirelings, at the second most expensive rate of service.

Peacock's Display

You never fail to make a dramatic entrance. Your mastery of Performance is legendary.

Rank 1: As you perform, your audience is enrapt. You can choose to perform at any time. Anyone who wants to pay attention to anything else has to make a Mental Saving Throw in order to even attempt something like a Notice roll.

Rank 2: Whenever you want to perform, once per scene, make an appropriate Charisma/Perform roll against a difficulty of 8. For each successful intensification you make, gain a free Intensification for a later social or mental roll to use against someone who saw your initial performance.

Special Service

There is nothing more highly prized in Kaigaku than devotion to one's place in society and excellence in performing one's duties. This Technique teaches you to be the best that you can be with one Non-Combat Skill. You may take this Technique multiple times for different skills. Have fun coming up with florid names for the school that your PC attended.

Rank 1: Roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die for rolls with this skill.

Rank 2: Roll 4d6 and drop the lowest 2 dice for rolls using this skill.



Spinner of the Web

You learn to Connect with useful people no matter where you happen to go. Everyone whom you gather to your web becomes an agent who advances your agenda.

Rank 1: After a week in a location, you've spun your web. Your minor contacts are willing to perform one favor for you per day, so long as it's no more than a slight transgression.

Rank 2: So long as you're in a location where you might meet someone who's willing to help you, you can call in a favor once per day. Tell the GM where you want to meet, and they determine the identity and nature of the help.

Tortoise' Wisdom

You simply Know more than everyone else. You can take this Technique multiple times for different fields of knowledge.

Rank 1: When you want to impress others with your knowledge, roll Wisdom/Know against a difficulty of 8. The GM can increase this difficulty in situations where you might need to work harder to impress people, such as trying to flaunt your knowledge of metallurgy to a blacksmith. For the rest of the scene, anyone who heard you defers to you as an authority of the topic.

Rank 2: Others always consider you an authority of your knowledge specialty. You can still use the Rank 1 ability, Intensifying as you wish. For each Intensification, you gain a +1 bonus until the end of the scene for rolls made to command or convince others, so long as you can show that it relates to your knowledge.

Welcome Stranger

You have an extraordinary ability to Connect with others. Your presence is almost always welcome wherever you go.

Rank 1: Roll Charisma/Connect when you approach a group of people with whom you haven't been invited to speak. If successful, you can join the conversation without seeming rude.

Rank 2: When you successfully use the Rank 1 ability, you can make Intensifications to impose a penalty to anyone else's attempts to shame you or kick you out of the group. For each Intensification, the penalty is -2 to your opponent's roll. This effect lasts until the end of the scene or until you make overtly hostile comments or actions.

Wolf's Patience

In the course of normal conversation, your seemingly simple Talk can trick others into revealing what they ought not.

Rank 1: You can roll Intelligence in place of Charisma for any Talk rolls. If you succeed on a Talk roll while attempting to covertly pry information from a target, they slip up and you discover secret information. It's up to the GM what you learn.

Rank 2: After talking to someone for about a minute, they must make a Mental Saving Throw or inadvertently give you some of their secrets. You learn their attributes and skill ranks.

Ascetic Disciplines

Ascetic Disciplines work differently than Techniques. Only Ascetics can take them. Each Ascetic Discipline revolves around a single unique skill. This skill's rank governs how many special abilities an Ascetic can take. They require kiseki stones to work properly. You can assume that your PC has the stones on hand when they level up.

When you take rank 0 of a Discipline Skill, you gain access to its core ability. As you gain further ranks, your abilities become broader and more powerful.

Effort

Effort is the mental focus that allows the Ascetic to use his powers. Every Ascetic character has an Effort score equal to his highest rank of Ascetic Discipline skills, his Constitution or Wisdom attribute modifier, whichever is higher, plus 1. Ascetics have a minimum Effort of 1.

Most powers require you to commit Effort. When you commit Effort, reduce your current Effort by 1. The Effort does not recover until you reclaim it, which ends the effect of that power. Some powers require you to commit effort for longer than the duration of the power, such as how many Shinobi abilities require you to commit Effort for the day when they only last for a single scene. In this case, you only recover the Effort after the day is over and you wake up from a restful sleep. If you want to activate a power but have no free Effort, you can't activate that power.

Dawn of Creation

You channel your energy into creative endeavors. Your Dawn of Creation rank tracks separately for every Craft specialty, and you can use it in place of a specific Craft specialty. The Dawn of Creation skill is compatible with Techniques such as Master of the Forge.

At each rank of this skill choose one of the following abilities. You can only choose a given ability once.

Artistic Apotheosis: Commit Effort permanently when you finish a Masterwork that's not a weapon or a piece of armor. You choose one specific task for which users or wearers of this item roll 3d6, dropping the lowest die. This is not a modification. If you ever regain the Effort before you die, this ability ceases to function forever.

Beautiful Killer: Commit Effort permanently when you craft a Masterwork weapon. Add your current Dawn of Creation rank to its Lethality. If you ever regain this Effort before you die, this item permanently loses this ability. This ability is not a modification.

Creator's Signature: Choose one modification. You can add that modification to all of your Masterwork items for no additional cost, though it does require maintenance. This modification takes up no slots.

Dual Mastery: Your Dawn of Creation rank now counts for 2 Craft specialties instead of 1.

Everlasting Masterpiece: Commit Effort permanently when you finish creating an item to make it indestructible. If you somehow regain that Effort, the item disintegrates immediately. If you die without recovering the Effort, the item remains indestructible. This is not a modification.

The Master's Gift: When you or the patron for whom you crafted a Masterwork item gives that item as a gift, commit Effort for the day to add your Dawn of Creation rank as a bonus to any one Connect or Talk roll made against the recipient within the next day.

Parent and Child: Commit Effort for the day to learn where one of your Normal or Masterwork items is. If it's at least a kilometer away, you only determine the vague direction. At less than a kilometer away, the feeling becomes stronger and stronger as you get closer, giving you both the direction and relative distance in tens of meters.

Sun's Protection: When crafting a piece of Masterwork armor, commit Effort permanently. Increase its AC and reduce incoming damage by your current Dawn of Creation rank. If you regain this Effort before you die, the armor loses this ability permanently. This ability is not a modification.

Elemental Fist

You power your Discipline through the kiseki stones implanted within your hands and arms. Your Elemental Fist has the power to harm and to heal.

Core Ability

When you first gain this ability, choose one of the Elemental Fists on the list below. You gain another Elemental Fist with every rank of the skill. Destructive abilities require a melee strike using an Unarmed Attack, while healing abilities require you to lay your hands on an ally or incapacitated target. The first use of an Elemental Fist in a scene requires no Effort. Further strikes require you to commit Effort for the day.

Healing Elemental Fists require no die roll. A target can only receive a given healing effect once per day.

Destructive Air

You can make this strike at any opponent within your Elemental Fist rank in hexes. The attack still uses Unarmed Attack, does the same damage, and has the same properties of your regular unarmed attacks.

Destructive Earth

This attack has Lethality $X/16$, where X is twice your Elemental Fist rank, if your unarmed attacks don't already have a better Lethality. This strike can affect Heavy Armor and Gaijin Armor.

Destructive Fire

Anyone hit by this attack has to make a Physical Saving Throw or catch on fire. The fire does 1d8 damage per turn until they spend a Main Action to put it out or if the damage die ever rolls a 1. Roll damage immediately after this strike and then again at the end of every round.

Destructive Water

You add your Elemental Fist rank to any attempts to shove a target, as well as twice that number to the number of hexes that you can push an opponent that you shove.

Destructive Void

You may perform any two other destructive Elemental Fist abilities in a single attack. The attack still costs the same Effort, or is free if it's the first one of the scene.

Healing Air

Immediately stabilize a mortally wounded target and give them 1 HP.

Healing Earth

Clear a subject of any non-poisonous conditions that would impose a penalty on Physical Saving Throws or rolls made using physical attributes and heal them for 1d8 HP.

Healing Fire

Immediately purify your target from any poisons and heal them for 1d8 HP.

Healing Water

Replenish lost tissue and blood supplies while sealing the skin. Heal the target for 1d12 HP.

Healing Void

Clear the subject of any non-poisonous conditions that would impose a penalty on Mental Saving Throws or on rolls made using mental attributes, and heal them for 1d8 HP.

Balance of Air

Receive this bonus ability automatically if you have both the Healing and Destructive Air abilities. You can use both of your Air Elemental Fist abilities at a range equal to twice your Elemental Fist rank in hexes.

Balance of Earth

Receive this bonus ability automatically if you have both the Healing and Destructive Earth abilities. Healing Earth imparts a bonus to Physical Saving Throws that the target makes for the rest of the scene. Destructive Earth imparts a penalty to the target's Physical Saving Throws for the rest of the scene. Both the bonus and the penalty are equal to your Elemental Fist rank.

Balance of Fire

Receive this bonus ability automatically if you have both the Healing and Destructive Fire abilities. Healing Fire now also purges virulent and bacterial diseases. Destructive Fire causes all enemies in hexes adjacent to your target to make Evasion Saving Throws. If they fail, they also catch on fire.

Balance of Water

Receive this bonus ability automatically if you have both the Healing and Destructive Water abilities. Healing Water now affects every ally adjacent to you. Destructive Water allows you to make that attack against two targets who happen to be adjacent to one another and to you. Use the same attack roll against both targets.

Balance of Void

Receive this bonus ability automatically if you have both the Healing and Destructive Void abilities. Your Elemental Fist rank now counts as 2 higher for the purposes of your Elemental Fist destructive abilities, to a maximum of 6. These extra ranks don't add a bonus



to any skill rolls. Your Healing Void ability now imparts a bonus to the target's Mental Saving Throws for the rest of the scene. The bonus is equal to your Elemental Fist rank.

Balance of Forces

Receive this bonus ability automatically if you have either all five Destructive Elemental Fist abilities or all five Healing Elemental Fist abilities. You now get three free uses of Elemental Fist abilities per scene and the rest only require you to commit Effort for the scene, not the day.

Folk Alchemy

This Discipline is most common among peasant Ascetics, but higher-caste Ascetics see the value in it. Its techniques don't require users to gather kiseki stones. They work because of the latent effects of kiseki on the biosphere of this world.

Core Ability

At every rank of Folk Alchemy, you may choose a new potion to brew. You can sell some of these potions if you wish or give them as gifts. Unless otherwise stated, each potion takes an hour to brew and you have to commit Effort that does not refresh until your next sleep after activating the potion. Each potion is good for a single use.

Clarity

This potion is prized by Ascetics and others. It is completely clear.

Rank 1: You may have one Clarity brewed at any given time. It takes no commitment of Effort to brew. Upon drinking Clarity, you recover one Effort that's not bound up in a potion or other crafted item.

Rank 2: You may now have a number of Clarity potions prepared equal to your Folk Alchemy Skill rank at once.

Incendiary Potion

This potion has to be stopped up in a secure vessel for safety's sake. It has a swirling red and orange coloration.

Rank 1: The potion acts as a granada, and it requires 15 zeni of components. This concoction only affects the hex in which it lands and only you may use it.

Rank 2: You can now give your Incendiary Potions to others to use. Alternatively, you, and only you, may drink one readied Incendiary Potion as a Move Action to be able to shoot fireballs from your mouth for a number of rounds equal to your Folk Alchemy Skill rank. Attack using the Folk Alchemy Skill rank. The attack has range 2/5 and does 1d8 damage on a hit.

Lethe

This potion is very popular on the black market. It has a milky white color.

Rank 1: After drinking this potion, a character has to make a Mental Saving Throw with a penalty equal to your Folk Alchemy Skill rank or forget the last 10 times your Folk Alchemy Skill rank in minutes of experience.

Rank 2: You are now immune to Lethe potions, both yours and another alchemist's. You may distill it into an incense stick, tea, or other powdered form.

Liquid Iron

This formulation is invaluable to craftsmen. It has a glittery silver color.

Rank 1: Pour this liquid onto a broken item to bond it together stronger than any glue. It fixes the item, but leaves behind silvery veins. This ruins any Beauty modification affecting that item until a craftsman can fix it.

Rank 2: Pour this liquid onto an unbroken item as a Main Action. The liquid absorbs into the item, making it succeed its next breakage roll. If the item is a weapon, it does +1 damage for the scene and imposes a -1 penalty on breakage rolls made by armor or weapons that it strikes. If applied to armor, increase its AC by +2 for the scene. Clothing becomes armor of AC 14 for the scene, although it appears to be nothing more than a regular garment.

Revitalizing Draught

Most country physicians know how to make this potion. It's light blue and sparkly.

Rank 1: Choose one when you make this potion:

It restores 1d4 HP per round on your turn for X rounds

It provides a +X bonus to your next Physical Saving Throw this scene

It automatically flushes a poison from your system, either already introduced, or introduced later this scene

X is equal to your Folk Alchemy Skill rank. A person can only drink one of these potions per day.

Rank 2: Your Revitalizing Draughts now do all three effects rather than just one.

Harmony of Earth

Adherents of this Discipline implant the kiseki within their body. This can manifest as geometric patterns of stones, tattoos using kiseki powder ink, or in another form. This is perhaps the most generalized of all Disciplines.

Core Ability

At every rank of Harmony of Earth, select one of the abilities below, or advance one to a higher rank.

Connection

Rank 1: Commit Effort for the scene as an Instant Action to activate this ability. Roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die for the next Connect, Lie, or Talk roll.

Rank 2: You now roll 4d6, dropping the lowest 2 dice, when using this ability.

Curve

Rank 1: Commit Effort for the day as an Instant Action when taking damage from a melee attack. Direct an amount of damage equal to your Harmony of Earth Skill rank to another target adjacent to you.

Rank 2: You can now redirect damage back to your attacker and the first use of this ability each scene only requires you to commit Effort for the scene.

Infinity

Rank 1: Commit Effort for the day to replenish yourself as if you drank your daily requirement of water or ate your daily requirement of food. You can only do this once every 5-X days, where X is your Harmony of Earth Skill rank.

Rank 2: Once per week, you can instantly refresh your Effort as if you slept, without the need to sleep that night.

Wall

Rank 1: Commit Effort for the scene as an Instant Action to activate this ability. Gain a +1 bonus to your Physical Saving Throws for the rest of the scene per rank of Harmony of Earth.

Rank 2: Commit Effort for the day as an Instant Action to reduce incoming damage by -1 per rank of Harmony of Earth.

Wellspring

Rank 1: Commit Effort for the day as a Main Action to recover HP equal to your Harmony of Earth Skill rank.

Rank 2: Your rank 1 ability now restores HP equal to twice your Harmony of Earth Skill rank.

Wards

Wards are physical items imbued with the power of kiseki. They are usually small, stiff slips of paper, but can come in a variety of forms.



Core Ability

You have the knowledge and skill to create your own wards. These wards contain specific effects that activate when certain conditions are triggered. So long as you're within an appropriate distance, you know when the ward triggers.

Distance works as follows. At rank 0 in this Discipline the maximum alert distance is your character level x 10 feet. The multiplier increases to 100 feet at rank 1, 1000 feet at rank 2, 1 mile at rank 3 and 10 miles at rank 4. This multiplier means that the maximum distance is 100 miles for a supremely gifted ward maker.

At rank 0 and every rank thereafter, choose one effect that you can imbue into a ward.

Surveillance: You can see through this ward as if it were your eyes. Such a ward is very obvious to any person of at least rank 0 in this discipline. At rank 3 you can also hear through this ward.

Barrier: This ward activates a wall when triggered. The wall is made of light and has a square footage equal to 10 times your rank in Wards. Treat it as having HP equal to 5 times your rank in Wards, and a damage reducing effect equal to your rank in Wards. You may use this to create cages. You must set up the size and placement of the ward as you create it.

Fire: When triggered this ward creates a flash of fire. Flammable items within a range of feet equal to 3 times your rank in Wards catch fire. Anyone within that area, which has a maximum radius of 2 hexes, must save or take 1d8 of fire damage times your rank in Wards.

Flash: When this ward is triggered it creates a blinding flash that affects any beings with a sense of sight. It reaches a radius equal to 5 times your rank in Wards feet. Any being who fails a saving throw suffers Disadvantage on all rolls made using sight for a number of rounds equal to your rank in Wards.

Null Sound: When triggered this ward absorbs all sound within a radius equal to 5 times your rank in Wards feet. At rank 2 you can instead state that the ward prevents any sound created within the area from travelling outside it.

Web of Existence

This Discipline teaches its practitioners how all matter is in some way connected. The scholars of Kaigaku recognize the difference between atomic elements, such as iron and gold, but they call these elements materials. The word translated to element refers to the four phases of matter (solid, liquid, gas, and plasma). In scholarly writings, they refer to solid as earth, liquid as water, gas as air, and plasma as fire. This is a different school of thought from that behind Elemental Fist and other Disciplines, though some individual practitioners do learn both and come to their own syncretic conclusions.

Core Ability

When you take this ability, choose an element from Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. Each element is a different skill with ranks that track separately. Commit Effort for the scene as a Move Action to be able to control a volume of solid, liquid, gas, or fire, depending on which skill you're using, of a set mass. The mass depends on your Web of Existence rank and is as follows:

Rank 0: The size of your fist

Rank 1: The size of your head

Rank 2: The size of your upper body

Rank 3: The size of your body

Rank 4: Twice the size of your body

The control lasts for five rounds per activation. You can control the matter as far as 5 times your Web of Existence Skill rank + 5 hexes. At this rank, most of what you can do is use the matter as a toy, creating impressive shows and such. At later levels, it allows you to lift rubble. The core ability isn't suitable for attacking.

Rank 1: As a Main Action, you can now use your rank 1 ability to animate a creature made from your chosen type of matter. This creature has no mind of its own, but can perform actions on its own turn so long as you use your Move Action to direct it. It has physical attributes equal to 10 + your appropriate Web of Existence Skill rank. This creature has HP equal to 3 times your Web of Existence Skill rank. It moves at normal human

speed and does damage as an Unarmed Attack, +2 for each of your ranks in Web of Existence. The AC of the creature is 15. This creature may take any form that you desire.

It also has 3 Rank 0 skills of your choice, which don't require reasoning to use. Exert, Perform, Weapon skills and more are fine, but Lead, Talk, and the like are not. This creature gains an additional rank of skills equal to your Web of Existence Skill rank. When your control of this matter runs out, it simply collapses into nothingness unless you commit further Effort as an Instant Action.

Depending on the element chosen, the animated matter gains additional properties:

Air: May be invisible if you choose. No one can tell that you're controlling it if you commit additional Effort for the day. Double your distance for controlling this creature.

Earth: The creature gains +3 HP per rank of Web of Existence. Reduce Lethality of any melee attacks against it by -1. Counts as Heavy Armor or Gaijin Armor for the purposes of resisting Unarmed Attacks.

Fire: The creature may light enemies or items that it attacks on fire. The fire does 1d8 damage per turn, at the end of every round, until the target takes a Main Action to put it out or after it rolls a 1 for damage done. After making a melee attack against this creature, enemies have to make an Evasion Saving Throw to avoid catching on fire.

Water: The creature has an AC of 19 and moves +2 hexes moved per Move Action. It also regenerates 1 HP per turn, or 2 if it takes a Move Action to regenerate.

Rank 2: You now can create matter seemingly out of nothing as a Main Action. This gives you an amount of the matter as if you were controlling it using your Core Ability at your Web of Existence Skill rank -1. So, at this second rank, you can create matter equal to the size of your head. You must commit Effort for the day to make matter that lasts for the entire scene. You can animate this matter with the Rank 1 ability by committing Effort for the scene.

If you choose to summon regular water and not to animate it, you get enough drinking water to sate 1 person per day per rank of Web of Existence. This water does not disappear at the end of the scene if anyone drinks it. If you choose to summon air without the intent to animate it, you get 10 minutes of breathable air for one person per rank of Web of Existence. This air stays around your head or those of any people with whom you choose to share it in any full minute increments and hostile effects can't blow it away.

Rank 3: Your animated creature now lasts for 10 rounds per activation instead of 5.

Rank 4: Directing your creature now takes an On Turn Action instead of a Move Action.



Henjin Heritage

These heritages represent the gifts or abilities that Henjin (changed beings) gain. A henjin is a half-human, half-animal creature. No one knows if they were originally human or originally animals. They're generally persecuted in the Empire, so they stay hidden.

A henjin has three forms. The first is their natural state, which usually appears as a humanoid animal. The second state looks like an eerily beautiful animal and the third is a human with striking looks. Half-foxes, for instance, usually have green eyes and narrow fox faces in human form. Half-badgers look squat and solid.

All Henjin who want to use their animal abilities need to take the Henjin skill, and all who want to be able to assume human form at all need the Human skill. They automatically get both the Henjin and Human skills at rank 0.

Henjin take their Heritage abilities as they would a Technique. One of their Level I Techniques must be the Rank I ability of their Heritage.

Human Skill Table

Rank	Transformation Interval	Change Back Stimuli
None	Never, permanent hybrid form	N/A
0	Presence of any stimuli	Presence of natural predators/prey
1	1/day	Presence of same species
2	2/week	Extreme emotions, combat
3	2/month	Reduced to 0 HP
4	1/month	Full moon

The Transformation Interval refers to how frequently you have to check for involuntarily changing into your hybrid or animal form from the human form. You also have to check for changing back involuntarily when exposed to the listed stimuli.

You only get affected by the stimuli listed for your current Human Skill rank or higher. So a Henjin with Human 2 must check twice a week for an involuntary change. Such a character is no longer vulnerable to changing back in the presence of predators or prey, but they do still have to roll to resist changing back when among their own species, in combat, or when mortally wounded.

Besides changing back under certain stimuli, your unmasked reflection is always the face that you show in your hybrid form. There are rumors that lenses made from certain materials or gemstones can reveal a Henjin's true form.

The roll to resist involuntary changes, whether by time intervals or exposure to stimuli, is usually Wisdom/Human versus a difficulty of 8. Extreme circumstances can make this roll harder.

When you change involuntarily, you can't change back for the rest of the day. A character can voluntarily change back and forth a number of times per day equal to the average of their Human Skill and Henjin Skill ranks plus 1. Transforming into animal form or hybrid form uses the Henjin Skill, while transforming into a human uses the Human Skill. It usually requires a roll with a difficulty of 8.

Henjin Rank Abilities

Rank 1: You gain two gifts, one of which is your species' Core Ability and the other is one that's in your animal form's list of available gifts.

Rank 2: Gain a second gift from your animal form's list of available gifts. You can now use your Core Ability in human form, if you couldn't before.

Half-Henjin Heritage

Sometimes Henjin, in their human guise, marry humans and produce offspring. These children pass for humans, and they don't have animal or hybrid forms. That said, they do tend to have very striking features. For instance, half-kitsune have narrow faces, high cheekbones, and slanted eyes,

Rank 1: Take the Extraordinary Ability associated with your chosen species. If there isn't one listed, work with the GM to determine which attribute best fits your character's chosen species.

Rank 2: Take gifts that are listed for your chosen species. If your species isn't written up, work with the GM to determine which two best fit the species. Or you may come up with your own, with the GM's permission. This ability doesn't grant a species' Core Ability.

Animal Species

The following is a list of some of the most common animal species that have Henjin members. There are dozens more species. This is only a sampling and it represents those species that humans are most likely to allow to live in peace.

Kame

Tortoises and turtles are among the wisest creatures in the Empire. A big part of this reputation comes from their extremely long lives. One kame, from the secret enclave known as Henjinmura Village, is over 500 years old.

Core Ability: Add your Henjin Skill rank to your Mental Saving Throws and +1 to your Effort.

Available Abilities: Amphibious (if turtle), Armor, Natural Weapons (bite or claws, if tortoise), Extraordinary Ability (Wisdom or Constitution)

Karasu

Crows have a reputation as some of the most incredible swordsmen alive. They often take on human students who then have a lifelong obligation to alert their sensei if humans are hunting them.

Core Ability: Add your Henjin Skill rank to your laido rolls.

Available Abilities: Flight, Sharp Senses (eyesight), Speed (when flying), Extraordinary Ability (Dexterity or Wisdom)

Kitsune

Foxes are talented tricksters. They all have vividly colored eyes that are usually green. Foxes usually take the form of beautiful humans.

Core Ability: Add your Henjin Skill rank to Connect rolls made to seduce or flatter someone into liking you better.

Available Abilities: Natural Weapons (bite or claws), Silent, Speed, Extraordinary Ability (Charisma or Intelligence)

Neko

Cats are ubiquitous in Kaigaku. They often stay in their pure animal form, as this allows them to stay in villages, free from predators. Since the humans appreciate how cats keep pests away, they take care of them as pets.

Core Ability: Add your Henjin Skill rank to any Saving Throws that you make.

Available Abilities: Natural Weapons (bite or heavy bludgeon), Sharp Senses (eyesight or hearing), Extraordinary Ability (Dexterity or Charisma)

Ozaru

Great apes tend to be a peaceful lot, but they're incredibly violent if you provoke them to rage. Only the more martially minded clans tolerate them at all, but those that do sometimes create special ozaru squads that dominate the battlefield.

Core Ability: Decrease the minimum AC for Lethality to kick in against your opponents by your Henjin Skill rank.

Available Abilities: Nimble, Tough, Extraordinary Ability (Strength or Constitution)

Tanuki

Raccoon dogs are a very mischievous lot. They're very talented shapeshifters.

Core Ability: Gain the Many Faces of the Tanuki Technique. Add your Henjin skill to the Perform rolls that you make for this Technique. You may gain the Shinobi ability of this Technique, using Perform instead of Ninja.

Available Abilities: Natural Weapons (bludgeon or bite), Sharp Senses, Extraordinary Ability (Intelligence or Dexterity)

Animal Abilities

This is a partial list of some animal abilities.

Amphibious: You can breathe underwater as easily as you can breath on land.

Armor: You have AC 15 plus half your character level, rounded up, when not wearing armor.

Extraordinary Ability: Increase your modifier in a specific ability by +1. It now has a maximum modifier of +3. The attribute modifier must be appropriate to the species.

Ferocious: Gain a +1 bonus to your hit rolls.

Flight: You can fly up to 5 hexes vertically and 5 hexes horizontally as a Move Action. You can't hover, and must move 5 hexes every turn, even when landing.

Nimble: Gain a +2 bonus to Evasion Saving Throws. m m

Silent: Gain a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls.

Sharp Senses: Gain a +2 bonus to Notice rolls made using a specific sense. Alternatively, you may see in total darkness using echolocation

Speed: Add +2 to the number of hexes you can move per Move Action.

Sticky: You can climb walls with no climbing gear, and if you use your Main Action to maintain the grip, you can use your Move Action to scuttle along ceilings without falling.

Tough: Reduce incoming physical damage by -2.

Venom: You may produce one vial of standard poison a day, either in a bottle or to apply with a bite attack.

Secret Techniques

Most clans sponsor their own dojo, which teach specialized ryu. The philosophy of each dojo harmonizes with a clan's prevailing view of bushido and duty. Not every clan member gets to attend the clan's elite dojo. Rather, they train en masse with the armies or attend a less prestigious dojo within their territory. For the purpose of the game, every PC has access to their clan's special techniques.

Clan secret techniques are usually variations on techniques that are available throughout the empire. While some clan techniques might have started out as unique teachings, over time other Kaigakujin noticed and copied the abilities of the various clan ryu.

For instance, the Watanabe Bushi Dojo teaches its members to be more effective while wearing armor. Other clans that wanted their warriors to be as dangerous ended up copying that technique. The copycat technique is called Shell of the Tortoise and is taught throughout the empire. Without perfect study the imitators did not learn every nuance of the Watanabe's ideas. Watanabe practitioners of Shell of the Tortoise gain an extra bonus thanks to their clan's more extensive knowledge of armored combat.

Not all regular techniques are copies of secret techniques. Many of them are simply intuitive abilities that various dojo developed independently. For instance, My Hands Are My Weapons is not a single dojo's style, but the natural result of many different martial artists coming to the same conclusions on their own. Clan techniques that reference My Hands Are My Weapons are probably improvements to that technique, rather than an original technique that's been copied by other schools. It's up to the GM to determine if a technique is an improvement of a common teaching or if it's an ability developed by a clan and then stolen and spread throughout Kaigaku.

Atsumichi Techniques

Atsumichi Ascetic Dojo

You have +1 Effort if you have at least one rank in the Web of Existence Discipline.

Atsumichi Bushi Dojo

When using the Heron's Strike Technique you may use laido for all strikes, though you don't gain the Lethality bonus for subsequent strikes after drawing the sword.

Atsumichi Courtier Dojo

Roll an extra die when using the Welcome Stranger Technique. You still only count two dice towards determining success or failure.



Chisaten Techniques

Chisaten Ascetic Technique

If you have the Dawn of Creation Discipline, you may create a number of special items using that Discipline's techniques up to your rank in the Dawn of Creation skill. These items require no Effort to maintain the special abilities that they gain from Dawn of Creation. You can still create other items using Dawn of Creation, but their effects are dependent on Effort as usual.

Chisaten Bushi Dojo

Add your Intelligence modifier to your attempts to disarm someone using the Reverse the Flow technique.

Chisaten Courtier Dojo

If you have the Special Service Technique you can grant another PC one use of its effects, for any skill for which you have Special Service once per day. You can grant a use of Special Service to NPCs a number of times per day equal to your Intelligence modifier. If you do you can then add your Intelligence modifier to a subsequent social roll made against that NPC at any time in the next 24 hours. NPCs who benefit from this ability make the roll for the specified skill as if they had your appropriate attribute modifier and half your skill rank, at any time in the next week. A given NPC can only benefit from this ability once per week.

Kakujima Techniques

Kakujima Bushi Dojo

If you're using the Falling Stars Technique you gain an additional bonus to trip or disarm equal to your Strength Modifier.

Kakujima Courtier Dojo

If you Intensify on the roll made to acquire goods or services using Fortune's Flow Technique's Rank 1 Ability you increase the maximum price of that item or service by +7 per Intensification, rather than by +5.

Kakujima Ninja Dojo

If you have the One True Shot Technique it only takes three rounds of aiming to set up an Execution Attack with a bow.



Kondo Techniques

Kondo Ascetic School

Select one of your Harmony of Earth abilities, if you have any. The first use of that ability per day requires no Effort.

Kondo Bushi School

If using the Hare's Vigilance technique, you add your Wisdom modifier to your Initiative total. If you already have the highest Initiative you instead add your Wisdom modifier to your AC.

Kondo Courtier School

You may use the Games Skill in place of Lead when you are leading a group or army in mass combat if you have the Black and White Eyes Technique. If you've beaten the opposing general in a game of strategy in the last year, you can use your Rank 2 Black and White Eyes ability against them.

Morimoto Techniques

Morimoto Bushi Dojo

If you're using the Dog Against the Lions Technique you gain its initiative bonus even if your opponents are using polearms or spears.

Morimoto Courtier Dojo

You can ask an extra question when you succeed at a roll using the Fox' Eyes Technique.

Morimoto Ninja Dojo

If you know the Soaring Heights Technique you may add +1 to each of the ranks listed in the Rank 1 and Rank 2 abilities.



Shirai Techniques

Shirai Ascetic Dojo

When you take your very first ability in the Elemental Fist Discipline, take another rank 1 Elemental Fist ability. This extra ability is of the same element as the first ability that you took. If you chose a Destructive ability you get that same element's Healing ability, and vice versa.

Shirai Bushi Dojo

If you're fighting using the Brothers in Arms technique, you and your ally each gain an additional bonus to your ACs equal to your Charisma modifier.

Shirai Courtier Dojo

Whenever you pick up the first rank of the Tortoise' Wisdom Technique, it applies to two areas of knowledge, rather than one. If you have the second rank of Tortoise' Wisdom it applies to all areas of knowledge that your rank I Tortoise' Wisdom covers.

Toguchi Techniques

Toguchi Bushi Dojo

When in a duel using the Eagle's Glare technique you may substitute your Charisma modifier in place of Dexterity or Strength for the attack roll.

Toguchi Courtier Dojo

When using the Wolf's Patience Technique you roll an extra die. You still only count two dice towards success or failure.

Toguchi Ninja Dojo

When using the Many Faces of the Tanuki Technique you gain additional skills for a role equal to your Intelligence modifier, and you increase the rank of each such skill granted by taking a roll by +1.

Watanabe Techniques

Watanabe Bushi Dojo

If you know the Shell of the Tortoise technique, you reduce incoming damage by -1 whenever you wear at least medium armor.

Watanabe Courtier Dojo

You may use the Air of Command Technique's Rank I ability an additional number of times per day equal to your Intelligence modifier, to a minimum of one extra use per day.

Watanabe Ninja Dojo

If you have the Unstoppable Charge Technique, you may, once per turn, make an attack as an Instant Action when an enemy within melee range of you attempts to run away.

Ronin Techniques

Ronin Bushi Dojo

Ronin have access to schools throughout the empire. While a clan samurai is normally not allowed to attend the dojo of another clan, ronin do get admitted to these schools. Ronin can learn any clan dojo so long as they have the favor of that clan and spend months in training.





The Rules

These rules govern virtually any situation in the game.

The Main Game System

Whenever you decide that your character takes a certain action, it usually happens as you state. If the GM rules that there would be consequences for failure, or that success isn't automatic, then you make a Skill Roll.

Skill Rolls

To make a Skill Roll, you select which skill best represents the action that you want to take. The GM might do this for you instead. Then pair that skill with the most relevant attribute that your character possesses.

Sum up your skill rank, which is between 0 and 4, with the modifier for your chosen attribute, which is between -2 and +2. Note that sometimes the most relevant skill might be one that you don't possess. In that case, you suffer a -1 penalty to the roll.

A supremely clumsy and untrained person who wanted to Perform a dance would be at a serious disadvantage. Supposing the minimum possible Dexterity of 3, then they get a -2 penalty to the roll, and another -1 penalty for having no ranks in Perform. An unparalleled master, on the other hand, with a Dexterity of 18 and a Perform rank of 4 would get a bonus of +6 to their roll.

Once you have your bonus determined, roll 2d6 and add or subtract the bonus to determine your final result. Compare that result against the difficulty set for the roll. If you rolled higher, then you successfully achieve your goal. If you rolled below, either you fail, or if the GM decides, you succeed at a narrative cost.

Difficulties

Difficulty for a task ranges from 6 for the easiest tasks to 14 or higher for the most difficult. Most standard tasks have a difficulty of 8.

Consider that when you roll 2d6 you have about a 58 percent chance of rolling 7 or below and the same chance of rolling 7 or above. This means that a somewhat proficient person who has either rank 0 in the relevant skill and a +1 attribute bonus or a 0 attribute bonus and 1 rank has better than even odds of success, while an unskilled person fails most of the time.

If the difficulty is 14, someone with the highest possible skill rank and attribute modifier, +6, needs to roll an 8 or higher and only has about a 40 percent chance of success. This means that a master has a decent chance of doing what's impossible for regular folk, but that it doesn't become routine.

Circumstantial Modifiers

Sometimes circumstances conspire against you or work in your favor. For instance, heavy rain during a footrace would impart a penalty on Exert rolls. Not every little annoyance or slightly favorable thing has to provide a modifier. Try to keep it to truly impactful circumstances. After you take all factors into consideration, the bonus or penalty should be no more than +2 or no less than -2.

Skill Check Assistance

Sometimes you need to get by with a little help from your friends. If you, as a player, want to help another player's character accomplish something, describe to the group how your character takes an action to assist. If it makes sense and the GM permits it, you can attempt to help. Make a skill roll using a skill that's relevant to what you did to assist, not necessarily the same skill that the main character is using.

The difficulty of the assist roll is the same as the difficulty of the main roll. If you succeed, the main player gets a +1 bonus to their eventual roll. Everyone in the group can try to assist, but the bonus from assistance is never more than +1.

Opposed Checks

A normal skill roll tests you against your environment. You roll to determine how well you climb a wall or forge a sword. Any skill roll that pits you against another person or creature is an opposed roll. In this case, you roll your skill plus attribute modifier and any other modifiers, against your opponent. NPCs roll 2d6 plus any bonuses that they might have.

If you want to improvise and you find that the NPC doesn't have any listed abilities that are relevant to the situation but you feel like they should get a bonus, here's a suggestion. Suppose you're facing an NPC who's just listed as a ronin yojimbo. As a bodyguard, the yojimbo is probably good at noticing things. So if you're sneaking by them, increase the challenge by adding one quarter of that enemy's HD, rounded up, to the roll as a bonus.

The character who rolls the highest result wins the challenge. If both sides made Intensifications, only the winner of the opposed roll gains the effect of any Intensifications.

Intensification

Any practitioner of a skill can succeed at routine tasks. Adding new steps or trying to get better effects increases the strain of the action. Intensification allows you to increase the risk of a roll for a potentially better reward.

When you Intensify, increase the difficulty of a roll in increments of +2. To intensify an attack, increase your opponent's AC in increments of +2. To Intensify an opposed skill check, you give your opponent a +2 bonus to their roll.

If you succeed at the new difficulty, you get additional positive effects. Your roll might be good enough to beat the original difficulty but not high enough to meet the new difficulty. In this case, you still fail. There is no reward without true risk. You can only Intensify a number of times on a given roll equal to your relevant Skill rank.

Here are some standard Intensifications

- Reduce the time that it takes to craft an item by 10%. No combination of circumstances can ever reduce an item's crafting time by more than 70%.
- Each Intensification on an attack roll increases the damage roll by +1.
- For each Intensification to a social roll, such as Talk, Lie, or Connect, make the subject or any witnesses either more convinced, cowed, or appreciative of you.

Saving Throws

A Saving Throw is your chance to avoid something unpleasant. When you get exposed to a certain danger or other effect, the GM might call for a Saving Throw. Not every effect is eligible for a Saving Throw - that's the GM's call.

Saving Throws come in three varieties: Evasion, Mental, and Physical. Your Saving Throw rating starts at 15 at the first level and decreases by 1 for every character level after that.

Whenever you need to make a Saving Throw, roll 1d20, hoping to roll over your Saving Throw value. Add the better of your Strength or Constitution modifiers to your Physical Saving Throws. Modify your Evasion Saving Throws by the better of your Dexterity or Intelligence modifiers. Add the better of your Wisdom or Charisma modifiers to your Mental Saving Throws.

The consequences of success or failure are usually up to the GM. If an NPC ever needs to make a Saving Throw, subtract their HD from 20 to find the number they need to beat.

Combat

Combat is the test of your might versus your opponent. In Kaigaku, the stakes are often lethal. The best person, even a powerful warrior, avoids combat when they can.



Rounds

Combat is broken up into rounds, each of which is an abstract unit of time that lasts for between 6 and 10 seconds. There can be as many rounds in a scene as it takes for a conflict to play out. In a round, everyone takes their actions in order according to Initiative. When you act in a round, that's your turn. There are multiple turns in a round.

Initiative

Initiative is the mechanic that arbitrates the order in which people act in a round. You only need to determine Initiative once for the scene. Anyone who joins the fray rolls Initiative in the turn that they become a combatant.

All you have to do to determine Initiative is roll 1d8 and add your Dexterity modifier. NPCs just roll 1d8, unless they have special abilities that affect Initiative. The person with the highest Initiative goes first, followed by the next highest, and so on. PCs always go before NPCs if they're tied. If two or more PCs are tied, choose among yourselves in which order to take turns.

Ambush and Surprise

Getting the drop on your opponent makes you more dangerous. The most common way to accomplish this is with an opposed Dexterity/Sneak versus a Wisdom/Notice roll. The defenders win any ties. According to the context of the situation, the GM might rule that you get to surprise your opponent without the need for a roll.

Anyone who fails the Notice roll is surprised. You don't get to act at all in the first round of combat if you're surprised. It's harder for NPCs to surprise the PCs however, since they're almost always looking out for attack.

Combat Round Actions

During your turn, you can take a variety of different types of actions.

Main Action

A Main Action is something that takes up the majority of your focus and effort during a round. Attacking is the most common type of Main Action. You can make only one Main Action per turn. These also include giving medical attention, standing fast against a horde of enemies, unpacking a Stowed item, and a host of miscellaneous effects.

Move Action

You get one Move Action per round. The default move is running up to 5 2-meter hexes. You have to move the entire 5 or fewer hexes in one go. This means that you can't run 1 hex, attack, and then run again on the same turn.

If you're swimming, climbing, or going over terrain that would otherwise hamper you, reduce your movement by half, rounded up.

If you move away from any opponents wielding melee weapons adjacent to you, you have to use your Main Action to hold them off, which is called a fighting withdrawal. If you don't do this, they each get a free attack against you.

On Turn Action

On Turn Actions are miscellaneous simple actions. You can take as many of them as you like per turn, within reason. You can use it to drop an object, draw a Readied item, or perform some other task.

Instant Action

Instant Actions are very much like On Turn Actions. The difference is that you can perform them even when it's someone else's turn.

Attack Rolls

The attack roll is how you damage your opponent. The process is simple. Pick which weapon you're using, add your Skill rank in that weapon to your relevant attribute modifier, and roll 1d20. If you roll higher than your opponent's AC, you hit them.

Specific weapons list their relevant attribute in their description. For ranged weapons, this is almost always Dexterity, while most weapons and unarmed attacks allow you to use your choice of Strength or Dexterity. If you're attacking in melee, you have to be adjacent to your opponent.

The penalty for attacking using a skill in which you don't even have at rank 0 is -2 to your attack roll.

Damage

If you hit the opponent, you damage them. Do this by rolling the dice listed in the Damage section of the weapon's description. You also get to add the attribute modifier from that attack to your damage roll.

Wound Penalties

When you take serious amounts of damage, you become more sluggish and less effective. To simulate this, each PC has Wound Levels. When you've lost at least a quarter of your maximum HP, rounded up, you take a -1 penalty on all physical actions. At half or less health, rounded down, you suffer a -2 penalty. After losing 75 percent of your health, rounded down, this penalty increases to -3. Note that it doesn't apply to Physical Saving Throws.

Lethality

Some melee weapons have a Lethality rating. If you miss a melee opponent but are wielding a Lethal weapon, you still damage them. The damage for a miss is equal to the Lethality value. If you do hit your opponent but the damage that you roll is less than the weapon's Lethality rating, use the Lethality for damage instead.

Lethality effects list an AC level next to the Lethality rating. In order to benefit from the Lethality you have to be attacking an opponent whose AC is no higher than the one listed. The Lethality still counts as your minimum damage if you hit your opponent and roll damage, even if the AC is higher than the Lethality rating normally affects. Having a higher AC only means that attacks don't automatically do their minimum damage, even if they miss.

So, if you attack with a weapon that has Lethality 3/AC 14, your attack does a minimum of 3 damage to any opponent whom you hit. It also applies that damage to an opponent with AC 14 or less even if you miss. Add your relevant Attribute modifier to Lethality damage.

Unarmed Damage

Unarmed damage does not normally penetrate Heavy Armor or Gaijin Armor. You do get to add your Skill rank to unarmed damage, though. If you ever get another bonus that allows you to add your Skill rank to damage, you never get to double up this bonus. Skill-based damage increases are limited to exactly your current Skill rank.

Situational Modifiers

There are various factors that make it easier or more difficult to hit your opponent. It's impossible to list them all, but here are a few of the most common.

Situation	Modifier
Shooting at a distant prone target	-2
Ranged or melee attack against adjacent prone target	+2
Melee attack while prone	-4
Target has half cover	-2
Target has near-total cover	-4
Ranged attack from a prepared and hidden position	+2

Combat Action Summary

This section summarizes some previously listed actions and also explains a few others.

Melee Attack

As a Main Action, you can attack an opponent adjacent to you with a melee weapon or unarmed attack. Roll 1d20, adding your relevant Skill rank and your relevant attribute modifier to the roll. The difficulty is your target's AC. If you miss but are wielding a weapon with a Lethality rating, apply that much damage plus your attribute modifier to the target. If you hit, you roll the listed damage rating for your weapon or unarmed attack. Melee attacks at least do as much damage as their Lethality rating. Unarmed Attacks don't normally penetrate Heavy Armor or Gaijin Armor. You can only attack with Readied weapons.

Ranged Attack

As a Main Action, you can use your ranged weapon to attack a foe that's at least 1 hex away from you. You must have a Readied ranged weapon. The process is the same as a melee attack, except that you don't have Lethality. Thrown weapons use the Exert skill. If you're using a two-handed ranged weapon, you can't make a ranged attack if there's an enemy with a melee weapon adjacent to you. In this instance, you can still make ranged attacks with one-handed ranged or thrown weapons, but you suffer a -4 penalty to hit.

Snap Attacks

As an Instant Action, you can sacrifice your next Main Action, even if it's in the next round, to make an attack with a Readied weapon. This attack suffers a -4 penalty to hit.

Total Defense

Switch to a defensive posture as an Instant Action. This forfeits your Main Action for the round, which you must not have already used. Until your next turn, you're immune to Lethality damage and gain +2 to your AC.

Buttstroke

Use your Move Action to turn your Readied gun into a melee weapon or back into a ranged weapon.

Arquebuses count as Staves and Pistolas count as Batons. If they roll maximum damage from a melee attack, the weapon breaks.

Run

Use your Move Action to move up to 5 hexes or whatever your natural movement rate happens to be. Rough terrain, swimming, and other difficult terrain halves your movement, as does moving while prone. Very difficult movement might require an Exert roll.

Fighting Withdrawal

Use your Main Action to disengage from armed adjacent opponents before taking your Move Action. If you fail to do this before moving, each such opponent gets a free attack against you before you take your movement.

Skill Use

If you make a Skill Roll, assume that it takes a Main Action. If an Ascetic Discipline doesn't list an action type, assume that it takes a Main Action. This includes making a Heal roll with Intelligence or Dexterity to stabilize dying comrades.

Item Readying

Stow one of your Readied items or make Ready one of your Stowed items as a Main Action. This is different than drawing a Readied weapon, which is a Move Action.

Reload Weapons

Get your weapon ready to fire again. This takes a Move Action for bows. When it comes to guns, it takes a number of Main Actions equal to 1 plus the gun's Encumbrance.

Drop Something

You can drop anything that you're holding as an Instant Action.

Pick Something Up

You can pick up an item from the ground as a Move Action. It's automatically Ready.

Stand Up

Unless some other effect that made you fall specifies otherwise, it takes a Move Action to stand up from being prone.

Go Prone

You can drop to a prone position as an On Turn Action. This imparts a -2 penalty to ranged attacks made from a distance of 1 hex or greater, but gives anyone adjacent to you a +2 bonus to hit you. You get a -4 penalty to make melee attacks while prone and a +2 bonus to ranged attacks if you're firing from a prepared and hidden position.

Hold Your Action

Make a Move Action to delay your Main Action until later in the turn. You can then make your Main Action as an Instant Action, interrupting another character's declared action before it resolves, if you like.

Shove or Knock Prone

If you want to push an opponent away, first make a successful Unarmed Attack, win an Opposed Unarmed Attack skill check, or Exert skill check. If you win, you can shove the opponent up to 2 hexes in any direction and/or knock them prone. Some melee weapons, such as staves, are useful for tripping or possibly shoving. If knocking the opponent onto rough ground, into a wall, or some other hazard would hurt them, roll 1d8 for damage.

Disarm

Disarming your enemy is a special Main Action attack that does no damage. Make a successful attack, then you and your opponent each make an appropriate Weapon skill check, using Strength or Dexterity. Your opponent gets +3 to this roll. If you win this roll, your opponent is disarmed. If you tie, you're both disarmed.

The weapon clatters to the ground 1 or 2 hexes in a random direction. If you make 2 successful Intensifications, you can instead hold the weapon Ready in your free hand.

Execution Attacks

If you can spend a minute aiming at an opponent or creeping up on them, you can make an Execution Attack. Neither the target nor their allies or anyone who might raise an alarm can see or realize what you're doing. If they do, the target becomes alert enough to avoid the attack. You can't make an Execution Attack with your bare hands or batons.

Ranged Execution Attacks are actually skill checks, not attacks. You roll Dexterity and the relevant skill against 6 for point blank shots, 8 within the normal range of the weapon, and 10 at long range. Melee attacks always hit, but you can't make them on the same round that you moved next to the target.

If successful, the attack automatically does maximum damage. The target also has to make a Physical Saving Throw or be instantly mortally wounded. You impose your skill rank as a penalty to that Saving Throw. Declare ahead of time if you want the attack to be non-lethal. If so, you can stun the target, but only if you're using a poison or some other means to knock them out, such as a blunt weapon.

Dual-Wielding

To successfully wield two weapons at once, you have to have at least rank 1 in the skill that you use for each weapon type. Dual-wielding imparts a -1 penalty to your hit rolls, but you do +2 damage on a successful hit. You can only dual-wield two one-handed weapons. Declare which of the weapons you're using when you make your attack.

Wounds and Healing

If you're reduced to 0 Hit Points, you're out of action. What happens next depends on how you get there. If mental trauma, unarmed attacks, or attacks made from blunt, non-bladed, non-heavy weapons, such as batons, staves, or chain weapons, brought you down, then you're knocked out. You recover to 1 HP after 10 minutes and can act freely.

If it was another source, such as a sword, that brought you down, you're mortally wounded and have 6 rounds before you're gone for good. If you get stabilized in that time frame, then you're saved and count as being knocked out as described above.

Stabilizing someone is a Main Action using either Intelligence or Dexterity and Heal. If you have proper medical tools or a kit available, then the difficulty for this roll is 8. Otherwise, it's 10. You also add +1 to the difficulty for every round after the first since your patient was mortally wounded.

If you recover to 1 HP from a mortal wound rather than from getting knocked out, then any further mortal wounds or getting knocked out again automatically kills you. Unless some kiseki-based Ascetic ability or advanced medical technique fortifies you, you have to spend a week in bed to recover from this state. Afterwards, you start to regain HP as normal.

The normal rate for recovering HP is either your level, if you're a PC, or the HD of an NPC. To heal through medical care, the default ability is Intelligence or Dexterity plus Heal against a Difficulty of 8. You heal 1d4 HP. The amount of HP healed is increased by +2 for each Intensification on the roll. A character can only receive this attention once per day.

Iaido Duels

Iaido is the martial way to settle matters of honor. It's both the privilege and the obligation of the samurai caste. When the honor of oneself, one's family, or one's lord gets impugned, a true samurai must challenge the offender to a duel in order to restore the honor.

Courtiers tend to choose seconds, personal champions, to fight their duels for them. This is almost always their own yojimbo. Unless your lord themselves orders you to be a second to a party to the duel, no one else can make you a second for a person. You only have the right to select someone under your authority as a second, though your allies can volunteer.

In an Iaido duel, the two parties face one another, poised to draw their swords. They each make an Iaido attack roll, using the better of Strength or Dexterity. Since you're both presenting easy targets, your AC is 10. If an Iaido strike hits in a duel, it does damage as an Execution Attack, including the Physical Saving Throw to avoid a mortal wound.

You can only use Techniques in an Iaido duel that are specifically designed for use in Iaido duels. Techniques that provide ongoing passive effects, such as extra HP at all times, are still in effect. Others, such as Master Warrior, do not. When in an Iaido duel, choose one and only one of your Iaido Techniques to use, if you have any.

Duels don't have to be to the death, unless both parties agree, or if a lord, such as the Emperor, decrees it to be so. If both players strike one another and if they haven't both died, the one still standing wins. If both are still

standing, the one who inflicted the highest amount of damage wins. Should one player miss, the player who hit wins. On the rare occasion where both miss, then both characters lose shamefully.

There are other forms of duels. Ones that take place on the battlefield, where warriors run at each other with swords drawn, are called kendo duels. No special rules govern them. Resolve such duels as a one-on-one battle, with the player who submits or goes down first losing.

Some laido duels turn into kendo duels. For instance, if it's a mortal duel and both players are still standing after the strike, they have to resolve it as a normal battle. At that point, each can use their regular Techniques in the fight. Sometimes, an iaido duel consists of an initial strike, followed by a battle until one character submits or goes down.

Weapons, Armor, and Equipment

In the Empire of Kaigaku, a warrior's blade is as much a part of him as is his own heart. Samurai pride themselves on having quality equipment or heirloom items once used by valiant ancestors.

Encumbrance

Encumbrance represents the effect that carrying too many items has on your mobility and coordination. When carrying items, you can choose whether they're Stowed or Ready. Stowed items count for their normal Encumbrance value, while Readied items count for double their Encumbrance value.

You can only safely carry a maximum total Encumbrance value equal to your Strength attribute. If you carry up to 4 more than your maximum Encumbrance, for example, 20 Encumbrance if your Strength is 16, then you reduce your movement speed by 1 hex per turn and are Lightly Encumbered. If you carry between 5 and 8 Encumbrance more than your Strength, so 21-24 if you have 16 Strength, you are Heavily Encumbered and have your movement reduced by a total of 3 hexes per turn. You absolutely cannot carry any more than this.

The difference between Ready and Stowed items is that you can easily get at your Readied items. A sword in its sheath is always Ready when you wear it on your hip or behind your back for o-dachi and longer nagamaki. This is true even if your blade has a peace knot. Essentially, you always have access to Readied items and for game terms consider the item in-hand. It takes a Main Action to dig Stowed items from your pack or wherever else you stored them.

If you have an attendant carry your gear, those items are Stowed for you if your attendant is in an adjacent hex. Regular clothing, ornaments, and minor items don't have any Encumbrance.

A armor

Bushi are the only members of society who wear armor on a regular basis. Wearing armor while in the lands of a lord besides your own is a faux pas that can lead to expulsion from the territory or even a blood duel.

For instance, if a yojimbo were to wear armor in the court of another lord, claiming that he was doing it as part of his duty to protect his own lord, that would be a grave insult to his host. It implies that the other lord is either unable or unwilling to protect their visitors.

Name	AC	Cost	ENC	TL
Ashigaru Armor	12	5	1	0
Light Armor	13	10	1	1
Medium Armor	15	50	2	1
Heavy Armor	17	100	3	2
Gaijin Armor	17	300	2	2
Ninja Armor	12	20	1	1

Example Armors

As with all of the item examples, these are only a small selection of what's available.

Ashigaru Armor: Used only by peasants, this armor provide minimal protection. It's a form of scale mail that covers mainly the chest and back.

Light Armor: For samurai who value speed over protection, Light Armor delivers minimal coverage.

Medium Armor: Samurai who can afford this armor almost always choose it over Light Armor, feeling that the extra protection is worth the added bulk.

Heavy Armor: The highest level of protection offered by traditional samurai armor. It's most popular among warriors who prefer to fight on horseback. Unarmed attacks do not apply Lethality to heavy Armor.

Gaijin Armor: An adaptation of gaijin designs, this is samurai armor with a rigid chest piece and other innovations. It's less bulky than Heavy Armor, but much more expensive. Unarmed attacks do not apply Lethality to Gaijin Armor.

Ninja Armor: Similar to Ashigaru Armor, Ninja Armor folds up to almost nothing. You can keep it Stowed in your pockets. You can also wear it under non-revealing clothing without detection.

Ranged Weapons

Contrary to popular belief, it wasn't the katana that was the original weapon of the samurai class, it was the bow. Samurai began as mounted archers, and the vast majority of them still receive archery training.

Guns and bombs are a relatively new arrival in Kaigaku. Traders, missionaries, and explorers from Cordova and Albar brought them over. They have yet to make a true change in the methods of warfare as samurai find them unwieldy. A trained archer can get off two or more arrows in the time that it takes a teppou to load and fire their arquebus. Firearms are also much more expensive than bows.

In the Range column, there are two numbers. The left number is the normal range and the right number is the maximum range that they can reach. Shots beyond the normal range take a -2 penalty.

Name	DMG	Range	Cost	Shots	ATTR	ENC	TL
Blowgun	1d2	2/4	5	1	DEX	1	1
Short Bow	1d4	3/8	15	1	DEX	2	1
Longbow	1d6	5/10	50	1	DEX	3	1
Pistola	1d6	2/4	60	1@	DEX	1	2
Arquebus	1d12	5/7	90	1@	DEX	2	2

@Weapon takes 1 plus Encumbrance Main Actions to reload

Example Weapons

There are many other types of weapons beyond this list. Feel free to come up with your own.

Arquebus: The main gaijin firearm, the arquebus originated in a far-off kingdom. While it is very powerful, it's not as fast to fire as a bow. The elite warrior class first surmised that their peasant ashigaru levies should train

with guns, as they felt it would make the peasants less deadly in the case of a rebellion. Unlike the yumi, which is only a samurai weapon, arquebuses are popular among ashigaru, ronin, certain ascetics, and others. Reloading takes 3 Main Actions.

Blowgun: These ninja weapons are not very dangerous on their own. You place a dart into the tube and blow. Its advantages are that it's relatively silent and very inexpensive. Most users tip their darts with some sort of poison. Reloading takes a Main Action.

Hankyu: The standard design of the short bow in Kaigaku. It's not very popular, as most warriors prefer the power of longer bows. Hankyu usually only see use by peasant hunters, ninja, pirates, and others who need mobility over power. Reloading takes a Move Action.

Pistola: This weapon is a gaijin invention recently beginning to see use in Kaigaku. It can only hold a single shot. Pistola are useful if you can finish a fight in one or two shots, assuming you carry a brace of them. Reloading takes 2 Main Actions.



Yumi: Also called the daikyu, or longbow, this is the true traditional weapon of the samurai class. It's very long and has an asymmetrical design. This allows an archer to fire it while standing. Reloading takes a Move Action.

Thrown Weapons

Thrown weapons are usually the province of ninja. Bushi tend to use melee weapons that are too large to throw and prefer the bow for ranged attacks. Ascetics usually fight barehanded or with simple melee weapons. The standard range for thrown weapons is 5 hexes. These weapons usually use Exert as their attack skill.

Name	DMG	Lethal	Cost	ATTR	ENC	TL
Granada	2d6	None	50	DEX	I	2
Improvised	1d2	None	X	DEX	I	0
Knife	1d4	I/AC 15	3	DEX	I	1
Shuriken	1d4	None	1	DEX	X	1
Torinoko	---	---	3	DEX	X	2

Example Thrown Weapons

As with other entries, this is only a sampling of various weapons.

Granada: Granada are gaijin grenades. You light them with a fuse, which takes an On Turn Action. The delay in the fuse going off means that a grenade always explodes at the end of the round in which you throw it. Granada do half of their damage to everyone within 2 hexes of where it lands. Anyone in these hexes can make an Evasion Saving Throw to avoid the damage.

If your attack roll with a grenade misses, you have to roll 1d6, with a 1 being up relative to your map and proceeding clockwise. The grenade heads in that direction instead. It lands a number of hexes away from the target hex equal to the number by which you failed the roll, to a maximum of 5.

Knives: Small weapons favored mainly by criminals and peasants, knives are also used by ninja. Unless stated in a weapon's description, you can throw any knife up to 5 hexes with your Dexterity. Note that you don't get to apply Lethality when you throw a knife.

Shuriken: Often called ninja stars, shuriken are small throwing blades. They're usually shaped like stars and have between 3 and 8 pointed blades. Up to 3 shuriken count for just 1 Encumbrance when Stowed. You can make a number of shuriken equal to your Dexterity modifier plus 1, to a minimum of 1, Ready with your Main Action. You can't attack in melee with shuriken. Use the Knives or Ninja skill to attack with them.

Torinoko: This is a smoke bomb that ninja use to distract enemies. Anyone within 5 hexes of where you throw the torinoko has to make a Mental Saving Throw or suffer a -2 penalty to Attack rolls and their AC for 2 rounds.

Melee Weapons

The most iconic image of a samurai is of a man wielding a katana. On the battlefield, samurai use spears and polearms as often or even more frequently than swords. There are many different sword varieties that bush use beyond katana, and some of them choose to use other weapons. In many cases, the katana is only a mark of status and the weapon of ceremonial duels.

Name	DMG	Lethal	Cost	ATTR	ENC	TL
Unarmed	1d2	None	---	STR/DEX	---	---
Knife	1d4	1/AC 15	3	STR/DEX	1	1
Short Sword	1d6	2/AC 13	15	STR/DEX	1	1
Medium Sword	1d6+1	2/AC 15	20	STR/DEX	1	1
Long Sword	1d8+1	2/AC 15	30	STR	2	1
Spear	1d8+1	2/AC 15	30	STR	3	1
Polearm	1d8+1	2/AC 15	30	STR/DEX	2	1
Baton	1d6	1/AC 13	10	STR/DEX	1	0
Chain Weapon	1d6	1/AC 12	15	STR/DEX	1/2	1
Heavy Melee	1d10	2/AC 16	20	STR	2	1
Staff	1d6	1/AC 15	5	STR/DEX	2	0

Example Melee Weapons

The weapons below are not the only examples of their types. If you want to represent a weapon that's not listed here, just use the stats from the Melee Weapons Table and adjust as necessary.

Unarmed Attacks: Unarmed combat is the provenance of ascetics, but individuals from all other stations often learn the basics. Unarmed combat is useful because there's nothing to drop, bare hands are legal everywhere, and it's the most efficient type of technique for disarming foes.

Knives: Small weapons favored mainly by criminals and peasants, knives are also used by ninja. Unless stated in a weapon's description, you can throw any knife up to 5 hexes with your Dexterity. Note that you don't get to apply Lethality when you throw a knife.

Bisento: This polearm features a thin, round shaft with a broad, heavy blade on the top. It uses the same stats as a heavy weapon except that it has an Encumbrance of 3. Due to the overly weighted blade atop a thin pole, this weapon is easy to knock aside. Attempts to disarm it get a +2 bonus, and if disarmed, it gets broken on a roll of a 1 or a 2.

Bo: The favored weapon of ascetics, this staff resembles an ordinary walking stick, and is legal to carry openly almost anywhere in the Empire. They're usually made from a solid piece of wood, but some have strips of iron reinforcing them against blade strikes.

Kama: A sickle originally used as a peasant tool, the kama is a knife resembling the claws of a praying mantis. Kama aren't balanced for throwing, and many practitioners wield them in pairs.

Kanabo: A studded club, this heavy weapon causes lesser enemies to run in terror on the battlefield. It's a long metal or metal-reinforced shaft with a handle and a ring or a rounded pommel at the end.

Katana: The traditional medium sword of the samurai class. It's slightly curved, which assists in pulling it out of the saya for laido quick-draw duels.

Bokuto: This is a wooden medium sword made to look like a katana. It's compatible with both Sword and Baton Techniques. This weapon costs 20 zeni and uses the stats of a regular baton. You can use one in an laido duel.

Kiseru: A heavy smoking pipe, the kiseru is a baton preferred by peasants, ninja, and others. Since it's technically just a pipe, users can take it into sake houses and other areas where weapons are not allowed. Less scrupulous users utilize poison powders within the bowl.

Kunai: A ninja throwing knife, wielders can also use this weapon in melee. It's a single piece of iron with a blade at one end, a thin handle, and a ring instead of a pommel.

Kusarifundo: A chain with a weight at one end and a ring at the other. The ring, or sometimes another weight, is the handle. They're useful for constricting weapons or hands. It's popular among ninja and peasants, who also sometimes replace the ring with a kama or a kunai. That variant is called a kusarigama or a kusari kunai, and has a cost of 20 zeni. The chain also has the same functionality as a rope.

Magariyari: This trident-like spear is not balanced for throwing. It only has an Encumbrance of 2.

Nagamaki: A curious weapon, the nagamaki usually resembles a cross between a polearm and a medium sword, and it counts as both. The handle is as long or longer than that of an o-dachi, while the blade is the same length as that of a katana. Some nagamaki have wakizashi-length blades. Others have naginata-length handles and o-dachi-length blades, though these are exceptionally rare. They count as both polearms and long swords instead.

Users hold nagamaki in a fixed two-handed manner. The dominant hand is always higher than the weaker hand. As such, nagamaki can't be used in a duel without imparting a -4 penalty on the quick-draw. You can use a nagamaki for any Technique that's compatible with polearms and either medium swords or long swords, depending on blade length. The only exception is that nagamaki aren't compatible with laido Techniques. No matter which Techniques you use, a nagamaki always uses the polearm statistics and damage.

Naginata: This long polearm is often considered a sword by members of the samurai class. There's a curved blade on the top, which spoils the balance and aerodynamics in such a way that you can't effectively throw it. The front side is rounded so users can tell which way the blade is facing even if they can't see it.

O-dachi: The great long sword. This large unwieldy blade features a very long handle and longer blade than the katana. To draw them, users usually have to throw the saya off or have a servant pull it away.

Ono: This axe is a heavy weapon favored by strong warriors. You can get it in two variants: the one-handed throwable ono or a two-handed version that's also useful for demolitions. Two-handed ono always do maximum damage to wooden buildings or fortifications.

Sai: Three-pronged batons that resemble knives. They're not sharpened, but they can still cause a lot of damage. Wielders often use the prongs to catch sword blades, knives, or other batons. These weapons are compatible with both baton and knife Techniques, but they use the baton statistics. Sai originated as peasant agricultural tools and peasants can legally carry them. They're also popular among ninja.

Tachi: A medium sword that predates the katana. It's similar, except for the fact that it has a higher degree of curvature. Instead of wearing it thrust into the obi, you wear it in a sling that hangs from the waist. This sling makes it more cumbersome when you're fighting with a spear or polearm on foot or performing other tasks, adding 1 to its Encumbrance. Tachi give a +1 bonus when you're attacking from horseback. They're not suitable for iaido duels, but you can use them in kendo duels.

Tanto: These knives resemble shorter versions of wakizashi. You can't throw them since they aren't balanced for that. Upper-class samurai view tanto with more respect than they do other knives.

Tessen: The small weapons are light batons disguised to look like regular fans. They're reinforced with iron instead of bamboo and the silken sections are replaced with stiffer material. Some versions cannot fold down and are made entirely from steel or iron, though they are covered with decorative silks. Courtiers favor them because they provide a measure of protection against attacks and they can take them virtually anywhere.

Tonfa: Medium batons that feature two handles, one of which projects from the side. Users can hold them parallel to their forearms for defense, twirl them rapidly, or wield them like a club.

Uchigatana: The medium sword from which the katana evolved. Ironically enough, it was an ashigaru weapon. Uchigatana are cheaply made, essentially making them inferior quality katana. They cost only 8 zeni and are prone to breakage. Any time the wielder gets disarmed by an enemy who's wielding a weapon or by an unarmed attacker who's wearing armored gloves or gauntlets, roll 1d6. On a result of a 1, the uchigatana breaks.

Wakizashi: A short sword carried by samurai and higher-ranking ashigaru. Courtiers who have yojimbo often wear only the wakizashi, leaving dueling to their bodyguards. Bushi tend to use wakizashi indoors and in cramped quarters, while reserving katana for fighting outdoors. A warrior using a wakizashi doesn't suffer any situational penalties from fighting in a confined space. You do have -2 AC when wielding a wakizashi in an iaido duel against an opponent with a katana.

Yari: This long spear makes an effective cavalry lance. It's balanced for throwing. Yari have only 2 Encumbrance when wielded by mounted samurai. Yari are long enough that you can attack up to 2 hexes away with a melee attack. Yari and all other throwing spears use the Spears skill, rather than Exert, to throw.

Other Equipment

There are some items besides weapons and armor that a character needs in order to live their life or go on adventures. Here is a list of just a few.

Astrolabe: A gaijin invention for navigating at sea. Provides a +1 bonus for the navigator of a ship.

Climbing Gear: Spikes, ropes, and other tools used to scale mountains or walls.

Clothing: Regular clothing is what anyone needs to look presentable. Most people below the level samurai on the Lifestyle Table in this chapter wear Inferior regular clothing. Winter clothing keeps you from freezing in the cold months. At best, it can mitigate some of the penalties imposed by cold weather. Fine clothing is what people wear during festivals or to court. Peasants have, at best, a Normal outfit of regular clothing that serves as their fine clothing.

Compass: A gaijin invention that's useful for navigating. It can provide a +1 bonus for finding your way overland.

Crafting Tools: The gear necessary for making other items. Each set of crafting tools is useful for only one item or type of items, such as handcars, swords, or bows.

Grooming Kit: The bare minimum necessary for a samurai to make themselves presentable to a lord. Courtiers wouldn't be caught with less than an excellent grooming kit, which costs triple what a regular grooming kit costs.

Hand Cart: This item slows your movement down by 1 hex per turn or one overland hex per day. It allows you to carry up to 6 Encumbrance of Stowed items for just 2 Encumbrance.

Hanko: A seal and stamp used by samurai and merchants to mark their identification. Also called a chop, it's essentially your signature. Anything stamped with your chop is completely authorized by you. Courtiers and high-ranking bushi have more ornate chops, which might contain symbols indicating rank and credentials. Stealing, using, or counterfeiting chops that are not yours is a capital offense.

Musical Instrument: Many courtiers, geisha, and performers play musical instruments. Examples include:

Biwa: A pleasant lute.

Koto: A large zither.

Shakuhachi: A versatile flute.

Shamisen: A three-stringed banjo.

Tsuzumi: A small hand drum.

Name	Cost	ENC	TL
Astrolabe	30	1	2
Clothing, Winter	15	0	1
Clothing	10	0	1
Clothing, Fine	20	0	1
Climbing Gear	20	1	1
Compass	50	1	2
Crafting Tools	30	1	1
Grooming Kit	15	1	1
Hand Cart	10	2	1
Hanko	40	1	1
Musical Instrument	20	1	1
Pack	4	0	0
Paper	10	1	1
Pen and Ink	7	1	1
Rations	3	1	0
Tea Service	20	1	1

Pack: Useful for carrying your gear around. It doesn't increase your maximum Encumbrance, but simply allows you to carry what you have.

Paper: 3 zeni gets you three sheets of thick paper. Finer paper, such as that used for origami or for courtiers to send letters, costs 9 zeni for three sheets.

Pen and Ink: Black ink and a brush for calligraphy. Each pot of black ink is enough to write 5 pages of paper. Colored ink costs 20 zeni per pot per color, each of which is suitable for about 3 illustrations.

Rations: 3 zeni gets enough food for 1 day. Rations keep for about 2 weeks before they go bad.

Tea Service: A pot that's rugged enough for brewing tea on the road. It also comes with two cups and a jar for holding tea leaves.

Telescope: An advanced gaijin invention. It gives a +1 bonus to rolls made for navigation by land or sea and to rolls made when leading troops in battle.

Poisons

Poisoning is a dishonorable practice in Kaigaku. It's almost exclusively the province of the Ninja Skill, though someone with Know Poison could craft some, too, only at a +2 penalty to the difficulty.

Standard poison has to get ingested before it takes effect. It does 1d8 damage per interval, with your subject getting a Physical Saving Throw at each interval. The first time the subject succeeds a Physical Saving Throw to resist the poison, they only take half damage from it, rounded up. After the second successful save, they take no damage and end the poison effect ends.

The standard poison lasts for half an hour and takes effect immediately. You have to roll to resist it every 10 minutes.



Crafting this type of poison requires Intelligence/Poison at a difficulty of 8. It's a bitter liquid that you apply to food or drink. You can also place that liquid on a sharp weapon, such as the point of a dart. It takes a Wisdom/Notice roll at a difficulty of 8 to detect the poison. Alternatively, you can choose to make the poison a powder. Throw or blow this powder at an opponent using your bare hands or a blow gun to make the opponent suffer its effects.

Castes and Standard of Living

Income inequality and poverty are dramatic in Kaigaku. The samurai, who are at most no more than 10 percent of the population, control 90 percent of the wealth. Merchants control the rest.

There is a strict caste system in play. Everyone below a samurai is a peasant. Some peasants can increase their status by meritorious service.

Farmers who miraculously manage to save up to afford better weapons and training might become full-time ashigaru. Ashigaru can become samurai if they're valiant enough in battle. Certain craftsmen might receive as much respect as a samurai, especially court artists or blade smiths. Sumo champions are also considered honorary samurai.

At the bottom of the caste list are the outcasts, also known as eta or burakumin. These extremely poor individuals live in their own shabby villages and are shunned by everyone. They tan hides, butcher animals, and perform other unclean tasks.

Above the outcasts are the merchants. Merchants have more influence than other peasants due to their success in business. Samurai despise merchants because their work doesn't directly contribute to the dominance and prosperity of the samurai. Many bushi resent that a merchant can hold power over them via debts.

The next from the bottom are craftsmen. These artisans range from simple potters to fine artists and sword smiths. The samurai appreciate what they make, but choose not to think about the people who make them, unless the craftsman happens to be famous.

Below the samurai are farmers. Samurai consider these the best peasants, since they feed the samurai class. Farmers suffer from high taxation. When a lord conscripts an army, he takes them from among the farmers, and names them ashigaru. Some ashigaru form mercenary bands and renounce farming altogether. They tend to fight with spears, inferior swords, or guns.

The samurai form the ruling class of Kaigaku. The name means "to serve", as they were originally ashigaru who served local lords during times of war. The prosperous farmers who owned horses became full-time mounted archers and eventually dominated both their farmer brethren and their original lords.

Ronin are samurai without masters. They either disgraced themselves and were cast from service or their lord died and they were left with nowhere to go. Some samurai are born to other ronin. Ronin are "wave men", who travel where fate takes them. They have no official authority or place in society, but often find work as either clan mercenaries or merchant bodyguards.

Young samurai sometimes take a musha shugyo, or warrior's pilgrimage and voluntarily become ronin temporarily. While on this pilgrimage they seek adventure throughout the empire and attempt to train with many different dojo. Reports of lords using the musha shugyo arrangement to send out spies in the form of ronin are completely baseless.

Kuge are the original rulers of Kaigaku. The Imperial Families were the first clans, each formed from non-inheriting offspring of the Emperor or members of their household. For all intents and purposes, kuge are samurai.

After being usurped by the samurai, the kuge serve as imperial bureaucrats and teachers. They cultivate an air of sophistication and superiority, which leads samurai, who are deeply insecure about their legitimacy, to take lessons in culture from kuge. Kuge give samurai who successfully complete their courses certificates of achievement. Other kuge successfully formed samurai clans when the bushi originally rose to prominence.

This table summarizes how much a member of a certain class would have to pay out of pocket to make ends meet at a standard of living that's expected from someone of their class. It only covers their personal expenses and perhaps those of a spouse and children. Assume that a character's holdings pay for a reasonable number of retainers.

Poor members of a class get treated with contempt by their betters. A poor samurai might be able to appear at court, but only if he was the bodyguard of a courtier patron. Even then, unless it was a poor lord's court, the courtier in question would get mocked behind his back.

Lifestyle	Daily Cost
Outcast	3
Minor Craftsman, Laborer, Ronin, Ascetic	5
Humble Merchant, Farmer	7
Ashigaru, Poor Samurai	9
Prosperous Merchant, Famous Artist	20
Samurai, Poor Kuge, Poor Courtier	30
Courtier, Poor Lord	100
Lord, Kuge	300



Poor lords are heads of obscure lesser clans or low-level retainers of higher lords. Poor kuge are those minor functionaries that are superfluous to society, but who manage to hold on to what they have through sycophancy.

Hiring Services

Everyone needs some help now and then. Hiring out a service costs zeni based on the type of work that you need done.

The rule of thumb is that you pay the daily cost for a member of a particular caste to maintain their lifestyle for their services on a daily basis. Alternatively, you can pre-purchase their service for a set term.

When you pay the base cost of a character's lifestyle, you get someone with a 14 in a single attribute and a 10 in all the others. This hired help has rank 1 in one relevant skill and rank 0 in two others, chosen at the time that you hire them. They can and will perform basic services expected from their station. A ronin serves as a bodyguard, while a craftsman performs maintenance on your items.

If you pay double the base rate, you can afford a helper who has a 14 in two attributes and a 10 in the rest, rank 2 in a single relevant skill and rank 1 in two others. Paying five times the base rate gives you a worker with a 14 in three attributes and a 10 in the others, plus a rank of 3 in one skill, rank 2 in two others, and rank 1 in two more.

To clear up any vague notions of where certain types of characters fall on the Lifestyle Table, here are some guidelines. Geisha are regular craftsmen if they come from a standard geisha house or famous artists from more prestigious districts. Note that a famous artist geisha at the base rate has lower stats than a craftsman geisha at five times the base rate, but you'll gain more prestige if you're seen with a famous geisha. This goes for associating with less-skilled versions of other more highly placed characters, too, such as major clan samurai over poor samurai or ronin.

Sumo wrestlers are craftsmen if they come from a lower circuit or famous artists if they compete in more prestigious venues. Ascetics of most types hire out at a craftsman's wages. They'll leave you after a single fight, though, as most ascetics who engage in combat are either employed by the clans or off on their own quests.

Doctors are essentially famous artists. So are scribes and non-martial sensei. Note that once you get up to the category of lords and kuge, you aren't really hiring their services. If you want something done, it's really just bribing them for a single act, decree or permission.

Horses

Owning horses and bows was what originally determined which peasant farmer warriors became samurai and which remained peasants. Horses cost 500 zeni to purchase, and they increase your standard of living costs by 5 zeni per day each.

Horses have a speed of 15 hexes per Move Action. Stats for horses are in the NPC section.

Kiseki Stones

The true source of power in Kaigaku is mastery of kiseki stones. These are mysterious gems that rain from space during meteor showers known as seirakka. Some areas have underground supplies which are perhaps the remnants of ancient seirakka now buried under thousands of years of soil and rock.

Ascetics are the scholars who study kiseki and learn to use their power. Some of them utilize kiseki to power their martial techniques, while others craft wondrous items.

Kiseki seem to shine with an inner fire, though it waxes and wanes over time, and no two stones have quite the same pattern or brilliance. Only ascetics can truly harness their power.

Non-Ascetics and Kiseki

Bushi or peasant craftsmen sometimes try to harness the power of kiseki for their own use, circumventing the scholarly monopoly on kiseki. Virtually the only thing that they can make is a fire flower, which is a small grenade. It works the same as a granada, except that it costs 100 zeni, has a blast radius of 3 hexes, and requires no fuse to light, exploding on impact after pressing a primer button.

They can attempt the incredibly dangerous practice of implanting kiseki within their own body. This gives them access to a random ascetic Technique with a skill rank of 1, but at great cost. Every single time they use the skill associated with that ascetic Technique, they have to perform a Mental Saving Throw. If they fail, they lose a point of Wisdom permanently.

These untrained kiseki wielders take a -1 penalty to the Saving Throw for each time they've used such an ability without getting a full night's sleep. An untrained kiseki wielder can't upgrade their Techniques except by implanting more stones. For every level of a Technique above the first, impose a further -2 penalty on all Mental Saving Throws for any effect. Characters who have their Wisdom reduced to half their original score or 3, whichever is higher, go mad permanently.

Those affected by the Kiseki Madness no longer have to make Mental Saving Throws to resist its effects, and they automatically succeed all other Mental Saving Throws. The Kiseki Madness also causes those who suffer from it to automatically succeed all Morale checks. A PC who succumbs to the Madness automatically becomes an NPC. Madmen can use their powers any number of times per day, regardless of what the rules state. They cannot learn new Techniques, though.

The rules for kiseki Techniques are in the ascetic Technique section. The rules for crafting with kiseki are in the crafting items and modifications section below.

Kiseki stones are generally not available for purchase. When they are, it's a minimum of several hundred zeni. The most common method for getting kiseki stones is taking on quests.

Crafting Items and Modifications

PCs might want to create or improve their own equipment. This section shows you how to do that. Note that if you want to be a professional blacksmith, it takes more than simply making a few things. In order to turn a profit, you need access to a full-fledged and permanent workshop, certificates and permits from the local clan, and various PC Techniques.

The time to create an item varies by item type. Generally, it's three months for large ships, a month for small boats or carriages, and a week for standard weapons, armor or luxury goods. Gaijin items take double the normal time to complete and cost twice as much money in parts. An assistant with relevant Craft 0 or higher can halve the time to craft any item. If making gaijin items, you would need a gaijin assistant from the appropriate culture in order to halve construction time.

There are three levels of quality when it comes to items. They are as follows:

Inferior Quality

Items of Inferior quality only require raw materials worth a quarter the price of their Normal quality equivalents to make. Unfortunately, no one will pay more than that for a completed Inferior item. It takes half the normal time to make an Inferior item. There are usually penalties associated with Inferior items. For instance, when weapons or armor are disarmed by anything that could break them, you only roll 1d6 instead of the normal 1d8 to determine if the Inferior item breaks. Inferior items cannot have any modifications. The difficulty for crafting Inferior items is 6.

Normal Quality

Normal quality items require materials worth twice as much as their market cost to make. Only dedicated craftsmen ever make a profit at creating items, and only then because of patronage. Normal quality items take the regular amount of time to make. When disarmed by anything that could reasonably break it, a normal weapon or piece of armor rolls 1d8, breaking on a roll of 1. The difficulty of crafting a Normal item is 8.

Masterwork Quality

Masterwork items are rare and highly prized. It takes raw materials worth 10 times the cost of an equivalent Normal item to make a Masterwork. You also need to commit twice the normal time to create Masterworks. Masterwork items roll 1d10 to check for breakage. Each Masterwork can also maintain a single integral modification, installed at the time of its construction, that doesn't need weekly maintenance. Installing the integral modification requires an Intensification. Modifications installed after the initial crafting, even if you didn't install one when you first made the item, still require maintenance. The difficulty of crafting a Masterwork item is 10.

Modifications

Modifications allow you to upgrade an item. They're not trivial to create. You can't simply make an item, call it a modification, and then stick it onto your gear later. Modification is directly applied to a specific item, either as part of the crafting process or later.

Modifications require a specific level of the Craft skill to install. If you don't have that level of skill, you can't install the modification.

Some modifications are labeled with the kiseki tag. You have to be a trained ascetic or specialized craftsman to install these modifications. Once a specific kiseki stone gets used in crafting, it never functions for another purpose again. So, a stone used to add an effect to your katana couldn't get removed and then placed in a suit of armor.

Modifications have a cost in zeni, which represents the price of materials that you have to use. It takes one week of work per level of the Craft skill required to install a modification. This is true whether you're installing the modification when you create the item or afterwards. As with crafting an item from scratch, an assistant with Craft 0 or higher for relevant items can halve the time that it takes to modify an item.

Item and Modification Maintenance

Modifications require maintenance every day. You, or a qualified attendant if you don't have the skills, have to spend an hour per day per modification on maintenance. This might include oiling your blade, attending to the laces of your armor, and more. Every item that you use in battle requires an hour of maintenance each day, regardless of whether it has modifications or not.

You reduce the number of hours that you spend on maintenance per day by your maintenance score. This is equal to the sum of your Intelligence and Wisdom modifiers times your highest relevant Craft skill. In order to reduce bookkeeping, it's a good idea for GMs to allow the single highest weapon or armor Craft skill to cover all weapons and armors.

Example Modifications

The modifications in this list are just a small sample of what you can do. No amount or combination of modifications can give an item more than +3 to any roll or to an armor's AC. If a modification lists levels in its description, you can increase its effect somehow, but only when you initially install the modification.

Every additional level costs double the amount of the previous levels, cumulatively. So a modification that costs 100 zeni at its first level costs 300 at the second level (100 for the first level, 200 as twice the price of previous levels), and 900 at the third level (adding 600 because it's double the total cost of the previous levels). Modifications to Masterwork items cost double their normal amount on top of this.

Every level of a modification counts as a new modification that requires extra maintenance. It also requires an additional rank of the Craft skill per level beyond the original modification. If a level 1 modification required Craft 1, then its second level requires Craft 2, and the third requires Craft 3.

Installing a modification requires a roll equal to the initial crafting roll of the item, plus one Intensification, plus one Intensification for each additional modification the item already bears.

Accuracy

Craft 1

Cost: 50 zeni

If this modification is set on a melee weapon, call it Improved Grip or something similar. On a ranged weapon, it might be Improved Sighting. For each level of this modification, add +1 to your attack rolls made with the weapon.

Beautiful

Craft 1

Cost: 70 zeni

For every level of this modification, gain a +1 bonus to any rolls made to impress others. This bonus only applies in situations where the beauty of your clothing, weapons, armor, or other things could improve your standing in someone's eyes. In the Emperor's court, where everyone dresses splendidly, you might even subtract 1 or 2 from the bonus that the Beautiful modification gives.

Breakdown

Craft 3

Cost: Triple item price

This allows you to completely disassemble an item into inconspicuous components. Unless someone is actively looking for evidence of this modification, they'll assume that the pieces are just random bits. It takes a Main Turn action to assemble this item for every point of Encumbrance.

Custom Fit

Craft 3

Cost: 300 zeni

This armor has -1 Encumbrance for you and +1 Encumbrance for anyone else. This modification requires two hours of maintenance per day any day that you fight in battle, but only one hour otherwise.

Disruptive

Craft 3

Cost: 300 zeni, kiseki stone

After each successful attack that you make with this melee weapon, not simply one that imparts Lethality damage, impose a -2 penalty to the target's Saving Throws for the next minute.

Extendable

Craft 2

Cost: 20 zeni

This unorthodox modification allows you to extend the reach of your melee weapon 1 hex beyond its normal range. Collapsing it back down is an On Turn action. When extended, anyone who tries to disarm the weapon gets a +1 bonus and if you ever roll to see if an extended item breaks, add +1 to the minimum that you have to roll to avoid breakage. In most cases, this means that it breaks on a 2 instead of a 1.

Extra Power

Craft 2

Cost: 200 zeni

Extend this ranged weapon's maximum range by 1 hex per level, to a maximum of +3.

Hidden Pockets

Craft 1

Cost: 30 zeni

You can store a 1 Encumbrance item completely hidden in this garment or armor. It's considered Stowed while hidden and the difficulty to find it is 12. The second level of this modification allows you to keep the hidden item Ready without increasing its Encumbrance.

Keyed

Craft 3

Cost: 200 zeni, kiseki stone

Anyone else besides you who picks up this weapon or tool or who dons this garment or armor has to make a Physical Saving Throw every round for five rounds. They suffer 1d4 unavoidable damage for each failure. Any modifications affecting this item only work for you, and if someone manages to survive all five Saving Throws, the item functions as an Inferior item for them.

Kinetic Magnification

Craft 3

Cost: 400 zeni

You gain a +2 bonus to any attempt to disarm your opponent when you use this weapon.

Performance

Craft 3

Cost: 300 zeni

This item gives a +1 bonus per level, to a maximum of +2, to the rolls for which it was designed. If you're modifying a tool kit, this bonus stacks with the tool kit's innate +1 bonus.

Reinforced

Craft 2

Cost: 30 zeni

Step up the die that you use to roll for breakage against this item. A d6 becomes a d8, a d8 becomes a d10, and so on.

Replenishing

Craft 3

Cost: 300 zeni, kiseki stone

You can, once per day as your On Turn action, heal yourself 1d6 HP. At the second, maximum level, this increases to 1d8 HP. No matter how many items with this modification you have, you can only benefit from its effects once per day.

Reversible

Craft 1

Cost: Base cost of the item

You can turn this garment inside out. It has no unfinished seams on either side, so each looks as nice as the other. The reverse side has a different color, pattern, or decoration than the other side.

Shockwave

Craft 3

Cost: 400 zeni, kiseki stone

You can use this weapon to shove, even if it has a blade, and you gain a +2 bonus to do so.

Weighted

Craft 2

Cost: 100 zeni

This weapon gains +1 to its damage rolls per level.

NPCs

NPCs, or non-player characters, form the cast of extras, allies, and enemies that your PCs encounter from day to day.

Reactions

A Reaction Roll makes encounters more interesting. If your PCs come across a group of people on the road or in other situations, use 2d6 to make a Reaction Roll, consulting the table below to determine how the others treat the player characters.

2d6	Reaction
2	Hostile: The new group treats you poorly or even violently.
3-5	Negative: Unfriendly and dismissive.
6-8	Neutral: No unexpected actions, even if they are wary of you.
9-11	Positive: They may help you if treated well or if there is an incentive.
12	Friendly: Something good is likely to come from this encounter.

There are a number of things that can modify this roll, for good or ill:

Lower Caste: If you are peasants and the NPCs are samurai or if you're samurai but the NPCs are higher-ranking than you, take a -1 penalty to the Reaction Roll.

Enemy Clan: If you and the NPCs are from opposing clans, take a -1 penalty to the Reaction Roll.

Same Clan: If the NPCs are from the same clan as you, or an allied clan, gain a +1 bonus to the Reaction Roll.

Same Family: If you and the NPCs are members or retainers of the same family, gain a +1 bonus to the Reaction Roll.

NPCs Explained

All NPCs have some statistics, even though they're usually far less detailed than PCs. You can give NPCs some PC abilities, or even go through the normal process for creating a player character to create them. It's probably only worth the time to do that if the NPC is going to be a recurring character that you encounter in a variety of situations.

NPC HD stands for Hit Dice. A Hit Die is a d8 that you roll to determine how much HP the NPC has. You can, if you want to be faster about this, just multiply HD x 4 for HP. The HD is a good indicator of an NPC's power.

AC is Armor Class, just like it is for PCs. The usual AC for an NPC is equal to the armor that they're wearing. If the NPC is nimble, add +1 or +2 to the value. Unarmored NPCs have an AC of 10. Assume that anyone with an AC of 16 or higher is wearing Heavy Armor, and thus is immune to unarmed attacks.

ATK is the attack or hit bonus of an NPC. Add this to their attack rolls. There's no need to worry about the skill or attributes of a character. By default, you can make an NPC's ATK equal to their HD, with some slight adjustments for combat training or weakness.

DMG is the damage done by the NPC. Use their weapon's damage if they're human. Some powerful NPCs get a bonus on top of this.

Move is movement. All human by default can move 5 2-meter hexes per turn.

ML is the Morale score of an NPC. Whenever they're faced with danger or take a lot of damage, they roll 2d6, hoping to score under their ML. If they fail, they try to run away or freeze in terror instead of continuing to fight. Weak NPCs might need to make a morale check immediately after combat begins.

Skill is the skill level of the NPC. It covers non-combat situations, and some non-attacking actions in combat. Whenever an NPC has to roll to try something, they roll 2d6, adding the Skill rating only if it's covered by their training. Skill ranges from +1 for most characters, all the way up to +5 for masters.

Save works just like it does for PCs. Rolling under it can save you from a negative effect or at least allow you to suffer a lesser version of it. Save begins at 15, and you subtract half the NPC's HD, rounded down, from it to determine the true score.



Human NPCs

Use the data below to make your own NPCs. Either use them as is or customize them with these abilities.

Type	HD	AC	ATK	DMG	Move	ML	Skill	Save
Non-Combatant Human	1	10	+0	*	5	6	+1	15
Courtier	1	10	+0	*	5	7	+3	12
Basic Warrior	1	10	+1	*	5	8	+1	15
Doshin	1	10	+1	*	5	8	+2	15
Veteran Warrior	2	14	+2	*+1	5	9	+1	14
Elite Warrior	3	16	+4	*+1	5	10	+2	14
Basic Ninja	3	15	+3	*+1	7	10	+2	14
Yoriki	3	15	+3	*	5	10	+3	14
Senior Courter	4	10	+1	*	5	8	+5	12
Magistrate	4	15	+4	*+1	5	11	+3	13
Experienced Ninja	5	15	+5	*+1	7	10	+2	13
Heroic Warrior	6	16	+8	*+3	5	11	+3	12
Senior Magistrate	6	15	+6	*+1	5	12	+4	12
Ninja Master	7	16	+9	*+4	9	11	+4	11
Legendary Warrior	8	20	+12 x 2	*+4	5	12	+5	10

* Use regular weapon damage.

Human NPC Abilities

You can use the following abilities to vary your NPCs. If you aren't sure when to give abilities, just add one ability for every 3 HD, rounded down.

NPC Types

A character's type is listed in their name. This might have various effects on their abilities and aptitudes. Keep the type in mind when coming up with your own NPCs.

Courtier: Likely to have more money on hand, and maybe imperial documents or other valuables. Usually travels with a yojimbo of HD equal to their own + 1d2. The yojimbo has the Yojimbo ability and uses the most applicable Warrior stat line.

Magistrates: Magistrates, including yoriki and doshin, have credentials showing their authority. They usually fight with batons if they're not samurai. Magistrates can, as a Main Action, summon 1 yoriki and 3 doshin. Yoriki can summon 3 doshin if they're not with a Magistrate. It takes 1d4 rounds for the backup to arrive.

Ninja: Likely to have poison and a high movement rate. Skilled at stealth and surprises.

Warrior: Likely to do more damage and have a high AC and Morale.

Combat Abilities

Commander: Add +1 to your allies' attack and Morale rolls, or +2 if your HD is 6 or higher.

Duelist: Add half your HD, rounded up, to your AC in an Iaido duel. The default AC in a dueling stance is 10, regardless of armor.

Evasive: Add +1 to your AC, or +2 if your HD is 6 or higher.

Fierce: Make an additional attack per turn, or two additional attacks if your HD is 9 or higher.

Healer: As a Main Action, you can automatically stabilize a mortally wounded ally in an adjacent hex. You can also heal an adjacent ally for 1d4 HP as a Main Action. Each ally can only benefit from each of these abilities once per battle.

Stealth: If you have surprise on an opponent, you can make an additional attack against them this turn.

Swift: Add your HD to your Initiative roll.

Thick-Skinned: Reduce incoming weapon damage done to you by half your HD.

Tough: Add half of your HD, rounded down, to the HP that you get for each HD. So an NPC with 3 HD gets +1 (half of 3, rounded down) to the result of each die rolled to determine their starting HP. A 10 HD NPC would get +5 to each such die.

Yojimbo: Add half your HD, rounded down, to one specific ally's AC as a Move Action. Gain half your HD as a bonus to Notice rolls.

Non-Combat Abilities

Adept: Add half of your HD, rounded down, to your Saving Throws.

Charming: Add half your HD, rounded down, to your Connect rolls.

Domineering: Add half your HD, rounded down, to your Lie rolls.

Haggler: Add half your HD, rounded down, to your Trade rolls.

Reasoning: Add half your HD, rounded down, to your Talk rolls.

Skilled: Reroll any 1s on your relevant Skill rolls, up to a maximum of one reroll per die.

Non-Human NPCs

This section details animals, Henjin, and more.

Type	HD	AC	ATK	DMG	Move	ML	Skill	Save
Small Creature	1 HP	14	+1	1d2	5	7	+1	15
Small Pack Hunter	1	13	+1	1d4	8	8	+1	15
Lesser Henjin	1	15	+1	*	5	7	+1	15
Large Pack Hunter	2	14	+2	1d6	8	9	+1	14
Herbivore	3	15	+1	1d6	8	7	+2	14
Average Henjin	3	15	+3	*	5	8	+1	14
Seirakka Creature	4	15	+4	*+2	9	9	+1	13
Large Aggressive Prey	5	13	+4	1d10	8	8	+1	12
Experienced Henjin	5	15	+5	*+3	5	9	+3	13
Lesser Lone Predator	3	14	+4 x 2	1d8	8	8	+2	14
Greater Lone Predator	5	15	+6 x 2	1d10	5	9	+2	12
Greater Seirakka Creature	6	16	+7x2	1d10	10	10	+3	11
Greater Henjin	7	16	+7	*+5	6	10	+3	11
Terrifying Apex Predator	8	16	+8 x 2	1d10	10	9	+2	11
Seirakka Apex Predator	10	18	+10 x 4	1d10	10	11	+3	10

NPC Types

A character's type is listed in their name. This might have various effects on their abilities and aptitudes. Keep the type in mind when coming up with your own NPCs.

Henjin: The Henjin are a specific species. They have the Core Ability from their type in the Character Creation chapter's Henjin Heritage section. Their Henjin skill is equal to half their HD, rounded up, while their Human skill is equal to their Henjin skill -1. Their damage is equal to the weapon they're using. Use the most logical non-human type to represent their animal form.

Predators and Hunters: These are aggressive creatures that usually attack. Roll -1 on the Reaction Roll table when you encounter them.

Pack Animals: These come in groups of 1d4+2 or more.

Seirakka: Mutant creatures altered by kiseki meteors. They are more powerful than their regular counterparts. A seirakka beast always has one more ability than their HD would allow. Use the Seirakka creature stat line that's next after a specific animal NPC's stat line to determine the statistics of the mutated version.

Non-Human NPC Abilities

An NPC can have as many of these abilities as it makes sense for them to have. If you don't feel like tracking abilities, don't add any. They're usually assigned to represent regular animal abilities, Henjin gifts, or seirakka mutants' new abilities.

Amphibious: You can breathe underwater as easily as you can breath on land.

Ferocious: Gain a +1 bonus to your hit rolls.

Flight: You can fly up to 5 hexes vertically and 5 hexes horizontally as a Move Action. You can't hover, and have to move 5 hexes horizontally every turn, even when landing.

Nimble: Gain a +2 bonus to Evasion Saving Throws.

Silent: Gain a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls.

Sharp Senses: Gain a +2 bonus to Notice rolls made using a specific sense. Alternately, you may see in total darkness using echolocation

Speed: Add +2 to the number of hexes you can move per Move Action.

Sticky: You can climb walls with no climbing gear, and if you use your Main Action to maintain the grip, you can use your Move Action to scuttle along ceilings without falling.

Tough: Reduce incoming physical damage by -2.

Venom: You may produce one vial of standard poison a day, either in a bottle or to apply with a bite attack.

The Setting

The complete setting of Kaigaku is beyond the scope of this book, but this is a primer indicating what you need to know about how life in the Empire works.

An Empire of Samurai

Kaigaku is a feudal monarchy with tendencies towards military dictatorship. Citizens belong to one of several stratified castes. In ascending order of rights and privileges, they are as follows.

The Eta

The unclean, untouchables, or outcasts, the eta are those who were unfortunate enough to be born into a life of menial labor, such as cremation, burial, butchering, or anything that involves handling dead flesh or cleaning sewage waste. Eta have no rights whatsoever. According to the law, they do not qualify as people. They can legally be executed by samurai simply for being visible.

The Merchants

As merchants are, in the eyes of the samurai, simply middlemen who handle money and produce nothing, they are the lowest form of human being. A cynic would say that this view comes from the fact that samurai dislike anyone who isn't feeding or making things for them.

The Artisans

Artisans make things for the samurai, so they get some respect. That's a relative term, though. A prestigious sword maker might be as highly esteemed as a samurai poet, but a common laborer would never hear a polite word from the noble classes.

The Farmers

They feed the samurai, so farmers are the best of peasants. Farmers often get levied as foot soldiers during wartime. They have to pay for their own arms and armor. Those that get called up are called ashigaru, and are one step below samurai. Farmers are by far the largest caste in Kaigaku.

The Samurai

Descended mostly from peasant warriors, the first samurai were those lucky few who owned horses and could afford bows and swords. While the Imperial Families fought their petty wars, they failed to notice the peasants becoming stronger and more ruthless. In only a couple generations, the samurai virtually displaced the Imperial Families as the powerful in Kaigaku. They immediately went about pretending that they'd always been somehow more noble and honorable than their neighbors who worked the same earth to grow the same rice.

Samurai make up about five percent of the population of Kaigaku. They're entitled to wear the daisho, or combination of medium and short sword. This is usually a katana and a wakizashi, but they sometimes use variant weapons. Samurai men also wear their hair in a distinctive style.

A samurai may summarily execute peasants for any perceived lack of respect. The peasant's family has no recourse to seek justice against a bushi who slaughters their breadwinner after stumbling drunk from a sake house and drawing his sword against someone who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. That said, minor lords need their peasants, and they may take action against overly wanton samurai who damage the fief's production capacity.

The term samurai means “to serve”. All samurai are beholden to a lord, who has the power of life and death over them. At the most basic level, a soldier serves an army officer, who reports to a clan general, who in turn serves the daimyo, or clan head. Other samurai are administrators, and they serve the castellans and chamberlains of their clan, who are also under the daimyo.

Ronin

Ronin are “wave men” who go where the water carries them.. They’re members of the samurai caste who have no one to serve. Samurai positions are all hereditary, so it takes extraordinary means to become a masterless warrior. Samurai become ronin when their lord dies without an heir, as punishment for crimes, or even voluntarily to go on a musha shugyo, or warrior’s pilgrimage. Ronin have no legal authority beyond the privilege of being able to wear their daisho publicly.

Ronin wear no clan identification, though they might still go by their former name. They travel freely, but often get stopped and harassed by magistrates or border guards. This is because it’s not uncommon for clans to cast out samurai publicly, only for them to continue to act as clan agents in secret. Food production is always strained in Kaigaku, and less prosperous fiefs try to keep non-productive people out of their territory.

Ronin get romanticized in plays and stories. They’re wandering warriors who protect the innocent, avenge tragedy, or encounter amazing creatures. Some of this is true, but the life of a ronin is hard and uncertain.

Kuge

The descendants of the Imperial Families, kuge are the aristocracy of Kaigaku. They used to rule the land until they lost most of their power when they failed to keep their armies in line.

All Imperials are supposedly descended from the first Emperor, either as part of the main inheriting line, or cadet or bastard branches. The kuge use this heritage to their advantage. Kuge now make their living as court functionaries, advisors, magistrates, artists, and teachers. They also profit from selling their children in marriage to samurai who crave political legitimacy.



There is an overlap, as most kuge are now also samurai. One of the main differences between Kaigaku’s lesser clans and its greater clans is that the major clans all have a samurai daimyo who can claim kuge blood. The highest courtly minister positions and the military rank of shogun are only available to kuge or their descendants.

The Emperor

Nominally the ruler of the Empire, the Emperor is a hereditary monarch. There are currently two feuding lines of the Daiten Imperial Family. As a stopgap measure to prevent further civil wars, the two lines agreed to split succession. The eastern and western lines would take turns holding the

office. When the Emperor of the Left died, then the next ruler would be the most legitimate heir of the previous Emperor of the Right, and so on.

The Shogun

A military leader, the position of shogun was created by an Emperor several generations ago as a political ploy. It's become a hereditary office, nominally in charge of conscripting the military forces of the Empire and leading them. The current shogun's family are not the originators of the position, having used courtly ploys to usurp it for themselves. The office is currently fairly weak, and the shogun herself is dominated by a council of retainers and advisors who hamper her moves for their own gain.

The Fringes of Society

Not all people fit so neatly into this caste system. Nor do they wish to do so. There are other elements and groups who make up Kaigaku. Their position is nebulous, which gives them certain freedoms to move about in different circles, but it also puts them at risk for persecution by the samurai.

Criminals

Gangs of criminals afflict urban life in Kaigaku. These groups were originally bands of lowly peasants who grouped together as a sort of civilian police force. The idea was to keep crime from being reported to the city and fief administrators, since anything the peasants could deal with on their own meant that it wouldn't attract the attention of cruel lords.

As time went on, the stakes in these organizations became greater. They began taking tribute from local merchants and families as a protection tax. The gangs did live up to their reputation as guards, protecting neighborhoods from petty thugs, corrupt magistrates, and more.

After the rise of the samurai, the gangs found themselves in a more precarious position. Samurai are more vigilant about policing peasants than the kuge were. This led to marginalization, as some peasants chafed under the gangs' rules and tried to get something better from the samurai.

Things are now in a state of flux. In some neighborhoods, the gangs rule all but supreme, with police powerless to stop them. In other cities, they're almost a legitimate organization. And in others, the gangs have very little power but are all underground.

Ninja

Spurred on by the excesses of the kuge and their samurai usurpers, many peasants took to the shadows. Through torturous training and dedication, they became the contemporary ninja. Ninja were originally vigilante spies and assassins, many of whom had ties to the criminal gangs.

As time went by, the ninja became more independent, and some allied with the samurai clans. There are ninja from many backgrounds. Some from the old families in their hidden mountain villages, some from the cities, and still others who are members of the samurai caste.

Most ninja are merely spies. Some of them live regular lives as merchants and simply report the goings-on in their neighborhood to their superiors. Others are infiltrators who pose as gardeners, cleaners, servants, and other invisible people. A few of them are assassins, thieves, and warriors.

The average samurai clan makes use of ninja whenever they need them, but they don't usually spend the resources to develop their own schools. Most samurai clans turn to ninja clans in hidden mountain villages as mercenary spies and saboteurs. Clans tend to work closely with one another on a fairly long-term basis, but each remains independent of the other. The Morimoto and Toguchi clans are the two notable samurai clans who maintain their own ninja schools.

A Note On Ninja

Yes, I know that real ninja didn't wear the dark pajamas. There's a lot that real ninja didn't do and couldn't do. But don't mistake "unreal" for "unauthentic". All of these myths and legends about ninja? They come from Japan. The current concept of these ninja comes from old Japanese art and folklore. Think modern-day comic books. Go ahead and look up Utagawa Kuniyoshi and check out his ninja prints. They're not real ninja, but they're the only ninja for Kaigaku.

Ascetics

Some people choose to forsake striving for material gain in order to focus on perfecting their mind and body. Members of the samurai caste who do this are often the heads or high-ranking members of ascetic schools. They study kiseki, powerful stones that fall to earth in meteor showers. From these, they develop powers beyond those of normal men.

Peasants can become ascetics, too, but they usually have a harder time at it. An ascetic isn't supposed to be worried about prosperity, but this usually only works when you're a samurai who has rich patrons on which to call. Peasant ascetics have to go out into the world and be practically useful to the community if they want to eat or sufficiently impress an ascetic school into giving them a position.

These schools make ends meet by hiring out their members to use their abilities to improve crops, serve as doctors, increase fertility of married couples, and perform other services. The powerful stones that the ascetics wield give them the ability to make life better, but the supply is limited, so only those who pay get the goods.

Ascetics don't have a definite place in the caste system. Those who come from the samurai class get much better treatment, though. This is true both within the ascetic society and from outsiders.

A Typical Clan

Clans are the basic unit of political power in Kaigaku. Clans are ruled by a daimyo, whose family takes the name of the clan. These names are usually taken from a geographical feature, such as how Morimoto means "at the base of the forest".

There are other families within a clan. Some of these are full vassals where all members of that family are servants of the clan. Others are less formal retainers whose members might take up service among other clans. Most positions within a clan are hereditary, from common foot soldiers to stablemasters, castellans, seneschals, and advisors.

The difference between major clans and lesser clans is twofold. First, the daimyo of a major clan must be able to trace their lineage back, in some way, to the Imperial line. The easiest way to achieve that status is to marry an Imperial noble to a daimyo. All of their subsequent children, and the legitimate descendants of those children on down the line have Imperial blood.

Major clans also rule an entire domain on their own. They can rule more than one domain, but have to have at least one in their control without an outside superior.

Almost all clans are lesser clans. Lesser clans usually have one castle, with a surrounding castle town and farms, whose agriculture and industry support the fortress.

More powerful and prosperous clans govern more towns. No matter how much of an area they control, the daimyo of a lesser clan always reports to a shugo daimyo. Shugo are officials appointed by Imperial authority who nominally govern a domain. The shugo's job is to maintain the power of the Emperor. They usually do this by fostering resentment among the lesser clans and their neighbors to prevent them from banding together and rising up.

Major clans hold sway over an entire domain. They might allow very minor clans to hold territory, so long as they pledge absolute loyalty to their patrons. The daimyo of a major clan often uses the same methods as a shugo to maintain his power. The minor lords within a domain usually have to compete among themselves for the daimyo's favor and opportunities for advancement.

Threats and Enemies

There are several threats to the Empire, besides those that come from its loyal samurai fighting among themselves.

Albar

Albar is a distant country whose representatives are the most recent foreign visitors to Kaigaku. The Albish come from the same continent as the Cordovans, who are their chief international rivals. Albish folk tend to be very fair skinned. Their hair ranges from black to brown, yellow, or red, and their eyes are often blue or sometimes green. This appearance fascinates and unsettles the Kaigakujin, as it's unique among all the peoples they've met.

Albish have a reputation for untrustworthiness, at least according to the Cordovans. Thus far they're more willing to share their technology with Kaigaku, since they have fewer resources with which to barter than do the Cordovans.

Cordova

Cordova is the preeminent power of its continent. Its explorers first set ashore in Kaigaku decades ago. They made quick work of setting up embassies and religious missions. Hailing from a sunnier climate than the Albish, Cordovans have a look that's more familiar than the lighter, exotic northerners. Their language is also easier for Kaigakujin to learn than that of Albar. This makes relations between the two nations often more cordial than they are between Albar and Kaigaku.

A growing number of samurai resent the Cordovan tendency to try and convert their populace to the Cordovan religion. To lessen Cordovan influence the disgruntled daimyo have plans to raise tensions between the two foreign delegations to distract them from their proselytizing.

Henjin

Henjin means “changed being”, and the term refers to animal-like creatures with strange abilities and human intellects. Most henjin are no more malicious than the average human, but relations between the samurai and the beasts are usually negative. Humans see all of Kaigaku as belonging to them and are ill-tempered when it comes to dealing with henjin pranks and acts of sabotage or spying.

Most henjin live alone or in very small single-species villages. There's at least one exception, Henjinmura, home to perhaps dozens of different species who work in harmony. Henjinmura's existence is little more than a rumor to most Kaigakujin.

A faction of henjin that represents a true threat to Kaigaku is the Hebi Clan, also called the Serpent Clan. Not an official clan, the group is a secret society of infiltrators and spies who live among all strata of Kaigaku society. Their members are primarily hebi, henjin snakes, or other reptilian creatures. No one has proof that the Hebi Clan exists, and people who ask too many questions tend to disappear or wind up dead.

Kherin

Raiders from across the sea, these horsemen are the lords of the steppes. A conglomeration of several tribes, the Kherin are just one of many offshoots of an ancient society of nomads whose offshoots reached multiple continents. The current Kherin are descended from a vast army that conquered lands from Tian almost to Cordova. Their conquests were short-lived and now the Kherin retain their fiercely independent ways but control far less territory than at their zenith.

In recent years various local Kherin Khans have been vying to unify the remains of their society and to launch a new conquest. They occasionally harass Minami no Hanto, Kaigakujin territory on a small peninsula jutting off from the mainland. The Watanabe clan guard this border and protect the other peninsular clans, and by extension the rest of Kaigaku, from incursions. In recent generations the Watanabe have been intermarrying more and more with the steppes people, and many now see themselves as separate from Kaigaku society.



Myoung Yea

Located north of Kaigaku, Myoung Yea sits on a peninsula that borders both Kherin and Tian. Within the last century the three warring kingdoms of Myoung Yea's peninsula united into one. Their king rules with absolute power checked only by a cadre of elite scholars.

During the time of the warring kingdoms various refugee nobles fled Myoung Yea towards Kaigaku. They were given position as samurai and clans of their own. These clans include the Shirai and several others.

Myoung Yea is an isolationist nation that does most of its trade with Tian and Tian alone. Its various lords have managed to maintain independence by means of their powerful navy and natural defenses.

Relations with Kaigaku are strained, but Myoung Yea has no intention of starting a war. They prefer to leverage their status with Tian to make trade more difficult for Kaigaku.

Ogres

Ogres are a race of powerful, mysterious humanoids. They're larger and stronger than a typical human, and able to withstand grievous harm in combat. Ogres have their own culture, though none of the inhabitants of Kaigaku seem to know anything about it. Ogres never appear in great numbers, but a dozen or so individuals can pose a threat even to an army.

No one claims to have seen a settlement of the ogres. They almost always live solitary lives in huts and forest dwellings. Their rarity and asocial tendencies lead Kaigakujin scholars to assume that ogres are very long-lived, since they don't appear to develop communities, but the number of sightings and encounters per year never seems to decline. Some ogres speak Kaigakugo, as bushi report hearing them taunt humans in battle. They also must have some sort of industrial capacity, as they often wear armor patterned after samurai gear, only made to ogre size.

Tian

Located to the northwest of Kaigaku across the sea, the so-called Heavenly Kingdom is supposedly from where modern-day Kaigakujin claim descent. A land of rich culture and a long history, Tian's art, philosophy and customs have influenced every nation in the surrounding region.

Tian's fortunes wax and wane with every generation. A few decades ago monsters laid waste to the countryside, devastating the nation until a delegation from Kaigaku helped defeat the beasts. Centuries before the Kherin overthrew Tian and ruled for three generations. Now Tian is ascendent once more. Its armies stand ready to march, its merchants trade across the globe and its scholars produce revolutionary texts. Time marches on and the once-cordial relations between Tian and Kaigaku turn cool again as each nation seeks its own interest.



SECRETS

This information is for players and their characters discover during play.

The Serpent Clan

The Serpent Clan is an ancient group of zealots who aim to subvert the empire. They aren't all true Henjin, in that they were not all born as human-snake or human-lizard hybrids. Some of their members were human from birth and underwent a terrible metamorphosis as part of their initiation.

Any member of the conspiracy has a human form and a beast form, just like any other henjin. Their species name is Hebi. Among the Hebi there are two major types. The first are those of the Bloodline, and the second is the Gathered.

Gathered Hebi come from completely human backgrounds, and they are not privy to the inner machinations of the conspiracy. Bloodline Hebi are descended from Orochi, the great beast that the Serpent Clan serves. Most descendants of Orochi appear completely human, and most of them have no idea that this heritage is in their background.

Most members go about their daily lives as if they were any other samurai, farmer, noble or or outcast. They remain in human guise at all times unless commanded to use their snake abilities. A Serpent agent spends much of their time simply watching the local goings-on and reporting to their superiors. When the masters have need of something more than simple observation, they may call on any Hebi agent, though they tend to train elite members for ninja duty.

Unless a Hebi fails to restrain their animal nature there is generally no reason for anyone to suspect that they're anything but a regular human. The gifts of Orochi are different from one individual to the next, but common abilities found among members of the Serpent Clan include venomous fangs or spray, the ability to stick to walls and other surfaces, the ability to regrow lost limbs and heal other wounds, and the ability to see in virtually pitch black darkness.

Orochi

Orochi was the great monster that terrorized Kaigaku before unification. He resembled an enormous snake or dragon and had eight heads. According to legend his body was as large as a village.

Orochi was slain by the first Emperor of Kaigaku as he solidified power in the nation. It was this act that completely validated his claim to the throne. Orochi was relegated to folktales and historical documents in the generations following his defeat.

The narratives in the histories is missing two important facts. Orochi is not truly dead, only awaiting reanimation. The other fact is that the original Emperor was a son of Orochi.

This means that the rules of Kaigaku, as well as most of the members of the imperial families as well as the heads of the major clans and their immediate families are all descendants of the monster. In Serpent Clan terms, these individuals are Bloodline Hebi, whether they know it or not.

The Conspiracy

Some members of the Serpent Clan are born into the organization, raised in the secret ways of their people. Others join through various means. Some get blackmailed into undergoing the ritual, after which they're bound to serve for the rest of their lives.

Bloodline Hebi are very susceptible to the machinations of the Serpent Clan, even if they're unwilling to join. Very powerful Serpent Masters can use an individual's own heritage against themselves, activating long-dormant genes and causing them to lose their will to resist commands of the Serpent.

When a Serpent Master determines that the organization needs to recruit an unwilling member of the Bloodline, they arrange for their agents to kidnap that individual. The process takes several days to complete, and in that time the Master and the victim remain locked in an isolated room. There are no reliable reports of what goes on during this time, but so far no one of Orochi's Bloodline has ever managed to resist the will of a Serpent Master.

