

World of Dew

Ben
Woerner



*A world of dew,
and within every dewdrop
a world of struggle*

- Issa



Once Upon a Time in Old Japan...

World of Dew



A B L O O D & H O N O R S E Q U E L

By
Ben Woerner



Dedication

John Wick for encouraging me to write this and inspiring me decades ago with honorable samurai and swashbuckling pirates.

My Parents for nurturing my love of reading and writing even when I decided I could write a book report for *Ivanhoe* in 8th grade.

My wife and family for sacrificing their time with me so I could create this game.

My friends for continually encouraging me and asking when they finally get to play.

Erik Stant and **Dan Waszkiewicz**, great sounding boards and helpful in a pinch. Pester them to write, I really want to play Erik's *Mecha* game and Dan's *Wrestling* game.

Kickstarter and **All My Backers** for helping this book see the light of day. Check out the end of this book, you're all listed there.

IGDN - The Independent Game Designers Network. Thank you. Without reading your emails and seeing the surmountable problems that we all face I never would have finished this book.





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Aspects - From the Fate System - Fred Hicks and Rob Donoghue

The Rule Set for this game come from John Wick's Blood & Honor, and have been reprinted here with his permission. If you like this game, you will want to play Blood & Honor.

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Author's Foreword

When I was thirteen years old, I saw my first chambara film: *The Seven Samurai*. I fell in love.

Since then I've seen numerous films (and read tons of history and fiction about Japan), but *The Seven Samurai* is still one of my all time favorites. The pacing, the drama, and the action are all so intense.

Later, I read books like Laura Joh Rowland's Sano Ichiro novels. They tell noir tales of police investigators in Tokugawa Japan, and in them I saw the other side of the coin of my love of Japan. The unique culture, the duty, honor, and glory warring with personal desires and freedom, told in the classic, down-in-the-gutter noir fashion.

I wanted to roleplay these stories too. I wanted to be the Police Investigator or the Ronin samurai looking for his lost Giri. I've read and played nearly every Japanese roleplaying game out there, but while many of them are excellent, they tend to focus on the samurai themselves. Admittedly, the samurai are flashy and honorable, but there's so much more to Japan's history and culture than just the samurai, just like there is so much more to European history than the knights.

When my friend John Wick decided to write a new role-playing game about Japan I was thrilled! I loved every minute of watching him create *Blood & Honor*. I even got to write a small part in the book! And I knew after John finished it that it could do more than just tell the tales of samurai.

I asked John if he would be okay with me writing an expansion/ sequel to the game. He looked at me like I was crazy. Of course he wouldn't mind! He'd been bugging me to write a game for years, but I'd always had an excuse. But there was no other game that really covered this subject matter in a way I found satisfying. It was my duty. No more excuses.

Of course, life has a way of getting in the way. A new baby, the family business, and life all provided convenient excuses to not write. But after an inspiring peer coaching meeting with my friend Marissa Kelly (part of the Indie Game Developer Network), I buckled down

and wrote this game. In my mind, it was just an expansion, but as it grew it became a full game. It was still a reflection of *Blood & Honor*, but it stood on its own as a companion, a matching piece. Shoto and daito, together.

Now we all get to play Zatoichi, Reiko, Mononoke-Hime, Sanjuro, and all my favorite characters from my favorite Japanese films. Samurai, yes. But also so much more.

Ben Woerner

Surprise, AZ

July 15, 2014



Introduction

At the ancient pond
An old frog plunges into
the sound of water

- Basho

In *Blood & Honor*, John Wick introduced you to a world of the tragic samurai. In *A World of Dew*, I continue forward along the lines he has drawn to bring glory, tragedy, and honor to the lives beyond those of the samurai. Now you can tell noir tales about the ronin, geisha, gaijin, and more in Old Japan.

You will find a host of new concepts in this book, but I've also used familiar rules from *Blood & Honor*, drawing upon John's work to create a game of Samurai Noir. *A World of Dew* contains new Giri, Advantages, and Aspects to allow you to play new characters in this new setting.

A World of Dew specifically focuses on the era of the Tokugawa Shogunate, a relatively peaceful time marked by conflict between ancient tradition and modern innovation. Shogun Ieyasu Tokugawa initiated two hundred years of peace and united Japan under a single banner, but he also instituted reforms that slowly murdered the ideals of bushido and heralded the end of the samurai. In *A World of Dew*, you can tell stories during the rise of the Tokugawa's reign through the era when the corrupt and decadent Tokugawa Shogunate fell to the Meiji Restoration.

A World of Dew also opens up Europeans as playable characters; they played a fringe but important role in shaping Japan during this time. Dutch and Portuguese merchants and Spanish and English priests brought new faiths and new weapons that proved key in winning battles, drawing battle lines between the Buddhists and the Christians. German, French, American, and other immigrants and traders brought even more money and power to Japan in the 1800s and helped set the stage for the Meiji Restoration.

Despite the influence of Europeans, it was ultimately Tokugawa's own reforms that opened the door for the lower classes to amass wealth and social clout. Geisha, merchants, actors, and criminals of all sorts came to wield immense power in Japan under the Shogunate. Eventually, they and their Imperial allies toppled the Shogunate itself. The descendants of some of these same merchants, criminals, soldiers, and courtesans survive as forces to be reckoned with even today in modern Japan. *A World of Dew* centers primarily on these characters, the future movers and shakers of Japan, the rising middle class that is determined to forge a future under the shadow of the Shogunate. What does the future hold for them?

A World of Dew. And in every dewdrop. A world of struggle.

In the Credits:

Clear credit here needs to go to John Wick. *A World of Dew* was going to be a little supplement to add a few ideas to *Blood & Honor* long before it was a companion piece. John was excited all along the way and offered me support and counsel whenever I needed it. *A World of Dew* has grown, but it is still rooted in the rules from *Blood & Honor*. Many of those rules are brought over into *A World of Dew* complete, only edited to adjust the style and rules to match needed revisions for the change in setting.

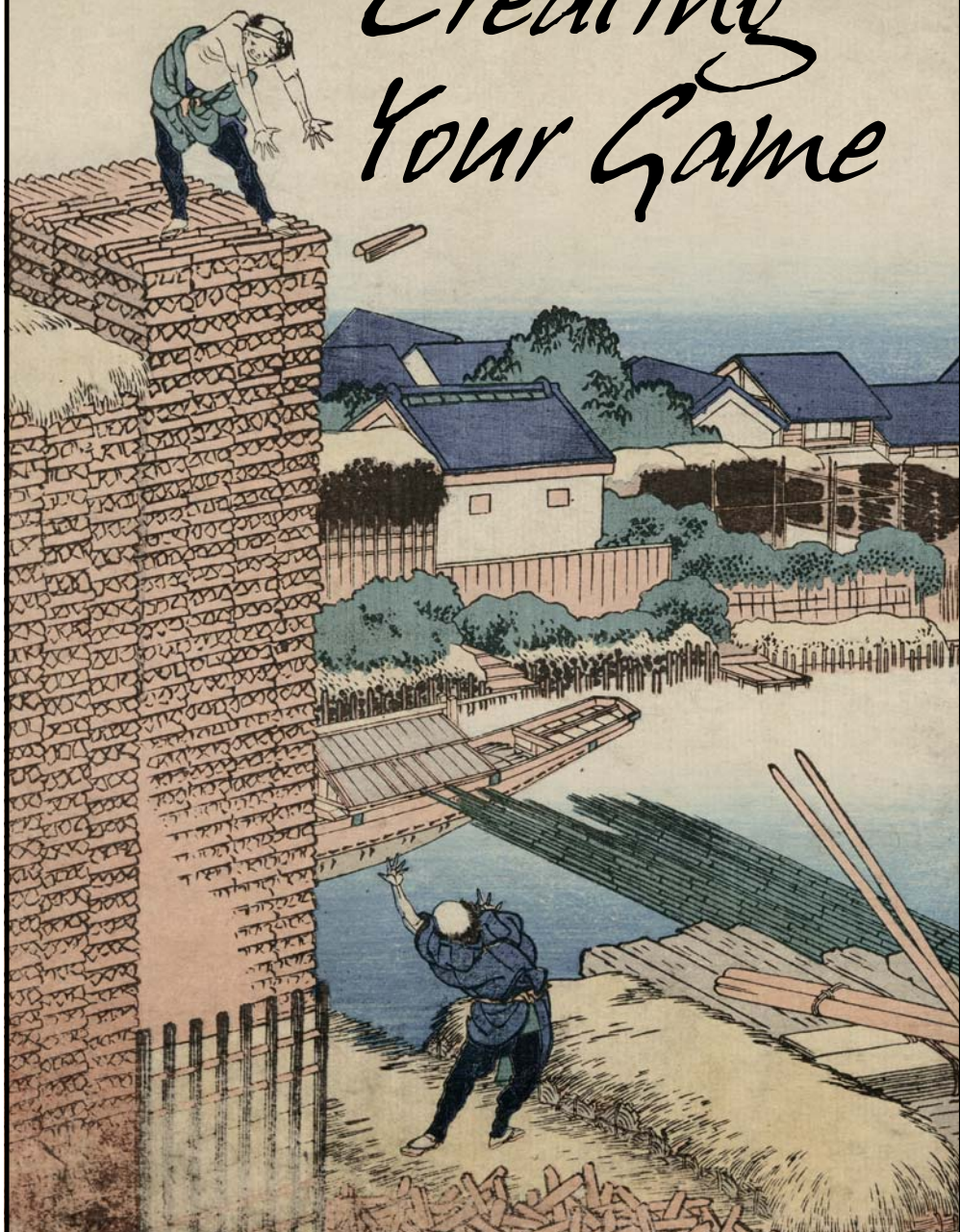
You'll find a good deal of John's writing in those sections, specifically the rules of how Virtues, Giri, Honor, Glory, Violence, Buddhist and Shinto Magic, Season Actions, and Locations all work. Thanks to John, you have everything you need to play the game right here at your fingertips.

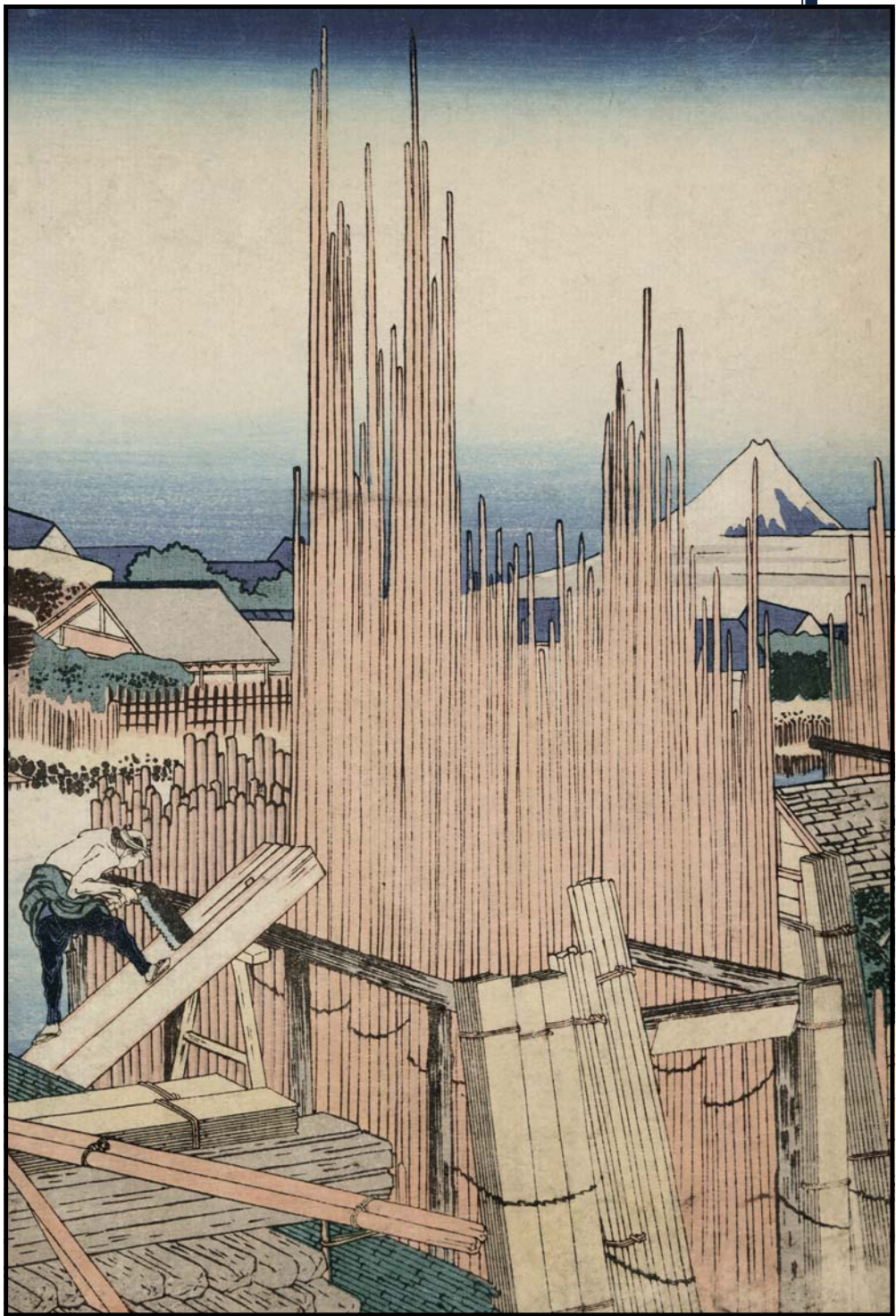
Special thanks also should go to John Wick and Dan Waszkiewicz for their assistance developing the sumo. Both are experts on all forms of wrestling. They inspired me to include Sumo wrestling in this game, and the final system is a nod to a system that they developed a few years ago. I also asked them for excellent names for the wrestling schools. If you're a wrestling fan you might note how Glory works like "Heat" does in modern pro-wrestling.

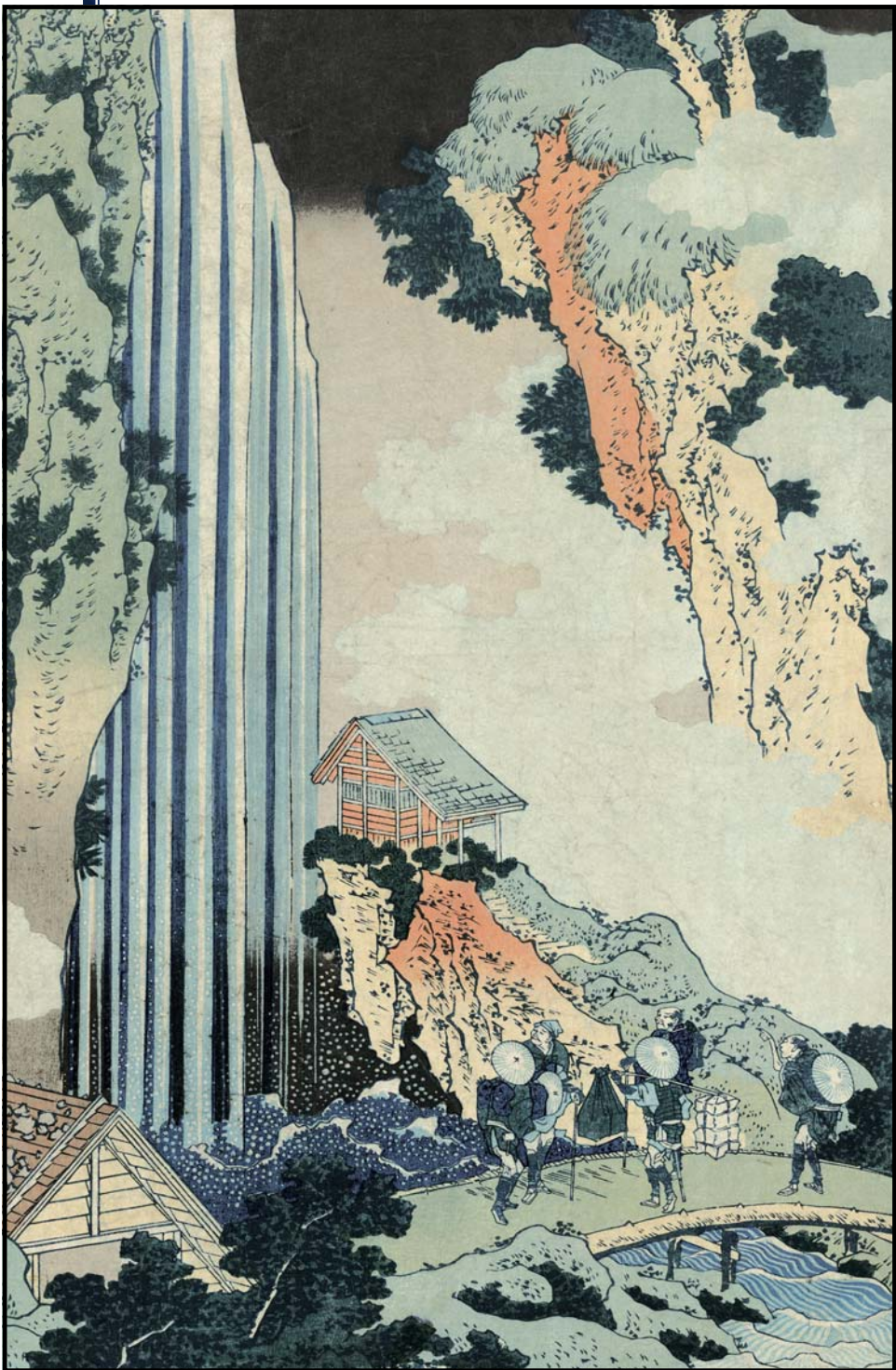
And of course, any errors in the book are mine.



Part I
*Creating
Your Game*







Chapter 1

Within Every Dew Drop

“The farmers have won. We have lost.”

- Kanbe Shimada, *The Seven Samurai*

A World of Dew is a roleplaying game in which your group will tell samurai noir stories inspired by your favorite chambara movies, anime, and novels. Unlike the tales of legend and war, samurai noir isn't about the samurai who loyally serve their lord without question in splendid armor riding off to battle. Instead, these stories are about geisha, the gaijin, the yakuza, and even the down-on-their-luck samurai police detectives who fill the major cities of Japan after the Clans fell from power. The stories you tell in *A World of Dew* are down in the gutter, where it rains and there's usually a dead body floating by in the muddy water.

How do you tell these stories using this book? You'll start by creating *characters*, the stars of the samurai noir story that you want to tell, and making choices about those characters like your *Giri* (your duty, job, calling), your *Aspects* (descriptive phrases describing your character), and your *Virtues* (like Beauty, Cunning, Strength, etc.). All of these elements will determine your character's strengths and weaknesses and the direction that the story will take over time. You'll also need to select one player to be the *Narrator*, the person who plays the rest of the world instead of just a single character.

When you play *A World of Dew*, your characters will take *risks*. Risks are dice rolls that determine what happens next in the story. When you win a risk you gain *privilege*. Unlike most roleplaying games though, winning a roll doesn't just mean that your character succeeds. Instead, you—as the player—gain privilege, the ability to say what happens. You can decide if your character succeeds or fails and what additional details are added to that success or failure.

The elements that you picked for your character, all determine how many dice you get to roll during a risk, and characters with more dice are more likely to get *wagers*, extra successes that let you inflict extra *Injuries*, determine those additional details, improve your

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Reputation in the City, or earn extra *koku* (the standard monetary unit in Japan at the time) from your schemes.

In addition to your *Giri*, *Aspects*, and *Virtues*, you'll also get two resources you can spend to help you tell your story: *Honor* and *Ninjo* (Desire). *Honor Points* are a communal pool that any player can earn by acting in an honorable fashion. Any player can spend these *Honor Points* to declare things that are true, gain dice to roll for a risk, or activate *Locations* in the City. *Ninjo Points* are similar to *Honor Points*, but you gain them by taking steps towards your personal desire and they can only be spent selfishly, helping you accomplish your own goals instead of serving a broader purpose.



But before you sit down to make your characters, you'll want to have a conversation with your group about when and where your story will take place. Japan is a complicated place, and your choice of setting and time may have a large impact on your story.

Do you want your story set in the turbulent final days of the Sengoku Jidai when Tokugawa had just crushed the final enemies of his regime?



Where change is new and the only gaijin are the Dutch and English Protestants vying against the Spanish and Portuguese Catholics for economic and spiritual footholds?

Or do you want to focus on just the Japanese and play during the long time when Japan was “closed” to outsiders? That’s a perfect time to tell tales like the traditional *47 Ronin*, stories of sacrifice and duty that mark the transition from one way of life to another for the Japanese people.

Or perhaps you want to tell a story set around the time of the Meiji Restoration when the social conflict between ancient tradition and modern innovation are coming to a head, and a re-opened Japan is flooded with new technologies and social reform.

Maybe you don’t care too much about the specific era. You just want to tell samurai noir tales and don’t care so much when your story takes place. Keanu Reeves’ *47 Ronin* is quite vague about the timing of the events, but playing that story around a gaming table would be a blast. Go for it!

The Actual Process

First, create your characters. Look over the Giri (duties) and decide what your character concept is going to be. It’s a good idea for you all to make characters that can work together, but it’s fine for you to have some opposition and competition between the player characters. Once you’ve chosen your concept select your Giri. Decide on your Virtues and Aspects. Then pick your Advantage and record your Glory, Honor Points, Ninjo Points, and any equipment or money (koku) you might have.

If you’re pulling in characters from *Blood & Honor*, or just want some well defined Clans (perhaps you’re playing in the early 1600s), you’ll need to create any Clans and their holdings that are near your City and its surrounding area. Is there one Clan in charge of the entire city? Often times there was, but creating a city where two or more clans vie for control can be fun too. *Romeo and Juliet* and *The City of Lies* are both famous for this kind of mass familial conflict.

Consider what else the Clan might control beyond the City. Is everything they have there? Or are they massively powerful and this city is just but one of many cities the clan controls? If you’re not sure don’t worry about it, but if you have some ideas jot them down so that if it becomes important you’ll know. If just one character is playing a Clan Samurai, from *Blood & Honor*, make sure that your Narrator helps you decide what holdings and aspects are available to



you as a Clan Samurai. Make sure you discuss this with your Narrator before making your character.

Finally, you'll want to create a City. You'll find all the rules for creating the City as a group in the City chapter after character creation. In many ways, cities are like Clans. They have a ruler, they have different people in charge of different areas of the city, and they even have Aspects common to that city.

The city is a grand monolithic structure, the backdrop for your game now that Clans are not as important. In fact, there might be several Clans living in your city. It will certainly have Locations, places where your characters can go to gain benefits like wagers, rumors, special items, and much more to drive your story forward. It will also have Themes, big overarching Aspects of your City that color and shape your city in macroscopic ways.

Your City will also contain Threats and Faces. Threats are problems that your characters must face now or deal with later when they grow larger and more threatening. Finally, Faces are all the

Using Blood & Honor

If you're only using material from *A World of Dew*, follow along with the next two chapters to create characters and your City. If you want to bring in elements from *Blood & Honor* follow the chart below. It's proven to be the best method for creating everything you need to play the game properly with characters from both books.

1. CREATE CHARACTERS

See **Chapter 2: Character Creation** on page 15 for character creation for any non-samurai characters. For Clan Samurai see the character creation rules in *Blood & Honor*.

2. CREATE ANY CLANS

If you have Clan Samurai, create their Clans using the Clan Creation rules in *Blood & Honor*. For new Locations, see page 54 in **Chapter 3: The City**. Of course, any Aspects the samurai characters have should be Clan Aspects.

3. CREATE YOUR CITY

See **Chapter 3: The City** on page 49 to build your City. Remember to include any Clan Daimyo and groups in possible Organizations, Faces, and Threats.

important non-player characters that the Narrator will control. These are the heads of important organizations or Locations in the city, or just interesting characters the players want to interact with on a regular basis.

Once you've finished creating your Characters and City you're ready to play! May honor guide your sword, may the koku fall into your hand, and may you be out of town before the police inspectors have discovered your crime!





Chapter 2

Waves Upon the Sand

Character Creation

Even in the heat
a perfect orchid blossoms
amongst alley trash

- Gansho

浪人、砂にごとく

In this chapter you will find everything you need to build your character. Do you want to create a blind ronin who travels the countryside incognito as a masseur so they may right the wrongs of the wicked? Or perhaps you want to play a cunning geisha whose web of spies reaches from the lowest sewers and up into the highest castle towers? Or maybe you want to play the brilliant and pious Jesuit priest sent by the King of Portugal to convert the people of Japan to the Word of God, only to find yourself tempted by this beautiful and strange land? You can build all these characters and more!

Step 0: Concept

You can play a beautiful Geisha, an honorable Jesuit Priest, or an ambitious English Merchant, and more. Pick a concept that appeals to you, that feels like a character you would want to see regularly appear in the story. Start thinking about how your character is connected to the other players. Once you've decided on your concept, find a Giri that fits your concept in the list of Giri below.

Character Creation Steps

- Step 0: Choose a Concept
- Step 1: Choose a Giri & Record Glory
- Step 2: Select Status, Honor, & Ninjo
- Step 3: Choose a Name & Virtue Bonus
- Step 4: Choose Virtues
- Step 5: Choose Age
- Step 6: Choose Aspects
- Step 7: Choose an Advantage
- Step 7.5: Choose a Flaw (Optional)
- Step 8: Relationships
- Step 9: Finishing Touches

Step 1: Choose a Giri & Record Glory

Giri means Duty. In **A World of Dew**, a character's Giri is their calling, their job, and how they live their life, a combination of all of the pressures of modern life. It is also a mechanic that defines many of your character's unique abilities and traits.

To determine your Giri, think about your character's role within the City. Are you a Painter of beautiful scenery, maybe a scheming Gaijin Dutch Merchant? Or even a Samurai who is the last living member of an entire Clan, forced to work a job like so many others?

You may choose the same Giri as other players, but differentiate your abilities, advantages, and aspects so you all have unique stories to tell. It's no fun to all play the same character, facing the same problems every session.

Samurai Characters

If you want to play a Samurai from a Clan in *A World of Dew* you'll need to "cheat" a bit. Make your character following the steps in this chapter, and then create your Clan by backfilling all the Aspects that you've already created. If two or more players want to play Samurai from the same clan, then they need to coordinate Clan and character creation per the rules in *Blood & Honor*.

Your Giri provides three advantages. All characters start with Rank 1 Giri.

- Your Giri gives bonus dice equal to your Giri Rank for any risks involving your duty. If you are a Rank 2 Artist and you are making a work of art, you gain two bonus dice for that risk.
- You also gain an Ability you can use during the game. Read your Giri's specific Ability for details.
- Finally, you gain a specific Benefit during the game that only your Giri can access.

Your character begins with a single Glory Reputation at Rank 1—you are effectively a lesser-known character without much of a reputation within the City. Because you have one (1) Glory Rank, you may write a short phrase on the line below your Glory titled Reputation. You might be a "great sword fighter," a "wise advisor," or a "superb shamisen player." Other characters in your city might know you, and their reactions to you will be based upon the Reputation you choose at character creation.

ARTIST (ACTOR, DANCER, MUSICIAN, PAINTER, SMITH, OR POET)

You are the creator of art. Through you flow happiness, serenity, and enlightenment in word, dance, song and image.

Status: Smith, Poet, Painter = Artisans or higher, Actor, Dancer, Musician = Hinin or higher

Bonus: You gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice when creating or evaluating art.

Ability: You have trained yourself to express that which is most beautiful about the world. You may take an action to perform your art for others. Make a Beauty + Giri Rank risk. If you gain privilege, every player who witnessed your performance gains a tag based on a single Emotion you wish to evoke. These tags last until the end of the scene or until you or another Artist performs again.

Benefit: At the start of a game session, make a Giri Rank + Courage risk. If you gain privilege a patron has requested a performance of your art. Use your wagers to: determine more about this performance (pay, time, what they want, who the patron is, etc.); create

additional performance requests; or save them to be detailed later in the game. (It may prove useful to you later to have an open invitation to a specific household!)

DOCTOR

You bring comfort, remove poison, and cure disease within the bodies of those who seek you out. You have studied the ancient Chinese medicinal texts, and you are a master of understanding the body, the flow of Chi within it, and the various techniques and medicines used to bring a sick body back into harmony. Or you are a Western-trained doctor of European medicine using sterile tools, advanced surgical techniques, and maybe even germ theory and antibiotics.



Status: Any

Bonus: You gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice when practicing medicine.

Ability: You have trained yourself to understand how your patients' bodies can be brought to health. You may take an action to diagnose and treat any poison, disease, or injury sustained by a person by making a Giri Rank + Wisdom risk. If you gain privilege, you may spend a number of wagers equal

to the Injury rank to lower the Injury, one for one. Once a doctor has treated an injury, disease, or poison in this manner they must let nature take its course and may not treat the injury again.

Touching the Dead

It's important to note that touching dead, diseased or injured bodies makes one unclean in the Shinto and Buddhist religions. Many doctors hired Burakumin to do actual surgical procedures for them when practicing Western medicine. And virtually all handling of the dead was delegated to Burakumin. There is no need with the potion and powder-based Chinese medicine for such procedures except when setting bones or placing poultices over wounds.

Lindsey's doctor, Sophia, rolls four dice and holds seven wagers when trying to remove a bullet from a gangster's leg (a Rank 5 Injury). She gains privilege and declares her surgery a success. She spends five wagers to lower the Injury to a Rank 4 Injury; she then banks the other two wagers towards her Glory. Lindsey's doctor has done all she can for the gangster, he must rest and let time heal his wound. Fortunately, for him, he won't risk Infection.

Benefit: You are only a commoner, or a gaijin Westerner, but your skills raise you to the social status of a monk, somewhat outside of the hierarchy of Japanese society. When performing your Giri, others may not use their social status against you in any risks. It is also improper to kill or attack a doctor who is performing their duties. If you are injured or killed you will go into the afterlife knowing that the offending character has lost major face. Those who would dare strike a Doctor would lose Honor Points equal to at least triple the Doctor's Giri Rank + the rank of the Injury dealt to the Doctor.

GAMBLER

Others think you live a life of chance. You know better. You find the advantages and take them whenever they are offered. You may be a grown-up gutter rat Burakumin who's made it big, or a ronin samurai who realized that life is safer testing your luck in a gambling hall than on a battlefield. Either way, you know that you only win when you seize the advantage.

Status: Any

Bonus: Gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice whenever you engage in gambling or games of chance.

Ability: You have trained yourself to see the advantages within the world and learned when it is best to take them. At the beginning of every game session, write down another player's character's name, a Virtue, and how many wagers the player will make on a roll with that Virtue during the game session. Give this "secret bet" to the Narrator. If the player makes a successful roll with that Virtue and that number of wagers, you immediately gain that many bonus wagers to use on any roll(s) during the session. Immediately replace your successful bet with a new bet.

You cannot tell the other players what you've bet, if you do, the Narrator gains privilege and all your wagers on your next risk, no matter what you roll.

Benefit: At the start of each session, make a contested roll of Giri Rank + Cunning vs. the Narrator's roll of three dice + your Wisdom. If you gain privilege, you gain a number of koku for that session equal to the difference between the total of the two rolls; you also gain 4 koku for each wager you made. If the Narrator's total is greater you owe the difference in koku to someone the Narrator determines. If you fail your roll by rolling less than ten, you owe an additional number of koku equal to your total dice pool. Work out with the Narrator who holds this debt. The total amount of money you start with each session will be determined this way. Other characters probably shouldn't have you hold their money. Good Luck!

Mason's Gambler, Daisuke, is a Rank 1 Gambler with a Rank 3 Cunning and a Rank 2 Wisdom. It's the beginning of the session so he has to roll against me, the Narrator, to determine how many koku he starts with this session. He has

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a total of four (4) dice (Giri + Cunning) and I have a total of five (5) dice (3 + his Wisdom). Since it's a contested risk we make our wagers in secret. Mason makes one wager and I make none as there is no need for the Narrator to wager for this special roll. Mason rolls thirteen (13) and I roll terribly and only get eleven (11). Mason beats my total by two (2) and made one wager so he starts the session with a total of six (6) koku (2+4).

If I had rolled better for a total of seventeen (17), Mason would owe an NPC in the game four (4) koku. I'd make it someone who Daisuke doesn't like, say like an evil oyabun, or a Tokugawa governor. Worse, if other characters had given Daisuke, Mason's character, any of their koku to hold between sessions, all of that koku would be lost.

GEISHA

You are peace and pleasant times personified. You bring calm and serenity wherever you go. Samurai look to you for respite from the harsh realities of life, as do commoners. You are not a person who sells their virtue. No, you are a person who practices the highest arts of entertainment: singing, small talk, gentle speech, instrument playing, and companionship. While many Geisha were traditionally women, a number of men practiced the art as well and a few became famous.

Status: Hinin

Bonus: You gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice whenever you are trying to calm or gently persuade anyone through your speech or performance.

Ability: You have trained yourself to bring peace and tranquility to the world through



pleasant companionship. In doing so, you free others of their duties and desires and allow them to relax around you; they often tell you things they tell no one else. At the start of every session you receive a number of rumors equal to your Wisdom—secrets you have learned from clients and other geisha. These rumors can be spent at any time during the game session, detailing a piece of gossip that may or may not be true (see page 96 for more about rumors). Rumors cannot contradict truths already established, but they may complicate existing truths.

Benefit: You have servants that help you perform your duties equal to your Giri Rank. They can run errands, help you with your makeup and clothing, and carry things for you. Generally, they are young girls training to be geisha themselves. Feel free to detail them and provide the Narrator with their names and tragic backstories.

HOLY PERSON

You are devotion to a higher ideal. You might be a Buddhist Nun or Shinto Priest seeking enlightenment beyond the cares of the mortal realm, a Jesuit Brother bringing the glory of the Holy Jesus's word and Francis Xavier's teachings to the Daimyo of Japan, or a firebrand Protestant Preacher bringing the truth about God and the Bible so that the Serpent of Rome does not corrupt these innocent people. Whoever you are, you are here to teach others and bring them true enlightenment, be that about the Kami, Holy Jesus, the Buddha, or the Bible.

Status: Priests

Bonus: Gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice whenever you act in accordance with your faith's teaching or rituals.

Ability: You have been molded by God, the Kami, or the Buddha to be an instrument of their will here on Earth. You have trained to show others the True Path to Enlightenment and Eternal Bliss and are thus seen as a wise counselor and consultant on all matters. Whenever you give advice about any subject, you may add your Giri Rank as bonus dice to the normal Wisdom risk you would make. If a character follows your advice to a successful resolution, you gain a point of Glory.

Benefit: As a member of a religious order, you are outside of the honor and social system within Japan. No player may ever use Social Status dice in any risk against you. Your position makes you equal to the lowliest Burakumin and the mightiest



Shogun! You may use your Giri Rank in all social risks against anyone who is not a priest or holy person. Just beware—defying the command of the Emperor or Shogun has consequences for the holy and unholy alike.

MERCHANT

You are the provider of all needs and wants. You're either a provider of a single service or product, like a rice merchant or sword sharpener, or you sell a myriad of goods for profit. You may have been born and raised above your shop or you might have literally traveled from the other side of the Earth to arrive here in Japan. Your goods might be common and legal or rare and prohibited. Some might even call you a smuggler. However others see you, you have what everyone else wants, and you'll give it to them for a profit.

Status: Merchants or Gaijin

Bonus: Gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice when fast-talking or haggling.

Ability: You have trained yourself to fulfill the needs of

others so that you might have what you want. Your goal in life is not honor, it is money. If you are a Japanese merchant, you still pay respect to the idea of honor, but in your heart of hearts you know that only the koku lives there and there is no room for honor. If you are a gaijin, you are far more open about paying your respects to All Mighty Profit over the flimsy blanket of honor. Fortunately, this provides you with some esoteric protection. When you act dishonorably the Narrator only removes one Honor Point from the Honor Pool and only if others witnessed your dishonorable act or later



learn of it. Also, whenever you take an action that furthers your plans significantly, the Narrator gives you an extra Ninjo Point.

Darren's Merchant, Han, seals a deal with a shipping magnate to bring whiskey to his city, despite his earlier promises to avoid shipping alcohol. This fulfills his Desire to become the greatest Merchant in Nagasaki. Normally, he'd receive one Ninjo Point, but since he's a merchant he receives two. If his treachery is discovered, the Narrator would remove only a single point of Honor from the Honor Pool.

Benefit: You have numerous connections through your business. If you need something mundane—like a pistol, some fine painted fans, or climbing tools—you know someone who might have what you need. If you need just one thing, spend a Ninjo Point and your contact will make it available to you. If you need more than one of a thing, roll your Giri Rank + Cunning: each wager you keep gives you access to one more of the item you wanted.

POLICE INSPECTOR

You are the hand of justice, literally. You may believe you are the embodiment of justice, or you may just be a retired soldier doing the only job he knows. Either way, you capture criminals and bring them to justice.

Status: Samurai

Bonus: You gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice when fighting crime.

Ability: You have trained yourself to see the darkness within the world. You may take an action to notice subtle signs of criminals or criminal activity. Make a Giri Rank + Cunning risk. If you gain privilege, instead of describing the results yourself, you may ask the Narrator to describe what you uncover for your privilege and every wager you spend. If you let the Narrator add those details, you gain a number of points of Glory for an appropriate Reputation equal to your total wagers plus one (1).

Benefit: You are the law. You have access to other police officers and you can use your weapons in the line of duty

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without incurring the wrath of the lord or the law. In addition, you have one assistant doshin (police patrolman) per your Giri Rank. They may be used to track down information, gain equipment or talk to people for you. Detail them with the Narrator and use a Wisdom risk to determine more about them.

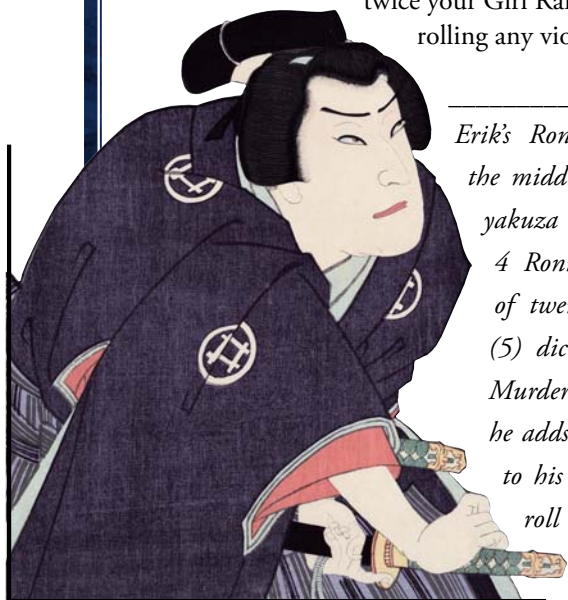
RONIN

You are the wave without an ocean or a shore. Once you were a soldier for a lord, but now you are free. Perhaps your lord died and you did not kill yourself as honor dictates. Or you are a peasant who has armed themselves with the tools of a dead soldier and now pretend at being a samurai. What is your purpose now?

Status: Samurai

Bonus: You gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice to a risk when you are involved in violence.

Ability: You have trained yourself as a soldier for a lord, or stolen the tools and learned to play the role of the wandering samurai well. In an earlier day, before the Tokugawa, you'd have been seen as useless. Now you're seen as a mercenary for whoever can pay for your sword arm. Many rich merchants need protecting; fortunate daimyo need cannon fodder for their secret wars. You don't plan on dying for either. You add twice your Giri Rank to your risk total after rolling any violence risks.



Erik's Ronin, Mitsurugi, is in the middle of a fight with five yakuza thugs. He is a Rank 4 Ronin and rolled a total of twenty-four (24) on five (5) dice this round of Mass Murder. Since he's a Ronin, he adds double his Giri Rank to his total roll, making his roll a thirty-two (32). (24 + 8 = 32).

Benefit: At least you have your sword. You have an average quality katana and one other weapon. An honorable Ronin would have his wakizashi so that he may someday atone for being alive. A dishonorable Ronin can have a dai-kyu (bow) with a few arrows, a tetsubo, a naginata, a yari, a black powder pistol with a few rounds of ammo (you honorless dog!), or even a piece of armor like a cowardly gaijin.

At the beginning of every session, if you are not already dealing with a problem, a local asks you to help them with a predicament. It may be simple and annoying or dangerous and exciting. Roll a Virtue determined by the Narrator + Giri Rank, and make your wagers as normal. If you gain privilege, use your wagers to determine the nature of the problem and how it is appropriate for that Virtue. Ask the Narrator to describe the problem if you fail to gain privilege. Other Players may spend Honor or Ninjo Points to add details to your problem, one for one. Whatever it is the local will pay you one koku + one koku per your Giri Rank in coin or trade. Be careful about turning down the problem; the consequences may come back to haunt you.

SERVANT

You are the perfectly placed rice bowl, the repaired armor, the night soil removed, the delivered note, and the bribe paid for your master. Perhaps you are here because your master wants you to keep an eye on these others she has hired, or perhaps your master cares not what you do so long as it serves your purposes, which are her purposes. Or perhaps you are working to be free of your master, to rid yourself of the samurai lord or merchant prince who rules your existence.

Status: Peasant or lower

Bonus: Gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice whenever you are acting socially as someone's servant even if they are not your master.

Ability: You have trained yourself as a servant to a lord. Choose a job, ask another character who might have a servant (a samurai, doctor, merchant, geisha, etc.) to be their servant, or ask the Narrator to suggest a job (handmaid, butler, leatherworker, smith, night soil remover, footman, cook, messenger, etc.). In addition to your bonus dice for your Giri, you also gain the ability to bring honor with your duty as a servant. At the end of every game session ask your master



(either PC or Narrator) if you performed your duty as a servant well. If they agree you add your Giri Rank in honor to the Honor Pool. Perhaps the Narrator can even see fit to let such a noble servant keep track of the Honor Pool for them.

Benefit: As a servant, you go unnoticed by most others when you are performing your duty. Samurai, and even many other people, will not remember seeing a servant engaged in their daily tasks whether it is as a leatherworker hauling a cart of animal skins down the road at night, or a maidservant delivering a letter. You gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice whenever you must make a risk to avoid being noticed or to bluff your way into a location as a normal servant. You also gain your Giri Rank in dice when talking to other servants because they trust you as one of them.

SOLDIER

You are your master's sword, his spear, and his glory! Be you Bushi, Ashigaru, or a Gaijin, you are a warrior trained to fight. If you are Samurai then as a Bushi you have trained your entire life to be the pinnacle of fighting perfection. If you are an Ashigaru you are a commoner who has been trained as a soldier with thousands of others. If you're a gaijin your European social status matters little, you are an outsider with strange weapons and fighting techniques. You are **not** an honorless Ronin. You fight for your master, be he a Daimyo, the Shogun, or a European Merchant.

Status: Samurai, Gaijin, or Peasant (Ashigaru)

Bonus: Gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice when you fight with a weapon with which you've been trained (minimum school rank 1).

Ability: You have trained as a soldier for a lord. You know how to fight. Not just with the weapons your master commands you to know, but with all the weapons that are useful to you in combat, including other people. As a soldier, you know better than anyone how to take and hold a place by use of force. Whenever Mass Murder breaks out, you gain a number of bonus dice equal to your Giri Rank each round. These dice you can grant to other players for free when you give them orders and they do what you say. For the cost of one Honor Point per die you may give these dice to yourself. You know you are the linchpin in this situation, which sometimes means usurping the honor of others to gain glory for yourself.

Benefit: You are stoic and disciplined. You follow orders. With the help of your Narrator create a Master that you serve. The rules for Daimyo from *Blood & Honor* might serve you well in this step. Your Master provides for your room and board as well as training. If you are below the status rank of a samurai you begin the game with one (1) rank in a sword school of your choice. If you are a samurai then you gain one (1) extra rank to your sword school or another sword school of your choice.

SUMO WRESTLER

You are the wall of honor, the sacred defender, the man who the kami has destined to never flinch, to never move, but only to move others. You are sumo. You are the Rock, the Earth; none can stop you once you start. You were most likely raised from birth in a sumo school to master this ancient, honorable, and religious art form of sacred fighting. You may be a champion or a failure. You may still be part of your fighting school, or perhaps you've hired out your services as a bodyguard to a merchant, a smuggler, a geisha, or a yakuza boss. Whatever you do, no one can stop you.

Status: Hinin

Bonus: Gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice whenever you use your sumo school dice in a risk involving violence or when attempting to intimidate another character.

Ability: You have trained yourself to be a great sumo fighter. Your Strength is unequalled! No one is as powerful as you! You are the Soul of All Japan! Mount Fuji-Sama grants you his Strength! As long as you are pure to Shinto standards and your Reputations are undamaged you may do two things. First, you may add your Giri Rank to any nonviolent Strength risks even outside of a sumo match. Second, you may automatically add your Giri Rank



as free wagers to any Injury wagers you set aside outside of a sumo match.

Benefit: You are the professional athlete of your day. You may be a minor sumo with little history or career, but you're still a sumo! Women want you and men want to be you, or at least be seen with you. Once per year, you may exchange any one Reputation you have for any new Reputation for half the rank round down, reinventing your social status to better fit your wants and needs. You are a celebrity of an honorable profession and people like to listen to important people.

*Dan's character, Tadashii O-Mutoh, the Sumo Champion of Osaka, has been discussing politics with all the important lords of Osaka. He has several Reputations, but his **Defeated Kyojin Andore** Rank 5 Reputation is old and not much use to him now that he has the **Sumo Champion of Osaka** Rank 6 Reputation. He exchanges his Rank 5 Reputation for a new Reputation: **Political Insider** Rank 2 (5/2 rounded down equals 2). He may not make this exchange again until four seasons have passed and thus a full year from his last exchange has passed.*

YAKUZA

You are a protector of the common man, the provider of illicit goods and services needed by the masses, a member of a Chivalrous Organization. And you are willing to defend your usefulness with violence and intimidation. Your deeds are tattooed on your body, your Oyabun knows you better than your own mother, and your brothers in arms always have your back as long as you have theirs.

Status: Hinin

Bonus: Gain your Giri Rank in bonus dice whenever you are committing a crime suited to your organization.

Ability: The samurai can envision honor as a lofty castle of ideals, but down in the mud, alley trash, and pain, honor is different. You do not lose or gain Honor Points in the traditional manner. You gain Honor Points whenever you protect your gang and the locals of your district, or when you

act in retribution against those who have harmed your gang or the locals. You lose Honor Points when you fail to protect your gang or the commoners in your neighborhood. You are capable of all sorts of things that honorable samurai could never do, for they would most definitely lose honor if they did what you do to protect your family. You begin the game with two (2) Honor Points and (1) Ninjo Point, just like a Samurai.

Benefit: Your gang has your back, as you have theirs. At the beginning of every session roll your Giri Rank plus one of your rank 4 or 5 Virtues chosen by your Narrator. Make any wagers you wish, but you must roll a minimum of three dice. If you succeed your oyabun has a job for you, even if you have an uncompleted job from a previous session. Your Narrator details the job type; you may spend wagers to describe the job along with the Narrator. Of course, your gang has your back. You get a number of gang members to help you equal to your Giri Rank.



Step 2: Select Status, Honor, and Ninjo

Your status determines your rank within the hierarchy of Japanese society. You can add your status as dice to any risk where social class matters like (usually a contested risk of Beauty vs. Courage) when determining if lower or higher-ranked characters listen to the orders, ideas, or suggestions of a player character. Characters may add their status rank to rolls when deemed appropriate by the Narrator.

The Giri you've already selected lists the possible status you can choose. No matter what your background was before now, your Giri determines your current status.

The official social classes are in order from top to bottom:



- **Imperial (Rank 5):** The Emperor and his family: frequently concubines to the Shogun, priests, and artists, socially powerful, but political figureheads until the Meiji Restoration.
- **Samurai (Rank 4):** The Shogun and all the people from current and former Samurai families who rule Japan
- **Peasant (Rank 3):** The farmers who till the land, and those who have left farming to come to the cities and find a new life.
- **Artisans (Rank 2):** The smiths and artisans who create everything from cups to swords
- **Merchants (Rank 1):** Those who do not make anything, but sell items to others
- **Burakumin (Rank 0):** The Unclean employed in industries deemed profane by Shinto and Buddhist beliefs (undertakers, night soil removers, leatherworkers, etc.)

Outside of this order are three important social orders:

- Members of a Holy Order (priests, nuns, etc.)
- Hinin (aka Half-People who were entertainers, geisha, and yakuza)
- Gaijin (foreigners, traditionally Europeans)

The status of all three groups varies greatly depending on how influential and useful they are at their jobs. Unlike all the others their position is not hereditary.

If you are a Priest then you are completely outside the social order (see your Benefit on page 21). You need not worry about your social rank.

If you are a gaijin merchant lord your samurai patron grants you a Rank 4 status. If your Samurai Patron ever revokes her patronage then your status falls to Rank 1 until you have gained new patronage. If you are a gaijin with a gaijin Master your rank is one below their Rank.

If you are a Hinin you have a Patron or Master. Ask your Narrator (Narrator's you can always ask the Player to detail Three True Things about their Patron, see **Chapter 11: The Narrator** on page 203 for more on Three True Things) to detail your Patron NPC (or PC!). You are one Social Rank below your Patron or equal to your Glory Rank, whichever is Higher. Lower Ranked Patrons/Masters do not like their underlings achieving higher status than they themselves possess.

Once you choose your status record your status rank next to your name.

If your character's status is Samurai, Priest, Imperial, or the Yakuza Giri you start with two (2) Honor Points and one (1) Ninjo Point.

If your Status is Peasant or lower, Hinin, or Gaijin you start with one (1) Honor Point and (2) Ninjo Points.

Record whatever you get on your character sheet. Next to your Ninjo Points write something down that your character desires. Read more about how Honor and Ninjo Points work in **Chapter 6: Honor, Glory, and Desire** on page 103.

Step 3: Choose a Name and Virtue Bonus

Choose a name for your character. Last names are only used by samurai and higher (your Clan name), and gaijin only. Everyone else just gets a first name and sometimes a descriptor: Yuki the Squirrel, Gorgeous Jin, or Old Ken. Write out what your character's name means. If it's ever appropriate to a risk you gain one die for free.

Choose what Virtue your character believes in the most. See page 104 for the different views of bushido via the Virtues. Add one (1) to the Virtue that motivates your character as your Virtue Bonus.

If you are a samurai determine the Virtue of your Clan. Obviously, the Virtue of your clan is your Virtue as well.



Step 4: Choose Virtues

You must now assign ranks to your Virtues. There are six Virtues, but unfortunately you only get five of them. The sixth is your weakness. You will have no ranks in that Virtue. Not now, not ever.

Here are the Virtues to choose from:

BEAUTY

Beauty is the ability to communicate to others. It may be through poetry or rhetoric or drama or even gardening. Beauty is the most important Virtue because without it you cannot



communicate your ideas to the world. Use Beauty when you want to convince or enthrall others.

COURAGE

Courage is the ability to say "No." The ability to say no to temptation, to fear, to pain, to anything. Courage is the most important Virtue because without it your character will not be able to refuse temptation or stand strong against fear. Use Courage when you want to assert your will against the winds of the world.

CUNNING

Cunning is the ability to see the plan within the plan within the plan. Cunning is the most important Virtue because without it you will not be able to anticipate your enemy's plans. Use Cunning when you want to see past the obvious to what is really going on around you.

PROWESS

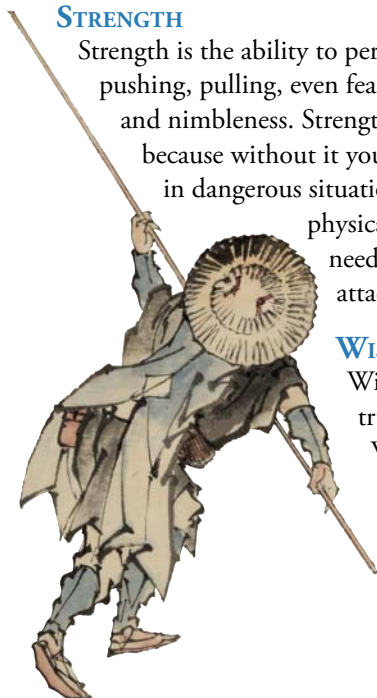
Prowess is the ability to wield weapons. Prowess is the most important Virtue because without it you cannot defend yourself against martial attacks. Use Prowess when your skill and speed with a weapon are needed in combat.

STRENGTH

Strength is the ability to perform physical actions: lifting, pushing, pulling, even feats of manual dexterity, speed and nimbleness. Strength is the most important Virtue because without it you cannot swim, climb, or jump in dangerous situations. Use Strength when your physical endurance and power are needed to perform tasks or you attack without a weapon.

WISDOM

Wisdom is knowing what is true and false in the world. Wisdom is the most important Virtue because without it you cannot determine facts from falsehoods. Use Wisdom when you need to know something about the world or others that is not immediately apparent.



Assign these ranks to your Virtues:

- One Virtue at Rank 4
- Two Virtues at Rank 3
- Two Virtues at Rank 2
- One Virtue as a weakness (write “W”)

Remember to include your +1 Virtue Bonus from Step 3 to the Virtue that best embodies your character’s values.

I need to assign the Virtues to my Police Inspector, Kenji. Cunning is important to Kenji as a Police Inspector, but he will also need Strength and Prowess when he has to run down or fight criminals. Courage and Wisdom and Beauty are less important to him, but Wisdom and Courage seem to be more important to this character as I’ve decided that he’s going to be brusque and ill-mannered (Beauty Weakness). Finally, his Virtue Bonus is Prowess since I’ve decided that his Samurai status comes from a Clan who was extremely martial.

I assign my sole Rank 4 to his Cunning, the first Rank 3 to his Prowess, adding the +1 Virtue Bonus to bring his Prowess to a Rank 4, the second Rank 3 to his Strength, and both Rank 2’s to his Wisdom and Courage. Beauty is Kenji’s Weakness.

Having a weakness means you have no dice for that particular Virtue. You must find dice elsewhere (in Aspects, Giri, etc.). Having a weakness does not preclude you from rolling dice for a particular kind of risk, but it does mean that your Virtue gives you no dice.

*Riding a horse is a Strength risk. Tonbo has Strength as a weakness, so if he must make a Strength risk for riding a horse, he gains no dice from his Strength Virtue. However, he has the **Born in the Saddle** Aspect, giving him three dice for riding a horse. He still doesn’t get any dice for Strength, but his Aspect gives him three dice.*



Step 5: Age

For your age roll a single d6 and mark that as your age in the Spring phase of your life. This isn't your numerical age, but an abstract representation of your life. For more on age in *A World of Dew*, see **Chapter 9: Seasons** on page 155.

Your Narrator may give you permission to begin the game in a later phase, as a Summer, Autumn, or Winter phase character with all the benefits listed below. However, if you choose to begin in a later phase in life you must roll additional dice for your age. If you start as a Summer phase character, roll 2d6-1 and total them for your starting age in Summer. Roll 3d6-3 for Autumn, and 4d6-5 for Winter. Autumn and Winter characters should also add a Winter Aspect (see page 168) as well as the extra age dice.

Here's a chart to help you figure out all the changes to your character:

Phase	Normal Aspects	Winter Aspects	Age Dice
Spring	3	-	1d6
Summer	5	-	2d6-1
Autumn	6	1	3d6-3
Winter	7	3	4d6-5



Step 6: Choose Aspects

Choose three Aspects for your character. Alternatively, you can work with your Narrator to create an Aspect not found here or in *Blood & Honor*. Choose one Aspect that represents you as you would typically perform your Giri, another Aspect that defines what you desire to be, and a third Aspect that defines your past.

Aspects are short descriptive phrases that cover a wide range of skills, talents, and knowledges that describe your character. They have two parts: invokes and compels. When an Aspect is invoked you gain three (3) dice to add to a risk you're going to roll. When you, the Narrator, or another player compels your Aspect they grant you an Honor or Ninjo Point to have your character act in a way befitting that Aspect. To learn more about Aspects, see **Chapter 5: Aspects** on page 91.

LUCK EXISTS

Invoke: ... in the Leftovers. You find opportunities where others do not. Gain three dice for any risk when attempting to solve a problem in an unorthodox manner. You will go to any length!

Compel: Appearance matters little to you. You will go anywhere, do anything, or talk to anyone if you think you can find an answer to your problem.

DO NOT STAND IN THE MELON FIELD

Invoke: ... under the Plum Tree. Face and honor are all important. You know not to take actions which can paint you in a bad light. Gain three dice to any risk when trying to maintain your face and honor in a difficult social situation.

Compel: You tend to over analyze situations, avoiding action even when it is called for.

THE TALENTED HAWK

Invoke: ... Hides its Claws. You understand the importance of misdirection and appearing weaker to others. Gain three dice to any risk when you are attempting to appear weaker than your opponent.

Compel: A good liar trusts no one. Not even the closest allies.

Samurai Aspects

If you are a Clan Samurai character from *Blood & Honor* you must take the *None of Us...* Aspect as one of your three Aspects. The other two Aspects should be from your Clan. Follow the Aspect creation rules in *Blood & Honor*, working with any other samurai from your Clan if they are present as player characters.

DUMPLINGS RATHER THAN FLOWERS

Invoke: You prefer the useful rather than the beautiful. You gain three dice to any risk in which your common practicality would help you overcome an obstacle.

Compel: Your diligence and focus on the utilitarian blinds you to the beauty in this world.

FALL DOWN SEVEN TIMES FOR THE KAMI

Invoke: ... And They Will Help You Get Up The Eighth Time. You can endure anything when what you do is righteous! Gain three dice to any risk where you must endure injustices against your righteous beliefs.

Compel: Your faith in the Kami and Righteousness blinds you to harsh reality, and you overlook the obvious at times.

WAKE FROM DEATH

Invoke: ... And Return to Life! When the chips are down, you are truly alive. At your lowest point, when everything and everyone is against you, you find Lady Luck! Gain three dice to any risk when you are in an apparently hopeless situation.

Compel: You don't believe in your ability, just your luck. You don't try yourself unless the odds are against you.

AN ANGRY BULL

Invoke: ... Will Break Down the Toughest Fence. You let your violent passions consume you, becoming stronger when you summon up your anger and aggression. Gain three dice in any risk when you let your violent passions drive you to greater physical feats.

Compel: You see those who are not as strong as you as lesser and scoff at their inferiority.

THE REVERSE SIDE

Invoke: ... Also has a Reverse Side. You can see the world from many angles, and you understand the perceptions of others. Gain three dice in any risk in which your ability to see things from a different point of view is important to understanding your problem.

Compel: You understand people so clearly that sometimes you insult them with your honesty assessment of them.

A MONK FOR THREE DAYS

Invoke: You've tried many things and know a little bit about many subjects. Gain three dice on any risk in which a basic piece of information about a subject of knowledge is needed to proceed.

Compel: But you've mastered only a few subjects. You do not know the deeper truths or hidden knowledges about most things.

ENTERING THE TIGER'S CAVE

Invoke: ... Is Easier Than Waiting for the Tiger. You understand that it is fear that stops many from completing the tasks set before them. You gain three dice when you do not let fear stop you from acting.

Compel: But Sometimes You are Eaten. You are not always wise enough to heed the wisdom of fear, and you jump into action without preparation or caution.



Step 7: Choose an Advantage

You receive one Advantage from the list below. Record it on your character sheet. Note the space for a second Advantage, and read Flawed Virtues on page 41 to find out how to gain a second Advantage. If you wish to create a new Advantage not listed here or found in *Blood & Honor*, ask your Narrator.

ALLY

A true friend, someone who wouldn't double cross you and is some position to provide help in one specific area. Work with the Narrator to create this complete character. Start with declaring Three True Things about your ally.

CONTACTS

You know people that can provide information, but probably not material aid, from various walks of life. You have as many as your Cunning. Detail them with your Narrator as you need them. Or you may leave them undetailed and later declare an NPC to be one of your Contacts.

BLACKMAIL

You have dirt on someone. You may already be blackmailing them for koku, information, or access. Gain the target's status in koku or free wagers, at the beginning of each session. But be careful. Blackmail is illegal and can come back to bite you.

BLESSED

Your kharmic outlook is good. You may re-roll one risk per session.

BLOODLINE

You are descended from lofty ancestors. Your status is one rank higher than your current position dictates. This matters not to characters of Imperial status or holy persons, and such a distinction is rare for gaijin unless they are some sort of royalty in their home country.

GAIJIN GEAR (JAPANESE ONLY)

You own some significant piece or several minor pieces of gaijin equipment or goods. A pistol or musket, armor, a folding telescope, a crossbow with bolts, rare medicinal/nautical/philosophical manuals, or other such items that are only available through gaijin.

JAPANESE GEAR (GAJJIN ONLY)

You own some significant piece or several minor pieces of Japanese goods or equipment not normally available to gaijin: a fine katana or dai-kyu (bow), a suit of armor, Chinese medicinal texts, or other such items that are only available to the Japanese.

GAMBARU

You are the hardest of workers. You gain one additional Season Action each Season.

HEART OF STONE

You are not easily swayed by the sweet words of those who are Beautiful and honey-tongued. Add two dice to your dice pool for any risk when someone with True Beauty, Stylish, or a Beauty-related Aspect (Narrator's call) tries to convince you of something.

IN ANOTHER LIFETIME

For a short time you had another calling. You gain two ranks of a Glory Reputation in a Giri other than your current Giri. Tell the Narrator why you are no longer performing that Giri.

KHARMIC CONNECTION

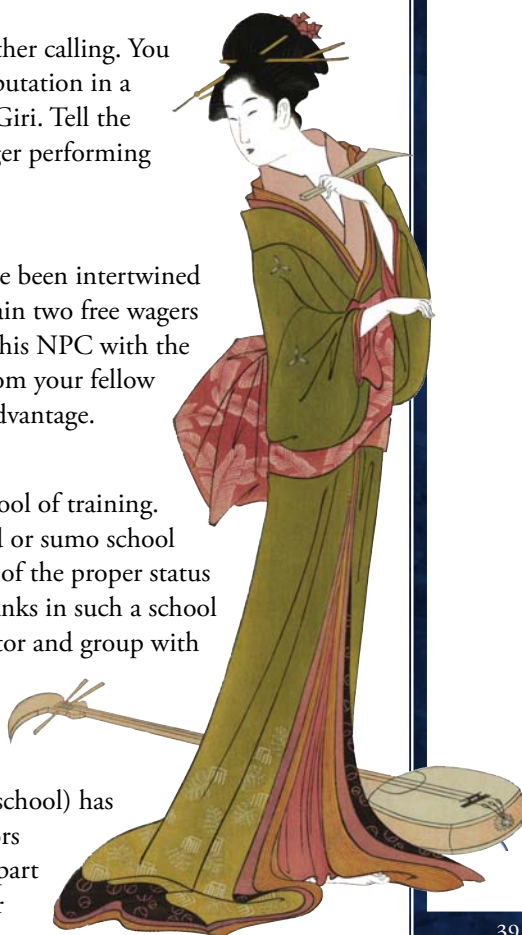
You and an NPC (or PC) have been intertwined through multiple lives. You gain two free wagers when you help them. Detail this NPC with the Narrator or get permission from your fellow PC to include them in this Advantage.

PRODIGY

You are dedicated to your school of training. Gain two (2) ranks in a sword or sumo school of your choice. If you are not of the proper status to begin normally with any ranks in such a school you must provide your Narrator and group with an excellent story as to how you've gained such training.

SENSEI

Your Master of your Giri (or school) has taken a liking to you and favors you over others. They will impart wisdom and help you on your



path to greater Glory. But they expect more from you. If you perform all the extra duties your sensei demands of you (Narrator's discretion) gain a free increase in your Giri Rank. Your sensei will only do this for you once every four Seasons.

SOCIAL POSITION

You hold some social position above your current abilities or status. Perhaps your high ranking father passed away and you inherited his position. Perhaps your performances have brought you acclaim at court despite your few experiences. Whatever the reason, you gain two extra dice in any status risk when invoking your social position. Detail what brought you such fortune to your Narrator's satisfaction.

THE GIFT

The Kami, God, or Fate has granted you a powerful and dangerous ability, a gift. You may know what animals— or humans—are thinking, speak into the minds of others, or even change your form into an animal. Such an ability could easily lead to your demise at the hands the superstitious or deeply religious. Describe your ability to your Narrator. They will decide to which Virtue it is tied. All uses of your gift are considered risks of that Virtue.

WILL OF STONE

You are built like a small mountain and can weather things better than most. You may endure Injuries up to Rank 6. Treat a Rank 6 Injury like a usual Rank 5 Injury. If you gain a Rank 5 Injury you have major damage to your body, but because you are so strong you may drag yourself along and still act. Of course, your opposition can still tag your Injuries to gain additional dice. See page 117 for more information on Injuries.

WEALTHY

You have acquired more koku than you can spend through your deeds or perhaps you are from a wealthy family. Maybe you're even a rich gaijin merchant who has returned to Japan for even more wild profits. Whatever your reason you want for nothing. You have the best clothes, weapons, horses, food, and entertainment. Start the game with five (5) additional koku and any items you own are considered fine quality. You may add a single bonus die (1) to risks in social situations where such things matter.

Step 7.5: Choose a Flawed Virtue (Optional)

In the Kurosawa movie *Ran*, a retelling of King Lear, Hidetora is by all accounts a Wise and Cunning ruler, except when it comes to seeing Virtue in others, especially his sons. His inability to see the true natures of his sons is the spark that burns up his family and brings about their downfall.

The same is true for so many characters in noir and chambara films, books, and anime. Sano Ichiro is a great police detective who isn't very socially adept (Beauty Weakness), but he is Courageous in the face of daunting adversity. Yet, he fears for his family and makes questionable choices because of his deep fear for their wellbeing. He has a flaw even in the Virtue that makes him strong!

To me deeply flawed characters are always more interesting to play. A single Virtue Weakness provides a consistent point where your character is weaker. For some characters though, a powerful Virtue can also be imperfect and fail them in moments of weakness. To reflect this complicated reality, I created Flawed Virtues.

Flawed Virtues are a disadvantage your character has in one of their most powerful Virtues. It's situational, so it happens in only certain rare circumstances, but since the flaw is tied to one of your more powerful Virtues the sudden onset of a weakness is a dramatic problem, just the sort of thing you want to create great stories.

If you like you may take a Flawed Virtue; it has a drawback and a perk. The perk is simple: you may take a second Advantage to balance your Kharma. You may have a second, tragic flaw, but you gain an additional Advantage with which you can pursue your interests.

The drawback is as follows. First, choose a Virtue that is Rank Four or Rank Five. Then choose **one** of the Flaw Aspects below to apply to that Virtue. Whenever these Flawed Aspects comes into play treat your Virtue as if it were a Weakness.

That's right, your Virtue, no matter what rank it is acts as if it were a (0) Zero.

As always, if you come up with a Flaw not listed below talk with your Narrator about approving it. Finally, your Narrator has final veto rights to any Flaws. For example, if you were playing a dishonorable Artist your Narrator would never approve of you taking the Courage Flaw: Fear of Dishonor even if they would approve of the Courage Flaw: Fear of Mortality. Here are the Flaws:



BEAUTY FLAWS

Mean

You are beautiful and a skilled artist, but you are not a nice person. You can be petty and others do not trust you. Treat Beauty as a Weakness when you try to convince someone through pleasantries and grace.

Plain

You are convincing, and skilled in the things you create, but others do not find you attractive. Treat Beauty as a Weakness when you try to seduce someone with your physical body.

Unimaginative

You are beautiful, and can persuade others with your honeyed-tongue, but you have no skill at creating works of art. Treat Beauty as a Weakness when you attempt to create any work of art.

COURAGE FLAWS

Fear of Power

You can face down the mightiest beasts, and have no fear when asked to do the unthinkable, but you falter when confronting those of higher status. Treat Courage as a Weakness when faced with opposition from those with higher Status than you.

Fear of Dishonor

You can speak truth to the powerful, but you cannot abide facing dishonor through your actions. Treat Courage as a Weakness when you attempt to perform a dishonorable action.

Fear of Mortality

You can perform any dirty deed and scoff at the powerful, but you flinch and falter when faced with the flashing blade of a duelist, or the claws of a beast. Treat Courage as a Weakness when you must put your life at Risk to accomplish your goals.

CUNNING FLAWS

Honest

You notice the smallest details and can easily discern truth from lies, but you cannot bring yourself to tell lies yourself. Treat Cunning as a Weakness when you attempt to lie.

Distracted

You can lie like an actor and tell when others do as well, but you miss important details in the world around you, perhaps as the result of a disability like being a blind masseur. Treat Cunning as a Weakness when you survey a scene for fine details.

Trusting

You can lie with a straight face and you notice when something is out of place, but you cannot penetrate the souls of others. Treat Cunning as a Weakness when you try to determine if someone is lying to you.

PROWESS FLAWS

Slow

You can acquit yourself well in duels, and you know the ways of war, but you are not as fast as others. Treat Prowess as a Weakness when you declare a Strike (page 121).



浪人、砂にごとく



Unprepared

You are as fast as any warrior, and you have faced others in duels, but you have not learned how to fight in the swirling melees of war. Treat Prowess as a Weakness when you find yourself in Mass Murder (page 132).

Obvious

You know the devilry that is massed combat, and you are not slow, but your moves are obvious. Treat Prowess as a Weakness when you find yourself in a Duel (page 124) against a single opponent.

STRENGTH FLAWS***Weak***

You are whole of body and can endure painful trials, but you are small and without much muscle. Treat Strength as your weakness when you perform simple feats of strength like lifting or breaking something.

Delicate

You can bend bars and have escaped permanent injuries in your travels, but you cannot endure physical trials of any sort, be it swimming a long distance, enduring a snowstorm, or even torture. Treat Strength as a Weakness when you attempt to endure a physical trial.

Impaired

You can endure trials and lift gates, but your body is not whole. You've been permanently disfigured in some way either from birth or an injury. Perhaps you are missing an arm, a foot, or have a crooked back. Treat Strength as a Weakness when your disability inhibits your ability to exert yourself.

WISDOM FLAWS***Cloistered***

You have much knowledge and know the wisdom of studying your situation, but you have been kept separate from others and the world at large. Treat Wisdom as a Weakness when you must rely on your knowledge of other people.

Unlearned

You have traveled the world and know the importance of learning your surroundings, but you have little knowledge from books or scrolls. Treat Wisdom as a Weakness when you rely on knowledge that can only be found in written documents and ancient histories.

Foolish

You have seen the sights of the world and are well read and schooled, but you care little about your current situation. Treat Wisdom as a Weakness when you attempt to divine the truth of your present predicament.

Step 8: Relationships

Once you have finished detailing your individual character, go around the table and discuss how you know each player. Write down a single sentence under the **Relationships** heading on your character sheet that describes your relationship with every other player's character. These sentences are Aspects that can be invoked and compelled just like your other Aspects. To keep things interesting,



favor relationships that are double-edged, offering both costs and benefits to both sides. If you pick Aspects that are too positive, you'll never get Honor or Ninjo Points from compels!

*Jessica's character, Kaede, has The Gift. She is "cursed" to turn into an Otter, and cannot let anyone else know. She was once injured by a shark while swimming in Yokohama Bay, narrowly escaping with her life. She swam up a river and collapsed in the garden of Fabien's Gambler, Shinji, who saw her change from an otter back into the beautiful daughter of the Emperor. Jessica writes, **The Gambler Knows My Curse**. Fabien's Gambler, however, Fearful of Power sees Jessica's character not as someone he can Blackmail, but as a friend. He writes, **I Help My Friend, the Otter-Woman**.*

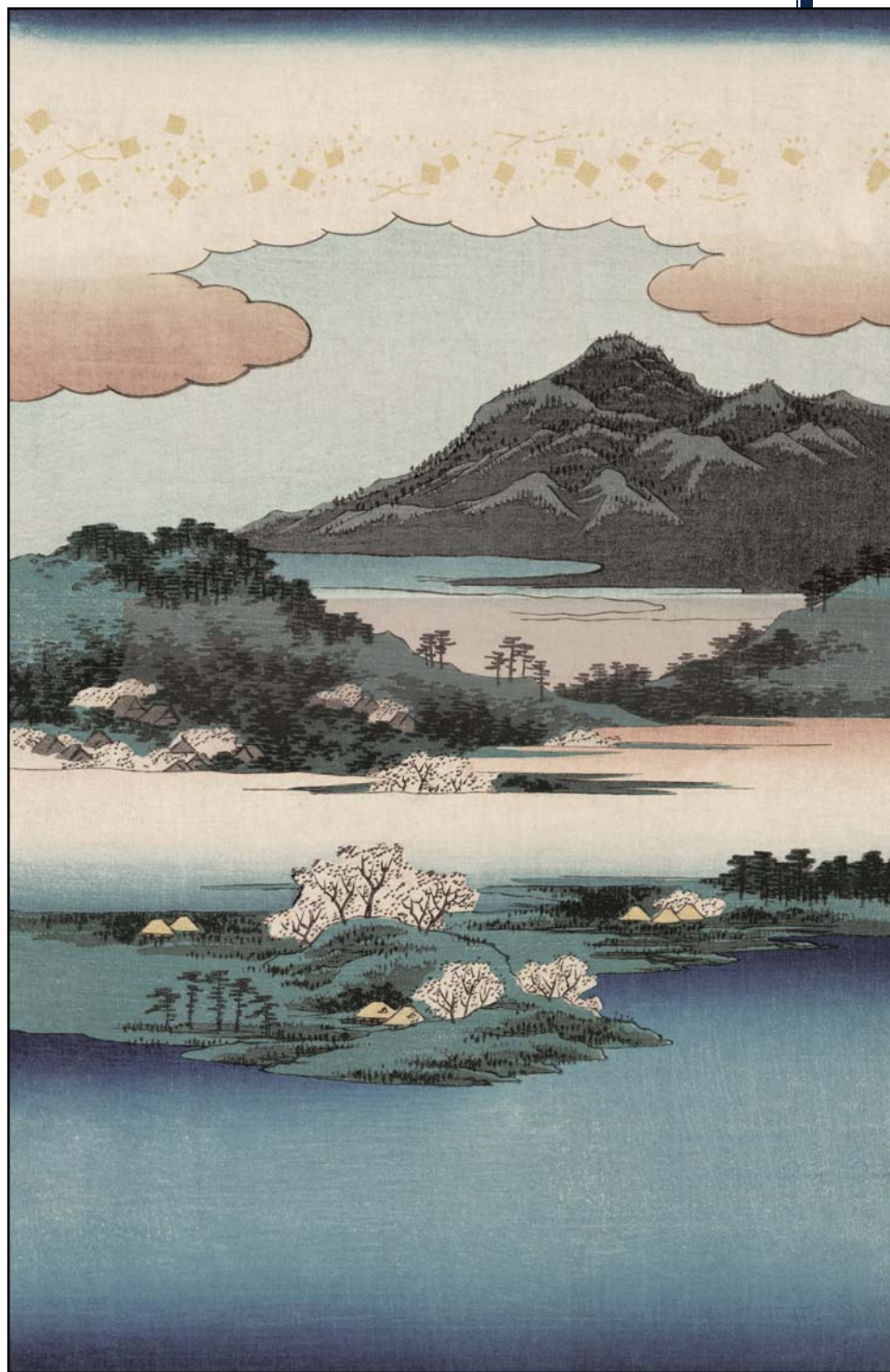
Step 9: Finishing Touches

Record everything on your character sheet; fill in any blank spaces you may have left or leave them blank with your Narrator's permission to detail later.

Write down any equipment that you have and record your koku. You have as many koku at the start of play as your starting status plus any other gained from other sources. Priests start with no koku. What need do you have of such worldly trappings? Change comes from within.

If you are of Samurai status or higher choose a sword school at Rank 1 that you know. Alternatively, if you are a sumo, choose a sumo school at Rank 1 that you know. Record either under your Schools section.

Go back over your sheet to make sure you didn't make any mistakes and have your Narrator check it over to make sure they approve. After that, you're ready to build your city and play *A World of Dew*!





Chapter 3

Where Honor Goes to Die

The City

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The lord's hired sedan
Marching home from Yoshiwara
Gorged nightjars now sing.

- *Gansho*

There were cities in Japan before Tokugawa came to power, but they were mostly capitals of Clans, subservient to the Daimyos and Samurai that ruled the lands. In *Blood & Honor*, Clans acted as a setting, the background against which all action occurred during the game. Now that the Clans are no longer the primary focus, your group will need a new setting, a City that draws you all together into conflict and action.

In noir films and non-samurai chambara movies, cities, towns, and hamlets become major backdrops to the action taking place on screen. The locations may be as small as a single village in *Seven Samurai* or as large as the multi-city journey along the Tokaido Road in *Samurai Champloo* (a story about two ronin and a servant, despite its name), but the people and places in the cities all play important roles in complicating and driving the story. Thus, I give you these rules to help complicate and drive your stories in *A World of Dew*.

Cities are complex structures that grown and change beyond any one person's control, but creating your own metropolis for the game can be a lot of fun. When you create your City, sit

Who Creates the City?

This chapter is written for the entire gaming group, both the Players and the Narrator. You're all going to have a hand in creating your city because I want every member of your group to be invested in the setting. I want Players to add the Locations, Themes, and Threats they want the characters to face, and I want the Narrator to lay the groundwork for all the interesting plots and conflicts to come. I'll try to be clear in this chapter when I'm addressing just the Narrator or just the Players, but if I don't call out either, assume I'm talking to all of you.

down with your entire group, and decide on the level of detail you want. If some of you want more detail than others, the more detail-oriented members of your group should take on research and design themes before coming to the table to play. And if you really don't want to spend all the time creating your own City, place a Stronghold and the Locations associated with each Giri and start playing!

Let's run down a list of what you're going to have to do to create your city:

- Step 0: **Research** your city (if it is a real place)
- Step 1: Determine the major **Themes** for your city
- Step 2: Create some **Locations** for your city
- Step 3: Create some **Threats** as opposition
- Step 4: Create the **Organizations** for your city
- Step 5: Create any **Faces** not already detailed by the Organizations
- Step 6: **Fill in any details** you think are needed, and leave some holes for later fun

At the start of City Creation, each Player gets five (5) City Points. As your group goes through City Creation, the Players give these City Points to the Narrator to add Locations, Threats, and Organizations to the City. The Narrator collects these City Points to form the Story Pool, a pool of points that will complicate and twist the events of the story during play.

Step 0: Research

Read up on your City if it's a real place. (Skip this step if you're planning on running your game in an imaginary city.) Wikipedia and several of the published histories of Japan are excellent resources. Travel guides to actual cities are also a great place to learn about the neighborhoods and politics of your setting. You can find several

Narrator Note: Quick City Creation

City Creation taking too long? You'd rather start playing **now** instead of building your City? Go Ahead! All the Narrator needs to do is give the Players their points, tell them what they can spend them on, give them their free Locations, and dive into the story. If the Players later want to go somewhere, see someone, or deal with an imminent threat, they can spend a City Point to add information to the City Sheet.

travel guides to famous major cities in Japan with a simple Google search, each full of great history, a city map, and important dates and landmarks.

As you do your research, talk to each other about major themes you see that have developed around this city. Was it a major trading port during the 17th and 18th centuries? Was it famous for its dissidents or its loyal warrior monks? Note all of these details. Designate someone in your group to take notes about what you all find interesting about your city.

I'm making my version of the city of Nagasaki as it existed right before the overthrow of the Shogun and the return of the Emperor. I've read that Nagasaki was one of the only places legally open to foreign trade even before Tokugawa became Shogun, making "Foreign Trade" an important Theme in my game. I also might let some of my Players actually play foreigners, as there was a large community of them there at that time.



I also discover that some of the earliest Christian churches were built here, from both Catholic and Protestant traditions. Adding religious conflicts between the Christians themselves (Jesuit Priests vs. Dutch Merchants!) and the Buddhists will help add new tensions to my game. I could research more, but I've dug up a lot in just a few minutes of searching!

Step 1: Themes

The first step is something you've roughed out already through your research: Themes. What major themes are important for your City and game? Talk to each other explicitly about what kind of game you want; some players might have an idea of something they definitely want in the City to help complement their character. If

Japanese Neighborhoods

In Japan, cities were (and many still are) divided up into distinct neighborhoods along caste/status lines and occupations. For example, there were separate neighborhoods for all the classes including the artisans, who even divided up by artisan type. Goldsmiths lived in one area, weaponsmiths in another, potters in a third. There were even specific walled off neighborhoods for all proscribed activities. Yoshiwara was a famous red-light or pleasure district in Edo where thousands of courtesans, gamblers, geisha, entertainers, guards, and criminals lived and plied their trades.

When building your City keep this segregation in mind. Buildings of a similar type are likely to be grouped together. Arresting a goldsmith from her business will quickly spread the word to all other goldsmiths. Community matters!

it doesn't clash with the rest of the Themes for the City then the group should try to accommodate everyone's ideas. If it does clash somewhat, then reworking it and the other Themes so they all work together can help everyone get some of what they want from the game.

I sit down with my Players to discuss the Themes I researched and everyone likes them a lot. Joe, Jason, and Jess are all excited about "Foreign Trade" a major element in the City. Jessica wants to deal with her Gift Advantage so she adds the Theme, "The Supernatural is Real." to our Campaign.



I agree and rub my hands in glee, maybe the murderer I was planning to introduce is actually a monster...

Joe and Jason, however, have some conflicting Themes they want to add to the City. Joe is playing a Buddhist monk and wants a Theme for the City to be "Religious Harmony," but Jason created a Catholic Gaijin Merchant and wants to include the Theme "A New Religion Brings Change." Since those Themes conflict I ask them to clarify and refine them so they can both work.

Joe decides that what he wanted was "Harmony Among the Buddhist Clergy," indicating that the Buddhists monks and nuns are friends and allies. Jason decides after that that his Theme works as titled, but clarifies and says, "The Catholics are selling modern weapons and techniques to anyone who converts." We all agree that the new Themes are a good compromise.



Step 2: Locations

After deciding on a set of Themes for your game, add specific Locations to your City. Locations are buildings or areas in your City that provide specific benefits to the characters. Characters can go to an Apothecary to help heal Injuries, or the Geisha House to gain Rumors, or the Market to gain temporary Contacts. These benefits may require characters to spend Honor and Ninjo Points to activate the effects, but any character that goes to the Location can gain the benefit if they are willing to pay the cost.

Some Locations on the map are not a single place. The Market, Stronghold, and Seaport are all Locations that can cover vast areas and represent multiple buildings with hundreds or even thousands of people within them. You can represent such an area on the map with a single Location or you might have multiple Seaports, Markets, or Strongholds within the City. These repeated Locations can represent either parts of the whole (one Market Location to represent the foreign half of a market and another to represent the local part of the market) or multiple different Seaports or Markets or Strongholds your city might have (two warring Clans each have their own Stronghold in the City).

The City Map

Before anyone creates any Locations, the Narrators give the players a piece of paper and a pencil to draw a map. When a Location is added to the City, the Players draw the Location on the map. Pass the paper around as you spend City Points and have everyone add Locations as you go around, leaving blank spots for future details.

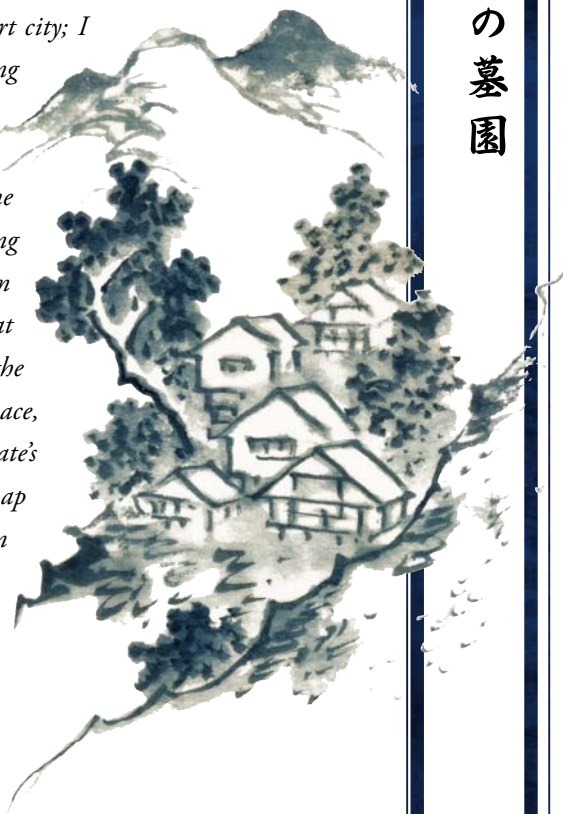
Free Locations

The Narrator starts City Creation by granting a few free Locations to the Players, beginning with some kind of Stronghold guarding the City; the size of the Stronghold depends on the strength of the ruling clan. If there are any major geographic features, the Narrator also adds buildings associated with those features: Ports for cities on coasts, Shrines for cities next to mountains, Smiths for cities next to mines, etc. Finally, the Narrator grants a free Location based on each character's Giri: a Magistrate's Court for a Police Inspector, a Gang Hideout for a Yakuza, a Tavern for a Ronin, etc..

Once free Locations are placed in the City, each player (in turn) can give one of their City Points to the Narrator to add an important Location to the city, increase the rank of an existing Location, add an important detail to a Location or the City at large. Players can also pass to save their City Points to purchase Threats, Organizations, or Faces in the

City in future steps of City Creation. Once all the players pass you move on to the next step: Threats.

Nagasaki is an important port city; I start City Creation by giving the Players the Port Location as a free Location. And since Nagasaki was the seat of one of the major Clans during this time I also give them the Stronghold Location at Rank 3 for free. I also have the Players add a Performance Space, Surgery, Tavern, and Magistrate's Court Locations to the map because they are playing an Artisan, a gaijin-trained Doctor, a Ronin, and a Police Investigator.



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Location Benefits

During gameplay, characters will patronize various establishments and landmarks to gain the benefits associated with the Locations. Players cannot simply state that their character is visiting a Location to gain the benefit. Visiting Locations must be important!

When a Player wants to activate a Location, the Narrator can create a scene for the Player. If it's something as simple as gaining bonus Prowess Wagers from a Dojo for an upcoming duel, the Narrator might describe a montage scene where the character goes through all their moves. Or better yet, the Narrator might let the player describe the scene.

If multiple characters visit a Location the Narrator can also have them roleplay the experience of interacting with the building and staff. Many times when I've run these scenes, new story threads and hooks emerge naturally, growing the campaign for everyone.



Missing Locations

Unless the Narrator specifies otherwise (a small town, a landlocked city, etc.) every Location exists within a City. The Locations you spend City Points are the places that are most important to the story and provide benefits to the Player's characters.

If a Location doesn't already exist on the map, it can be discovered during play when someone introduces the Location into the story. The Narrator can always introduce Locations at any Rank for free, but Players must spend an Honor or Ninjo Point to create a Rank 1 Location. Of course, the Players may want to spend additional Honor or Ninjo Points to raise the rank and add details.

The Rank of Locations

Many Locations have a Rank, sometimes for the building itself and other times to represent the staff and characters who inhabit the Location. If the Location is already in the game it should already have a rank determined by the number of City Points spent on the Location when it was created during City Creation.

You can only spend Honor and Ninjo Points to add ranks to new Locations when they are discovered in play. If you want to add ranks to Locations later, you'll need to use Season Actions. See **Chapter 9: Seasons** on page 155 for more information on Season Actions

Locations, Old and New

Here is a list of all the Locations, old and new, found in *A World of Dew*:

OLD LOCATIONS

Blacksmith, Buddhist Temple, Dojo, Gambling Den, Geisha House, Sake Works (now Tavern), Shinto Shrine, Stables, Sumo School.

NEW LOCATIONS

Church (Catholic or Protestant), Gang Hideout, Magistrate's Court, Market, Performance Space, Seaport, Stronghold, Surgery or Apothecary, Tavern (see Sake Works)

Blood & Honor Holdings

Many Holdings from *Blood & Honor* make an appearance here as Locations, but I've added new buildings that give the characters wagers, Rumors, ways of healing themselves, and all sorts of other story options. Keep reading for more on introducing Holdings to your City!

Old Locations

While Holdings from *Blood & Honor* can appear in Cities as Locations, they function differently during the game. Instead of Season Actions powering their effects, now Honor and Ninjo Points are the primary activator of Location benefits. Remember the limits to Ninjo Points: if you spend a Ninjo Point on a Location it can only benefit you.

BLACKSMITH

Blacksmiths are hot and smoky locations filled with the ringing of hammers as artisans pound out metal to create weapons, armor, and tools. Here you can purchase weapons and armor of various qualities, reflecting the skills and strengths of the staff. The higher the rank, and the more free wagers, dice, or effects the weapons and armor provide, the higher the cost. Usually weapons and armor fetch a koku per wager/die/effect rank times the rank of the Blacksmith. See **Chapter 7: Violence** on page 117 for more on weapons and armor.

BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Buddhist Temples are usually beautiful wooden buildings with curved roofs painted red and gold, places of quiet contemplation and meditation. Sometimes the droning of holy monks or nuns can be heard as they pray the various Buddhist sutras to gain Wisdom and guidance.

If you meditate at a Buddhist temple, you may gain Meditation Points or bonus Wisdom wagers by spending an Honor or Ninjo Point. For each Honor or Ninjo Point spent, you gain any combination of bonus Wisdom wagers or Meditation Points equal to the Temple's rank. You may spend a number of Honor or Ninjo Points here equal to your Wisdom per Session. **See Chapter**

Location Wagers

Many Locations grant bonus wagers based on your Virtues. You may spend these bonus wagers on any risk based on the Virtue to which they are tied. Before you roll an appropriate risk you must declare any bonus wagers you are adding to your wager pool. Just like regular wagers if you do not gain privilege you still lose half of all your wagers rounded up, including the bonus wagers.

You can never have more than five (5) bonus wagers attached to any single Virtue per game session. Set the bonus dice associated with Virtue on your character sheet and discard any you get in excess of five (5) for a single Virtue.

Finally, smart players will note that many low level Locations do not grant as many dice as a single Honor Point would grant to a risk. Smarter players will realize that having these wagers banked will allow you to keep both bonus wagers and additional wagers from spent Honor Points.

8: Magic and Religion on page 141 for more on spending Meditation Points.

Dojo

Dojos are buildings for martial training, usually featuring a large courtyard in the front or rear and a large practice space inside with places for practice equipment to be stored. The space is used by the students and teachers to train both indoors and out.

If you train at a Dojo, you may gain bonus Prowess wagers. For each Honor or Ninjo Point spent at the Dojo, you gain a number of Prowess wagers equal to the rank of the Dojo.

Secondly, your character may train at a Dojo to gain ranks in a sword school, spending a Season Action to gain one rank in a sword school. You may only raise your rank in a sword school once per Season. Dojos at Rank 2 or higher can teach more than one weapon style. See **Chapter 7: Violence** on page 117 and **Chapter 9: Seasons** on page 155 for more on training.

Finally, whenever you create a Dojo in a City you must create a Rival Dojo. Name it and determine Three True Things about the Dojo.

GAMBLING DEN

Gambling Dens provide a place to gamble, an often proscribed activity in Japan. They are usually cramped, smoky, and brightly lit, and found in a specific Proscribed Activities area of town. Small Dens usually run only one game of chance; larger dens have multiple tables of the same game or diversify and run all sorts of different games.

If you patronize a Gambling Den, you may gain bonus Cunning wagers. For every Honor or Ninjo Point you spend, you gain a number of Cunning wagers equal to the rank of the Den.

You can also gamble for additional koku by betting on the Cunning wagers you've earned. Roll a number of dice equal to the number of Cunning wagers you earned by spending Honor or Ninjo Points. If you roll a five or a six on **any** of the wagers rolled, you earn a number of koku equal to the rank of the Gambling Den per wager. If you do not roll a five or six on any of the wagers rolled, you lose all the Cunning wagers you gambled.



GEISHA HOUSE (TEA HOUSES)

Geisha Houses (sometimes called Tea Houses) are fine buildings in which Geisha entertain their customers. Many have a large public area where customers sit and drink tea while they talk with individual geisha or are entertained by one or more geisha dancing, singing, or playing an instrument. Private spaces are also available for higher prices where more private conversations and entertainments can be found.

If you visit a Geisha House, you may gain bonus Beauty wagers and Rumors. For every Ninjo Point you spend at the Geisha House, you gain any combination of Beauty Wagers or Rumors equal to the rank of the Geisha House. The Narrator may require you to spend an equal number of koku for the time of the geisha.

SAKE WORKS (TAVERNS)

Taverns are common all over Japan, even the smallest towns will often have a Tavern where the farmers and workers can go for a drink of sake and maybe a bowl of noodles before returning home. The front room of a tavern is filled with many tables, usually long straight tables, and no bar. Waiters quickly bring drinks and food to patrons through a split hanging curtain that divides the kitchen from the front room.



If your drink at a Tavern, you may gain bonus Courage Wagers. For every Honor or Ninjo Point you spend while drinking sake at the Tavern, you gain a number of Courage Wagers equal to the rank of the Tavern. In addition to gaining your bonus wagers, you must also roll a number of dice equal to the total free Courage wagers earned at any Tavern or Sake Works ever (keep a tally next to your Courage). If you ever roll exactly a 4, 9, 49, or 94 (very unlucky numbers), you gain the Aspect *First the Man Takes a Drink* until you spend a Season Action to change your Aspects.

*For example, Marissa's Ronin, Tanuki, likes to drink. She's gained a total of 16 bonus Courage Wagers over several Seasons and she just bought two more with a Ninjo Point. Each time she's purchased Courage Wagers she's rolled her dice. She rolls 18 dice, to represent her total Courage Wagers purchased, and rolls exactly a 49. She gains the Aspect *First the Man Takes a Drink*. If she wants to get rid of this Aspect, she will have to spend a Season Action.*

SHINTO SHRINE

Shinto shrines are peaceful places, closely tied to nature and the kami, or spirits, that Shinto believe are within all things. Shrines can be as small as a roadside stand containing the statue of a single kami or large open-air complexes with multiple shrines to many kami and room for hundreds to gather. Many weddings and Seasonal festivals are held at Shinto shrines, and usually one or more Torii arch marks the entrance to a Shrine.

If you visit a Shinto Shrine, you may gain Blessings. For every Honor or Ninjo Point you spend while praying at the Shrine, you gain a number of Blessings equal to the rank of the Shrine. See **Chapter 8: Magic and Religion** on page 141 for more on Blessings.

STABLES

Stables are large barns and corrals where horse dealers keep a number of animals for breeding, trade, and sale. You can purchase horses from a stable in a City. Their cost, in koku, is based on the rank of the Stable and the number of free wagers each horse grants.

SUMO SCHOOL



All Glory to the Kami! Here young Sumotori train so that one day they may be as great as the legendary champions of Sumo, an ancient art and religious ceremony that brings joy to the entire country and piety and honor to the Shinto religion. Each bout is as much about honoring the kami and purity as it is about defeating one's opponent. Like Buddhist Temples or larger Shinto Shrines, a Sumo School houses Sumo wrestlers young and old, many offering their services to non-members to support their schools financially.

If you train at a Sumo School, you may gain bonus Strength Wagers and Injury Defense Ranks. For every Honor or Ninjo Point you spend while training at the Sumo School, you gain any combination of free Strength Wagers or Ranks of Injury Defense equal to the rank of the Sumo School.

You may also attend a Sumo School as a Sumo Wrestler, undergoing the strict, ancient training that makes sumos the joy of Japan. While training as a sumo, you may spend Season Actions at a Sumo School to gain ranks in any one Sumo Wrestling School. You may spend a number of Season Actions here equal to your Strength plus one (1).

Finally, whenever you create a Sumo School in a City you **must** create a Rival school. Name it and determine Three True Things about the school.

New Locations

The following are new Locations available for use with *A World of Dew*. If you're playing with Clans from *Blood & Honor*, many of these Locations can also be Holdings.



APOTHECARY

Apothecary shops are small stores with a counter where one speaks with the apothecary directly. Behind the counter the walls are lined with small drawers, each filled with various exotic substances with which the Apothecary concocts their potions for their ailing customers.

If you visit an Apothecary, you can be healed of Injuries, diseases, or poisons and avoid Infection. You may also acquire poisons here from the chemists who can concoct dangerous substances.

Is Poison Legal?

If a Location is associated with a Player's Doctor make sure you have that character's permission before acquiring a Poison from one of their servants. Poison is only legal to use on vermin in Tokugawa Japan. Breaking either of these traditions would have consequences.

Healing: If you wish to be healed at an Apothecary, you must spend Honor Points and koku. Each Honor Point you spend is worth one rank of healing. Your Injury, disease, or poison requires you to purchase ranks of healing equal to the rank of the affliction.

Once you've spent enough Honor Points, your affliction is lowered by one rank and you are now free of any possible Infection. You must let time heal the rest of your Injury. You must also pay a number of koku equal to the Injury rank multiplied by the rank of the Apothecary.

Poisons: Conversely, you may spend Ninjo Points and koku to acquire Poison from an Apothecary. Each Ninjo Point you spend raises the rank of the poison you acquire by the rank of the Apothecary. You must also pay a number of koku equal to the rank of the poison times the rank of the Apothecary.

(See **Surgery** on page 66 for a similar Location)

CHURCH (CATHOLIC OR PROTESTANT)

A place where the faithful of the Christian religion, be it Catholic or Protestant (choose one), come to receive the blessing of the Lord, commune with others of their Faith, and gain a deeper understanding of their beliefs.

If you worship at a Church, you can gain forgiveness by asking the attendant priest or god for absolution. You may spend an Honor Point to gain a number of Ninjo Points equal to the rank of the Church.

Priests of the Church's religious faith may also gain Insight. For each Honor or Ninjo Point you spend, you gain a number of points of Insight equal to the rank of the Church. Each point of Insight must be spent during that Season of gameplay to Add Details per the Honor Point ability. Whether this Insight is gained from holy visions, confessions, or faithful spies is up to the Player. See **Chapter 6: Honor, Glory, and Desire** on page 103 for more on Adding Details.

MAGISTRATE'S COURT

This official Location is where the guilty are tried, held, and then sent to the execution grounds and where officers of the court, inspectors, and police doshin (patrolmen) work. In Japan, a person isn't arrested until there is strong evidence that they are guilty of a crime. Court proceedings are never held until the court is certain of a person's guilt. If you are found innocent you are let go, there is no trial.

Here you may spend unused Rumors to receive leads on a case. For each Rumor you spend, you receive a number of Leads equal to the rank of the Court. Each Lead gives you a wager's worth of information about a crime or open case.

Fabien is a down on his luck Police Inspector named Shiro. He spent his last koku (and Ninjo Point) at a Geisha House and has only one (1) Rumor. He goes to the Rank 2 Magistrate's Court and asks the other inspectors if they've heard anything about the murder case he has been working on, spending his last Rumor. The Narrator gives him two new leads (equal to the rank of the Court): an officer fined a woman for brawling in public who matches Inspector Shiro's description of the murderer and the woman in question was staying at the Plum Tree Tavern in the wine merchant's neighborhood.

MARKET

In Japan, Markets are subdivided into different classes as well as types. A Market outside of the Temple District sells religious items; in the Smith's quarter, a Market is the storefront to all the various smiths; near the Seaport, the Market is the



bounty of the sea and goods from far away on sale. Thus, Markets tend to hold other Locations such as Performance Spaces, Shops, Gang Hideouts, Smiths, Stables, Taverns, Geisha Houses, etc.

If you shop at a Market, you may seek out temporary Contacts. For each Honor or Ninjo Point spent, you gain a number of free Contact NPCs equal to the rank of the Market. These Contacts can provide the same benefits as a regular Contact, but only for a single Session.

Alternatively, if you already have Contacts, you may upgrade a known Contact to an Ally by spending an Honor or Ninjo Point to grant them various gifts and favors to win their allegiance. Remember that koku is king in a Market, and that loyalty bought can always be sold. These Allies, like the temporary Contacts, only last for the Session.

Finally, any Merchant may spend a Season Action at the Market to gain a number of koku equal to their Giri rank times the rank of the Market. They may do so a number of times a Season equal to their Cunning plus one (1).

PERFORMANCE SPACE (THEATRE, GALLERY, STUDIO, ETC.)

Theatres, Art Galleries, Tea Houses, and Studios are performances spaces that are as varied as the artists performing or displaying their artistry within. They are similar to their Western counterparts in function and style although many theaters in Old Japan were open air. When a Performance Space is added as a Location, the creator determines what sort of place it is (Theatre, Gallery, Tea House, etc.) and what kind of artists frequent the establishment.

If you attend a show at a Performance Space, you may gain free Emotion Aspects by spending one Honor or Ninjo Point and a number of koku equal to the rank of the Performance Space. The Emotion Aspect gained has both an invoke and compel based on the emotion of the artistic work and lasts for for a single game session. If you spend a Season Action, the work of art moved you so deeply that this emotion will stick with you for the entire Season.

Finally, any Artist who spends a Season Action to perform at this Location splits all the koku spent here by other characters this Season with all other Artists (PC's or named NPC's) who have spent a Season Action to perform at this Location. They also gain one koku per their Giri rank. If no characters have

spent koku at this Location this Season than the Artist gains one koku per rank of their Giri.

SEAPORT

Seaports are bustling during the daytime and dead at night. The smells of the salty sea, fetid harbor water, and dead fish comingle with the wood and tar of the ships, the alcohol and smoke from the nearby taverns, and the exotic spices and products stored on the ships or dockside warehouses.

If you frequent a Seaport, you may hear of rumors and gossip from the sailors and dockworkers. For every Ninjo Point you spend at the Seaport, you gain a number of Rumors equal to the rank of the Seaport.

You may also gain items that are difficult to acquire in Japan. Spend a number of Honor or Ninjo Points up to the rank of the Seaport to acquire an item of worth. You cannot acquire truly unique items in this manner, but you can acquire hard to find items like gaijin pistols or revolvers, medical texts, rare poisons or animals. An item acquired here has a number of Bonus dice that equals the number of Honor or Ninjo Points you spent. This item's bonus dice may not exceed the Seaport's rank.

STRONGHOLD (FORT, CASTLE, CITADEL)

Even the smallest Forts are large imposing structures that overlook a City. Built in strategically important places to defend a road, a pass, a harbor, or the City itself, Strongholds are the physical manifestation of the feudal system in Old Japan.

If there is a Clan ruling the City, they rule from the Stronghold. The rank of the Stronghold is added to the Ruler's dice pools when someone is rolling a contested risk against



the Ruler of the Stronghold. Alternatively, you may add the Stronghold's rank to any dice pools when directly helping the ruler of the Stronghold.

Often, the Clan's other Holdings are located inside the Stronghold, so that they can be better protected from interference and attack. While the Stronghold offers no opportunities for Players to spend Honor or Ninjo Points for benefits, the group should discuss the Stronghold's aesthetics, customs, and resources, as it is often a central meeting place and roleplaying backdrop.



SURGERY

Surgeries are usually medium sized buildings found in a gaijin quarter, at a prison or mortuary, or in a Burakumin neighborhood. Surgery is considered an unclean practice by Buddhist and Shinto religions as many surgeons and doctors come into contact with blood and other bodily fluids, all Unclean substances.

If you visit a Surgery, you can be healed of Injuries, diseases, or poisons and avoid Infection. You may also acquire poisons here from the pharmacists who can concoct dangerous substances.

Healing: If you wish to be healed at a Surgery, you must spend Honor Points and koku. Each Honor Point you spend is worth ranks of healing equal to the rank of the Surgery. Your Injury, disease, or poison requires you to purchase ranks of healing equal to the rank of the affliction.

Once you've spent enough Honor Points, your affliction is lowered by one rank and you are now free of any possible Infection. You must let time heal the rest of your Injury. You must also pay a number of koku equal to the Injury rank multiplied by the rank of the Surgery.

Poisons: Conversely, you may spend Ninjo Points and koku to acquire Poison from a Surgery. You must spend a number of Ninjo Points and koku equal to the rank of the Poison you wish to purchase. See the **Is Poison Legal?** on page 62 for more information.

(See **Apothecary** on page 62 for a similar Location)

YAKUZA HIDEOUT

This building is where a yakuza gang congregates and where you will find the oyabun (leader) of the gang. These Locations are as varied as the yakuza gangs themselves. Some are old, run down warehouses, others posh gambling dens or geisha houses, and everything in between.

You may petition a yakuza gang for help committing a crime by spending Honor or Ninjo Points at the Yakuza Hideout. If you ask for assistance with illegal activity, you gain a number of dice for a crime Risk equal to the rank of the Hideout times the total Honor or Ninjo Points spent. The risk is rolled as normal against a standard difficulty (10) with wagers, but no other dice (Aspects, Virtues, etc.) may be added to this Crime Risk. If you gain privilege, describe the crime committed and any benefits gained via wagers. You now owe the oyabun a number of favors equal to the Yakuza Hideout rank.

Yakuza Hideouts are always hidden within another building that acts as a front for criminal dealings; no matter what rank the Location attains as a Yakuza Hideout, it may always acts as a Rank 1 front as well. Anyone who attempts to determine the true nature of the front must make a Cunning Risk opposed by the oyabun's Cunning and a number of Free Wagers for the oyabun equal to the level of the Hideout.

The City as a Character

If you're interested in the City as a game element and story engine in roleplaying games, I highly advise you to check out John Wick's *Play Dirty* and Evil Hat's award-winning *Dresden Files RPG*. Both are great resources for making your city more than a collection of empty buildings!

Joe is playing a Yakuza named Gorgeous Jin. He wants his oyabun to be a woman who owns a Geisha House. He spends a City Creation to create a Face, Kaede of the Maple Leaf Inn. He then declares Three True Things about Kaede. One



of them is that she is his oyabun, and another that her gang hideout is fronted by her Maple Leaf Inn Geisha House.

Later he spends a point to increase the Maple Leaf Inn's rank to two (2). This increases the Gang Hideout level, but the Inn itself, no matter its actual size, will always function as a Rank 1 Geisha House since the majority of the activity is being spent on gang activities.

The yakuza never place their hideouts in a gaijin building, as the yakuza are fanatically loyal to Japanese culture, nor will they submit to the authority of a Clan. A Yakuza Hideout will never be found fronting in a gaijin-owned building and a Clan may not build a Yakuza Hideout as one of its Holdings.

When all the players have passed, move on to Step 3: Threats.

Step 3: Threats

After placing all the Locations on the City map, it's time to add Threats to your City. You should be getting an idea from the Locations and Themes as to what type of story you want to tell and the direction you're taking can give you an idea of the Threats you want to face as a group.

Are you playing all honorable Buddhists? Why not create the Threat of Jesuit missionaries who have the ear of the City Magistrate?

Or maybe you're all low-caste commoners of sorts who are just trying to get by in a shifting economy. Perhaps the samurai of the city don't appreciate that these commoners are prospering and want to take you down a peg by wrecking your shops and taking what's "due" to them!

Or maybe there is a secret organization plotting revenge...

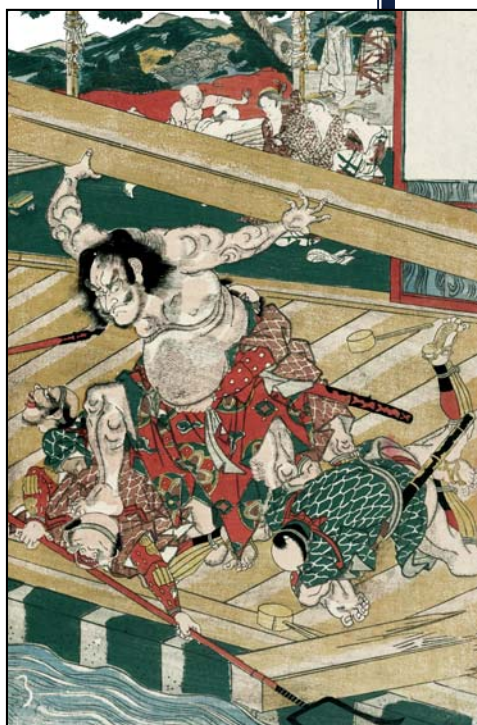
As with Locations, go around in a circle to spend your City Points. When you spend a point you may detail one Threat the characters or the City as a whole faces. Go around until everyone passes. If you are stumped look at the Locations and Themes you've detailed for ideas.

For each Threat detailed by the Players, the Narrator should award Honor or Ninjo Points:

- A minor Threat that affects only one character that can be resolved in a session or two is worth one Ninjo Point.
- A major Threat that affects only one character that lasts longer than a session or two is worth two Ninjo Points.
- A minor Threat that affects over half the characters that can be resolved in a session or two is worth one Honor Point.
- A major Threat that affects over half the characters that lasts longer than a session or two is worth two Honor Points.

The Narrator records these Threats on the City Sheet.

As my group is building our version of Nagasaki, Chris details the threat of “Three Ronin Brothers are Hunting Me,” describing how he angered three brothers who still seek revenge on his Soldier. The group agrees that this is an interesting long-term Threat that Chris’s character will have to work on for most of the campaign. I award Chris two Ninjo points for creating such an interesting long-term obstacle.



Erik creates the Threat, "A Typhoon is coming," and tells the group that many have foreseen a great storm on the horizon. This is an excellent short term Threat that will be resolved soon, but will have a large impact on the City. I grant the entire group an Honor point.

When all the players have passed, move on to Step 4: Organizations.

Step 4: Organizations

Once you've finished adding Threats to the City, the Narrator writes down any Organizations that might own or work at a Location. Is there a Sumo Stable, a Dojo, or Yakuza Gang? What about a ruling Samurai Clan? The Player of the character most closely related to the Organization associated with a Location should say Three True Things about the Organization.

After all the free Organizations have been added to the City, go around the group again and spend City Points to create additional Organizations. Each City Point spent creates a new Organization in the City, and the Player who spent the City Point must say Three True Things about the Organization.

Under the Organizations section of the City Sheet write down any Organizations that have been created (either through a Location or through spending City Points) and any details about the Organizations that have already been described.

Feel free to leave blank sections under the Organizations. Worry about those holes only when the characters come face to face with them, and then make Wisdom Risks to see what they know. You don't need to detail everything now, and sometimes the blank spaces are more interesting to explore later!

When all the players have passed, move on to Step 5: Faces.

Narrator Note: Trouble in your city

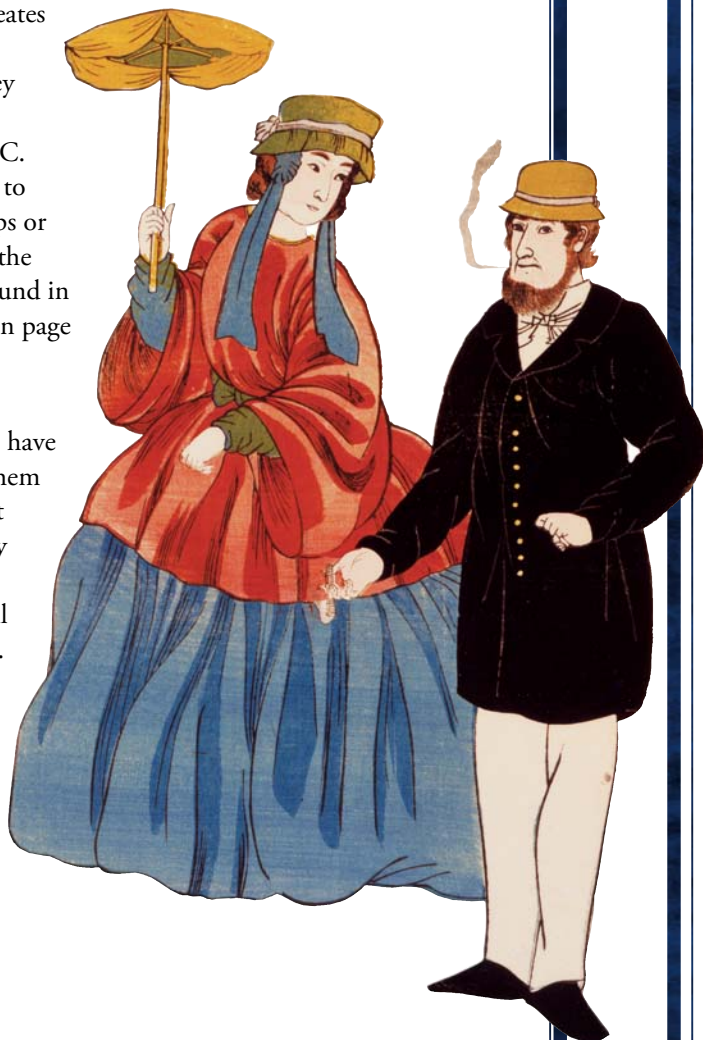
Once all the Players have created their characters and the City has been filled with Locations, Narrators can go through the initial steps for starting a Season found on page 157. Roll for Trouble if you don't already have a good problem to deal with based on the player's contributions to the City, such as a Threat or ambitious Organization.

Step 5: Faces

Finally, the Players go around the circle again and spend City Points to create any Individuals not associated with any groups. Is there an irascible doctor who works at the Surgery? Perhaps you described the richest merchant in town when you added a Port or perhaps the merchant's hard drinking son who wishes he was a samurai when you added the Tavern. Make sure you record all these characters for future use.

When a player creates an NPC by spending a City Point, etc., they must say Three True Things about the NPC. A Narrator will want to grant leaders of groups or organizations one of the Organization Tags found in **Chapter 5: Aspects** on page 91.

Just like with the Organizations, if you have holes you can leave them empty for now. Don't feel like it is necessary to detail everything. Leave holes only until you need to fill them.



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When all the players have passed, move on to Step 6: Review Your City.

Step 6: Review Your City

Go back over everything you've created as a group. Make sure everything is recorded and detailed to the level you need to start playing. If you have any City Points left over, spend them on whatever you think would add interesting stories to your City. Have the players check the Narrator's work or if the Narrator is having a player record everything have the Narrator check their work. You're ready to play!

The Story Pool

Do you remember how all of the City Points the Players spent went to the Narrator?

MUWAHAHAHA!

Now that the Players have **foolishly** given the Narrator all of their City Points, the Narrator has set aside the very seeds of the Player's inevitable **doom** as the Story Pool! At any point during a game session, the Narrator may spend a Story Point from the Story Pool to make a change to an existing detail in the game, like spending a wager after a risk. But Story Points can actually contravene existing Truths and facts, effectively rewriting what the Players know to be true.

In short: Narrators are allowed to restate **any single** Truth already established per Story Point they spend.

Perhaps that important left turn on the map in the castle is not there. Maybe the oyabun is not behind the recent murders. Or perhaps Lord Daasu Beida is actually Sukaiwaka Ruka's father! Story Points add twists and turns to the game by surprising the Players!

Remember that whenever a Player spends an Honor or Ninjo Point, that point goes into the Story Pool. The Narrator tracks how many Story Points are in the Story Pool from session to session. If the Story Pool is ever empty, the Narrator has to wait until a Player spends an Honor or Ninjo Point to make further alterations.

Narrator's Note: The Story Pool

The Story Pool is there because plot twists can be awesome, and as a Player I love not being certain of what's really going on. The system of privilege and wagers allows Players to have a lot of control over what happens in the story, and I've found that it can cut mystery and uncertainty out of the game. If you can always spend a wager to have things turn out in your favor, why worry?

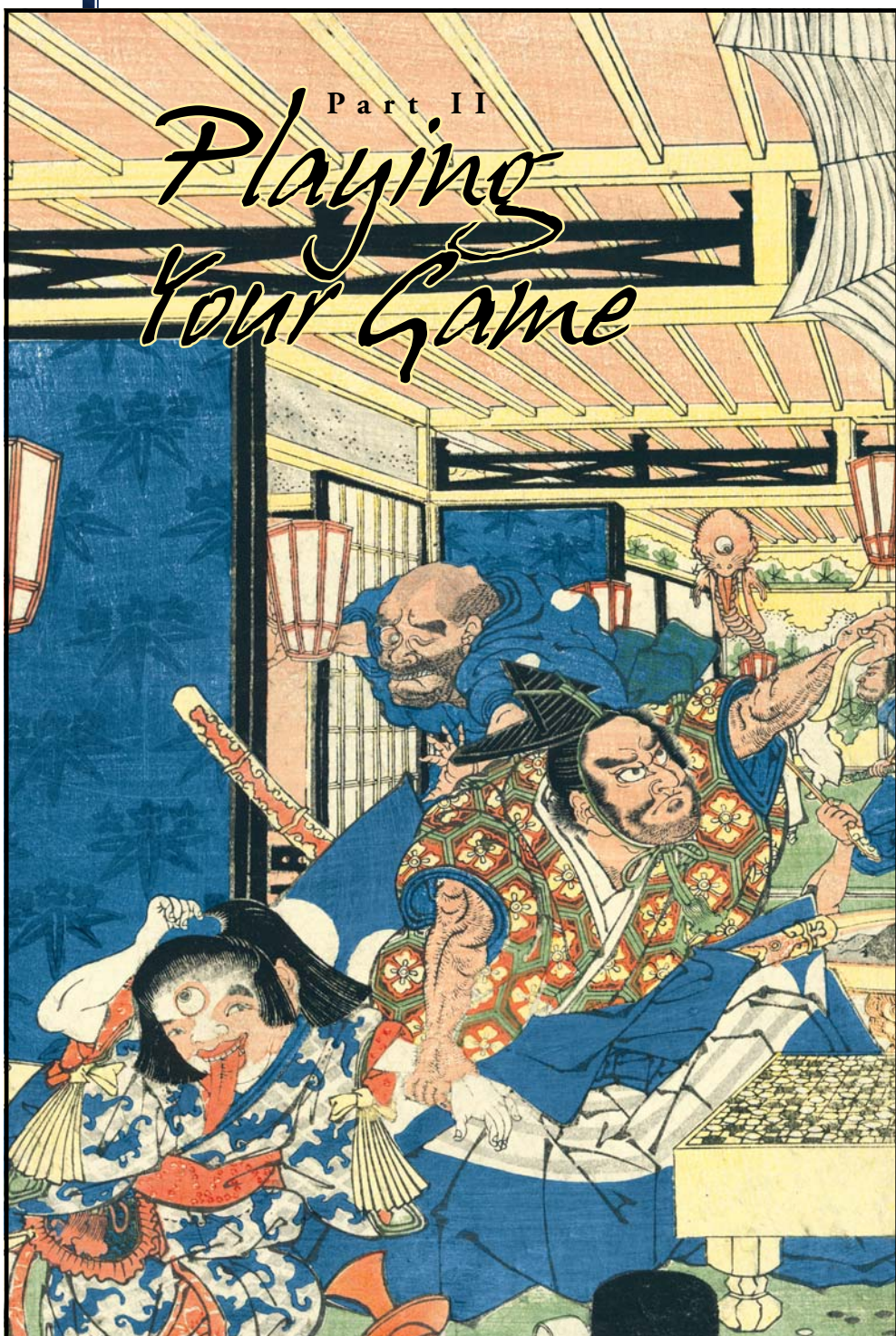
The Story Pool is intended to maintain the mystery of a constantly changing city, to put doubt in the Players' minds about the certainty of the choices they've made. But don't abuse the twists and turns it brings to the game. The Story Pool is designed to create in-game tension and drama, not table drama and tension. Don't override the Player's wagers without reason or contradict True Things just because you don't like them. Look for points of drama and pressure!

If your Players are making the current plot far too easy for themselves with wagers, by all means hit them with a tough Story Point: an NPC ally betrays them unexpectedly, one of them is captured instead of escaping, or a key resource they needed is suddenly missing. But remember that the Story Points are there to raise tension and keep things interesting for the Players first!



Part II

Playing Your Game







Chapter 4
*Climbing Mount
Inaba*
Risks

稻葉山の登山

“I enjoy the cool under
The pines of Mount Inaba,
Soothing the hardships of my journey:
Mountain cove—
I would nourish my body
with this field of melons”

- Basho

In this chapter, we discuss all the rules for resolving risks in the game.

A risk is a meaningful action taken by a character whose outcome may influence the plot and/or the characters of the story.

If it isn't meaningful, it probably isn't a risk. If it doesn't affect any characters, it probably isn't a risk. If it doesn't affect the plot, it probably isn't a risk.

If a Player wants to undertake an action and it doesn't qualify as a risk, the Player gets to narrate the outcome of the action.

If a Player wants to undertake a risk, then the narration rights of that action are at stake. In other words, if the Player rolls well enough, they can narrate the outcome of his action. If they do not, then the Narrator does.

Privilege

Rolling dice in *A World of Dew* is not about success and failure. Instead, it is about who gets to say what happens.

When you want your character to take a risk, you roll a bunch of six-sided dice. If the sum of the dice is **equal to or greater than ten**, you gain **privilege**. This means you get to say what happens.



If the sum of the dice is nine or less, the Narrator gets privilege. This means the Narrator gets to say what happens.

I'll say that again.

If you beat the target number, you get to determine how your character succeeds or fails. If you don't, the Narrator gets to say how your character succeeds or fails.

Target Number

The target number for almost all risks is ten.

That number never goes up or down. Ten.

Getting Dice

You get dice from the following sources:

VIRTUE

If a Virtue is appropriate to the risk, you get a number of dice equal to the Virtue's rank. You may only invoke one Virtue per risk; you cannot gain dice from more than one Virtue at a time.

NAME

If your character's **family name** is appropriate to the risk, you gain one die. Only gaijin and Samurai status (or higher) characters have family names. All other characters have only personal names.

If your character's **personal name** is appropriate to the risk, you gain one die.

You can gain two dice if you have a family and personal name that are both applicable to the risk at hand.

GIRI

If you have a Giri that is appropriate to the risk, you gain your Giri Rank in dice.

ASPECT

If you have an Aspect that is appropriate to the risk, you gain three dice. You may only invoke one Aspect per risk; you cannot gain dice from more than one Aspect at a time.

OTHERS

As you read through the book, you will find other sources of dice including status, Locations, Relationships, sword or sumo schools, Honor and Ninjo Points, Reputations, Injuries and various Tags.

Simple Risk

A simple risk usually involves a single character. A character trying to remember details. A character trying to lift something heavy. A character climbing a wall. All of these are good examples of simple risks.

All you have to do is roll a number of dice and beat a ten. If you can do that, you gain privilege and get to say how your character succeeds or fails. If you roll nine or less, the Narrator gains privilege and says how your character succeeds or fails.

Mike's character, Obu Tsubaki, has been called by his oyabun to perform a task. One of the oyabun's favorite concubines has been murdered and Tsubaki's reputation for having an eye for details is known in the City. The oyabun asks Tsubaki to look at the murder scene to determine if he can find anything important.



Tsubaki enters the room to find clues. That's Mike's intent. The Narrator tells him, "That's a Cunning risk."

Mike look at his character sheet.

Tsubaki has a Rank 4 Cunning. That gives him four dice.

*Tsubaki also has the Aspect **The Reverse Side**.... The Narrator agrees that's an appropriate Aspect for looking at the situation from multiple angles. Since an appropriate Aspect give a player three dice for a risk, Mike gets three more dice. Finally, Mike has the Rank 2 Reputation: **An Eye for Detail**, so he gains two more dice. He now has a total of nine dice.*

He makes the roll: 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, 1, 1. Well over ten. He gains privilege.

He tells the Narrator, "I find a clue. A dab of puffer fish poison on the girl's lips."

Wagers

As you are about to undertake a risk, you may notice that you have more dice than you need for rolling a ten. If that's the case, you'll want to make some **wagers**.

Wagers are the real backbone of the system. They make the game fun.

When your character gains privilege, you have one effect. But you can increase the effect of your success by **spending wagers**. Wagers allow you to do more than just climb a wall or notice one clue or strike an opponent with a single roll.

Consider. About to roll for a risk, you look at your pool. You can easily beat the risk. You've got seven dice. Using four is a safe bet. Five is an almost guarantee. So, what do you do with those extra dice? You **wager** them. Set those extras aside and roll the rest.

Setting dice aside before your roll is called **wagering dice**. A wagered die does not get rolled with your other dice. It's set aside,

waiting to see if you gain privilege and control the outcome of the roll. If you do, those wagers are valuable!

If you beat the risk (get a ten!), each wagered die can be spent to add additional details to a scene, increase the rank of an Injury, or state True Things about other characters. In other words, each wagered die allows the Player to take additional narrative control of the conflict at hand.

Yes, this means **the Players** tell **the Narrator** what's happening in the scene. Wagers give everyone the opportunity to be the Narrator, to be in charge, to add to the collective narrative.

Let's expand on the example above: Mike's character, Obu Tsubaki, is investigating the murder of his oyabun's favorite concubine.

*He still has a Rank 4 Cunning, the Rank 2 Reputation: **An Eye for Detail**, and **The Reverse Side**... Aspect giving him nine dice to roll. Because he really only needs four dice to make ten, he set aside five of his nine dice as wagers.*

*He makes his roll:
6, 4, 4, 1. He easily
beats a ten. That gives
him privilege.*

*Because he has
privilege, he says, "I
find a clue. A dab of
puffer fish poison on
her lips."*

*His five wagers allow
him to say five more
things Tsubaki finds.
He tells them to the
Narrator.*



First wager: "I also find a similar dab of poison in some rice spilled on the floor."

Second wager: "The lock to the window is in perfect condition."

Third wager: "But the window is open."

Fourth wager: "The road outside the window is muddy."

Fifth wager: "There are muddy footprints from a small foot on the wall outside and the window sill."

CONVERTING WAGERS TO GLORY

Wagers can also be spent to gain Glory Points to increase appropriate Reputations. For every two wagers you convert to Glory, you add one Glory Point to an appropriate Reputation. See **Chapter 6: Honor, Glory, and Desire** on page 103 for details on Glory Points and Reputations.

Mike has five wagers to spend for his roll to investigate the concubine's death, but instead of detailing the muddy footprints he decides to increase his Reputation as a sharp detective. He feels that the lead he created with the poisoned rice is enough to get him started on his investigation.

*Instead of detailing the last two Truths about the muddy road and footprints, he spends those two wagers to create a Glory Point for his Rank 2 Reputation: *An Eye for Detail*. He already has nine Glory Points in this Reputation; adding a tenth point increases the Reputation to a Rank 3 Reputation. In the future, when Mike uses his Reputation to gain dice on risks he will gain three dice instead of two.*

ESTABLISHING TRUE THINGS

In addition to saying things about the scene, you can also use your wagers to say true things about other characters. In fact, when you meet a new NPC, it's likely that the Narrator

will ask you to make a Wisdom risk to find out what you “know.” Of course, that’s your opportunity to wager some dice to declare interesting things about the character in question!

Mike wants to know more about the oyabun’s concubine. He asks the Narrator what he know about her. The Narrator says, “You tell me. Make a Wisdom risk.”

He has a Rank 3 Wisdom. That gives him three dice.

*He also has the Aspect **A Monk for Three Days...**, which means he has spent a little time as a bodyguard for a concubine. The Narrator agrees this is an appropriate Aspect, but he can only use it to learn things he would know from being a concubine’s bodyguard.*

He has six dice. He makes two wagers.

His roll: 4, 3, 3, 2. He makes ten and gains privilege.

The first thing he knows (because he got privilege) is that, “She was captured when the oyabun’s gang defeated a rival gang.”

His first wager: “And she was the rival oyabun’s second daughter.”

Second wager: “And she was never happy here.”

THE WAGER GOLDEN RULES

You cannot use a wager to contradict a previously established element of the scene. You cannot use a wager to say, “No.” You can only use wagers to say “Yes, and...” or “Yes, but...” You cannot simply negate another person’s wager. Wagers are used to add elements to a scene or to define undefined elements of a scene, not to contradict or undermine the established facts of a scene.

You cannot use a wager to get a free risk. Any action that would require a risk (like inflicting an Injury during a Wisdom



risk) cannot be accomplished with a wager. That requires an additional risk.

FREE WAGERS

Every once in a while, you will receive a **free wager**. This is a wager the Narrator gives you because of circumstance, a mechanical bonus from a Location or Giri, or some other reason. You can add these to any wagers you make on any appropriate roll.

Free wagers are just that: they are free. They don't come from your die pool. You can't add them back into your die pool, either. Also, if you roll 9 or less, you lose **all** wagers, even the free ones.

Contested Risks

A **contested risk** occurs when two or more characters want the same thing. All Players roll simultaneously and the Player who rolls higher is the **victor**. All the other Players who rolled lower are the **defeated**.

STEP 1: GATHER DICE

The Players announce how many dice they can roll for the risk.

STEP 2: ANNOUNCE HIDDEN WAGERS

Each Player then secretly makes wagers and reveals their wagers at the same time.

STEP 3: DETERMINE PRIVILEGE & WAGERS

The Players roll. The Player who rolls highest is the victor and has privilege. Any and all other Players involved in the risk are the defeated and do not have privilege.

If all Players roll below a ten the Narrator then describes the scene where no party involved gets what they want, and terrible things happen.

The victor has privilege and may describe the outcome of the risk.



The victor also gets to keep all their wagers.

The victor also gets to say who spends their wager first (themselves or another player).

The defeated do not have privilege.

The defeated also only keeps half their wagers, rounded up (minimum of one if they made wagers). If they kept no wagers, they have no half wagers to round up.

STEP 4: SPEND WAGERS

The victor decides who spends their first wager, the victor or one of the other defeated. Spending wagers then goes around the circle until all players are out of wagers.

If you like, you can choose to **pass** when it comes your turn to use a wager. This allows you to hear more of what's going on (or spend wagers on Glory Points), but passing also loses you the opportunity to spend your wager first and set precedent. Remember: wagers cannot say "No." A wager can only say "Yes, and..." or "Yes, but..." or some other positive modifier. Passing lets your opponent establish facts that you cannot get rid of by spending wagers later.

If all players pass, the Narrator asks if they really want to end spending wagers. If they do not, wagering continues with the first player to pass. If all players want to pass, they spend any leftover wagers on Glory Points or discard the unused wagers.

Mike's character, Obu Tsubaki, is questioning Marissa's Ronin, Tanuki about her whereabouts during the murder of the concubine. After intense questioning (roleplaying), Mike wants to know if Tanuki is telling the truth. Marissa wants Tsubaki to believe Tanuki. This calls for a contested risk.

For Tsubaki, Mike has to roll his Rank 4 Cunning (determining truth from lies) plus his Rank 3 Reputation: An Eye for Detail. That gives him seven dice.

Marissa has to make a Beauty risk (communication, be it truth or lies). Tanuki's Beauty is three. She also has the Aspect Honest Eyes giving her three more dice, for a total of six dice.



Mike tells Marissa that he has seven dice and Marissa tells Mike that she has six dice.

They both make their wagers in secret. They put their hands under the table and put their wagers in their right hand and their remaining dice in their left hand. Simultaneously, they reveal their wagers and put them on the table. Mike makes three wagers and Marissa makes only one.

Now, it's time to roll. Whoever rolls higher gets privilege. If either of them rolls below a 10, that player will lose all their wagers.

Less Than 10

If any Player in a contested risk rolls less than ten, they get nothing. They get no wagers, no privilege, no anything. Don't throw all your dice away on wagers expecting to keep half of them even if you lose. If you don't roll at least a ten, you get nothing.

Mike's roll: $4+3+2+1=10$. It's just barely enough.

Marissa's roll: $5+4+4+3+2=18$. Marissa is the victor and Mike is the defeated.

Marissa gets to determine the outcome of their risk. She also keeps all of her wagers. In this case, she made only one wager.

Because Mike is the defeated, he only keeps half his wagers, rounded up. Since he made three wagers, he get to keep two of them. (3 divided by $2 = 1.5$. Rounded up, that's 2 .)

Marissa says, "Tsubaki believes Tanuki." Then, she declares that she will spend her first wager. She adds: "And, Tsubaki suspects someone else."

Now it is Mike's turn to use a wager. He says, "Yes, but there is a hole in Tanuki's story I have not yet noticed."

Marissa has no more wagers, so Mike spends his last wager to say, "I suspect Tanuki's lover, Saru."



Cooperative Risks

If two or more characters are working toward the same goal, they can make a **cooperative risk**. This kind of risk allows everyone to assist (and add details) in some way.

STEP 1: GATHER DICE

All Players announce how they are gathering dice, and then announce how many dice they have.

STEP 2: ANNOUNCE PUBLIC WAGERS

All Players then announce how many wagers they are going to make.

STEP 3: DETERMINE PRIVILEGE & WAGERS

Everyone rolls. Every Player who rolls ten or higher gains privilege. That is, every Player who rolls ten or higher gets to say one thing true about the outcome of the risk. The Player who rolls the highest gains **primary privilege**; the other Players all gain **secondary privilege**.

The Player who rolled highest keeps all their wagers. All the other Players only keep half their wagers, rounded up.

The Player who rolled highest gets the first opportunity to say what happened at the end of the risk. They then choose which Player goes next.



Each Player who gains privilege can add a detail to the outcome when they are selected to go next. Then they spend their wagers to add additional details.

Cooperative Risk Example

Two Sumo named Soteki and Kenshin (played by Dan and Mark) are trying to lift a heavy gate separating them from their dying friend, the Ronin Tanuki.

Both gather dice. Soteki has a Rank 3 Strength, and Kenshin has a Rank 4 Strength. Because they have the [None of Us...](#) Aspect, they each gain three more dice. Dan has six dice for Soteki and Mark has seven dice for Kenshin.

Mark decides to spend an Honor Point from the pool giving Kenshin four more dice. Now, Kenshin has eleven dice and Soteki still has six.

Both players, Mark and Dan, announce their wagers. They could hide their wagers, but they feel it is appropriate to show them and work cooperatively. Mark makes five wagers for Kenshin; Dan makes two wagers for Soteki. That means Mark rolls six dice and Dan rolls four.

Mark rolls 5, 4, 3, 3, 2, and 2. Dan rolls 6, 6, 4, and 4. Mark rolled a nineteen and Dan rolled a twenty. That means that even though Dan rolled fewer dice, he still gains primary privilege: he gets to say whether or not the two Sumo lift the gate successfully. He also determines who spends their first wager. Because he does not gain primary privilege, Mark only keeps half his wagers, rounded up, a total of three (3) wagers.

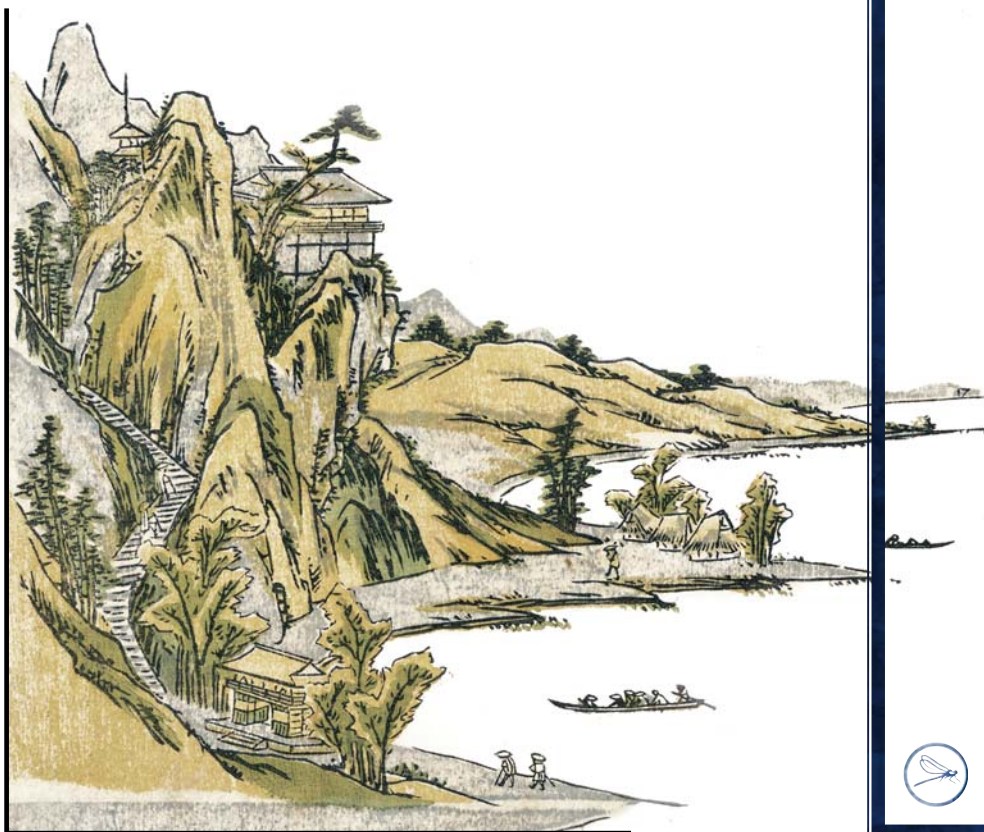
Dan says, "We successfully lift the gate..." and he spends the first wager: "but my Strength gave out at the last minute, leaving Kenshin to lift the gate alone." Quite honorable!

Mark is working with Dan in this risk, so while he didn't get to go first and only keeps half his wagers, he also gets to add a detail with his secondary privilege.

Mark says, "As I lift the gate over my head I let out a great shout that awakens Tanuki."

Then Mark spends his first wager since Dan already spent his own first wager. "Tanuki wasn't the only one alerted by my shouts, guards stumble out of the barracks looking around."

Dan and Mark continue to spend their wagers until they've spent them all.





Chapter 5

Within the Dragonfly's Eye

Aspects

Quietly sitting
Within the dragonfly's eye
I watch the valley.

- Gansho

Aspects are defining traits. People have Aspects, places have Aspects, and even things can have Aspects. For those familiar with roleplaying game tropes, an Aspect is like a “skill” or “ability,” but it’s a bit more three-dimensional.

Aspects represent the qualities of a person, place or thing. For example, if you have the Aspect *Entering the Tiger's Cave*, it reflects a particular quality about your character. They recognize that it is fear that stops many from completing the tasks set before them, and do not let fear stop them from acting. Other Aspects reflect different qualities. If a character has *The Talented Hawk* as an Aspect, they know how to appear misdirect or appear weak to their opponent.

Aspects reflect not only knowledge, but skill as well. They are broad-based abilities that are open to a little interpretation. Now, you can't go around with an Aspect like *I'm Awesome!* That's just silly. Aspects should be open for Players to use, but an Aspect shouldn't be useful in all situations.

Invoke & Compel

Every Aspect has two elements: an **invoke** and a **compel**. The owner of the Aspect uses the invoke, but others can use the compel. (A Player may compel his own Aspect as well. We'll talk more about that later.)

You invoke Aspects when your character is about to take a risk. When you invoke an Aspect, your character gains three bonus dice for an appropriate risk. For example, if you want to know the right course

目玉にうつるとんぼ



of action during complicated issues of etiquette, you should have the *Do Not Stand in the Melon Field* Aspect. That Aspect gives you three bonus dice for any risks involving face and honor.

Invoking an Aspect does have a few limits. You may only invoke one Aspect per risk. You cannot invoke more than one. Also, you are the only person who can invoke your own Aspect. You can't invoke it for someone else and other Players can't invoke your Aspects for their own benefit either. Invokes are powerful tools that allow you to get narration rights at the end of a risk, and only you get to choose when you invoke them.

But each Aspect has a compel as well. A compel forces your character to act in a certain way whenever the situation is appropriate. The Aspect *Entering the Tiger's Cave* has the compel that you do not always heed wise caution or fear and jump into action without preparation or caution. The Aspect *The Reverse Side* has the compel that you understand people so clearly that you sometimes insult them with your honest assessments.



Whenever characters act according to their compels, they gain an Honor Point from the Narrator to add to the Honor Pool.

Everyone should be on the lookout for opportunities to compel any of the characters. If you notice another player compelling their character, but not asking for the Honor point, you should remind them of the opportunity.

Not acting on your compel, however, has consequences.

Refusing to act upon a compel when the opportunity arises forces you to take three Honor from the Pool and hand them to the Narrator.

Relationships & Reputations

Relationships and **Reputations** are special Aspects: the invoke and compel are the same phrase. You gain Relationships with the other characters during character creation when you write out one sentence that describes your side of the relationship with each other character. You gain Reputations during character creation and later during gameplay that describe the reputations that your character has.

The sentence that you write out for these two types of Aspects acts **as both the invoke and the compel**. Anyone can use that sentence to compel you to act in a specific manner granting you an Honor Point. And you can use that sentence to invoke during a Risk to gain your three bonus dice.

Unlike regular Aspects if you refuse to compel a Relationship or a Reputation you do not lose three Honor Points from the pool. Worse things happen.

Refusing Relationship Compels

If you refuse a Relationship compel you must first give two Ninjo points to the character whose relationship you've failed to uphold. Then you must re-write your Relationship sentence for that character to reflect your failing to act in the appropriate manner. The other player may rewrite theirs as well if they feel the need to make the change.

Tanuki, the Ronin, and Mutoh, the Sumo have acquired a priceless jade falcon statue. Mutoh wants to give it to his sumo school Master (as it was his Master's great-grandfather who originally owned it), but Tanuki needs to sell it to the oyabun of the Ten Thousand Koku Gang to pay off the debts she owes them.

Mutoh's Relationship with Tanuki is I Would Do Anything for Tanuki, My Love.

Tanuki's Relationship with Mutoh is I Always Support My Friend, Mutoh.

Unfortunately, Tanuki decides that she cannot let Mutoh give the statue to his master. So when he is distracted she



visits the oyabun and sells the statue to pay off her debts. Right before she does that the Narrator calls out Tanuki's Relationship as a compel and warns her that she will damage her Relationship with Mutoh if she goes through with this sale.

*Tanuki sells the statue despite the warning; her heart heavy knowing she's betrayed her friend Mutoh. Marissa, Tanuki's player, gives Misha, Mutoh's player, two of her Ninjo Points and rewrites her Relationship with Mutoh to read: *I Sometimes Help My Friend, Mutoh*. Misha considers changing Mutoh's Relationship with Tanuki, but realizes that Mutoh is too trusting and too much in love with Tanuki to change Mutoh's Relationship with Tanuki.*

Marissa groans and tells Misha, "Now you're just making me feel worse!"

Refusing Reputation Compels

If you refuse a Compel for one of your Reputations, the Narrator must declare your Reputation to be damaged. Since you didn't uphold your Reputation you don't get the benefits of the Reputation in other conflicts.

Until you repair your Reputation, you can't use it in any risks.

To repair a damaged Reputation, you must earn Glory Points equal to your Reputation's rank in actions that are appropriate to your Reputation. See **Chapter 6: Honor, Glory, and Desire** on page 103 for more on damaged Reputations.

Tags

You can give a temporary Aspect to another character, a place or even a thing. We call these **Tags**. When you give another character a Tag, it works like an Aspect, describing the situation at hand (*I'm Drunk...*) or the characteristics of a person, place, or thing (*Clumsy, On Fire!, Broken*, etc.).

Tags are descriptive phrases like Aspects, but the thing Tagged **gains no benefit from the Tag**. Other characters, however, can

make use of the Tag to gain extra dice for contested risks. **Tagging**, activating the Tag, doesn't cost anything; the other characters or NPCs just need to know the Tag exists to activate it. Tagging always gets you two bonus dice, provided that the Tag would be useful to the character activating the Tag, such as a Ronin tagging his opponent's *Clumsy* during a duel. Remember that you can't activate your own Tags!

*Brie's Geisha, Sakura, creates the Rumor Tag **Double Crossing Backstabber** on Joe's Yakuza, Gorgeous Jin. Anyone who knows the Rumor can tag it during an appropriate risk, and gain two dice to roll against Gorgeous Jin.*

Tags are especially useful for describing situational changes. If someone drops a lantern in a room full of flammable material, you can give the room the *On Fire!* Tag. If your intention is to burn down the building, you could tag *On Fire!* to gain two bonus dice. Multiple characters might even tag *On Fire!* as well, so long as each one has a way to turn the Tag to their own advantage.

Or, if you are playing a sumo in a school with a *Non-Traditionalist* Master, your character will have the *Non-Traditionalist* Tag from their Organization (see page 99 for more on Organization Tags). Another character (if they know your sumo school) can use that Tag to gain two bonus dice against you in any situation when your non-



traditionalist nature would be a disadvantage, like trying to embarrass you during a formal sumo ceremony.

Tags do not count toward the total number of Aspects that can be invoked during a risk. If you use a Tag during a risk, you aren't actually invoking it. You're tagging it. And that doesn't count towards the total Aspects invoked in the risk.

Rumor Tags

Rumors are Tags that **might be true**, and are treated as true by everyone until the affected player confirms the truth of the Rumor or denies it by squashing the Rumor. Rumors allow Players to indirectly shape the story by suggesting possible Truths about the world, but also act as Tags, giving social bonuses based on gossip and hearsay.

Anyone can create Rumor Tags. Geisha Houses and Seaports are excellent sources for Rumors, but anyone may create them by spending Ninjo Points and placing the Rumor directly on another character.

To create a Rumor Tag on another player character, declare what the Rumor is, write it down on a piece of paper with the target's name at the top, write your initials at the bottom, and hand it and one Ninjo point to your fellow Player. The Tagged Player places the Rumor in front of them at the table.

To create a Rumor Tag on an NPC, write the NPC's name on a piece of paper with the Rumor, and place the paper in front of the Narrator. Pay the Narrator one Ninjo Point.

If you are describing a Rumor Tag about another player character that you "learned" from a Geisha House or Seaport, the Narrator will pay the target of the Rumor one Ninjo point. **You** were obviously not the source of such a nasty Rumor: it was the geisha or dockworkers! There is no extra cost to you beyond what you already paid for acquiring the Rumor.

Rumors stay with your character as long as you wish them to remain. If you desire for the Rumor to remain, there is no need to remove it. As long as the Rumor is attached to your character, however, other characters will be able to tag it for two dice.

There are two ways for you to remove a Rumor from your character if you desire:

First, you can confirm the Rumor is true. Pay the Narrator two Ninjo points to convert the Rumor into a full Aspect. Create an

appropriate invoke and compel based on the Rumor's Tag. If this would cause your total Aspects to exceed nine then replace one of your current Aspects with the new Rumor Aspect.

Or you can squash the Rumor by declaring it to be false. Pay the Narrator two Honor points to clear your name and make sure no one believes that such a deplorable Rumor could be true. Tear up the Rumor and remove it from the game.

Scene Tags

Anyone can create a Tag for a scene when it is appropriate. Some Tags may already exist on a scene based on what has been described as True. If you are taking a risk and are attempting to use part of the scenery to help you, you may ask the Narrator to confirm that you may tag the scene for your two bonus dice, provided that a previous Truth established the Tag.

If no scene Tags are available for you, but you want to create a Tag for a scene, you may do so by spending an Honor or Ninjo Point to Add a Detail. See *Chapter 6: Honor, Glory, and Desire* on page 103 for more on spending Honor and Ninjo Points to Add Details.

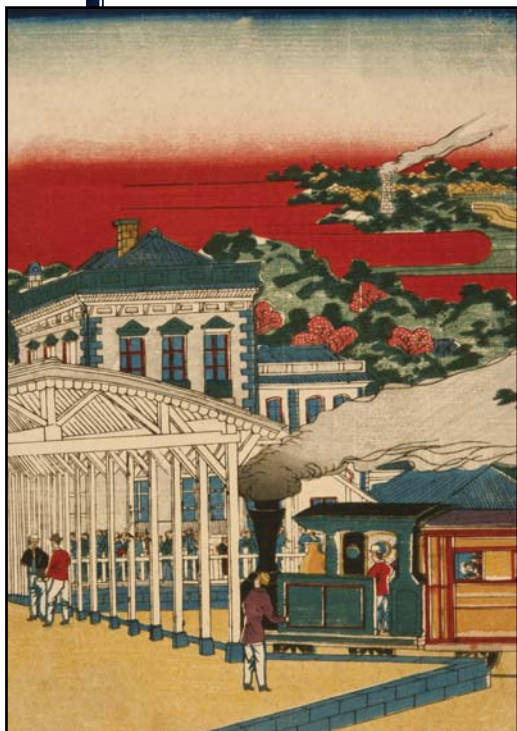
Other players must either spend a Ninjo Point to notice the Tag you've created for themselves, or you must spend an Honor Point to make the scene Tag available for everyone to access. If a Tag for a



scene is instantly universal, like the earlier mentioned *On Fire!* then you must spend an Honor Point to create it. A Ninjo Point won't do the job.

Mutoh and Tanuki are running away from a dozen doshin (police officers) after robbing the corrupt gaijin merchant of his priceless jade falcon statue. Tanuki's player Marissa sees that she doesn't have any Aspects or Reputations to help her in the chase, and Tanuki's Strength is only a two, long odds for rolling a ten and escaping from the doshin.

Marissa really doesn't want Tanuki to be caught. Since the Narrator has described the chase through the back alleyways of



Nagasaki, Marissa decides that there is a convenient ladder leaning against one of the buildings in a side alleyway. Marissa knows that Mutoh wants to give the statue to his sumo stable master, but she needs to sell it to the oyabun to pay off her debts. Fortunately, she's carrying the statue.

Marissa gives the Narrator one Ninjo Point and declares that Tanuki notices a ladder in a side alley and adds that she will be tagging it to help

her escape the doshin. The Narrator accepts the Ninjo Point and Marissa adds two dice to her pool for the Risk.

*Misha, Mutoh's player, now **must** spend a Ninjo Point to Tag the ladder if she wants to gain access to the two bonus dice from the ladder since Marissa spent a Ninjo Point. Since Misha knows that Mutoh trusts Tanuki (and is besotted with her), she shouts out to Tanuki, "Get away, I'll hold them off." Mutoh stops in front of the side alley and turns to face the dozen doshin.*

Organization Tags

Each Organization, Holy Order, or School has a Tag that reflects their typical attitudes and perspectives. Any member of the group is subject to the Tag, and only characters outside the group can use the Tag against the group's members.

Organization Tags grant two bonus dice like other Tags. Like other Tags, activating an Organization Tag is free.

If none of these Tags below are appropriate work with the Narrator to create an Organization Tag that works for your group. After all, there are new attitudes everywhere these days.

AMBITIOUS

Everyone knows your group will do anything to gain prestige. Everyone knows you are looking to expand your power. Whenever you are in a risk involving your group's reputation, another character can give you an Honor Point to tag Ambitious.

For example, you say, "My gang has no plans to attack your gang." You make a Beauty risk. But your target gives you an Honor Point and tags Ambitious. They gain two dice to resist your Beauty risk, for they know that your gang desires territory, koku, and power.

NON-TRADITIONALIST

Whenever you speak of the dignity and honor of your group, another character can give you an Honor Point and tag Non-Traditionalist. Your group is the big nail that everyone wants to hammer down, the outsiders that need to be taught respect. If you try to make an argument about the virtues of your group, someone will tag your Aspect.



CRUEL

Don't even try showing mercy. Don't even try showing compassion. Everyone knows your group's members are cold-blooded bastards. If you ever try to appeal for mercy or compassion, someone will tag Cruel and gain two bonus dice for their argument.

UNTRUSTWORTHY

The truth? What do you know about the truth? What do you care about the truth? Your group's members are a bunch of lying cowards. Don't ever speak to me about the truth again.

TRUSTING

Are you suspicious about the ambassador's promise? If you are, you'll want to make a Cunning risk to see if they're telling you the truth. Of course, they'll spend an Honor Point and tag your Trusting, won't they? Everyone knows your group's members are a trusting bunch.

Injuries as Tags

The most common Tag a character may activate are Injuries, and they work slightly differently. If you are facing another character in a physical risk (Prowess or Strength), you may Tag any and all Injuries that character has for bonus dice by giving that character one Ninjo Point. **The number of bonus dice you gain is equal to the cumulative ranks of all the Injuries.**

Tanuki and Kenshin are in a fight and Tanuki has a rank 1 Injury, a rank 2 Injury and a rank 3 Injury, Kenshin may tag all three Injuries for a total of six bonus dice by spending one Ninjo Point.

Since Kenshin and Tanuki are both player characters Kenshin's Player, Mark, gives the Ninjo Point to Tanuki's Player, Marissa. If Kenshin was an NPC and Tanuki a Player character, the Narrator would grant Marissa a Ninjo Point. If Tanuki was an NPC, then Mark would give the Ninjo Point directly to the Narrator.





Chapter 6

Crave Not These Things

Honor, Glory, and Desire

貪愛するべからず

What's the use of worrying about your beard when your head's about to be taken?

— *Gisaku*, *The Seven Samurai*

For a samurai, honor (yo) is everything. For you, as a Player, honor will be the key to the game. Honor (along with Ninjo) unlocks all the mechanics, enabling you to activate Advantages, Locations, and Tags. It is the true engine of the game. Without honor, your character will be less than nothing.

But honor is a difficult concept. Samurai wrote long essays on honor; all exquisite arguments for what it actually means to be a samurai. What is the best life? What is the appropriate action? What exactly does honor **mean**?

In *Blood & Honor*, John introduced the concept of honor as a question, an open discussion that the samurai had to engage throughout their adventures. Rather than define honor in a categorical way, the game allowed character to hold different views of honor, each one a struggle to build a life of meaning in a harsh world.

In *A World of Dew*, those questions linger. While the world may have moved on from the time of Clans and samurai, the Japanese still struggled with these same conceptions of honor, each one promising a path forward that led to deeper questions and struggles. Thus, characters from *A World of Dew* must still pick a favored Virtue, one that they feel most closely embodies the concept of honor.

What Does Honor Mean?

What does it mean to be honorable? Depending on the Virtue it means different things. Listed below are six points of view regarding honor in Tokugawa Japan, ideas that resonated with the people who lived, worked, fought, and died during that era. You must choose one of these views as your character's primary view on honor when creating your character.

Your character may disagree with a few of the ways that other Virtues view honor. That's fine! In fact, the Virtue your character



disagrees with the most is probably a good Virtue to select as their Weakness. If a way of viewing honor seems alien and incorrect to your character, it's probably the Virtue they don't personally hold.

Of course, others will not agree with your character's views regarding honor. They will see the world through a different lens, with different Virtues. This creates conflict, and conflict is the beginning of good noir stories.

Beauty

One's duty is maintaining civilization. Only through culture and art can humanity maintain its dignity. The rules of society provide us with two important benefits. The first is the law and the second is the exquisite.

Culture provides laws to help maintain balance and order. Every creature in the world has its place in the world and humans are no different. We fulfill an obligation to the universe. We hold a place within it. We must fulfill that obligation. We must follow the structure and order of law. Justice is what mankind introduces into the world. Without humanity, there is no justice. It is our duty to maintain order in the world.

Culture also provides the exquisite. The sublime. Art communicates powerful truths that cannot be stated by words alone. The recreation of experience. I cannot tell you true beauty, I can only try to show it to you through poetry and painting and the other Arts. This is a vital and necessary part of being human.

It is your duty to maintain civilization and help it grow. Make it better. Rid the world of injustice and bring beauty into the lives of as many as possible. This is the truest and most high virtue of bushido.



Courage

Courage is the ability to say “No.” There is no other creature in the world that can do so. All other creatures act on instinct. Humanity alone is capable of rational thought, capable of choosing not to rip off our legs to escape the trap. Courage is more than just willpower. It is the recognition that some things in this world are more important than yourself.

Duty.

When tasked with a charge, many say the word as if it were like any other. That word is **not** like any other. It is the only word a truly courageous person needs: the recognition that your life means nothing if it is not serving a higher purpose.

It is your duty to subsume your personal desires and accept your obligations to society. What you want is irrelevant. Your Organization, Your City, Your Clan, or Your Country always comes first. This is the truest and most high virtue of bushido.

Cunning

Cunning is your most crucial weapon. Without the ability to discern truth from deception, a person’s life is worthless and false. Politics, business, and violence are all truly the art of deception. A wise person knows this.

A **true** sage knows this that discernment between the Truth and Lies is the first step towards enlightenment. The sage is not charmed by the lures of “integrity” or “honesty.” Your enemies use the tools of deception. Choosing not to use them only puts you in danger and only a fool would do that.

A Cunning person is no fool. They bury fools.

We will use distraction and deception. We will tell the Truth from the Lies. We will make our opponent think we are helpless when we are ready to attack. When we are caught off-guard, we will use tricks to keep him from taking advantage of our weakness. And we will spot our enemy’s weakness. This is the truest and most high virtue of bushido.



Prowess

One is already dead if they are not a warrior. If a person does not understand the arts of warfare and the sword then all other skills are meaningless, and we are just waiting to be killed.

A wise man needs only a moment in this world to understand that this is a world of violence and struggle. If we do not know the ways to master it, the world will eat us alive. We must study **advantage**. We must study **strife**. We must study **violence**. This is the true language of the world. To live in the world without mastering it is to live in the world like a blind man: without full understanding of what is around us.

The sword is the way of truth. The sword is the way of peace. The sword is the way of war. Those who do not master the sword think words can protect them. Those who do not master the sword think books can protect them. Those who do not master the sword think illusion can protect them.

What is more real than the sword? Nothing.

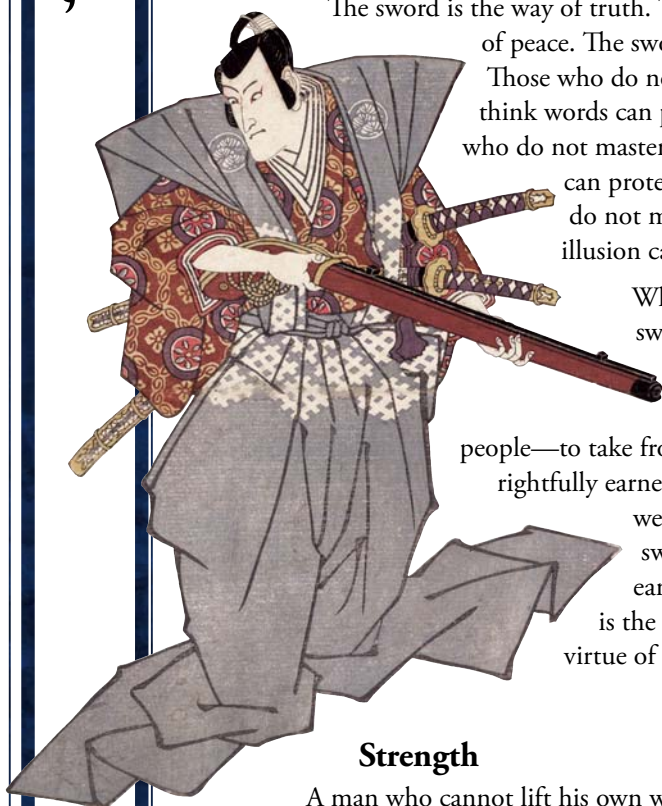
Our enemies use tools—tools of weak people—to take from us what we have rightfully earned. We take back what we have earned with the sword. What we have earned with blood. This is the truest and most high virtue of bushido.

Strength

A man who cannot lift his own weight...what can I do with that?

A man who cannot swim. A man who cannot jump. A man who cannot climb. A man who cannot master his own body. A man who cannot master his own flesh. A man with no discipline.

A man with no strength. This man is useless to me.



Your body is your most precious weapon. Without it, you are a weapon that can only be used by my enemy.

Train your body. Give it strength. A courageous man who is weak wastes his courage. A cunning man who is weak wastes his cunning. All other virtues are wasted if a man cannot master his own body. This is the truest and most high virtue of bushido.

Wisdom

If a woman is ignorant, what good is she?

Let me ask that again. If a woman is ignorant, what use are her other virtues?

If a woman cannot think for herself, if she knows nothing of the world around her, if she acts without true understanding of her actions... she is nothing more than a wild animal who bites and claws without thought, without intention, without **meaning**.

It is only the **meaning** of a woman's actions that matter. The truth of her actions. The intent of her actions. Otherwise, she is like a storm: a raging and violent whirlwind. Destructive but without purpose.

It is knowing the meaning of our actions that gives them purpose. Without that, we are nothing. Therefore, a woman must study. She must study history to know what came before and she must study philosophy to know the profundity of her deeds.

Our enemies will use the past against us. They will use knowledge against us. Without this most potent weapon, we will be naked and helpless against them without knowledge of when, how, or why they strike. This is the truest and most high virtue of bushido.

The Honor Pool

In the center of your gaming table, place a bowl. This is the Honor Pool. You can use whatever tokens you like to represent Honor Points. At the beginning of the first session, fill the Honor Pool with a number of Honor Points equal to the total Honor Points of all the characters present. At the start of every other session fill the Honor Pool with the total Honor Points left over from previous sessions.

Before you make a risk, you may draw Honor Points from the pool to aid your efforts. Give the Honor Points you have drawn to the Narrator to spend them from the Pool. The Narrator turns the Honor Points into Story Points by placing them into the Story Pool.



You can spend Honor Points in four ways: bonus dice, adding details to the story, creating Tags, and activating Location effects.

Bonus Dice

When you spend an Honor Point before a risk, add **four dice** to your pool. You call on your reserves of honor within your soul to aid you in your endeavor. The honorable are worthy of victory and by spending Honor Points you help yourself towards victory.

Adding Details

During the game, a player may spend an Honor Point to add details to the story as it progresses. Think of these like free-floating wagers. Just as a wager allows you to add details to a risk, Honor Points allow you to modify the story in the same way. You can add details to an NPC, a castle, the relationship with your family, or anything else you like in the game.

Like wagers, Honor Points cannot be used to say “No.” If I use a wager to say the gaijin merchant is a drunken fool, you can’t use an Honor Point to say, “No, he’s not.” You can use an Honor Point to say, “He’s a drunken fool because his wife drives him to drink.” That intimates that if we get him away from his wife, he’ll drink less. That isn’t a “No,” it’s a “Yes, but....”

Creating Scene Tags

We already spoke about Tags in *Chapter 5: Aspects* on page 91, but it’s important to restate here. You may spend an Honor Point to create a universal (open to everyone) Scene Tag. Any Tag you create with an Honor Point allows everyone in that



scene to gain the two bonus dice from the scene Tag for risks when appropriate.

Activating Location Effects

During the game, you may spend one or more Honor Points to activate the benefits of a Location. Follow the rules for that Location and spend as many Honor Points as required, no more.

Adding Honor to the Pool

You can add Honor Points to the Pool by taking specific kinds of risks. See the list below for risks that add an Honor Point to the Pool.

Each of these qualifications is cumulative. That is, if you take a risk that fulfils one of the qualifications, that's worth an Honor Point. But if you take a risk that fulfils more than just one qualification, it's worth multiple Honor Points.

Again, my wording here is specific. It must be a **risk**. Simple actions are expected of the characters of *A World of Dew* and are not worth Honor Points. Only risks are worth Honor Points.

There may be circumstances where an action qualifies for an Honor Point, but these should be **momentous**.

- Take a risk that directly furthers the interests of your Master, Patron, Oyabun, Daimyo, etc., but does not further your own interests.
- Take a risk that upholds the dignity and honor of others.
- Take a risk that puts your character in danger while fulfilling another obligation. (The Japanese lived dangerous lives. Just being reckless is not honorable.)
- Fulfill the definition of bushido that hews closely to your Virtue Bonus.

Losing Honor from the Pool

When a character takes an action that is disgraceful, insults the dignity of their Master or

Communal Points

Honor and Ninjo Points are something I struggled with for a long time. But even today the Japanese are a people who view the group as more important than the individual. Thus, I have left Honor as communal resource. You're all in this together. If *A World of Dew* was a Noir game with Honor Points set in Chicago or London, I'd likely make a different choice. The Japanese stories we're hoping to tell demand that we find rules that match the cultural realities of the Japanese people.

otherwise shames themselves, the Narrator takes **three** Honor Points from the pool. The character gets no benefit for these lost points.

As a Narrator, I should note for anyone playing in one of my games that I also take Honor from the Pool for player behavior: quoting Monty Python, answering your cell phone, talking about last night's episode of (insert current cool geek TV show here), or otherwise distracting from the game.

Bad form. Lose Honor.

At the End of the Game

At the end of each game session, the Narrator should count up the total Honor Points in the pool. At the start of the next game session, the Players begin with the same amount of Honor.

The Death of Honor: Ninjo (Desire)

So how does honor work in a game where each character has a different set of loyalties and goals? What if you are not a member of a Clan, Organization, or School? What if you aren't even of Samurai status!? Most of you won't be. You'll still get a little bit of honor, but not as much as the Samurai. Instead, you get something else, something more sinister.

In lieu of the unifying power of honor, you get Ninjo (Desire). Ninjo can only ever help you. Unlike Honor you cannot be selfless with Ninjo. And it is the sense of self that even samurai feel. That's right. Samurai get Ninjo too. Of course, you're all mooching off the poor Samurai's Honor Pool so it's only fair that she use some Ninjo to help herself as well. Desire lives in all our hearts since the fall of the Clans.

On your character sheet you will see a line titled, "Ninjo," and next to it you will see a box and the word "Desire" with a line next to it. Write how much Ninjo you start with in the box and then write next to Desire something your character desires. It could be anything from a short term goal of "a hot meal tonight" to something as grand and noble as "overthrowing the Tokugawa." If you ever complete your Desire erase it, and write in a new one.

Whatever you write in as your Desire cannot be something that is easily done for your character. If you are a samurai who can demand a meal whenever he wants, writing down "A hot meal" is Bad Form. Lose one Honor Point **and** one Ninjo Point. However, if you are a poor ronin that has to work hard for a simple meal then a Desire for

sustenance might work. It'd be even better if you were a poor street urchin. "Overthrowing the Tokugawa," is a better Desire for a ronin!

Gaining Ninjo/Desire

Whenever you take a significant step towards your Desire you gain a Ninjo Point. If you take a step and your Narrator doesn't reward you, remind them. If they agree that you've advanced your Desire, they must grant you a Ninjo Point.

But what can you do with Ninjo Points? What good is all this Desire? How does getting closer to your Desires help you accomplish your goals?

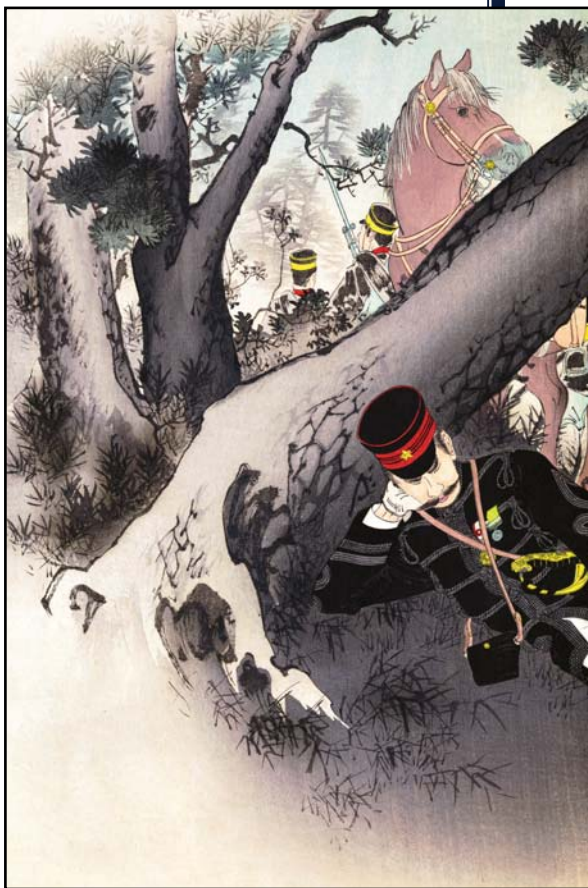
Like Honor Points, you can spend Ninjo Points in four ways: bonus dice, adding details to the story, creating and activating Tags, and activating Location effects. Unlike Honor Points, however, you can only use Ninjo Points to help yourself....

BONUS DICE

You may spend Ninjo Points to gain bonus dice, but you gain only two (2) bonus die for your roll. In addition, **you can only spend Ninjo Points to help yourself toward your Desire.** If helping yourself happens to help others out as well, so be it, but you cannot spend Ninjo on altruistic acts.

ADDING DETAILS

You may also spend Ninjo Points to add details to the story, but any detail you add to the story must be one that only your character can know. No one else knows it.



貪愛するべからず

This detail must be a secret that your character doesn't want to share or reveal. Or if it is something physical, like a ladder that you use to climb away from danger, the ladder or thing can only work for you. **Whatever detail you add can only help your character.**

CREATING AND ACTIVATING TAGS

You may spend Ninjo Points to create Rumor Tags, Scene Tags, and to activate Injuries. Like all other Ninjo expenditures **you can only add dice to risks that will solely benefit you.** When creating Scene Tags with a Ninjo Point your character is the only one who can benefit from the Tag unless other players spend Ninjo Points for their character to also notice the Tag. When you create a Tag that can only benefit you, make it a resource that's limited (like a ladder only you can use) or a secret that you would be unlikely to openly share.

Injuries work a bit different. You may Tag all the Injuries of another player by giving them one Ninjo Point. You gain bonus dice equal to the total of all ranks of Injuries that player has for the cost of one Ninjo Point.

ACTIVATING LOCATION EFFECTS

You may spend Ninjo Points to activate the benefits of a Location, but **you can only spend Ninjo Points to gain benefits that solely benefit you.**

Losing Ninjo/Desire

If you ever act in a selfless or honorable way that makes achieving your Desire more difficult, you lose two (2) Ninjo Points and gain one Honor Point for the Honor Pool. Your Ninjo Points go to the Story Pool. If you don't have than many Ninjo to lose, the Narrator still gains two Story Points for their pool.

Note that you don't have to take a risk to earn Honor Points when you lose Ninjo Points. But the act you take must be one that is significant, such as giving away your last koku to a starving kid instead of gambling it on a sure bet to achieve the riches you so Desire.

Glory & Reputations

Glory indicates how known and respected your character is within the City. The higher your Glory, the more people know who you are

and respect you for your accomplishments and skills. Glory comes in Points and Reputations, but unlike Honor Points you do not spend them. Instead, you try to acquire Glory through noteworthy and auspicious deeds.

Earning Glory

Your character earns Glory in two ways. First, whenever you perform a risk, you may convert two wagers to gain one point of Glory. The greatness of your deed feeds the story of your life. Note that this makes saving extra wagers extremely valuable, even when taking relatively simple risks.

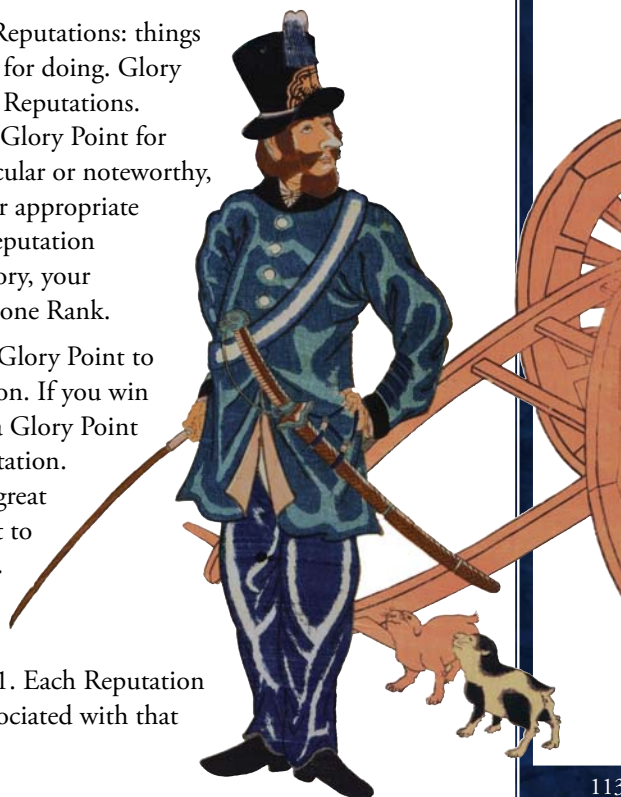
Second, you may earn Glory whenever you take an action that is noteworthy and important. The Narrator will award this Glory directly whenever you take such an action. Players may also suggest to the Narrator when they feel a reward of Glory is appropriate. In fact, I give one Glory Point to each Player at the start of every session that they can give to another Player when they feel Glory is appropriate.

Reputations

Every character has Reputations: things your character is known for doing. Glory Points feed your various Reputations. Whenever you receive a Glory Point for doing something spectacular or noteworthy, you add it to one of your appropriate Reputations. When a Reputation reaches ten points of Glory, your Reputation increases by one Rank.

You may only add a Glory Point to an appropriate Reputation. If you win a duel, you cannot add a Glory Point to your *Great Poet* Reputation. Likewise, if you write a great poem, you cannot add it to your *Duelist* Reputation.

All characters begin the game with one Reputation at rank 1. Each Reputation has a word or phrase associated with that



Glory Rank, indicating the general reputation you earned getting that rank of Glory.

*Mark's character, Kenshin, has a Rank 2 Reputation: **Clever Negotiator** with nine Glory points already invested in it. He gains privilege in a risk while he is negotiating a peace between two rival gangs. He has four extra wagers he has not spent on Truths. He decides to convert them, two for one, into Glory Points. His four wagers become two Glory Points which he adds to his previous nine Glory Points, bringing his total Glory Points in his Rank 2 Reputation: **Clever Negotiator** to an eleven. He erases ten of those points, leaving the last (the eleventh) Glory Point in his Reputation. He increases his Reputation to a Rank 3 Reputation: **Clever Negotiator**.*

Using Reputations

If you are about to undertake a risk and one or more of your Glory Reputations is appropriate, you may add the dice equal to the rank of one the applicable Reputations. In other words, if you have a Rank 1 Reputation: **Great Swordsman** and you have a Rank 3 Reputation: **Winner of the Duel at the Burnt Village**, and you are about to enter into a duel, you may add dice equal to the rank of one of those Reputations, either one die or three dice.

Glory Limits

You may only have a number of Reputations equal to your Giri Rank plus one. Thus, a rank 1 Yakuza may only have two Reputations. A rank 3 Geisha may have four Reputations. The rare character who can reach Giri Rank 7 (most can only reach 6) can have a maximum of eight Reputations.

Damaging Your Reputation

You may take actions that damage a Reputation you have earned: either through direct actions that contravene your Reputation or by

refusing a compel for your Reputation. If you do either, the Narrator may declare that your current Reputation is tainted and must be cleansed before it may be used again. You cannot call upon that Reputation for bonus dice until you have taken actions to repair it.

To repair a damaged Reputation, you must earn Glory Points equal to your Reputation's Rank in actions that are appropriate to your Reputation.

For example, if you are challenged to a duel and decline, the Narrator may declare that your Rank 4 Reputation: *Great Swordsman* has been damaged. To repair that Reputation, you must earn four Glory Points from risks appropriate to Great Swordsman.

Until you repair it, you can't use it in any risks.

Changing Your Reputations

If you have reached your limit of Reputations and want to start a new one, you must abandon one of your Reputations. Simply drop it from your sheet. You may add a new Reputation with the acquisition of appropriate Glory Points. Starting a new Reputation only costs one Glory Point.





Chapter 7

Rhythm of the Void

Violence

空の拍子をしり

“I’m not dying yet. I have to kill quite a few men first.”

— *Sanjuro*, Sanjuro

There are three circumstances where the violence mechanics are necessary: a strike, a duel and mass murder. We’ll discuss each in turn. But before we do, let’s talk about Injuries.

Injuries

Injuries are Tags that occur when your character gets hurt. When your character is injured, put a mark in the correct Injury Rank box on your character sheet. Like most things in this game, Injury Tags have ranks:

A rank 1 Injury is a cut or a minor bruise or an annoying pain.

A rank 2 Injury is a little more serious. A sprained ankle or wrist, a cut above the eye.

A rank 3 Injury is a deep laceration or a hairline fracture. A rank 3 Injury takes a lot of time to heal.

A rank 4 Injury represents something serious. A broken bone. A missing limb. An eye cut out of the socket.

A rank 5 Injury is completely debilitating. You won’t be getting up anytime soon.

You may have multiple Injuries, so long as they are Rank 1 through Rank 4 Injuries. In fact, such Injuries don’t impede you from acting (although others will tag them for bonus dice). It’s quite possible for a Ronin to keep fighting a gang of yakuza, even with multiple broken bones (Rank 4 Injuries) and minor lacerations (Rank 3 Injuries).

If you ever acquire a Rank 5 Injury, you become Helpless. At the end of the risk that inflicts the Injury, you fall down. During the current risk, or any following risk where you are Helpless, any character may spend a wager to kill your character. You may not roll dice and may not participate in any risks while Helpless. Helpless



does not need to be tagged for someone to kill you with a spent wager.

Some extremely focused character can take more than a Rank 5 Injury by choosing the **Will of Stone** Advantage at character creation. **Will of Stone** allows you to take an unlimited number of Rank 5 Injuries. In this case, it is a Rank 6 Injury that renders you Helpless.

Disease and Poison

Diseases and **poisons** are ranked as well and are treated just like Injuries. In Old Japan diseases and poisons were common. Diseases common to Asia swept through Japan regularly despite high levels of cleanliness, and when gaijin arrived to Japanese ports they brought with them many diseases no one had ever seen before.

While a disease isn't something your character can control, you and the Narrator can describe the effects of such a disease using Wisdom wagers or discover a cure for it using Cunning wagers. Either way, your opponents can tag your disease Injury just as they can tag a cut or a broken bone.

Your City might be vulnerable to disease as well, depending on the events of your stories. Your Narrator might even use a Story Point to increase the dramatic tension by revealing that your peaceful city is now in the throes of a cholera outbreak.

Poisons, alternatively, are very much something you can control. You might want to use a poison on an enemy to kill them without revealing your hand. A doctor or an apothecary can create and neutralize poisons, and death by poisoning is a classic noir story tool.

When you are poisoned or contract a disease your Narrator will have you mark down the appropriate Injury Rank. Your Narrator will also write down the symptoms of your disease or poison on a card and place it in front of you, one symptom per Rank of Injury. As the disease or poison progresses, the Narrator will add new symptoms to the card. All poisons and diseases are considered Infected and will increase one Rank of Injury until treated. See Infection on page 120 for more information.

Diseases and Poisons act just like Injury Tags. Anyone in a Violence Risk can tag them with other Injury Tags for bonus dice. But poisons and diseases have different effects and can also be tagged in other types of risks when a sick person would not be seemly in a social situation or when a character with a high fever is trying to remember something important.

Paul's Poet, Kobiyashi, ate dinner with a powerful merchant. Unfortunately, the Narrator spent a Story Point to declare that the food was poisoned by a Rank 1 poison that induces sweating, vomiting, hallucinations, blindness, deafness, and finally death. Kobiyashi doesn't realize what he has yet so he does not get it treated immediately.

During the second session, the Narrator tags the poison while he is giving a poem recitation during a garden party and Kobiyashi vomits. The party is ruined and he is asked to leave. Realizing something is wrong, Kobiyashi seeks out a doctor.

Injuries as Tags

I mentioned it before, but this is a good place to mention it again. Another player (or the Narrator) can tag your Injury for bonus dice. For example, if you have a rank 3 Injury and two rank 2 Injuries, your opponent can tag it for seven bonus dice on any risk against you. Every time someone tags your Injuries, they must give you one Ninjo Point. That's one Ninjo Point regardless of the rank or number of the Injury.

Healing Injuries

Rank 1 Injuries heal at one rank per day

Rank 2 Injuries heal at one rank per week

Rank 3 and 4 Injuries heal at one rank per Season

Rank 5 and 6 Injuries heal at one rank per Year

When an Injury reaches the time threshold, it becomes an Injury of the next lower rank. A Rank 4 Injury becomes a Rank 3 Injury, a Rank 1 Injury goes away completely, etc..

In *A World of Dew*, Rank 3 Injuries and higher do not heal if simply left alone. They stay the same until a doctor treats the Injury, after which it begins to heal as normal. Doctors also prevent Injuries from becoming Infected.



Injury and Infection

In *A World of Dew* you play noir stories, a hallmark of which are characters who are beat up, injured, and even dying from their wounds. They fight against the odds to keep going, but circumstances keep piling up against them, making their chances of success slimmer and slimmer.

Infections are one of those ways that the odds are against you. Your Injuries aren't just a static problem that you can occasionally ignore; your wounds might kill you before you can get the job done! A race against time is a powerful dramatic device and Infected Injuries are an explicit way to bring that device into your game.

If you leave any Injury untreated at the end of a game session, roll a number of dice equal to the rank of the Injury. If the roll beats a 10, your Injury has become Infected. That means that the rank of your Injury increases by one level at the beginning of each game session after the Infection begins. Remember that poison and disease Injuries are automatically Infected.

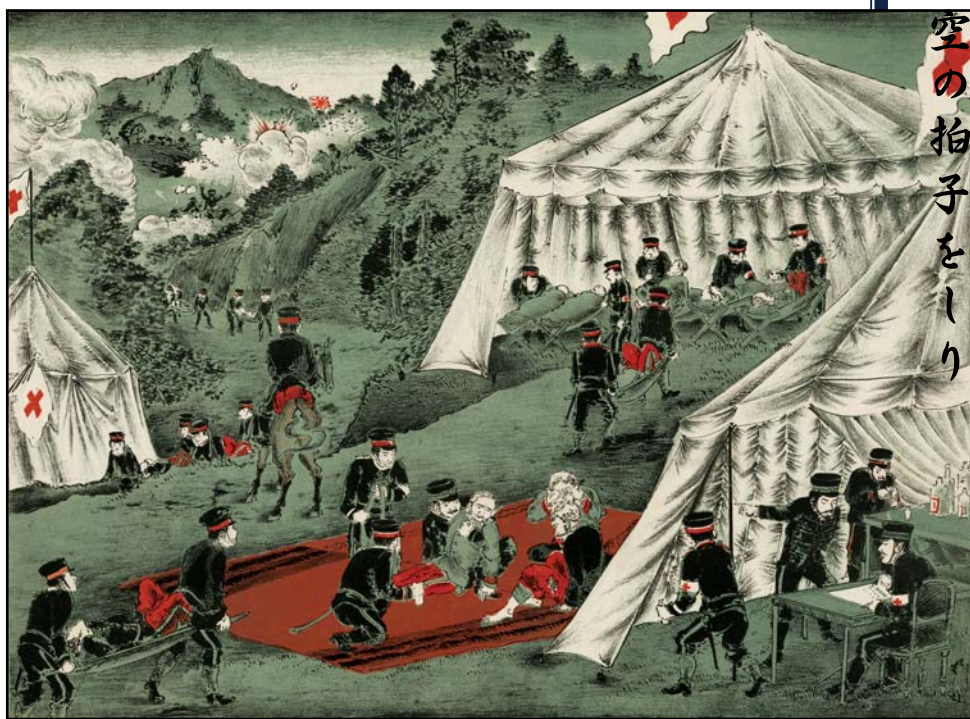
If your character has an Injury at Rank 5 (or Rank 6 if they have the Will of Stone Advantage) that is Infected, and you end a game session with the Infected Injury untreated, your character dies in a dramatic fashion at the beginning of the next game session.

For example, Jennifer's Painter, Hisami was cut in the leg (Rank 4 Injury) during a fight a few sessions ago, but she's left it untreated. She's too poor to afford treatment and has kept the Injury a secret from the rest of the group.

*At the end of the session her Narrator asks her to roll three dice. She's been lucky so far, but this time she rolls a 15. Hisami's untreated Injury has become Infected. Her Injury will go up a rank to a Rank 5 Injury at the beginning of the next session. If she or the other players do not get her treated before that next session ends, **she will die**. The Narrator is likely to provide an opportunity for her to find treatment, but with dramatic costs or consequences.*

Treating Injuries

A Doctor can make a risk to treat any Injury, even one resulting from disease or poison. If successful, the Injury has been treated



(reduced by one rank), but no more risks can be made to treat the Injury. It's better to let nature take its course.

However, if the roll fails, dramatic consequences occur. The Doctor can continue to take risks to treat the Injury, but the Narrator should create dramatic roadblocks like a need to acquire more medical supplies or similar problems. See **Chapter 2: Character Creation** on page 17 for more on how Doctors can treat Injuries.

If there is no Doctor in the game, characters may attempt to gain treatment for the ailments at a Surgery or Apothecary Shop, but they must pay the cost to activate the Location in order to receive treatment.

Strike

A strike is an immediate action. One character draws his weapon and the other responds. This is not a formal, ritualistic action like a duel; this is a character immediately attacking and their target responding as quickly as possible.

That's how violence begins. It starts fast. Almost no time to react. That's how our fights begin here, too.



A fight scene begins when someone calls out, “Strike!” and points at another player. No initiative rolls. You call it out and it happens. (Point at the Narrator if you want to strike an NPC.)

When an attacker announces a Strike, they gain two bonus dice. There is a slight advantage to surprise. Not much, but enough for two bonus dice.

If both characters call out “Strike!” at the same time, neither gains bonus dice. There is no surprise, therefore, no advantage.

My NPC Aizu Garuda, the Governor’s hired muscle, finds himself in an alley accusing Zach’s Police Inspector, Hiro, and Mason’s Gambler, Hokusai, of murdering Hokusai’s lover. This isn’t true, Garuda killed her, but he’s trying to cover his tracks.

Garuda is waving his revolver around. Despite being a coward Hokusai cannot take these lies! He grabs Hiro’s revolver from his holster and points it at Garuda. Mason declares “Strike!” and points at me to indicate that he’s shooting Garuda. The violence begins.

The first actions in a fight are between the attacker and the defender. No one else can assist. The action is too quick. The two characters draw weapons and (most likely) one of them dies. After the first strike is over, other characters can announce intentions to attack (and perhaps a Mass Murder begins), but the first attack and defense are between the attacker and the defender and no one else.

Result

After a strike has been called, both opponents gather dice for a contested Prowess risk. You know the procedure. Each Player announces their dice, then hides their wagers, then rolls.

The victor (the Player who rolls highest) gains privilege and may determine the outcome of the strike. Does the attacker or the defender successfully strike? Do they both miss? The victor determines the outcome, whatever it may be.

In this case, the victor may be the defender and the defeated may be the attacker. Yes, that means you can draw your sword on a better opponent and get yourself killed. It happens all the time in chambara films, and I don’t see why it shouldn’t happen here.

Mason and I both gather dice.

Mason has six dice (with his two bonus dice for declaring the Strike) while I have seven. We make wagers secretly, then reveal our wagers and roll. Mason and I both make two wagers.

Mason's roll: 5, 5, 6, 4 = 20

My roll: 6, 4, 3, 3, 3 = 19

Mason gains privilege so he narrates the outcome of the strike. I lose, but I keep half my wagers rounded up. In this case, I have only one wager.

Mason looks me right in the eyes and says, "Hokusai pulls the trigger on the revolver and is so nervous he misses Garuda from five feet away." Then Mason says that I can spend the first wager.

I declare, "Garuda gut shots Hokusai." This will kill Hokusai, since Garuda is using a firearm. Mason spends the last Honor Point from the Pool to reduce his death to a Rank 5 Injury. (See Page 127 for more on firearms, death, and Honor Points.)

Mason spends his first wager and says, "I shoot Garuda in the heart." This kills Garuda. But I still have Story Points to spend.

I spend a Story Point and say, "Garuda turns his pistol on Hiro, the Police Inspector, and will shoot him too if you don't stop him." I let Mason have the final say in the outcome of this fight.

Mason, with tears in his eyes, spends his final wager and says, "Hokusai leaps in front of his friend Hiro as Garuda's pistol fires. Hokusai blocks the shot with his body."



The risk is over, Garuda dies. There are no more Honor Points, so Hokusai dies. I let him have a dramatic final moment.

Coughing up blood, Hokusai lies in Hiro's arm and whispers his lover's name before going still. Hiro didn't even have a chance to react.

Wagers and Glory

If you have wagers left over, you may convert your wagers into Glory. Two wagers make one Glory Point that you add to an appropriate Reputation. You may do this even if your character is dead.

Using Honor

If your character is killed, you may spend one Honor Point from the Honor Pool to reduce your death to a rank 5 Injury once in a game session.

Duel

A duel is a formalized, ritualistic contest involving two characters. They occur when a character calls out another character for a one on one fight. The two characters stand apart, hands on their weapons. They stare for a long moment. Then, in a brief moment of violence, blades flash and pistols fire. It is a dramatic, immediate event that



happens often in chambara cinema. Here's how you handle it in the game.

Step 1: Challenge

Both duelists gather and announce dice.

Step 2: Focus

The duelist with the most dice sets aside any number of wagers.

The second duelist must then set aside an equal number of wagers.

Step 3: Strike

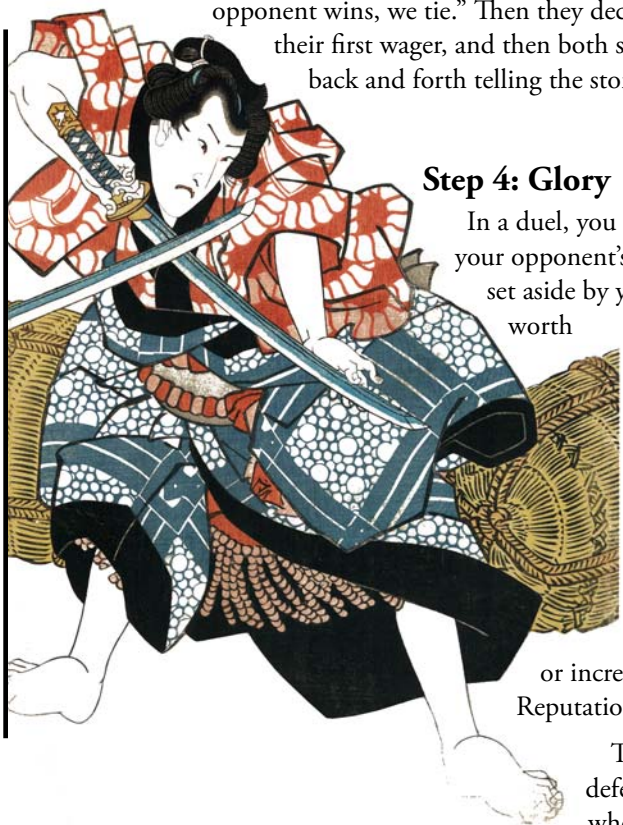
Then, both players roll. Whoever rolls highest gains privilege. Regular risk rules apply for keeping wagers and failing to beat a ten.

The duelist with privilege narrates the outcome of the duel in a dramatic fashion with various outcomes including "I win, my opponent wins, we tie." Then they decide who will spend their first wager, and then both spend their wagers back and forth telling the story of the duel.

Step 4: Glory

In a duel, you gain Glory based on your opponent's wagers. Each wager set aside by your opponent is worth one Glory Point, rather than the typical two wagers to one Glory Point conversion cost in most risks. In this case, both duelists gain a new Reputation based on the duel or increase an existing Reputation.

There is no Glory in defeating an opponent when the match is so



obviously one-sided. Thus, if you reduce your opponent to less than two dice with just spending wagers, you gain no Glory for that duel. You also can't convert wagers to Glory after you roll (aside from the Glory Points you both earn for taking part), so you'll want to have the highest roll possible to gain privilege.

I have ten dice and my opponent has four. I could easily bid four dice as my wagers. My opponent would have to bid an equal number of dice as wagers, thus removing any dice from his pool. If I fight this opponent in a duel, I gain no Glory.

On the other hand, if I bid only two wagers, he will be left with at least two dice, enough to beat a ten. The duel can gain both of us Glory. In this case, I bid only one wager.

Remember, I have ten dice and my opponent has only four. I'm still rolling nine dice and my opponent now has an opportunity to gain privilege with one wager, making the total Glory for our duel one point of Glory.

That's not much, but I shouldn't expect much. I'm a far better swordsman and accepting a duel with a samurai of such lesser skill is mostly a sign of respect from me. I don't stand to gain much from this duel.

Honoring Your Opponent

If you have ten dice and I have six, you can use six of your dice for wagers forcing me completely out of the duel. I have no chance to win. None at all. But all of my wagers count for nothing toward your Glory. Because I can't roll dice (you've wagered all of my dice away), I can't beat ten and that means all my wagers are thrown away. You get no Glory for defeating me.

If you want a duel with more Glory, you'll have to allow your opponent an opportunity to keep some of his wagers. Otherwise, I'm the only one who gains Glory from the duel. You get nothing because you gave nothing.

This raises an important point. In many duels, the characters strike and both agree, “It was a tie.” There is an implicit understanding that one duelist was the better, but both agree the duel was a tie.

If you fight another character and you gain privilege, what is the best way to ensure that both of you gain Glory?

You both won. It was a tie. Two characters (you and I) face off in a duel. One of us rolls better than the other. We both know who won. But the winner smiles and says, “A tie.” And we both walk away with Glory. That’s how most duels should work.

Of course, when it comes down to murdering your opponent, that’s a different story.

Katana, Firearms, and Sword Schools

The katana was a powerful sword with many superb qualities, but (as many masters have stated) it is only truly as great as the one who wields it. During the Sengoku Jidai (literally: The Age of the Country at War), the era before Tokugawa unified Japan, every samurai saw mastering the sword, the bow, and the spear as their primary duties to their daimyo. War was the main motivation for literally every samurai alive. Thus, sword masters were common, and the katana was deadly in almost every samurai’s hand.

This is true no longer.

Master sensei are not cheap. Many clans were decimated and Tokugawa worked hard to make the rest financially dependent upon his regime. Keeping order, not training warriors, became the most important duty. Now most samurai are trained in the basics of swordsmanship and sent on their way. Masters become rare, and to train under one is expensive and time consuming. New duties do not always grant the luxury of training.

In *A World of Dew*, the katana is treated as any Other Weapon. It does one rank of Injury and you may spend wagers to increase the Injury.

Also, Sword Schools from the *Blood & Honor* Appendix are available (and reprinted here) to everyone. Samurai and Imperial status characters begin the game with one (1) rank in a sword school of their choice.

Even gaijin know a fighting style with their strange broadswords, sabers, and rapiers and gain one (1) rank in a sword school.



If you are below Samurai status you begin with no ranks in a sword school. However, if you can convince a half-starving sword sensei to teach you the ways of the blade you may learn ranks in a sword school.



Sword Schools

While Old Japan has many different sword schools, I give you the option for five types of Sword Schools. The full-page illustration nearby shows how the five Schools relate to each other. Each provides a bonus or penalty against a different School and gives you bonus dice in a duel.

However, if your opponent has also studied under a Sword School, they may gain additional bonus dice because of their studies. Some Schools are better suited to take on others.

You may learn the techniques of a Sword School with a Season Action. This gives you one rank in that Sword School. You gain a bonus die for each rank you learn from that School. Additional ranks and bonus dice may be gained as well, but each costs additional Season Actions.

- Increasing from rank 1 to rank 2 in a Sword School costs two Season Actions.
- Increasing from rank 2 to rank 3 costs three Season Actions.

- Increasing from rank 3 to rank 4 costs four Season Actions.
- Increasing from rank 4 to rank 5 costs five Season Actions.

Each School is associated with a particular Virtue. You may only gain a number of ranks in a School up to the Virtue associated with that School. For example, if your Cunning is 3, you may only gain three (3) ranks in a School that has Cunning as its associated Virtue.

When facing an opponent from an opposing School, you either gain additional dice or your opponent gains additional dice. Sword Schools provide a +2 bonus against rival School beyond the dice gained from School Rank. Every school has a +2 bonus against two other schools, and thus two other schools have a +2 bonus against any given school. For example, Fire Schools gain a +2 bonus against Wind and Void schools, while Earth and Water schools gain a +2 bonus against Fire school practitioners.

You must place your School somewhere on the chart on the following page. It must be a Water School or a Wind School or a Fire School, etc. Regardless of where you place it, some other School will have an advantage over you. No technique is perfect and every technique has a weakness.

EARTH (“CHI”)

Schools of Earth teach students supreme confidence in both mental and physical tests, granting bonus dice based on a student's Strength.

FIRE (“KA”)

Schools of Fire teach students that action and forward motion is the key to success, granting bonus dice based on a student's Courage.

WIND (“FU”)

Schools of Wind teach students to watch an opponent carefully and deduce his weaknesses, granting bonus dice based on a student's Cunning.

WATER (“SUI”)

Schools of Water teach students to be fluid and ever adapting. Flexibility allows victory, granting bonus dice based on a student's Beauty.

VOID (“KU”)

Also known as “Sky” or “Heaven,” Schools of Void teach their students the philosophy of No Thought: Reacting without



knowing, Emptiness in motion. Schools of Void grant students bonus dice based on their Wisdom.

Training in Other Weapons

Dojos were not solely used for training in the katana. Many weapons like the naginata (pole arm with a long blade), the dai-kyu (bow), the tetsubo (a metal studded wooden club), and others were popular and had formal training schools teaching their proper use. Empty handed martial arts besides sumo were rare in Japan, at this time, but kung-fu martial artists from China and karate masters from Okinawa did visit.

Not all Weapons use Prowess. Ask your Narrator if a weapon your character wants to use is a Prowess or Strength weapon. Most weapons are Prowess, but weapons like the tetsubo and empty-handed martial arts like sumo and karate use Strength.

If your character is trained in a martial art of a weapon besides the sword, treat the training as another school per normal rules, but provide the +2 Bonus and Tag for specific situations:

For example, a Naginata School might give two (2) bonus dice, besides the school rank, when fighting against anyone using a sword, but provide the two die Tag for opponents to use when a Naginata user is fighting in confined spaces.

Firearms

Firearms, unlike the katana, are still just as deadly in the Tokugawa era. If a character is shot with a firearm, they die.

Worse yet, for the right koku anyone can have one.

Even worse for samurai, if you play during the final days of the Tokugawa, guns are everywhere. Revolvers and breech-loading rifles with six shot capacity magazines began to appear in Japan, mostly thanks to American, French, and British merchants. Now these firearms can kill at range, and the shooter can shoot six times before reloading the weapon.

Death of the samurai, indeed.

Of course, as per the earlier rule, anyone may spend an Honor Point once per session to turn death by a firearm into a Rank 5 Injury. This matters little, though, when a yakuza with a six-shooter shoots you again and again and again....

Yowamushi

Yowamushi are any unnamed characters, brutes the Narrator employs to attack the characters for some reason.

Unlike player or named characters yowamushi can only take a total of five points of wagers spent on Injuries from all sources, like a Rank 2 Injury and a Rank 3 Injury. Once their Injuries total Rank 5, they are dead or unconscious per the attacker's discretion.

When attacking in a risk, yowamushi are worth one die each for the Narrator's dice pool. They may be just a group of yowamushi or supporting a named NPC. Either way they are worth one die each.

Characters trained in fighting schools have it easier than most when fighting yowamushi. Any character that has three (3) ranks in a fighting school can kill any yowamushi by announcing their death and spending a wager.

"I kill him."

That's all it takes.

If there's more than one yowamushi, a trained character can kill a number of them equal to their Prowess Rank per wager spent

Keen observers will note that if you took Prowess as a weakness, you cannot employ this rule.

Surprise

Taking another character by surprise provides a significant advantage. If you successfully sneak up on another character or if you perform an action that is unexpected, taking everyone off guard, the Narrator may declare that you have the advantage of surprise. If your target is surprised, they roll no dice in the next contested

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risk. Thus, if you surprise an opponent and declare “Strike!” they cannot roll any dice against you.

Guard

At any time during the game, you may declare, “Guard!” This represents your character putting their hand on the handle of their weapon ready for action. While under guard, you may not be surprised. Also, if someone declares “Strike!” they do not gain the two bonus dice for declaring a Strike first.

Of course, this raises the possibility of some player saying, “I’m always on Guard!” Bad form. No one walks around a City with their hand on their weapon all the time.

Breaking a Weapon

A weapon breaks if the character holding it does not beat 10 on a roll and their opponent spends wagers to break the weapon. So, to break an opponent’s weapon, you must win privilege and have a wager and your opponent must roll less than 10.

You must spend a number of wagers equal to the Quality of the weapon. A **Normal** weapon costs one wager to break. A **Good** weapon costs two wagers to break. A **Fine** weapon costs three wagers to break. An **Exquisite** weapon costs four wagers to break.

Mass Murder

So, what happens when three or more characters want to get involved in a fight? You’ve got a Mass Murder on your hands.

If two groups of characters square off, the Narrator invokes the Mass Murder rules. Or after a Strike occurs, if other characters want to be involved in the violence, the Narrator invokes the Mass Murder rules.

Step 1: Gather Dice

All players who want to be involved gather dice as if they were preparing for a Strike: Prowess (or Strength if using a Strength Weapon or Sumo Attack) + Aspect + Giri (if appropriate) + other bonuses. All players announce how many dice they have.

If Mass Murder directly follows a Strike, the winner of the Strike gains two bonus dice for the Mass Murder.

Step 2: Declare Strikes

On the count of three, each player points at whom they want to Strike. If a player wants to Strike an NPC, he points at the Narrator.

Step 3: Strike

Everyone sets aside wagers (secretly) and rolls. The player who rolls highest has initiative not privilege. They may declare their Strike first. No player loses any wagers in Mass Murder as long as they roll 10 or higher. All players keep all wagers made. That's important to remember: **all players keep all wagers made in a Mass Murder provided they roll a ten or higher.**

In the event of a tie, the two characters roll their Prowess dice against each other and total them up. The winner has initiative and goes before the other character.

During Mass Murder, you may Strike the character that was the target of your declared Strike during Step 2 by spending wagers against your target to create an Injury. Each wager spent increases the



rank of the Injury up to rank 5. You may spend six wagers to kill that character. However, the character will not die until the end of the Mass Murder; they still have a chance to strike back at you!

If you pointed at the Narrator and declared you were fighting yowamushi, and are trained up to Rank 3 in a Sword School, you kill a number of yowamushi equal to your Prowess for every wager you spend. If you are untrained you need to spend five wagers to kill each Yowamushi you fight.

Then, the player who rolled the next highest number may declare their Strike. This continues until all characters involved have made a Strike.

A Note About Mass Murder

Mass Murder can be **very deadly**. It is designed that way. Game mechanics should influence player behavior. Real fights that are not one-sided are bloodbaths for both sides, so Mass Murder is designed to do just that.

Still, every once in a while, it happens. Of course no one wants the game bogging down in minutia. Fights in chambara are lightning quick and lots of folks die. So, this system reflects that. You've been warned. Do what Musashi and Sun Tzu suggest: only get involved in a fight you know you can win.

Then, go back to the first player. If you have any wagers left over you may make an additional Strike. You point at any target and spend wagers to create a new Injury. This continues with each character making an additional strike, in turn, until all additional strikes are exhausted.

After all Strikes are exhausted, if characters wish to continue Mass Murder, repeat the process.

Sumo Wrestling

Sumo may grant Bruises, or non-lethal injury Tags to opponents. Sumo can certainly cause real injury with their massive sizes and powerful muscles, but their primary training is in a non-lethal art form. Thus, whenever they create an Injury they can declare it to be a Bruise or an Injury. If the Sumo causes a Rank 5 Bruise, just like with Injuries, it makes the target Helpless: the Sumo has knocked out or pinned their opponent.

All Non-Lethal Injuries go away at the end of a scene. Pummeling a restrained opponent for a Rank 3 Bruise and having your police inspector friend Tag the Bruise for three (3) dice during an interrogation is a great alternative use for the sumo school techniques.

Sumo Schools

There were hundreds of sumo schools that covered Japan as sumo suddenly rose to popularity when the Tokugawa came to power. In this book I give you five schools that represent a broad swath of the major sumo school styles.

Sumo schools act in much the same manner as sword schools. Each school gives your Sumo bonus dice in a Sumo Bout. However, if your opponent has studied under an opposing Sumo School he may gain additional bonus dice.

Sumos learn techniques just like the Sword Schools.

To learn the Initial Technique of Rank 1 in a Sumo School costs one Season Action.

Increasing from Rank 1 to Rank 2 in a Sumo School costs two Season Actions.

Increasing from Rank 2 to Rank 3 in a Sumo School costs three Season Actions.

Increasing from Rank 3 to Rank 4 in a Sumo School costs four Season Actions.

Increasing from Rank 4 to Rank 5 in a Sumo School costs five Season Actions.

Each Sumo School is associated with a particular Virtue. You may gain a number of ranks in a Sumo School up to your Virtue associated with that School. For example, if your Courage is a 4, you may only gain four (4) ranks in a School that has Courage as its associated Virtue.

When facing opponents of other Sumo Schools either you or your opponent gains two bonus dice.

If you create your School then you must place it on the chart on this page. It must be placed where one of the five schools is located. Wherever you place it some other Sumo School will have an advantage over you. No School is perfect and all have weaknesses.

MUTOH

Students of the Mutoh School learn to face all enemies without fear. They will even employ techniques to frighten their opponents such as ear splitting roars and great slaps to their own chests. Mutoh students gain a bonus based on the student's Courage and an additional bonus against students of the Rikidozan and Tarokichi Schools.



RIKIDOZAN

Students of the Rikidozan School use their Wisdom to study the ways of sumo and know the right moment in which to defeat their opponents. Many early Yokozuna, Grand Champions of all sumo, came from this school and have left behind scrolls of their wisdom for study and contemplation. Students of Rikidozan gain a bonus based on the student's Wisdom and an additional bonus against students of the Tarokichi and Inoki Schools.

TAROKICHI

Students of the Tarokichi School learn to sharpen their powers of observation. They learn what a weak leg looks like or how to tell when their opponent is favoring their stomach or side from an injury. They exploit the weaknesses of their opponents to emerge victorious in bout after bout. Tarokichi students gain a bonus based on the student's Cunning and an additional bonus against students of Inoki and Yamada Schools.

INOKI

Inoki is a no nonsense school. Students drill day and night, practicing all their moves until their dreams are filled with perfect form and balance. Even in their dreams, they are still drilled by their masters. They are without flair, but their



perfection is peerless. Inoki students gain a bonus based on the student's Prowess and an additional bonus against students of the Mutoh and Yamada Schools.

YAMADA

Sumo is said to be a holy art. Nowhere is this more evident than in the students of the Yamada School. In them, Strength becomes Beautiful. They move like liquid steel, their muscles rippling below their skin like waves upon a mighty ocean, each move a symphony of form and function. Yamada students gain a bonus based on the student's Beauty and an additional bonus against students of the Mutoh and Rikidozan Schools.

Sumo Tournaments and Bouts

Sumo Tournaments are very structured throughout the year. There is one Han-Basho, or Main Tournament, every year, but there are many lesser bouts every Season. However, Sumo Wrestlers may not participate in more than eight official regular season bouts (two per Season) per year. Of course, special or illegal fights off the official books or special "grudge match" engagements do not count towards this limit, but then they don't count towards your standing in the sumo league either.

If you face the same opponent in multiple bouts, you gain extra Glory. Each bout after the first bout with the same opponent grants you both a number of bonus Glory Points equal to the number of times you've faced each other in the year. However, if you defeat any opponent three times in a row you gain no Glory Points from any bouts against them until they have defeated you three times in a row.

Morgan's Sumo Wrestler, Nezumi faces Chris's Sumo Wrestler, Daikoku for the fifth time in an official bout this year. They both gain five (5) bonus Glory Points for having fought each other that many times in a year.

Nezumi defeats Daikoku this match for the third time in a row. She gains Glory for this fifth bout, but gains no more Glory from subsequent bouts against Daikoku until Daikoku has defeated Nezumi three times in a row. She continues to



face Daikoku in subsequent bouts, losing the last three in a row.

When they face off for their ninth bout of the year at the Han-Basho, Daikoku gains nine bonus Glory Points for their ninth bout. Nezumi also gains nine bonus Glory Points. She gained no Glory at all during the previous three matches, but it's still their ninth match and she's again eligible for Glory points having lost the last three.

Of course, if Daikoku had won that bout then both wrestlers will continue to gain full Glory awards from all their bouts, as long as neither wrestler won three matches in a row against the other during the year.

Finally, if you've defeated a wrestler at the Han-Basho there is no Glory gained in facing them again for at least another year. They must first raise their Sumo Giri to the same level as your Sumo Giri before they can demand a re-match. If they are already at your Giri (or above), they must still wait for the next Han-Basho.

Sumo Bouts

Sumo Bouts are fought almost exactly like duels, except no one dies. Usually.

On the day of the bout, both sumo wrestlers perform a cleansing ritual to enter the ring. Then they spend several minutes taking turns to lift their legs as high as possible and stamping down to scare away demons. Finally, they toss salt to cleanse the ring and sprinkle it around themselves to protect themselves. Then the bout begins with a shout, followed by a blinding rush of massive bodies until one wrestler is forced to step out of the ring or touches the mat with any part of his body except the bottom of his feet.

STEP 1: THE CHALLENGE

Both Players gather and announce their total dice.

STEP 2: THE CHARGE

The Player with the most total dice acts first.

They set aside any number of dice as wagers.

The Second Player must then set aside an equal number of wagers.

STEP 3: THE WINNING TECHNIQUE

Both Players roll their remaining dice. Whoever rolls highest gains privilege. Regular risk rules apply for keeping wagers and failing to beat a ten.

The wrestler with privilege narrates the outcome of the bout in a dramatic fashion including whether they won or lost. Then they decide who will spend their first wager, and then both wrestlers spend their wagers back and forth telling the story of the duel.

STEP 4: THE GLORY

In a bout, you gain Glory based on your opponent's wagers. Each wager set aside by your opponent is worth one point of Glory. If this is the first time two wrestlers have met, they both gain a new Reputation based on the bout. Pick an interesting name for the bout, such as "Tadashii Buries Kyojin at Osaka" or "The Double Rumble" or anything that both wrestlers agree on for the Reputation's name.

If you've faced your opponent before you do not create a new Reputation. Instead you add any Glory Points you've earned from the bout to your existing Reputation with that wrestler. You may also update the name of the Reputation if you both agree.

There is no Glory in defeating a wrestler when a bout is one-sided. If you reduce your opponent to two dice or less by setting aside wagers, you gain no Glory for that bout. There is no Glory in facing opponents who cannot hope to win a match against you.

After defeating a sumo at the Han-Basho, you cannot fact them again until they've raised their Giri Rank to match yours and a year has passed. If you agree to a match prematurely, you lose Honor equal to their Giri rank and damage your Reputation related to that wrestler. Your Narrator will decide the exact nature of the damage to your Reputation.

Winning Techniques

Check out a list of Kimarite, or winning techniques, online (Wikipedia has the whole list) or in books about sumo wrestling if you want some ideas of the over sixty official winning moves Sumo use to win a match.





Chapter 8
*Seeking Satori
Within*
Magic & Religion

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Winter seclusion
Seeking satori within
This cold, empty cave

- Gansho

Magic in *A World of Dew* is not quite like the magic in most roleplaying games. Despite the overwhelming temptation to try fitting Buddhism and Shintoism into a codified set of rules, I chose a different path. Japanese magic—like the magic of most cultures—is a mess of exceptions rather than rules. In folk tales and legends, what magic can and cannot do fits the story's needs.

Also, this is a game about samurai noir. Samurai feared magic and those who used it. It was not something they could control. The power of the stars and the planets, the earth beneath them, the power of the spirits around them, the power of the gods and heavens... all of these things were beyond the reach of samurai. Beyond the reach of most mortals, in fact. A mystic in samurai literature was a plot device to (again) fulfill the needs of the story, not an active agent. The samurai consulted seers and oracles, but these seers and oracles were not the protagonists.

In most roleplaying games, magic becomes a kind of Swiss Army knife, capable of doing anything at any time. Or, it is an artillery device used to take out boss units on the other side of the board. Such magic does not fit in an authentic game about Japanese culture.

The immortal and inscrutable power of the universe is what we're talking about here and mortal men do not tinker with the immortal and inscrutable power of the universe.

For those reasons (among others), I have resisted the urge to make "magic rules" and a "magic-user class." Instead, this chapter talks about the various forms of Japanese mysticism, magic and sorcery and how to use those in your own campaign.



Syncretism

Syncretism is the attempt to reconcile disparate or contrary beliefs, often while melding practices of various schools of thought. In other words, in Old Japan, the two prevailing religions—Shinto and Buddhism—are practiced with equal respect and reverence. Even though the two of them are completely different—even with different creation myths—the Japanese don't seem to have a problem with reconciling the two of them.

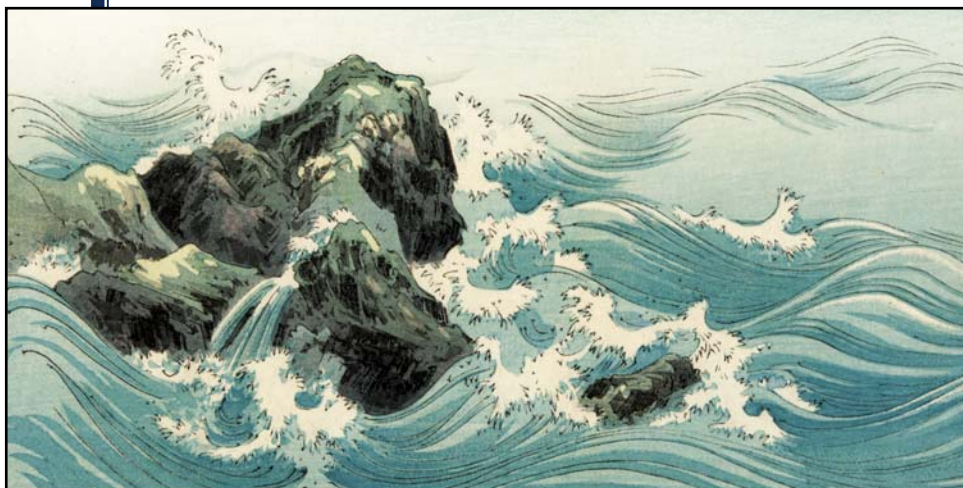
In Old Japan, most people had Shinto weddings, and Buddhist funerals. In modern Japan this sort of syncretism is still true: many people have various Shinto rights of growth and adulthood, then a Christian wedding, and still a Buddhist funeral.

Shinto

Shinto is the practice of revering animistic spirits. It is a highly ritualized religion, but at this period of time, it is also highly disorganized. The arrival and popularity of other religions (such as Buddhism) forced Shinto priests to get their acts together. Shinto has no popes or bishops or any other formal hierarchical structure. A local priest serving a small fishing village has just as much authority as a priest who advises the Emperor.

Kami

Shinto priests communicate with the spirits of Japan called kami. Now, exactly what a kami actually is presents a difficulty. Kami are



natural spirits, ancestor spirits, guardian angels and just about any other kind of invisible force you can imagine. Every river, every tree, every storm, the sun, the sky, the earth... all of these things have an accompanying spirit. A kami. A Shinto priest's position in Japan is to communicate to the kami, keep them happy and make them happy again when they grow angry or dissatisfied. All trouble in Japan comes from dissatisfied kami. If the invisible world isn't happy, the visible world feels it.

Every kami has its own character. Like the gods of ancient peoples (the Greeks, the Norse, the Babylonians), the kami are seen as flawed characters with incredible power (and hair trigger tempers). If things are going wrong for a city, the city calls upon the priest (kannushi) to deal with the problem. He consults with the local kami, finds out what the problem is and goes about setting the problem right.

The standard fix for such problems is dancing and sacrifice, although in a heroic setting such as this, more dramatic actions may need to be taken to rectify the wrong.

Purity

Purity is an important aspect of Shinto. Actions can make a person "unclean" (kegare) requiring a ritual to cleanse his spirit. Two good examples of such actions are killing animals for food and actions which further one's personal power at a cost to others (politically or otherwise). Both are seen as impure actions which require a cleansing ritual.

The Japanese avoided eating meat and put the chore of slaughtering animals to the Burakumin. In fact, the entire Burakumin caste consisted of professions who, by the nature of their activities, would be considered unclean. Butchers, leather workers, undertakers and anyone required to touch dead flesh.

Also, any action that falls outside the prescribed etiquette or procedure could be considered kegare. Not only that, but impurity could be seen as a kind of contagion: if your neighbor is unclean, you can likewise be tainted by their impurity if you fail to help them regain their purity. In this sense, the Great Social Hammer of Japan comes calling to put down that infamous tall nail.

Shrines

Once stained, you must go to a shrine to perform harai, the purity ritual. When entering, you must approach the temple with reverence



and respect. Often, a particular ritual must be performed. While the rituals vary from shrine to shrine, a typical version looks something like this:

The supplicant bows respectfully before entering. They then perform temizu: washing their hands and mouth. Washing their left hand first, and then their right. They then rinse their mouth and feet. Then, they wash the ladle provided and replace it. They then ring a bell and leave a donation. Finally, they say their prayers and then bow again and clap (usually two bows and two claps).

Talismans

Shinto has many different kinds of talismans providing luck and good fortune and even protection. There are so many; too many to list here. But, I've provided a few as examples below.

Ema are small wooden amulets or trinkets with sacred and auspicious words or phrases written on them. Ema bring good luck to those who wear them. An ema must include the word gani ("wish") to perform properly.

Ofuda are talismans of wood or paper that provide protection to a household.

Omamori are personal protection amulets, usually made of cloth, worn to bring good luck. Omamori provide a specific kind of luck: good health, good fortune with fishing, protection for travelers, etc.

Omikuji are small random fortunes written on paper. The visitor to a shrine leaves a donation and may draw one from a box receiving the good fortune inscribed there.

Onmyōdō

Onmyōdō could be called "Japanese alchemy," although that isn't entirely correct. Like Western alchemy was the predecessor to science, Onmyōdō was the forerunner of many Japanese sciences. Under the *ritsuryō* system (a Confucian-inspired "duty system"), the *Onmyōryō* (Bureau of Divination) was required to know *koyomi* (calendrical studies), *onmyō* (Yin-Yang divination), and *rōkoku* (time keeping), and *tenmon* (astrology); all of which assisted the Daimyo and maintained their position.

One needs a permit from the Emperor to practice onmyōdō and doing so without one is a serious offence. Licensed practitioners were called *onmyōji*. Their duties include serving as a kind of occult

adviser, maintaining the calendar, divination and protection from evil spirits. See *Blood & Honor* for rules on playing a samurai with the Onmyoji Giri.

Buddhism

“That which can be said about the Way is not the true Way.”

So, here I go, trying to give an introduction to Buddhism, in a **roleplaying game**. Specifically, the very odd kind of Buddhism that developed in Old Japan: Zen Buddhism.

I once heard it said that teaching someone about Buddhism is a lot like teaching someone how to bake a cake. I can give you the ingredients list, go shopping with you, pick out everything we need, mix everything together, prepare the frosting together and even show you how to preheat the oven. But once it comes out of the oven, there's no way I can prepare you for how the cake will taste.

That is Zen.

Zen emphasizes direct knowledge rather than philosophical or theoretical knowledge. One must **do to know**. After that, everything is up for grabs. Every teacher of zen will tell you that each student must go out into the world and **experience** the world to gain its deeper meanings. Do not be distracted by physical temptations and distractions. You must see beyond what the world **is** to learn what the world **means** and to learn your part in it.

And even by saying that much, I've distracted you from the true path.



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Christianity

History in Japan

Christianity made major inroads into Japan starting with the very first European visitors to Japan. The Catholic Jesuits took particular interests in Japan, and through the diplomacy of several famous Jesuit priests they helped write the first Japanese language Bible. A Jesuit priest was the first European to learn Japanese.

The second to learn Japanese was a Protestant English ship's pilot in roughly 1600. If you know anything about Europe in the 1600s, know this: the Protestants and Catholics were literally at each other's throats. Plus, the Spanish and their Portuguese allies were fighting against the English and their Dutch allies. And these four groups were the main groups of Europeans that were visiting Japan.

Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate had that English Protestant as one of his personal advisors, his knowledge of sailing and cannons helped Tokugawa become Shogun. But the Jesuits converted a lot more Japanese to Catholicism, entire Clans and Provinces. Many of those Clans converted their populaces at the point of the sword.

When Tokugawa's descendants closed Japan (there were still a few minor ports one could trade through) they also moved to stamp out Christianity in a series of deadly pogroms. Many converted, more hide their faith, some died.

When the Tokugawa were failing in the 1800's the modern European powers returned and so did Christianity. Many came out of hiding, the Shogunate had bigger problems, and Christians weren't seen as a major political force, mostly because for many it had become syncretic with Shinto and Buddhist beliefs.

Theology

Basic Christianity itself is relatively straightforward to most Westerners. God created everything. Mankind fell to Original Sin. Jesus, the Son of God was born, died for our sins and spread the Gospel. If a person prays to God to be forgiven they are and when they die they will go to Heaven to live eternal life with God.

The devil, as they say, is in the details. Catholics believe in salvation through following the proper doctrine and have a hierarchical faith with The Pope as the head of the church. Protestants, especially in the 1600s, believed in Faith alone for

salvation and were anti-hierarchical because of their opposition against the Catholic Church.

Using Religion

Now, with all that in mind, how does one go about using Religion as a “magic” in a roleplaying game?

Well, the whole Western concept of “spells” is right out the window. Instead, I have some suggestions for how to use all of this in a campaign without (pardon the pun) invoking a magic-using class of characters.

Wisdom Risks

Despite these suggestions, one thing remains true: magic is never truly in the players’ hands. A Holy Person can use his Wisdom to say things are true about magic, but he is not a “magic user.”

If the adventure includes a haunted forest, the samurai turn to the Holy Person. The player makes a Wisdom risk and says what is true about the forest. If a castle has fallen under a terrible curse, the player makes a Wisdom risk to say how the curse may be lifted.

Charms & Talismans

Most of what constitutes Japanese magic are good luck charms and tokens you see everywhere in the literature (and even on the streets of modern day Tokyo).

Characters can carry good luck charms if they like; whether or not they actually work is another matter.

Charms provide benefits to characters... some of the time. Every charm has a particular theme: good luck in love, good luck in battle, good luck in farming, etc. A charm may or may not provide a benefit.

Each Charm provides a free wager on a single category of risk. The Holy Person may provide a number of charms to their fellow characters equal to their Giri rank. For example, a Rank 3 Holy Person may provide three charms to their fellows. Charms are only good for one adventure, and then, they must be replenished. A character may only carry a single Charm.

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Advice

At the beginning of every session, the Holy Person should give advice about any subject they believe will be involved in the session. Make a Wisdom Risk. Add your Giri Rank to this roll. If characters take your advice and they succeed at the matter you gain a Glory Point per character who succeeded.

Controversy

In *Blood & Honor*, John wrote, “One of these days I’m going to write a roleplaying game where I write the statement, ‘Christian/Jewish/Islamic characters can pray to their god if they like; whether or not he actually exists is another matter.’”

Well there you go, John, something like that is right here on the page. Remember folks this is a game about telling samurai noir. We’re not concerned with theological debates. How does your Jesuit Priest fit into the story? What role does he play in this strange land? How does he view forgiveness? It doesn’t matter if the character’s deity actually exists in reality outside of the story. It matters what role the character plays in the immediate story.

Christian Forgiveness

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

- John 14:6

Christians gain absolution through Catholic confession, or by directly petitioning God through prayer. This provides numerous advantages, but primarily allows them to not be bogged down with terrible guilt about the errors and sins they’ve committed in the past.

When a Christian prays at a Church they gain forgiveness in the form of more Ninjo Points. By spending an Honor Point a player may convert forgiveness into a number of Ninjo Points equal to the Rank of the Church at which they are praying. There is no limit to receiving absolution.

Of course, this is a game, so it doesn’t actually matter if God exists. The same is true for the Kami and the Buddha. The idea here is that the character receives what they believe is forgiveness and whether that’s from a higher power or just a personal psychic salve doesn’t matter. Focus on telling good stories; don’t worry about metaphysics in your game.

Zen Meditation

“The archer does not shoot at the target; the archer shoots at himself.”

The “magic” of Zen rests in Meditation. Those who are trained in the ways of Meditation may

bypass the distractions of the world to reach the inner truth of its beauty.

When a character practices Mediation, he hopes to escape the trappings of the world to transcend to Luminous Truth. With that Truth in his heart, he can only do Justice. With that Truth in his heart, he can only make Balance.

A zen monk can teach characters the art of Mediation. With an Honor or Ninjo Point —and a Buddhist Monastery—a character may gain Meditation Points.

Characters may spend a Meditation Point before any risk. The character must roll at least one die, but the Meditation Point turns that any dice rolled (including a single die) into a ten. You must spend the Meditation Point before rolling and before declaring wagers.

You may only spend one Meditation Point per roll and may only acquire and use a number of Meditation Points equal to your Giri Rank per Season.

Shinto Spirit Blessings

Even in one single leaf on a tree, or in one blade of grass, the great kami presents itself.

Shinto Shrines provide an opportunity for characters to commune with the kami and the spirits of their ancestors. Spirits may give cryptic advice, provide ominous omens or bless the characters in some other mysterious way.

You may pray to the spirits at a Shinto Shrine. If you spend an Honor or Ninjo Point at a Shrine, you may gain the benefit of a Blessing from the Spirits.

Listed below are the many Blessings a spirit can bless a devoted petitioner. When you pray to a spirit, the Narrator will give you the Blessing they feel you need and/or deserve.



You may only gain a number of Blessings per Season equal to your Giri Rank. You may also only use a number of Blessings equal to your Giri Rank per Season. Once a Blessing is used, it's gone. You cannot use it a second time this Season unless the kami have granted to you the same Blessing twice.

I HAVE NO PARENTS...

"... I make the Heavens and the Earth my parents."

Invoke this Blessing to ignore one Honor loss.

I HAVE NO HOME...

"... I make the Tan T'ien my home."

When another character compels one of your Aspects, you may invoke this Blessing and ignore that compel.

I HAVE NO DIVINE POWER...

"... I make honesty my Divine Power."

Invoke this Blessing when making a confession or revealing statement. All in attendance believe your sincerity.

I HAVE NO MAGIC POWER...

"... I make personality my Magic Power."

Invoke this Blessing after being the target of any magical effect. Cancel that magical effect.

I HAVE NEITHER LIFE NOR DEATH...

"... I make A Um my Life and Death."

Invoke this Blessing after you have rolled dice in a contested Courage risk. Cancel your opponent's wagers in this risk. Success and failure of the risk is unaffected, but only you can keep your wagers.

I HAVE NO BODY...

"... I make Stoicism my Body."

Invoke this Blessing after you have rolled dice in a contested Strength risk. Cancel your opponent's wagers in this risk. Success and failure of the risk is unaffected, but only you can keep your wagers.

I HAVE NO EYES...

"... I make The Flash of Lightning my eyes."

Invoke this Blessing after you have rolled dice in a contested Cunning risk. Cancel your opponent's wagers in this risk.

Success and failure of the risk is unaffected, but only you can keep your wagers.

I HAVE NO EARS...

“... I make Sensibility my Ears.”

Invoke this Blessing after another character has spoken to you. You know whether or not that character is lying or telling the truth.

I HAVE NO LIMBS...

“... I make Promptitude my Limbs.”

Invoke this Blessing after another character has declared surprise upon you. You may cancel the effects of surprise.

I HAVE NO LAWS...

“... I make Self-Protection my Laws.”

Invoke this Blessing if you lose a risk. You may either spend your wager first or make your opponent spend his. Your opponent still gains privilege.

I HAVE NO STRATEGY...

“... I make the Right to Kill and the Right to Restore Life my Strategy.”

Invoke this Blessing while meditating on a target (character or an object). On your next risk against that target, you know exactly where its weakness lies. Even the weakness of an argument. You gain free wagers equal to your Wisdom on your next risk against that target. You can reveal this weakness to another, but the person you are communicating to does not gain complete understanding. Another character can only gain half your Wisdom in wagers.

I HAVE NO DESIGNS...

“... I make seizing the opportunity by the forelock my designs.”

When it comes time to make wagers in any contested risk, invoke this Blessing. You may look at your opponent's wagers before you make your own. Your opponent may not change his wagers after you've looked at them. You do not have to show your own wagers. You also cannot reveal your opponent's wagers to other character.



I HAVE NO MIRACLES...

“... I make Righteous Laws my Miracle.”

Invoke this Blessing after dice have been rolled in a risk but before privilege has been declared. You may spend your wager before anyone else, including the person who gains privilege.

“I HAVE NO PRINCIPLES...”

“... I make Adaptability to all circumstances my Principle.”

Invoke this Blessing before making a risk. You may replace your highest Virtue with your lowest Virtue. You may not replace your Weakness.

I HAVE NO TACTICS...

“... I make Emptiness and Fullness my Tactics.”

Invoke this Blessing after privilege is determined but before any wagers are spent. You may spend two wagers in a row (rather than just one at a time). You may only do this once during this risk.

I HAVE NO TALENT...

“... I make Ready Wit my Talent.”

Invoke this Blessing after you have rolled dice in a contested Wisdom risk. Cancel your opponent's wagers in this risk. Success and failure of the risk is unaffected, but only you can keep your wagers.

I HAVE NO FRIENDS...

“... I make my Mind my Friend.”

Invoke this Blessing after you have rolled dice in a contested Beauty risk. Cancel your opponent's wagers in this risk. Success and failure of the risk is unaffected, but only you can keep your wagers.

I HAVE NO ENEMY...

“... I make Incautiousness my Enemy. “

Invoke this Blessing and target another character. You must be able to name one of the character's Aspects. That character cannot use the invoke for that Aspect until next Season. The Aspect can still be compelled, but not invoked.

I HAVE NO ARMOR...

"... I make Benevolence my Armor."

After taking an Injury, invoke this Blessing. You may reduce that Injury's rank by three.

I HAVE NO CASTLE...

"... I make Immovable Mind my Castle."

Invoke this Blessing and pick one opponent during the Gather Dice phase of a contested Prowess risk before any wagers are made. Before you roll for your attack, you may deduct dice from your own pool to force your opponent to deduct dice from his pool, one for one.

I HAVE NO SWORD...

"... I make No Mind my Sword."

Invoke this Blessing after you have rolled dice in a contested Prowess risk. Cancel your opponent's wagers in this risk. Success and failure of the risk is unaffected, but only you can keep your wagers.





Chapter 9

Soot in the Snowfall

Seasons

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The world of dew --
A world of dew it is indeed,
And yet, and yet . . .

-Issa

Time is an important element in *A World of Dew*. It moves forward at a terrible pace. Never hesitating, never resting. The passage of time gives characters the chance to grow, to practice, to become more than what they are. Time also allows a City the opportunity to grow in population, to accumulate more land, to build more buildings and more wealth.

This chapter focuses on the Seasons mechanic you will use to measure the passage of time in the campaign. As the seasons pass, both your characters and your City will grow and change. You can put long-term plans into motion and watch as they come to pass. You will improve yourselves, heal from injuries, watch your City grow, create art, buy weapons, and much more.

All of these things require time. More time than is allowed in a single adventure. Days, weeks and months of toil, labor, blood, and sweat go into a Season Action. Great effort for great deeds. To represent the long-term strategies and subtle maneuvers of a Season, we have this chapter.

The Passage of Time

When you first sit down to play *A World of Dew*, with everybody around the table—character sheets, dice and refreshments ready—the Season has begun. In other words, the first adventure begins the first Season. We'll assume you'll be starting with Spring. Remember: you have ninety days before the end of the season. That leaves you with plenty of time to get a lot done.

Each Season, the Narrator prepares a number of **stories** (otherwise known as “adventures”). A story, of course, is a fictional tale with a beginning, middle, and an end that the characters take part in—for



better or worse. See *Chapter 11: Narrator* on page 203 for more information on building successful stories.

Season Actions

Characters receive two (2) Season Actions per Season plus their Season Age. One (1) if you're Spring, two (2) if you're Summer, three (3) if you're Autumn, and four (4) if you're Winter. See the chart for your Total Season Actions by Age.

Season Actions Table

Season	Bonus Age Season Actions	Total Season Actions
Spring	1	3
Summer	2	4
Autumn	3	5
Winter	4	6

The Season

A World of Dew marks the passage of time in Seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. When you first sit down to play the game, you should start in the Spring Season, **and it should be raining**. You'll play two or three adventures, then move on to the



Summer Season, then Autumn, then Winter, then back to Spring. Circles, circles, circles. Four Seasons constitute a Year and at the end of the Year, your character ages.

That's how the Seasons work. The slow and inevitable crawl of time.

Now, each Season is broken down into four phases:

- Trouble
- Action
- Stories
- Harvest

Let's take a look at each one in turn.

Phase 1: Trouble

Determine what kind of Trouble has sprung up in your City. This takes a couple of steps.

Each Location in your City may generate Trouble. Location by Location, roll a d6 for each Location. If any dice roll a one (1) or a two (2) that Location is Troubled and remains so until the Trouble is dealt with by the characters.

Once Trouble is determined for a Location, the Narrator and Players determine the nature of the Trouble. The Trouble is something to do with the Location itself. If it's the Magistrate's Court, perhaps it is corrupt police officers. If it is the Castle, perhaps the governor or daimyo has been murdered. Everyone, including the Narrator, says One True Thing about the Trouble. If more details are needed later, the Players can roll a Wisdom Risk.

If none of the Locations have Trouble, the Narrator may offer one Honor Point and one Ninjo Point to the Player who volunteers the Location associated with their character to have Trouble. Follow the rest of the steps for creating Trouble as normal.

Noir Rain

Rain is a constant presence throughout numerous noir and chambara films, used in countless ways to establish the tone of the story. In the climax of *The Seven Samurai*, *Blade Runner*, and countless other scenes in noir the rain forms the backdrop of the action. It can be cleansing on occasion, but it is often a symbol of sadness, despair, and lost hope, like tears in the rain. Every dark and stormy night is filled with rain.

Rain here can mean whatever you want to your story, but we use it here to denote the beginning of a samurai noir tale. The streets are filled with messy, dirty rain, and your characters will have to go out in the world to contend with the messy, dirty situations that drive the City.

Phase 2: Actions

Next, it is time for you to take some action.

Every Season, you can take a number of Season Actions. (You may get a bonus action based on the Advantage Gambaru.) You can use your Season Action for the following tasks.

- **Create a New Contact:** Gain more Allies and Contacts
- **Craft Items:** Create works of art and useful items.
- **Personal Training:** Improve your character through personal training or time spent in religious contemplation.
- **Spend Time at a Location:** Everybody knows your name some places. Increase the rank of a Location and gain the Location benefit as if you'd spent one Honor or Ninjo Point there.

An Action represents a long-term goal your character has set in motion. It may even take more than one Season to accomplish.

Phase 3: Stories

Now while all these Seasonal actions are going off, you and your cadre of characters are taking care of business. Possibly a week dealing with a new disease in the Foreign Quarter, possibly hunting down the murderer of the shogun's chief retainer, or possibly dealing with a gang war. These events, these adventures, are called stories.

Those familiar with roleplaying games call these "adventures." I guess I could have called them adventures, too, but I wanted to use a term that was more accurate. A story has a beginning, a middle and an end. Resolution. I like that. So, I'm using "story."

Each Season, your character gets to participate in a handful of stories. That's about enough time. Maybe a little too much, maybe a little too little. Maybe just enough to make you worry you're not getting enough done. I hope so. That means I'm doing my job.

Your Narrator may determine that some stories may take an entire Season to complete. Or maybe you can get in a whole series of really short stories. What it comes down to is that there's never enough time to get everything you want done.

Phase 4: Harvest

Harvest represents the collecting on anything you began making at the beginning of the Season. This is where all your plans pay off.

Anything you planned on during the last Season comes to fruition in the Harvest Phase.

Finally, pay one (1) koku for your living expenses. See page 165 for more details on your living expenses and paying your bills.

Actions

Here is the complete list of everything your character can do as a Season Action.

Create a New Contact

You may spend Season Actions to create more Contacts or convert them into Allies by doing small favors or missions. Spend a Season Action to create a new Contact just like the Advantage. Tell the Narrator Three Truth Things about them.

You may also convert a Contact into an Ally. Spend one (1) Season Action for the next four (4) Seasons (one year for a total of 4 Season Actions) and one of your Contacts becomes an Ally. Work with the Narrator to create this character and describe how you two have become allies.

These activities may very well generate stories for your group, as your characters try to impress, flatter, and indebt other characters to make them Allies and Contacts.

You can only have as many Contacts and Allies as your Cunning. No Cunning, no Contacts or Allies.

Craft Items

Characters (usually Artisans with the proper training) may use a Season Action to Craft Items.

There are two ways to Craft Items. You can create Simple Crafts or you can create Exquisite Crafts.

SIMPLE CRAFTS

Making a Simple Craft takes a single Season Action. At the beginning of the Season, you add “Making Simple Craft” as your Season Action. You must have the proper materials for producing the correct Item. If you want to make a sword, you need a swordsmithy and the iron, chromium, sharkskin, and wood to create the sword. If you creating a silk kimono you need the silk cloth, a pattern, and the thread to sew it. If you



don't have those things, purchasing them or acquiring them via favors is the way to go.

Use your Season Action. At the end of the Season, you have the item you need. It is considered **normal quality**. (See Equipment on page 166.) If you have a master who is Clever (via the Daimyo Aspects) all things you produce are **fine quality** instead of normal.

EXQUISITE CRAFTS

Making Exquisite Crafts is a bit more difficult. It requires more time and rolling dice.

When you announce Craft Goods as your Season Action, roll a number of dice equal to Beauty + appropriate Aspect. If you gain privilege, your attempt at making your item is successful. You have a normal quality item. The wagers you make are the **potential** of the item. In other words, the first draft is done, but now, it needs refining.

Every Season you use to refine your item adds a level of quality. Normal quality to good quality to fine quality to exquisite quality. The number of wagers you make represents how high you can refine your item. If you only made two wagers, you can only refine it from normal to good to fine. If you made four wagers, you can refine it from normal to good to fine to exquisite. Each level of refinement takes an additional Season.

BENEFITS OF QUALITY

Each level of quality above normal gives the person using the item a bonus die for any appropriate risks. A fine kimono, for example, provides two bonus dice for Beauty risks. An exquisite sword provides three bonus dice for any Prowess risks.

Normal	No Bonus
Good	1 die
Fine	2 dice
Exquisite	3 dice

Weapons

“If on your journey, you encounter God... God will be cut.”

— *Hattori Hanzo*, Kill Bill, Volume 1

It was said a samurai could see his soul in the reflection of his blade. It has also been said that the daisho (long sword and short sword) were the only two friends a samurai could rely upon.

To one trained in the way of a weapon, nothing is more sacred than their weapon. As such, I think it is important to include a section on weapons and a few mechanics that make them more than just bonus dice. The samurai may not be the warriors they once were, but the Ronin, the Soldier, and the Police Inspector all still wield weapons.

CREATING AN EXQUISITE WEAPON

Only a Master Weaponsmith (Rank 4+ Giri) may make an Exquisite Weapon.

An Exquisite Weapon requires Season Actions. Creating a Weapon is the same as creating an Exquisite Item. See the rules for those above.

A weaponsmith Ally or Contact (or PC) can create a weapon equal to his own rank. Thus, a Rank 1 weaponsmith may only make normal quality weapons. A Rank 2 weaponsmith can make good quality weapons. A Rank 3 weaponsmith can make fine quality weapons. But only a Rank 4 or higher weaponsmith (a Master) can make exquisite quality Swords.

The weaponsmith also requires the proper materials (steel, sharkskin, etc.) and koku equal to the quality of the weapon. Thus, a Rank 2 weapon requires both the proper materials and two Koku.

Quality

A weapon ranks from 1-4 points in Quality. Each point of Quality is a slot that can hold a different kind of benefit. Here are the benefits a weapon can carry:

POWER

The sharpness of a katana blade, the sturdiness of the ironwood tetsubo, or the perfect shape of the dai-kyu carry its



own benefits. If you invest in the weapon's power, it allows a number of free wagers in Prowess risks using the weapon equal to the Quality of the weapon.

CURSED

Some weapons carry a Curse. If your character carries a Cursed weapon, at the beginning of each Season, the Narrator adds a number of Honor Points to the pool equal to the quality of the weapon.

Sample Curses include: you may never sleep in the same bed twice, you may never find true love, you will betray the one you love the most, etc. Every Curse must also have a method for removing it.

A character cannot carry any other weapon if they carry a Cursed weapon. Not until the Curse has been lifted or fulfilled or the weapon is destroyed.

LEGEND

Some weapons are ancient and have stories about the deeds done with them long ago. Much like a Reputation they will have an Aspect that describes the Legend.

For example, *Defeated a Cunning Tengu* might be an appropriate Legend. Or perhaps *Beheaded the Owner's Mad Daimyo* works better for your character. Whatever the Legend, the Aspect grants Bonus dice equal to the weapon's Quality to any non-Violence risk that is appropriate to the Legendary Aspect when invoked.

Remember that Aspects can be compelled.

REPUTATION

A weapon can also carry a Reputation from the original owner of the weapon. For example, if the original owner had the Reputation *Great Duelist*, your weapon carries that Reputation at the rank of the weapon.

You may use this Reputation as if it were your own as long as you possess and use the weapon. If you lose the weapon (or are not using it), you may not use the Reputation and lose access to it.

FAMOUS

Legends and Curses all help to make a weapon well-known, but sometimes those are secrets. Reputations are about the weapon's former masters that rub off onto the character. But

Famous weapons are well known because the weapon itself is popular for some reason. It could be that it's Cursed, is Powerful, is a Legend, or has a Reputation. Whatever it is it must have one other Quality before it can be Famous.

Famous weapons are desired by those who do not own it. And those who do own them become known. Keeping it for yourself is a selfish act, an attachment that Buddhism teaches against. It's best to sell or give away famous weapons if you can. If you keep the weapon, you gain a number of Ninjo Points equal to the Quality of the weapon each Season. But rest assured know that others desire your weapon and will do almost anything to acquire it.

Armor

Armor makes little difference in Chambara films, but sometimes the foolish peasant pretending to be a ronin has just enough armor to survive. If you feel like you need to present armor for dramatic purposes (perhaps the breastplate of The Spaniard can stop bullets), then here are two rules for Armor: light armor and heavy armor.

Peasant soldiers, ashigaru, and low ranked gaijin sailors and marines would wear **light armor** if they wore any, and only during battle. Most samurai and European gaijin wore **heavy armor** if they wore any and only during battle.

If your character is wearing armor and they are struck with an attack that will cause a Rank 5 Injury, the attack must spend one (1) extra wager for Light Armor and two (2) extra wagers for Heavy Armor to make it a Rank 5 Injury. Otherwise, they may only spend four wagers for a Rank 4 Injury. Watch out: next turn they can tag that for four (4) bonus dice.

Personal Improvement

Personal Training allows you to add elements to your character sheet.

You may use a Season Action to gain a Giri Rank. You must spend a number of Season Actions equal to the Giri Rank you want and spend that many Seasons improving at your Giri. For example, if you want to raise your Giri to rank three, you must spend three Season Actions, and three Seasons, to get there. But you must complete the previous Giri Rank before going to the next Rank, no jumping ahead.





Characters can reach Rank 6 in their Giri, very rare characters can reach Rank 7.

You can also spend a Season Action to add an Aspect to your sheet. You are limited to the total number of Aspects you may have on your sheet. You may only have three Aspects plus a number of bonus Aspects equal to your total Season Actions for a maximum of nine Aspects ever, even those with Gambaru (you get your Aspects earlier than everyone else).

You may spend Season Actions at Dojos and Sumo Schools for Personal Training. See the Dojo and the Sumo School in

Chapter 3: City Chapter on page 49 for how to increase ranks in your chosen school.

Finally, you can practice religion. You may spend Season Actions at one, two, or all three types of religious Locations. The Japanese were not particular about following just one religion.

For one Season Action you may:

- **Practice Meditation:** Gain a Meditation Point from a Buddhist Monastery
- **Revere the Ancestors:** Spend time at a Shinto Shrine to gain the Blessings of your forefathers
- **Receive Forgiveness:** Spend time at a Christian Church to gain Ninjo Points.

Spend Time at a Location

Finally, you can just hang around a Location: doing work there, helping the owner (perhaps you are the owner), or patronizing the establishment. Describe to the Narrator what you are doing at the

Location, and how you're helping to improve it or make it a more important Location. Spend a number of Season Actions equal to the next rank of the Location (1-3) and a number of Seasons at that Location helping out. When enough Seasons have passed, the Location grows to the next size.

Each Season that passes you may gain the benefit of the Location as if you had spent one (1) Honor or Ninjo Point there. The benefit is equal to the current rank of the Location until the final season ends; when the Location goes up a rank, you gain the benefit of the Location at its new rank.

Remember that during play you can create a new Location: simply spend an Honor or Ninjo Point and describe Three True Things to the Narrator.

Koku

In Old Japan, the currency is rice. Without rice, everything falls apart. Therefore, rice is the most valuable commodity.

A Koku represents enough rice to feed a samurai for one year (approximately 278.3 liters or 73.52 gallons). Realistically, each Province (or han) should generate around ten thousand koku. The largest han in Old Japan generated around **one million koku**. That's a bit much math for a roleplaying game. So, we're going to pretend that generating koku in the tens rather than the thousands is the standard.

Jobs and Living Expenses

In *Blood & Honor*, Clans produced koku and paid their samurai, but you don't get that free money in *A World of Dew*. You have to work for it. If you are gainfully employed in some manner you gain a koku each Season equal to your Giri Rank.

You must spend (1) one or more koku on your lodgings and foods per Season. If you can't afford it maybe a friend will pay your way, but there's no getting around the cost of living. It's expensive to live in a city.

If you find yourself at the end of Season without any way to pay your living expenses, you either owe a debt to someone or you become homeless. Either way, finding the money to cover your costs can end up being an interesting story itself!

Artists, Ronin, Yakuza, Gamblers, and Holy Persons, do not gain koku in the normal way. Artists must create and sell art to Patrons,



Ronin must find jobs, Yakuza must ask their oyabun for money, Gamblers never know what they will have, and Holy People should have no need for material things. Holy People are the only group exempt from seasonal living expenses; their religion covers their basic needs.

Equipment

Once, samurai were given their equipment by their lords, but not anymore. Those days are over. Everything you have you paid for with blood, sweat, and tears, even if you are of Samurai status or higher. The Imperials, while better off than many, are kept on a tight financial leash by the Shogunate to prevent them from encouraging rebellions.

Characters begin the game with their basic necessities and any equipment appropriate for their Giri. Doctors might have a medical bag and tools and might even own the Surgery (or just work there for a senior physician) in town. Police Inspectors have access to weapons and armor, as well as thief-catching tools, doshin, and information. Holy People have nothing but perhaps a change of clothes, an alms bowl, a holy symbol, a book, or a scroll of religious text.

All this equipment varies in quality. Determine the quality of your starting equipment with your Narrator before beginning the game. Most equipment is of normal quality, but if your Narrator is kind perhaps every character receives a better quality item.

Equipment comes in four categories, listed below.

Poor equipment includes anything found on the battlefield, left-over or otherwise scavenged. If your character has poor equipment, you gain the tag *Poorly Equipped*. Any other character can tag you for two bonus dice on any appropriate risk.

Normal equipment provides no bonuses or penalties.

Good equipment provides a bonus of one die to any appropriate risk.

Fine equipment provides a bonus of two dice to any appropriate risk.

Only a Master Smith or Craftsman (an NPC or a PC) may make **exquisite quality** equipment. It adds a bonus of three dice to any appropriate risk.

End of the Year

Another important date. The End of the Year.

The winters in Japan are not kind. Cold and terrible. But Spring will come soon.

Soon....

In Winter, characters mark the end of the Year by looking back at their accomplishments and defeats. But more importantly, each and every one of them takes one more step toward inevitable death.

Age

On your character sheet, you'll find a space for Age. When you created your character, you were instructed to roll a number of dice based on your starting Phase. It is the end of the Year; time to add to that total.

At the End of the Year, regardless of your current phase, roll one (1d6) and adds the result to your Age.

Your character advances to the next Phase of their life when their Age reaches 20 points or higher. Spring to Summer, Summer to Autumn, Autumn to Winter, Winter...to Death.

Once you reach 20 or higher, erase that total. You now have zero Age Points. At the end of next Year, roll 1d6 and write down your roll in that spot.

Sex & Children

Since we're talking about long term plans, we have to talk about children.

Any sexual encounter between male and female characters presents the opportunity for pregnancy at the end of the Season.

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The players involved both roll a die. If both roll a 1-2, 3-4, or 5-6, the woman gets pregnant. That is, if both players roll a 1 or 2; or if both players roll a 3 or 4; or if both players roll a 5 or 6. That makes a 33% chance of intercourse resulting in pregnancy. Two characters can also use a Season Action (one for each) to produce offspring. That way, they don't have to roll.

Pregnancy lasts three Seasons. At the end of the third Season, the baby is born. Also, the mother adds one die of Age Points to her character sheet. Each Season after the child's birth, roll 1d6 and add it to the child's Age. At the age of sixteen, a child can enter play as a rank 1 Ally (Son or Daughter), and continue to age like adults. If the players and the Narrator agree, jumping forward in time to have young children come of age during game play is a great idea.

Phase to Phase

When your character moves from Spring to Summer or a Summer to Autumn or an Autumn to Winter, you may make certain changes. You can change your character's Name, change Aspects, and even Switch Virtues

NAME

You may, if you like, change your Name. Changing who you are. Changing your Destiny. Taking on a new path.

You can never change your Family Name.

ASPECTS

When you move to a new Phase, you also gain new Aspects.

Spring to Summer: gain two Aspects

Summer to Autumn: gain one new Aspect and one Winter Tag.

Autumn to Winter: gain one new Aspect and two new Winter Tags.

If you have as many Aspects as you possibly can, or need you may instead of taking a new Aspect replace a number of Aspects equal to the total you would gain.

WINTER ASPECTS

A Winter Tag is just that, a Tag. It has only a compel and no invoke. It must be a Tag like *Bad Leg*, *Blind Eye*, or *Quivering Hands*. When your character moves into Autumn, you gain one

Winter Aspect. When your character moves into Winter, you get two more.

VIRTUES

When your character enters a new Phase, you may switch your Virtues. For example, as your character grows older, you may switch your Wisdom and Strength or perhaps you Prowess and Cunning.

You may switch your Virtues as you wish, keeping the same numbers just moving them into different Virtues. Remember, you always have a Weakness, but that Weakness can move to a different Virtue.

DEATH

Winter Phase. You've reached 20 Age points at the End of the Year. Time for your character to pass away. Whatever the City needs from this point will be carried forward by your children....









Long Evenings With Friends Players

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No matter how bittersweet --
Finer than Jasmine

-Gansho

This chapter is for you, the player. We're going to talk about how to play the game. You already know the rules, but now, we're going to talk about how to use those rules to get the most out of *A World of Dew*.

A few bits of this chapter come from *Blood & Honor*, and you should read the excellent player chapter John wrote there to get the most out of this game too. I'm not going to repeat everything because I'm going to try to focus on giving you just the advice you need to play *A World of Dew*, but you'd be a fool to miss out on everything John has to say....

Samurai Noir

Blood & Honor was about Tragedy. Your characters fail in spectacular ways when they are just about to win it all. They die before they can tell their friend they loved them. They fall just after they vanquish the darkness. They live for their ideals and they die for them too.

A World of Dew is Samurai Noir. It's a close cousin to Tragedy, but it doesn't go quite as far, and sometimes it goes farther. Your character doesn't always die in Noir stories. Sometimes they live to see everything they've worked for crumble into impotent nothingness. Sometimes they realize that they are the villain, their passions a cruel curse. Either can be worse than the release of death.

In Noir, characters fail...a lot. But they fail forward. Things get harder for them as they work their way through the story. They spend their resources; call in favors, get beat up, and things just get bleaker.



But they keep going. In the end, they don't usually get everything they want. Sometimes they don't get anything they want, but things end anyway, at least for a time.

A World of Dew is about all of that. You're probably not samurai, and if you are, you're at best a lowly bureaucrat, a Police Investigator. You're in the gutter struggling to get by; life is constantly raining on you. Things go from bad to worse, but somehow you follow the trail to the end. Even as it takes you to a dark place where your own secrets come tumbling out of locked doors.

It's always the costs that are the sticking point. That murder might be solved, but your friend died while searching for the Truth. You might have defeated that other gang, but you're the only one left of your gang. You won your oyabun's trust, but only because you were willing to do the unthinkable to keep your position. The costs may be higher than the glory or honor you gained seeing it through.

Pyrrhic Victories are the name of the game in Noir, and the impact of them is sometimes more profound than tragic failure.

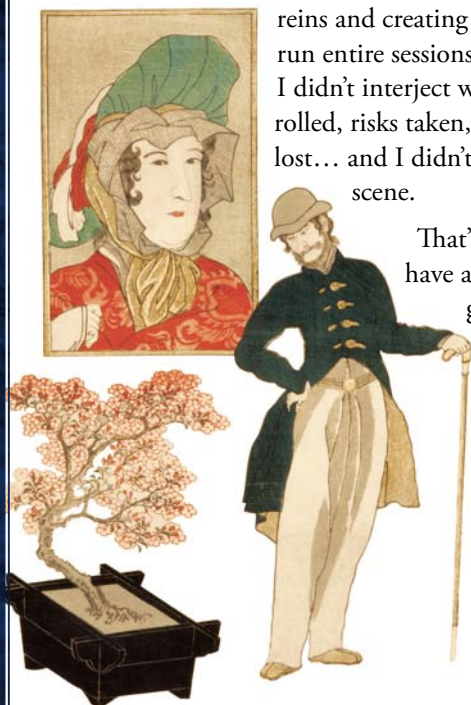
A DIFFERENT KIND OF GAME

A World of Dew is a bit different than most traditional roleplaying games. With the wagers system, players have a lot more control over the narrative, taking the reins and creating the story themselves. I've run entire sessions where, as the Narrator, I didn't interject with "plot" once. Dice rolled, risks taken, clues discovered, lives lost... and I didn't have to frame a single scene.

That's because the players have a lot of power in this game. As much power as the gamemaster, if they want it. Now, why would I do a silly thing like that?

Because I trust you.

Most roleplaying games are designed with cheaters, wankers, and munchkins in mind. Designers put guards



in place to keep those people from abusing loopholes. After all, this is a roleplaying game.

Loopholes exist. So, instead of putting so many limits on the players that they can't even breathe, I've done the opposite. I've put the power directly into your hands. Again, you may ask, why would I do such a thing?

Because I trust you.

I trust that you understand it isn't just the Narrator's job to make sure everybody's having fun. It's *everybody's job* to make sure *everybody* is having fun.

Whenever I find myself on the other side of the screen, as a player, I inevitably find myself playing the role of pocket Narrator. That is, I engage other players *in ways that get them to talk about their character*. I put myself in a position where the other characters are in the spotlight, and I do whatever I can to make that moment fun. I try, in short, to be the kind of player I would want at my table.

FAILING FORWARD

One part of this system that knocks players for a loop is the whole idea of narrating your own failure. After all, dice rolls don't determine success or failure; instead, they tell us who gets to narrate the success or failure. So many players ask me, "Why would I want to say that my character fails?"

Because failure is half the fun of drama, that's why.

When you get to narrate how your character fails, you get to say how they fail. That means, you can fail forward. Let me explain.

In most samurai noir, when a character fails, they do so in a way that moves the plot forward. Unfortunately, in roleplaying games, that doesn't really happen. If the party is on one side of a locked door and they can't get it open, the adventure is over. They may as well go home. The rest of the adventure is on the other side of that door and if they can't get it open...well; the GM just has them re-roll until they get the door open.

The "locked door" isn't always a locked door. Sometimes, it's an NPC you have to convince. Fail to convince the NPC, the adventure stops.

Sometimes, it's a clue the characters have to find. Fail to find the clue, the adventure stops.



Physical, social and mental locked doors all accomplish the same thing: they stop the story.

As players, when you narrate your character's failures, you can unlock the door but add complications.

A physical adversity would be something like jumping across a rooftop to another rooftop. You roll Strength and get privilege. This means you can say how your character succeeds or fails. Let's say you decide to fail and start plummeting down toward the ground. But, you have wagers and with those wagers you can say...

"My character lands on a balcony just under the rooftop," and...

"The room that I've landed in belongs to someone I trust," and...

"That person hides me from the guards I'm running from."

With those three wagers, you've turned a failure into something else. You could even turn the "someone I trust" into "someone I don't trust" and now that person will hide you...if you pay their price. Drama.

Another kind of adversity is social adversity: trying to get what you want through dialogue rather than violence. Let's say you are trying to convince the merchant's (unfaithful) wife to sleep with you to get evidence of her infidelity. You make a seduction risk and get privilege. You can succeed or fail. Success means she goes along with you. Failure means...she goes along with you. But wagers make things interesting. She doesn't believe you. You failed. But she goes along with you anyway because...

"She goes along with me, but she suspects I'm up to something."

Or... "She goes along with me because she wants to kill me in my sleep."

Or... "She goes along with me because she's been in love with me for years."

Any one of those things complicates the matter in a way that creates drama. And if you create drama, you're likely to get Honor or Ninjo Points from the Narrator. They like it when you complicate things, and they will reward you for keeping the

story interesting. For honoring your obligations. For pursuing your Desire.

Mental adversities work out in much the same way. Finding clues is a popular Cunning risk. Just what clues you find make all the difference. Clues complicate everything, especially when they are inconvenient. You enter a room with a dead body. Do you find any clues? Why yes...

"I find a clue. It is a piece from my husband's kimono, torn at the seam."

"I find a clue. One of my own wakizashi!"

"I find a clue. My son in the corner of the room, tears in his eyes, a bloody blade in his hands."

"Does my character succeed or fail?" isn't an important question.

"How does my character succeed or fail?" That's what you want to be asking yourself.

Does the result of your character's action result in moving the plot forward? Does it result in complicating things? Does it result in revealing something new and different about your character? Ask these questions when determining the success and failure of your character's actions.

Success and failure are only byproducts of drama.

THE X-CARD

Your Narrator is going to take a card, write a big, "X," on it and place it in the center of the table. If they don't and you like this rule, ask them to do this. We call this card **the X-Card**.

The X-Card is all about what you don't want to play during your game. It's there to provide an easy, socially acceptable way to move past elements of a game that make you uncomfortable or that ruin the tone. Perhaps you had a bad experience about something that shows up in games. You don't like talking about it, and it actually makes you queasy when it comes up. Or maybe something just isn't working during play and you'd like to cut it out of the story.

The X-Card is there to help you and your group move past that stuff. You point at it when someone talks about said subject and say, "X-Card." You don't have to explain, just say what you don't want in the game. For me, Ben, it's anything with medical



details. I had a bad experience in real life, and I don't want to talk about it!

I point at the card and the Narrator fades to black or glosses over that scene or replaces the problematic element with something a bit easier. We also know from now on what not to talk about, but if one of us forgets, I can simply point at the card again and we move forward.

The X-Card is also great for keeping the tone of the game on track. Say we're playing a game in Old Japan and one of the players describes a giant steam powered mecha that she's just discovered in an ancient smithy. You all might think that's cool and works for your story, go ahead, I won't stop you. I like Giant Steam Mecha as much as the next Narrator!

But you also might think it is out of context for your story, a tale of political intrigue during the height of the Shogunate. "Giant Steam Mecha have no place," you think.

If you feel that way, you can simply point at the X-Card and say, "Giant Steam Mecha." No explanation is needed. You don't want that in your game, it's hurting your fun, and the player who introduced it didn't know. *No harm, no foul.* The Narrator asks the player to describe something else they've discovered or you can work with them to decide what works for you all. You're not obligated to go into detail about why you don't like it, but that doesn't mean you have to do all this in silence. Talk about what you think might work for you!

Finally, don't abuse the X-Card. It's not there to tell the story exactly how you want it to be told without input from the rest of the group. It's there to keep things from going places that ruin immersion for you or make you uncomfortable to a level where it's no longer fun.



A little discomfort can be fun. Hard choices, bad choices, and going outside of your comfort zone are big parts of gaming and storytelling. But if a game I'm playing goes into medical horror (or even just medical details), I can't even concentrate on the game. I am focusing on not throwing up and not fainting. So X-Card. We'll all have more fun this way.

THE EASTERN HERO

For many American and European fans of Japanese literature, many of the themes and events can be quite confusing. Character behaviors seem out of line with Western values such as individualism and free will. That's because our own hero (the Western Hero) is a manifestation of those values. We expect our heroes to walk their own path, adhere to their own private code of ethics and buck the system.

But the Eastern Hero is quite different. They reflect the values of a different culture. To most

More About The X-Card

If you'd like to learn more about the X-Card, search the internet for "John Stavropolous X-Card." John created the X-Card for use in his games, and he has a ton of tips and notes for using it in all sorts of situations. Thanks, John!



accurately emulate samurai literature, we should take a look at the Eastern Hero and how their values differ from their Western counterpart.

As I said above, the Western Hero's values focus on free will and self-determination. Our Hero defines their role in the world. They go out into the wilderness and make their own way. They don't rely on others (although they may find other strong-willed individuals who assist them because they recognize strength in each other) and they eventually become a ruler in their own right.

The Western Hero's adventure begins with a sense of unease. Something is wrong. The Western Hero goes out into the world to find a cure for their unease. The adventure transforms them into that cure. They become what the world around them needs. Through that transformation, they cure both themselves and the world.

The Eastern Hero's journey is very similar—you can find the same trappings, in fact—but the focus is different. The Western Hero gains the cure through self-determination, but the Eastern Hero heals themselves (and the world) through subjugating their ego. In other words, they bury their desires under the duty that they must perform. The Western Hero's courage comes from doing what is right regardless of what the world wants them to do. The world is sick and must be healed. The Eastern Hero's courage comes from doing what is right regardless of their personal desires. They must sacrifice what they want for the greater good.

To quote a famous Vulcan philosopher: "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few (or the one)."

The Western Hero feels a call to adventure, but this call comes (usually) comes from within. It is their desire to fix what is wrong. The Eastern Hero's call to adventure is external: the world has a duty for them to perform. Only they can perform this duty and no other. The world has a place for them and they must accept that place or the world's machinery will grind them down. The longer they refuse this duty, the harder the world's punishments will be. Desires and fears will come to taunt and humiliate the Hero, and they succumb to those fears for a while, but eventually they overcome them and continue on their journey.

While these differences may seem trivial, they are actually a great wall between the East and the West. The West who sees the individual as a lone hero who has to defy the world and define their own existence on their own terms and the East who sees the individual as someone who must accept their place in the world.

To Eastern eyes, the Western Hero is selfish and egotistical. They think only of themselves and have no regard for others. To Western eyes, the Eastern Hero is a weak person who accepts their fate and goes along with the flow of the world. An unquestioning milquetoast who does what they're told. But in the world of Old Japan, the Hero is one who has an appointed duty in the world that must be fulfilled. The more they deny this role, the more the world is an enemy, forcing them to fit.

Your character is an Eastern Hero. They have a duty to fulfill and a higher authority to appease. Society expects them to act and react in certain ways. When they do not, they demonstrate that they don't fit, and as the old saying goes, the hammer will soon knock their tall nail attitude into place.

When your character views others who put their own ambitions in front of social responsibility, they should act accordingly. In fact, complete disgust is an appropriate response, although even strong reactions are almost always subdued and understated in Old Japan.

Strong reactions are kept for the most heinous offenses. But this isn't to say that the values of the Eastern Hero and the Western Hero don't show up in each other's cultures.

In the West, the idea of duty resonates through our literature. The film *Saving Private Ryan* is a great example of the values of the Eastern Hero: a squad of men who are doing what they are told and the courage it takes to do so. Likewise, in Japan, the films of Akira Kurosawa make heavy commentary on the American values of the individual.

This is the key difference between the Western Hero and the Eastern Hero. For a look at exactly how these two characters clash, I suggest watching a back-to-back double feature of Akira Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* and Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars*.

In the end, the virtues of the Eastern Hero are expressed in the behaviors of the characters. How these characters respond to their conflicting honor, duty, and desire is what causes conflict



and conflict is what gives us stories. But for now, let's take a look at what's expected of your character.

Beware! We are about to enter the very complicated and convoluted world of Japanese etiquette....

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CHARACTER

What is your role in the grand design? What is your ultimate destiny?

What is a suitable punishment for those who put ego ahead of their giri?

Castes

Old Japan is a divided country. Divided by clans, divided by castes, divided by koku. Even as the Shogunate claimed power and remade Japan, the castes persisted.

The castes in Old Japan are the samurai (the warrior caste), the clergy (those who pray) and the peasantry (those who work). Samurai are on the top, the peasantry is on the bottom and the clergy are...on the side.

SAMURAI

As a samurai, you are feared and respected. Respected by those who are within your own caste and feared by those who are not. You are among the only caste allowed to carry weapons. You are also permitted to murder those who are below you. Not a serious crime, but it is an action that may carry consequences, depending on the lord of the land.

As a samurai, you are the equivalent of a European knight. You have land and title and vast amounts of cash on hand. You never need to pay for anything: everything in your lands belongs to you, anyway. Your duty is to protect the lands and dynasty of your Clan. Everything else is ego. Only your Clan matters.

From a very young age, you were trained to be a warrior. Even if your giri (your duty) is to be a courtier or a spy, all samurai are trained in the martial arts. It is a samurai's duty to fight and die for your Clan without thought to your own safety or security. These values were burned onto your soul from the time you were born. This is your duty. Your destiny. Nothing else matters.

Of course, all this is being eroded by the Tokugawa Shogunate. Very few samurai clans caught onto the harsh new realities quickly, most had to be dragged into the reality of life only after everything around them had collapsed. They acted as if everything was as it had been before the Shogunate, even as their resources and rights dwindled.

PEASANTS

The peasants also serve, but you do so in a different way. The heimin (common people) serve as farmers, craftsmen, artisans, and tradesmen. You are the people who create things: food, tools, weapons, buildings, art. You have no legal rights when samurai are concerned, but may appeal to samurai for justice when wronged by another peasant.

Within the caste itself, farmers are regarded as most important. You farmers provide rice and without rice, Old Japan would fall apart.

There is a sub-caste among the peasants: the hinin, or half-people. They are entertainers, geisha, and merchants. If you are a hinin you create nothing according to Old Japan caste views. You just provide services. You are the lowest rung on the social ladder. Farmers scoff at you when you complain to them. Samurai are so much higher than you.



BURAKUMIN

Finally, there is a non-caste below everyone: the Burakumin.

If you are Burakumin you perform jobs that make you untouchable. (The highly derogatory word commonly used in this era was eta, which means “an abundance of defilement.” This word is now considered as offensive as “nigger” or “wetback” in American slang, so we’re not going to use it.) Any profession that involves exposure to flesh or blood is considered Burakumin. Undertakers, tanners and torturers fall into this category.

CLERGY

Buddhist monks and Christian and Shinto priests fall into a strange category here. They are not samurai but they are also not peasants. This is a blurry region where it is difficult to tread. There are no clear-cut rules, only a few guidelines.

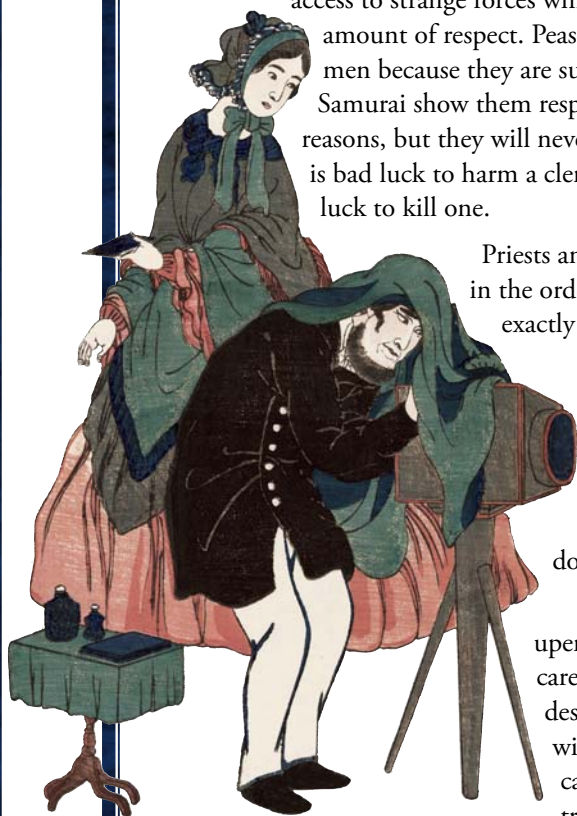
Because holy men are not samurai, they do not deserve the respect that samurai receive. On the other hand, they do have access to strange forces which demand a certain amount of respect. Peasants show respect to holy men because they are superstitious and afraid. Samurai show them respect for exactly the same reasons, but they will never admit it. No doubt, it is bad luck to harm a clergyman. It is even worse luck to kill one.

Priests and monks have their place in the order even if it is unclear exactly what place that is.

Castes in the City

How does all of this work in a massive bustling city? Well, in many ways it doesn't.

The very nature of a city upends many of those roles, carefully constructed positions designed for an agrarian society with small towns next to large castles. The samurai, of course, try to maintain the caste



system, technically: the daimyo or governor of the city is in charge of all the people in their city, and they do appoint magistrates and police officers to oversee the people. But this half-modern system doesn't always work, and in these early cities many people fell through the cracks. Murders go unpunished, people take on new tasks outside of their roles, and the rules fall apart.

Ideally, all that I've written here about castes is true, but in reality the City is much more fluid.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Bushido is only expected from samurai because only they have the will and character to adopt such a demanding philosophy. Does this mean if you are not a samurai that you are actually a lesser breed of human than the samurai? How does the honor of the Yakuza fit into this view?

The philosophers of Old Japan speak of a celestial order of things: everything is born into its place. Does this mean a person of the hinin class may never find the courage of a samurai?

Hinin merchants are now richer than entire samurai families; geisha advisors speak directly into the Shogun's ear. What does this say about the caste system?

Etiquette (That Matters)

Authors have spent millions of pages talking about etiquette and custom in Old Japan. I'm not going to do that here. Instead, I'm going to focus on a philosophy I use when running games in Old Japan (and other more fantastical realms that attempt to emulate such etiquette).

I'm going to focus on etiquette that matters.

In the world of Old Japan, you could spend an entire game session obsessing over manners. In fact, I could spend a few dozen pages just on the etiquette of bowing. Just bowing. I'm not going to do that. Instead, I'm going to encourage you to focus on etiquette that communicates something to the Narrator and the other players. Let me explain.

A performance of etiquette should communicate something to the other players. It is only important if a character makes an exception to that proper etiquette; then, they are communicating something important to the players and the plot. For example, we can all assume characters bow and greet each other with the proper etiquette. But



what if your character meets a stranger? You gather together to meet at a noodle shop; there is an old monk eating here. Everyone greets the monk and performs the proper bowing ritual, but my poet takes a moment to bow deeper and longer than the others. Why does he do that? I'm communicating to the others, "I recognize this man and we have a history." What kind of history? Perhaps the old monk was my teacher. Or, perhaps we were friends before he retired and joined the monastery. Or, perhaps he is a family member. Any number of possibilities spring to mind.

The simple act of bowing a little lower and a little longer communicates something to the other players and adds depth to the story.

Another example: one group of players had just solved a murder of an oyabun. The new oyabun had been one of the suspects, but was innocent despite the party rudely questioning her early in the investigation. The oyabun had even helped them catch the real killer in the end. Having risen in position, she was throwing a party and giving everyone gifts. There's a ritual for accepting gifts in Old Japan:

the recipient should refuse three times to allow the giver an opportunity to prove their sincerity.

They began running through this complicated procedure but upon their first refusal, the oyabun said, in a stern voice, "Accept my gift...and do not question my sincerity again."

This put the characters in a harsh spot. Etiquette demanded that they refuse again, but the oyabun just gave them a direct order to break that etiquette. It was a reminder of their failed etiquette when they first met, a reminder not to question the sincerity or honesty of the oyabun.



Again, etiquette added to drama of the scene rather than just took up time.

The way you hold your fan when you speak says a lot. Use that. Show your character waving the fan around dramatically. It adds to your character's flavor and makes what could be a droll bit of dialogue much more exciting.

The way you hold your sword when you speak says a lot. Use that. When a character enters a room with another character, what he does with his sword says something. If he pulls his sword from his obi and puts it on his right side, it means he does not feel in any particular danger. The sword is difficult to reach and unsheathe on your right side: you must go through multiple motions to do so.

Therefore, either you trust the other characters in the room or you don't feel threatened by them. On the other hand, if you lay your sword on your left side—where it is easy to reach—that also says something about your opinion of the other people in the room. Just that simple motion—the laying down of a sword—communicates volumes.

Changes in Etiquette

As Old Japan becomes a land of bustling cities, personal space becomes a premium. Old rules, like customs that declared it an offense for someone to hit a samurai's sword even accidentally, begin to break down. Touchy samurai might try to make it an issue, but if an angry samurai turns around to find his sword hit by a merchant flanked by two hulking sumo who could crush him easily, traditional etiquette won't matter. Only power and position matter now. If that touchy samurai worked for the governor of the city and the merchant relies on the governor's passes to continue trading, the merchant might just apologize, albeit not as sincerely as would be customary. Or, if the samurai is a ronin, then the sumo might even take his sword and break it for daring to inconvenience their master. Everything is different.

The yakuza are a strange case. You'd expect gangsters to be rude and impolite (and they are to those who they're roughing up) but they generally recognize hierarchy, especially to their oyabun. They don't see themselves as simple thugs; they are members of a "chivalrous organization" offering services and goods normally not available in strict Japanese society. They are a pressure valve, a way to maintain true honor in a world where corrupt samurai do not look after the common people.



Playing a yakuza that is kind to an old woman is not out of character. You're chivalrous after all. You're helping the weak. If, however, the other characters come upon you beating an old woman, that communicates something about your character. Is this woman the one who betrayed your oyabun? Or perhaps she's a poisoner who's been killing the geisha in the neighborhood? Or did she offend your reputation in some way?

More often than not, exceptions define your character. When your character breaks with tradition, it will say something about your character. Your game should be filled with choosing between the expedient choice and the correct choice. Etiquette in Old Japan is filled with these kinds of landmines and bear traps. There is no easy way to move forward, but you cannot always stop and find a middle way.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CHARACTER

What non-verbal cues do you use to communicate to others?

How does your character feel about those of higher social status?

What about those below them?

Makoto

The word makoto is often translated as "sincerity." The truth of the matter is, it doesn't mean sincerity at all. Makoto is a highly valued trait in Old Japan and a difficult concept for most Western minds to grasp. For a Westerner, such as myself, sincerity means honesty and genuineness. But for the people of Old Japan, it means something else entirely.

To speak with makoto means to eliminate your ego to ensure harmony is maintained. It also implies that one should strive to maintain the honor and dignity of all involved. Makoto is a complicated concept and boiling it down to "sincerity" does not do it justice. Makoto stresses harmony. A plea for the most harmonious solution.

Two police inspectors present two solutions to a problem. The first solution is forthright and presents the facts clearly and plainly. These facts, if they should come to light, will cause many to lose dignity and honor and means a good deal of cleanup will be required to set things right. The second solution avoids certain facts, presents others in an obscuring light but saves a good many people a great deal of embarrassment and allows everyone to go home without ever thinking about the problem again.

In Old Japan, the second solution has makoto. A wise person will do everything in their power to ensure problems are solved elegantly, cleanly and without fuss or trouble.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CHARACTER

*How does your character view the concept of makoto?
Remember, this is not a trivial concept in Old Japan: it is how Old Japan works. Dismissing it means you dismiss a cultural pillar. If you do dismiss it, what price have you paid in doing so?*

Women, Sex, and Gender

Historically, ancient Japan was relatively progressive. Women played major roles in ruling Japan as numerous Empresses, there were famous women warriors (onna bugeisha), and women in Japan up through the 1700s had legal and social rights similar to what many women in Japan and the West enjoy today. Buddhist religious views did attempt to place some sexual and social restrictions on women, but the Shinto animist views of women and their sex being a sacred as creators of all creation worked against the more traditional mainland Buddhist views.

Alternative sexual orientation was also something that was not seen as deviant or a problem in Ancient Japan. Most children were dressed as girls until a certain age because of superstitions regarding spirits kidnapping young boys. The ideas of transgender, asexual, ambiguous gender, and cross-dressers have a long and accepted history in Japan. Homosexual relations were accepted and while not considered a good match for offspring, and thus politics, amongst power-seeking samurai and Clans, they were common and usually



considered a standard affair, something else the Japanese viewed as different.

Affairs, sexual liaisons, or open marriages were not considered strange either for many in the upper classes. They were more discrete compared to open marriages today, but there are writings from the late 1500s about the importance of a Japanese wife picking a proper companion for her husband while he is on campaign so that he is neither bored in conversation or in bed. This wasn't one sided either. Women also carried on such affairs and some of our earliest examples of female sex toys come from Japan.

But with the introduction of Christianity, gaijin cultures, and industrialization, women began to lose significant power. They were relegated to more "traditional" roles, less active social positions, and not allowed to take on specific jobs like soldiers or police investigators. Of course, there were exceptions, some of them very famous (Date Masamune's Christian daughter), but change was coming for the rights of women. During the Meiji Era many rights women enjoyed: owning personal property, choosing who to marry, getting abortions, and taking jobs were all taken away.

A World of Dew is set right smack dab in the middle of the Era when these changes begin to creep across Japan. Some women are becoming rich and powerful merchants, geisha, artists, and leaders while many are being pushed out. Playing a woman during this time means extra roadblocks for you. Men are getting everything handed to them. You have to fight extra hard and not show any feeling to get the position you deserve, and even then people won't think you deserve it and give you more trouble.

But good stories are all about conflict, and playing a woman in Old Japan can be full of good stories. If you play during the early Tokugawa Era many women embraced the new cultures, religions, and ideas brought from the West, and thus they gained many advantages. During the long era in the middle, change was slow and conflict about status for women was almost non-existent. But if you play during the late Tokugawa Era when industrialization and Victorian sensibilities start to encroach, then you'll be fighting against the changes that are coming.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CHARACTER

If your character is a woman how does she fit into typical society in Old Japan? Does she buck the trends, or is she a trend setter? Does she appear to be a dutiful woman while secretly working to subvert the new rules of society?

If your character is a woman in a non-traditional role, how did she come to be in that position?

What is your character's sexual orientation? Do they dress in the traditional clothing of their gender? Do they dress in an ambiguous way or cross dress?





Six Characters for a Rainy Night

One of the rewards for *A World of Dew's* Kickstarter was a custom character for the game built by me and added to the book. These six characters are the product of five steadfast *Oyabun* and one resolute *Daimyo*. They sprung from the imaginations of backers, distilled through my brain and worked into *A World of Dew*.

And you can use them too! Each character is unique and ready to put down on your character sheet. They have enough detail to get you rolling, but still space for you to make them uniquely your own.

I hope you enjoy playing them as much as I enjoyed writing them, and thank you to the six of you who supported me at this level, your confidence early on will always mean a lot to me. – Ben Woerner

Kage Hatsumi

For Oyabun Bruno Jornada

The First Day of Darkness

When the Tokugawa took power, they took it directly from the samurai. Your family, the Kage's were one of those families who lost everything when the Shogunate rose. Your lands and titles were stripped from you, and you were left with nothing.

You worked at the docks to get by or, if no work was to be had, you tried fishing from the pier since you were too poor to own a boat. Sometimes you went hungry, but your father insisted that you wouldn't sell the family daisho despite its age and missing tsuba (the crossguard). You had nothing of value left.

One night you came home from meditating at the Temple to find your mother dead and your father dying.

Your father gasped, "They mustn't find it, Hatsumi!" His blood was everywhere, his life leaking away.



“Go to the docks, under the pier where we fish. Find a box with our crest. Take it and flee. They think you have it. I told them you were in the pleasure district. Son, take the daisho.”

You rushed to the docks in the rain and found the box with little trouble. A ferry took you across to Kyoto. With half of your remaining koku, you rented a room above an old tavern and bought some noodles. You're not great with words, but money talks.

Hunched over the table, you opened the box. You didn't believe your eyes. You've seen the paintings many times before, but you never thought you would see such a legendary item: the tsuba of the legendary Grass Cutting Sword, Kusanagi. And it fit onto your sword!

Just as you finished restoring Kusanagi's tsuba, five Tokugawa soldiers rushed into the shop. The officer pointed at you, “Get him!”

You drew your sword and smiled, these men were already dead.

Character Information

Giri: Ronin

Strengths: Prowess, Cunning, & Courage

Weakness: Beauty

Location: An old Tavern

Three True Things

- You meditate and practice Kaze kendo daily.
- You own the legendary sword Kusanagi.
- You're seeking revenge on those who killed your parents.

Mugai

For Oyabun Paul Thorgrimson

No Lid

You don't think about your life before the temple very much. It was a pointless existence. But as a monk you were above reproach and gained wisdom quickly. Monks from China even came to test you to see if you were a Bodhisattva. Things were going well. Many thought you would be declared a living saint, even though you knew such a proclamation would be false.

The questions were nearly done, your martial arts kata were perfect, but that mattered little. The Chinese monk with more

wrinkles than silk looked at you, smiled, and simply asked, “Do you still love her?” You knew only one thing you could say: “Yes.”

Your abbot was furious. He told you to go find another temple, that you were a fraud and displeasing to Buddha. You left in shame, filled with the knowledge that you were not worthy.

You gathered your meager things and began to travel up the Tokaido Road, seeking solitude and a place to meditate. A month later, you came across a sign pointing off the road and up a trail to a shrine just outside of Hakone. You decided to visit it.

When you arrived three bandits were taking everything of value from a poor farmer and his wife who’d also fallen for the trap. You suggested that the bandits return the stolen items and turn away from crime. They laughed and tried to rob you.

You drove them off, but felt sorry for them and their lack of enlightenment. The farmer and his wife offered you one of their damaged sacks of rice and a half spilled pot of paint as thanks Perhaps you’ll stay here awhile and clean up this shrine, maybe even help folks in Hakone?

Character Information

Giri: Holy Person

Strengths: Wisdom, Cunning, & Strength

Weakness: Beauty

Location: A small Zen temple that holds shrines to Benzaiten, Bishamonten and Daikokuten.

Three True Things

- When people need help, you are there.
- You are skilled in the Ku school of empty-handed fighting.
- You seek enlightenment and love all, even those who you are forced to fight.



Matsumura Banko

For Daimyo Chris Colbath

Everlasting

A skilled yojimbo, you served Lord Aizu for years. Your life changed, though, when you were traveling home to Osaka with his daughter, Sarkura. She had negotiated a peace deal with the Satsuma, bitter rivals of Lord Aizu. Your journey had been easy, and at the end of the trip you were excited to finally be able to propose to her. Lord Aizu had offered to make you Police Inspector, making you worthy of asking for his fourth daughter's hand in marriage.

But as you approached the city heavily tattooed men attacked your party: yakuza. Upon awaking, you found everyone dead and Sakura gone. The assailant's tracks led back to Osaka, but you lost them at the gates.

You searched for weeks, desperate for any clue. Your will gave out a month after she went missing, and you spent the entire evening drinking and gambling at a yakuza gambling den.

You woke up in a jail cell, Lord Aizu standing over you, his gaze stern and unyielding. "You have failed my daughter, me, and our city. You are no longer in my service and the city does not need you. You should leave: you are an honorless dog!"

His men released you and returned your meager possessions (but not your wakizashi). You had no money, no prospects, and no master.

It's been two years now, but you haven't given up your search for Sakura. No body has ever been found.

At first, you suspected the Satsuma, but you found no evidence at the gambling dens and geisha houses you searched. Eventually you have grown to suspect Lord Aizu himself. When Sakura and her peace deal went missing, it was her father who refused to acknowledge the deal, not the Satsuma, and Lord Aizu gained from the shattered negotiations.

Now you carefully collect your evidence and your witnesses. A tea merchant who saw her enter the city. A tavern keep gave you the receipt for the rooms the men rented who had taken her. Soon the man who was your Lord (and would have been your father-in-law) will be laid bare for all to witness his wickedness. If only you can stay sober long enough to close the case!

Character Information

Giri: Gambler

Strengths: Cunning, Prowess, & Beauty

Weakness: Wisdom

Location: A yakuza-run gambling den

Three True Things

- You've spent many months undercover working odd jobs as a cook, carpenter, and even a hosozao shamisen player.
- You have been badly bruised and even injured because you preferred to fight without killing.
- Your sister is a lady-in-waiting to Lord Aizu's wife. She thinks your quest is foolish.

Kobayashi Yataro

For Oyabun Paul Tevis

The Beauty of Loss

The son of a farmer, you led a normal life until your mother died and your father remarried a vile woman. She beat you regularly until your father sent you away to Edo to practice your poetry. You lived in Edo happily working as a clerk and developing your skills as a poet for years.

You eventually married a beautiful woman and had many children, but your daughter Sato was special. Your bond was magical; you'd carry her around the city on your shoulders while you worked and she'd greet everyone.

One day, when Sato was home with a cough, you saw black smoke rising from your neighborhood. You rushed home, but all was gone. Your wife, eight children, even little Sato. Worst of all, your old master, the owner of your office, had dropped by to visit. His body was recovered from the fire as well.

All was bleak and grey. Your father had died as well, so there was no point in going home. You left Edo and wandered all of Japan as a beggar for several years, never speaking. You just wrote your poetry and silenced your tongue.

When you finally did start to speak again, you changed your name and went back to Edo. You sold some of your poems so that you

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could sleep in a bed once again. You did not know what the future held, but you were ready to live.

Two weeks later, a furious knock came at your door. Your publisher! He demanded more poems from you, saying “Your poems have sold out five times now, and everyone wants to meet this mysterious poet, ‘Cup of Tea.’” You were stunned, but agreed to give him more poems!

You now find yourself going with him every week to the Renku poetry gatherings. Even though you’ve lost much, it would be wrong to waste the rest of your life...

Character Information

Giri: Artisan (Poet)

Strengths: Beauty, Cunning, Wisdom

Weakness: Strength

Location: The Tea House where regular Renku gatherings are held

Three True Things

- You have traveled Japan and seen the true nature of humanity.
- Every poem you write has three meanings.
- You have loved and lost, but only fear living a life unfulfilled.

Kinzi da Mira

For Oyabun Gabe de Graca

Of Two Worlds

Your father was Chief Police Inspector for Nagasaki. He met your mother Filomena Córdoba y Teixeira when her husband, a Portuguese merchant and explorer, was murdered. Since she was alone in the city, your father offered her rooms in his home. He helped her track down her husband’s killers: thugs working for a rival English merchant, Lord Darlington. Your father made sure the crime was solved. Darlington’s men were executed and Darlington himself left the islands.

And during the course of the investigation, your parents fell in love. They married and had you.

Years later, Darlington returned to Nagasaki. Shortly afterwards, your home was burned to the ground, killing your mother. Your father was distraught, and worse there was no proof Darlington had

anything to do with it; the arsonist was found floating dead in the harbor.

Your father raised you as best he knew how; he doted upon you and took you with him on many of his investigations. You grew up a stranger to most of your neighbors. Your almond-shaped eyes are green like your mother's, but your hair is straight and black like your father's. As a young woman, you assisted your father in his investigations and carried the katana your father had carried when he was a young man.

When your father was murdered, supposedly from a mugging gone wrong, you were crushed. You knew you had to figure out the truth. Lord Gomen of Nagasaki would not hear of you inheriting your father's position, despite the law being on your side. Your father's senior investigator, Ichiro, was given the position instead. He apologized to you when he accepted the position and quietly offered you help investigating your father's death.

Two weeks later you walked into a meeting between Ichiro and Lord Gomen, interrupting them with your findings on your father's murderer. You had Darlington in chains behind you, a signed confession, and a strongbox containing over ten thousand koku that Darlington had gained from smuggling in Nagasaki. You demanded that Lord Gomen grant you a position as a Police Investigator. Ichiro immediately agreed and Lord Gomen, his pride assuaged by the koku that he would collect, reluctantly agreed.

Now you patrol the streets of Nagasaki, keeping the people safe, carrying your family daisho, and making your parents proud. You are of this world and apart from it, but you know your place.

Character Information

Giri: Police Investigator

Strength: Beauty, Cunning, Wisdom

Weakness: Strength

Location: Ichiro's Magistrate's Court

Three True Things

- Your green eyes make you stand out in a crowd, but unsettle the criminals you question.
- You are fluent in the languages and custom of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, as well as the Japanese.
- You have had some basic training with the sword and carry your family daisho.



The Brothers Edwards

For Oyabun Jason & Brian Edmunds

Merchants/Cartographers/Smugglers

The law was always a gray area for you and your brother. Your parents had named you Theodore and Ryan Edwards, but your mates called you Ed and Ted.

You came from well-heeled minor British nobility, and went to fine private English schools, but your teachers were little impressed with your lack of effort (despite your obvious intelligence). You wasted your time and money in brothels, bars, and private clubs.

One day your family's butler, Bohall, brought you a fateful note informing you that your parents had died during what should have been a routine crossing of the Channel to France. The boat had been caught in an unexpected storm, and all aboard had been lost. Worse, Bohall informed you that he believed your family estate was in arrears and your parents were fleeing to France to avoid creditors. You were ruined... unless you moved quickly.

Your father had won a single merchantman ship in a game of chance, and with it a letter of introduction to a fabulously wealthy Dutch trader to Japan, Van der Groot. You quickly and quietly sold off everything you could from the estate to raise some capital, instructing Bohall to go on as if all was normal. Both of you set out with a quickly assembled crew, joining Van der Groot's expedition to Japan and leaving Bohall with a lump sum for his service.

Again fate frowned upon you. Within sight of Japan, your boat was caught in a great storm. You thought you'd join your parents in the sea, but you lashed yourselves to the mast and washed ashore as the only apparent survivors. You had arrived in Kagoshima, but in a worse shape than you had left England.

You presented yourselves and your papers to Van Der Groot's house, but you discovered that his ship had not made it into harbor either; he could do little to help you with trade. Luckily, he had another job for you. The Tokugawa, his allies, knew that the Satsuma Clan, the Lords of Kagoshima, were planning on backing the Emperor in a revolt the Tokugawa. They needed intelligence on the positions and power of the Satsuma.

You are both bright young men who know their way around a chart and map; perfectly positioned to work in Satsuma as gaijin merchants. No one would suspect you if they found you in the wrong place at the wrong time. Van Der Groot has set you up with some

funds and goods that you can sell and has promised you each a five percent cut in the net profits from the entire trip.

So far, your activities have gone unnoticed. You sell your goods and travel around town and the Satsuma forts, slowly counting their numbers and drawing maps and illustrations of their forts for your true masters, the Tokugawa.

Character Information

Giri: Merchants

Strength: Courage, Beauty (Ed) & Cunning, Prowess (Ted)

Weakness: Prowess (Ed) & Strength (Ted)

Location: The Gaijin Market in Kagoshima

Three True Things

- You're quick studies. You both learned to speak Japanese with the help of a Japanese sailor on your trip over.
- You are more lovers than fighters, although Ted has some rudimentary training with the saber and Ed carries a brace of pistols under his coat.
- Ed is the better artist and cartographer while Ted can fast-talk anyone in Japanese or English.





Chapter 11

The Clinking of Dice

Narrator

The clinking of dice,
Sake cups, and metal pipes
While old jays chatter

- Gansho

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In *Blood & Honor*, John wrote a ton of good advice for Narrators, both specifically for playing Old Japan and for running roleplaying games in general. I'm not going to repeat it here, but you should read it: it's beyond good. You should also check out Robin Law's excellent writing on this subject too, if you're interested in becoming a better Narrator. He has a very different take than John, but they're both full of excellent advice.

My hope is that this chapter offers you some specific advice and tools for making *A World of Dew* work at your table. It's all stuff that I have touched on in previous chapters, but I want to make it explicit so that you have everything you need in one place. Let's get started....

The Story Pool

The Story Pool plays a dual role in your game. It's to create the doubt of uncertainty and the actuality of hard choices. Remember that you can spend a point out of the Story Pool at any time to add a new detail, create a hard choice, or contradict a previous wager. It's your way of keeping your players guessing and on their toes.

No matter how full it starts, your Story Pool will soon be overflowing as your players spend their Honor and Ninjo Points. That's fine. You don't actually need to use it very often. It's mostly there to create doubt for the players, so that they can connect more directly with the doubt their characters carry.

Are they certain that the sumo was telling the truth about what he saw? Did that sculptor from the market really steal the comb from the dead geisha or was it planted on her? They spent wagers for those facts, those clues, but they can be turned aside at any moment.



Move your hand towards the Story Pool and watch all your players slow down and their eyes follow your hand. It's creating doubt in their minds about if you're going to let a piece of information stand. They are worried, like their characters are worried, that the world isn't as it seems.

And for the most part you should let wagers stand. Use the Story Pool rarely. You should trust your players just as much as we trust them. They're great at telling stories.

But plot twists can be hard when everything is established as true. The facts can become known, all the challenge sucked out of tense situations. That's when you can use the Story Pool to create more than doubt, more than uncertainty. You can spend Story Points to make the players face hard choices.

That left turn those characters were going to make on the map. It's not there. But there's a passage farther along that goes where the characters want. It's just guarded by two guards with an alarm bell.

The guy the yakuza just stabbed in the back wasn't the retainer that she had declared with her wager. It was her oyabun's lieutenant. Her oyabun's favorite lieutenant.



The loyal fence that the Ronin said he had in the gaijin market isn't so loyal. In fact, he's happy to sell the Ronin out for the right price. Right now.

When you pull a Story Point from the pool to introduce a plot twist do it sparingly. Focus on the times when the players are slowing down on the story or running on autopilot. It happens, sometimes. The players get lazy and start using wagers to win without working too hard. Shake them up!

If all the players absolutely balk at your plot twist, remember to communicate. Figure out together what would be a better plot twist. If they're still not happy and really want the scene to go their way, give it to them, but take an Honor point (or three depending on how easy and rewarding the scene turns out to be) as the cost. The characters lives should not be easy. Ever.

Apocalyptic Themes and A World of Dew

We all know what happened to the world of Old Japan, but the current residents do not. As far as the characters can see, their world is coming to an end. The arrival of gunpowder, the rise of the merchants, and the influence of the West will force the samurai caste into choosing between transformation and extinction.

You can use these themes to give your world a dystopian backdrop. The systems the samurai manage no longer work. Only in their castles, high above such mundane concerns, can the issues of poverty, crime and starvation be ignored. But that's exactly what's happening: the lower classes are ignored in lieu of warrior philosophies such as duty and honor. To a peasant, duty and honor are meaningless if they can't feed their family.

The samurai don't care about such concerns. Bandits raid the lands, crooks bribe officials, and the farmers starve. It's only when the samurai don't get their rice that they pay attention, and when that happens, it's already too late.

When the samurai leave their courts and battlefields, depict the world with as many apocalyptic images as you can. Remember the dog running out of the village at the beginning of Yojimbo? That's what I'm talking about. You are about to enter a world without rules.

Where things like bushido don't matter.



Dust and wind. Corpses. The voices of dying men from dry throats. Buildings are dilapidated and the people are naked and starving. What good is your philosophy here, samurai?

The Rise and Fall of Tokugawa - Eras of Gameplay

“My ancestors have ruled Japan for 2,000 years. And for all that time we have slept. During my sleep I have dreamed. I dreamed of a unified Japan. Of a country strong and independent and modern... And now we are awake. We have railroads and cannon, Western clothing. But we cannot forget who we are. Or where we come from.”

- *Meiji Emperor*, The Last Samurai

A World of Dew was written to be played during the Tokugawa Shogunate, when the Tokugawa Clan ruled as the Shoguns of Japan for two hundred years, upsetting the social order of the samurai and ushering in an era of modernity for Japan. This era, full of change, is exciting and full of the best of human drama. Japan goes from an isolated, minor Asian country many sought to turn another colony to a world superpower almost by the sheer force of will of its people.

Of course, Japan wasn't the only country going through changes. The two hundred years from 1605 to 1868 are significant to the rest of the world as well, as political, social, and economic changes rocked the globe. The United States of America was founded, the first modern democracy, a challenge to autocracy and aristocracy that would not be put down. The invention and discovery of the rifle, germ theory, and the steam locomotive are also significant advances that have profound impacts upon the world at large. How can you, as Narrator, keep track of all these changes?

I'd suggest making it easy on yourselves by playing either close to the beginning of the Tokugawa Hegemony or right at its end. The most drama comes when things are most interesting!

The beginning of the Tokugawa Hegemony resulted in a million masterless Ronin roaming Japan as the previous social order came to a close. The Tokugawa's grip was not as firm as it would be in later years, but their rule was mostly benevolent. Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English Merchants and Priests came to Japan during this time, and it was a time of opportunity and change.

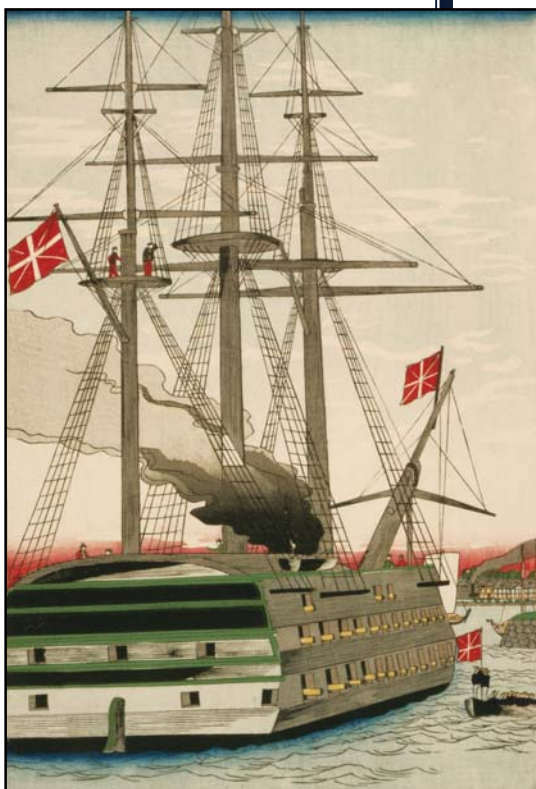
The Clans who had backed Tokugawa were rich and powerful, and those who had fought against Tokugawa at Sekigahara were angry but stripped of their once fertile domains. They, however, were not entirely beaten. As in any unification, history is not neat and there were rebellions for many years and decades to follow.

If you play during this era, you might want to include one or more Clans and give them significant power. You might also want to maintain the *Blood & Honor* rules for katana and the laws for firearms that restricted them to samurai. Gaijin should only be from the four countries listed above and Chinese merchant smugglers or apothecaries. Rifles and revolvers don't exist yet, and many gaijin still employed crossbows as a hand-held ranged weapon.

The end of the Tokugawa Hegemony, on the other hand, saw the Shogunate with a grip so firm on the nation that provinces were slipping from their grasp. The Tokugawa were as corrupt as any great dictatorship and while they allowed Westerners to trade with them, they refused to adopt the many modern advances they offered, holding back Japan's progress.

That said, British, French, American, German, Russian, and Chinese foreigners frequently visited and traded with Japan. They brought modern marvels that were snapped up quickly by those who wished to restore the Meiji Emperor to his rightful place. Ronin were less

prevalent, but criminal gangs were everywhere. The Clans still existed but they now saw themselves as subordinate to the country of Japan; they only disagreed over whether the Emperor or Shogun should rule the country. Merchants richer than any samurai, lived decadently within the simple plain exterior walls of their estates, just as they wore their required cotton kimono lined with the most expensive silk.



If you play during this era, be sure to have plenty of rich and powerful merchants and criminal gangs. Firearms should be common. Repeating rifles and revolvers also showed up during this time, instantly lethal and routinely available. Clans should still be around, but use the City rules to describe a more esoteric approach to the Clans with a ruler of a city being a daimyo. Focus on the City containing Locations and minimize the importance of Clan and Holdings. Finally, Gaijin characters can be from a wider range of countries with religious differences between Catholics and Protestants. Americans and Germans, for example, had large populations of both religions.

Players, Wagers, Honor, & Ninjō Points

In many ways, running *A World of Dew* is no different than running any other game. More specifically, your players will always come out of left field with some wild scheme and lay waste to your best-laid plans. The difference in *A World of Dew* is: we give them mechanics to do it.



They use Wagers, Honor, and Ninjo Points to screw things up. They'll take your best-laid plans and throw them out the window... just like they do in other roleplaying games.

But you have an advantage here. You have no plans. You have a kind of outline and perhaps some motives, but as soon as players figure out they can assign motives and histories on their own, they'll start building the story themselves. So, what do they need a Narrator for?

They need you to throw surprises in the mix. They have to make wagers and spend Honor and Ninjo Points to add details. You don't. You can make things up on your own...just as long as you don't contradict what your players have already established.

But this kind of power in the hands of the players is a good thing. It means they can tell you—right up front—exactly what they want. When a player turns an NPC into a cousin or a former lover by spending a Ninjo Point, it means “I want to have a relationship with that NPC.” They don't have to ask you, they just do it. Same thing happens when a player spends an Honor Point to say, “We've been enemies for a long time.”

The player doesn't need to spend points on an “Enemy” to add



it to his character sheet, he can play the game for a few sessions, find an enemy he really hates (or loves to hate), throw down a Ninjo Point, and BANG! He's got a new enemy.

Power in the players hands gives them the ability to tell you what kind of stories they want, what kind of allies they want, what kind of enemies they want. You don't have to be clever about it. You can give them exactly what they want because they told what they want. That's the advantage of the *Blood & Honor* system: it allows the players to create characters, plots and mysteries all on their own.

You aren't a “dungeon master” or a “game master.”



You're a Narrator: guiding the story along, working with the players—not against them—to make a story you all want to hear.

Always Ask for Wagers

Whenever a player makes a risk, make a habit of asking, “Do you want to make any wagers?” Players forget these things and until they’ve got the habit on their own, keep feeding it to them.

“Do you want to make any wagers?”

“Do you want to make any wagers?”

“Do you want to make any wagers?”

If you forget, how do you expect them to remember?

Wisdom Risks

Whenever a player asks you a question about the world, your answer should be, “I don’t know. Make a Wisdom risk.”

Three True Things

Whenever someone introduces someone or something new into the game world ask them to describe three true things about the new thing. If multiple characters introduced the new thing have them split up the three true things, or have each of them say one true thing.

Last Words

I could go on for ten thousand more words and many more pages of advice on how to run your game, but ultimately it’s up to you now. I trust you’ll do a great job, and if you make mistakes, that’s fine; keep plugging along. We only get better the more we do something.

The stories we’re trying to tell with this game are Noir. They’re rough on the characters, but they’re fair, to a point. They’re not tragedy where the characters are doomed to die, eventually. They’re stories where the characters get beaten up, bad, but they get up again. Stories where they eventually succeed against all odds, but don’t always win everything they want.

These are fun stories to tell. That example in the Violence chapter with Mason’s character dying actually happened. We leapt up from our table and cheered. Cheered. At a convention. People stopped and stared at us, but we didn’t care. That’s how much fun we had when

one of our favorite goofy characters died. It was tragic, sure, but it was also gutsy and noble and just. It was Noir. I'm getting teary-eyed typing about that moment.

I've tried to make it easy on you. I've been running games for over twenty-five years, I know how tough it can be, so I've written as many rules as possible to make it possible for you and the players to tell great stories. I've given you the Story Pool to make it hard on the characters, but also reminded you to be fair. It can take a bit to find the balance, but I know you'll get there. You'll get that chance to tell great noir stories in Old Japan.

I can't wait to hear about them.

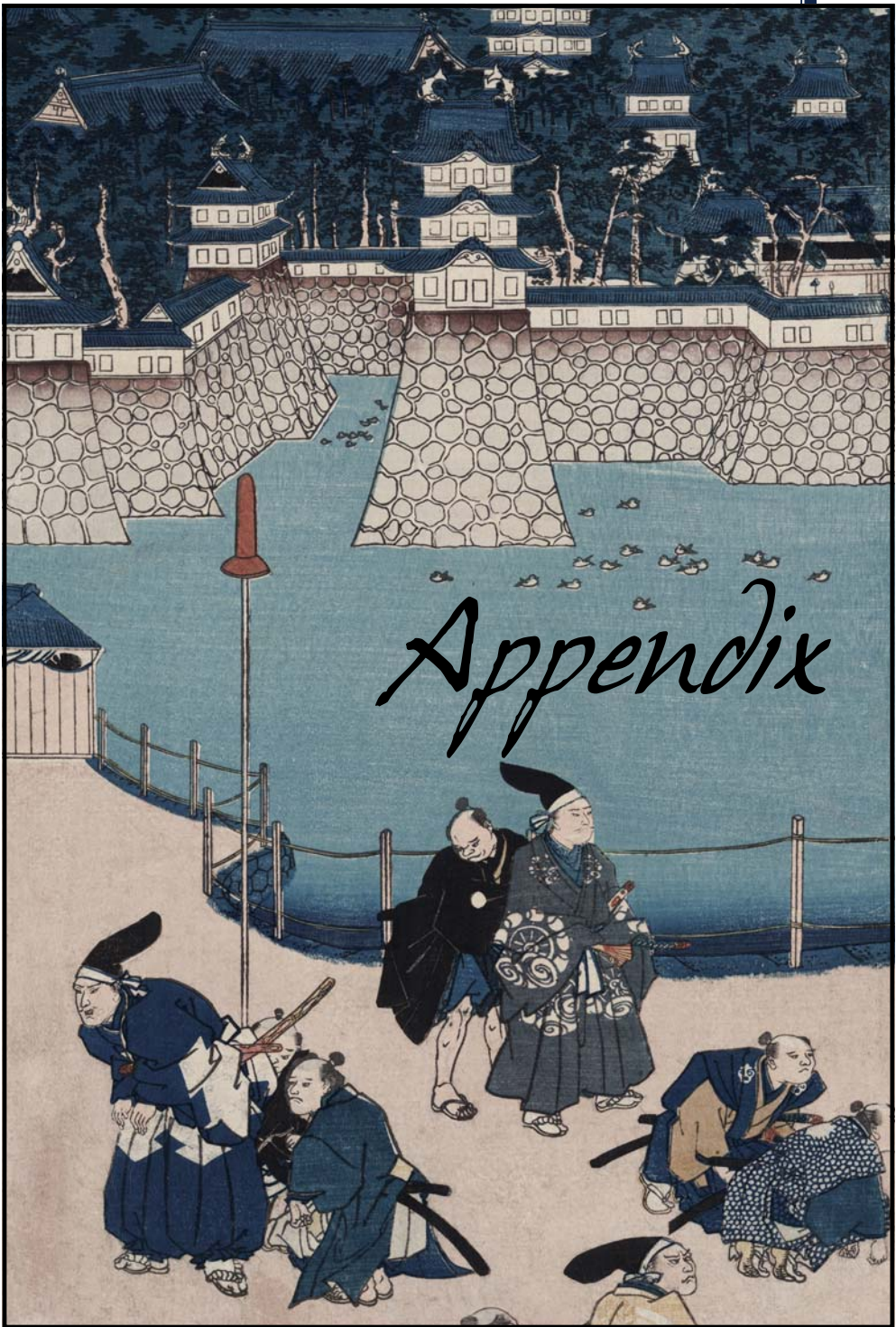
-Ben Woerner

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田原三郎太成





Kickstarter Backers

To anyone reading this let it be known that all who are named below helped my dream of A World of Dew become a reality. This people trusted me when I was just starting out. They believed in me, and because of all of them you are holding this book in your hand. If you know any of them you should thank them, because without them this book would never have seen the light of day.

To all you Backers: Thank you. You were there with me when it all started. You can tell others that you helped me make my dream come true. You helped me publish my first roleplaying game. It's not very often a little money from someone can help fulfill someone's lifelong dream, but you did. You.

Tomodachi (Friends)

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Eloy Lasanta	jarethellenin	Lemuel Pew
Elven McKnight	Jason Cotton	Lindsey
Erica Sontz	Jason Hunt	Lisa Manglass
evangineer	Jason Ramboz	Longstrider
EWWhitten	Jason Reid	Louis Luangkesorn
fantomas	JAvier Perez Garcia	Lucas Servideo
Flavio Mortarino	JH	M Alexander Jurkat
Fraser Ronald	João Mariano	M.G.
Fringe Games	JoeyR	Manu Marron
Gabriel De Lima Carioca	Johan Karlsson	Marc Hameleers
Galen Teschendorf	John C Hay	Marc Majcher
Garrett W Chambers	John Dodd	Marc Margelli
George Harnish	john hayholt	Marcus Shepherd
Gilbert Isla	John Hildebrand	Mario Dongu
Giuseppe	John W. Thompson	Mark
gwathdring	Jon Smejkal	Mark Cookman
Hans Messersmith	Jonathan Korman	Mark Fentz
Harley Stroh	Jordan Durham	Mark Moser
Howard Hendrickson	Jory Blacklock	Mark Townshend
		Mark Welch

Markus Viklund	Paul M. M. D.	Smule
Martin Wagner	Jacobus	Soren Hjorth
Matt Sanchez	Paulo Cortes	Steve Hickey
Matt Shursen	peregrinefalcon	Steven
Matt Yun	Peter Gates	Steven Lord
Matthew Caulder	Phil Nicholls	Stras Acimovic
Matthew Haulman	Philippe Niederkorn	Thane Tuttle
Matthew Parker	Phillip Bailey	Thomas Gassner
Matthew Strachan	Pineapple Steak	Thomas S.
Melody Haren	Quirkworthy	Thor Sundqvist
Anderson	René Kragh Pedersen	Tim Ellis
Michael Bowman	Renee Ritchie	Tim Ireland
Michael Chui	Richard Sardinas	Timothy Vollmer
Michael Dilorenzo	Rob Heath	Todd Reed
Michael Karasch	Robert Biskin	Tom Dowd
Mikael Hansson	Robert Charrette	Tom Pleasant
Mike Sands	Robert Daley	Travis Stout
Morgan	Rod Chanas	Tristan Zorak Sanders
Mr.Float	Rowdy Scarlett	Ulfark Games
Natterhorn	Ryan Scott Dancey	Vincent Arebalo
Neil Harkins	Samuel	Vojtech Pribyl
Nick Brown	saodhar	Wade geer
Ollie Gross	sbr	Whitt
Olna Jenn Smith	scionofnyarlathotep	Will North
Ovid	Shana Swartz	William Hochella
Owen Kerr	Shirley Lee	Zach Johnson
paolo	Simon	Zoe Mora

Rowin

Aaron Matthew	Adjacent Cow	Alberto Muti
AB Bright	Adrian Knight	Alexander Hollins
Adam Boisvert	Al Billings	Alexander Pole
Adam Johnson	Alan Parsons	Amy Waller



andresor	David Thomas	Jared Kenjamin
Andrew Cowie	ddraco Draconet	Fattmann
Andrew Dorman	Deafnotdumb	Jason Corley
Andrew Gatlin	DGSnyder	Jason Miller
Andrew Gray	Douglas Laedtke	Jason Pelloni
Andrew Hauge	Drew Wood	Jason Schindler
Andrew Robertson	Duane Moore	Jason Sperber
Angus Mol	Dustin Eppers	Jason Verbitsky
anonymous1453	Dylan Green	Jean-Christophe
Barak Blackburn	Ed Kowalczewski	Cubertafo
Ben	Edward Lynch	Jeremiah Ganner
bmarkslash7	Edwin J Torres	Jeremy Hamaker
Bradley Russo	Erde	Jesse
Brand	Eric Franklin	Jim Miller
Brandon Kern	Eric Hoffman	Joel Beally
Brendan G Conway	Eric McCommon	Johan Nilsson
Brennan Taylor	Eric Mersmann	John Adamus
Brent Erdman	Erik	John Atwood
Carlos Lastra	Felicia Hudson	John D Kennedy
Charlie Main	FredH	John Kennon
Cherian Drouillard	Gareth Hodges	John Madigan
Chris Bernhardt	Gomai	John Wick
Chris Norwood	greatkithain	Jonathan
Christian Turkiewicz	Griff Maloney	Jonathan Beard
Contesse	Heather	Jonathan Ly Davis
Dan Grendell	Jace Java	Jonathan Parker
Daniel Tenney	Jack Gulick	Tinsley
Dave Sokolowski	Jackson Brantley	Jonna Hind
David Cruz	Jake Leeder	Joseph Thibodeau
David Duerschlag	James Criss	Josh Riggins
David James Solie	James Foord	Josh Roby
David Morrison	James Unick	JustJessie23
David Terhune		Kaph
		Kayne Newell

Kristine Roper	Noah Carden	Scott Underwood
Kyle Jewell	Odysseus King	Sean Ramirez
Lance savage	Pablo Domínguez	Shadowjack
Leah Elliott	Castro	Simon Stroud
Lee Lawson	PandaDad	Steve Radabaugh
Lion of Albion	Patrick R. Groleau	Steven Warble
Lisa Padol	Paul F	Streamjumper
Lowell Francis	Paul Wolfe	Stuart Barrow
Maciej Sabat	Peter Sotos	Stytch
Magdrion	Peter Woodworth	terrasaur
Magnus Bergqvist	Petter Wäss	Thomas Johnston
Mark Buckley	Phil Smith	Thomas Ladegard
Mark Richardson	Philip	Tim Warman
Mark S	Philippe	Tomohisa NAKA
Matt King	Pj Saad	Travis Stone
Matthew B	Postworldgames Jim	Tug Brice
Matthew Heimbecker	Pinto	Tyson Vanover
Matthew Klein	Ramzi Vincent	Vicente Cartas
Matthew Nielsen	Randy B	Victor Bugg
Matthew Swetnam	Randy Belanger	Victor Wyatt
Michael Derry	Raymond Rappaport	Will Rotenberry
Mike Musteric	Richard Hawkins	wraith808
Moondogtk	Richard Taylor	Xavier Aubuchon-
Morgan Weeks	Rick Harrelson	Mendoza
Nathan Jordan	Rob Justice	Y. Lee
Nathaniel Ray Pickett	robdeobald	Yann Abaziou
Neall Raemonn Price	Robert Carnel	Zechariah
nerdwerds	Ryan H	
Nicholas Clements	Sally Brewer	
Nicholas Macula	Sam Paley	
Nishan A	Samuel Williams	
	Scott Culver	



Gambler

Aaron Burkett	Cousin Artaud	Nigel Holloway
Áine ní Dhonnchadha	Dennis Winn	Paul Truman
Ana Silva	Fireside	Pookie Uk
Augustine Shim	Jason Youngdale	Steve Turnbull
Ben Morgan	Jenny Brundage	Tony Ewing
Brian Allred	Keith Mingus	Trip the Space Parasite
Caelestis Designs	Kenneth Lewis	Tristan Smith
Christopher LaHaise	Matthlew	Ty
Christopher Shaffer	Michael Pureka	Xavier Doolittle

Merchant

Darren Johnson	Jason Pitre	Roland Bahr
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Go Master

Christopher James	Kevin Lawrence	Robert Harrison
David Rego	Matthew Orwig	spacehappy
Doug Pirko	Michael Pietrelli	Svend Andersen
James Perry	Nicola Urbinati	Tobie Abad
jennifer	Owlglass	
Jessica Straits	Randall Wright	

Sumo

Alishara	David A. Stern III	Geoffrey L. Woerner
Anthony Elaluf	Derek Guder	Gregory P. Freeman
aragaer	Descendingform	Jason Datsun
Brett Easterbrook	DivNull Productions	Jody R. Woerner
Calvin Jim	Douglas Maddox	Joel D Moore
Carl Rigney	Dutch Dragon	John Mehrholz
Chris Snyder	Erich Lichnock	Malraza
Christopher Wong	Eseell	Michael Leader

nathan
Paul Sudlow
Robert Dickerson

Robert Fulkerson
Roland Cooke
Simon Ward

Thomas Michael
Harris Jr
Tom Wilson
Undead_Ichi

Samurai

Chelsea Mead
Christopher Dykes
Daniel Waszkiewicz
Erik
Ford Fitch
Frédéri POCHARD
George Duffy

James Mendez Hodes
Josh Rensch
Kairam Ahmed
Hamdan
Kristian Zirnsak
Michael
Neal Fischer

Patrick Barrett
Ralph Kelleners
Robert M. Ramus
Robin Everett-
McGuirl
Ryan Vaughan
William Jones

Oyabun

Brian & Jason
Edmunds

Bruno Jornada
Gabe Graca

Paul Tevis
Paul Thorgrimson

Daimyo

Chris Colbath





Inspirations

夜鷹が囀る

Fiction

Lone Wolf and Cub, Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima

Musashi, Eiji Yoshikawa

Shogun, James Clavell

The Sano Ichiro Novels, Laura Joh Rowland (A Police Inspector with the Ally Advantage: Wife - Reiko)

The Tale of Genji, Murasaki Shikibu

The Tales of the Otori, Lian Hearn

Usagi Yojimbo, Stan Sakai

Film

13 Assassins (2010), Takashi Miike

47 Ronin - Any of them, even the Keanu Reeves version

Memoirs of a Geisha (2005), Rob Marshall (A bit late, but an excellent look at the life of Geisha)

Kagemusha (1980), Akira Kurosawa

Ran (1985), Akira Kurosawa (Full on *Blood & Honor* with *King Lear*)

Rashomon (1950), Akira Kurosawa

Seven Samurai (1954), Akira Kurosawa

Sanjuro (1962), Akira Kurosawa

Samurai Assassin (1965), Kihachi Okamoto (A Ronin seeks to become a Samurai)

The Last Samurai (2003), Edward Zwick (A Gaijin Soldier and a Samurai form an alliance)

The Samurai Trilogy (1945-6), Hiroshi Inagaki

The Sword of Doom (1966), Kihachi Okamoto

Throne of Blood (1957), Akira Kurosawa

Yojimbo (1961), Akira Kurosawa



Zatoichi (2003), Beat Takashi (A Ronin with the In Another Life Advantage: Masseuse, and the Cunning Disadvantage: Distracted-Blind)

Any of the Sergio Leone Spaghetti Westerns or George Lucas's *Star Wars*. Many of these films were direct adaptations of movies by Kurosawa and other famous Japanese directors. *The Magnificent Seven* is a direct adaption of *Seven Samurai*. *Star Wars: A New Hope* was heavily influenced by *The Hidden Fortress*.

Music

Kitaro

Kodo

Yoko Kano

Yoshida Brothers

Soundtracks:

Memoirs of a Geisha

The Last Samurai

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Seven Samurai

Samurai 7

Video Game Music:

Shogun 2: Total War

Non-Fiction

Any of the haiku by Basho, Buson, Chiyo-ni, Issa. This book's title was inspired by an Issa haiku.

Book of Five Rings, Miyamoto Musashi

Hagakure, Yamamoto Tsunetomo

Legends of the Samurai, Hiroaki Sato

Lust, Commerce, and Corruption: An Account of What I Have Seen and Heard, an Edo Samurai (translated and edited by Mark Teeuwen, Kate Wildman Nakai, Fumiko Miyazaki)

The Art of War, Sun Tzu

The Samurai, Stephen Turnbull



Character Sheet 1

Honor	Ninjo
Virtues	
() 美	Beauty
() 勇氣	Courage
() 狡	Cunning
() 勇敢	Prowess
() 強さ	Strength
() 知恵	Wisdom
Flawed Virtue: _____	
Age	
Phase	
Injury	
1 ☐	2 ☐
3 ☐	4 ☐
5 ☐	6 ☐

(#
dice)

Concept _____	Player _____
Name _____	
Family Name Meaning _____	(1)
Personal Name Meaning _____	(1)
Status _____	()

Giri	
Giri (Duty) _____	Rank _____
Bonus _____	()
Ability _____	

Benefit _____	

Glory	
Reputation	Rank
☐	()
☐	()
☐	()
☐	()
☐	()
☐	()
☐	()
☐	()

Relationships	
Player _____	Name _____ (2)

Player _____	(2)

Player _____	(2)

Player _____	(2)

Player _____	(2)

Martial Arts

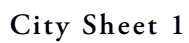
Advantage

Equipment

Koku

Aspects

[illegible]



Three Things True:

Locations

Rank

7

1

1

5

7

1

4

1

10

10

1

1

10

	Name	☐ Beauty ☐ Courage ☐ Cunning ☐ Prowess ☐ Strength ☐ Wisdom

	Name	☐ Beauty ☐ Courage ☐ Cunning ☐ Prowess ☐ Strength ☐ Wisdom

	Name	☐ Beauty ☐ Courage ☐ Cunning ☐ Prowess ☐ Strength ☐ Wisdom

	Name	☐ Beauty ☐ Courage ☐ Cunning ☐ Prowess ☐ Strength ☐ Wisdom

	Name	☐ Beauty ☐ Courage ☐ Cunning ☐ Prowess ☐ Strength ☐ Wisdom

	Name	☐ Beauty ☐ Courage ☐ Cunning ☐ Prowess ☐ Strength ☐ Wisdom

	Name	☐ Beauty ☐ Courage ☐ Cunning ☐ Prowess ☐ Strength ☐ Wisdom



City Sheet 3

Story Pool

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Threats

Organizations

	Name

	Name

	Name

	Name

	Name