



WAY OF THE SAMURAI



ORIENTAL ADVENTURES



WAY OF THE SAMURAI™

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WONDERFUL WORK ON ORIENTAL ADVENTURES.

SHAWN: "TO TAMARA AND ALL MY FRIENDS IN LIVINGSTON,
WHO ALWAYS WELCOME ME HOME WITH OPEN ARMS."

RICH: "RICH WOULD LIKE TO THANK HIS FRIENDS AND
FAMILY, AS ALWAYS, AND THE FANS FOR ALWAYS BEING
THERE."

AARON: "AARON WOULD LIKE TO THANK RICH, SHAWN,
AND SETH, WHO ARE THREE OF THE FINEST GENTLEMEN
HE'S EVER HAD THE PLEASURE TO WORK WITH, AND HIS
PARENTS, WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT AN RPG IS
BUT ARE USUALLY ENCOURAGING ANYWAY."

To use the d20 System™ portions of this book, a Dungeon Master also needs the *Player's Handbook*™, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*™, and *Oriental Adventures*. A player needs only the *Player's Handbook*™ and *Oriental Adventures*.

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"ONE LIFE"

It had been too long since the aged samurai had simply looked out over the plains near his family's home. Akodo Ginawa let the breeze from the shore to the north blow into his face, and let worry melt away for a little while. He remembered when the Emperor had restored him and his kin to their rightful place in the Empire; he had promised himself he would always stop to enjoy what it was he had once again. Years as a masterless man had taught him to truly appreciate the life of a man in service, as a samurai was meant to be.

Of course, the promise hadn't been so simple to keep. Many of the Akodo were amnesiac, with no recollection of the events of their lives. They had been taken by the Living Darkness, their minds wiped clean by that dark force. There were others as well; Akodo who had not been taken by the Darkness, but had lived many years as cast-out ronin roaming the Empire. Forging these two groups into a single family within the lands of the Lion had taken a year. As Ginawa herded the new Akodo through this time, they had endured a prolonged war with the spirits of those who had come before.

This, however, was the fire that had forged those who had forgotten and those who had been cast out into the Empire of old legends. They had once again shown the Empire the strength of their family, and that they had deserved the place Toturi had set aside for them.

Now Ginawa felt at ease. Though war moved in the Empire, and his friend Toturi had passed into the Void, the Akodo daimyo's soul was centered at last. Complete. It was the way of a samurai to find inner peace in times of war and look upon death as a part of life. Emperor Toturi had died in defense of the Empire, honorably, courageously, and without fear; a true samurai. Though Ginawa would surely miss his master, he had died as every samurai wished. His life had been complete.

The old Akodo's thoughts drifted to others he had known, and one face came to mind clearer than many. Dokaru. The young boy's frequently-changing looks of puzzlement, frustration, anger, humor, and unease flooded Ginawa's memories as he remembered the first who had come to him after he left the Akodo...

"Is it true you are an Akodo?" the boy asked, his eyes wide. He and the unshaven, unbathed, and uncaring ronin Ginawa stood near the encampment Toturi's army of ronin and Dragon samurai had made. The older ronin had laid his swords to rest and was stretching ritually for a practice with his yari.

Ginawa glared at Dokaru. "No," he said flatly.

"But," Dokaru said quickly, "you know the ways of the Lion? You understand the ways of Akodo's technique?" The boy shifted uncomfortably as his obi slowly sagged down his hips from the weight of the sword he had jammed in it.

"Hai," Ginawa replied, eyeing the newcomer suspiciously. "I know the Way of the Lion. As does Toturi-sama. Do you hear anyone addressing him as Akodo Toturi, boy?"

Dokaru shook his head. "No. He's our commander, though. He told everyone not to call him that. Bushido says to obey your commander."

Silence passed for a second as Ginawa raised his eyebrow and studied the lanky young man in front of him. Perhaps he was truly the son of a samurai and a geisha, as he had said. Perhaps not. "And you will not listen to me because I am not your superior? What if I simply kill you?"

The boy hesitantly responded, "Bu... bushido says we should not be afraid to do what is right in the face of d... death." To Dokaru's surprise, Ginawa suddenly broke into deep, rough laughter.

"Perhaps, then, I should be your superior? If I were to teach you the basic ways of Akodo's style, I would be your sensei, boy. Then if I told you to stop calling me Akodo, you'd have to obey." Ginawa smiled for a moment, then added, "Since bushido says so."

Dokaru's eyes grew wide. "You would teach me?"

An amused grunt issued from Ginawa's throat. "Hai, for all the good it would do. You appear less ready for combat than many of the Scorpion's old wives. Maybe the training of a real samurai would just kill you."

"Bushido says not to be afraid of death," Dokaru said again, apparently believing it a little more this time.

Ginawa's yari swung a few times in his hands. He felt a little better, holding the weapon and falling into the routine of the practice kata. "Fine, then, boy."

The older ronin said finally, turning his head to regard the young man without interrupting his kata. "Fetch your sensei some water."

A look of confusion crossed Dokaru's face. "But bushido says such tasks aren't for samurai..."

With a fluid motion, Ginawa took one hand off of his yari, pulled his wakizashi free, and hurled it hilt-first at the boy. Dokaru fell backward and landed on the ground in a sitting position after the handle of Ginawa's short blade impacted squarely on his forehead.

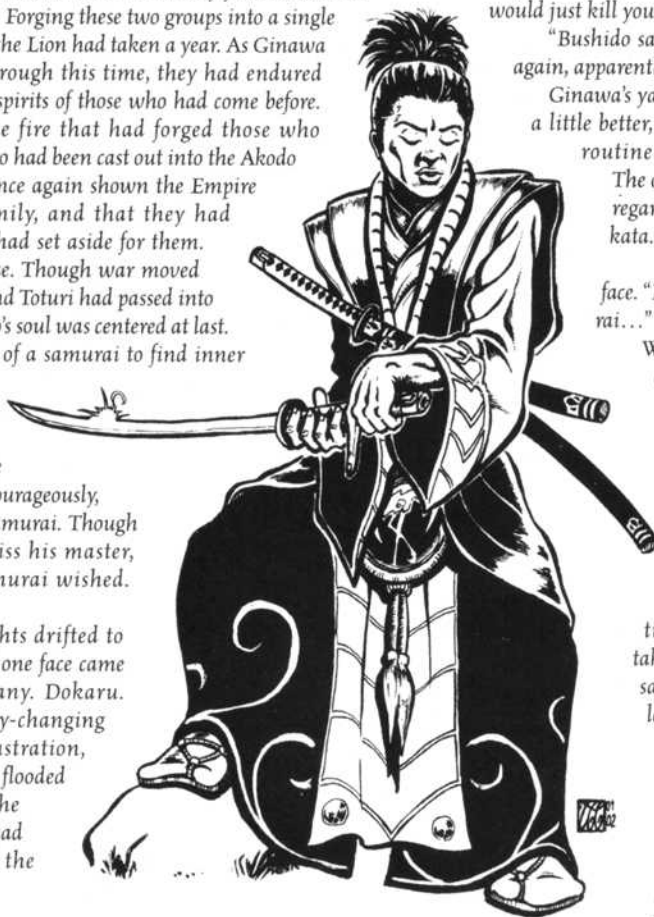
Ginawa's kata had not been interrupted in the slightest by this sudden movement. "Now," he said, continuing the graceful swings of the yari, taking his eyes away from Dokaru, who still sat in the grass, stunned, "that is your first lesson, boy. Sensei is always right."

The old Akodo smiled at the memory as he walked inside. The dojo's interior was immense, as it should be. Though the structure was hundreds of years old, the stones and wood of the structure were polished and maintained in such a manner that age did not wear away at them. Indeed, Ginawa mused to himself, the very spirits of the Akodo that came before watch over these halls.

What trouble could come to them?

In the room, several samurai sparred with one another, or studied their kata alone. Though the hour was late, the doors of the Akodo dojo were always open to its students; the Lion would never discourage bushi from perfecting their art in their spare time. As Ginawa walked in, the assembled students all fell into a respectful bow, kneeling before their lord.

Ginawa himself performed a low standing bow before he entered the heart of the dojo. Such was custom when coming into the place where thousands of legends had come before. The Akodo daimyo nodded to the students in respect, and they slowly returned to their practices. One of the senior students walked calmly to his lord, and Ginawa allowed himself a small smile.



"Dokaru-san," Ginawa greeted him warmly. "I see the geisha will miss your presence yet another night."

The other Akodo bowed quickly to his master and friend. "They have been missing me for my entire life, Ginawa-sama. It is unfortunate I could not follow your lessons in all ways," he replied, a sly smirk on his face.

Ginawa was about to ask what had brought Dokaru, now a respected sensei of the Akodo, to the dojo at such a late hour, when the wind brought the hollow ring of a watchtower bell. Everyone in the dojo looked off in the direction of the sound, and Dokaru hissed, "We are attacked!"

"Everyone, to your commanders," Ginawa instructed the assembled students. "Now! — Dokaru, attend me," he added, the tactical mind of an Akodo taking over from the pleasantries of friendship.

The Akodo daimyo and his one-time student rushed out the great doors of the dojo and gazed at the plains ahead of them. In the smaller barracks around the dojo, Ginawa saw his gunso assembling bushi as they awoke from their early slumber or personal activities. Perhaps half a mile away from them all, a group of hunched humanoid shapes approached the dojo.

"Tsuno," Ginawa said flatly, his mind racing — why would such a small pack forge its way into the heart of Akodo lands? "Five-point formation!" the daimyo shouted to his gunso as he strode forward. Dokaru walked uneasily at his master's side, not entirely sure how to conduct himself. The sensei could not recall an instance in which the Akodo dojo had ever been attacked.

Within half a minute, five distinct units of bushi stood ready to receive the charge. Two units of pikemen flanked Ginawa as he stood boldly against the night sky. A reserve unit supported each one, preparing to flank the Tsuno as they charged those in the front. Behind all of them was a long line of archers, their arrows nocked and awaiting their commander's order.

"Four Tsuno!" called down the guard from the watchtower above them. "They charge on foot, and bear no open weapons. They..." the guard's voice trailed off for a moment, then came down again. "They carry a sashimono of parley, my lord!"

Ginawa's eyebrow rose. "Parley... I have heard rumors that these Tsuno attempt to carry themselves with the mien of samurai, Dokaru. Do you believe it?"

The sensei nodded. "I have no reason to disbelieve it. My own former students have written to me about such things from the front lines of the fighting."

"Allow them to parley with us, gunso," Ginawa called back.

The Tsuno slowed their run and stepped cautiously into the open area where Ginawa and his small army had formed. Without preamble, the one in the front pointed at the large building before them. "We have come to claim this, Lion. I have come to challenge the master of this dojo, and to display his pathetic skull! I have slain too many of your mewling samurai on the field of battle to permit such useless training to continue. I will destroy the sensei and train my own students here, students worthy of a blade. Not these," it waved at the men assembled against it dismissively, "children."

Dokaru nearly advanced to accept the challenge, but Ginawa held up a restraining hand and stepped forward himself. "I accept, beast. You dare call my men children, when I have seen more Tsuno fall under their blades than a season's stalks of wheat before a simple farmer's sickle? I am Akodo Ginawa!" he cried, "and I will see you die here, and watch your ashes feed a fire to warn your brothers."

The lead Tsuno nodded, snorting in defiance, and stepped toward Ginawa.

"Not just you," Ginawa growled, and the Tsuno stopped for a moment. A long silence followed; several hundred Lion looked on, their hands sweating in anticipation against their weapons.

Ginawa drew his sword in a slow, deliberate motion, and then leveled it at one of the Tsuno behind its leader. "You as well," Ginawa's voice rumbled. The pack leader looked back at his subordinate, who growled and drew his gigantic blade in answer.

The Akodo daimyo's blade moved a few inches to the right, "And you," he added, giving the beasts a grim smile. He motioned to the final Tsuno and said, "You get to live. You get to tell your master how these three died."

The lead Tsuno drew his blade in a swift motion and threw his head back, loosing a deep bellow that sounded like a hurricane. With no further words, he charged the lone Lion, and the other two followed.

Ginawa did not give an inch as he adopted Akodo's First Stance. He felt complete.

ORIGINS OF THE SAMURAI

"A quick sword does not make a samurai, though it can unmake one."

— Hantei Naseru

Though it is their duty to wear the daisho and lead troops into combat, samurai are more than mere warriors. They are direct vassals of the Emperor, the ruling class of the Empire. The kuge and buke classes enforce the law of the Emperor, and hold domain over the lesser classes.

But how did the system of the samurai come into being? Since the dawn of Rokugan's history, it seems that there have always been samurai, and in a manner of speaking this is true. The concept of samurai was passed on to the early tribes of Rokugan from the Kami themselves, though what it means to be a samurai has changed somewhat throughout the ages.

Upon their arrival, Hantei and his Kami siblings sought to bring order to the disordered civilization of the humans. Seeking the most expedient means to do so, they relied upon what they knew — the Celestial Heavens. Tengoku has always been a place of strictly defined order. The lesser kami (not true residents of the Celestial Heavens but able to visit that realm at will) serve as much of its population, though they are ruled over by the Lesser Fortunes. They are ruled over in turn by the Seven Fortunes. Just above these Fortunes stand the Elemental Dragons. Until their fall, the greater Kami stood slightly above the Dragons. The Sun and Moon reign above all, their rule supreme over all of Tengoku.

The role of the lesser kami — those whose duties are necessary but whose existence often goes unnoticed — was assumed by the hinin class. As the lesser kami are not true residents of Heaven, so would this class be considered "non-people," though through the merit of their labors they might qualify for a more important role in a future life. The heimin, a group with versatile abilities but little to distinguish them as individuals, reflect the place of the lesser Fortunes. The buke, or lesser samurai, emulate the position of the Seven Fortunes, while the kuge, or noble samurai, emulate the role of the Elemental Dragons in bringing law and order to Ningen-do. The daimyo of the Great Clans reflect the role of the greater Kami (and, in the beginning, were in fact the greater Kami) while the Emperor and Empress assume the roles of the Sun and Moon as rulers of all the land. The term "Celestial Order" was coined to reflect this emulation of the Heavens.

Rokugan has prospered greatly under the rule of the samurai, and most who dwell within the Empire would never dream of altering the status quo. Most Rokugani view the Celestial Order as not merely a way of life, but as the only conceivable way reality can function. The world can no more exist without samurai than it can exist without a sun or moon. Though it is true that the Sun and Moon once fell from the heavens, the fact that they were replaced by mortal samurai only reinforces the importance of the Celestial Order in most Rokugani's minds. Much as a soldier must stand ready to take up his army's banner should his comrade fall, the existence of samurai is essential to insure the continued safety of the mortal realm. Had the Sun and Moon fallen and worthy individuals not been prepared to take their place, the fate that might have befallen Rokugan is too horrible to contemplate.

Though Rokugan typically avoids contact with foreign nations, the Empire has had sufficient contact with gaijin powers to realize that others do not also adhere to the Celestial Order. To the Rokugani mind-set, this does not reflect any flaw or weakness in their own philosophy, but a foolish oversight on the part of the gaijin. The way of the samurai, the teachings of bushido, are the only true paths that lead the soul from darkness to light. Rokugan will follow the Celestial Order and save the world from chaos and oblivion, even if it must do so alone.

THE TWO SWORDS

"A sword is a weapon made for killing, but the intent of the daisho is not to take life, but to punish the wicked."

— Mirumoto Hojatsu's *Niten*

A samurai carries two things that set him apart from the common man — his honor and his daisho. The daisho is a tradition that dates back to the fall of the Kami. Hantei and his brethren each carried two swords, and thus their chosen followers — the samurai — were blessed with the right to carry these weapons as well. Why the Kami originally began carrying two swords is a matter of theological debate, but is ultimately a question that only the Kami themselves could answer.

Though the first samurai gladly obeyed the divine mandate that commanded them to carry the daisho, these weapons were viewed as only that — weapons. However, this philosophy did not endure for long. Two essays written shortly after the First Day of Thunder emphasized the philosophy of the samurai not only as a warrior, but specifically as a swordsman. These essays, arguably the most influential writings on swordsmanship, were Mirumoto Hojatsu's *Niten* ("Two Swords Fall From Heaven") and Kakita's *Ken* ("The Sword").

These two works were greatly influential in emphasizing the deadly art of the sword — supreme among all fighting arts of the samurai — but also explored the strong spiritual connection between a samurai and the blades he carries. Though Crane and Dragon still argue which of the two works is more important, it is unquestionable that without these early writings the katana and wakizashi would not hold the same importance that they do today.

However, the art of swordsmanship is only half the reason why the daisho are important to samurai. The art of swordsmithing is equally significant in the importance of

a samurai's swords. Unlike most crafts, swordsmithing is forbidden to heimin. Only a true samurai may craft a katana, and those capable of doing so are afforded a reverence equaled only by the most holy priests and shugenja.

In the early days of the Empire, steel was not as it is today and only the ancestral swords wielded by the Kami were of extraordinary quality. All other blades were limited by the crude weaponsmithing technology of the time. The first three great swordsmiths in Rokugani history were Kaiu, Togashi Nyoko, and Tsi Wenfu.

Kaiu, often called the First Smith, was a prodigy among mortals — of all the Kami only Hida set aside the blade he carried with him from the heavens and instead took up Chikara, the first katana produced in Kaiu's forge, the weapon that slew the infamous Hatsu Suru no Oni. Being a practical sort, Kaiu was not the sort of person to conceal his teachings. He eagerly instructed any smiths who wished to learn from him, even those from other clans, and was single-handedly responsible for the overall improvement of smithing and weaponcraft throughout the Empire. Unfortunately, Kaiu was so greatly blessed in the arts of weaponcraft that he was able to teach his followers only a fraction of what he knew. Kaiu Master Smiths have dedicated generations to studying the writings left behind by Kaiu, and even today great untapped wisdom is often discovered in the First Smith's teachings.

Togashi Nyoko was born a decade after the death of Kaiu. Though she was a Dragon, she was an avid student of the First Smith's teachings. She was also a shugenja, apprentice to Togashi's successor as champion of the Dragon, Togashi Furukusai. Under Furukusai's tutelage, Nyoko first experimented with combining the arts of magic and swordsmithing, forging blades that were truly extraordinary. The Five Swords of Legend were her finest creations, and inspired the fledgling Agasha family to take notice of her work. The Agasha took up where Nyoko left off, establishing the Agasha Foundries. Utilizing analytical thought as well as magic, the Agasha devised forms of steel that were both sharp and flexible. The breakthroughs they made built upon Kaiu's foundations. Unlike Kaiu, the Agasha kept the secrets of their steel close for generations, though eventually their smithing techniques leaked out. Notably, the Bayushi smiths began forging Agasha-style swords before any other, with the strongest allies of the Scorpion at the time following shortly thereafter.

The famous smith Tsi Wenfu is a rarity among Rokugani historical figures: a gaijin who gained acceptance in the Empire. He was born a Yobanjin tribesman (though some sources claim he was half-Rokugani) and came to the Empire bearing secret weaponsmithing techniques from lands beyond Rokugan. Though Wenfu's techniques were by no means superior to Rokugani techniques — Rokugani steel is arguably the finest in the world — Wenfu cleverly combined Rokugani craftsmanship with gaijin innovation to craft swords that were truly unique. When Lion daimyo Akodo Gempachi discovered one of Wenfu's blades by accident, he was so enamored by the weapon's sheen and balance that he demanded to know the identity of the smith, and was only momentarily nonplussed by the fact that Wenfu was a gaijin. Gempachi immediately commissioned a blade from the gaijin smith. The blade Wenfu crafted for him was of such extraordinary quality that Gempachi arranged for him to craft another for Hantei Genji, who was also astounded. The Emperor was so impressed, in fact, that he declared that the smith could not possibly be a gaijin, even if his own

bloodline seemed to indicate otherwise. As if to prove the matter final, the Emperor awarded the gaijin the Rokugani family name "Tsi" and granted him a small estate in the East Hub Village of Otosan Uchi. Wenfu's descendants have plied their trade in that village as swordsmiths ever since. Tsi blades are true works of art, known for their light weight and the distinctive humming sound they make when wielded. The eight Celestial Swords, currently wielded by the leaders of the Great Clans, were forged by the hand of Tsi Xing Guo, the master smith who went on to become the Fortune of Steel.

ANATOMY OF THE BLADE

"Know your sword as you know yourself, for in truth there is no difference."

— Togashi Nyoko

A katana consists of a blade, a guard (*tsuba*), a handle (*tsuka*) and a scabbard (*saya*). The blade itself is of course the most significant part of the weapon. A katana or wakizashi will likely bear many different *tsuba*, *tsuka*, and *saya* in the course of its existence, but so long as the blade survives it is still considered to be the same weapon.

There are five distinct portions of a blade that may be studied to determine the quality of the weapon — the *hamon* (temper pattern along the blade's edge), *kissaki* (tip of the weapon), *monouchi* (first eight inches of the blade's cutting edge), *mune* (back of the blade roughly eight inches from the end), and *shinogi* (back side of the blade half the length from the handle). All blades also feature a tang, a section of metal that extends into the handle. This tang is often engraved with the personal mon of the smith who forged the blade, or the mark of approval of those who have tested the blade.

Though all samurai would hope to possess a perfect daisho, most blades are not entirely flawless. Most feature some flaws ("kizu"). Blisters, stress fractures, or wrinkles in the metal, pockets of carbon or other impure substances, stains in the substance of the blade, or even dents from clumsy forging all detract from the performance of a blade. Though sometimes these imperfections can be repaired by re-forging the blade, it is a simple fact that most weapons are not entirely perfect; a blade that truly has no imperfections is a cherished treasure of any family lucky enough to possess it, and the pride of the smith who forged it.

Before they may be carried by a samurai, all katana must be properly tested. Any respectable swordsmith puts a freshly forged blade to a variety of tests before he allows it to be wielded by a bushi. These tests vary from smith to smith. Most simply practice the weapon's edge on successively thicker bundles of bamboo. The swordsmiths of the Lion and Unicorn frequently test new weapons on convicted criminals; the grand record is held by a blade that cut through eight bodies in a single stroke (forged by Akodo Mayuko in the year 643 IC). The Kaiu master smiths test their blades on the only substance they deem worthy — a steel helm forged by another Kaiu. The legendary Kakita blades are tested against solid stone, with the depth and angle of the test cut marked upon the tang of the blade.

HONOR

"I borrow my name from my ancestors. I must return it to them unharmed. I borrow my honor from my descendants. In shaming myself, I shame them as well."

— Akodo's Leadership

The guiding principle in the life of every proper samurai is honor. Glory, fame, wealth — these things are meaningless. The only measure of a samurai that matters is living life in strict accordance with the code of bushido. This ancient code was established during the dawn of the Empire, and although the interpretation of the individual virtues it describes has changed from time to time, the code itself has endured the centuries virtually unchanged.

THE TENETS OF BUSHIDO

The code of bushido exemplifies seven virtues that every samurai should demonstrate with every breath. Only by adhering to these guidelines can a samurai truly serve his lord with his life and death.

GI (HONESTY AND JUSTICE)

There is no room for dishonesty in the heart of the samurai. Lies corrupt the soul and distract the mind from honest pursuits, something a true and proper samurai cannot abide. Just as a samurai is honest with others, he cannot abide dishonesty and treachery in others. When confronted with criminal behavior, a samurai must see justice done. It is his duty.

Some in modern Rokugan consider full and complete honesty to be a failure of duty, particularly when it works against the goals of one's lord. The Scorpion have been notorious for this philosophy for centuries, and a handful of other families in the Empire seem to have recognized the effectiveness of such tactics, particularly in court.

YU (HEROIC COURAGE)

The motto of the Kakita family is "for the coward, there is no life; for the hero, there is no death." For the samurai, to die without fear in the fulfillment of one's duty is the ultimate honor. Fear is for the weak of mind and those who have no faith in the strength of their own blades.

Courage is particularly valued among the Crab Clan, as they face fearsome monstrosities that can break the spirits of men with a glance. However, discretion is valued as well. If by running from a foe a samurai can survive to warn his brothers of the creature's impending assault, then there is great honor in such an action.

JIN (COMPASSION)

A samurai is strong and noble. By his very nature he is stronger than the lesser classes. Mistreatment of those beneath one's own station is a sign of weakness and insecurity, traits no true samurai would ever exhibit. A samurai cares for and protects those beneath him, just as his own lord sees to his needs. This extends all the way to the Emperor, who cares for the people of Rokugan and is looked after by the Heavens. To fail to show compassion to those beneath your station is to fail in maintaining the Celestial Order.

REI (POLITE COURTESY)

The samurai is a civilized warrior. In addition to being taught the art of the sword, he is learned in the ways of history, literature, and etiquette. To treat another with rudeness or disrespect is to abandon that which makes one worthy of the title samurai. Without courtesy, even towards one's enemies, a man is little more than an animal, snarling and lashing out at that which it does not understand or like. A man cannot be respected who does not conduct himself with poise and etiquette.

In practice, this is the tenet of bushido that is most quickly forgotten by modern samurai. The passion in men's hearts is such that when one perceives a slight against him or his clan, he is compelled to respond with aggression and vitriol. Witness the relations between the Crab and Crane, or the Lion and the Scorpion.

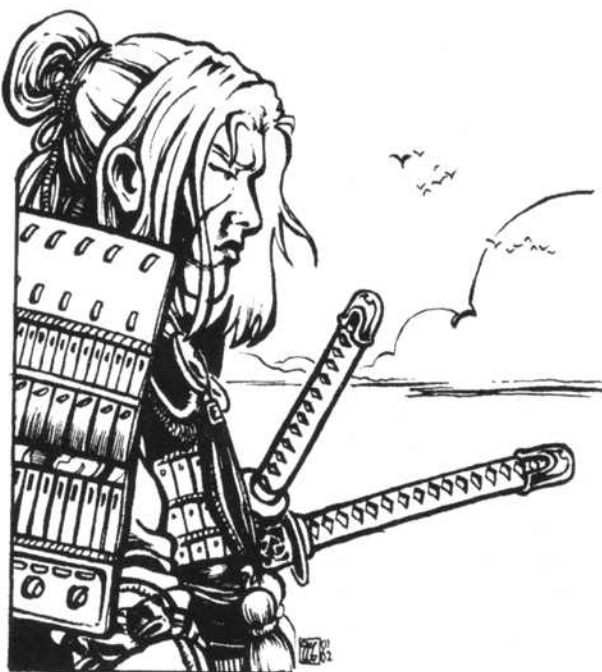
MEYO (HONOR)

External judgment is meaningless to the samurai. The true measure of worth comes only from within. If a samurai is true to himself and makes decisions that stem from his own sense of what is right, then he cannot be dishonorable.

Many samurai use this tenet to justify questionable behavior. For example, the Daidoji family of the Crane participates in battle tactics that could be considered dishonorable (contaminating the enemy's water supplies with animal waste, for instance). The Daidoji, however, consider this their duty to protect the clan and ensure their victory on the battlefield, and thus look upon it as an honorable sacrifice made in the name of the Crane.

MAKOTO (COMPLETE SINCERITY)

There is no difference between what a samurai says and does. If one says that one will perform a certain act, then that act is as good as done. It has nothing to do with honesty or dishonesty, merely the recognition that the word and the deed are both the extension of the samurai's honor, and that they are ultimately one and the same.



CHUGO (DUTY AND LOYALTY)

The most important factor in a samurai's life is his duty. Loyalty to one's lord and the execution of the duties with which one is charged define what it means to be samurai. Failure in either respect is inexcusable, and could be considered grounds for being made ronin or even ordered to commit seppuku.

On this count there is no dissension. All great and minor clans expect the samurai within their ranks to live each day exemplifying chugo. Those who do not are of no use to their lord, and thus are worse than traitors.

HOW HONOR HAS CHANGED

The Rokugani notion of what it means to be honorable only changes when something of incredible importance redefines a social convention. In the history of Rokugan, there have been only a few such incidents.

THE RISE OF IUCHIBAN

Prior to the Bloodspeaker's appearance in Rokugan, the tradition of reverence for one's ancestors often took the form of maintaining elaborate memorials to their remains. After Iuchiban animated the corpses of the dead, forcing samurai to fight their own ancestors' corporeal forms, an Imperial edict made cremation the proper way to deal with the remains of the dead. The honorable reverence for one's ancestors took on a more spiritual element, often involving lengthy meditation.

THE BATTLE OF WHITE STAG

The Empire's most memorable conflict with the gaijin from beyond its borders was a defining moment in Rokugan's history. Until that point, the gaijin had been considered strange and somewhat untrustworthy, but not dishonorable. The death of the Hantei in their siege, however, demonstrated clearly that those who dwell beyond the Empire are utterly without honor or even the most basic grasp of what it means to be civilized beings. Ever since the battle, interaction of any sort with gaijin has been considered a source of dishonor for the samurai of Rokugan.

THE SCORPION CLAN COUP

The failed coup of Bayushi Shoji did not change the perception of honor so much as reinforce it. The traitor's unimaginable crime, the willingness of his clan to follow his wishes, and even the disastrous opposition to the Emperor's wishes by Akodo Toturi after Shoji was defeated all served to reinforce the notion that only unquestionable loyalty to the Emperor is acceptable. Any less means death.

THE CLAN WAR

The Clan War was the most divisive and destructive conflict in Rokugani history, surpassing even the ravages of the War of Spirits. Each clan took a different course of action in an attempt to do what they believed was wisest and most honorable for the Empire. The harshest lesson was one learned by the Lion Clan, fully half of whom felt it their duty to follow the Emperor even after it became clear that he was possessed by Fu Leng. In the end, the Empire learned the harsh lesson that in order to be truly honorable, the Shadowlands must be opposed whenever it appears, regardless of what form it takes.

THE DEATH OF THE SUN AND MOON

When Hitomi slew Lord Moon, it was a violation of the Celestial Order on a magnitude that no one could ever imagine. Yet her actions were necessitated by the actions of Onnotangu and the Living Shadow. In the end, it was decided that Onnotangu himself had first violated the Celestial Order by failing to look upon those beneath him with compassion. To some in the Empire, this smacks of rationalization, but it is the only way many could deal with the enormity of the notion that a mortal had slain the Lord Moon.

THE WAR OF SPIRIT

This conflict again complicated the relationship between the Rokugani and their ancestors. Facing their ancestors, either as equals or on the plains of battle, was a jarring and extremely disruptive experience. That some of these spirits were unwilling to return to the realm of Yomi was a violation of the Celestial Order that many living Rokugani could not reconcile. In the end, many samurai were forced to choose between the two when the armies of Hantei XVI threatened to overthrow the Empire.

NEW MECHANICS

The Legend of the Five Rings game setting has been officially presented in two separate game systems, the *Legend of the Five Rings RPG 2nd Edition System* (presented in the *Player's Guide* and *Game Master's Guide*) and *Wizards of the Coast's d20 System* (presented in *Rokugan*, the official supplement to *Oriental Adventures*). While these two systems are somewhat dissimilar, the setting presented in both versions of the game is the same, and thus it is our intent to present a sourcebook that is useful no matter which of these systems you choose to use when running your game.

Generally, when a new rule or mechanic is presented, whenever applicable we will present equivalent d20 System™ and L5R RPG 2E System versions in close proximity.

Rules and options for the d20 System™ will look like this.

Rules and options for the L5R RPG 2E System will look like this.

Occasionally, extensive new information may be exclusive to a specific system (such as New Paths for the L5R RPG 2E System or new feats for the d20 System™). In such a case, the information will follow the same convention as above. The d20 System™ material will appear in black and the L5R RPG 2E System material in blue.

In the case of characters, occasionally, a character's name will be followed by a short explanation of his character class in lieu of full statistical information. Such an example might look like this:

TORITAKA TATSUNE

[Samurai 6/Berserker 4/Shadowlands Veteran 10; Hida Bushi 5/Hida Avenger 3]

The information presented before the semicolon is the character's class and level in the d20 System™. The information presented after the semicolon is the character's rank and school in the L5R RPG 2E System.

INSIGHT RANK

Many of the new samurai options in this book rely upon an attribute called "Insight Rank." What this means is that a character must have a total Insight equal to a character of that rank to attain that option. For example, a Single-Technique School that requires Insight Rank 3 is available to any character with 176 Insight or more, even if they possess three Rank 1 Techniques in three different schools.

A character may never know more Techniques (of any kind) than his total Insight Rank. Kata are not Techniques.

SCHOOL RANK

Any option that requires a School Rank means just that — the appropriate rank in that school. This is independent of Insight Rank. For example, a kata that has the requirement "School Rank Hida Bushi 2" cannot be learned unless the character knows the Rank 2 Hida Bushi Technique, no matter how high the character's Insight Rank may be.

NEW MOVES FOR OLD SAMURAI

Though the schools of the Great Clans are each impressive in their own right, and a samurai character who attains five ranks in a particular school is certainly a foe to be reckoned with, these schools illustrate only the most traditional teachings of the clans. This book introduces a number of options that can add more depth to bushi characters, allowing two students of the same school to turn out quite a bit different from one another at equivalent levels of Insight. Among these options are Single-Technique Schools, New Paths, and Kata.

SINGLE-TECHNIQUE SCHOOLS

These were originally introduced as "Ronin Bands" in *Way of the Wolf* but there is no reason why these schools should be limited to ronin characters. These techniques represent special fighting styles devised by legendary individuals and their followers, or the secret techniques of small bands of independent bushi.

Unlike normal techniques, Single-Technique Schools have entry requirements (such as minimum Rings, Skills, or Honor) and cost a set amount of points (either Character Points or Experience Points) to learn the technique. Once these conditions are met, the character may learn the technique. Characters who wish to learn these techniques do not require the Multiple School or Different School Advantages so long as they meet the technique's requirements.

CREATING A NEW TECHNIQUE

Inevitably, player characters are going to wish to create their own techniques. Though new techniques should be rare, those who wish to create their own Single-Technique Schools should adhere to the following guidelines.

KNOW THE SCHOOL

D20 SYSTEM:

Feat: Know the School (All Clans Technique)

You have studied the students of another clan in exquisite detail, and know well how to conquer their techniques.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (appropriate clan or family, 2 ranks)

Benefit: You must choose a Great Clan or Minor Clan as the focus of this feat when you select it. You gain a +1 competence bonus on all Sense Motive checks, Battle checks, Bluff checks, melee attack rolls and melee damage rolls against members of the chosen clan, and a +1 dodge bonus to your AC against melee attacks from members of the clan.

Special: This feat may be chosen multiple times. Each time, it applies to a different clan.

(This feat was originally presented in *Rokugan*.)

LSR RPG 2E:

Skill: Know the School

A character with this skill picks one bushi school that he has attended or studied with some regularity. The character may add his rank in this skill as a bonus to all attack rolls against members of that school, and gains his rank in this skill as a bonus to his TN against any attacks by members of that school that use that school's techniques. This is considered a Bugei skill.

(This skill supersedes the version found in *Way of Shinsei*.)

- The character should have Insight Rank two Ranks higher than the Rank of the Technique to be created.
- The primary skill that the technique will use (Kenjutsu, Courtier, etc.) should be at least 7.
- The character must have the Great Destiny Advantage. This sort of thing doesn't happen every day.
- The character must spend a minimum of one year perfecting the technique. No adventuring. Just practice and study in peaceful surroundings.
- The character must be finished with his current school, or must purchase the Multiple Schools advantage.

CREATING A NEW SCHOOL

If a character has accumulated three or more Single Techniques that share three or more similar requirements, these techniques are similar enough that they can be used to create the groundwork of a new School. If two techniques both require a certain attribute, but one has stricter (but non-conflicting) requirements — one requires 2 Honor or higher and the other requires 3 Honor or higher — these techniques are considered similar.

A character who wishes to create a new school must have the Instruction skill at 6 or higher, and must possess the Great Destiny Advantage. He must also spend 50 Experience Points, at which time he is sufficiently inspired that he learns how to combine the disparate techniques into a single style. The GM then chooses a Trait bonus he feels is appropriate for that

school (a Trait that is required by one of the Single Techniques is usually a good choice). The school's creator does not gain this Trait bonus, though newly characters who attend the school will.

Together, the GM and the school's creator should also determine a starting curriculum of seven skills that all newly created Rank 1 students will learn. Any skills formerly required by the Single Techniques are logical choices, and a skill that is not known by the school's creator cannot be chosen. With the GM's permission, the school's creator may choose for the new school to have six starting skills, with one skill starting at 2, rather than seven starting skills.

The Ranks of the new school's techniques are determined in order of their former point cost, from the lowest to the highest, no matter what order the teacher originally learned them in. For example, consider the Ronin Kuso. He has learned the following techniques: Righteous Fury (7 points), Samurai's Fury (5 points), and Child of Water (15 points), all of which have sufficiently similar requirements to be combined into a school. The resulting school features Samurai's Fury as its Rank 1 Technique, Righteous Fury as Rank 2, and Child of Water as Rank 3.

Characters who attend the new school need spend no points or meet requirements to learn its techniques. However, those who already possess techniques in other schools must purchase the Multiple Schools Advantage as usual to take techniques from the new school, or to branch out to new schools.

NEW PATHS

New Paths are just what their name implies: new ways of combining training styles to achieve a character more diversely talented than a student of a single school. New Paths have a Path of Entry requirement, which states what school and School Rank (not Insight Rank) a character must be in order to be accepted in the Path's dojo. For example, the Satoshi's Legacy New Path only accepts students who have achieved the second rank of the Miya Shisha School.

Similarly, New Paths have a Path of Egress. This specifies what schools the student may attend after his training in the New Path has been completed and he is ready to advance once more. Usually, this means that the founder of the New Path was originally a student of the mentioned school, and arranged for his students to study there upon their graduation. Note that as long as the character follows both the Path of Entry and the Path of Egress, there is no cost incurred, as the Multiple Schools advantage is not required.

Example: Miya Kaneko is a Rank 2 Miya Shisha. She wishes to join Satoshi's Legacy and is granted leave by her sensei. Upon completion of her studies with the followers of Satoshi, Kaneko requests permission to study with the Matsu Bushi, the path suggested by his instructors among the Legacy. Upon achieving Insight Rank 4, Kaneko's School Rank will be as follows: Miya Shisha 2, Satoshi's Legacy 1, Matsu Bushi 1. This is an acceptable course of study, and Kaneko did not need to purchase Multiple Schools at any point.

NEW PATH NOTE

In the d20 System, most new Paths translate as five-level prestige classes.

KATA

Kata are special practice maneuvers learned by all bushi. They are typically used as training exercises or a focus for meditation, though some have practical applications in combat as well. Though many of these kata limit one's ability to react spontaneously, they can be very useful in the proper situation.

Like Techniques, major bushi schools all claim their own unique kata. Many contests of a samurai's skill involve performing one or more kata for show.

Learning a new kata requires as much time and energy as learning a new Technique or feat; the GM is encouraged to use his own judgment in determining how long it will take a character to master a new kata.

All kata have a preparation time. If this preparation time is interrupted for longer than a minute, the preparation is ruined and must begin again. Kata have a limited duration, but a kata can be extended for another full duration by spending three Void Points. Kata that end instantly after an attack roll or other stimulus may not be extended this way. A kata's preparation time and duration are the same in both systems.

As kata require very precise, choreographed movements, a character may only be affected by one kata at any given time, unless noted otherwise in the description of a particular kata. There is no limit to the number of kata a character may know.

If a character wishes to cancel a kata currently affecting him, he may do so with a moment's thought, but cannot regain the kata's benefits without undergoing the preparation ritual once more. A character who is rendered unconscious loses all effects of any kata he was using at the time.

In the d20 System,TM kata are a unique new ability exclusive to Rokugan. Though they may require certain feats or class abilities before they can be learned, they are not feats nor class abilities, and can be learned by any character who meets the requirements. Learning a new kata requires a significant expenditure of spiritual energy; all kata have a cost (in experience) that must be paid when the kata is learned.

In the L5R RPG 2E System all kata have a Rank requirement. Kata with a School Rank requirement require a level of familiarity with a particular fighting style before they can be learned. Kata with an Insight Rank requirement require no particular fighting discipline, only a certain level of competence to learn the maneuver. These kata can be learned by any character.

Kata also have a cost (in Experience or Character Points) to learn the kata.

(The rules for kata in this book supersede those presented in *Time of the Void*.)

STRIKING AS THE ELEMENTS

These are the most basic kata taught by any dojo, and their origins have been lost to time. They are known throughout Rokugan, even among Minor Clan and ronin samurai.

STRIKING AS EARTH

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This simple kata draws on the vast inner reserves of Earth within the body. Just as Earth is shielded from harm, so does it often fail to perceive the world around it.

Requirements: Constitution 13+

XP Cost: 20

Effect: You gain a +2 natural armor bonus for the duration, but suffer a -2 penalty to all Wisdom- and Charisma-related skill checks.

Rank: Insight Rank 1

Cost: 2

Special: Must have 3 or higher Earth

Effect: When using this kata, your TN to Be Hit is increased by 5, but all of your Awareness- and Perception-related rolls roll two fewer dice.

STRIKING AS FIRE

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This simple, short kata is adaptable to any weapon or empty hands. Schools that primarily focus on speed over power teach this kata right away, improving the accuracy and repetition of a student's strike.

Requirements: Intelligence 13+

XP Cost: 20

Effect: While using this kata, you gain a +1 insight bonus to melee attack rolls and initiative checks, but suffer a -2 penalty to all weapon damage rolls.

Rank: Insight Rank 1

Cost: 2

Special: Must have 3 or higher Fire

Effect: While focusing on Striking as Fire, your initiative rolls are increased by 2, you roll one extra die on melee attacks, and roll and keep one fewer die (minimum one) on all damage rolls.

STRIKING AS WATER

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Focusing on pure strength, Striking as Water brings to bear the power of Water, sacrificing precision for the pure ability to inflict damage. Given the nature of this kata, however, bladed weapons gain no benefit from this kata (though penalties still apply). Only bludgeoning weapons or unarmed attacks benefit from Striking as Water.

Requirements: Strength 13+

XP Cost: 20

Effect: While using this kata, you gain a +2 insight bonus on all melee damage rolls, but suffer a -2 penalty to your initiative check and all attack rolls.

Rank: Insight Rank 1

Cost: 2

Special: Must have 3 or higher Water

Effect: When using Striking as Water, you roll two additional dice on all melee damage rolls, but your initiative is reduced by 5 and you roll one fewer die on all attack rolls.

STRIKING AS WIND

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This kata relies upon speed and maneuverability at the cost of all else. Striking as Wind allows phenomenally quick movements at the cost of both power and accuracy.

Requirements: Dexterity 13+

XP Cost: 20

Effect: While using this kata, you gain a +6 insight bonus to your initiative check, but suffer a -6 penalty to all attack and damage rolls.

Rank: Insight Rank 1

Cost: 2

Special: Must have 3 or higher Air

Effect: This kata allows you to roll two additional dice on all initiative rolls, but you roll and keep one fewer die (minimum one) on all attack and damage rolls.

STRIKING AS VOID

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: One day

Special: You must know Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, Striking as Water, and Striking as Wind to learn this kata.

Effect: The effect of this kata is the same in both systems. Striking as Void allows you to use two other kata simultaneously. These two kata (neither of which may also be Striking as Void) must be named while preparing this kata, and cannot thereafter be changed. These kata must be prepared normally.

This basic kata does nothing in and of itself. It simply broadens the mind so that other kata may be utilized more easily.

Requirements: Void Use, Depths of the Void

XP Cost: 50

Rank: Insight Rank 2

Cost: 5

Special: Must have 3 or higher Void

THE THOUSAND YEARS OF STEEL

Decades ago, the samurai Kakita Kaiten and Mirumoto Uso met for a duel of respect — the bloodless challenge between masters of the Mirumoto and Kakita schools that occurs almost every generation. Having seen two major wars during their lifetimes, Uso and Kaiten understood the value of peace between the Clans. The two swordsmen conspired to settle the differences between their families, designing kata that united the two traditions instead of setting one against the other. Through intense practice, innovation, and patience, these masters of the blade devised five kata that share the vision of both Mirumoto Hojatsen and Kakita.

Kaiten and Uso encouraged the spread of these kata throughout the Empire, especially in the lands of their own clans. Following their example, the Kakita and the Mirumoto have come to a new appreciation of each others' styles, and come a step closer to uniting the genius of the two greatest swordsmen to ever live.

These kata are collectively known as the Thousand Years of Steel, and are practiced by all the major bushi dojo of the Great Clans.

THE EMPIRE RESTS ON ITS EDGE

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Special: Must be used with a katana or daisho.

The first common truth that Uso and Kaiten discovered about their ancestors' styles is that both men applied the art of the sword to every aspect of life. Each endeavor requires devo-

tion, training, purpose, and a goal. Those who learn this kata realize that everything must be treated as if it rests upon the edge of a sword.

Requirements: Void Use

XP Cost: 450

Effect: When you learn this kata, choose a single Charisma, Intelligence, or Wisdom-based skill you know. While using this kata and rolling to attack, you gain a circumstance bonus equal to one-fourth of that skill's modifier. For the duration of this kata when the chosen skill is used, its modifier is halved (round up).

Rank: Insight Rank 1

Cost: 2

Effect: When you learn this kata, choose a single High Skill. While the kata is active, you keep a number of dice equal to half of that High Skill (rounded down) when making Kenjutsu rolls. The character's rank in that High Skill is considered to be half (rounded up) of its normal value if he uses it while this kata is active.

STANDING ON THE HEAVENS

Preparation Time: 35 minutes

Duration: 180 minutes

Special: Must be used with a katana or daisho.

The ultimate lessons of Kakita and Mirumoto teach that the blade is a living thing, guided by the soul of a samurai. Like anything that is alive, it is bound by the will of the Heavens in action — though a truly skilled samurai can stand above the Celestial Pattern to get a better understanding of destiny. It is this view of the world and its patterns as a whole that leads to ultimate mastery not only of the sword, but of one's own destiny. This kata primes the samurai's soul to be an indomitable force that is assured of the outcome of a fight — his victory.

Requirements: Depths of the Void, Knowledge (Shintao): 10 Ranks, Void Use

XP Cost: 3,000

Effect: Whenever you would be struck in combat, you may spend a Void Point to force the attack roll to be rerolled. If you ever have zero Void Points while this kata is active, you suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to AC for the rest of the day, and cannot inflict critical hits.

Rank: Insight Rank 5

Cost: 7

Effect: Whenever you would be struck in combat, you may spend a Void Point to force the attack roll to be rerolled. If you ever have zero Void Points while this kata is active, your TN to Be Hit is reduced by 10, and you may not reroll dice that roll a 10 for the rest of the day.

THE VICTORY OF THE RIVER

Preparation Time: 30 Minutes

Duration: 180 minutes

Special: Must be used with a katana or daisho.

Central to the master's control of swordplay is the relaxation of mind and body. This kata helps the samurai to adapt to the changing tides of warfare and the art of combat. Once the kata is complete, the samurai's strikes flow beautifully and cleanly; ten strikes blend together in one flowing arc of steel. The strikes this kata favors flow together, causing one effective attack to create another, and then another. These bold attacks even sacrifice defense for fluidity.

Requirements: Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack

XP Cost: 2,250

Effect: For each successful attack you make on an opponent, all additional melee attacks you make against that opponent in the same round receive a cumulative +5 insight bonus. You may not declare total defense while this kata is active, and you are denied any Dexterity bonus to your Armor Class (making you vulnerable to sneak attacks).

Rank: Insight Rank 4

Cost: 6

Effect: When you successfully attack an opponent, his TN to Be Hit is reduced by 15 for the remainder of your attacks during that same round. You may not declare Full Defense while using this kata, and your TN to Be Hit drops by 10.

VICTORY OF THE WIND

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Special: Must be used with a katana or daisho.

In both the art of iaijutsu and in a skirmish, the master of the sword understands that it is not he who strikes first who is victorious, but he who strikes first with perfect form. This kata enforces the idea that a hindered man strikes slowly and poorly, and the man who can attack with precision and speed is to be feared. By focusing on disabling the opponent instead of overpowering him, this kata's quick, shallow strikes take advantage of opponents who attack with sheer force.

Requirements: Expertise, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw

XP Cost: 500

Effect: Each time you deal 10 or more points of damage with a single melee attack against an opponent, you gain a +1 insight bonus to attack that opponent for the remainder of this kata's duration. These bonuses are cumulative, but may not exceed half your class level (rounded up). You suffer a -2 penalty to your damage rolls.

Rank: Insight Rank 2

Cost: 3

Effect: For the duration of this kata, you gain a Free Raise to every attack made against an opponent for each Wound Rank your opponent has dropped below +0. You may not gain more Free Raises per attack from this kata than your Insight Rank. You roll one fewer die on all damage rolls.

THE WORLD IS EMPTY

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Duration: Special (Maximum 60 minutes)

Special: Must be used with a katana or daisho.

Both Mirumoto Hojatsu and Kakita were mortal men, but ones who walked alongside the Kami in the armies that defeated the Dark Brother Fu Leng. Even though they were not as powerful as the Kami, they found that seven mortals could reach within to find a point of perfection: the Void. Both men sought to hone this ability through training with the sword. This kata, a natural outgrowth of their styles, draws out and expends this inner power in a swift display of awesome skill. The focus of this kata is more intense than most, and it cannot be maintained for very long.

Requirements: Depths of the Void, Void Use

XP Cost: 1,500

Effect: When this kata is completed, you may choose to activate it as a free action at the beginning of any round in the next sixty minutes. When you activate it, you gain a Void bonus to all of your attack and damage rolls during that round equal to the number of Void Points you have remaining. All of your remaining Void Points are spent by this action, and you are considered fatigued. You cannot recover Void or recover from this fatigue until you rest for at least one hour.

Rank: Insight Rank 3

Cost: 5

Effect: When this kata is completed, you have sixty minutes to choose to activate its power. When you activate it, you gain an extra number of dice for attack and damage rolls on your next single attack equal to the number of Void Points you have remaining. After using this kata, its effects end. You cannot recover Void Points, and you roll two fewer dice on all attack and damage rolls. hour of rest restores you to normal and allows future recovery of Void Points.

DOJO

All samurai attend a dojo, a school where they learn the way of bushido. This dojo may be an open field where a samurai's ronin father taught him how to hold a sword, or it may be an ancient academy where generations of proud samurai have learned the way of the warrior. Where a samurai character received his initial training and passed his gempukku can greatly color that samurai's abilities as well as his perception of the world. With this in mind, many dojo are introduced in this book. If a player creating a samurai wishes for his character to attend a particular dojo described in this book, he may do so if the GM approves. Attending a major dojo bestows a number of benefits. Individual benefits vary from school to school.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Social benefits represent a measure of status gained by your association with a major school. These benefits apply only so long as the student continues to attend the dojo. They represent mannerisms common to the students and social contacts

SCHOOL AND DOJO

There is a slight distinction that should be kept in mind between the terms "school" and "dojo." A "school" is a philosophy or style of combat, while a dojo is a physical place where that style is taught. Multiple dojo may share teach the same school, or a single dojo may teach several school styles. A character who has attended "the Hida Bushi School" may have attended any of a dozen different Crab dojo, and a student of "the Sunda Mizu Dojo in the Crab Lands" might be a student of the Hida Bushi School or the Hida Berserker School.

between members of the dojo. If a student leaves the dojo on bad terms, certain aspects of these social benefits fade. An intricate knowledge of the customs and practice of an individual dojo is required to emulate these benefits, so the success or failure of an impostor hoping to reap these benefits is left to the discretion of the GM.

All dojo give the following Social Benefit:

BROTHERHOOD OF THE SCHOOL

All members of a dojo are familiar with that dojo's customs of greeting, meditation, and exercise. Two fellow students introduced to one another have little trouble recognizing their mutual training, even if they have never met before, and will be kindly disposed toward one another.

Benefit: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks with members of your own dojo, or on Spot checks to recognize a fellow student.

If you leave the school on bad terms, the Diplomacy check bonus becomes a penalty instead.

Benefit: You gain a Free Raise on all Awareness- and Perception-related rolls against members of your own school.

If you leave the school on bad terms, the Free Raise on Awareness-related rolls fades, and all Awareness-related rolls against members of your former school have their TN increased by 5.

TRAINING BENEFITS

Training benefits represent basic fighting abilities learned by attending the Dojo. These benefits reflect the training regimen of that dojo, and thus do not fade even if the character leaves on bad terms. However, should the character take up study at a new dojo, the practices of that dojo may replace those gained at his former dojo, causing certain training benefits to fade.

All dojo give the following Training Benefit:

KNOW THE SCHOOL

You are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of your own style.

Benefit: You gain Know the School as a bonus feat (even if you do not meet the normal prerequisite), but with the restriction that it applies only to those who have trained in your own dojo.

Benefit: You gain one free rank in the Know the School skill. (See sidebar, page 10.)

Gaining a dojo benefit costs nothing; it's part of your character's background and history. While it may seem that a character who chooses a dojo is getting something for nothing, keep in mind that membership in an esteemed samurai school is a very serious business. Even after graduation, the eyes of the sensei are watching. A samurai is expected to honor his school, and to prove the superiority of its techniques against the students of rival schools. A student of a major dojo is a proud samurai indeed, but if such a samurai dishonors himself, he has brought shame not only to his clan and family, but also to his school. In addition, the troubles of his school are his own as well; if the samurai's former school should come under attack, he may be called upon to defend it.

SENSEI

If a samurai wishes to learn a new technique, naturally he will wish to turn to his sensei to learn it. So who is his sensei? Though most major dojo have numerous instructors, all have at least one sensei, a master of the school's techniques. Each of the dojo described in this book describes a sensei, a master bushi who instructs the students of that school. It is possible that a particular student may have very little contact with his sensei (some of them have a lot of students to instruct) but a samurai is certainly aware of who his sensei is and will have met him at least a handful of times.

The sensei NPCs in this book can fill a variety of different roles in your campaign, from teacher, to benefactor, to villain, depending on the campaign. If your campaign involves extensive forays into the Shadowlands battling Tainted monsters, Crab sensei Toritaka Tatsune may play the role of protector and advisor for the party. In a campaign based in Crane lands, Tatsune may instead be the villain of the campaign, dispatching brash and surly Hida bushi to plague the lives of a refined and aristocratic party.

Keeping in mind the wildly different roles available for a sensei given the variety of different campaigns possible in a Rokugani setting, full statistics for sensei are not given. Instead, only a suggestion of character School Rank / character class and level are provided so that you may customize all sensei to suit the needs of your campaign. It is improbable that most sensei NPCs will ever be directly involved in combat, whatever the campaign — and a player character who attacks his sensei deserves whatever he gets — so full statistics are rarely required.

TSI (RONIN FAMILY)

Current Daimyo: Tsi Tianlin

[Samurai 7/Master Smith 6; Tsi Smith 5]

The Tsi are an extremely small ronin family, with only half a dozen members at any time. They are famous weaponsmiths, who proudly count the Fortune of Steel, Tsi Xing Guo, among their ancestors. The Tsi have a family estate in East Hub Village, though whenever a great war arises they usually strike out to offer their services as weaponsmiths to one side of the conflict or another. They are known to be on good terms with the Crab, Lion, and Phoenix, and rarely involve themselves in conflicts in a way that would anger one of these clans.

D20 SYSTEM:

Favored Class: Samurai

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skill: Craft (Weaponsmith)

Starting Outfit: 1) Masterwork weapon of choice, masterwork weaponsmithing tools.

Bonus Languages: Yobanjin.

LSR RPG 2E SYSTEM:

The Tsi are known for the strength of their spirit, as is reflected in the quality of their blades.

Family Benefit: +1 Willpower

CHAPTER ONE:

DOJO OF THE CRAB CLAN

Toritaka Tatsune peered out into the grim expanse of the Shadowlands, scratching his goatee with one hand. The sky was a savage purple; Lord Sun had long since vanished into the western sky. At Tatsune's side, Hida Wukau looked over his scroll for the sixth time in the last hour, clicking his tongue irritably as he paced the Katu Wall.

"You fret like a nervous hen, Wukau," Tatsune said.

"They are late," Wukau replied. "I knew this was a bad idea. This is a bad season, the worst in decades. Daigotsu's front lines are barely a mile from our position. This is no place for untrained children. Lord Kuon expects a full report. I respect you as a sensei, Tatsune-sama, but if I find that your training methods are threatening the lives of potential Crab samurai, I will not hesitate to —"

"It is more important than ever that our traditions be maintained," Tatsune replied with a frown.

"Tatsune-sama!" called out a scout from atop the nearest watchtower. "They come!"

Tatsune looked westward. In the distance, he could see a small group of figures carefully picking their way through the shadows toward the Wall. Each carried a bloodstained head-bag at its waist, the burden of an apprentice Crab warrior's first mission in the Shadowlands.

"How many?" Wukau asked apprehensively.

"Five," Tatsune replied.

"Five?" Wukau exclaimed. "Only five of twelve?"

Tatsune nodded, took a few limping steps from the wall and looked at the smaller man frankly. "I expected no more than three," he said.

"Sensei," Wukau asked, "how can you be so heartless? One, perhaps two casualties per year during the gempukku is normal, but seven all at once?"

Tatsune shrugged.

"Do you know what you've done?" Wukau exclaimed, displaying the list of students' names to the aged sensei. "What will Lord Kuroda say when I tell him you sent seven children to their deaths?"

"Tell him the truth," Tatsune said with a sneer. "I did not send seven children to their deaths, I sent twelve, and from their corpses sprang five Crab, strong soldiers who will help him take back his lost towers. If Kuroda feels he can train soldiers more efficiently tell him to come out here and do it himself. You think that my methods are harsh? Perhaps they are not harsh enough. Perhaps if we were stronger we never would have lost the six great towers to begin with."

Wukau lowered his eyes and bowed. "H'ai, sensei," Wukau replied, his face burning with shame.

SURDA RIZU DOJO

Classes: Berserker, Fighter, Samurai

Schools: Hida Berserker, Hida Bushi

HISTORY

Many Crab claim that the largest dojo of the Hida bushi is the Carpenter Wall itself. To a degree this is true, as nearly all aspiring Crab samurai are assigned to the wall for some period of time. However, no samurai is allowed to face the

Shadowlands without the proper training, and for most bushi this takes place at the Sunda Mizu Dojo (Clear Water Academy).

Sunda Mizu Mura (Clear Water Village), one of the oldest cities in Rokugan, nestles between Earthquake Fish Bay and the Wall Above the Ocean Mountains. Clear Water Academy has been housed in the same structure for centuries, built of the sturdy gray stone that dominates Crab architecture. The school was designed by Kaiu himself late in his career, and its foundations were laid by his apprentices.

In the one instance during recorded history that Sunda Mizu Mura was attacked (during the War of Spirits), the residents of the village retreated into the dojo and successfully defended the structure against the spirit armies for seven weeks. Eventually, the armies of the Lion and Crab arrived, forcing the Iron Chrysanthemum to retreat. Some believe that it was the ferocity of the dojo's students and the quality of Kaiu's architecture that kept the dojo safe. Others whisper that Hida Tsuneo's memories of training within the dojo overwhelmed his loyalty to the sinister Hantei XVI, leading him to knowingly perform an ineffective assault upon the ancient structure.

TRADITION

It is said Hida himself was the first sensei of Sunda Mizu (though if all Crab legends about him were true, Hida would have been a busy Kami indeed). While the Crab Kami's position as teacher is open to debate, it is known that he instituted the tradition of carving the names of every student who attended the dojo in the stone walls. Hida decreed that no name would ever be removed or allowed to fall into ruin, and thus the names of such legendary heroes as Hida Tadaka, Hida Tsuneo, Hida Yakamo, and even Osano-Wo can be found on the walls of Sunda Mizu, carved by their own hands. Even students from other clans who train at Sunda Mizu carve their names on the walls.

Upon first arriving, an accepted student is given a hammer and chisel and instructed to carve his name in a location of his choice, so long as it does not deface an existing name. Students who find a place to carve their name beside that of a great hero are seen as lucky, though they must be careful that their actions bring that hero no dishonor by association. Over the centuries, the dojo has been expanded many times, both to accommodate more students and to make room for more names.

Students of Sunda Mizu take the inscription of their names very seriously. "You may forget your training, but Sunda Mizu never forgets you," is a common admonishment of the dojo's sensei. Students who misbehave or perform poorly are given their punishment in the presence of their own names, so that they may meditate upon the shame that they have brought the dojo.

Though Hida ordered that no names would be defaced, the names of those who bring the dojo dishonor are often covered with carpets, wall hangings, or even chamber pots. The lengths to which sensei will go to hide a shamed name can be profound examples of the Crab sense of humor. The name of Hida Hideaki (a bushi who willingly joined the army of Fu Leng during the Clan War) is now covered by a silk painting of a delicate geisha at rest among overstuffed pillows. Covering or uncovering a name is always the decision of the master sensei, and is not subject to discussion.

TRAINING

Young students hoping to undergo gempukku as Crab samurai take their basic training at Sunda Mizu. Students are trained in a variety of weapons (usually wooden replicas of weapons used on the Wall). Most basic exercises and sparring are done in "heavy arm training": students wear heavy armor fitted with lead weights to make it even more uncomfortable and difficult to maneuver in. At times, students who are not performing adequately are ordered to do heavy labor or sleep while wearing weighted armor. This harsh regimen not only forces students of the Hida style to become accustomed to the discomfort of armor, but it also builds their stamina.

After a student's gempukku, he is expected to journey into the Shadowlands and return with the head of a Shadowlands creature. Sunda Mizu Ryu students bring these heads to the dojo for the approval of the sensei. Those who bring back the heads of powerful creatures are allowed to advance more rapidly through the dojo's training. The head is cleaned for permanent display in the dojo's entry hall, so that the first thing visitors see upon their arrival is the remains of those that have fallen to its students. Over the centuries Sunda Mizu has accumulated quite a terrifying collection of skulls.

Accumulating the Shadowlands Taint in any amount is grounds for immediate and permanent expulsion from Sunda Mizu. Such students are immediately sent to the barracks of the Damned.

SENSEI

Due to the Crab Clan's eternal war with the Shadowlands, few able-bodied bushi can be spared to instruct new recruits. However, the Crab have no lack of samurai who have sustained permanent injuries but still have the will to fight. These samurai are assigned to Sunda Mizu as instructors.

Though the sensei of Sunda Mizu is always a bushi, there is always a senior Kuni shugenja on the premises who instructs the students regarding the inhabitants of the Shadowlands. Mostly, this instruction focuses on how to identify and kill said inhabitants. Like the other instructors, this shugenja is usually too old or injured to serve on the Wall itself.

TORITAKA TATSUNE

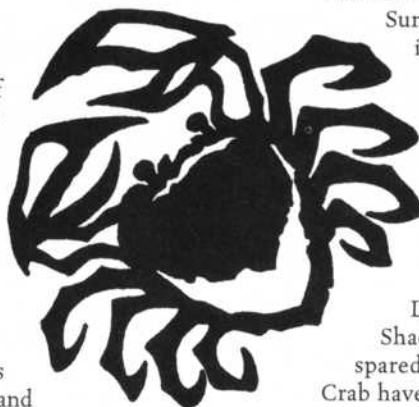
Master Sensei, Sunda Mizu Ryu

[Samurai 6/Berserker 4/Shadowlands Veteran 10; Hida Bushi 5/Hida Avenger 3]

Toritaka Tatsune is a gruff warrior in his late fifties, the first sensei of Sunda Mizu to ever bear the Toritaka name. He also happens to be the daimyo of the Toritaka family, though the family is small enough that his position as sensei seldom interferes. (He leaves most of the daily duties of family daimyo in the hands of his wife, Koiso.)

He is a quiet man built like a mountain, with thick limbs and a broad chest. He possesses infinite patience and has never been known to give up on a student, though a handful have found his training regimen so difficult that they fled and did not return.

Praise does not come readily from Tatsune's lips, and students who do not perform adequately are severely punished with harsh labor and extra exercises. Tatsune sees no reason to treat his students with compassion, as he knows that the



Shadowlands will show none. Tatsune makes no compromises and bestows no favors; his duty is to make strong bushi, not friends. Only returning students who have performed in successful campaigns against the Shadowlands are met with any warmth by Tatsune, though even they will find his harsh demeanor quickly returning when they request advanced training.

Tatsune walks with a severe limp; his left leg was shattered by an ogre during the Battle of Oblivion's Gate and never healed properly. Though the wound bears no true Taint, it bleeds freely and emits terrible rotting odors without weekly treatments with a special healing poultice devised by the Kuni. Even if Tatsune could find a means to permanently heal his leg, he would not do so. To him, the wound is a reminder of what can happen when one is not prepared for the dangers of the Shadowlands. Tatsune never speaks openly of his injury.

Mechanical Notes: Tatsune's skills, abilities, and feats tend to concentrate on stamina, endurance, and anti-Shadowlands combat techniques. He readily teaches these abilities to any student of the dojo who meet his approval.

SUNDA MIZU BENEFITS

As one of the oldest existing dojo in Rokugan, membership in the Sunda Mizu academy is a great honor not only among the Crab, but among the samurai community in general. Hida bushi take an enormous amount of pride in their dojo, and tolerate those who defame its name with only slightly less patience than they hold for Shadowlands beasts.

Training in Sunda Mizu emphasizes endurance, heavy armor training, and a thorough instruction in how to identify and kill minions of the Shadowlands. A student of Sunda Mizu may choose to honor his dojo with a small splash of gray (representing the gray stone of the ancient dojo) in the lower left corner of his sashimono or personal mon.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

The students of Sunda Mizu are the implacable enemies of the Shadowlands; the most powerful warriors of the Crab. Those who have the support of their dojo will never falter in the face of the Horde.

Benefit: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus on all Intimidation checks against Shadowlands creatures.

Benefit: You gain a free Raise on all Intimidation rolls against Shadowlands creatures.

TRAINING BENEFIT

You are particularly skilled in battling the minions of the Shadowlands. Due to the fierce focus and dedication this benefit requires, it fades if you should ever begin study at a new dojo.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to all Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks against Shadowlands creatures, and a +1 bonus to all weapon damage rolls against such opponents. This benefit stacks with the ranger's favored enemy ability, and damage is gained even against creatures that are immune to critical hits. With ranged attacks, this bonus applies only against creatures within 30 feet.

Benefit: You may add your Insight Rank to all Hunting and damage rolls made against Shadowlands creatures.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

HIDA REIHA

[Samurai 6; Hida Bushi 2]

A relatively young and inexperienced student of the academy, Reiha is nonetheless quite notable. She was one of the few samurai to survive the Shadowlands' recent attack upon the Kaiu Wall, and personally witnessed Crab Champion Hida Kuroda's final moments in combat with the Onisu Kyofu. She was the one to carry the shattered Celestial Sword of the Crab to the Kaiu Forge, where it was re-forged and given into the hands of new Crab Champion Hida Kuon. The young samurai-ko was profoundly affected by her experience, and now has returned to Sunda Mizu, hurling herself into more rigorous training so that she will be prepared to fight at Kuon's side when the Wall is retaken.

HIDA SAKAMOTO

[Samurai 5/Fighter 10; Hida Bushi 5]

One of the most seasoned warriors of the Crab army, Sakamoto is also a proud student of Sunda Mizu. On the day he was allowed to carve his name on the stone, he chose an open area in a new wing, far from all other samurai's names. His sensei reacted with surprise.

"What is wrong?" the sensei asked. "Are you ashamed to place your name beside the others?"

"Not at all," Sakamoto replied. "I do this so that when I become a great hero, there will be room for hundreds of names to crowd near mine."

Sakamoto was given extra exercises and harsh labor for his bravado, but he performed admirably. He has come to be regarded as one of the finest warriors the Crab have to offer, and has acted as military advisor to Hida O-Ushi, Hida Kuroda, and Hida Kuon. If he has any regrets, it is only that he did not train himself thoroughly enough to adequately protect his two former masters. Though neither of their deaths were truly his fault, Sakamoto has sworn that he will not fail Lord Kuon.

DAISHIKI'S ANVIL

Classes: Fighter, Rogue, Samurai

Schools: Hida Bushi, Hiruma Scout, Kaiu Engineer, Yasuki Taskmaster

HISTORY

Daishiki's Anvil was founded by Kaiu Daishiki, a wealthy Kaiu daimyo who felt that the soldiers of the Crab could benefit from direct experience on the Wall prior to gempukku. With the permission of his lord, he spent his great wealth to expand Kaiu Shiro and build the dojo that would be called Daishiki's Anvil. He invited masters of every Crab school (with the exception of the Berserkers, whom he felt were too unstable to roam unchecked in Kaiu Shiro) to come and train their students within his dojo.

Kaiu's Anvil is located within Kaiu Shiro, and is thus located close to both the Wall and the Shadowlands. The school has stood within the walls of the castle for three hundred years, operating amid the busy workings of the Crab Clan's most industrious family.

TRADITION

Though not as old or respected as Sunda Mizu, Daishiki's Anvil is a moderately well-established dojo. Its training is extremely flexible, catering to the styles of many different schools. The students in the different schools at Daishiki's Anvil are encouraged to interact, train with one another, and share thoughts on how to better fulfill their role as bushi. A friendly rivalry exists between the four distinct schools represented at Daishiki's Anvil, and competition is encouraged among the students. Though the sensei of Daishiki's Anvil consider this a strength, they often receive criticism from other, more focused dojo.

TRAINING

As Kaiu Shiro is a functioning fortress, some pains must be taken to keep students who have not yet reached gempukku out from underfoot of the true samurai on the premises. These students wear colored armbands so that they will be recognized as students, and thus won't accidentally be given important orders by a harried commander who mistakes them for true samurai. The color depends upon their school: red (Hida Bushi), black (Hiruma Scout), gray (Kaiu Engineer), or green (Yasuki Taskmaster).

During attacks upon Kaiu Shiro, the students of Daishiki's Anvil are expected to aid in the castle's defense. Even those who have not reached gempukku serve as messengers, put out fires, or simply load ammunition into the siege engines under the direction of an experienced samurai. As a result, most students have some experience actually battling the creatures of the Shadowlands before reaching their gempukku. This is especially true of late, as Kaiu Shiro stands at the front lines between the conquered section of the Kaiu Wall and that part which still remains in Crab control.

SENSEI

Daishiki's Anvil has a staff of four sensei at any given time, one for each of its major school styles. These sensei are all considered equally influential in any matters concerning the dojo, though the sensei with the most seniority typically makes most of the important decisions. The current staff of sensei consists of Kaiu Hosaru (Kaiu Engineer School), Hida Fuchida (Hida Bushi School), Hiruma Hotoke (Hiruma Scout School), and Yasuki Otojiro (Yasuki Taskmaster School).

YASUKI OTOJIRO

Senior Sensei, Daishiki's Anvil

[Fighter 6/Rogue 10; Hida Bushi 2/Yasuki Taskmaster 4]

In his early seventies, Otojiro is the most seasoned and respected daimyo at the Daishiki's Anvil dojo. He is a grizzled veteran of countless battles upon the Wall, and has become a somewhat stubborn and eccentric character in his old age. He is known for telling prolonged tales from his youth of his exploits in the Shadowlands, and is never seen without a short-handled ono at his side. Otojiro refuses to credit any rumors of a Crane daimyo of the Yasuki, no matter how reliable the source may be. Once he even physically attacked a messenger claiming to bear such news (albeit without using his ax) claiming that the man "had his brains addled by the Shadowlands and needed to get some sense knocked in."

Mechanical Notes: Otojiro's skills, abilities, and feats concentrate on brute strength and intimidation. He will teach his techniques to any who attend the dojo, so long as they treat him with respect and listen to his stories.

DAISHIKI'S ANVIL BENEFITS

The students of Daishiki's Anvil are a cosmopolitan and versatile lot (for Crab, anyway) who are well aware of a variety of different fighting techniques. Training at this dojo involves not only a mastery of one's own school, but a mastery of the strengths and weaknesses of other Crab schools. Those who attend this dojo often retain the armbands they once wore as pre-gempukku students, attaching them to the hilt of their tetsubo or other weapons as decorative tassels.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

None.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Your versatility aids you in mastering a variety of different fighting techniques.

Benefit: Select the favored character class of any other Crab family (except the Kuni). You gain this character class as an additional favored class.

Benefit: You may purchase the Multiple Schools advantage for three fewer points, so long as the new school that you choose is also a Crab school.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

HIDA YASUHIRO

[Samurai 7; Hida Bushi 3]

Something of an anomaly among the students of Daishiki's Anvil, Yasuhiro is a samurai who has stayed true to the path of the Hida Bushi School, and has not adopted any techniques of the various other schools taught by this dojo. While he is aware of and appreciates the abilities of his brethren, he feels that the Hida Bushi school is the strongest of the styles represented at the dojo, and is a fervent proponent of the virtues of his style.

DOJO OF THE RAZOR'S EDGE

Classes: Berserker

Schools: Hida Berserker

HISTORY

The Dojo of the Razor's Edge is relatively new, founded only thirty years ago by a group of "dead-eyes" Crab berserkers led by a young samurai named Hiruma Yugure. After the death and corruption of the infamous Hida Amoro, these bushi felt that their style (already often decried for its brutality and mindless savagery) had been shamed by the fall of the Crab daimyo's nephew. They established this school in the shadow of Razor of the Dawn Castle, far from the castles of the great families, but close to the Shadowlands. Here, the berserkers felt that they could perfect and purify their misunderstood techniques in a location with ample access to the hated denizens of the Shadowlands. The school itself is rather small, a somewhat ramshackle one-story building just outside the walls of Razor of the Dawn.

Though the students of the Razor's Edge have killed an impressive number of Shadowlands creatures during the dojo's short existence, they have had absolutely no success whatsoever in making the image of the dead-eyes berserker any more honorable or respected. If anything, the existence of a formal and (somewhat) organized school of berserkers just causes others to be even more wary and keep their distance from this "school."

TRADITION

With its brief history, Razor's Edge has very few traditions. The only true tradition to speak of involves an absolute intolerance of all outbreaks of the Shadowlands Taint. Any students, past or present, who bear the Taint are hunted ruthlessly by all members of the dojo.

TRAINING

Training is very loosely organized at the Razor's Edge, but mostly involves tapping the deepest pits of one's inner rage. Exercises involve building stamina by repeated exposure to pain (either by being beaten by other students or by exposing oneself to harsh conditions) and harvesting rage through kiai shouts. It is said that the assembled cry of the students of Razor's Edge is a sound that would strike terror into the heart of Jigoku itself.

SENSEI

Selection of a sensei is also rather informal at the Razor's Edge. The sensei is simply the oldest living student. Usually, this individual is no more than thirty, and rarely holds the position for more than three years before being slain by some inhabitant of the Shadowlands, some other enemy of the Crab, or another member of the dojo during an accident while practicing. The sensei has few formal duties, though all in the dojo treat him with due respect.

HIDA INUKAI

Sensei, Dojo of the Razor's Edge
[Berserker 15; Hida Berserker 5]

Inukai is a stunningly beautiful woman in her late twenties who dresses in revealing, form-fitting armor most of the time. She also happens to be a homicidal lunatic, barely lucid at the best of times and truly savage whenever anything resembling an enemy approaches. She is temperamental, abusive, and unpredictable toward the students under her care, though she rarely does them any permanent damage.

Mechanical Notes: Inukai's skills, abilities, and feats are straightforward. She does as much damage as quickly as possible with no concern for her own safety. Students who show no fear in her presence (quite an accomplishment) may merit her personal attention.

RAZOR'S EDGE BENEFITS

Membership in the Dojo of the Razor's Edge is not exactly a matter of prestige, though it certainly does cause others to take notice. The dojo's reputation for producing fearsome, maniacal warriors is enough to gain most samurai's attention.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Members of the Dojo of the Razor's Edge have a reputation for wanton violence, giving them an extremely intimidating character. Unfortunately, this also often prevents them from seeking a peaceful solution to their problems (not that this often comes up for them).

Benefit: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus on all Intimidation checks, but suffer a -4 penalty to all other Charisma checks that relate to social interactions.

Benefit: You gain a free Raise on all Intimidation rolls, but all other social-based Awareness rolls have their TN increased by 5.

TRAINING BENEFIT

The students of Razor's Edge have mastered a more focused rage, allowing them to enter a state of savage fury for longer periods than a typical berserker.

Benefit: Your rage ability lasts for double your Constitution modifier + 3 rounds rather than your Constitution modifier + 3 rounds.

Benefit: You may ignore wound penalties for your Earth \times 3 rounds instead of your Earth \times 2 rounds when using your Berserker techniques.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

HIDA TENSU

[Berserker 9; Hida Berserker 2/Dead Eyes 1]

Hida Tenshu is the son of Crab shugenja Hida Rohiteki, and thus shares the bloodline of the infamous Hida Amoro, whose death and corruption inspired the creation of Razor's Edge.

Those who knew Amoro say that they see much of that cruel berserker's soul reflected in Tenshu's merciless fighting style. Though the young berserker has been in few battles, already he has gained a reputation for never allowing an opponent to begin a fight with him and live. Even an innocent bar fight ended with Tenshu beating his opponent to death with his bare fists. Fortunately for Tenshu, his mother was the Crab daimyo's advisor and the victim was a rather annoying Bayushi emissary. The Crab made restitution to the victim's family; Tenshu went unpunished save for a period of duty on the most dangerous section of the Wall. Many say that this deadly student of the Razor's Edge is walking a razor's edge of his own.



ADVANCED TRAINING

HIDA ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The most skilled warriors of the Crab are invited to join the Hida Elite Guard. These elite soldiers serve not only as the personal guard of the Crab Champion, but also carry out important missions in their daimyo's name. These warriors are known for their ferocity; the Hida Elite Guard will allow themselves to be slain to a man before they consider retreat, especially in the face of the Shadowlands Horde.

Hit Die: d12.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Hida Elite Guardsman, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +9

Clan: Crab.

Feats: Hida Technique, Mountain Does Not Move, Strength of the Earth, Toughness, Void Use, Way of the Crab.

Special: Must be invited to join the Elite Guard by the Crab Champion. Must have the ancestral daisho class ability.

CLASS SKILLS

The Hida Elite Guardsman's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Shadowlands) (Int), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), and Swim (Str). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle and Tea Ceremony skills are described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Hida Elite Guardsman prestige class.

Hida's Strength: At 1st level, the guardsman may spend a Void Point to add double his Constitution modifier to his AC as an insight bonus, or to add his Constitution modifier as an insight bonus to all attack and damage rolls. Either effect lasts one round; both effects cannot be used simultaneously.

Fear the Mountain: The looming strength of earth within the guardsman overpowers his foes. At 2nd level, the guardsman may add his Constitution modifier to all Intimidation checks.

Great Fortitude: At 2nd level the guardsman gains this feat for free.

Hida's Armor: At 3rd level, the guardsman becomes tougher and more resistant to damage. All natural armor bonuses provided by the Hida Technique feat are tripled, even if tripling the bonus would allow a bonus greater than the feat normally allows.

TABLE 1-1: THE HIDA ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Hida's Armor
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Fear the Mountain, Great Fortitude
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Hida's Strength
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Hida's Last Lesson

Bonus Feat: At 4th level, the guardsman may select a bonus feat from the list of Crab samurai feats or technique feats.

Hida's Last Lesson: At 5th level, the guardsman gains permanent +2 inherent bonus to Constitution.

HIDA ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Hida Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Hida Bushi 4

Technique: Hida's Strength

The Hida Elite Guardsman has learned to channel the legendary power of the First Crab, adapting readily to attack or defense. Each round during his action the guardsman may choose to add twice his Defense Skill to their damage rolls or his TN to Be Hit until his next action.

DEAD-EYES BERSERKER (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Among the Crab, there is a special variety of berserker who attains a purer state of rage. The rage that burns within these warriors is not a raging, uncontrollable flame but a cold, inexorable anger that rises from nowhere and vanishes just as swiftly. These warriors are said to be entirely without emotion, rendered nothing more than engines of death by their rigorous training and the terrible burden these techniques place on their soul.

Some pity the dead-eyes berserker, but the Crab know better.

Save your pity for those who stand against him.

Hit Die: d12.

REQUIREMENTS

To become a dead-eyes berserker, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any chaotic

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Feats: Power Attack, Way of the Crab

Rage class ability: This can originate from the Hida Defender class, the berserker character class, or any other ability that allows the character to enter rage, but it must be usable at least twice a day.

Special: Though this prestige class is taught by the Crab Clan, one need not be a Crab to become a dead-eyes berserker. Prospective students must only meet the approval of another dead-eyes berserker — an equally monumental task no matter one's clan of origin.

CLASS SKILLS

The dead-eyes berserker's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), and Swim (Str). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the dead-eyes berserker prestige class.

Rage: At 1st, 3rd, and 5th level the berserker gains the ability to enter into a rage (identical to the rage described under the barbarian character class in the *Player's Handbook*™) an additional time per day.

Dead Eyes: At 2nd level, the berserker has begun to purge himself of all emotion. He gains a +2 bonus on all saves vs. any mind-affecting effect. While affected by a rage, he is entirely immune to all mind-affecting effects (though if their duration is long enough, they take effect normally when the rage ends).

Eternal Rage: At fourth level, the dead-eyes berserker has learned to harness the deepest rage within his soul. If in the throes of a rage, he may extend the rage for an additional round by sacrificing ten hit points. He may continue to do so as long as he has hit points to spare, and can even render himself unconscious by sacrificing hit points in this manner.

DEAD-EYES BERSERKER (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 3

Path of Entry: Hida Berserker 2

Path of Egress: Hida Bushi 1

Technique: Endless Rage

After using your berserker technique (see *Way of the Crab*), you are do not enter a semiconscious daze as normal. Instead, you roll two fewer dice on all attack and damage rolls for the same amount of time for which you would normally be spent. This technique counts as a rank of the berserker school for the purposes of rolling and keeping extra damage dice.

KATA OF THE CRAB

The Crab dojo are as secretive as any, though they have been known to occasionally teach their most treasured kata to the dead-eyes berserkers and swift Hiruma scouts who share their war against the Shadowlands.

SOUL OF STONE

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This is one of the simplest kata taught by Crab sensei. The bushi folds his palms across his chest and focuses on drawing his own strength inward, hardening his body against harm.

Requirements: Hida Technique, Way of the Crab

XP Cost: 40

Effect: While under the effects of this kata, you gain a deflection bonus to AC equal to one-fourth your level (minimum 1), but you cannot charge or run.

School Rank: Hida Bushi 1, or Hida Berserker 1, or other Crab schools 3

Cost: 2

Effect: This kata increases the practitioner's TN to be Hit by his Insight Rank for the duration of the kata, but he cannot move faster than a walk.

SHARDS OF EARTH

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes or until an attack roll is made

Other: When he learns this kata, the bushi applies it exclusively to either tetsubo or jiujutsu attacks. Shards of Earth may be learned separately in both forms.

The Hida teach their samurai to focus their chi like the earth, to become impenetrable and strong like the mountains. They show their students how to draw out the Earth in themselves to augment their strength, but this kata takes a different approach to the Hida's affinity for Earth.

The bushi must focus his chi around a small stone or other object at the beginning of this kata. When the bushi reaches the end of the ritual, he raises either his tetsubo or his empty hand high above his head and strikes down quickly, stopping a hairsbreadth above the stone. Within seconds, the stone begins to crumble into dust.

This kata ends after your first attack roll, whether or not you successfully strike the target.

Requirements (tetsubo version): Cleave, Martial Weapon Proficiency (tetsubo), The Mountain Does Not Move, Power Attack, Void Use.

Requirements (unarmed version): Breaking Blow, Fists of Iron, Improved Unarmed Strike, The Mountain Does Not Move, Power Attack, Void Use.

XP Cost: 500

Effect: While under the effects of this kata, you may make a single attack roll as if it were a touch attack. Your weapon is considered to be +1 for the purposes of piercing damage resistance only. (If the weapon is already magical, it can pierce damage resistance as if its bonus were +1 higher).

If you strike a flat-footed opponent with this attack, he must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your Constitution modifier + half your level) or be stunned for 1d3 rounds.

School Rank: Hida Bushi 3, or Hida Berserker 4, or Hiruma Scout 4

Cost: 3

Effect: You may completely ignore armor when striking an opponent, directly attacking his Earth. If an unprepared target is struck by a Shards of Earth attack, he must make an opposed Earth check vs. your Earth or be thrown off his feet and miss his next action.

UNYIELDING FURY

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

The bushi has learned to tap into the boundless rage of the Crab, the raging fire that fuels their boundless sense of duty.

TABLE 1-2: THE DEAD-EYES BERSERKER

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Rage
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Dead Eyes
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Rage
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Eternal Rage
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Rage

The Crab can never be defeated; those who slay a true Crab will find themselves being dragged into the next world as well. This kata is seldom seen in action; its very existence is a matter of whispered legend.

Requirements: Great Fortitude, Hida's Rage, Hida's Technique, Strength of the Earth, The Mountain Does Not Fall, The Mountain Does Not Move, Toughness, Void Use, Way of the Crab.

XP Cost: 1,500

Effect: When under the effects of this kata you may spend a Void Point to make an immediate melee attack (out of turn and as a free action) against an attacker who has just struck you with an attack that will reduce you below zero hit points. This attack is made before damage is applied, and is automatically a critical threat. The damage inflicted by the original attack is not reduced in any way.

School Rank: Hida Bushi 4 or Hida Berserker 5

Cost: 5

Effect: If you are struck by an attack that would reduce you to Down, Out, Dead, or even one that would kill you outright while under the effects of this kata, you may spend a Void Point to make an immediate melee attack against your attacker before damage is applied, doing double damage if you strike successfully. The damage inflicted by the original attack is not reduced in any way.

THE TORITAKA

With their absorption into the Crab Clan as the Toritaka family, the once-Minor Clan of the Falcon now has resources never before available. With this in mind, they have greatly improved the techniques of their bushi school. The Toritaka serve as the eyes of the Crab, searching out menaces from other Spirit Realms beyond Jigoku which the Hida, Hiruma, and Kuni are not prepared to perceive.

(Note: the techniques and bonuses represented here supersede those presented in Way of the Minor Clans.)

NEW FAMILY

Toritaka

Bonus: +1 Perception

(The Awareness-related abilities available to Toritaka family members are no longer available; this enhanced awareness has been enhanced and altered as a part of the bushi school's training.)

TORITAKA BUSHI SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Skills: Falconry, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Lore (Spirit Realms), Meditation, Yarijutsu, and a second rank in either Falconry or Hunting

Starting Honor: 2, plus 0 boxes

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Falcon's Eyes

At Rank 1, the falcon gains a free Raise per School Rank on all Perception rolls. In addition, he may perceive any invisible spirits within his range of vision by making a Perception roll vs. the spirit's Air \times 5.

Rank 2: The Falcon Takes Flight

At Rank 2, the bushi begins to understand the swift movements of the Falcon. He may add twice his Perception to all his Initiative rolls.

Rank 3: The Falcon's Wings

At this Rank, the Falcon's mastery of his technique is such that he may make two attacks per round.

Rank 4: Vigilant and Strong

At this Rank, the Falcon no longer needs to make a Perception roll to perceive invisible spirits. Against any invisible creatures he may make a Perception roll vs. that creature's Air \times 5 to perceive them normally. Also, he may make a Perception roll opposed by the Air of any opponent within thirty feet to perceive them despite any darkness or blinding effects that may hamper his vision. He must be aware of an opponent's existence to use this ability.

Rank 5: Claws of the Falcon

Just as the Falcon can perceive things that are beyond this world, so can he draw upon his understanding of such creatures to defeat them. By spending a Void Point, the Falcon can select one opponent and harm them normally (despite any special invulnerabilities or Carapace rating) for the duration of that combat. This applies only to melee attacks made by the Falcon.



CHAPTER TWO:

DOJO OF THE CRANE CLAN

In the secluded gardens of the Kakita Dueling Academy, master sensei Kakita Noritoshi stood surrounded by six of his most gifted and promising students. Beside him, in the center of the garden, was a low stone pedestal with a water-filled basin. It was as old as the school itself, and known as the Pool of the Perfect Stroke.

"The secret of Kakita's technique," Noritoshi began, walking about the circle slowly, "is not simply about the speed of one's blade, as many believe. Nor is it merely the precision of your strike. Kakita's ultimate lesson is one of subtlety. Without subtlety, no amount of speed and precision can make you a master of the Kakita style." He stood quietly, waiting for the inevitable question.

"Master, I do not understand." It was Kakita Ukoto who broke the silence. Noritoshi smiled inwardly. Ukoto was young and gifted, always eager for knowledge and an understanding of the style. He would be a great warrior one day. "How does one master subtlety with the katana? It seems so... so..."

"Contradictory, yes," Noritoshi replied. "But true nonetheless. A great duelist can have speed, precision, and strength, but without subtlety he will never be a master. It is the ultimate expression of the beauty and art of the Kakita style." Noritoshi surveyed his students again, looking for any sign of comprehension. As usual, even his most advanced students displayed little. He sighed lightly. "Very well, then. I shall show you."

Noritoshi reached into his obi and withdrew a single pristine leaf. He held it delicately above the basin, allowing all of his students to see it before allowing it to drift lazily downward and settle lightly upon the surface of the water. Stepping back from the basin, the iaijutsu master dropped easily into a dueling stance, his hand gripping the hilt of his sword. For several long moments, he regarded the basin with no sign of movement.

Suddenly there was a blaze of motion. Noritoshi now stood in the classic pose of a duelist having completed a single strike, but with no apparent effect. Several students winced in pain, as they believed they had just seen their honorable sensei miss his target, a great dishonor.

Noritoshi leaned forward and blew very gently upon the surface of the water. The leaf, stirred by the motion of the air around it, separated neatly into two perfect halves. In awe, Ukoto uttered, "Master, you did not even touch the surface of the water! Your stroke... it was perfect!"

Noritoshi said nothing, but instead held his blade before him and performed the ancient flicking motion that cleaned the katana of an enemy's blood. A single drop of water arced across the room to strike the stone floor at Ukoto's feet. "Perfect? I am afraid not. I am a student of Kakita just as each of you."

"What would happen if one of us were to master the perfect cut?" another eager student blurted out.

Arching a single eyebrow, Noritoshi said simply, "Then that student would take my place."

KYUDEN DOJO

Classes: Artisan (Prestige), Courtier, Doji Elite Guard (Prestige), Samurai

Schools: Doji Courtier, Doji Elite Guard (Advanced), Doji Magistrate

HISTORY

Although Kyuden Doji itself has stood since the time of Lady Doji and Lord Kakita, it has only housed the primary dojo of the Doji family for the past few decades. The devastation of the Clan War, which followed years of war with the Lion, left many Crane dojo poorly defended or in ruins. The Crane Champion of the time, Doji Kuwanan, relocated all Crane schools to one of the clan's most defensible locations. For those schools operated by the Doji family, that location was Kyuden Doji.

Kuwanan's plan was a success. During the tumultuous period following the Clan War, the brief civil war between the Doji and Daidoji families saw Kyuden Doji transformed into the center of Kuwanan's military operations. With the family's resources centered there, he had considerable resources at his disposal and could continue to supervise the Doji's affairs while away from the front lines. Likewise, the Crane used Kyuden Doji as one of their primary centers of operations during the War of Spirits.

In recent years, Kyuden Doji has avoided the unpleasantness of war. The current war between the Crane and Crab is taking place in the southernmost Daidoji regions and the adjoining Yasuki provinces of the Crab. While Crane Champion Doji Kurohito oversees the war effort personally, his wife and advisors manage the affairs of the Crane from the relative safety of Kyuden Doji.

TRADITION

Since the schools were combined at Kyuden Doji only recently, there are few long-standing traditions. One of the most interesting involves a competition between the Doji courtiers, the family's oldest and most prestigious school, and the Doji magistrates, an institution no more than a few hundred years old.

The eldest students of the courtier school put into motion some elaborate plan that will result in some small and relatively unimportant loss of face to the students of the magistrate dojo. The prospective magistrates, however, are aware that some such plot is afoot and attempt to discover the nature of the scheme. Historically, the courtiers have dominated the contest, which might have played a role in the subdued profile of the magistrates in the empire at large. In the last few years, however, the magistrates have outsmarted the courtiers more and more often, giving them a reputation as cunning adversaries.

TRAINING

Much of the training at Kyuden Doji does not involve combat. Both the magistrates and the courtiers focus primarily on observing others and interpreting their actions. They are trained in the nuances of inflection, body language, and subtle shifts of facial expression. Young courtiers relive the great historical debates of the Imperial Court while aspiring magistrates examine the most heinous crimes in the Empire's history to see how they were solved.

One of the least conventional training methods the Doji employ is to have their students impersonate servants during unimportant diplomatic sessions. This allows them to see and hear what is going on, but prevents them from embarrassing the family with their inexperience; after all, no one pays attention to the servants.

Martial training does go on at Kyuden Doji, as the Doji Elite Guard maintains a large training area for their rigorous practice sessions. The magistrates maintain a much smaller space for the martial component of their training. For the most part, however, these activities are secluded from the majority of the palace's occupants. The Doji consider it poor form to conduct their military activities in full sight of guests.

SENSEI

Obviously, the three very different dojo based in Kyuden Doji have separate sensei. The sensei of the courtiers and magistrates are very influential in the Crane Clan. Within the palace itself, however, the sensei of the Doji Elite Guard is considered to have seniority. As both the sensei and the captain of the guard, the responsibility for the safety and security of every individual within the palace falls upon his shoulders. It is considered a sacred duty, and the Crane Champion selects each new sensei personally.

DOJI NAKANU

Master of the Watch, Doji Elite Guard

[Samurai 14/Doji Elite Guard 5; Kakita Bushi 5/Doji Elite Guard 1/Doji Magistrate 1]

Most of Doji Nakanu's life has been spent in quiet contemplation of the secrets of the Kakita style. As a young man he gained a reputation as an enthusiastic student, often practicing for long hours in the forests beyond his home. Striking at leaves falling from the trees, practicing his strikes while standing in a waterfall, and balancing stones upon the end of his blade as he practiced his long, delicate blade strokes, he mastered many secrets of the style long before a bushi of his age would normally do so.

Only weeks after his gempukku, Doji Nakanu found himself among the few defending soldiers when Kyuden Doji was assaulted during the Clan War. His flawless style caught the eye of Doji Kuwanan and Daidoji Uji, and when those two heroes escaped the final onslaught of the False Hoturi and his hordes, Doji Nakanu was one of a handful of guards who survived to flee alongside them. Nakanu's valor earned him a position in Kuwanan's elite guard, where he served with distinction for the duration of the Clan War. Following that conflict and the consolidation of the Doji schools at Kyuden Doji, Kuwanan charged Nakanu with the formation of an elite cadre of defenders to ensure the palace would never fall again.

Mechanical Notes: Nakanu has skills and feats that emphasize his vigilance and devotion to his duty. Any abilities that reflect an increase in perception or willpower would be appropriate.

KYUDEN DOJI BENEFITS

Kyuden Doji is one of the most prominent and renowned centers of learning and diplomacy in the Empire. It is the sort of place that poor peasant children dream of visiting to catch the eye of a great warrior or courtier. Samurai trained here carry that prestige with them wherever they go. Students at Kyuden Doji can be recognized by the symbol of the court fan spread beneath the family mon on their kimono.



SOCIAL BENEFIT

Having trained at Kyuden Doji demands respect from others, who will be more receptive to such an individual in social settings.

Benefit: Once per day, the character may add a +4 competence bonus to any Diplomacy or Charisma check.

Benefit: The samurai gains a Free Raise per day to be used in any social interaction.

TRAINING BENEFIT

All dojo at Kyuden Doji emphasize perception, granting their students an edge over their opponents in many situations.

Benefit: Once per day, the character may add a +4 competence bonus to any Search or Spot check.

Benefit: Students of Kyuden Doji roll one extra die on any Perception roll.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

DOJI TANITSU

[Courtier 16; Doji Courtier 4]

Despite his relative youth, Doji Tanitsu is one of the most prominent courtiers in the Crane Clan. He was a childhood friend of all three of Toturi's children who were raised in court, and is at present one of the few people in the Empire on friendly terms with all four of the Winds. He is particularly close to Toturi Tsudao, although he has gained the trust of her siblings as well. Tanitsu is open and honest, with an infectious cheerful demeanor. His good nature and forthrightness blind those who do not know him to his unprecedented skills at manipulation, although he rarely uses them unless it directly benefits the clan.

DOJI YASUYO

[Samurai 15; Kakita Bushi 2/Doji Magistrate 2]

Several Crane historians have declared Doji Yasuyo to be the very image of Lady Doji herself, and in truth she does seem to possess an otherworldly poise and grace. An extremely gifted duelist, Yasuyo was a well-known student of the Kakita dueling academy, but requested permission to study with the Doji magistrates in order to better serve her clan. Few among the Crane can refuse the beautiful samurai, and she was granted permission.

Recently, Yasuyo requested leave to pursue a personal quest. The exact nature of her search is unknown, but her distant cousin Doji Kurohito personally gave her his blessing. Some rumors claim that Yasuyo was set upon her quest by a vision of the Lady Doji. All that is known for certain is that she carries with her the mysterious blade carried by her grandfather. It is called Naishi, the Raven Sword, and not even Yasuyo herself knows its secrets.



KAKITA DUELING ACADEMY

Classes: Hoturi's Blade (Prestige), Iaijutsu Master (Prestige), Kenshinzen (Prestige), Samurai

Schools: Kakita Bushi, Kenshinzen, Hoturi's Blade

HISTORY

The origins of the Kakita Dueling Academy lie with Lord Kakita himself. Those who followed his style learned directly from him at first, then from his students. After Kakita's death, the school remained at Kyuden Kakita, although by that time there were many other dojo throughout the Crane lands. The Lady Doji came to visit Kyuden Kakita less and less, however, as the sight of students practicing her lost husband's secrets caused her great pain. Not wishing to offend their mistress, the followers of the Kakita style constructed a separate facility that would serve as the hub of the many Kakita dojo across their lands. Thus was born the Kakita Dueling Academy.

Due to its position in relatively unfruitful lands and the lack of seasoned troops stationed there, the Academy has never suffered a major assault from an organized foe. During the Clan War and the War of Spirits, the Academy served as a rallying point for refugees from large battles that had been scattered across the Crane lands.

TRADITION

One of the oldest traditions of the Kakita Dueling Academy is its fierce rivalry with the Mirumoto Swordmasters of the Dragon Clan. This heated competition is nearly as old as Rokugan itself and originated in the dispute between Kakita and Mirumoto during the earliest days of the Empire. Kakita attempted to heal the rift when he duelled Mirumoto Hojatsu, the son of Mirumoto. Hojatsu was killed and the badly-wounded Kakita deliberately fell upon Hojatsu's sword, proclaiming, "Do your master's bidding." Unfortunately, the arrogance of some Kakita and the stubbornness of some Mirumoto have continued the sometimes-violent rivalry to this day.

TRAINING

The training of a Kakita duelist is a traditional and ritualized process. There are certain milestones that each sensei looks for to determine when a student is ready to advance to the next level. The first few years of a student's training is spent exclusively within the dojo practicing the mechanical aspects of the dueling system. When the instructors feel that a student has mastered the basics of the draw and strike, that student is sent on to the next level.

Second-tier students practice a great deal while surrounded by nature. By practicing in heavy rain, wildlife-filled forests, waterfalls and the like, they learn to focus only on their strike rather than their surroundings. Additionally, the immersion in nature allows them to gradually realize the spiritual element of their craft.

Kakita students are also trained in a wide variety of high arts. The Crane Clan is renowned for its culture and sophistication, and it would not do to have its most visible representa-

tives not demonstrate the appropriate skills. History, literature, poetry, artisan skills, and etiquette are taught at Kakita Dueling Academy alongside a wide variety of different weapon skills.

SENSEI

KAKITA NORITOSHI

Master Duelist, Kakita Dueling Academy

[Samurai 10/Iaijutsu Master 10; Kakita Bushi 5/Kenshinzen 3]

Kakita Noritoshi is the nephew of Kakita Toshiken, formerly the Emerald Champion of the Empire. He is the grandson of Kakita Toshimoko, a former Emerald Champion and the grand master of the Kakita Dueling Academy, and perhaps the finest duelist that has ever lived save for the great Kakita himself. Noritoshi feels the burden of his family's legacy, but refuses to let it mold him into something he is not.

Noritoshi practices an older variant of the Kakita style, one that has not been prominent among Crane duelists in many decades. Perhaps partly because of this, he has enjoyed great success among his peers, many of whom cannot mount a successful defense against his particular methods. This is by no means a crutch for Noritoshi. On the contrary, he is very gifted with the modern dueling style as well; he merely prefers the style used by his ancestors.

Noritoshi is an exceptionally patient man. It is one of the strengths that allow him to prepare young Crane for the uncertain future of the Empire. Already he has sent many of his students fresh from their gempukku to their deaths in the war with the Crab. It weighs heavily upon his soul.

Mechanical Notes: Noritoshi has many Void-related feats, even a few kiho. Beyond that, his abilities focus on dueling and instruction.

KAKITA DUELING ACADEMY BENEFITS

The Academy is well established as the finest institute for the instruction of iaijutsu in the Empire. Aspiring duelists from across Rokugan look to the Kakita Academy as the birthplace of greatness. When facing other duelists, the students of the Kakita Academy enjoy a considerable social and psychological advantage. The symbol of the Academy is a single stripe of silver, signifying the lightning strike of Kakita himself. This stripe appears on the right side of the students' family mon on their kimonos.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Kakita Academy students enjoy considerable clout, as they are seen as the ultimate practitioners of the Empire's most honorable fighting style.

Benefit: The character gains a +5 enhancement bonus to all Diplomacy or Bluff checks with any individual of the Samurai class who is of lower overall character level than the student.

Benefit: When dealing with bushi with a lower Glory Rank, the samurai rolls an additional die on any social roll.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Anyone who practices formal dueling is intimidated by the students of the Kakita Academy, as they are the best and brightest of that art.

Benefit: The character gains a competence bonus equal to half his Iaijutsu Focus modifier (round up) to all Intimidation checks with other members of the Samurai class.

Benefit: When interacting with any bushi of lower rank who possesses the Iaijutsu skill, the samurai gains a bonus to Intimidation equal to his Iaijutsu skill.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

DOJI REJU

[Samurai 5/Fighter5/Tattooed Monk 3; Kakita Bushi 3/Hitomi Hikage Zumi 1]

One of the eldest students currently attending the academy, Doji Reju has lived a full and eventful life. He has served the Crane in a number of capacities, including a period as an official liaison to the Tsume vassal family. He became a servant of Hitomi after the Clan War, but managed to serve both her and his lord Kuwanan equally well, thus avoiding any dishonor. Upon her death, Reju returned to the Crane and eventually earned his right to bear the Doji name once more.

KAKITA ATOSHI

[Samurai 4/Courtier 2; Kakita Bushi 2]

Although he is well regarded by his fellow students, Kakita Atoshi is a lackluster student of iaijutsu. His choice to attend the academy came as a great surprise, as he is from a very distinguished line of courtiers. When he first joined the school, his fellow students treated him rather poorly. His perseverance and generally good attitude quickly earned their respect, however. Atoshi currently serves as the yojimbo of a prominent Kakita courtier, lending both his blade and his keen powers of observation to his charge.

KOSATEN SHIRO

Classes: Fighter, Ninja, Rogue, Samurai

Schools: Daidoji Yojimbo, Doji Magistrate, Tsume Pike-men

HISTORY

Always the military arm of the Crane Clan, the Daidoji family has dealt with centuries of aggression from the clan's ancient enemies, the Lion. Eventually, the Crane determined that scrambling troops and resources from Shiro Daidoji across the Crane lands every time Lion troops were spotted was a rather inefficient means of dealing with an organized military foe. So a new fortress was constructed, one that overlooked the plains between the Crane lands and the fury of Shiro Matsu. Kosaten Shiro was born.

The Daidoji have always known that they cannot match the Lion in numbers or in sheer military might. Instead, they have developed tactical methods that skirt the edges of dishonor. Ambush, sabotage, exploiting the advantages of the

land... the Daidoji are masters of canny guerrilla warfare. It is the only way they have survived years of intermittent warfare with the Lion.

During both the Clan War and the War of Spirits, Kosaten Shiro served as one of the southern centers of Crane military machine. Not only that, but in the period between those two great conflicts, the castle was the primary fortress of the Daidoji and their allies during the brief but brutal civil war within the Crane Clan.

TRADITION

The Daidoji are by far the least traditional family of the Crane Clan. They adopt unconventional — some might say unethical — military tactics that constantly change and evolve so that the clan's enemies will never be able to anticipate them. It has long been the opinion of the Daidoji that adherence to ritual purely for the sake of conformity is both impractical and foolish.

One tradition that has survived the family's policy of practicality over ritual is that of the gempukku. When a Daidoji warrior reaches his gempukku, he receives a tattoo of the family's mon on his wrists. Every Daidoji undergoes this ritual, no matter the circumstances. It is a physical, visible symbol of loyalty to the clan and the Daidoji vow to protect it at all costs.

TRAINING

Training at Kosaten Shiro is a mixture of the martial and the academic. The students there are taught to use virtually every type of weapon imaginable, although the katana and the yari are favored above all others. History, tactics, and even geography are given equal weight because of their importance in the Daidoji military style.

The most important training exercises students participate in are small unit tactics against larger and better-equipped foes. The students are expected to use every resource at their disposal to harass, delay and defeat the enemy. These exercises rarely end in victory for the students, but on those occasions when they do the students in question often go on to great things.

SENSEI

The dojo at Kosaten Shiro typically undergoes a significant shift in both instructional style and military tactics each time a new master sensei is appointed. This is a necessity, because the tactics of the Daidoji forces must always change and evolve. Even the most devious and unforeseen assaults can be overcome if they are repeated.

DAIDOJI ENAI

Master Sensei of Kosaten Shiro

[Fighter 12/Rogue 4; Daidoji Yojimbo 5]

Daidoji Enai is one of the youngest men to ever ascend to the position of master sensei of Kosaten Shiro. He was appointed because of his keen intellect and absolute ruthlessness in battle. His previous posts include leading patrols on the Lion-Crane border and serving a stint in the contested Yasuki provinces. Enai's intimate knowledge of the borders the Crane share with their enemies was yet another determining factor in his appointment.

Unlike the somewhat detached attitude many master sensei in Rokugan have toward worldly affairs, Enai is very active in the events of society. In particular he has a burning hatred for the Crab samurai Hida Kuoshi. He does not speak of the dispute to others, nor will he discuss its origins.

Mechanical Notes: Enai's abilities reflect his dual training as a warrior and a specialist in various dirty tricks.

KOSATEN SHIRO BENEFITS

While not particularly sociable, the samurai who graduate from Kosaten Shiro are widely recognized as canny and unpredictable foes on the battleground. Even large and well-equipped foes consider carefully before marching on the Daidoji lands.

Students of Kosaten Shiro are easily recognizable by the twin crossed yari beneath the family mon on their kimono or armor.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

None.

TRAINING BENEFIT

The soldiers of Kosaten Shiro are trained to exploit every advantage in order to take their opponents by surprise.

Benefit: During the first round of every combat encounter, the bushi receives a +5 bonus to initiative.

Benefit: During the first round of combat only, the bushi receives +5 to his initiative roll.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

DAIDOJI GUDETA

[Fighter 8/Rogue 3; Daidoji Yojimbo 3]

The son of a Daidoji father and a Shinjo mother, Gudeta suffered considerable discrimination in his youth because of his gaijin name. To escape, the young man found solace in hunting. By the time he underwent his gempukku, Gudeta was already one of the finest archers the Daidoji had ever seen. He has only improved since then. Some of his kinsmen call him "the Blue Wasp," a nickname which he discourages. Nonetheless, the sensei have their eye on this young man and expect great things from him.





ADVANCED TRAINING

DOJI ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Although the family hosts no bushi school itself, over the centuries the Doji family has produced some of the finest students the Kakita Duelist Academy has ever seen. The leaders of the Crane keep close track of those Doji who enter the clan's bushi schools, looking for suitable candidates to serve in the Doji Elite Guard. This elite cadre of bushi is entrusted with the safety and security of the holdings of the Doji family and the other families of the Crane. It is said that, if the Crane lands were ever to be sacked again as they were during the Clan War, the Crane's enemies would first have to slay every Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Doji Elite Guard, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Clan: Crane.

Base Attack Bonus: +10

Feats: Indefatigable Hero, Kakita Technique, Void Use, Way of the Crane, Weapon Focus (katana).

Special: Must be invited to join the Elite Guard by the Crane Champion. Must have the ancestral daisho class ability.

CLASS SKILLS

The Doji Elite Guard's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Iaijutsu Focus (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (politics) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle and Tea Ceremony skills are described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

TABLE 2-1: THE DOJI ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Doji's Scrutiny 1/day
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	One with the Blade
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Doji's Scrutiny 2/day
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Stroke of Wind
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Doji's Scrutiny 3/day

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Doji Elite Guard prestige class.

Doji's Scrutiny: None of the Kami were as perceptive and insightful as the Lady Doji. Those who guard her legacy learn the techniques she once used. Once per day as a free action, the Guard may make a Spot check (DC 20) when facing an opponent. If successful, the Guard may add an additional +10 to his highest attack roll. The frequency of use of this ability increases to twice per day at 3rd level and three times per day at 5th level.

One with the Blade: A lifetime of training grants the Guard a deft ability with the blade that none can match. The Guard may now apply the Weapon Finesse feat to the katana even though the feat does not normally apply to a weapon of its size.

Stroke of Wind: Nothing is faster than the blade of the Doji Elite Guard in combat. When attacking with a katana or wakizashi, the Guard may add his Dexterity modifier to both his attack and damage rolls.

THE DOJI ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Kakita Bushi 3 or Daidoji Yojimbo 3

Path of Egress: Kakita Bushi 4 or Daidoji Yojimbo 4 (reenter the same school)

Technique: Doji's Scrutiny

With careful analysis of an opponent, the samurai can find and exploit weaknesses in his style and armor. Once per day per Insight Rank, the samurai may make a Perception roll versus a TN equal to the target's School Rank \times 5. If successful, the samurai gains a number of Free Raises on his next strike equal to his School Rank (maximum of five per strike).

HOTURI'S BLADE (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Doji Hoturi was perhaps the greatest hero of the Crane Clan in recent memory. Even among the tremendously gifted samurai of his age, Doji Kuwanan, Daidoji Uji, and the legendary Kakita Toshimoko, Hoturi stood out as the shining example of what it means to be a Crane. Tremendously skilled both in court and with the blade, it was Hoturi who survived the treachery of Bayushi Kachiko to save the Crane from the evil doppelganger known as the False Hoturi. It was Hoturi who united the clan against the Shadowlands. And it was Hoturi who faced the dark god Fu Leng alongside the Thunders.

There is a group of samurai within the Crane Clan who believe that the ultimate service to the clan lies in Hoturi's path: mastery of both word and blade. Toward that end, they have established a small dojo on the outskirts of Kakita Dueling Academy. Although those of Hoturi's Blade are considered

odd by most, the sensei of the Crane schools seem to have endorsed their teachings.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Hoturi's Blade, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Clan: Crane

Base Attack Bonus: +8

Skills: Diplomacy: 4 ranks

Feats: Versatile, Weapon Focus (katana)

Special: Must possess the ancestral daisho ability.

CLASS SKILLS

The Hoturi's Blade's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Iaijutsu Focus (Cha), Sense Motive (Cha), and Tumble (Dex). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The *Battle and Tea Ceremony* skills are described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Hoturi's Blade prestige class.

Hoturi's Poise: The Blades train in the basic diversification of skills that made Hoturi so talented. The Blade receives a competence bonus equal to his class level to all Diplomacy and Iaijutsu Focus checks.

Bonus Feat: At the 1st and 3rd levels, the Blade may select a feat from the following list: Ambidexterity, Expertise, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Way of the Crane, Weapon Focus, and Versatile.

Blade of Whispers: By spending a Void Point, the Blade may add his total Diplomacy bonus to any attack roll using the katana or to any Iaijutsu Focus check. This may be done twice per day beginning at the 2nd level, and increases to a number of times per day equal to class level at the 4th level.

Hoturi's Speed: So great was the speed of Hoturi that even a missed strike was not a failure. A number of times per day equal to his class level, the Blade may immediately re-roll any one missed attack roll. This is considered a free action.

Soul of Hoturi: The Blade has finally mastered the style and speed of the great Doji Hoturi. The bushi gains a permanent +1 inherent bonus to Dexterity and Charisma.

HOTURI'S BLADE (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 3

Prerequisites: Courtier 4, Kenjutsu 4

Path of Entry: Kakita Bushi 2

Path of Egress: Doji Courtier 1

Technique: The Blade of Whisper

The samurai has learned the secret of the Doji: the duel of words in court is no different from the duel of blades in iai-

TABLE 2-2: HOTURI'S BLADE

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+2	Hoturi's Poise, Bonus Feat
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+3	Blade of Whispers
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+3	Bonus Feat
4th	+4	+1	+4	+4	Blade of Whispers, Hoturi's Speed
5th	+5	+1	+4	+4	Soul of Hoturi

jutsu. A number of times per day equal to his Insight Rank, the samurai may keep all dice rolled on any Iaijutsu or Courtier skill roll.

DAIDOJI IRON WARRIORS (NEW PATH)

Although they are renowned for their unconventional battle tactics, it is still the duty of the Daidoji to make up the bulk of the Crane armed forces. When the time comes for direct confrontation, it is always the Daidoji Iron Warriors who comprise the front lines. These heavily armed spearmen face down charging Matsu, inexorable Hida, and a wide variety of other foes without flinching.

Technique Rank: 3

Path of Entry: Daidoji Yojimbo 2

Path of Egress: Daidoji Yojimbo 3 (This path normally exits to the Hida Bushi school at rank 1, but the current war with the Crab makes this impossible.)

Technique: Strength of the Reed

The Iron Warriors are taught to exploit the reach of their weapons to their fullest advantage. When using a pole arm against a foe that has none, they roll two extra dice for all attack rolls. In addition, they suffer no penalties for wearing heavy armor and gain an Initiative bonus equal to their Insight Rank.

KATA OF THE CRANE

The Crane are perhaps the most selective and traditional swordsmen in the Empire. Their dedication to excellence is reflected in the quality of their kata. Learning a Crane kata is an honor shared with only a select few outside of the clan.

WATCHFUL FALCON

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 60 minutes

While technically a kata, this is actually more of a ritual that the Doji courtiers and magistrates both make use of in order to sharpen their senses. It involves a slow series of alternating slashing and sweeping strikes with the wakizashi that focus the Doji's perception of things around him.

Requirements: Base attack bonus of +2 or better, Concentration (2 ranks)

XP Cost: 1,000

Effect: You gain a +4 enhancement bonus to all Spot and Search checks, but suffer -2 to all Diplomacy and Bluff checks.

School Rank: Doji Courtier 2, or Doji Magistrate 2, or Kakita Bushi 3

Cost: 4

Effect: For the duration of the kata, your heightened senses confer a +5 to all Perception rolls. Unfortunately, the intensity of your scrutiny disturbs others, causing you to suffer a -2 penalty to all social interactions.

ONE LEG STANCE

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 40 minutes

Other: This kata may be learned using either the katana or the yari. It must be learned separately for each weapon.

This kata involves a flurry of motion with the arms with virtually no movement of the legs whatsoever. Like a crane, the

warrior tucks one leg beneath his body, then practices a series of rapid strikes all about them. Upon conclusion of the kata, the bushi is prepared to strike multiple times in rapid succession, but at the cost of his mobility.

Requirements: Improved Initiative, Void Use, Weapon Focus (katana or yari), Weapon Proficiency (katana or yari)

XP Cost: 1,200

Effect: You gain an additional strike equal to your highest attack modifier when using the full attack action. You are denied your Dexterity bonus to AC while using this kata, and cannot run or charge. Any opponent using a reach weapon gains an additional +5 to hit you if you are practicing the katana version of this kata.

School Rank: Kakita Bushi 3, or Daidoji Yojimbo 4

Cost: 4

Effect: You gain an additional attack per round. Your TN to Be Hit is reduced to your Reflexes $\times 2$ (plus armor), or just your armor bonus if targeted by a ranged attack of any kind. Opponents wielding pole arms are more difficult to strike with a katana while conducting this kata, adding an additional +5 to their TN to Be Hit.

ONE-STRIKE BLADE

Preparation Time: 40 minutes

Duration: 90 minutes

By focusing, the Kakita bushi emulate the speed of their founder. This kata consists of a lengthy series of blade strikes while focusing on a single object. Gradually, the number of strikes decreases while the bushi's speed increases. At the end of the kata, the bushi is making single attacks of incredible speed and accuracy.

Requirements: Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack, Weapon Focus (katana)

XP Cost: 1,200

Effect: During your turn each round, you may choose to sacrifice an attack to add +5 to your initiative for the following round. Multiple attacks may be sacrificed in this manner, beginning with the lowest attack modifier and moving upward.

School Rank: Kakita Bushi 4, or Daidoji Yojimbo 5

Cost: 8

Effect: For the duration of the kata, you may sacrifice an attack per round to add +15 to your Initiative.

NEW FEATS

STRENGTH OF THE REED

ANCESTOR: DAIDOJI MASASHIGI

You are descended from the great hero Daidoji Masashigi, who brought the Crab and Crane together with his incredible fortitude and bravery.

Clan: Crane

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +6 or higher, Con 14+.

Effect: You grow stronger as death approaches. When reduced to 15 hit points or less, you receive a +1 enhancement bonus to all attack rolls. This bonus increases to +2 when you are reduced to 8 hit points or less.

CHAPTER THREE:

DOJO OF THE
DRAGON CLAN

Rosanjin smacked his boken against the stone floor, and a sharp ringing sound echoed throughout the great chamber of the dojo. "Ichi!" the Grandmaster called out, and the hundreds of students before him performed the first step of the most basic kumitachi in the Niten style.

"Ni!" Rosanjin called again, the sound of his boken keeping time filling the room again. The sensei surveyed his class as he counted out time with his voice and wooden sword, guiding his students one step at a time. Only two hundred and thirteen. "Small class," he grunted to himself.

A handful of students, scattered throughout the class, nearly tripped as they moved at the sound of their master's voice, only to try and stop themselves when they realized their error. The Grandmaster couldn't help a grim smile at the sight. He also sourly noted several of the other students laughing quietly at the mistakes of their classmates.

"San!" the sensei barked out suddenly, and the class returned to order as the students continued their form. "Shi!" he called quickly, stalking toward one of the others who had thought his fellow students were a source of amusement. "GO!" He stepped nearer, almost a sword's length between them. "ROKU!" he yelled, his face now mere inches from the student, who was trying his best to pretend his Grandmaster was not screaming out orders directly in his ear. "SICHI! HACHI! KU!" Rosanjin commanded in quick succession, and the strain proved to be too much for the student, who slipped and fell.

The Grandmaster of the Iron Mountain Dojo glared down at the student, and the rest of the class stared directly ahead, waiting on their sensei's command. After a moment of absolute silence, Rosanjin raised an eyebrow at the young bushi. "You fell," he said flatly.

"H... hai, Grandmaster," the youth stammered, not knowing if he should attempt to pull himself to his feet, or if the sensei would find such scuttling offensive.

"Why?" Rosanjin asked, genuine curiosity in his voice.

The student found the courage to meekly reply, "I ... wasn't expecting you to do that, sensei."

"Good," the Grandmaster said, and grumbled, "Now get back on your feet and into low stance." As he turned and walked back to the front of the class, Rosanjin was sure that was a student that wouldn't be surprised again for a while.

IRON MOUNTAIN
DOJO

Classes: Samurai, Fighter, Ranger, Shugenja, Niten Master (Prestige), Mirumoto Elite Guard (Prestige)

Schools: Mirumoto Bushi, Mirumoto Elite Guard (New Path)

HISTORY

Mirumoto envisioned the castle he would build for his family as grand but practical. The samurai of the Dragon would have their family roots deep within the mountains; impossible to break, but not completely unwelcoming. Mirumoto never lived to see his plan unfold, for the man was called by Shinsei to face Fu Leng at the dawn of the Empire. It was probably for the best. Mirumoto's castle had to be abandoned as it became clear that his vision was too

grand for the location. The Dragon had just come to their cold and rocky home, and did not realize the error in placement Mirumoto made until it was a quarter finished. Construction on the site halted, and what would become the ancestral estate of the Mirumoto family was built further to the south.

A generation later, construction began again on the castle, but with a different design. Mirumoto's son, Hojatsu, decreed the cleared area and foundation should not go to waste. Workers toiled for a season simply recovering the area from years of negligence. Working peasants were joined by their Dragon masters, working alongside the common man to learn humility. More often than not, the Togashi monks would assist voluntarily, while brash and overconfident Mirumoto bushi were sent as a lesson by their sensei.

Like his father, Hojatsu never lived to see the completion of the building. Mirumoto's son lived his final years in the nearly finished dojo, detailing his father's style of swordplay in what would become *Niten*. The original copy of this work still rests in the center of the dojo, protected by the borders of the Dragon, stone walls, and thousands of samurai who would die before allowing an intruder to touch the work.

When the dojo itself was finished, the body of Hojatsu was buried at the head of the main open classroom, under a shrine to Mirumoto, Shinsei, and Togashi. On either side of this ancient shrine are vertical scrolls that simply read "Neither will I." Since the first large procession of students to come from Shiro Mirumoto to the Dojo were the ones bearing the body of Hojatsu, the path between the two structures came to be known as "The Son's Last Walk."

TRADITION

A Mirumoto's gempukku is symbolic of his training. The youth kneels in his dojo and meditates upon the only three words Shinsei ever spoke to Togashi, "Neither will I." At this time, the student has until dawn to craft a haiku in response to these words and their meaning. The most perfect response was written by Mirumoto himself, stating —

*Starving until I
Understand but I'm starving
My master with me*

Mirumoto's response illuminated the wisdom of Shinsei's words. While Togashi was starving himself, he was also harming those he had sworn to protect. When Shinsei sat at Togashi's side and said "Neither will I," he showed the Dragon Kami the consequences of his choice.

The bushi will spend his life studying the art of the two-sword technique, but for this ceremony he is bereft of weapons. He will learn how to work seamlessly with an army of his brothers and sisters, though in this test he is alone. Quiet contemplation of Shinsei's wisdom and the words of those long past await the young bushi, except now he must seek answers only from within.

Few Mirumoto fail this matter, for it requires only an honest and thoughtful answer. Though one response could be considered "more correct" than another, hardly any are ever seen as inappropriate.

TRAINING

Training at Iron Mountain is intense but surprisingly unfocused. Dragon bushi are expected to outmaneuver the Lion, anticipate and counter the brutal tactics of the Unicorn and Crab, and compose themselves as well as any Crane while being able to discuss the nature of the kami and Fortunes at length. While few Dragon actually attain this state of complete being, the very fact that Mirumoto excel at such a wide range of subjects is impressive indeed.

After gempukku, the progress of the student is determined by the student more than the sensei. Bushi are encouraged to practice daily, though their post-gempukku assignments rarely allow them to return to the great Iron Mountain dojo for regular training. The doors are nevertheless always open, and a student usually retreats to this great school to attain a new plateau of understanding in the two-sword style.

A large training ground is maintained outside the walls of the dojo, where the Dragon army practices maneuvers during the winter months. A Mirumoto samurai's training focuses less on the aspects of large-scale warfare than many other Clans, though they are hardly inept in such areas. Unlike their brothers in the Swordmaster school, however, this comprises most of the formal training and drilling a samurai of the Iron Dojo will receive past gempukku.

They peruse the mysteries of *Niten* in the time between drills and tours of duty.

When Mirumoto began the training of this style in earnest, he also impressed the importance of the shugenja's art upon his students. Mirumoto and Agasha were good friends, though quite unlike in temperament. Students of the Iron Mountain Dojo have always spent every second winter in meditation and training alongside the shugenja of the Dragon Clan. This close relationship between the bushi and shugenja is said to help lend enlightenment to the warriors of

the Mirumoto family, an idea that the bushi take seriously. This also leads to a fearsome coupling in battle, as a pairing of bushi and shugenja familiar with each other's ways is far more effective than most clans' simple placement of a handful of bushi with a few shugenja.

SENSEI

An honored position as a teacher within the ranks of the Dragon does not simply fall upon those who have proven themselves time and again on the field of battle. The Clan of the Dragon usually does not interfere with the infighting and plots of the Empire, thus few Mirumoto samurai see more than a few skirmishes. As one might expect from a Dragon family, the Mirumoto value enlightenment as well as military prowess. The sensei must immerse his students in the way of warfare, Shintao, and the five elements with equal ease and knowledge.

MIRUMOTO ROSANJIN

Master Sensei, Iron Mountain Dojo

[Samurai 15/Niten Master 5; Mirumoto Bushi 5]

The Grandmaster of the Iron Mountain Dojo is rather nondescript for a Dragon. Rosanjin's head is shaved bald, his eyes hold the wisdom of Shinsei, and tattoos of crawling dragons



adorn his upper body. Rosanjin is neither tall nor physically imposing. Having held his position as Grandmaster for only seven years, many other sensei in the Empire have commented on how unassuming Rosanjin appears when he meets with them.

Rosanjin doesn't seem to notice, nor does he care. He has a duty to perform, and that's that. He doesn't care to associate with the other sensei of the Empire, who seem too impressed with their duty and position to actually get anything worthwhile done. The Grandmaster treats his position as a common bushi would treat a simple day's guard duty. This is not to say Rosanjin takes his responsibility lightly, but like many Dragons he simply sees a larger picture. To him, there is no difference in the weight of responsibility that falls to him and that of a common bushi. He has studied history well and has learned that the fate of the Empire has rested with one man as many times as it has rested with whole armies.

Along with the typical teachings he passes along to the students, it is this mindset that Rosanjin hopes to impart. To bushi who seem nervous in their training, he often says things like, "Should the blacksmith forge a horseshoe wrong, the Emperor could lose his life on the morning's ride. You do not see the smith tremble and worry over every horseshoe, do you?"

The sensei expects nothing less than a student's full effort and attention, and has a natural talent for discerning when a pupil is not working to his potential. Rosanjin is unusually calm and cheerful for one in his position, though his anger is no less terrible than a scarred Hida veteran's when he feels he must show it. The sensei absolutely will not tolerate weakness in a Mirumoto bushi, no matter the cause. He has become infamous for ordering bushi to remain in the dojo for years, even if they had only returned to visit or train for a handful of days.

Mechanical Notes: Rosanjin's teachings focus on a relaxed style of combat, relying on fluidity of motion over rigid technique. He avoids wearing armor if he can, and uses tactics that outmaneuver the enemy rather than cutting them down quickly. Rosanjin's traits, stats, skills, and feats emphasize mobility and movement, favoring quick, precise attacks. Rosanjin's subordinate sensei and senior students reflect the Grandmaster's combat style, which is perfectly in tune with the teachings of Niten.

IRON MOUNTAIN DOJO BENEFITS

The first dojo of the Dragon, and the premier school of the famous niten style, the dojo at Iron Mountain is known throughout Rokugan to produce bushi who are adaptable and inventive. Students of the Iron Mountain honor their dojo by wearing the mon of the Mirumoto in steel gray against black on their kimono.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Mirumoto bushi are often regarded as the most spiritually adept and scholarly of the Empire's warriors. As such, they are comfortable dealing with esoteric and supernatural truths that would confound other bushi.

Benefit: When dealing with divine spellcasters or other religious figures, the Mirumoto samurai from Iron Mountain Dojo gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based rolls.

MIRUMOTO'S THREE ALTERNATIVES

The epitome of the Mirumoto bushi's mindset is expressed in two of the guiding principles of Niten. Mirumoto wrote, "I do not believe I can win, I know I will." This quiet confidence is also illustrated by Mirumoto's three alternatives of how a Niten student fights. "If he attacks first, kill him. If you attack first, kill him. If you attack at once, kill him."

After besting the samurai Ujimonaka in a duel, Mirumoto told his son, "He was the better swordsman. His skill and technique were better than mine." Hojatsu asked his father why he had won, and Mirumoto replied simply, "Because I knew I would win, and he did not." Mirumoto samurai are expected to carry this complete confidence with them at all times and in all things they do, but should not boast of their ability.

Benefit: A Mirumoto samurai trained at Iron Mountain Dojo will be treated as if his Glory Rank was one to two ranks higher than it actually is when dealing with monk or shugenja groups. Obviously impious behavior will negate this benefit completely.

TRAINING BENEFIT

A Mirumoto bushi who cannot learn to think on his feet and deal with a handful of new situations at once does not last long. As such, the Mirumoto's training is much more diverse than the average samurai's.

Benefit: The Mirumoto bushi gains a +5 competency bonus to any Spot or Listen checks made during combat or when the bushi is aware of an ambush on the round before it happens.

Benefit: A Mirumoto bushi trained at the Iron Mountain Dojo gains a bonus of twice his School Rank to all Perception rolls made during combat.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

MIRUMOTO TAIU

[9; Hida Bushi 1/Mirumoto Bushi 2]

Mirumoto Taiu loves combat a little more than many Dragon feel comfortable with. Many said his mother's Crab blood ran thick in his veins as he showed berserker tendencies during his training. His family eventually decided that he would probably be more comfortable in his mother's former house. The young Taiu seemed pleased with his new surroundings, and took to the training he began to receive there.

It was only a short time before Taiu was longing again for the cold peaks of his home, however, and by the next year he was once again training with his Mirumoto brothers and sisters. The time away from the Dragon mountains convinced him they were truly his home, and he has turned his "berserker" feelings toward guerrilla tactics. The war with the Lion and Phoenix has provided an outlet for Taiu's talents, and so far the young samurai has acquitted himself well.

MIRUMOTO SAIBANKEN

[Samurai 6/Mirumoto Elite Guard 3; Mirumoto Bushi 3/Mirumoto Elite Guard 1]

There were many things that Mirumoto Saibanken wanted to do in his life, and slaughtering countless Phoenix bushi and shugenja was not among them. Saibanken trained alongside his family when he was young, hoping to become the yojimbo for a Kitsuki magistrate or a Tamori shugenja. He had hoped his duty and destiny would take him far from Dragon lands to see the width of the Empire. So far, all he has seen is the front lines of the war.

Saibanken nevertheless knows his place and has carried himself as a true samurai. He has discarded his notions of far travel and focused intently where the Clan needs him — in battle. Saibanken has quickly progressed in ability and repute during the war, and several Phoenix commanders have already attempted to single him out for death in skirmishes. So far, all it has taken for Saibanken to survive is to remember his duty to his clan, and tear his way through to a destiny he never imagined.

VICTORY OF THE LIVING BLADE DOJO

Classes: Samurai, Fighter, Mirumoto Swordmaster (prestige), Niten Master (prestige)

Schools: Mirumoto Swordmaster

HISTORY

The newest dojo of the Dragon rests on the outlying lands of the Clan, just inside the official border between the Dragon and Dragonfly provinces. The building reached completion during the war against Hantei XVI — Togashi Hoshi himself demanded that work progress even as Mirumoto troops battled the spirit armies. News of the Empire's victory came only days before the final rituals were completed to bless the school, which led to the dojo's name — Victory of the Living Blade.

The name itself makes an obvious reference to the war with the spirits, but it also reflects the philosophy of Mirumoto and his descendants on swordplay. Mirumoto taught a loose style of swordsmanship, concerned more with the actual combat a samurai would engage in than endless form that would be confounded by the ebb and flow of true swordplay. Because of this, many who have studied the Swordmaster school since its inception within the walls of Iron Mountain Dojo have called the style of kenjutsu "The Art of the Living Blade." They believe that a samurai too concerned with performing what has come before for hundreds of years is buried in the past. Tradition is deeply important to these Mirumoto samurai, but they also realize that the duty of the living is to learn and build upon what their ancestors have wrought, not simply mimic it.

TRADITION

Because dynamic learning and thinking holds such high regard in this school, its doors are open to all who wish to come and exchange knowledge. The Mirumoto at Living Blade never expect another clan's bushi to reveal secrets of a different style, but simply to exchange ideas on how swordplay should be executed and practiced. As they are Mirumoto, spirituality plays heavily into their philosophies on the blade, often invoking the notions of how a certain Fortune or even Shinsei himself would approach the subject. Due to the very nature of such a school, however, the exact ideas taught there can vary wildly from one bushi to the next.

When a student of the Living Blade dojo feels he is prepared for his coming of age, he is expected to perform a simple task — invent a new kata and defeat every first-year member of his practice group (usually twenty to twenty-five students study under a senior student). In this way, the students learn humility when they are young, and then demonstrate superiority over their past as they age. Every bushi who passes gempukku was once one of the defeated younger students, just as those junior bushi will sometime soon stand victorious. The cycle is indicative of both the simple turning of life's Kharmic wheel, and early and harsh training in the ways of the Celestial Order. Each student has his place, which is demonstrated through combat and competition.

TRAINING

Those who have spent a year or more at the dojo are treated as sensei in their own regard by students who have less tenure. Classes are held much less frequently than at other schools, as the teachings at Living Blade focus more on finding one's own path. There is a great library located within the walls of Victory of the Living Blade, which is almost always filled with students attempting to seek out esoteric wisdom and apply it to their own way of life. Naturally, many of the scrolls at the dojo are concerned with warfare and swordplay in some form. Near the fore of the library is a rack of scrolls known as the Visitor's Blades. When a student of another school comes to visit the great library, the guardian of the library asks only that he sets aside time at the end of his visit to write down what he has learned; the visitor's words are added to this wall of scrolls. More often than not, the guest writes nothing very insightful or inspirational compared to the great works contained on nearby shelves. However, due to the sheer number of bushi who visit the library, the Visitor's Blades scrolls contain many clever and cunning modern insights into the nature of warfare and the role of the blade in a samurai's life.

Like the samurai of the Kakita, students of the Living Blade place their love of the sword just a notch below their lord when it comes to their duties in life. A married Swordmaster is often said to have "the woman who maintains his home, his mistress, but the true bride in his obi." Bushi from the Living Blade find joy in the contest of steel, though they tend to take a less fatalistic view of the blade than a Lion or Kakita would. To them, the sword is life, not three feet of death. There is almost no training for mass warfare at the Victory of the Living Blade (samurai interested in such studies often spend a winter or two at the Iron Mountain Dojo). Mirumoto trained as Swordmasters are fearsome duelists instead, their personal study of *Niten* a match for those who practice the ways of Kakita's *The Sword*, and the two schools share a rivalry that varies from friendly to cold, depending on the year and the Grandmaster of either dojo.

SENSEI

As a fairly new school, the Victory of the Living Blade Dojo has only had three bushi hold the position of Grandmaster. The very first organized training school of Swordmasters was held at the Iron Mountain dojo under the eye of a Kitsuki who had studied *Niten* and the art of the duel. Kitsuki Meda's application of the two-sword style was hailed as genius by the Mirumoto family, and Meda's classes soon grew just before the start of the Clan War. When the Empire's troubles through the Clan War and the War Against the Shadow finally ended, Meda had perished, though his teachings and philosophy carried on through his students and well-kept scrolls (a tribute to his Kitsuki blood).

The talented Mirumoto Uso held the position after Togashi Hoshi took the place of Dragon Champion and restored order to the ranks of the Clan. Uso petitioned his lord to construct the dojo that would be home to the Living Blade, and eventually Uso took the position of family daimyo, leaving the new dojo in the hands of Mirumoto Akohime. No true precedent has been set for who is picked as Grandmaster, and Akohime has been silent on the matter.

MIRUMOTO AKOHIME

Master Sensei, Victory of the Living Blade Dojo

[Samurai 15/Niten Master 5; Mirumoto Bushi 5/Mirumoto Swordmaster 3]

To look upon her, Akohime seems hardly the sort of person to be the sensei of a major samurai dojo. She is short and stooped, her limbs wizened with age. Despite appearances, Akohime has lost little of the fire and strength of her youth. She is still a master of the sword as well as a skilled practitioner of *Kaze-do*. More than one arrogant young student who sought to test her has ended up staring at the dojo ceiling, his sword a dozen feet away. Akohime speaks little of her past, but was a skilled warrior in her time. She fought at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, and a dozen other prominent battles since. Though she has been recognized for her bravery by the Dragon champion, she has never sought glory. The knowledge that her sword served the cause of justice was sufficient. It was this humility, combined with her extraordinary skill, that caused Uso to choose her as the sensei of Victory of the Living Blade.

Mechanical Notes: Akohime's skills and abilities rely upon subtle, defensive maneuvers as well as a deep understanding of unarmed fighting skills. Any student that approaches her from a desire to learn, rather than a desire to simply make a name for himself, will impress her sufficiently to be taught her skills and techniques.



VICTORY OF THE LIVING BLADE BENEFITS

As one of the more progressive and innovative dojo in the Empire, students of the Living Blade are regarded as open-minded, scholarly, and non-conformist. Depending on the situation, this can be a curse as well as a blessing. Students of the Living Blade honor their dojo by wearing a Mirumoto mon with the swords removed. To the master of the blade, the swords are only representations of true power.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Because of the spiritual and scholarly approach to swordplay, Swordmaster students are far more comfortable in more "cultured" settings than their reclusive and silent brethren.

TRAINING BENEFIT

The teaching of the Living Blade Dojo places emphasis on other study alongside the art of the blade, allowing them to apply such knowledge to all aspects of life, especially the way of the sword.

Benefit: If you create a samurai from the Living Blade Dojo, choose one Knowledge skill. For every five ranks you have in this skill, you may apply a +1 synergy bonus to all Iaijutsu Focus checks. You may never have more ranks in the chosen skill than your Iaijutsu Focus.

Benefit: Upon entering the Living Blade school, pick one Lore or History skill your character has. Add your rank in that skill to all Kenjutsu and Iaijutsu rolls. This bonus may not exceed your skill in Kenjutsu.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

MIRUMOTO TSUGE

[Samurai 5/Swordmaster 4; Mirumoto Swordmaster 3]

Like many of the students of Living Blade, Tsuge understands the importance of study alongside the way of the sword. Tsuge was one of the students who spent more time in the library than practicing with the blade, and his approach to combat has reflected this. The young samurai constantly infuriates his opponents by simply drawing out their attacks for long minutes, never moving to actually strike his enemy. Once the opponent has revealed himself to Tsuge's quick mind, the fight can be over in seconds.

The young Mirumoto is fiercely protective of his school, and will go to any end to prove to the other Clans the superiority of the two-sword style. His fervor and dedication have earned him many admirers among the leadership of the Dragon, and one of his impressive victories against a skilled Phoenix samurai was rewarded with a mystic tattoo from the Togashi. Tsuge sees the war with the Phoenix as the perfect chance to show the Empire that the Swordmaster's skills are to be feared, and does what he can to keep himself in the heaviest combat while the war rages on.

KILLING THE TEACHER

There are said to be three steps on the path to Togashi Castle: The first step kills your parents, the second kills your teacher, and the third kills your old self.

Many of the tattooed men and women in Togashi's order left other Clans, following the silent call of the Dragon Mountains. Though some of these were shugenja or courtiers, almost all were bushi, stepping from the dojo of their ancestors to the cold peaks of the Dragon. One might think that with this influx of information, the Dragon would have quite a library on the schools of the other Clans. They do not. Mysterious as the Dragon are, they are not so dishonorable as to ask new ise zumi for their Clan secrets. Even if someone were to ask an initiate, he would remain silent, since one of the steps into the tattooed order is to break with the past completely.

MIRUMOTO HOJATSU

[Samurai 7/Swordmaster 6; Mirumoto Swordmaster 4]

Hojatsu carries with him a name of legend. When he was younger, his gempukku was a completely breathtaking moment, as he challenged his own peers at the school to the ritual, instead of those below him. His victory was stunning, fierce, and fast. When he chose the name Hojatsu after the ceremony, few were willing to debate the matter. Hojatsu seems to carry with him the very soul of Mirumoto's own son, and has yet to lose a duel or skirmish. Hojatsu does not speak often, preferring to defer to the wisdom of elders in social situations.

In the thick of combat, however, Hojatsu is not a quiet, reserved bushi. He unleashes a fury that could make an ogre stare in amazement as enemies fall before him before they are even aware Hojatsu was upon them. He moves as a *taifun* in war, and those who come too close to his paired blades are broken like reeds. No single Mirumoto in the war against the Phoenix is as feared as Hojatsu, and even the Lion hesitate before engaging the Dragon if they believe that he is nearby. Hojatsu's troops have suffered few casualties during the war, as his leadership is an inspiration to all who follow him. After all, what need they fear when the reincarnation of Mirumoto's son leads them?

ADVANCED TRAINING

MIRUMOTO ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Membership in the Mirumoto Elite Guard is an honorary position granted to bushi who excel at both the martial and spiritual training of Mirumoto's two-sword technique. More often than not, these samurai guard the important holdings and persons of the Dragon Clan. Other times, they travel as normal bushi, claiming no honor or glory from the title outside of their homelands.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Mirumoto Elite Guard, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Dragon.

Honor/Alignment: Any lawful, honorable.

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Knowledge (spellcraft) or Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks, Iaijutsu Focus 6 ranks.

Feats: Way of the Dragon.

CLASS SKILLS

The Mirumoto Elite Guard's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Craft (Int), Concentration (Con), Iaijutsu Focus (Cha), Knowledge (arcana, elements, Fortunes, religion, Shintao), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Mirumoto Elite Guard prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Mirumoto Elite Guard are proficient with all simple and martial weapons. They do not gain any proficiency with armor or shields, though most have such proficiency from the samurai class.

Elemental Attunement (Ex): A first-level Guard's training gains him a connection with the spirit world. Whenever the Mirumoto Elite Guard makes a saving throw that would allow him to reduce the effect of a spell, the spell's effects are completely negated instead if the saving throw is successful. This is an extraordinary ability, and applies only when making a saving throw against a divine spell or a spell with an elemental (Air, Earth, Fire, Water) or Void descriptor.

Dragon's Talons: Once the Mirumoto Elite Guard reaches 2nd level, his understanding of the ways of the kami deepens to the extent that he can dispel them with a forceful chi strike. When he makes a strike against a creature casting a spell, the Mirumoto may spend a Void point to cause the spellcaster's Concentration check to automatically fail.

Dragon's Eyes: Starting at 3rd level, the Mirumoto Elite Guard gains the ability to cast *true seeing* on himself once per day as a spell-like ability. The spell is treated as if it had been cast by a sorcerer of the character's class level.

Dragon's Teeth: Once the Mirumoto reaches 4th level, he gains the ability to completely disrupt creatures' chi, preventing them from focusing their energies. Once per day, when the Mirumoto strikes a creature, he may spend two Void points to cause the victim to be completely unable to cast spells, or use innate abilities, spell-like abilities, or Kiho feats. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Mirumoto's Charisma modifier.

Diamond Soul: At 5th level, the Elite Guard gains spell resistance equal to 15 + his Charisma modifier. In order to affect him with a spell, a spellcaster must roll the Mirumoto Elite Guard's spell resistance or higher on a 1d20 + the spellcaster's level.

MIRUMOTO ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 3

Path of Entry: Mirumoto Bushi 2

Path of Egress: Mirumoto Bushi 3

Technique: The Dragon's Claw

Many Mirumoto train beside the shugenja of the clan, learning to work in concert with their brethren. This technique capitalizes on the bushi's growing understanding of the kami and the ways of magic. A member of the Elite Guard understands how to disrupt a person's chi in such a way that focusing the energies from within or those of the kami is impossible for a short time. This time can prove disastrous for a shugenja or monk as they find their connection to supernatural forces cut off in the thick of combat. If a Mirumoto Elite Guard strikes a shugenja or monk, he may choose to spend a Void point and make a contested roll of his Void Ring against a Ring of the target's choosing. If the bushi wins the roll, the target may not use spells or kiho for the remainder of this round or the next. The Mirumoto may not attempt this technique on two consecutive rounds, and this has no effect if used against a target currently under its effects.

KATA OF THE DRAGON

Though the Dragon can be distant and enigmatic, the Mirumoto family's expertise in the art of the samurai is one mystery that cannot be questioned. The Dragon gladly teach their kata to any who embrace their ways, though not all can easily understand.



MY BROTHER'S SOUL

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Special: This kata must be used with the daisho.

Dragon samurai, who train closely with the shugenja of their clan, are capable of talking to an erudite Agasha master about the ways of spellcraft for hours on end. This training teaches the Mirumoto something else as well — how to defeat their brothers. This kata focuses on striking between the elements, anticipating the shugenja's defensive tactics and abilities. Benefits are gained not just by the moves practiced, but by the focused mindset this kata grants.

Requirements: Way of the Dragon, Heart of the Dragon

XP Cost: 1,500

Effect: Once per round, while this kata is in effect, the Mirumoto bushi may forego the damage he would cause

when he strikes an opponent. Instead, the strike acts as if a sorcerer with a spellcaster level equal to the Mirumoto's class level had cast *dispel magic* on the creature struck. This dispel may be used as many times as the character has maximum Void points. During the time this kata is active, the character's initiative scored is halved as he maintains a constant focus on the kata's mindset.

Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 3

Cost: 4

Effect: While focused on My Brother's Soul, the Mirumoto samurai either ignores any one magical defense the shugenja has active (such as Aura of Flame or the Armor of the Emperor) or gains an extra die to roll (not keep) to attack and damage a shugenja. During this time, the bushi also has his initiative score lowered by five as he maintains a constant focus on the kata's mindset.

TIME BETWEEN BREATHS

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Special: This kata may only be performed with a katana.

One of the signature techniques of the Swordmaster school is the Half-Beat Strike, of which this kata forms the foundation. Performing this kata involves a series of staggered movements and feinted strikes, all intended to throw the opponent's rhythm off just enough to give the Swordmaster an advantage.

Requirements: Combat Reflexes, Let Him Go By

XP Cost: 2,000

Effect: This kata allows you to gain a +5 insight bonus to your next attack roll against someone who has made an attack and missed you. This bonus is only granted against opponents who have attempted to attack you in the current round. Because the kata focuses on delayed tactics, your initiative is reduced by 5 for its duration.

Rank: Mirumoto Swordmaster 2

Cost: 2

Effect: The Time Between Breaths kata gives you an extra die to roll (but not keep) when rolling to attack someone who has already made an attack against you that round. You have -4 to your initiative rolls while using the Time Between Breaths.

TABLE 3-1: THE MIRUMOTO ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+2	Elemental Attunement
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+3	Dragon's Talons
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+3	Dragon's Eyes
4th	+4	+4	+4	+4	Dragon's Teeth
5th	+5	+4	+4	+4	Diamond Soul

BREAKING WAVES

Preparation Time: 35 minutes

Duration: 140 minutes

Special: This kata may only be performed with a katana.

Breaking Waves teaches the Swordmaster one of Mirumoto's greatest lessons — any tide can be stemmed, and any force can be used against itself. Emphasizing defensive movements and techniques creates a mindset that is the undoing of those who wish to overpower the samurai with flashy strikes.

Requirements: Expertise, Improved Trip

XP Cost: 1,750

Effect: Whenever an opponent uses Power Attack against you, you may make an attack roll (at your highest base attack bonus, using your katana). This is not an attack, but is simply compared to the amount of the opponent's attack roll. If your total is higher, your opponent gains no bonus to damage from the use of Power Attack. You may not use any feat which lowers your bonus to hit (such as Power Attack or Expertise) while using this feat.

Rank: Mirumoto Swordmaster 4

Cost: 6

Effect: Any time an opponent makes one or more Raises when attacking you, you may make an opposed Agility/Kenjutsu roll against their attack roll. If you succeed, your opponent loses all benefits of Raises. Because Breaking Waves demands a defensive mindset, you may not make Raises on attack rolls. You must have a katana in hand to use this technique.

TATTOOS OF THE ISE ZUMI

HARE TATTOO

The athleticism and agility of the hare is almost without equal among the creatures of the Empire. However, it is also a timid creature, fleeing at the first sign of real danger.

Effect: The tattooed monk's Dexterity modifier is raised by his tattooed monk level. This effect may be used once per day per tattoo he possesses, and lasts two rounds for every level he has in the tattooed monk class. During this time, the tattooed monk has a -5 Tattoo penalty to all saves against fear.

Effect: While this tattoo is activated, the ise zumi adds his School Rank to his Reflexes and Athletics scores for the remainder of the day.

Cost: The hare is skittish as well as speedy. When facing a hostile enemy, the ise zumi must succeed on a Willpower test (TN 20) or flee.

WOLF TATTOO

A symbol of both shame and daring, the wolf is a pack hunter that is feared simply because it almost never fights alone.

Effect: The tattooed monk gains a number of extra Void Points equal to the number of allies in his party at the start of combat. These extra points last only until the end of combat, and may not exceed his level in the tattooed monk class. Tattooed monks without the Void Use feat gain no benefit from this tattoo. At the start of every round that the tattooed monk has no allies within fifty feet of him, he must make a Will save (DC 20), or suffer a -2 Tattoo penalty to all attack rolls. Minimum Level: 5th.

Effect: When in a skirmish alongside allies, the ise zumi gains a number of free Raises equal to the number of allies who fight alongside him, up to a maximum number equal to the ise zumi's School Rank. These free Raises are granted every round, but are lost at the end of each round if not used.

Cost: If the ise zumi ever finds himself fighting alone with the Wolf tattoo active, he rolls one fewer die when attacking.



CHAPTER FOUR:

DOJO OF THE LION CLAN

As he stepped onto the dais overlooking the courtyard, Hirotsu was struck by the absolute silence of the nearly four dozen students assembled there. Rarely was a group so quiet and still. It was a promising sign.

Facing the students impassively, Hirotsu studied them. They were young, of course. They seemed to grow younger every year. But while their rigid posture showed signs of inexperience, he also saw in them discipline. They would need it.

"Each of you has a sensei who believes that you are one of the finest that the Lion Clan has to offer. As such, you have come to Shiro sano Ken Hayai, the venerated school of the Akodo, to learn the secrets of Akodo One-Eye. I am Akodo Hirotsu, your sensei. And no matter how skilled you consider yourself to be, there is one thing I can assure you is true." Hirotsu paused for a moment to glance around the group, fixing several of them with his piercing gaze. "I have seen far better."

The aged sensei allowed his words to sink in before continuing. "You will begin this morning with the Drifting Snowflake kata, followed by the Leaf Upon Water and the Strike as Stone kata. Together, these three kata form a series known as the Gentle Blade of Winter. It is one of the most complex and arduous series to learn, and perhaps one in one thousand can truly master its intricacies. To attempt it and fail is a dishonor to oneself, albeit a slight one. To fail to attempt it, however, is to dishonor one's ancestors. Assume your stance." A single, crisp note rang throughout the courtyard as the students drew their blades in unison. Each held their katana before them, the blade pointing forward and slightly to the left.

"As you perform the kata," Hirotsu continued, "you will recite the first act of the play Honor above Question, by Ikoma Kyoko. Begin."

"It was in the fourth year of the reign of Hantei XXV," said forty voices in perfect unison, their blades flashing in the morning sunlight.

CASTLE OF THE SWIFT SWORD

Classes: Fighter, Samurai, Akodo Forward Sentry (Prestige)

Schools: Akodo (Lion) Bushi, Akodo Forward Sentry, Akodo War College

HISTORY

When the Kami Akodo One-Eye trained his soldiers to fight against Fu Leng, he built a massive dojo so that he could produce a great army to destroy his corrupted brother. Sadly, neither Akodo nor his school survived that terrible war, and each loss was felt deeply by all Lion everywhere. At least two attempts to rebuild the school ended disastrously, although the Ikoma records contain no mention of exactly what took place.

It was Akodo's great-grandson who commanded the relocation of the school. He had the stones that had once comprised his ancestor's school transported halfway across the Lion lands to the site where the primary shrine to Akodo stood: the place where he met the lady Matsu for the first time. There, at long last, the school was rebuilt and expanded. It stands to this day.

During all the wars that the Lion Clan has been embroiled in throughout its history, the Castle of the Swift Sword (Shiro sano Ken Hayai) has served as the military headquarters. Troop movement, supply distribution, the tracking of enemy units, and countless other military functions have historically been conducted from this castle. The battles against the forces of Iuchiban, occasional skirmishes with the Phoenix, the retaking of Kenson Gakka from the Scorpion, and innumerable conflicts with the Crane were all coordinated through this one ancient stronghold.

After the failed coup of the Scorpion Clan, the Akodo family was disbanded by imperial edict. In the wake of this tragedy, many of the military functions normally fulfilled by the Castle of the Swift Sword were assumed by the samurai of Shiro Matsu, leaving the ancient school a phantom of its former self. Throughout the majority of the Clan War, the castle served as little more than a way station for the Matsu armies, although the morose Akodo Deathseekers did use it as their primary base of operations.

The school came to prominence once again following the reformation of the Akodo family after the Battle at Oblivion's Gate. The school was used as the seat of Ginawa's governance until he could affect a transferal of the ancestral Akodo holdings from the Matsu to the new family. Once Shiro Akodo was once again firmly under the control of the Akodo family, the family's primary school relocated back to the Castle of the Swift Sword. The buildings had to be expanded several times over the first few years as the legions of newly created Akodo were trained in unprecedented numbers.

The recent two-front war the Lion are waging against the Dragon and the Tsuno has taxed the resources of even the Empire's greatest army. The Akodo tacticians of Shiro sano Ken Hayai have advised Matsu Nimuro to withdraw troops from the Dragon border to deal with the sudden and unexpected Tsuno assault on the Kitsu provinces. Nimuro has acquiesced, and now the full might of the Akodo is about to be unleashed solely upon the inhuman menace of the Tsuno.



TRADITION

There is no clan in Rokugan that adheres more strongly to tradition than the Lion. As such, it is not surprising that virtually every aspect of the training program at the Castle of the Swift Sword is strictly ordered and scheduled as it has been for centuries. Individual sensei are allowed some leeway in altering their programs somewhat, but anything more than a few cursory alterations to the accepted program is looked upon with disdain by the other sensei.

One of the stranger traditions at the Castle of the Swift Sword is one that drives home the school's emphasis on honing the mind as well as the body. During their final year of study, students train under the master sensei. For each class, the sensei selects one of his or her favorite playwrights and has the students recite a single act of one of their plays during each practice session. In most cases, the class will finish the entire body of work of the playwright in question by the time of their graduation. Failure to correctly recite the plays is considered a disgrace, so students spend many hours in study each night, memorizing the plays of the sensei's favored playwright.

TRAINING

It is extremely rare for a student to begin his training at the Castle of the Swift Sword. Such an honor is reserved for the children of prominent Lion figures and those rare individuals who show incredible martial prowess even before their training begins. These few have heavy expectations placed upon them, and often rise to the occasion, becoming the leaders and generals of the next generation.

The training at the Castle of the Swift Sword places great emphasis upon the katana, the soul of the samurai. The Lion consider it the only weapon that a true warrior requires. Nonetheless, there is training available in every type of weapon imaginable for those students who choose to study them. Archery is also a staple of the school's training, and training in pole arms and in dueling styles are also popular.

To the Akodo, the mind is as important a weapon as the body. Accordingly, the sensei here have developed one of the most intense non-combat curriculums found in any bushi school in the Empire. Battle tactics are a daily element of the students' training. Any graduate of this program has at the very least a command of basic small unit tactics, and often is capable of leading entire divisions into battle with confidence. History and literature are also important parts of training, for the Akodo have found that there are many valuable lessons to be learned from both fiction and the past.

SENSEI

Throughout history, only the very finest samurai have ever been honored with an assignment teaching at the Castle of the Swift Sword. In addition to being exceptionally gifted soldiers, sensei here must also have a command of history, literature, and many of the fine arts. The philosophy of the Akodo family has always been that a true samurai must master both mind and body, and in addition to some of the finest warriors the Lion has ever produced, the sensei of Shiro sano Ken Hayai have also historically been some of its finest and most educated minds as well.

Obviously, the vast majority of students at the Castle of the Swift Sword are bushi. However, as the Kitsu store a great deal of their records at the castle, a significant number of shugenja attend as well, often studying under the historians stationed there. These historians also find time to tutor prospective Ikoma bards and the next generation of historians. Each individual school that has students represented at the castle also has at least one sensei, all of whom are out-ranked by the sensei of the Akodo Bushi school.

AKODO HIROTSU

Master Sensei, Castle of the Swift Sword

[Samurai 15/Matsu Elite Guard 5; Akodo (Lion) Bushi 5/Ikoma Tactician 3]

Akodo Hirotsu underwent his gempukku ceremony mere weeks before the Scorpion Clan Coup. When Toturi was cast out as ronin and the Akodo family disbanded, Hirotsu felt that his only choice was to become a Deathseeker, a soldier seeking to redeem his honor through a glorious death in service to the clan.

Miraculously, Hirotsu survived the Clan War. His incredible self-discipline and constant devotion to the lessons of his school allowed him to emerge victorious from battles where his comrades died by the dozen. Upon the conclusion of the Clan War, Ikoma Tsanuri placed Hirotsu among her personal guard. He served her faithfully until the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, where once again Hirotsu survived while those around him died. When the battle was over and the Akodo had been reformed from the Living Shadow, the new family daimyo Akodo Ginawa personally asked Hirotsu to serve as his *yojimbo*. Hirotsu agreed without hesitation.

Over two decades later, Hirotsu is the master sensei of the very school where he practiced for endless hours in complete solitude. Now its courtyard is filled with students, inexperienced yet dedicated young men and women who long only for the opportunity to prove themselves worthy to be called Lion. It is the same goal that Hirotsu himself has sought for decades.

Akodo Hirotsu seeks only one thing in his students: perfection. He has yet to find it, but he will never give up the search. He is quick to offer suggestions or corrections in his students' performance, but slow to offer praise. He believes that to praise a warrior who has not truly earned it weakens the spirit of both the warrior and his teacher.

Mechanical Notes: Hirotsu's lifetime of experience has emphasized precision and stamina. His abilities are dominated by feats and skills that let him eliminate opponents with rapid, precise strikes that defeat armor or defense. He has been known to take an interest in particularly gifted students who catch his eye, tutoring them privately.

CASTLE OF THE SWIFT SWORD BENEFITS

One of the oldest of the Lion dojo, the Castle of the Swift Sword has a reputation throughout the empire as having produced the finest military minds in history. Students of the school are distinguished by the symbol of an iron *tessen* spread beneath the family *mon* upon their *kimono*.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

The students of the Castle of the Swift Sword are respected even by their enemies. Other samurai often defer to them due to their perceived prowess in all tactical matters.

Benefit: The samurai gains a +5 enhancement bonus to Diplomacy checks with all members of the samurai class.

Benefit: The samurai gains a free Raise in any social situation where he is interacting with other bushi.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Students of the Akodo style train extensively in tactics and strategy, preparing them for service in the greatest military in Rokugan.

Benefit: The character gains a +5 competence bonus to any Battle check or to any Gather Information check made to obtain information about the character's opponents.

Benefit: The samurai may add or subtract his School Rank from any Battle roll, including rolls made on the Battle Table.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

AKODO SETAI

[Samurai 9; Akodo (Lion) Bushi 3]

Younger students at the Castle of the Swift Sword look at Akodo Setai and wonder what dishonor could have driven a man to such depths. Setai is known to have been the personal student of sensei Hirotsu at one point, but committed a dishonorable act of such magnitude that he was given a choice between *seppuku* and becoming a Deathseeker. Setai chose to enter the ranks of the Deathseekers.

Setai is a quiet, intense man. He never speaks unless spoken to, and few in the dojo would choose to speak to one such as him. He makes his way to the front lines of any major Lion conflict, hoping for death to redeem his honor. It never comes.

AKODO IJIASU

[Samurai 10/Siegemaster 4; Akodo War College 4]

Like his daimyo Ginawa and his sensei Hirotsu, Ijiasu is a member of the Akodo line who survived the purge of Hantei XXXIX. Ijiasu's mother left the clan as a ronin to follow Toturi during the Clan War, and continued to serve as a member of his Imperial Guard up until the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, when she rejoined the Akodo.

Ijiasu is looked upon by many Akodo as a sort of young noble, but not because of his lineage. He is a gifted tactician, perhaps the finest of his generation. During the Tsuno assault, he assumed command of his border patrol following his *gunso*'s death and successfully defended the outpost to which he was assigned. Although the Tsuno still reached their objective, Ijiasu's valor was noted and he received a field promotion to *gunso*.

SHIRO MATSU

Classes: Berserker, Fighter, Lion's Pride (Prestige), Matsu Elite Guard (Prestige), Samurai

Schools: Lion's Pride (Advanced), Matsu Bushi, Matsu Elite Guard (New Path), Matsu Beastmaster (Advanced)

HISTORY

Shiro Matsu is the ancestral home of the Matsu family and has always served as one of the primary military staging grounds of the Lion Clan. There are vast troops massed here year round, always drilling for the next conflict, preparing for the next war.

Throughout the history of the clan, Shiro Matsu has served as the center of defense for the southern border of Lion holdings. This has never been more evident than in one of the Empire's most brutal battles, in which the Lion fought the Scorpion Clan several centuries ago. The Scorpion launched a siege of Ikoma Castle from their northernmost fortification, a city known as The Lion's Shadow. The Scorpion failed, and were driven back by a vengeful Matsu army from Shiro Matsu. Enraged by the Scorpion's audacity, the Matsu daimyo ordered The Lion's Shadow to be seized. The Matsu troops took the city, killed every living being within it, and annexed it to the Lion lands. The city was renamed Kenson Gakka, Humility's

Lesson, as a reminder to the Scorpion of what befalls all who arouse the ire of the Matsu.

During the period of the Akodo family's banishment, Shiro Matsu was the seat of the Lion Clan's power. All military activity throughout the Clan War was ultimately coordinated here at Shiro Matsu, a facility long accustomed to the movement of large numbers of troops. This continued through the turbulent period following the Clan War and well into the War of Spirits, although the Akodo had returned by that time.

In present-day Rokugan, Shiro Matsu remains the seat of power of the Lion Clan, as the current champion, Matsu Nimuro, calls it his home. The Akodo have once more assumed their role as the clan's tacticians and generals, and Shiro Matsu now serves primarily as the training ground for the vast armies of the Matsu who follow the commands of the Akodo generals.

TRADITION

There is but one true tradition among the Matsu: excellence. Students are trained ruthlessly in military drills of every type imaginable. Instruction begins with basic stances, then moves to unit-scale maneuvers. Students must master both before advancing in their studies, for a Matsu must be both a competent warrior and an exceptional soldier.

The most exacting and misunderstood tradition at Shiro Matsu is that of the gempukku ceremony. Rumor has it among certain circles that the Matsu order any applicants who fail their gempukku to commit seppuku. While this may have been true in the past, it is not the rule. The Matsu students are given an excruciatingly demanding series of tasks to complete that include multiple feats of martial prowess, fasting, and punishing tests of physical conditioning. Those who pass are branded with the mon of the Matsu family.

TRAINING

The students of the dojo at Shiro Matsu focus exclusively on the martial arts, particularly study of the sword. Virtually every weapon accepted as honorable for a samurai to carry and wield can be found in the expansive training dojo. Students seeking their gempukku are expected to be fully proficient in no less than three different weapon styles and possess a working knowledge of at least two or three additional weapons.

The Matsu downplay academic training. To be sure, all are literate and well-versed in the history of their clan and family, but the finer arts of literature, calligraphy, the composition of poetry and the like are considered distractions that dull the edge of the samurai's soul.

Drills for Matsu students tend to utterly disregard self-preservation, instead focusing on an all-encompassing assault that shatters an opposing line of troops. Beginning students are frequently given boken and sent to attack heavily armored senior students armed with padded tetsubo. This teaches the former how to attack without reservation, and serves as the only defensive training the latter receive.

SENSEI

Because of the wide variety of training styles found at Shiro Matsu, there are a number of different sensei. All report ultimately to a single sensei, chosen personally by the previous sensei upon their retirement. In the event that the previous sensei died in battle, which is not uncommon among the Matsu, the ranking sensei of each school at Shiro Matsu offer a recommendation to the Lion Champion, who ultimately chooses the replacement.

MATSU MIWAKO

Master Sensei, Shiro Matsu Dojo

[Samurai 10/Matsu Elite Guard 5/Lion's Pride 5; Matsu Bushi 5/Lion's Pride 3]

The current master sensei of Shiro Matsu is radically different from her predecessors. In fact, that is the reason she was chosen by her own sensei, Matsu Chikoko. In her older years, Chikoko had decided that the Matsu were far too morose and fixated upon death to truly live for the clan. Thus, when the time came for her to choose her replacement, she chose one of her own favorite students, Matsu Miwako.

Miwako is every bit as fearsome in battle as the sternest and surliest of Matsu warriors. However, she believes that battle rage should be reserved for enemies, not those whom she holds in the highest esteem: her kinsmen. Miwako's teaching style is encouraging and uplifting, something that disorients students accustomed to stern and unforgiving masters. Thus far, her attempts to inject levity has failed, as her students are convinced that her cheerful demeanor is merely an attempt to get them to let their guard down.

Mechanical notes: Miwako's abilities should reflect her typical Matsu training, which emphasizes all-out attacks and anything that augments her ability to inflict damage.

SHIRO MATSU BENEFITS

The students of Shiro Matsu are widely regarded as some of the fiercest warriors in Rokugan, both on the battlefield and in the court. Students of Shiro Matsu can be identified by the symbol of three jagged cuts, like those made by a lion's claws, upon one shoulder.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Students of Shiro Matsu tend to be given a wide berth in social settings, and many find that a simple glare or thinly veiled threat can accomplish much.

Benefit: The Matsu may add half of his Intimidation modifier (rounding down) to any Diplomacy check.

Benefit: When dealing with an individual of lower Glory Rank, the Matsu may use Intimidation in any situation where Courtier would be called for.

TRAINING BENEFIT

The Matsu are bred for battle. It is the lifeblood of the family, and the environment in which they truly come alive.

Benefit: After any combat encounter, the Matsu immediately regains a number of hit points equal to half their total character level (rounding down).

Benefit: The Matsu may subtract his School Rank from any wounds received as a result of a roll on the Battle Table.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

KITSU DEJIKO

[Samurai 10; Matsu Bushi 4]

Much has changed in the past months for the brash young samurai-ko Kitsu Dejiko. Her place at the front of the conflicts with the Dragon and the Tsuno have tempered her bloodlust, and the time spent by the side of Toturi Tsudao has quenched the twin fires of hate and rage within her. As she gradually comes to terms with her own shortcomings, she is becoming a greater servant of both the Lion and the Empire.

MATSU KENJI

[Berserker 4/Rogue 2; Matsu Bushi 2]

Bearing the name of her father, Kenji is rarely what others expect. She is mercurial and mysterious, with motives that few can decipher. Despite her eccentric behavior, however, none can question her devotion to the clan; those few who have in the past have regretted it deeply.

Kenji has recently come to the attention of the clan when she, along with her companion Ikoma Otemi, discovered the map to an island that once served as the headquarters of the great pirate Yasuki Fumoki. Together, they found the island, vanquished the great Tainted beast that haunted it, and claimed the wealth there in the name of the Lion.

SHIRO NO YOJIN

Classes: Fighter, Samurai

Schools: Ikoma Tactician, Ikoma Battle-criers (New Path), Matsu Bushi

HISTORY

Shiro no Yojin was once a Crane holding. Nearly a century ago, it was seized from the Crane by a Matsu army marching to avenge a slight made by a Crane diplomat. The Lion have held the castle ever since, and it has proved advantageous during the clan's intermittent fighting with the Crane, as it lies very close to the border of the Kakita lands.

Although the Akodo are very much the generals of the Lion armies, this particular fortress is firmly under the control of the Matsu and Ikoma families, who see it as a point of pride that they coordinate any fighting in this region on their own. There are always a large number of Matsu troops stationed here as well as a significant number of Ikoma tacticians. Shiro no Yojin is a coveted Matsu assignment because of the castle's constant state of battle readiness.

TRADITION

The dojo at Shiro no Yojin has existed for only a few decades, and thus the sensei there have yet to establish many traditions of their own. One of their more interesting practices is a full attack drill in the middle of the first night that a new class of students arrives, elaborate affairs that involve everyone in the castle. The commanders believe that this keeps the soldiers prepared for an actual attack while determining the level of training the students are ready to receive.

A very questionable and little-known practice at Shiro no Yojin is the dressing of all targets and practice apparatus in the captured armor of Crane samurai. The ringing of arrows and boken against the battered remnants of powder-blue armor can be heard across the courtyard daily. Guests at Shiro no



Yojin are not allowed in the parts of the castle where this takes place, as the Matsu are aware that the Crane would consider it a great dishonor and react accordingly. Not that the Lion fear an attack by the Crane, but they wish to avoid giving the Crane any material to use against them in court.

TRAINING

Samurai posted to Shiro no Yojin are trained exactly as if they were soldiers in a time of war. They keep a double watch around the clock and patrols constantly survey the entire region. Students at Shiro no Yojin stand watches and observe full-dress formations with the soldiers stationed there. It is an exhausting and punishing regimen, but one that the students respond well to: Shiro no Yojin has produced some of the finest bushi the Matsu family has seen in some time.

SENSEI

The dojo at Shiro no Yojin was established after the War of Spirits, and Ikoma Akiuji has been the chief sensei during its entire period of operation. He is aging, however, and there have been rumors that he is looking for a replacement.

IKOMA AKIUIJI

Sensei of Shiro no Yojin

[Samurai 13/Siegemaster 5; Ikoma Tactician 5]

Akiuji is the veteran of a hundred tiny skirmishes that no one remembers. There is no clan in Rokugan whom he has not faced in battle. The commander of the Matsu troops at Shiro no Yojin values Akiuji's counsel above all others, and aspiring tacticians throughout the Lion Clan long for the chance to learn from this most revered sensei of the Ikoma family.

Mechanical Notes: Akiuji has many combat-related abilities, most involve observation and analysis of his opponent.

SHIRO NO YOJIN BENEFITS

Notorious for their aggressive and unforgiving natures, the students of Shiro no Yojin are equally renowned for their unbridled ferocity in battle. They are noticeable because of the red edge on the sleeve of their otherwise traditional Lion kimono. The red signifies the blood of the enemies the samurai will slay in the name of his clan.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

None.

TRAINING BENEFIT

The ferocity of the soldiers at Shiro no Yojin is unparalleled. They often rush screaming across the battlefield to shatter the front lines of the enemy.

Benefit: The samurai gains a +5 to his damage rolls during the first round of combat.

Benefit: The samurai gains a +5 to his damage rolls during the first round of combat.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

MATSU HYUN

[Berseker 5/Courtier 3; Ikoma Omoidasu 1/Ikoma Battle-crier 1/Matsu Bushi 1]

Matsu Hyun is the kind of warrior-poet far more common in the tales of times gone by than in modern Rokugan. She is an avid student of the clan's history, but her passion for the battlefield led her to join the Matsu school after completing her basic training with the omoidasu. She stands on the front lines of the Lion's battle with the Tsuno, screaming poems that inspire and drive her fellow samurai to greater heights of heroism.

ADVANCED TRAINING

AKODO FORWARD SENTRIES (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The ability of the Akodo generals to consistently outmaneuver their opponents depends upon the intelligence they gather regarding the enemy's movements. In any situation where the Akodo suspect troops may have to be deployed, members of the elite Forward Sentries are immediately dispatched to investigate the situation. During Akodo Toturi's reign as Champion of the Lion, he introduced Unicorn tactics to the sentries, transforming them into an elite cavalry unit.

Since the reformation of the Akodo, the forward sentries have become even more effective. Very rarely, an individual is found among the family whose proficiency for stealth and covert maneuvers seems to rival that of the Shadow itself. These individuals are recruited to join the sentries. Upon conclusion of their training, they are often sent on to study with the Ikoma tacticians in order to better make use of the intelligence they gather.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Akodo Forward Sentry, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Lion

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Skills: Battle: 4 ranks, Move Silently: 6 ranks, Ride: 6 ranks

CLASS SKILLS

The Akodo forward sentry's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Wis), Sense Motive (Cha), and Spot (Wis). (See the *Player's Handbook™* for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan™*.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Akodo forward sentry prestige class.

Assessment: By observing unwary opponents, the sentry may find ways to overcome their defenses. For every round spent observing an opponent in combat, the sentry gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his next attack roll versus that opponent. This bonus cannot exceed a total of +6. The sentry may not gain this bonus from rounds during which he engages in combat.

Sneak Attack: When the sentry is in a position to strike an opponent who does not realize the sentry is there, he can strike a vital spot for extra damage. At any time the sentry's opponent would be denied his Dexterity bonus to AC or when the sentry successfully flanks an opponent, the attack deals extra damage of +1d8 at 1st level and an additional 1d8 every two levels thereafter. This additional damage is not multiplied in the event of a critical hit. This sneak attack bonus is not cumulative with other sneak attacks.

Bonus Feat: At the 2nd and 4th levels, the sentry gains a bonus feat. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Akodo's Technique, Mounted Combat, Skill Focus (Move Silently), Skill Focus (Ride), and Weapon Finesse.

Skill Bonus: Beginning at the 3rd level, the sentry has mastered the basics of his profession. The sentry receives a competence bonus equal to his class level +2 to all Battle, Move Silently, Ride, and Spot checks.

Opportunist: The sentry has learned to exploit even the most minimal of opportunities to its fullest advantage. The sentry gains an additional partial action that may only be used to attack an opponent who would be denied his Dex bonus to AC versus the sentry's strike. This attack does not gain the bonus damage dice of a sneak attack.

AKODO FORWARD SENTRY (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 3

Path of Entry: Akodo (Lion) Bushi 2

Path of Egress: Akodo (Lion) Bushi 3 or Ikoma Tactician 1

Technique: Honor in the Shadows

Akodo sentries are taught to remain unseen, observing and analyzing their foes so that when they strike, they have only to strike once. The samurai loses no Honor for use of the Stealth skill as long as the skill is used in fulfillment of a mission given to the samurai by his lord. Furthermore, for each round the sentry observes a foe without being seen, he gains a free Raise per round to use against that opponent in combat. This benefit lasts only for the first two rounds of combat. The sentry may only gain a maximum of three free Raises in this manner.

TABLE 4-1: THE AKODO FORWARD SENTRIES

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Assessment, Sneak Attack +1d8
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Bonus Feat
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Skill Bonus, Sneak Attack +2d8
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Bonus Feat
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Opportunist, Sneak Attack +3d8

MATSU ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Shiro Matsu has long been the southernmost major military installation of the Lion Clan. Although there are other settlements and structures farther south, Shiro Matsu is by far the largest and most heavily defended fortress between the bulk of the Lion lands and those of the Scorpion. As such, defense of Shiro Matsu is a high priority among the families of the Lion, and only the most vigilant, dedicated, and (some say) vicious samurai are selected to defend it. These men and women have pledged their lives to kill any intruder who dares enter the gates without permission, and every one has vowed to die before the castle falls.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Matsu Elite Guard, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Lion

Base Attack Bonus: +10

Feats: Power Attack

Special: Must be invited by the Matsu family daimyo; must possess the Ancestral Daisho special ability.

CLASS SKILLS

The Matsu Elite Guard's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidation (Cha), Jump (Str), Spot (Wis), and Swim (Str). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Matsu Elite Guard prestige class.

Relentless: Few enemies are prepared for the unrelenting assault of the Matsu. If the Guard has an initiative total higher than an opponent, then for the first round of combat the opponent is considered to be flat-footed against the Matsu.

The Lion's Claws: The Matsu has learned that sometimes a few precise, powerful strikes can have a greater effect than a great many less-intense attacks. Beginning at the 2nd level, the Guard may sacrifice a later attack to add a +5 enhancement bonus to his highest attack. The enhancement bonus increases to +10 at the 3rd level.

The Matsu's Roar: Nothing is as terrifying in combat as the unwavering attack of the Matsu. Beginning at the 2nd level, the Guard may, as a standard action, make an Intimidation check versus DC 20. If successful, a single opponent loses his lowest attack against the Matsu for this round. Beginning at the 4th level, the DC of the Intimidation check increases to 30, but costs an opponent his highest attack rather than his lowest. Targets of this ability may resist with a Will save (DC 25).

Lady Matsu's Fury: The rare samurai who have faced the Matsu in battle and survived can attest that their strikes have an almost supernatural strength. The Guard may double his Strength modifier when adding it to the damage of any melee weapon.

With My Ancestors Beside Me: The Matsu is fast and furious. Add a permanent +1 inherent bonus to Strength and Dexterity.

THE MATSU ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Matsu Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Matsu Bushi 4

Technique: Relentless

Whenever a Matsu Elite Guard strikes a blow that kills an opponent, the guard gains an additional two dice (rolled, not kept) for any subsequent attacks made during that round. These dice may be used for either attack or damage rolls at the character's discretion.

IKOMA BATTLE-CRIERS (NEW PATH)

Young Ikoma bards, usually fresh from their gempukku, are often sent to Shiro no Yojin to learn the histories of the battles there. It is uncommon but not unheard-of for these young men and women to be so taken with the lives of the soldiers stationed there that they join them in battle, standing on the front lines and screaming tales of their ancestors to whip the troops into a battle rage. These individuals are valued for the inspiration they bring to the battlefield, and the Ikoma daimyo has endorsed the practice of allowing them to pursue other paths than that of the bard.

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Ikoma Omoidasu 1

Path of Egress: Matsu Bushi 1 or Ikoma Tactician 1

Technique: The Hand of Our Ancestors

The Ikoma are able to spin tales of the Lion's history that apply to particular situations, rallying the troops and steeling them for the battle to come. The Ikoma must make a History roll versus a TN of 15. If the roll is successful, a number of troops (not counting the bard himself, who also receives the bonus) equal to the bard's Insight Rank x 5 receive a +5 to their Initiative and attack rolls for the first round of the next combat encounter. The troops gain an additional +5 for every increment of 10 by which the bard exceeds the TN of the History roll.

KATA OF THE LION

The Lion are a proud family with a tradition of mastery of the art of combat. Their sensei are brutal and unforgiving, but only because they are expected to live up to the high standards set by tradition. Any student who can meet these high standards might be granted the chance to learn these kata.

TABLE 4-2: THE MATSU ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Relentless, The Lion's Claws
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	The Matsu's Roar
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	The Lion's Claws, Lady Matsu's Fury
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	The Matsu's Roar
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	With My Ancestors Beside Me

GENTLE BLADE OF WINTER

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 40 minutes

Special: This kata works only with the katana.

Actually a series of kata, this powerful maneuver requires considerable time to prepare, but has a deadly effect. With each successful strike, the Akodo can disrupt the flow of chi through his opponent's body, lessening his abilities and leaving him weak and defenseless.

Requirements: Akodo's Technique, The Final Lesson, Power Attack, Void Use, Way of the Lion, Weapon Focus (Katana).

XP Cost: 1,500

Effect: Each of your attacks that causes a loss of hit points inflicts a -1 to all attack rolls made by your opponent. This penalty lasts for a number of minutes equal to twice your overall level. Multiple penalties from this kata stack.

Rank: Akodo (Lion) Bushi 4, or Matsu Bushi 5

Cost: 5

Effect: For every 5 points of damage you deal to a target, the TN for all attack rolls made by that target increases by +1. This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to twice your Insight Rank.

FURY WITHOUT END

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Other: This kata can be applied to any melee weapon or bare-handed attack.

Lion samurai are taught to focus on precision and honor, ignoring pain and difficulty until their goal is achieved. This kata combines a series of fluid, sweeping movements that focuses the samurai's mind and clears his thoughts of all distraction, allowing him to concentrate exclusively on his goal.

Requirements: Toughness, Way of the Lion, Proficiency in the weapon being used

XP Cost: 550

Effect: For the duration of the kata, you do not suffer penalties for being reduced to 0 or fewer hit points and cannot be stunned, staggered, or knocked unconscious. You remain conscious and fully active. If you are reduced to -10 hit points, you die normally. After this kata's effects fade, you are considered fatigued until you receive at least eight hours of rest, and must rest an additional eight hours before you can recover hit points or spells (if you can cast them) naturally.

Rank: Akodo (Lion) Bushi 3, or Matsu Bushi 4, or Ikoma Tactician 4

Cost: 3

Effect: For the duration of the kata, you suffer no penalties from wound ranks, fatigue, or other such distractions. When the kata ends, you require complete rest for at least half a day and are considered to be at the +20 wound rank until rested.

TSUKO'S STORM

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This kata is a flurry of rapid strikes, with the bushi striking, then spinning in a different direction to lash out, only to change direction once more. Upon completion of the kata, the practitioner finds his senses sharpened and his mind attuned to the possibility of attack from any direction.

Requirements: Matsu's Roar, Void Use.

XP Cost: 1,500

Effect: For the duration of the kata, you cannot be denied your Dexterity bonus to AC for any reason, so long as you are not helpless.

Rank: Matsu Bushi 3, or Akodo (Lion) Bushi 4

Cost: 5

Effect: For the duration of the kata, multiple opponents cannot exploit your defenses to strike you at less than your full TN to Be Hit.

THE SOUL'S ROAR

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This is one of the most basic kata the Matsu teach their students. It involves a short series of crisp, sweeping katana strokes and ends with the blade held aloft and a roar of primal fury. They often conduct it in large formations shortly before entering battle, and the blood-chilling roar of thousands of Matsu soldiers has been known to shatter the resolve of the hardest warrior.

Requirements: Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Way of the Lion.

XP Cost: 750

Effect: You may impose a penalty to your AC of up to twice your base attack bonus. You gain an insight bonus to your attack rolls equal to half this penalty, or a bonus to your damage rolls equal to one-fourth of this penalty (round down).

Rank: Matsu Bushi 2, or Akodo (Lion) Bushi 3

Cost: 3

Effect: For the duration of the kata, you may add your Insight Rank to all attack and damage rolls, but subtract 5 from your TN to Be Hit.

NEW FEATS

TRIUMPHANT

ANCESTOR: IKOMA1

You are descended from the first Ikoma, a cunning and observant warrior who would do whatever was necessary to win, regardless of the odds he faced.

Clan: Lion

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus of +4 or higher.

Effect: You gain a +1 enhancement bonus to attack rolls when multiple opponents are attacking you.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DOJO OF THE MANTIS CLAN

Yoritomo Tsuki smiled inwardly as her students continued their training. This was her most advanced class, and their practiced, skillful motions were undoubtedly making quite an impression on the visiting Doji dignitary. That they were practicing at midnight during a raging thunderstorm merely accentuated the point. She walked past her students, correcting one's stance here, encouraging another there. All the while, she was acutely aware that the Doji were watching from under the safety of the dojo's roof. The differences between her students and the Doji envoy was plain, and brought a wry smile to her face.

"Tsuki-san, why do your students train here, in the rain and cold? Wouldn't they be able to train longer in a proper dojo during the day?" called out one of the Doji, over the constant roar of the rain.

Tsuki paused, and turned towards the Crane who asked. With a broad grin, she approached and asked "Doji-san, have you ever been in combat?"

The Crane stood proudly. "Yoritomo-san, I have yojimbo for such things." He motioned to the two bushi flanking him silently. Their stoic countenance gave Tsuki the distinct impression that they considered themselves highly trained.

She looked the Doji over and said, "Perhaps a Crane would find all their combat in a dojo. Well-lit, clean, and dry. You cannot learn to fight in your home and then be expected to fight under adverse conditions. These students are Mantis. They know that combat is not so tidy as you would make it out to be."

The Doji huffed, "So when they complete this training, they will be able to fight under any conditions?"

Tsuki laughed, "No, Doji-san. A storm is a Mantis' home. I am their sensei, not their nursemaid. When they complete this training, only then will they begin training under adverse conditions."

DOJO RAIDEN

Classes: Fighter, Samurai, Storm Legion (prestige), Yoritomo Elite Guard (prestige)

Schools: Yoritomo Bushi

HISTORY

Dojo Raiden, located approximately 45 miles north of Toshi no Inazuma (M2 on the *Rokugan*™ map, A30 on the *Legend of the Five Rings Game Master's Guide*™ map) on the western cliffs, is the oldest Mantis dojo still in existence. It was founded in 644 IC by a retired Mantis bushi named Iroshu, who spent a lifetime on a merchant kobune before retiring. During a visit to his old dojo, Iroshu was struck by the lax discipline of the students. He had spent his entire life working to defend the Mantis' interests, and here he saw incompetent students being trained by lax sensei. A furious Iroshu challenged the grandmaster of the dojo the next morning, accusing the young sensei of intentionally sabotaging the clan with inadequate training. Iroshu soundly defeated the man, and carried his body to a cliff far to the north. The students followed their new sensei to the site where they would build Dojo Raiden.

Naming the cliff the Cliff of Weakness, Iroshu threw the sensei's body off the cliff, loudly declaring that anyone who failed the training would suffer the same fate. The students quickly decided not to fail.

Over the years, Dojo Raiden, which was once dedicated to martial arts instruction, has become as much a training arena for the mercantile arts as it is for traditional bushi skills.

TRADITION

Five hundred years after the founding of Dojo Raiden, Iroshu's threat has yet to be enforced; no failing students have yet been thrown from the cliff. However, very few students would willingly test that theory. Because of the incredibly broad curriculum, few students actually fail utterly. Most find something to suit their natures, even students who do well in just one of the major fields of training.

To feed the dojo, several rice farms and fisheries have sprung up; gatherers of the local fruit delicacies — pineapple and mango — are quite common. Altogether they make the dojo an exporter, rather than an importer, of foods. The school also employs several smiths solely to maintain the weapon stock. Both farmers and smiths are assisted by students as part of their training, as the sensei believe in "practical training."

Because of this infrastructure, most visiting dignitaries to the Mantis Clan are given a tour of the dojo. Visitors seeing samurai-caste students working the fields and being taught by heimin tend to be shocked, and that's just how the Mantis like it. Students typically stay at Dojo Raiden for at least eight years. Usually, the students arrive at the dojo when they are ten years old, but students as young as five have been accepted.

TRAINING

Training at Dojo Raiden is intense. More than at most dojo in Rokugan, an education at Dojo Raiden is a way of life.

The dojo trains students in successful mercantile practices with 'hands-on' experience. Students learn economics by working directly with the school's finances. Martial training is as intense; students typically spend several hours in the morning and the evening practicing with a wide variety of weapons. True to Mantis form, although Dojo Raiden offers instruction in kenjutsu, it focuses on the 'peasant' weapons used through the ages. Since the absorption of the Wasp Clan into the Mantis, kyujutsu has found a place in the core curriculum.

During the afternoon, students study history, accounting, and geography. The traditional samurai fields of literature, poetry, and the appreciation of other fine arts are all but ignored. By the time a student passes his gempukku, he is knowledgeable in a wide variety of fields — all of them practical rather than "Crane virtues."

The core philosophy of the dojo is that there are many ways to serve, and that all are needed. A bushi who cannot sail a boat or trade goods is of little use in peacetime, and in war a merchant who cannot fight will be robbed and killed.

SENSEI

Dojo Raiden allows nearly anyone to teach its students the non-combat skills for which the Mantis are known. The instruction of the martial arts, however, is reserved for the most glorious bushi of the Yoritomo school that the school can recruit. The exception is the instruction of kyujutsu, which is exclusively taught by Tsuruchi archers. Other skills, however, such as farming, sailing, fishing, and commerce, are often taught by skilled heimin.

YORITOMO TSUKI

Grandmaster Sensei of Dojo Raiden

[Samurai 2/Fighter 8/Storm Legion 4/Wasp Bounty Hunter 2; Yoritomo Bushi 4/Wasp Archer 1]

One of the youngest sensei ever to reach the lofty station of Grandmaster, Tsuki is a mere thirty-two years old. She was raised on stories of the heroism, wits, and sheer battle prowess of such figures as Yoritomo, Gusai, and Tsuruchi, and considers herself fortunate that she met the Little Wasp herself. Pursuing their examples, she found a dedication to her martial studies early in her youth. So driven, she passed her gempukku at age eleven, after only four years at Dojo Raiden.

She studied briefly with the Tsuruchi family, and was one of the first Yoritomo to attend the dojo at Kyuden Ashinagabachi when the Wasp were absorbed into the Mantis. She emerged from that training still a novice in the ways of the bow, but with a deep respect for the archer family.

Soon after, she hired herself out as a mercenary and was seen only intermittently by her clan for nearly twenty years. She does not speak of those two decades. She returned, scarred but not broken, to the Islands of Silk and Spice when she was summoned by her old sensei, the previous Grandmaster. When he died shortly thereafter, and she claimed the title, none challenged her.

Tsuki retains a peculiar sense of humor rare among battle-hardened veterans, and has incorporated it into her highly successful teaching methods.

Mechanical Notes: Tsuki is highly skilled in a variety of armed and unarmed combat techniques, favoring the twin kama.

DOJO RAIDEN BENEFITS

The training that each student receives at Dojo Raiden places a great deal of emphasis on the non-combat portions of a samurai's duty. Many students choose to tattoo the 'mon of the cliff-face' onto their wrists after their gempukku, to honor their school. The mon is not official, and does not appear in any heraldic records, but can be easily recognized by anyone familiar with the dojo.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Students of Dojo Raiden share a sense of brotherhood that extends beyond the dojo walls. As long as the students have no reason to feel otherwise, a student of this dojo can reliably count on his fellows to assist him in times of need. There are no mechanical benefits for this effect.

TRAINING BENEFIT

You have a diverse education, making you adept at the 'peasant' affairs that the Mantis Clan is famous for.

Benefit: Students of Dojo Raiden have a +2 competence bonus on all uses of one Profession or Craft skill of their choice. This skill chosen is always a class skill for them.

Benefit: Students of Dojo Raiden gain a free Raise on all uses of one skill of their choice from the following list: Commerce, Weaponsmith, Sailing.



NOTABLE STUDENTS

YORITOMO KATOA

[Fighter 5; Yoritomo Bushi 2]

Though he was born a samurai, Katoa has always felt more at home with the heimin sailors the Mantis employ. He swears, he gambles, and has little time for the restrictions that his superiors impose on him. He takes a great deal of pleasure in theft, and in other times, he would have left the clan to pursue a life of banditry.

Kitao, on the other hand, has provided him with a ship of his own, and set him loose on the ships of the other clans. He is a terror of the seas, and he makes no apologies for his actions as a privateer.

YORITOMO KAMOTO

[Samurai 14; Yoritomo Bushi 4/Toturi's Army 1]

(*The Toturi's Army Technique is in Time of the Void*, page 57)

Yoritomo Kamoto, at sixty-five years of age, is one of the oldest living students of Dojo Raiden. As a child, Kamoto showed enthusiasm but little promise in either the martial arts or in the ways of the merchant. His sensei had no idea what to do with a child who could barely pass his gempukku, but Kamoto begged for the chance to serve his lord properly. As an act of kindness, he was sent to a small mercenary band, the Gray Wave, working for the Crane.

Soon the Clan War erupted across Rokugan, and the mercenary band was sent into action. One night, the Crab's undead forces ambushed the unit. The captain was killed, and the mercenaries were nearly routed. Kamoto miraculously rallied the small unit and led them to victory. His talent for small-unit tactics awakened, he led the Wave to several more victories.

When Toturi sent out his call to the ronin of the Empire, Kamoto answered it. He and his unit joined Toturi's Army, and served the Black Ronin loyally for years.

He returned to the Isles after the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. He was given a hero's welcome by his new daimyo, Yoritomo Aramasu, and made a daimyo of a small province in the southern reaches of the Isles, where he remains to this day.

He occasionally visits his dojo, striving to master the final technique of the school. While there, he scrupulously avoids any discussions of recent politics. Privately, he does not approve of the way that Kitao seized power, but he refuses to say anything against her. She is his daimyo.

KYUDEN ASHINAGABACHI

Classes: Fighter, Wasp Bounty Hunter (Prestige Class; see *Rokugan*, pages 83–84), Tsuruchi's Legion (Prestige)

Schools: Tsuruchi Archer

HISTORY

Fifty years ago, the Wasp Clan was founded by a young man named Tsuruchi. Though he was born to a Scorpion father and a Lion mother, neither clan accepted him. Each clan attempted to rob Tsuruchi of his birthright; he fought against them and, to the surprise of many, won. With the help of the Emerald Champion, Tsuruchi found himself daimyo of the fledgling Wasp Clan.

During the early days of the Wasp, those wishing to join were tested: prospective Wasp needed to prove themselves superior to one who was already in the clan. This ensured high standards, but few new recruits. As the clan matured, and the second generation of Wasp started to be born, the old ways no longer proved useful. New members of the clan would not already have formal training. It seemed the Wasp would need to change their methods drastically.

Fate intervened. As a Mantis family, the Tsuruchi had access to sensei and tried-and-true instruction methods. Kyuden Ashinagabachi became as much a dojo as a family palace.

TRADITION

The Tsuruchi teach their children the ways of the bow, of the law, and of Tsuruchi's code.

Though the Wasp Clan became the Mantis' Tsuruchi family in 1134, a significant minority of Tsuruchi still consider themselves Wasp before Mantis. Daimyo Tsuruchi Ichiro himself is one such individual, and wears an armband of black and yellow on the left arm to signify this status.

The practice of favoring archery over kyujutsu has evolved over the years. Initially, Tsuruchi simply refused to have anything to do with the trappings of the samurai. However, since the Wasp are now firmly entrenched in the social order of the Empire, such notions have vanished. Ironically, it has remained in place mostly through the weight of tradition.

During the dawn of the Wasp Clan, all members were granted the status of Emerald Magistrate by then-Emerald Champion Doji Satsume. This status was held for many years, but lost when the Wasp were absorbed. This is a point of contention by many of the elder Tsuruchi, and leads to no small amount of friction between the Mantis families. Still, many Tsuruchi do seek to become magistrates, and thus the school still teaches the laws of the Empire in great detail. Few who try fail to achieve the post of Emerald Magistrate.

TRAINING

Although the curriculum at Kyuden Ashinagabachi is broad, classes are informal. Archery, of course, is paramount. A young Tsuruchi is given his first bow as soon as he can draw it. Daily practice from such an early age ensures that the Tsuruchi are more skilled than any other at the art of kyujutsu. Training in other weapons is nearly an afterthought.

Students receive a broad education in the way of things in the Empire. The Tsuruchi espouse a vastly different philosophy from the rest of the Empire, and thus their children raised must be carefully taught the ways of the outsiders. The concept of bushido (especially the tenet of sincerity, which is anathema to the Wasp Code) is carefully examined; until students understand the way the samurai around them act, and know how to act in their presence, Tsuruchi children do not leave the Valley of the Wasp.

SENSEI

The Tsuruchi train their children themselves. Most sensei are members of the family, with other Mantis filling the rest of the ranks. There are few sensei, simply because the curriculum has little to do with formal teaching. Those that exist are treated with the utmost respect at all times, because the Tsuruchi understand their value.

TSURUCHI HAKOBE

Master Sensei of Kyuden Ashinagabachi

[Fighter 6/Wasp Bounty Hunter 10; Tsuruchi Archer 5]

Tsuruchi Hakobe is an old man of 45, who walks with a slight limp from an injury suffered during the War of Spirits. He is the second Master Sensei of the dojo, having accepted the position after his predecessor, Tsuruchi Ikado, was slain by the Steel Chrysanthemum's forces.

He prefers to let his students learn from mistakes, only stepping in when absolutely necessary. He is charismatic, but quiet, and can teach students for hours without saying a word.

He is a fantastically skilled archer, and has served loyally for decades as a magistrate and soldier. However, his true passion lies in the discussion of philosophy. He is learned in the ways of the Wasp Code and its nuances, as well as several other philosophies found in the Empire. He has recently written a treatise, *Judgment*, on his views and interpretations of the Wasp Code. It has yet to be discovered by the great thinkers of the Empire, but it has been acclaimed by the few who have read it. Privately, he hopes it will be for the Tsuruchi what *Leadership* is for the Akodo.

He attempts to integrate his philosophical thoughts into his instruction, and has met with some modest success. None of his students yet have desired to continue their philosophical learnings, but he is well aware that his students have taken his lessons to heart, and that is enough for him.

THE WASP CODE

The Code was written by Tsuruchi, and given to the Wasp just before he left to fight at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. Though it was given to the clan only one year before the Wasp were absorbed into the Mantis, it was simply a codified form of the behavior that they had already been following since the clan was formed.

Honesty: Lies have nearly damned the Wasp before; never again. Those who call themselves 'samurai' will go back on their word and mask the truth with a pretty face, but a Wasp knows the price that is always paid for treachery.

Loyalty: No true Wasp will renege on a contract once taken, nor will he cheat the man who hires him. An oath, once taken, is sacred. Though a Wasp works for money, when a Wasp's loyalty is bought, it is as strong as a bond of fealty.

Mercy: There is no sense in killing those that do not deserve it. Such actions simply bring the wrath of the just upon the Wasp.

Justice: The Emperor's word is the supreme law of the Empire. A Wasp understands this fact, and works within the spirit of the law. Samurai twist the words of the law to injustice.

Brotherhood: Every Wasp is your brother, sister, parent, and child. Such bonds are as strong as duty, for family is the most precious thing one can have. Wasp will not face their brothers in battle.

Judgment: There will be times when the Code prevents the Wasp from doing the right thing. At those times, the Wasp must do what he feels is right, and answer for his actions later. The Wasp who understands judgment acts from his heart. Indecision is the greatest weakness, for from indecision, nothing at all can arise.

Mechanical Notes: Hakobe is quite adept with a bow, and his skills, abilities, and feats are oriented towards ranged combat and philosophy. He is more than willing to teach any student in his dojo any lesson they are capable of learning.

ADVANCED TRAINING

YORITOMO ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The Mantis, like all other Great Clans, has an Elite Guard unit composed of the finest bushi the clan has to offer. This Elite Guard was formed by Yoritomo himself shortly after the Mantis' ascendance to Great Clan status. As such, it does not have the prestige of the venerable Storm Legion. Yoritomo Kitao, a Storm Legionnaire herself, disdains the use of the Elite Guard. She dares not dissolve it; some in the Guard remember Yoritomo calling them together, and would fanatically oppose disbanding even if their Champion decreed it. She has instead assigned them to mercenary work for the Crane in their war against the Crab. Some speculate that the new daimyo does not trust the Elite Guard with any matter of importance, though even those foolhardy enough to spread such rumors are wise enough to not speculate further.

Hit Die: d10.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Yoritomo Elite Guardsman, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Mantis.

Base Attack Bonus: +9

Feats: Soul of the Storm, Power Attack, Void Use, Way of the Mantis.

Special: Must be invited to join the Elite Guard by the daimyo of the Yoritomo family.

CLASS SKILLS

The Mantis Elite Guardsman's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Yoritomo Elite Guardsman prestige class.

Storms Never Fall: At first level, the Guardsman may call upon the power of the storms. Once per day, the character may add his class level to his Strength modifier for one round.

Versatility in Strength: At second level, the Guardsman's Strength modifier is added as a bonus to the following skills: Balance, Intimidate, Tumble, and Use Rope.

Bonus Feat: At third level and again at fifth level, the Yoritomo Elite Guardsman can select a feat from the following feats: Armor Focus, Depth of the Void, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, and any Mantis or All Clans Technique (see *Rokugan*™ page 46).

The Essence of War: At fourth level, the Guardsman learns to attack relentlessly, to the exclusion of defense. When using the full attack action, the character may accept up to a -5 penalty to his AC to gain the same number added as a bonus to all his melee attack rolls that round.

YORITOMO ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Yoritomo Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Yoritomo Bushi 4

Technique: Storms Never Fall

Anything is a weapon, and any weapon is the province of the Yoritomo Elite Guard. The Guardsman gains an additional rank in all bugei skills, and is considered to have one rank of skill when using improvised weaponry. Like the Crab Hands Advantage, this is a 'phantom rank' and does not count for Insight or to determine the cost of raising the skill, though unlike that Advantage, this technique stacks with actual weapon skill ranks.

TSURUCHI'S LEGION (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Named for and founded by the legendary archer who formed the Wasp fifty years ago, all Tsuruchi aspire to the Legion. Like the Wasp of old, Tsuruchi's Legion is composed entirely of magistrates of the Tsuruchi family. They scour the empire alone or in small groups doing the 'small jobs' of a magistrate. A Legionnaire will just as soon arbitrate a dispute between two farmers as track a bandit. They pride themselves on acting in their proper roles as magistrates for more than just the samurai. Recently, the Legion has begun to speak with members of the Kitsuki family about their methods of investigation and philosophy of justice, though nothing concrete has yet come from these discussions.

Hit Die: d10.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a member of Tsuruchi's Legion, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Mantis (Tsuruchi family of the Mantis Clan).

Alignment/Honor: Any good.

Feats: Way of the Wasp, Void Use.

Special: Must be invited to join the Legion by the daimyo of the Tsuruchi family.

CLASS SKILLS

The Tsuruchi Legionnaire's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (law) (Int), Listen (Wis), Ride (Dex). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Tsuruchi's Legion prestige class.

Blazing Arrows: At first level, the archer gains a +2 bonus to all damage rolls with archery attacks. This bonus increases to +4 at third level.

Flight of No-Mind: At second level, all of the Legionnaire's archery attacks ignore damage resistance as if they had an enchantment of +2 (or an additional +2, for arrows already enchanted). The Legionnaire can spend a Void point to increase this ability to +4 for a single attack.

Blackened Sky: At fourth level, the Legionnaire's attacks can cover the sky. The archer may, at his option, treat his archery iterative attacks as if he were a monk making unarmed attacks as per the Unarmed Attack Bonus column in the *Player's Handbook*™. For example, a character with this ability and a base attack bonus of +14 would attack at a base of +14/+11/+8/+5/+2.

Unchosen Justice: At fifth level, the Tsuruchi can infuse his arrows with the same sense of justice that he himself has. By spending two Void points and whispering to an arrow of its



TABLE 5-1: THE YORITOMO ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Storms Never Fall
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Versatility in Strength
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Bonus Feat
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	The Essence of War
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Bonus Feat

purpose before firing it at a suspected criminal, the shot becomes lethal. If the target is actually guilty of the crime and the arrow hits the target, it is automatically a critical hit.

TSURUCHI'S LEGION (NEW PATH)

"True justice knows the way."

—Tsuruchi Akadi, Captain of Tsuruchi's Legion

Technique Rank: 5

Path of Entry: Tsuruchi Archer 4

Path of Egress: Tsuruchi Archer 5

Technique: Unchosen Justice

The Legionnaire's purity of purpose is unfettered by caste or birth. By spending three Void points and whispering to an arrow of its purpose before firing it at a suspected criminal, the shot becomes lethal. If the target is actually guilty of the crime and the arrow hits the target, he is slain instantly. This Technique may only be used once per day, and the shot may not benefit from any other Technique.

NEW FAMILY

Tsuruchi

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Once the Minor Clan of the Wasp, the Tsuruchi have a preternatural adeptness with the bow.

TSURUCHI ARCHER SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Hunting, Kyujutsu 2, Stealth, any one Lore skill (often Lore: Bushido)

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Never Let the Blade Reach You

The first lesson the Tsuruchi learns is to trust his instincts. Whenever firing an arrow, he gains a number of free Raises equal to his School Rank. His archery range increases by 50' per School Rank.

Rank 2: The Sting of the Wasp

Now moving beyond instinct, the Tsuruchi may make a number of additional attacks when firing a bow equal to his School Rank divided by two, rounded down.

Rank 3: The Arrow Knows the Way

The archer and arrow now become one. The Tsuruchi needs no longer roll to hit when firing an arrow. The attack is automatically successful. This Technique may not be used at the same time as any of the more advanced Techniques, and may only affect one attack per round.

Rank 4: Flight of No-Mind

Beyond precision and trust, the Tsuruchi understands a level of no-thought that leads to an incredible precision with the archer's attacks. At this rank, the Tsuruchi archer's archery



attacks ignore Carapace and any form of damage reduction (such as the Hida Bushi 2 technique).

Rank 5: Tsuruchi's Final Lesson

Tsuruchi developed his Final Lesson shortly before his retirement. All of the Tsuruchi's attacks may have the Arrow Knows the Way technique applied to them. Alternatively, the archer may choose to fire a single, perfect shot for a round. This perfect shot automatically hits with the equivalent of six raises for precision (e.g. a fly on a bushi's head away at fifty yards' range), and deals ten dice of rolled damage, keeping a number of dice equal to the Tsuruchi's Kyujutsu skill.

TABLE 5-2: TSURUCHI'S LEGION

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Blazing Arrows +2
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Flight of No-Mind
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Blazing Arrows +4
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Blackened Sky
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Unchosen Justice

KATA OF THE MANTIS

Though others may call the Mantis style unorthodox, the Yoritomo are quite proud of their kata. The Tsuruchi family have come to adopt these secret kata since their adoption into the family, as have the few Centipede who take up the life of a bushi.

HOWL OF THE SON OF STORMS

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 180 minutes

Believed to have been devised by Yoritomo himself, this kata embodies the bold, powerful techniques of the Mantis. Only the most skilled bushi can master it.

Requirements: Power Attack, Soul of the Storm, Void Use, Way of the Mantis.

XP Cost: 2,000

Effect: You may spend two Void Points any time you roll a critical threat for that attack to automatically hit the target. (Re-roll the die to determine the chance of a critical hit normally.)

Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 4, or other Mantis Bushi 4

Cost: 6

Effect: Any time you roll a '10' on at least two dice when making an attack roll, you may roll and keep an extra die for damage.

PRAYER'S END

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Special: This kata may only be used when wielding two kama.

Like the insect from which his clan takes its name, the Mantis bushi rests with weapons raised, gathering his chi, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. The twin kama of the wielder lash out at once with an explosion of action.

Requirements: Ambidexterity, Hand of Osano-Wo, Two-Weapon Fighting, Way of the Mantis.

XP Cost: 500

Effect: When fighting two-handed, you gain a bonus to your initiative equal to your Strength modifier. However, you must fight two-handed for a full round before you gain this bonus; it takes effect on the next round. This bonus is lost if you did not fight two-handed during the previous round.

Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 3

Cost: 3

Effect: When making two attacks per round, you may use the higher initiative for both attack rolls. You must return to this stance for a full round to gain the use of this ability again.

STRIKE OF THE CLIFF'S EDGE

Preparation Time: 1 minute

Duration: 10 minutes

This kata uses the weaving, rolling style of fighting of the Yoritomo bushi school to strike an opponent at any point on his body.

Requirements: Way of the Mantis

XP Cost: 40

Effect: When using this kata, you gain a +1 bonus to all melee attack rolls. This bonus does not apply to any opponents who have struck you successfully during this combat. Opponents who strike you successfully gain a +1 bonus to all attack and damage rolls made against you for the duration of the combat unless you cease using this kata.

Rank: Any Mantis bushi 1

Cost: 2

Effect: When using this kata, your opponent's TN to Be Hit is figured as if his Reflexes were one lower (subtract 5 from his TN to Be Hit) against your melee attacks. This bonus is lost against any enemy who strikes you successfully, and such enemies gain a Free Raise to attack you for the duration of the combat unless you cease using this kata.

NEW FEATS

STING OF THE WASP

GENERAL FEAT

You are skilled at striking opponents in precise locations with a bow.

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus 9+, Dex 15+.

Clan: Mantis (Tsuruchi family of the Mantis Clan).

Benefit: When using a bow (not a crossbow) with which you are proficient, your threat range is increased by one. For example, a yumi usually threatens a critical on a 20 (one number). With this feat, it is increased to 19 or 20 (two numbers).

If you also possess the Improved Critical feat for a bow, the threat range is doubled before you add one from this feat.

CLAWS OF THE MANTIS

MANTIS TECHNIQUE FEAT

You are skilled in the twin kama fighting style of the Mantis Clan, similar to the legendary Mantis Champion, Yoritomo.

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +1 or higher, Str 13+, Simple Weapon Proficiency: Kama.

Benefit: When holding a kama in each hand, you may fight as if you had the Ambidexterity and Two Weapon Fighting feats. You do not suffer a penalty for the weapons being of equal size.

Special: You may learn other feats that require Ambidexterity and Two Weapon Fighting as prerequisites, but may only use them while wielding twin kama until you otherwise meet the prerequisites of those feats.

WEAVING, DODGING, ROLLING MANTIS TECHNIQUE FEAT

You are adept in the Mantis style of defensive combat, which uses large sweeping motions to avoid blows quickly.

Prerequisites: Dodge, Tumble (2 Ranks).

Benefit: When executing the fight defensively standard action, you gain an additional +1 dodge bonus to your AC. Tumble is always a class skill for you.

CHAPTER SIX:

DOJO OF THE
PHOENIX CLAN

Even kneeling before his sensei, Shiba Chiyo found the time to flash that cursed, mocking grin at him again. Uezama fumed.

"May all the spirits take heed of my words: I hate that man."

They had met four years ago. Isawa Uezama was a prodigy even by the exacting standards of his house. He was filled with pride when his master told him that a yojimbo of the Shiba house was being sent to serve him, even one not yet past his gempukku. Shiba Chiyo had disabused him of the notion that it was any sort of reward almost the first hour that they had met. Uezama had told the young warrior-in-training to help him carry a chest full of scrolls back to his chamber.

"Perhaps you were misinformed, Isawa-san. I am not your servant, but your protector." Uezama had raged at him to pick up one end of the box, but he defied all of the apprentice's threats and demands until, after shouting himself nearly hoarse, Uezama finally breathed, "Please?"

And with that the yojimbo had hauled the massive box up five flights of stairs — by himself — without a word of complaint.

So it had gone for a month every summer for four years. "How can you be my bodyguard if you won't do as I say?"

Chiyo had just laughed, answering, "How can I protect you if you won't do as I say?"

Uezama watched as Chiyo stood to receive the certificate of his school on the day of his gempukku. Now he was both a man and a samurai, and, with that sheet of paper carefully folded into his obi, a yojimbo of the famed Dai-chikai Dojo. Judging by the pride on the sensei's face, Chiyo must have been quite a promising student. Uezama realized that he had never thought to ask why Chiyo had been matched to him.

The Shiba were more boisterous than his relatives had been at his gempukku only a week ago. The young Isawa wondered what he was even doing here, surrounded by so many warriors. Chiyo

turned to walk towards him, and the courtyard fell silent.

Like an afterimage of that ancient day, Shiba knelt before Isawa. He spoke with solemn shouts pitched so that every samurai in the courtyard could hear his oath. "I have lived for this day, when I could ask you a question, Isawa-sama. I swear to defend Shiba's oath — and your life — with my every breath unto the last. Will you take my life as your shield?" His voice grew even stronger as he ended with the formal Oath of Shiba: "Through this life and the next; world without end."

And for the first time ever, Chiyo bowed his head to Uezama.

Even Uezama could not fail to be moved, just as his ancestor had been over a thousand years ago. He reached for words to match what had been given him. "Rise, brother," he said with feeling. How to answer such a promise? Words failed him. Quietly, he said, "Thank you, Shiba-sama."

The young bushi rose. Another cheer shook the air before the warriors and servants in the courtyard returned to their tasks and the silence that followed Chiyo's promise was again replaced with the bustle of castle life.

"We're going to be together a long time if I have anything to say about it, Isawa-sama." Chiyo flashed that same infuriating half-grin he had worn when Uezama met him, only now the shugenja saw the warmth in it. "The years would go faster if we were friends."

Uezama smiled for one brief moment before the memories of all the slights, all the abuse, flashed through his mind. The smile froze on his face. Chiyo's own expression became slightly curious. For once, his mocking smile faded.

"You truly wish to be friends?" Uezama asked.

"I do," Chiyo replied.

"Then perhaps you should have considered that before. Now fetch that chest of scrolls from the library — the big one — and carry it up to my room."

ETERNAL PHOENIX DOJO

Classes: Fighter, Ranger, Samurai

Schools: Shiba Bushi, Shiba Yojimbo

HISTORY

The school of the Eternal Phoenix (Eien no Fushicho) dojo dates back to the very earliest days of the clan. Even before Shiba-no-Kami swore his oath to Isawa, he gathered around himself a strong house of samurai. Shiba's own interests permeated the House of Shiba, and so his followers were known as philosopher-warriors, men and women who contemplated the mysterious of the universe as eagerly as they might take up the sword in their master's defense.

When Shiba knelt to Isawa, it created a great schism in the warriors who followed him. Some were reluctant to be placed in the service of the pacifistic Isawa, foreseeing all their chances at glory buried under eternal guard duty. Akodo One-Eye's beliefs about the role of a warrior were not unknown in the north, and such a fate seemed quite beneath them. But Shiba was insistent: to follow him was to obey his words. Shiba left to follow the Thunders before this matter was truly resolved, and never returned.

The debate finally fell to Shiba's grandsons, Kaigen and Yinobu. Shiba Kaigen maintained that his grandfather's oath bound him only to safeguard the Phoenix lands and people; he claimed that "only when the Clan is whole and united can any of us know safety." Kaigen's younger brother Yinobu held that the Shiba must guard each Isawa individually, that the security of the whole was bound up with the survival of each individual. Each of them founded one of the clan's great dojo to fulfill their separate visions of their grandfather's wishes.

The School of the Eternal Phoenix is located in the heart of Shiro Shiba. Some say the first test of the school is whether or not the students can even find the dojo in the rambling maze of walls, moats, and buildings that make up the castle.

TRADITION

"Choosing the lesser of two evils is still choosing evil."

— War banner of the Shiba

As the preeminent dojo of the clan, Eien no Fushicho's traditions form the basis of all Phoenix dojo. Students are versed in the Tao as copied down by their founding Kami, and strive to follow his example of constant observation and contemplation. The arts of sword, naginata, and bow are practiced as much to hone the spirit as to defend the clan.

The Eternal Phoenix school strives to teach the concept of no-mind. To the outsider it seems like a soft philosophy, acting only when acted upon: a school fit to serve the pacifist Isawa. The true student learns that it is violence, with its mindless attraction to more violence, that is the ultimate expression of passivity. A master of the style always seems to be "waiting," but a Shiba bushi's stillness is the stillness of water: water never hesitates when the bowl is overturned. For this reason warriors of the school continue to surprise less thoughtful enemies, even after a thousand years.

TRAINING

Visiting sensei of other clans have often observed that the Eternal Phoenix School is more like a monastery than a dojo. Students swim in the moat or practice with bows and boken as at any other dojo, but also are to be found reading and meditating. Shiba, accused of being "all thought and no action," countered, "I am doing my thinking now. When the time for action comes, I will not have to think at all." This state of "no-thought" is at the heart of the school's teachings, and while the Shiba are poorly regarded as warriors, none can fault their mastery of the Void. No other school of samurai can tap its power with such consistency and variety.

Students from other clans coming to the school are often shocked to discover that the tales of students poring over scrolls for months, and then having to recite for hours from memory, are not exaggerations. While the school maintains a regimen of exercise and weapons training, the discipline of the mind and spirit is often a greater challenge.

Students from other clans are given exactly the same training as Phoenix youths, and held to the same standards. The Shiba have been so thoroughly ignored by the warrior houses of other clans that they are particularly eager to train outsiders to the highest level, in the hopes that the student will return home to bring honor and fame to his school. Sadly, many who return home after such instruction do go on to become important figures in their daimyo's service, but as advisors and scholars of great insight, rather than as warriors and generals.

SENSEI

Master Sensei Shiba Yusuke runs the school like her personal empire, with every warrior coming to stand before her scrutiny at least once each season, but she takes little interest in the day-to-day instruction of her "flock." Other sensei deal with training, from the mastery of donning armor to the secrets of meditation, but to rise in the school one must find a mentor who can be convinced of the samurai's special promise. Located in the heart of the Shiba's ancestral home, students work to attract the eye of guard captains, patrol commanders, various sensei and even generals.

Only a few dare to approach Yusuke-sensei, seeking to gain her personal instruction. Senior warriors put candidates for their instruction through tests that border on the sadistic. A possibly apocryphal story claims that Yusuke left one worthy student kneeling on her porch for three days in a blizzard.

This system of patronage has assured that the finest students have both humility and persistence. Once accepted, a student's fortunes and advanced training are tied to his mentor. Each student of the school owes a debt of loyalty to his mentor that will last a lifetime, forming an unbroken chain of honor back to the founding of the school.

SHIBA YUSUKE

Master Sensei, Eternal Phoenix Dojo

[Samurai 13/Shiba Elite Guard 5; Shiba Bushi 5/Shiba Yojimbo 2]

Yusuke is short, even for a Shiba. She has borne her years well; one can hardly tell that she is in her late forties. She is elegant, beautiful, and as inscrutable as any Phoenix. Her encyclopedic knowledge of the Tao awes even the Isawa who visit her dojo. Yusuke was fresh from her gempukku when the Clan War erupted, and like many eager young warriors of that time, she followed Shiba Tsukune into the fray.

For almost twenty years the students of Eien no Fushicho Dojo have lived in utter terror of Yusuke. She prowls the halls with a thin bamboo cane, and doesn't hesitate to lash any student who fails to keep perfect focus on his training. Students who fail to remain aware of their surroundings (and Yusuke's stealthy approach) bear fierce red welts for days. Two scrolls bearing the characters "Focus" and "Awareness" decorate the entrance to both her office and her sleeping quarters.

Mechanical Notes: Yusuke's skills are a broad mix of practical and knowledge skills, focusing particularly on medicine and the Tao. Her combat skills focus on physical toughness, endurance and Void mastery. She teaches such abilities only to those who win her approval through persistence.

ETERNAL PHOENIX DOJO BENEFITS

The Eternal Phoenix School is the best-known dojo of the Phoenix Clan. Those who have challenged the armies of the north expecting the simple tactics of inexperienced commanders have learned that Eternal Phoenix samurai are masters of combining the magical might of their clan with conventional forces and unconventional tactics.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

The students of the Eternal Phoenix dojo learn to work in close coordination with the shugenja of the clan. They take extra care in the placement and use of magical forces in any conflict.

Benefit: You gain a +2 competence bonus on all Diplomacy checks with shugenja. You gain an additional +2 bonus (total of +4) if the shugenja is a Phoenix.

Benefit: You gain a free Raise on all social interactions with shugenja. If the shugenja is a Phoenix, you receive two free Raises.

TRAINING BENEFITS

Students of the Eien no Fushicho dojo are not only sensitive to the moods of shugenja, but are also adept at fighting beside them on the field of battle.

Benefit: At the beginning of combat, you may spend a Void Point to switch your initiative check with that of any allied shugenja in the same combat, so long as the shugenja agrees to do so.

Benefit: At the beginning of a combat round, you may spend a Void Point to switch your initiative with that of any allied shugenja in the same combat, so long as the shugenja agrees to do so.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

SHIBA AIKUNE

[Samurai 10; Shiba Bushi 4]

The only son of Shiba Tsukune, one of the greatest Champions the Phoenix has ever known, is a troubled man. Unknown to most outsiders, the title of Champion follows the Soul of

the Shiba: not only the essence of the founding Kami, but also the experience of every Champion since the dawn of the empire. Despite his noble birth, Aikune has never been assured of any title save that which he made for himself. Recently, Shiba Aikune has discovered and unleashed Isawa's Last Wish, a magical artifact of extraordinary power. Though all past appearances of this artifact have led to disaster, Aikune seems to possess an astounding ability to control the Wish. With it, he hopes to create a new age of security and prosperity for the Phoenix, but the Isawa look upon the young Shiba's new power with apprehension...

DAI-CHIKAI DOJO

Classes: Fighter, Samurai

Schools: Shiba Yojimbo School

HISTORY

When Shinsei proposed that a mortal champion of each clan venture into the Shadowlands to do battle with the Dark Kami, Shiba turned to the reclusive and enigmatic Isawa. Isawa was the greatest of all mortal shugenja, but he was also the dutiful lord of his house. He refused to go, claiming that his absence would lead to the death of his people at the hands of the goblins, ogres, and oni that stalked the land. What

exactly Shiba said to Isawa that day has passed into legend, but the Asako playwright Hojoshio is said to have captured the essence of the moment in his play "Before the Thunder," wherein Shiba swears to protect Isawa's descendants for all time.

It was at this time that the order of Shiba Yojimbo were born, though they would not be so great in number to require their own school for several generations. In the year 217, the Dai-chikai Dojo was constructed to help house and train the growing numbers of yojimbo needed to protect the increasing number of Isawa. Fifty years later, the sensei of the dojo had developed so many of their own techniques that it was recognized as its own school.

The warriors of the Dai-chikai Dojo are sworn to uphold Shiba's great oath. They train in defensive techniques, always ready to fight and die for the shugenja placed under their care.

Despite its ancient lineage, few of the school's teachings come from Shiba himself. Shiba journeyed into the Shadowlands after the Thunders departed to face Fu Leng, and he returned reborn in the body of another. Though Shiba's wisdom was never lost to the clan, the new Champion was too busy founding a clan to detail Shiba's sword technique. Shiba Yinobu, the first Dai-chikai sensei, developed almost all of the training techniques of the Phoenix yojimbo himself, incorporating the words of Shiba where he could.

The Dai-chikai Dojo is located near Kyuden Isawa. While most of the students are Shiba samurai, it was Yinobu's belief that the yojimbo of the clan must train and live among the Isawa, so that they would always be close at hand should peril arise. The Elemental Masters felt that the training of warriors would be too great a distraction to their studies (and, truth to tell, several promising apprentices had abandoned their stud-



ies to join the young warriors), and the dojo was relocated a few miles south of the castle, and has long since been surrounded by a small town of its own.

The Clan War placed a terrible burden upon the Shiba yojimbo. Many shugenja of the Isawa family fell to the Taint in their eagerness to unravel the mysteries of the enemy. In particular the Elemental Masters succumbed to the Taint one by one — and their protectors stood beside them. Shiba's oath makes no provision for the honor, purity, or sanity of the Isawa. The great dojo itself was destroyed by the armies of Yogo Junzo as they marched to pillage Kyuden Isawa, dealing the Shiba family another terrible blow. After the devastation of the Clan War, the Dai-chikai Dojo was one of the first structures to be rebuilt. The philosophy of the Phoenix insisted that the dojo be "reborn" in the same form, with no change of name or nature.

TRADITION

In a remarkably plain hall just south of Kyuden Isawa hangs a great and ancient banner. In its center is the Phoenix mon, executed by the hand of Shiba himself. Kanji fill the corners of the fabric, words he passed on to his son and all the Shiba to follow: "If you are willing to sacrifice anything, you can be trusted with the world." Those words meet the students of the Dai-chikai Dojo every morning as they begin practice.

Students are allowed to repeat Shiba's oath upon their gempukku, but in practice, few are immediately assigned to a particular Isawa. Most junior warriors are given duty guarding Kyuden Isawa or other castles while they continue to train and grow in experience. Those of particular merit may be assigned to the protection of an equally promising young shugenja. The Elemental Masters (may of whom have had their own bodyguards since their youth) have learned that this early pairing of two potential rising stars of the clan often strengthens both.

One reason students of the Dai-chikai Dojo are not immediately assigned a shugenja to guard is that they traditionally take only a single charge in their entire lives. A yojimbo rarely outlives his charge, but most who do so take no other.

TRAINING

Yojimbo training is quite different from that practiced by bushi. The prospective guardian must learn to analyze every situation and tease out the clues that may indicate a threat. While their cousins in the Eternal Phoenix School read, students of the Great Oath solve puzzles. They walk in the streets and when they return to the dojo report in detail every individual they chanced upon. This training combines with swordplay, naginata drills, armor training, and the standard strict practice of meditation as seen at all Phoenix dojo to make a young bodyguard's life busy indeed.

With their emphasis on practical experience and understanding the workings of the assassin's mind, it is not surprising that students of the Dai-chikai Dojo who do not bind themselves to a particular Isawa often find honor serving as magistrates and investigators for the clan. Such samurai are tough and self-reliant, able to pursue investigations for their daimyo in great secrecy.

SENSEI

Worthiness in the ranks of the Dai-chikai Dojo is measured by one thing only — success. Those trained within the walls of the school have only one duty, and a yojimbo's ability is measured by the length of his charge's life. Because of this,

those invited to become sensei for the Dai-chikai Dojo are usually aged but able samurai who have never failed in their duty. When a new Master Sensei is needed, he is picked from among the sensei of the school, ensuring that failure does not soil the ranks of the dojo's leadership.

SHIBA SAISUNE

Sensei, Dai-chikai Dojo

[Samurai 10/Shiba Protector 5; Shiba Yojimbo 5]

Saisune is deeply pained by the irony of his position. He has the time and skills to train the next generation of Shiba yojimbo only because he himself failed in that duty — or so he believes. Charged with the protection of a bright flower of the Isawa, he came to love and cherish Isawa Mitako with a deep passion. His love for her drew him up as the rope draws the bucket from a well, until he was one of the most respected yojimbo in all of the Phoenix lands. But fate had other things in store for Isawa Mitako, and mortal Saisune was left behind when the Dragon of Water took her to become its new Oracle.

Saisune very nearly died of heartbreak, but his sensei, the previous head of the school, saw the tremendous strength still in him and stepped down so that Saisune might find purpose again. Now he trains other yojimbo, practicing in and amongst them as if he were but a senior student rather than head sensei of the school. His gentle manner does nothing to disguise the perfection he demands from both himself and others, and those under his tutelage strive to become the best that they are capable of. They put forth this effort not for praise or glory, but because being around Saisune makes them believe that doing so is the right thing — the only goal worthy of a samurai.

Mechanical Notes: Saisune's skills and abilities focus on the detection and identification of threats. His feats tend to concentrate on evasive maneuvers and defensive combat to the point that any attempt to strike him seems futile. He teaches the students of the school gladly, but outsiders may have to earn his favor with a purity of purpose or news of his beloved Mitako.

DAI-CHIKAI DOJO BENEFITS

The yojimbo of the Phoenix are amongst the most dedicated guardians a samurai will ever meet. They hone their skills with an almost maniacal determination to protect just one other life at any cost. Few outside the clan have ever been honored with such service, and even within the Phoenix Clan is it a mark of high esteem for any samurai to have a student of the Dai-chikai be assigned to their safety.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Students of the Dai-chikai Dojo become deeply devoted to their charges, and vice versa. This regular companionship forms a powerful bond between them.

Benefit: If you have the Void Use feat, you may give one Void Point to your charge, or vice versa, once per day. This is a free action and may be done any time you and your charge can see one another or know one another's exact location.

Benefit: One time only, you may choose a single individual that you will guard with your life. You and your charge gain one level of the Kharmic Tie Advantage with each other. If you already have that Advantage with your charge, it is increased by one level. This bonus cannot be transferred to another, even if your charge dies.

TRAINING BENEFITS

None.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

SHIBA MIRABU

[Samurai 7/Shiba Protector 3; Shiba Yojimbo 4]

Mirabu is often held up as one of the best that the Shiba have to offer. He is tough, knowledgeable, as capable in debate as in battle and filled with a fierce sense of loyalty. But despite his training in the Great Oath school, he is also one of those that has chosen to follow the son of the Champion, Shiba Aikune, and put the interests of the clan ahead of the security of the Isawa. He has yet to choose his charge, but it is said that Tsukune herself came to him shortly before she became a Fortune and encouraged him to watch over her son, a task he gladly undertook. This decision has put him at odds with Saisune-sensei, but so far the master of the school has withheld judgment about whether Mirabu will be allowed to remain with the school.

ADVANCED TRAINING

SHIBA ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Though many even among their own clan consider the Shiba Elite Guard nothing more than glorified yojimbo, the Shiba Elite have a warrior tradition as strong as any other. Although they specialize in preserving the lives of those under their charge, they hardly see this as a duty to be scorned. The Shiba Elite embrace their roles as protectors of the Isawa, and seldom allow any under their care to come to harm.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Shiba Elite Guardsman, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Phoenix.

Base Attack Bonus: +9

Feats: Depths of the Void, No Illusions, Shiba's Technique, Shield of Honor, Void Use, Way of the Phoenix.

Special: Must be invited to join the Elite Guard by the Phoenix Champion or the Elemental Council. Must have the ancestral daisho class ability.

CLASS SKILLS

The Shiba Elite Guardsman's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowl-

edge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), Tea Ceremony (Wis), and Swim (Str). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle and Tea Ceremony skills are described in *Rokugan*™)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2+Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Shiba Elite Guardsman prestige class.

Shiba's Strength (Su): At 1st level, the Shiba guardsman can extend an invisible protective aura created by his own chi to another individual at the beginning of combat. The Shiba names one individual, and thereafter bestows damage reduction of 10/+1 to that individual. This damage reduction remains so long as the Shiba remains conscious, within 10 feet, and does not attack the individual he is protecting. This protection increases to 10/+2 at 3rd level.

Power of the Void: At 2nd level, the Shiba begins to understand the true nature of the power of the Void. By spending a Void Point, the Shiba can grant himself 1d6 temporary hit points for one hour. Multiple applications stack, though the Shiba can only use this ability once per hour per level he has attained in this class.

Iron Will: At 2nd level the guardsman gains this feat for free.

Shiba's Armor: At 3rd level, the guardsman becomes tougher and more resistant to damage. All natural armor bonuses provided by the Shiba Technique feat are tripled, even if tripling the bonus would allow a bonus greater than the feat normally allows.

Bonus Feat: At 4th level, the guardsman may select a bonus feat from the list of Phoenix samurai feats or technique feats.

Shiba's Last Lesson: At 5th level, the guardsman gains a permanent +3 bonus to his maximum Void Point total.

SHIBA ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Shiba Yojimbo 3 or Shiba Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Shiba Bushi 4 or Shiba Yojimbo 4 (the student may choose which school to enter)

Technique: Shiba's Strength

At the beginning of a combat, you may spend three Void Points to declare one other person within ten feet to be under your protection. So long as this person remains in range, you do not attack this person, and you remain above the Down level, any opponents who attack that person roll and keep one fewer die (to a minimum of one) on all damage rolls, including damage rolls from spells.

TABLE 6-1: THE SHIBA ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Shiba's Mercy 10/+1
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Power of the Void, Iron Will
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Shiba's Mercy 10/+2
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Bonus Feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Shiba's Last Lesson

HEAVEN'S WING INITIATE (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Though the Phoenix clan is not known for martial prowess, some, if possessed of the correct blend of spiritual fortitude and martial skills, may join the Brotherhood of Heaven's Wing. While not as renowned as other clans' elite units, the warriors of Heaven's Wing have their own unique gifts.

Heaven's Wing is an ancient, proud, and somewhat secretive group dedicated to the cause of personal excellence through brotherhood. The members of Heaven's Wing encourage one another to greatness, and tolerate no weakness or failure among their number. During its long history Heaven's Wing has never admitted any female members, a fact that many perfectly capable Phoenix samurai-ko look upon with a certain amount of resentment.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a member of the Brotherhood of Heaven's Wing, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +11

Skills: Concentration: 10 ranks.

Feats: Depths of the Void, Shield of Honor, Void Use, Way of the Phoenix.

Special: You must be born into or have sworn fealty to the Phoenix Clan and possess the Ancestral Daisho class ability. You must be approved by the existing members of the brotherhood. So far only males have been allowed into the Brotherhood of Heaven's Wing.

CLASS SKILLS

The Heaven's Wing initiate class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Iaijutsu Focus (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4+Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Heaven's Wing prestige class.

Mark of Heaven: At 1st level, the brother of Heaven's Wing gains the ability to heal damage equal to his current Void Points each hour.

Depths of the Void: At 2nd level, the brother gains the Depths of the Void feat, increasing the number of Void Points he has by 2. He gains this feat again at 4th level.

Way of the World: At 3rd level, the brother's sense of his surroundings is so acute that he may avoid attacks with startling ease. The brother adds his maximum Void Points as



a Void bonus to his AC. This bonus applies even if the brother is denied his Dexterity modifier due to being unprepared, ambushed, stunned, and so on (though being immobilized does cancel this bonus). The total bonus granted by this ability may not be greater than twice the initiate's level in this class.

Wing of Glory: At 5th level the initiate has mastered the power of the Heaven's Wing kata, and can put it to greater use than a typical bushi. He may maintain the kata for up to three hours before discharging its power, and may make two five-foot steps at any time while making the bonus attacks granted by the kata.

BROTHERHOOD OF HEAVEN'S WING (ADVANCED SCHOOL)

REQUIREMENTS

Rings/Traits: Void 5

Skills: Kenjutsu 5, Meditation 6, Naginata 5, Shintao 5, Tea Ceremony 5

Other: Must know the Heaven's Wing kata (q.v.), and be approved for membership by the Heaven's Wing brotherhood.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Mark of Heaven

The bushi gains the ability to recover from injury with supernatural speed, recovering wounds equal to his current Void Points every hour.

TABLE 6-2: THE HEAVEN'S WING INITIATE

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Mark of Heaven
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Depths of the Void
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Way of the World
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Depths of the Void
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Wing of Glory

Rank 2: Way of the World

The bushi is so in tune with his surroundings that he may evade blows before they have even begun. The bushi may add his current amount of Void Points x 2 to his TN to be hit.

Rank 3: Wing of Glory

The bushi who reaches this rank has attained a mastery of the Heaven's Wing kata. He can now maintain the kata for up to three hours without discharging its power, and gains three free Void Points that can only be spent to gain additional attacks when using the Heaven's Wing kata.

KATA OF THE PHOENIX

While few Phoenix warriors can muster the brute power of the southern schools, they are masters of several more subtle martial techniques.

TAIL OF THE SUN

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 60 minutes

The Shiba are great advocates of the naginata. Other clans consider it a woman's weapon, but the Shiba prize its elegant control. You may not use any weapon other than a naginata while using this kata; if you release your grip on the naginata at any time, the kata ends immediately.

Requirements: Weapon Focus (Naginata).

XP Cost: 500

Effect: If you are wielding a naginata, you may threaten squares adjacent to you along with those threatened by the weapon's 10-foot reach.

School Rank: All Phoenix Bushi Schools 1
Cost: 3

Effect: When you are wielding a polearm, the initiative bonus it grants does not end after three turns, but lasts for the duration of the fighting.

DEEPER REFLECTION

Preparation Time: 60 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

The Phoenix shugenja are the acknowledged masters of the mysteries of the Void, but Phoenix bushi also share in this deeper understanding. The meditative techniques of the Shiba allow even warriors to draw deeply from that well of potential.

Requirements: Depths of the Void, Void Use, Concentration Skill (10+).

XP Cost: 4,000

Effect: You must meditate for an hour (Concentration

check, DC 20) to activate this kata. While under its influence you gain two extra Void Points. These are always the last Void Points the character may spend, and they disappear at the end of the kata's duration if not spent.

School Rank: All Phoenix Bushi Schools 5

Cost: 8

Effect: When you meditate to recover Void Points, you may choose to make two Raises. If so, you gain an additional two Void Points for the duration of this kata. These two points are always the last to be spent by the character (all normal Void Points must be exhausted before they may be used) and disappear at the end of the kata if not spent by then.

HEAVEN'S WING

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Duration: 60 minutes or until discharged

This difficult kata is not exclusive to the brotherhood that shares its name, though they pride themselves on a greater mastery of its mysteries. The kata builds focus through simple, wide movements of the naginata.

Although rarely seen in competitions, the steps are beautiful and sure as the bushi guides his weapon in long flowing arcs to finally release the

built-up energy in a flurry of startling motion. This kata can only be used with a naginata. If you do not discharge Heaven's Wing after beginning the kata, all of your Void Points are spent when the kata ends.

Requirements: Depths of the Void, No-Mind, Void Use, Way of the Phoenix, Weapon Focus (Naginata).

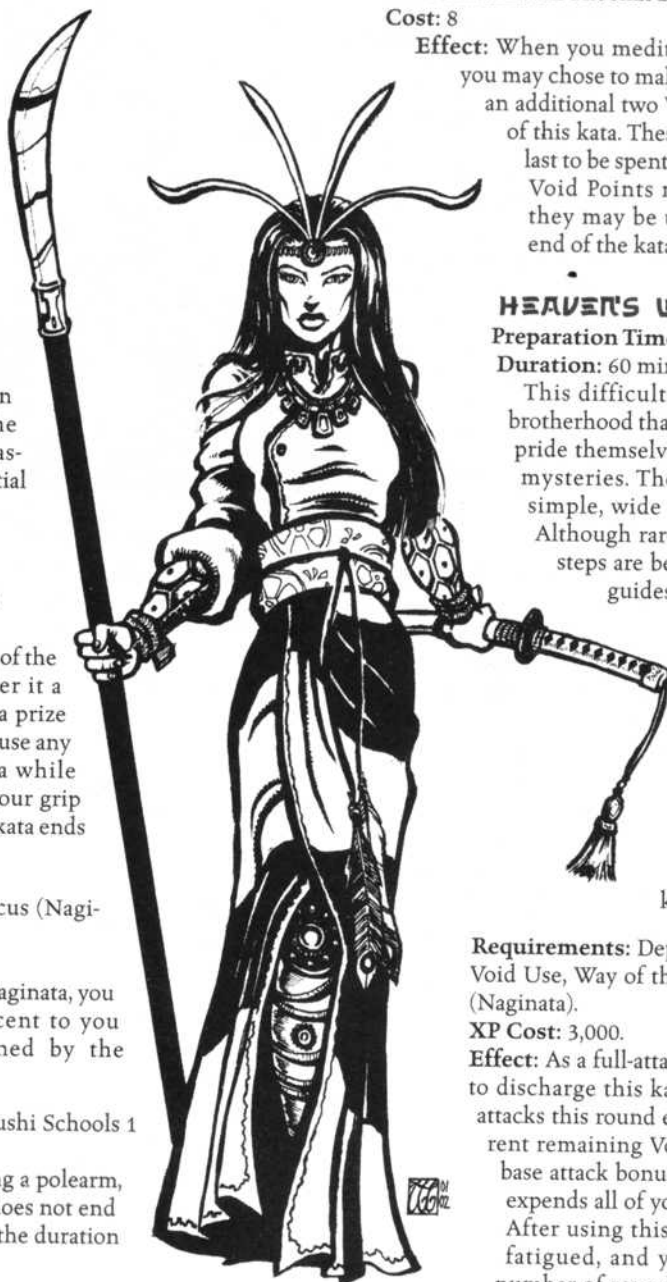
XP Cost: 3,000.

Effect: As a full-attack action, you may choose to discharge this kata. You gain a number of attacks this round equal to one plus your current remaining Void Points at your highest base attack bonus. This action immediately expends all of your remaining Void Points. After using this kata, you are considered fatigued, and you may not attack for a number of rounds equal to the number of attacks you gained.

School Rank: Shiba Bushi 4, other Phoenix bushi schools 5

Cost: 7

Effect: When you discharge this kata, you gain one extra attack during that round for every Void Point you have remaining, automatically spending your total remaining Void (you can choose to gain fewer attacks than maximum, but your Void is completely expended anyway). After the round is over, you must remain on Full Defense for a number of rounds equal to the attacks you gained.



CHAPTER SEVEN:

DOJO OF THE SCORPION CLAN

Soshi Tishi listened to the two courtiers drone on endlessly. They exemplified everything the Scorpion sensei was finding repugnant about this winter. His family had the honor of hosting the clan's winter court, which Tishi found more a punishment than a privilege.

Beside him, his student shifted uncomfortably. Tishi looked over at Bayushi Nokane and smirked. The boy knew the time was coming for his test, and was not handling the stress well. Tishi thought little of it; few students of the Bayushi dojo faced *gempukku* with serenity. Indeed, it was the point of the ritual to push the student to the limits of his endurance.

"...besides, Doji-san, those treaties are generations old," the fat Ide diplomat continued with a sickly smile. "If the Empire had to honor every outdated document gathering mold in its warehouses, I'm sure your lord Kurohito wouldn't be rampaging across the Crab lands right now, neh?"

The Crane gave a thin smile in response. "Indeed," he replied flatly. "Heavens forbid that we adhere to the lost documents that insist a clan of the Ki-Rin exists." The Doji cut off the Ide's blubbery retort by continuing coolly. "But the matter at hand does not deal with ancient or crumbling documents, but simply texts signed by your own daimyo, Ide Tadaji-sama, that allow us use of the Great Crater Pass."

Silently, Tishi inclined his head to his student, who promptly rose on somewhat unsteady feet. "Excuse me, Doji Ijino-sama," Nokane said as smoothly as he could.

Tishi watched intently, appearing to be completely impassive on the surface, as the student spoke politely for a few minutes with the Crane, and then led him off to another area of the palace for a meeting with some invented Scorpion courtier. Nokane's para-

lyzing fear of murdering someone made the subject of his test simple, and he would either overcome his fear and kill his quarry, or... else.

The only problem, the Scorpion sensei realized as he sighed to himself, was that Nokane's target had not been the Doji, but the Ide.

Tishi shrugged to himself as he stood. Crane, Unicorn, he supposed it didn't really matter, as long as Nokane finished the job. The Scorpion sensei adjusted his obi as he approached the Ide diplomat and said smoothly, "Excuse me, Ide Shika-san..."

HONOR'S LESSON DOJO

Classes: Fighter, Rogue, Samurai, Bayushi Elite Guard (Prestige)

Schools: Bayushi Bushi, Bayushi Saboteur, Bayushi Elite Guard (New Path)

HISTORY

Like many of the current schools of the Scorpion, Honor's Lesson is newly built. The original grand dojo of the Bayushi was destroyed during the Clan War after having stood for a thousand years. Honor's Lesson opened its doors five years ago, shortly after the end of the war against the spirit armies of Hantei XVI. The Scorpion named their new

dojo in honor of the stratagem that defeated those armies. Many realize that the Scorpion turn a samurai's faith in honor to their own advantage. Those who see this as the only way a Scorpion can behave tend to be surprised sooner or later, often painfully so.

The dojo itself is near the rebuilt Kyuden Bayushi. One of Bayushi Yojiro's first edicts as Clan Champion was to secure the future of his clan by finishing the Bayushi dojo as swiftly as possible. The stones and adornments from the old school were used when possible, serving as a metaphorical and spiritual tie to the dojo that served as the clan's training grounds for most of their history.

TRAINING

Only clever and resourceful children are accepted at the Bayushi dojo. In the past, the school had been infamous for weeding out nearly half of the students as unacceptable as they failed to live up to the rigors of training. Though Honor's Lesson has only been standing for five years, the number of students still attending from the first year seem to show a continuation of the previous pattern. Being sent away from the Bayushi dojo is not shameful in itself; the Scorpion sensei are masters at spotting hidden potential within a child and often send students away to the training halls of the Scorpion's courtiers... or less honorable duty.

During initial training, Scorpion bushi are given monumentally difficult tasks that must be completed in an unreasonably short time. Clever children quickly realize that the exercises are meant to test both a student's dedication to his duty and his ability to recognize when he has failed. Those who do not catch on find their progress through the school severely hindered.

Scorpion masters favor loyalty and honesty from their students when it comes to dealing with other members of the Clan. Students must possess knowledge of Rokugani politics and the ability to rely on "the more civilized method of warfare," as the Bayushi call court life. Kakita's *The Sword* mentions that the true master of the sword never draws his blade to defeat an enemy, and the Scorpion agree with this philosophy, even if their application of it differs from the Crane's.

The gempukku for Honor's Lesson dojo is different for every student. The student's sensei sets a task that forces the student to overcome an obstacle: a senior student, a puzzle, a koan, or some other hurdle. The student passes the test by discerning a weakness in his objective, and attacking it boldly and quickly. Failure to overcome the obstacle doesn't mean the student has failed. The Bayushi expect their students to attempt brilliant and dangerous actions every day. Failure is a logical ending in some situations, and even a Scorpion must know when only failure is possible.

SENSEI

In the tradition of the Scorpion, age is usually the prime indicator of ability and talent. As they move in and out of the battles and politics of the Empire, many put their lives in direct danger should their schemes fail. More often than not, the Grandmaster of the Bayushi Bushi School is the eldest samurai still fully capable mentally and physically. Of course, in what could be called the other tradition of the Scorpion, the current Grandmaster does not fit into this category.

SOSHI TISHI

Master Sensei, Honor's Lesson Dojo

[Samurai 13/Bayushi Elite Guard 5; Scorpion Bushi 5]

Soshi Tishi has always found himself endlessly amused with the little twists and turns life can take. Born into a family known for its shugenja, Tishi found himself more comfortable with the way of the sword. He didn't seem concerned with his family's offense at his blasé attitude toward tradition. So began the rapid rise of one of the most talented bushi the Bayushi school had seen in generations, as well as one of the most confident.

Tishi has never once doubted that his prowess could fail him in the pursuit of his duty, and to date it has not. His sensei attempted to quell the young bushi's enormous ego by presenting the task of preparing five unique and new kata for his gempukku. Much to the chagrin and silent pride of the masters, the five kata Tishi performed for his coming of age ritual are now part of the basic curriculum at Honor's Lesson Dojo.

As impressed with himself as Tishi was, he was nearly as shocked as the rest of the clan when the former Grandmaster named him heir to the dojo on his deathbed many years later.

As far as aged Grandmaster Hisa was concerned, Tishi represented what the clan's warriors should be in the Empire, as they were before the Clan War caused so many troubles for the Scorpion.

Oddly enough, this open recognition caused Tishi's famous arrogance to subside. He takes his duties as Grandmaster very seriously, and attempts to instill the confidence he held in his youth to his students. So far, Tishi has proven to be a resourceful and worthy Grandmaster. He isn't surprised.

Mechanical Notes: Many of Tishi's opponents are surprised to find that he's actually as good as he claims to be. Tishi has devoted himself to the art of swordplay and manipulation on and off the battlefield. His skills and feats reflect a samurai who prefers timing to power, and efficiency to a flurry of quick attacks. As his station demands, he is also a consummate gentleman and opponent in the courts.

HONOR'S LESSON DOJO BENEFITS

The warriors of the Scorpion Clan are no less civil, devious, and crafty than their courtier brethren. Students of Honor's Lesson honor their dojo by wearing a Bayushi mon with the tail dripping blood. They are the open-faced killers of their clan, and make sure others know it.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Scorpion bushi are among the most cultured and politically aware bushi in the Empire.

Benefit: Characters trained at Honor's Lesson Dojo gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff checks against Fighters, Samurai, Ninja, and Rogues that do not have any ranks in the Courtier class.

Benefit: A bushi trained at Honor's Lesson Dojo gains a free Raise when using the Sincerity skill against another bushi.



TRAINING BENEFIT

The students of Honor's Lesson understand that those who indulge in complex plots must be prepared for the consequences.

Benefit: When a character trained at Honor's Lesson Dojo is caught flat-footed, his Armor Class is considered 1 point higher.

Benefit: Whenever the character's TN to Be Hit would be reduced to his armor rating, the bushi gains a bonus to his TN to Be Hit equal to half his Perception (rounded down).

NOTABLE STUDENTS

BAYUSHI KAMNAN

[Samurai 10/Bayushi Elite Guard 3; Bayushi Bushi 3/Bayushi Elite Guard 1]

Kamnan was born and bred for a single purpose. He has been trained as one of the Bayushi's most specialized killers and was given a single target after his gempukku — the traitor known as Yoritomo Aramasu. His life was consumed with Aramasu's death, and when he finally cornered the Mantis Champion in Ootosan Uchi, the fight was swift and the outcome fore-ordained.

Kamnan now coordinates the efforts of the Clan against the Mantis and their inevitable retaliation. He knows the way of the Yoritomo warriors almost better than they do, and not a single unit of Mantis samurai can stand against him and his chosen followers. Kamnan himself speaks rarely, and then only to voice the hatred of Mantis that has been bred into him. Privately, though, he wonders — when the Scorpion have no further need to slaughter the Mantis, what purpose will his life serve? The only answer the silent bushi finds gives him no comfort.

BAYUSHI SHIXIANG

(Fighter 7/Rogue 3; Bayushi Bushi 2)

Like much of his Clan, young Bayushi Shixiang is a contradiction. He is an assassin, caring little for the tenets of bushido and the true ways of a samurai, yet he carries the daisho of his Unicorn grandfather and respects them above all things. Shixiang's duty to the clan is to insinuate himself beside other warriors and kill them when they do not expect it, though he would much rather match their steel in an open and fair fight. Unfortunately for him, Shixiang is really a likable and affable person. He doesn't much appreciate that it was this very trait that caused the Scorpion lords to pick him for the tasks he performs, but he executes his duty without complaint or hesitation. His superiors insist that he'll transcend his feelings eventually, but after years of performing his work for the clan, Shixiang is less certain.



THE DOJO OF LIES

Classes: Courtier, Rogue, Samurai, Mastermind (Prestige)

Schools: Bayushi Courtier

HISTORY

The events of the Clan War and the War Against the Shadow left the Scorpion Clan in ruins, and its legendary politicians had been murdered or lost. When the Scorpion's Great Clan status was reinstated in the year 1132, the clan had to decide where it would train its new generation of courtiers.

The Scorpion would have to train many students, which meant they would also have to find many worth the training. It also stood to reason that students would have to progress quickly, as the need for courtiers was pressing. When it also became apparent that the Clan of the Unicorn did not wish to return control of the city of Ryoko Owari to the Scorpion, the choice was easy.

The Dojo of Lies admitted its first class over twenty years ago in the heart of Ryoko Owari, under the watchful eye of the Unicorn magistrate. The Scorpion claimed that the dojo's location would allow them to train their courtiers in an environment suited to the lessons, and the Unicorn would be free to come and go within the dojo as they pleased. With such a name as The Dojo of Lies, would any student be so foolish as to bring suspicion upon it? If any wished to learn the secrets of the Scorpion's infamous politicians, they needed only to come peacefully to study, in exchange for a favor or two.

The Unicorn now realize, far too late, that what seemed like a foolproof way to curb the Scorpion's power in Ryoko Owari has failed miserably. Those who wander into the Dojo of Lies have a tendency to want to wander in again. And again. Even in the city of Ryoko Owari, the Scorpion find it easy enough to present entertainment, distraction, and the promise of 'secret education' far beyond what is normally attainable in their surroundings. Several young Unicorn (and members of other clans) have actually become agents of the Scorpion due to encouragement and training received there. Not that anyone can prove it, which is all the more infuriating to everyone but the smiling and hospitable Bayushi.

TRAINING

Unlike most dojo, the doors of the Dojo of Lies are open to all who wish to enter. Though this has raised security concerns, the results are not to be contested. Outsiders interested in studying with the Scorpion at Ryoko Owari are actually quite scarce, and invariably end up as pawns, agents, or dupes of the Scorpion. The initial training for children sent to the Dojo of Lies generally involves gaining the trust and attention of the non-Scorpion students. The most talented students are the ones who subvert the non-Scorpion most quickly, and most firmly bring the outsiders under the power of the Scorpion.

Naturally, the basic course of studies involves the history of the other Great Clans, the current status of their families, the history of the Scorpion's relation with the other Clans, and seemingly endless study of current affairs, societal niceties, and protocol. Those who come to the Dojo of Lies seeking the

adventurous life of the villainous and bold Scorpion courtier usually find their calling elsewhere. It quickly becomes apparent to the young courtiers that the most common pawns of a Scorpion lord are the Scorpion of lower station.

Training can continue uneventfully for years. Many students seeking "outside education" attempt to insinuate themselves into the myriad plots permeating Ryoko Owari when they feel they are able to do so. Only the most perceptive students understand that this is simply another step in the training, and perhaps the main reason the Dojo of Lies opened where it did.

Gempukku is performed once a year, in the winter courts of Ryoko Owari and the Empire. Those who wish to pass their gempukku simply make this known to their sensei, and (unless the masters think the student is grossly overestimating his own ability) they are sent with a proven Scorpion ambassador to the winter courts. Students may not request a particular court; the masters of the academy send a student where they believe he will be challenged appropriately. Students pass the test simply by returning to the Dojo of Lies the following spring with the favorable opinion of the courtier they were assigned to. From this assignment, the student and sensei begin the graduate's career, depending on what sort of contacts and plots he unfolded during the winter, if any.

SENSEI

As the master of the most feared academy of courtiers and politicians, the position of Grandmaster of the Dojo of Lies is perhaps more taxing than any similar position in the Empire. In addition to overseeing the future of his clan, the Grandmaster must stay abreast of the political climate across Rokugan as it happens — should the subordinate sensei of the Dojo be left in ignorance, it could spell disaster for an unwitting student.

SHOSURO TABERU

Master Sensei, The Dojo of Lies

[Courtier 20; Bayushi Courtier 5/Otomo Seiyaku 3]

Few men of the court have been forced to endure the horrors that the aging Taberu has seen, and he is all the more worthy of a sensei for it. Shosuro Taberu was still young when the failed Scorpion Clan Coup swept his clan into dust, and he was forced to manipulate and strike completely unseen. Even when the Clan War ended, his clan was sent to the Burning Sands, where Taberu surely thought he would perish. After the Scorpion's return to Rokugan, Taberu found himself hunted by the Darkness in the city of Otosan Uchi.



This life of blood and war has forged a cold and ruthless man, though Taberu is as cordial and polite as ever. He will do anything at any time, however, if he feels that it is in the best interests of the clan. He has murdered men with his own hands, and sent hapless and talented young Scorpions off to their deaths to further the larger goals of the Scorpion. Though they are loath to admit it, even the masters of the Shosuro Assassin Academy find Taberu a touch unsettling. Taberu himself doesn't care. He has a job to do, and he takes it more seriously than he probably should.

A generation of courtiers have been bred under his care, and the fruits of his efforts are just now ripening. The Crane's influence on the court has much less to do with the war against the Crab than they think, and the death of the traitor Aramasu has caused a gratifying amount of confusion shot through with opportunity.

If there is a single shred of human soul left in the Grandmaster, it shines in his poetry of the last ten years. Taberu is considered one of the premier poets of the Empire by many, and it is a great honor to be invited to one of his recitals. Even this aspect of his life, however, is devoted to his duty — Taberu generally dispatches his minions among the crowds of his recitals, and relies on his outstanding talent to lower the guard of visiting lords. This has allowed his subordinates to discern secrets that would have otherwise been guarded from the faces and souls of the men and women of the Empire.

Mechanical Notes: Taberu believes in being able to accomplish a task alone if one must. He is capable with a blade, though he makes sure this is a well-hidden secret. He is also a manipulator of emotions and words — his skills, traits, ability scores, and feats all reflect his preference to personally manipulate others instead of working through an intermediary.

DOJO OF LIES BENEFITS

The preeminent school of the Scorpion courtiers is home to both the most affable and the most dangerous members of the Clan. This reputation leaves many wondering if their pleasant Scorpion companion is plotting their downfall or is truly fond of them. Students of the Dojo of Lies honor their dojo by removing the tail from any Scorpion appearing on their garments (save those on the clan mon).

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Without a doubt, the guiding basis of the Scorpion courtier is social grace and control... of others. The Dojo of Lies insists that its students be fully capable of exerting this control.

Benefit: Students of this school may add half of their Intelligence modifier (rounded up) to their Bluff checks.

Benefit: A courtier trained at the Dojo of Lies may use his Awareness instead of his Willpower when rolling for the Intimidate skill.

TRAINING BENEFIT

More than any other courtier school in the Empire, the Dojo of Lies focuses on the manipulation of others — everything taught there is a means to this end.

Benefit: Choose a single Charisma or Intelligence-based skill at a time when the character gains a level from the Dojo of Lies. When using this skill, the courtier gains an additional +1 to that ability modifier.

Benefit: The courtier may choose one Awareness-based skill upon his graduation that he may roll (and not keep) an extra die when using, once per day.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

SHOSURO YASUKO

[Courtier 7; Bayushi Courtier 2]

Yasuko has stood in the shadow of one name since her childhood — Bayushi Kachiko, the legendary Second Thunder of the Scorpion and leader of the clan through the troubles of the Clan War. Everybody compared not only Yasuko's beauty but also her innate talent for intrigue to this legend. Shosuro Yasuko herself has never minded much; after all, who can complain about being told they are worthy of a legend?

However, Yasuko is more interested in making her own name known. To this end, she has made herself instrumental in the Scorpion's plots to usurp the power of the Imperial Courts away from the Crane. She has excelled in the art of seduction, like the image she is held up to. Unlike the great Kachiko, who was said to have never broken her loyalty to her husband, Yasuko is infamous for her more... direct approach to the art. Shosuro Yasuko can be found anywhere in the capital city of Otosan Uchi, ensnaring unwary samurai into becoming pawns of the Scorpion.

IDE MAKANO

[Courtier 11; Bayushi Courtier 3]

When the great doors of the Bayushi Courtier Academy opened in Ryoko Owari, young Ide Makano was among the first Unicorn to wander in. It was people like Makano that has made the Scorpion's plans for the Dojo of Lies real — Makano has taken to the teachings of the Scorpion as if they were the finest opium. He has betrayed secrets of both his family and clan to the Scorpion in exchange for further tutoring and support.

What the Ide know and the Scorpion only suspect is that Makano is not at all what he appears to be. The Ide have used the Scorpion's plans against them, and placed Makano in their ranks as a high-ranking spy. Makano himself has not gotten a day of rest in years, as he hurries back and forth between his family to report, and to his Scorpion contacts to maintain appearances. His is a deadly game that constantly keeps him on the move with Ryoko Owari... but he never wanted a dull life.

TABLE 7-1: THE BAYUSHI ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+2	Favored Enemy
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+3	Stolen Secrets
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+3	Favored Enemy (2nd)
4th	+4	+1	+4	+4	Stolen Secrets
5th	+5	+1	+4	+4	Favored Enemy (3rd)

ADVANCED TRAINING

BAYUSHI ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The most advanced students of the Bayushi style are unheralded and unknown. They are the ultimate combatants of the Scorpion; their completely focused combat style is revealed only to those who will live no longer. The Elite Guard walk the fine line between samurai and honorless assassin. They are typically employed as yojimbo to important courtiers of the clan, or as independent agents who kill in broad daylight. They are not simple stalkers or infiltrators, however, and consider themselves above the "dirty" tasks their clansmen must engage in from time to time. Quite simply, they kill in a way that many never expect from the Scorpion — openly and in a somewhat fair manner.

Hit Die: d10.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Bayushi Elite Guard, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Scorpion.

Honor/Alignment: Any lawful.

Base Attack Bonus: +10

Skills: Knowledge (any one Clan or acknowledged Roku-gani family): 6 ranks.

Feats: Know the School, Strike at the Tail.

CLASS SKILLS

The Bayushi Elite Guard's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Concentration (Con), Iaijutsu Focus (Cha), Knowledge (any Clan or Family of Rokugan), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Bayushi Elite Guard prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Bayushi Elite Guard are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and all armor.

Favored Enemy: A Bayushi Elite Guard chooses a clan as his favored enemy. (The Guard may choose the Scorpion, as some agents are trained to hunt down rogue Scorpion agents.) Due to his extensive study of that clan's fighting styles and practices, the Guard gains a +1 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Knowledge checks when using these skills against a member of that clan. He gets the same bonus to attack rolls against members of the chosen clan.

At 3rd and 5th level, the Bayushi Elite Guard may select a new clan as a favored enemy, and the bonus associated with every previously selected favored enemy goes up by +1.

Stolen Secrets: The Elite Guard's intense study of other schools is supplemented by the vast knowledge of the Scorpion spy network. Such insight allows the Guard to foil even the most advanced techniques of other clans. At 2nd level, the Bayushi Elite Guardsman may choose one Clan Technique feat that no longer functions when used in combat against him. This feat must be chosen from the clan the character has named with his Know the School feat. He also gains the Know the School feat again for free.

At 4th level, the bonuses gained from the Know the School feat increase to +2, and the Bayushi Elite Guard may choose two more Technique Feats (from among the clans he has chosen for his Know the School feats) that no longer function when used in combat against him.

BAYUSHI ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Bayushi Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Bayushi Bushi 4

Technique: My Enemy's Eyes

The Bayushi Elite Guardsman learns to excel against opponents who use a particular style. The bushi gains 5 ranks in the Know the School skill for free for a particular school. In addition, when engaging practitioners of the chosen school the bushi gains an additional attack and a free Raise each round of combat, and his Kenjutsu and Iaijutsu are considered to be two ranks higher. The bushi gains these benefits (and those of the Know the School skill) during Iaijutsu duels as well.

KATA OF THE SCORPION

The Scorpion guard their kata as jealously as they guard all their secrets. Few of the outsiders that are accepted into their schools are allowed to learn these ancient kata. Those who do gain the opportunity to learn Scorpion kata should understand that they have been given a great gift, and the Scorpion will expect that gift to be repaid.

BLACKENED SIGHT

Preparation Time: 35 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Special: This kata must be learned and used with a particular weapon.

The Blackened Sight kata is a high art among Scorpion bushi. Few have ever mastered its movements, much less the focused state of mind it requires to produce the effect Bayushi Nikute intended when he developed the kata hundreds of years ago. The complex movements of this kata summon forth the chi of the bushi, pushing it outward around him in formations that slowly become shadowy reflections of himself. When the ritual is complete, the bushi's eyes are completely black, and his form shimmers and flickers.

Requirements: Dodge, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Mobility, The Pincers Hold The Tail Strikes, Strike at the Tail

XP Cost: 3,000

Effect: You gain the effects of one-half concealment for the duration of the kata. Any round in which you do not move ten feet cancels the effects of the kata.

Rank: Bayushi Bushi 5

Cost: 7

Effect: Opponents may not re-roll 10s on attack rolls against you, and must drop all attack dice that roll less than your Air Ring. You may not declare a Full Attack when using this kata, and you must move at least ten feet each round or the kata ends.



CHAPTER EIGHT:

DOJO OF THE UNICORN CLAN

Ienari drew the sting of the daikyu to her cheek, sighting along the shaft as her steed galloped along beneath her. She struggled to adjust for the breakneck speed of her mount, balancing herself using only her knees and aiming at a straw target a hundred feet away. Hoping for the best, she released the arrow.

"Bishamon's blood!" the sensei screamed as the arrow flew wide. "What were you aiming at?" A chorus of snickers echoed through her fellow students, all waiting patiently for their turn to attempt to hit the target. The sensei silenced them with a harsh frown.

"I am sorry, sensei!" Ienari said, wheeling her horse and pulling the reins to halt its movement. "I did not expect it to be so difficult."

Sensei Shinjo Maku said nothing. He only deepened his customary frown, turned, and vaulted onto his own horse in a single swift movement. Knowing its master's wishes well, the great animal was already in motion before Maku was completely seated in the saddle. The tall warrior stood in his stirrups, drew the great bow he wore strapped across his back with a single hand, swiftly removed an arrow from the quiver strapped to his saddle, and released. He repeated the movement three times, nearly quicker than the students could perceive. The arrows took the straw target in the head, the heart, and the groin. Maku wheeled his steed to a halt and turned to face Ienari and the others.

"Horse archery," Maku said, his low voice carrying across the wide open field, "is perhaps the most difficult of the combat arts. One must learn balance. One must learn harmony with the steed. One must not only master the bow, but compensate for the distractions that will result from the ride, from the weather, and from your own weakness. A samurai who can wield the katana will impress the pampered courtiers in Otosan Uchi, but a samurai who can shoot from horseback can truly call himself a Unicorn."

"But sensei," Ienari said, bowing her head respectfully as her

teacher turned his attention toward her. "If horse archery is so difficult, why is it the first bujutsu art we must learn?"

Maku looked at her for a long moment, then turned to the others. "Yori," he said, pointing to a young man at the end of the line. His head snapped up and his eyes bulged, shocked at his sensei's sudden scrutiny. "Do you know why we study horse archery first?" the sensei asked.

"Shinjo once said, 'Travel the most difficult road first,'" Yori replied in a meek voice. "Then all others will seem smooth."

"Excellent," Maku said. He galloped toward Yori and tossed his daikyu toward the young man. The young student caught it in the air. "Your turn next," the sensei said.

SHINJO DOJO

Classes: Berserker, Fighter, Ranger, Samurai

Schools: Moro Bushi, Shinjo Bushi, Shinjo Scout, Hiruma Scout (special)

HISTORY

The rather simply named Shinjo Dojo is housed within the great structure of Shiro Shinjo itself. The dojo was established in 816, after the return of the Unicorn, though its traditions extend back much farther than that. The sensei of Shinjo Dojo consider themselves the heirs to Shinjo's own teachings, passed down from generation to generation during the long centuries spent in the strange lands outside of Rokugan.

The highest ranking teachers of the Shinjo Dojo have always been members of the Shinjo family, usually direct descendants of Shinjo herself. When Shinjo Yokatsu brought shame and dishonor upon the Shinjo family three decades ago, the Shinjo lost much of their status and their position as ruling family. The Shinjo's role within Shinjo Dojo, however, was an exception. As none of the sensei of Shinjo Dojo were revealed to be in any way connected to the Kolat, and many of the most influential Unicorn samurai had trained at Shinjo Dojo at some point, the school was above reproach. Shinjo Dojo was seen as an island of honor within the shame and deceit of the Shinjo family, and many innocent Shinjo sought to redeem their names by finding positions instructing at the academy.

Moto Gaheris, who became Unicorn Champion during this time, noticed this sudden increase in available instructors and sought a way to turn it to his clan's advantage. With the recent arrival of many Moto from the depths of the Burning Sands, none in Rokugan (and indeed few in the Unicorn itself) knew exactly how many samurai Shinjo had brought with her from foreign lands. Gaheris seized upon the sudden availability of skilled bushi instructors by secretly granting samurai status to dozens of capable ashigaru and lesser vassals of the Moto who had accompanied him from the desert, all of whom were quite capable warriors but not true samurai. These young "samurai" were quickly given their gempukku and enlisted at Shinjo Dojo.

Though some of the Shinjo sensei looked upon the sudden appearance of so many new samurai with a certain amount of skepticism, they were eager for the chance to redeem their own names by instructing the next generation of bushi. As a result, the ranks of trained samurai among the Unicorn swelled. The number of available Unicorn samurai troops doubled in the space of fifteen years. Gaheris was pleased.

TRADITION

For most of the "school's" history there was no actual school at all, and even in modern times the instructors and student body view the building that houses the dojo as merely a necessary structure. In keeping with the nomadic nature of the Unicorn, the students of Shinjo Dojo often leave for months at a time, taking their teachings into the wild steppes of the clan.

Naturally, instruction focuses on mounted combat. Upon arrival at the academy, each student is assigned a steed. This is usually a young horse, relatively untrained and untested. The young bushi is not only expected to fight on this steed during mounted practice sessions, but to feed and care for the animal as well.

Throughout the course of their studies, both rider and steed are expected to learn the skills required to become a fine Unicorn warriors. It is hoped that by making the young samurai reliant upon a single steed that an emotional bond will form between the two, increasing the ability of steed and rider to work together as an effective team. Shinjo Dojo's methods seem to be very successful, as their mounted riders are indeed the finest cavalry in all of Rokugan.

TRAINING

The training of the Unicorn is unlike that of any other Great Clan. Though they train in kenjutsu like other clans, they do not emphasize it the way most dojo do. All weapons are treated with equal consideration, and a student is encouraged to focus upon those areas of bujutsu in which he seems to show particular talent. Gaijin fighting styles adopted during the Unicorn's travels outside the Empire are also taught at Shinjo Dojo. Gaijin archery techniques, especially horse archery, are an important part of the curriculum.

Like all major dojo, Shinjo Dojo is open to students of other clans who meet the sensei's approval. However, the Unicorn have endured centuries of disdain and disrespect from other clans for their unique fighting styles, and the sensei of Shinjo Dojo tend to take this attitude as a personal insult. When students visit from other clans, the Shinjo sensei take particular delight in exposing them to harsh training regimens using gaijin weapons and fighting techniques. These students are treated roughly, given extra exercises, and sternly reprimanded if they seem unable to master the Unicorn techniques. If any visiting student ever refers to the training as "gaijin" or "barbaric" they are immediately expelled from Shinjo Dojo and asked not to return.

Visiting students are never allowed access to a full-blooded

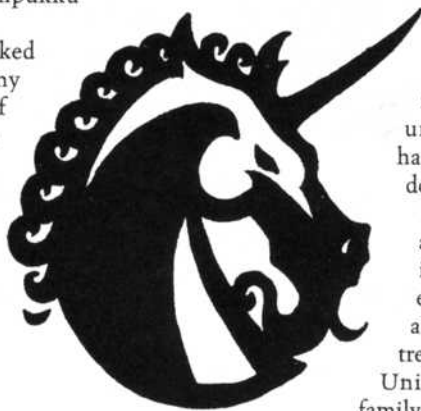
Unicorn steed. They are supplied with lesser steeds, usually Unicorn horses crossbred with Rokugani ponies. Any reduction in performance is blamed upon the student, not the steed. If this animal is injured while under the visitor's care, the visitor is given harsh punishments and extra labor around the dojo.

The exception to the Shinjo Dojo sensei's abuse of outsiders is the Ox Clan. As this clan is separated from the Unicorn by only a generation (and earned Minor Clan status by aiding the Unicorn), Ox are seen as kin and treated with the respect due any member of the Unicorn. Likewise, the Crab of the Hiruma family are considered almost cousins. For centuries, when the Hiruma family castle was lost to the Shadowlands Horde, the Hiruma family sent their scouts to Shinjo Dojo to train among the Unicorn. The Hiruma still occasionally send their scouts to Shinjo Dojo, hoping to keep relations between the two families friendly. Though the Hiruma students are not given steeds and seldom study the gaijin fighting techniques, the Unicorn view them as welcome friends.

SENSEI

The only two occupations that seem to allow the Shinjo to cleanse the dishonor Shinjo Yokatsu heaped upon their name are warrior and teacher, so those Shinjo not fully suited for front-line combat eventually make their way here. Nearly all of the instructors at Shinjo Dojo are members of the Shinjo family. The chief instructor is usually the samurai with the most combat experience, though an ability to draw a direct bloodline to the Lady Shinjo also adds to a sensei's influence.

It has been a long-standing tradition that the Unicorn Champion is the true master sensei of Shinjo Dojo, and can return to claim this position any time he deems fit to do so. Most Unicorn Champions do this only once a year, and only as a temporary ceremonial gesture, to review the bushi in



training and inspire loyalty. Though Moto Gaheris is the first Unicorn Champion who was not a Shinjo, he preserved this tradition and honored the dojo once yearly until old age robbed him of the ability to easily do so. Gaheris' grandson Chagatai, though not yet the true Champion of the Unicorn, visits Shinjo Dojo once a year to pass on his grandfather's regards and personally inspect the young bushi.

SHINJO MAKU

Master Sensei, Shinjo Dojo

[Fighter 4/Ranger 8/Samurai 4/Shinjo Explorer 4; Shinjo Scout 3/Shinjo Bushi 2/Unicorn Magistrate 3]

Shinjo Maku is a tall, lean, handsome man whose face is creased in an eternal frown. He seems very young for a master sensei of one of the greatest dojo in all of Rokugan, but he is merely very well preserved. In his early fifties, Maku awakens before sunrise each morning, practices extensive kata exercises, takes a two-hour ride on his favored steed, Mikoto, and eats a very strict diet of nutritious foods which he prepares himself from ingredients harvested in the wilderness. He is an extraordinarily strong, tough, self-reliant person not accustomed to weakness, and he accepts no weakness from his students.

Maku seldom shows emotion during instruction. He does not chastise a failed student for his failure; he simply exposes that student to harsher duties and exercises until he either triumphs or collapses utterly. Maku is not completely without compassion, and will not work a student (or his steed) to death or injury. He simply wants the next generation of Unicorn to be stronger than the last. He feels the sting of the Shinjo family's dishonor quite keenly, as he was Shinjo Yokatsu's nephew. Maku was a young bushi in Yokatsu's elite guard when the Unicorn Champion was exposed as a Kolat Master. Maku knows that if even he could be deluded by weakness, then those who follow must be even stronger. At night, Maku's dreams are filled with strange nightmares, nightmares of a dark future that could consume the Shinjo. These nightmares drive him to push his students even harder, so that if his nightmares come to pass and he is destroyed by this mysterious evil, his students will be strong enough to fight it.

Maku has no wife or children. The closest thing he has to a friend is his cousin Shinjo Shono, the son of Shinjo Yokatsu. Though the two often meet to share stories or simply relax, Maku considers the younger Unicorn too foolhardy and irresponsible. He often encourages Shono to take a position as instructor at Shinjo Dojo, but Shono has always refused.

Mechanical Notes: Maku's skills, abilities, and feats concentrate on mounted combat and archery techniques. He will readily teach these abilities to any student of the dojo, though Maku is a very demanding sensei.

SHINJO DOJO BENEFITS

Training at Shinjo Dojo emphasizes mounted combat techniques as well as an open-minded approach to a variety of different weapon styles. A student of Shinjo Dojo may choose to honor his dojo by wearing a netsuke carved in the image of a horse with a flaming mane (symbol of the Shinjo family). In the past, these netsuke have been made of ivory. Since the dishonor of the Shinjo family, the sensei have asked that these netsuke be carved of darkest ebony.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

None.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Shinjo Dojo students are particularly skilled in the difficult combat art of horse archery.

Benefit: You gain a +1 competence bonus on all attack rolls made with a bow while mounted on a moving steed.

Benefit: Archery and Horse Archery are considered the same skill for you; you need not learn these skills separately.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

HIDA KURODA

[Samurai 10; Shinjo Bushi 2/Hida Bushi 2]

The Champion of the Crab — missing and believed dead since the Shadowlands attack on the Kaiu Wall — was a student of Shinjo Dojo. Though the son of a former Unicorn, Kuroda was treated with the same disdain all outsiders receive when training at the Unicorn school. Despite this, Kuroda thrived and learned the lessons of the Unicorn well, even adopting many Unicorn habits and cultural beliefs. The sensei of Shinjo Dojo were impressed, and were sad to see the young Crab go. In truth, they considered him one of their own, and felt that he had much unexplored potential.

The news of Kuroda's disappearance shocked sensei Shinjo Maku. The normally unemotional sensei was torn with grief at the report. In his heart, Maku believes that Kuroda is still alive, and has used what political clout he has to encourage Moto Chagatai to assist the Crab in reclaiming the Kaiu Wall.

SHINJO OSEMA

[Ranger 6/Emerald Magistrate 2; Shinjo Scout 3]

Though Shinjo Osema has been offered a position as an instructor at Shinjo Dojo three times, he has always refused. Osema has instead chosen to pursue a path now looked upon with disdain by many Unicorn — the path of the magistrate. During the early days of Toturi's reign, countless proud Shinjo Magistrates rode forth to bring justice across the land. However, the pride of the Shinjo Magistrates was shattered when the Lady Shinjo revealed many of them to be Kolat agents. Some said that Shinjo Yokatsu had manipulated Toturi into giving the Unicorn the duty of protecting his laws so that the Kolat Master could pervert those laws. Where at one time the banner of a Unicorn magistrate inspired confidence and pride, now it inspires fear and distrust.

Osema feels that it is his duty to restore the tarnished image of the Unicorn magistrates. He never takes a bribe. He never allows a crime to go unpunished. His eyes are ever open to machinations of the nefarious Kolat. His dedication to justice is absolute and untiring. He will restore the reputation of the Shinjo magistrates, alone if he must. The Kolat are aware of Osema, but find his crusade amusing. His zealous dedication to justice has made him a paranoid man with few allies. He is no true threat to their activities. Not yet, at any rate.

SHIRO UTAKU SHOJO

Classes: Samurai

Schools: Utaku Battle Maiden

HISTORY

Like Shinjo Dojo, the dojo of the Shiotome (Battle Maidens) predates its actual physical structure. The fighting styles and traditions of the Battle Maidens have been passed down through the generations since the time of Otaku, though they were never formally written down until the construction of Shiro Utaku Shojo. The home of the Battle Maidens is one of the most heavily fortified structures in all the lands of the Unicorn, and represents the legendary strength and power of the Battle Maidens.

Shiro Utaku Shojo is relatively small, as the Battle Maidens are extremely exclusive. Only those who can claim some connection to Otaku's bloodline are welcome in the dojo; others are tolerated at best. Despite their small numbers, the Utaku are the elite shock troops of the Unicorn, and the battle cry of the Shiotome is feared throughout the Empire.

During the War Against the Shadow, the Battle Maidens were nearly wiped out by Oni no Okura during an ill-conceived attack upon Shiro Matsu. The return of Shinjo revealed many key numbers of the Battle Maidens to be Kolat as well, further reducing their numbers.

When Otaku Kamoko sacrificed herself to destroy the Dark Moto, it was thought that perhaps the Battle Maidens were near their last days, with few still surviving who could claim the bloodline of Otaku. On the tenth anniversary of the day Kamoko was taken into the heavens to dwell with Lady Shinjo, a rain of sparkling star-motes rained upon Shiro Utaku, an omen some said signaled the end of the Battle Maidens. Instead, this event turned out to be a miracle of extraordinary proportions. In the three years following Kamoko's ascension, births among the Battle Maidens skyrocketed. Some Battle Maidens gave birth to twins and mortality among mothers and children was extremely low. All of the children born during this three year period — with one exception — were girls. At first, this was thought to be some terrible scandal among the Shiotome, but the shugenja who investigated the matter confirmed that it was indeed a blessing from the spirit of their lost Thunder. The population of the Battle Maidens would replenish, and the Shiotome would rebuild.

TRADITION

The tradition of the Utaku Battle Maidens (originally the Otaku Battle Maidens) is a proud one. Since Otaku first swore her loyalty to the Lady Shinjo without speaking a word, the Battle Maidens have followed a philosophy of purity through action. The Battle Maidens do not need to waste words describing their valor or honor — their actions speak quite loudly enough. Battle Maidens are told to demonstrate their worth through action. Battle Maidens rarely apologize; it is more likely that if they feel that they are in error they will take some action to correct their error instead.

Only the Utaku may ride the powerful Utaku steeds, descendants of the legendary magical horse Vata and his herd.

Each Battle Maiden is bound to a particular steed, whom she treats not merely as a friend or ally but as an extension of herself.

Battle Maidens are told nearly from birth that they have been chosen by the blood of Otaku, and that they are intended for a destiny greater than common women. Battle Maiden thus tend to be extraordinarily brash and confident, sometimes bordering on outright arrogance. This arrogance is tempered by a strong sense of duty, as the Battle Maidens all know that they would not have been chosen had Otaku not intended them for some great purpose.

It is a tradition for all students of Shiro Utaku Shojo to spend one night within the halls of Otaku Seido, the shrine of the first Unicorn Thunder. In recent times, this shrine has also become home to Utaku Shiko, who returned through Oblivion's Gate during the Battle of Volturum. Realizing that her time on this world is long since over, Shiko no longer seeks to lead the Battle Maidens or ride by their side, but she maintains this shrine and offers her advice to the next generation.

TRAINING

Shiotome mostly train on horseback, focusing on the naginata and katana. Although Battle Maidens possess some skill in archery, they usually leave such matters to the Shinjo. The Shiotome prefer to engage their enemies directly, where their finely honed martial prowess and the superior strength of their steeds can grind the enemy into the dirt.

Battle Maidens are trained to rely upon other Battle Maidens, and to adjust quickly when the strength of lesser allies fails. The Battle Maidens are used to being in the thick of battle with little support and little chance for escape — they are taught to thrive in such situations and, despite all logic to the contrary, survive.

Students from other clans occasionally visit Shiro Utaku Shojo, but are never allowed to ride the Utaku steeds and are not privy to the secret techniques of the Battle Maidens. Instead, they are simply given cursory martial training of the sort available at nearly any ronin dojo throughout the Empire. Granted, the skill of the Utaku sensei is usually far superior to that of the typical ronin, but most visiting students walk away feeling that they somehow missed something.

SENSEI

Unlike most other families, the chief sensei of the Battle Maidens is always the daimyo of the Utaku family. Though this may seem a rather demanding role for the Utaku daimyo, who also leads the Battle Maidens into combat during major campaigns, the traditions of the Battle Maidens allow for the daimyo to fulfill her role as sensei with little difficulty. Though the daimyo is typically the chief instructor, most of the actual instruction at the dojo is performed by lesser sisters. At most, the sensei's only true duties amount to an occasional inspection of the younger students, and perhaps a group training lesson with the katana or naginata once every few weeks.

UTAKU XIENG CHI

Sensei, Shiro Utaku Shojo

[Samurai 7/Battle Maiden 8; Utaku Battle Maiden 5]

Xieng Chi is the aged leader of the Battle Maidens and sensei of the Utaku dojo. It has been her duty to forge a generation of children into warriors, replacing the large numbers of Battle Maidens who were lost during the War Against the

Shadow. Though the numbers of the Shiotome are growing, they are still much fewer than they have been in centuries. Most of the Maidens are young, inexperienced. At the direction of Moto Chagatai she has directed her young Shiotome against gaijin outposts in the Burning Sands so that they will gain experience in real combat, and they have performed well, but she fears that this younger generation is not ready to face real samurai. When she hears tales of what has happened to the Kaiu Wall, she is even more afraid. If Daigotsu's forces can defeat the Crab, the Unicorn may be next, and if the Crab cannot defeat him, what hope have an army of inexperienced young girls? With this dark future in mind, Xiang Chi trains the young Battle Maidens with a relentless fury. She relies heavily upon the advice of Utau Shiko, and has offered the spirit leadership of the family on one occasion. Shiko refused, for she knows that only Xiang Chi bears the strength to lead the family through this difficult time.

When the time comes for the Shiotome to be tested, they will be ready.

Mechanical Notes: Xiang Chi's skills, abilities, and feats tend to concentrate on powerful attacks and mounted combat. She will teach these abilities to any student of the Shiotome, but demands nothing less than excellence.

SHIRO UTAKU SHOJO BENEFITS

The name of the Battle Maidens carries a great deal of weight in Rokugan, even after their massive defeats during the War Against the Shadow. Only a fool takes the Shiotome lightly, and the name of their school is recognized by all major dojo.

Training in Shiro Utau Shijo emphasizes lightning quick attacks both mounted and on foot. The Shiotome often distinguish themselves by mounting a single horn upon the forehead barding of their steed, giving the animal the appearance of a true Unicorn. Other Unicorn who choose to do so are frowned upon by the Shiotome, who consider this a symbol of their school.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

All students of Shiro Utau Shijo are Battle Maidens. All Battle Maidens are students of Shiro Utau Shijo. The two are inseparable, and thus no benefits are gained that are not already gained by being a Battle Maiden.

Benefit: You may take the Battle Maiden prestige class (presented in *Oriental Adventures*TM).

Benefit: You may attend the Utau Battle Maiden School.

TRAINING BENEFIT

None.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

UTAKU YU-PAN

[Ranger 1/Samurai 4/Shinjo Explorer 1; Utau Battle Maiden 2]

Yu-Pan is one of the new generation of Battle Maidens, born during the period when the Battle Maidens were blessed by the spirit of Kamoko. Her birth was a joyous event, as were those of her three older sisters. Unfortunately, Yu-Pan's life has not been one of joy. During the War of Spirits, the village where she dwelled was attacked by the army of Bayushi Tozasu, a vengeful Scorpion spirit bent on slaughtering the descendants of the Unicorn who killed him long ago. Yu-Pan was to take her gempukku that very day, but as she had not done so, she was not truly a samurai.

Thus, Tozasu spared her. Her mother, brother, and sisters were all killed by the spirit-Scorpion. Since that day, the young Battle Maiden has possessed an intense hatred of the spirits who returned at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. She has sworn that she will not suffer any dishonorable spirit to live, no matter how powerful they may be. Even the noble Utau Shiko is not above her suspicion. Xiang Chi and Shiko are both somewhat disappointed that Yu-Pan has allowed herself to be consumed with such fury at such a young age, and hope that she can find a way to channel her anger.



ROJIN'S WANDERERS

Classes: Fighter, Rogue, Ranger

Schools: Shinjo Scout

HISTORY

Rojin's Wanderers are not really a school *per se*. More accurately, they are a group of Shinjo samurai who wander the harshest unexplored lands of the Empire. They were founded by a Unicorn named Shinjo Rojin, who was thought to have died during the Clan War. In truth, he merely disappeared during an exploration deep into the Plains Above Evil and did not come back for three years. Upon his return, Rojin told of the vast resources of iron and lumber he had discovered during his travels. As a reward, Moto Gaheris gave Rojin nearly unlimited funds to support his next expedition (which took him deep into the Burning Sands) and supplied him with a staff of seventy bushi to accompany him.

Thus Rojin's Wanderers were born.

The Wanderers are listed here as a dojo, for the most daring and clever young bushi are sometimes invited to accompany the wanderers on their adventures. Though the missions are often long and dangerous, a young bushi can learn much

through first-hand experience. Those who have traveled among Rojin's Wanderers become the finest scouts of the Unicorn (and in that clan, that's saying quite a bit).

TRADITION

Rojin's Wanderers have existed for barely a generation, and thus have few traditions to speak of. Though all of the Wanderers are capable bushi, their true focus is on exploration, not conquest. They do not seek to explore lands that have already been settled, but visit unsettled territories far from the cities of man.

Because the Wanderers' primary focus is exploration rather than teaching, a Wanderer who leaves the group may find it difficult to locate his sensei for further training ("The Wanderers have gone *where?!?*"). However, as the size of the group has grown, it has become increasingly difficult for all of the Wanderers to leave on a single mission at the same time. Those who remain behind can be found in the village of Kibukito, where Shinjo Juro (see "Sensei") maintains an estate.

TRAINING

Young bushi who accompany Rojin's Wanderers are usually given menial duties and told to stay out of the way. This is the first test. Those who know how to obey orders but still find time to wander off and explore on their own (without getting into trouble) are obviously the sort of people the Wanderers are looking for. These select few are chosen for further training, and invited to join the group permanently.

Rojin's Wanderers are expected to be experts in flora and fauna, and must also learn how to handle a horse in rough and unpredictable terrain. Survival skills are also highly emphasized, as these individuals often spend large amounts of time alone with nothing more than their wits to keep them alive.

SENSEI

Though there is no one with the title "sensei" among the Wanderers, the older scouts are certainly the teachers of the group. A practical lot, the younger members know to bow to the wisdom of those who have been surviving in the wild longer, so a student-teacher relationship naturally develops. There is no head sensei, but Rojin's son Juro is the leader of the group, so he fulfills that role.

SHINJO JURO

Leader, Rojin's Wanderers

[Ranger 5/Shinjo Explorer 10; Shinjo Scout 5]

Shinjo Juro is the only son of Shinjo Rojin, by a geisha with whom Rojin grew too comfortable. Rojin acknowledged Juro as his own as soon as he was aware of his existence, and began taking the boy along in his adventures. After Rojin disappeared during an expedition to the Burning Sands, Juro took command of the group and maintains it to this day. He is a fat, jolly man in his early forties who is at home in the wilderness but much prefers the comforts of court life. Though he can

certainly hold his own on an expedition, he prefers to remain at his father's estates and organize the missions from there. Though he disdains the dirt of the road, exploration and discovery still excite him, and Juro looks forward to the reports of his scouts with eager anticipation.

Mechanical Notes: Though he rarely explores, Juro is one of the finest wilderness scouts in the Empire. His skills, abilities, and feats concentrate on stealth, observation, and escape. He will teach his techniques to any who have met the approval of the wanderers, and easily befriends those who also appreciate the luxury of a fine castle as well as the joy of discovery.

ROJIN'S WANDERER BENEFITS

Though few outside the Unicorn know of the Wanderers, their skills as wilderness scouts and explorers are unequalled. Those who attend this group do nothing special to distinguish themselves to one another; the Wanderers are such a small group that all members recognize one another on sight.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

None.

TRAINING BENEFITS

You are a master of surviving in harsh conditions.

Benefit: You gain a +2 competence bonus on all Wilderness Lore checks that relate to survival in the wilderness.

Benefit: You gain a free Raise on all skill rolls that relate to survival in the wilderness.

ADVANCED TRAINING

SHINJO ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Though the Moto now lead the Unicorn, the elite guard of the clan still retains the name of the Kami that watches over them. Only the finest cavalry of the Unicorn are invited to join the Shinjo Elite Guard. These troops serve as the Unicorn Champion's honor guard, and carry out missions at his request throughout the Empire. The Shinjo Elite are known for their speed and swiftness. As a Unicorn's speed and swiftness outpaces normal cavalry, so do the Shinjo Elite outshine all other Unicorn.

Hit Die: d10.

TABLE 8-1: THE SHINJO ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Shinjo's Speed
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Master of Steeds, Lightning Reflexes
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Shinjo's Fortunes
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Bonus Feat
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Shinjo's Blessing

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Shinjo Elite Guardsman, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Clan: Unicorn.

Base Attack Bonus: +9

Feats: Dancing With the Fortunes, One Spirit, Shinjo's Technique, Way of the Unicorn.

Special: Must be invited to join the Elite Guard by the Unicorn Champion. Must have the ancestral daisho class ability.

CLASS SKILLS

The Shinjo Elite Guardsman's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), and Swim (Str). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Shinjo Elite Guardsman prestige class.

Shinjo's Speed: At 1st level, the Guardsman may spend a Void Point to add twice his Dexterity modifier to his initiative as an insight bonus, or to add triple his Dexterity modifier as an insight bonus to his movement (he may use this ability even when mounted, granting the movement bonus to his steed).

Master of Steeds: The Shinjo Elite are the finest horsemen in all of Rokugan. At 2nd level, the Guardsman may count his Dexterity modifier twice when determining his bonus to Ride checks.

Lightning Reflexes: At 2nd level the Guardsman gains this feat for free.

Shinjo's Fortunes: At 3rd level, the Guardsman is better able to draw upon the legendary fortunes of the Unicorn. When using the Dancing With the Fortunes feat, if the re-rolled die is not better than the original roll, he may use the better result. In addition, he may make two re-rolls per day for each time he has taken Dancing With the Fortunes instead of one.

Bonus Feat: At 4th level, the Guardsman may select a bonus feat from the list of Unicorn samurai feats or technique feats.

Shinjo's Blessing: At 5th level, the Guardsman gains a permanent +2 inherent bonus to Dexterity.

SHINJO ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Shinjo Bushi 3

Path of Egress: Shinjo Bushi 4

Technique: Shinjo's Speed

The Shinjo Elite Guardsman's speed, whether mounted or on foot, is a wonder to behold. Any steed the guardsman rides runs as if its Water were two higher. In addition, the guardsman may add his own Water to his TN to be Hit and all attack rolls.

MASTER HORSE ARCHER (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The Unicorn are the unequaled masters of horseback archery, and the students of Shinjo Dojo are particularly skilled. Many opponents are unprepared for a samurai who can ride full speed and still hit a target accurately from a distance, and the Unicorn take advantage of this. A number of Unicorn bushi train heavily in this form of combat.

Hit Die: d10.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Master Horse Archer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Skills: Ride: 9 ranks.

Feats: Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Fire, Weapon Focus (daikyu), Weapon Specialization (daikyu).

Special: Another master horse archer must agree that you have enough potential to be trained. Most master horse archers are found among the Unicorn, and do not share their secrets easily.

CLASS SKILLS

The master horse archer's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), and Swim (Str). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Master Horse Archer prestige class.

Improved Mounted Archery: At 1st level, the Master Horse Archer's penalties when using a ranged weapon from horseback (already reduced from the Mounted Archery feat) are reduced to 0 from -2 if his mount is taking a double move and to -2 from -4 if his mount is running. In addition, the Master Horse Archer is skilled at riding with his hands free and is not penalized on Ride checks if he is not controlling his mount with his hands, no matter the situation.

Superior Weapon Specialization: At 2nd level, the Master Horse Archer's skill with the bow improves such that he gains an additional +1 to hit and +1 to damage with the daikyu.

TABLE 8-2: THE MASTER HORSE ARCHER

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Improved Mounted Archery
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Superior Weapon Specialization
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Bonus Feat
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Piercing Shot
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Supreme Mounted Archery

Bonus Feat: At 3rd level, the Master Horse Archer may choose a bonus feat from among the following: Improved Critical (daikyu), Improved Initiative, Precise Shot, Ride-by Attack, Shot on the Run, Spirited Charge, Trample. All prerequisites must be met normally.

Piercing Shot: At 4th level the Master Horse Archer has perfected the art of using the great power of the daikyu to strike multiple distant foes with a single shot. As a full attack action, he may angle a shot against an opponent more than 30 feet distant so that it pierces that opponent and continues to strike another target in a straight line. Apply one attack roll against both opponents; even if the attack against the first opponent fails the arrow continues, possibly to strike the other. As this is a single attack roll, Void Points spent affect the chance to strike both targets.

Supreme Mounted Archery: At 5th level, the Master Horse Archer's penalties for firing from the back of a running mount are negated, and he gains a +2 circumstance bonus when firing from a steed.

MASTER HORSE ARCHER (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Shinjo Bushi 2

Path of Egress: Shinjo Scout 1

Technique: Hanari's Technique

Devised by Shinjo Hanari, a Unicorn master of horse archery, this technique allows the archer to fire rapidly from horseback without penalty to hit. Even if the horse is moving full speed, you merely must make your attack roll normally to strike a target. In addition, you may fire two arrows in one round (gaining an extra attack) by making one Raise. You must make a Raise on the additional attack as well.

KATA OF THE UNICORN

The Unicorn dojo rely upon unorthodox maneuvers and unpredictable techniques mastered during their journeys beyond Rokugan. As a result, their kata are quite unlike the kata of other clans.

SHINJO'S BREATH

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 180 minutes

Unicorn bushi quickly learn that they have a distinct advantage when fighting from horseback, and fight best when they can mount or dismount rapidly. This kata allows the Unicorn to perform an acrobatic backward flip, mounting or dismounting with ease.

Requirements: Way of the Unicorn, Ride Skill.

XP Cost: 40

Effect: You may make a Dexterity check (DC 10) to mount or dismount as a free action if your steed is within five feet. If you fail this check, you fall prone and take 1d6 subdual damage.

School Rank: All Unicorn Bushi Schools 1

Cost: 2

Effect: You may make an Agility check vs. TN 15 to instantly mount or dismount if your steed is within five feet. This does not count as your action for the round, so you may do this and attack as well. If you fail the Agility check, you fall prone and take one die of damage.

THUNDERING THE SKY

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 180 minutes

Some believe a Unicorn can only fight on horseback. They are wrong. This kata developed over many centuries, and was perfected shortly after the return of the Unicorn to the Empire. Thundering the Sky is an awesome maneuver to behold, as the Shinjo samurai leaps and spins, never stopping until every sweeping and dizzying movement of the kata is completed. The bushi's attacks seem to come from all angles, dizzying his opponents with multiple feints and distracting maneuvers.

Requirements: Dancing With the Fortunes, Dodge, Expertise, Mobility, One Spirit.

XP Cost: 700

Effect: While under this kata's effects, you cannot run or charge. However, you gain a dodge bonus to AC equal to your Charisma modifier, and gain a +4 bonus to attack any opponent who attacked you and missed since your last action.

School Rank: Shinjo Bushi 3, Shinjo Scout 3, other Unicorn Schools 4

Cost: 5

Effect: Your TN to Be Hit is increased by 15, and you gain an extra attack each round. You cannot run while under this kata's effects, and roll and keep two fewer dice for damage (minimum one).

HOWL OF THE MOTO

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

Nothing is quite as terrifying as a Moto warrior in a fury, and this kata is proof of it. The war cry of the Moto is horrifying, even to those who think themselves without fear. In recent times, even members of other Unicorn families have begun to learn this frightening Moto kata.

Requirements: Cleave, Depths of the Void, Intimidate skill, One Spirit, Power Attack, Void Use.

XP Cost: 700

Effect: You may spend three Void Points to duplicate the effects of a fear spell with a mighty roar. This fear emanates from you in a thirty-foot radius rather than the standard area, and persists for the duration of the encounter. The DC to resist this effect is 14 + your Charisma modifier. Enemies who are immune to fear due to feats or class abilities must save normally if you inflict 20 damage or more upon them with a single melee attack. Allies who are not immune to fear are affected normally unless they also know this kata.

School Rank: Moto Bushi 3, other Unicorn Schools 4

Cost: 5

Effect: Your battle cry produces Fear of a rating equal to your Insight Rank. If you do more than 20 Wounds in a single melee attack against an opponent, he must roll to resist the Fear even if he possesses the Death Trance advantage (or similar immunity to Fear from Advantages, spells, or Techniques). You must spend three Void Points to use this ability, which allows you to radiate Fear until the end of combat. Allies who do not also know this kata are not inherently immune to the Fear.

CHAPTER NINE:

OTHER DOJO
THROUGHOUT ROKUGANFALLEN
MOUNTAIN DOJO

"This is not the end."

— Ichiro Kihongo, after the destruction
of the Badger Clan holdings

HISTORY

When counting the clans of Rokugan, very few people consider the Badger Clan. In truth, the vast majority of the Empire has completely forgotten that they exist. Just before the outbreak of the Clan War, an oni summoned from Jigoku went on a rampage through the Badger lands. The origin of the beast was never made public knowledge, but an Imperial magistrate ended the threat at great cost to his men and himself.

Since that time, the few surviving members of the Ichiro family have banded together in an effort to rebuild. Unfortunately, they possess neither the manpower nor the resources for such an undertaking. They must hire themselves out as mercenaries, making koku however possible in an attempt to fund the restoration of their clan. There is but one Badger Clan dojo, founded in the City of the Rich Frog by Ichiro Kihongo, who assumed control of the clan after the death of the ruling family. The dojo is overseen by sensei Ichiro Tashimi, the last living master of the Badger Clan style.

The Badger Clan style borrows very much from the Crab, from whom the founders of the Badger were descended. Feats of strength are considered essential to the mastery of the style, as is an ability to withstand enormous amounts of physical punishment.

SENSEI

ICHIRO TASHIMI

Last Sensei of the Badger Clan
[Fighter 15/Monk 3; Ichiro Bushi 5]

Tashimi is a very old man, and one of the few surviving Ichiro who were actually in the Badger lands at the time of the oni's rampage. It took him several years to recover from the wounds he suffered, and Tashimi still refuses to speak of the incident.

He is the last living master of the Badger Clan school, and feels the weight of his responsibility every day. Tashimi realizes his time is limited, and has been searching for another to take his place. As yet, he has found no one suitable. If the proper student does not appear, it is possible that the secrets of the Badger Clan will die with him.

Mechanical Notes: Despite his age, Tashimi is possessed of nearly supernatural strength and stamina, and his abilities reflect those qualities.

ADVANCED BADGER TRAINING

TRANSCEND THE MOUNTAIN (BADGER TECHNIQUE FEAT)

The Badger prize strength above all things, and excel at any task requiring a demonstration of physical might.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +4 or higher, Str 14+.

Effect: You double your Strength modifier when calculating the total modifier for Strength-based skills.

NEW FAMILY

Ichiro

Benefit: +1 Strength

The remaining Badger samurai face a constant struggle, but if any family can survive these trials, it is the powerful Ichiro.

ICHIRO BUSHI SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Strength

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu, Wrestling, Yarijutsu, any one High or Bugei skill.

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

Outfit (all considered average quality): Katana, wakizashi, no-dachi or ono, nage-yari, kimono, 2 koku.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Return the Strike

Once, the tenacity of the Badger gave them a reputation as feared combatants throughout the Empire. Though they may be forgotten, they are still formidable. At the beginning of a combat round, the bushi may choose to reduce his initiative result in order to add half the amount it was lowered (rounded up) to either attack or damage rolls for the remainder of the round.

Rank 2: Refuse to Fail

Born of the mountains, the Badger mirror the strength of their surroundings. The bushi may add twice his Insight Rank to all Strength rolls, and may choose to re-roll any Strength roll in an attempt to get a better result, keeping the higher of the two rolls. Unarmed damage is the only damage result that may be re-rolled in this manner.

Rank 3: Crushing Blow

The strike of the Badger cannot be thwarted by mere armor. The bushi ignores light and heavy armor when striking in melee combat. Additionally, the bushi receives a number of free Raises per day equal to half his Strength (rounded down) that may be used on any damage roll.

Rank 4: Crashing Stones

The Badger strikes as often and as mightily as the force of an avalanche. The bushi may make two attacks per round.

Rank 5: Transcend the Mountain

Even the mountains cannot stand before the strength of the Badger. The bushi adds his School Rank to each die for any Strength rolls. This only affects unarmed damage rolls, not damage rolls made with melee weapons.

REICHIN'S REFUGE DOJO

"Throughout my ordeal, I endured only by thinking of you, my loyal brothers and sisters. You are the strength of my family and the foundation upon which all we have built rests. Never again shall we be cast into the shadows. Rejoice, brothers, for the Hare Clan has returned to Rokugan once more!"

— Usagi Ozaki, upon the reformation of the Hare Clan by imperial edict

HISTORY

Few clans have experienced the hardship the Hare have endured. In the years before the Clan War, their holdings were besieged by the Scorpion, leaving them with virtually nothing to call their own. Shortly thereafter, an Imperial edict disbanded the clan after four witnesses came forward to give testimony of the Usagi family's use of maho. Only through the valor and persistence of Usagi Ozaki and a handful of valiant samurai from the Great Clans was a nefarious Kolat plot revealed and the Hare reinstated.

In the intervening years, the Hare Clan has endured unnoticed as it has throughout history. Ironically, Ozaki's trials during the Hare's dissolution forged him into a leader the likes of which the Hare Clan had never known, and under his wisdom and guidance they have prospered.

One of Ozaki's first acts upon the reformation of the Hare Clan was to expand and diversify their martial training. He founded Reichin's Refuge Dojo in a village near Shiro Usagi, and it has since become the primary training post for young Hare samurai.

SENSEI

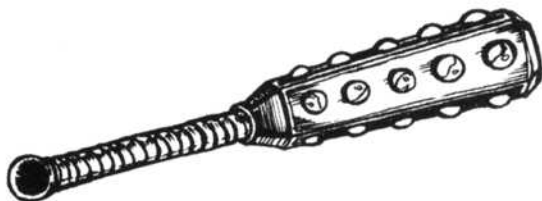
USAGI TAKESHI

Sensei of the Hare Clan

[Samurai 6/Fighter 5/Rogue 4; Hare Bushi 5]

Takeshi was a child when the Hare Clan was dissolved. His father had served as the chief general for Ozaki's father, Usagi Oda. Even at his young age, he felt the disgrace deeply. He lived in Second Chance Village for years until Ozaki reunited the clan. He took his father's name upon the eve of his gempukku. He served for decades in a variety of roles, eventually becoming Ozaki's chief advisor and, eventually, sensei of the Hare dojo. He is perhaps Ozaki's most trusted friend and the only one with whom the daimyo entrusts the training of the Hare Clan soldiers.

Mechanical Notes: Takeshi's abilities reflect his life-long training with the Hare and emphasize speed and athleticism above all else.



ADVANCED HARE TRAINING

SPEED OF THE HARE

HARE TECHNIQUE FEAT1

The fighting style of the Hare emphasizes speed and athleticism. In combat, a trained Hare warrior is a blur of motion.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +5 or higher, Void Use, Dex modifier of +2 or higher.

Effect: By spending a Void point, you may double your Dex modifier to your initiative for a single combat encounter.

NEW FAMILY

Usagi **Benefit:** +1 Reflexes
Reinstated after proving accusations of maho false, the Hare can once again teach the traditional springing Usagi style.

USAGI BUSHI SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Agility

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Kenjutsu, Jiu-jutsu, Hunting, Lore (Maho), any one High or Bugei Skill.

Starting Outfit (all average quality): Katana, wakizashi, yumi with 20 arrows of any type, light armor, traveling pack, kimono, 2 koku, any one weapon.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Leap of the Hare

The Hare samurai is capable of astounding feats of agility and athletics. The TN for any maneuver involving a great leap is reduced by 10. This may be used to gain a free Raise on an attack roll, but is considered a Full Attack. Using this technique while on Full Defense adds +5 to the Hare's TN to Be Hit.

Rank 2: Speed of the Hare

The warriors of the Hare Clan possess the quick wits and reflexes of their namesake. The bushi does not reveal his intended action for a combat round until all other combatants have revealed theirs. Multiple Hare in a single combat reveal their actions among themselves as normal.

Rank 3: Kick of the Hare

The powerful athleticism of the hare has offensive as well as defensive applications. The bushi gains an additional attack per round that may only be used for unarmed attacks. Alternately, the bushi may make a rapid kick toward one opponent with a single Raise. If successful, the bushi springs off of this opponent to attack another. The bushi may use his Rank One technique without it being considered a Full Attack. This second attack may only target opponents within six feet, including the original target.

Rank 4: Swift as Lightning

At this level of expertise, a Hare samurai's movements are nearly too swift to be perceived. The bushi may move normally while on Full Defense (though he may not attack), and any TN bonus gained by an opponent on Full Defense is reduced by the Hare's Agility x 2.

Rank 5: Reichin's Style

With a whirling flurry of athletic maneuvers, the Hare samurai leaves his opponent confused and disoriented, vulnerable to attack. With a successful Athletics/Agility roll versus a TN equal to the opponent's School Rank x 5, he may reduce his opponent's TN to Be Hit to 5 for the remainder of the round. If the opponent's TN to Be Hit is already 10 or lower, this technique instead confers three free Raises on the Hare's next attack roll.

THE VIGILANT KEEP DOJO

"Yesterday, we were ronin. Today we are the samurai of the Monkey Clan and the enforcers of the Emperor's will. Each of you is but a single man, and yet a single man can change the face of history. This is the Age of Man. Remember that, and nothing is beyond your reach."

—Toku to his retainers on the day of the Monkey Clan's founding

HISTORY

In the few decades since its construction, the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey has fallen twice to enemy forces, those of the Living Shadow and Hantei XVI. Both times it was quickly rebuilt, larger and better defended than before. This is the hallmark of the Monkey Clan: resilience. A samurai of the Monkey Clan may fail or be defeated, but he will never surrender while breath remains in his body. These are the lessons taught by Toku, the Champion of the Monkey Clan, and his students have learned them well.

The Monkey Clan dojo places great emphasis on the power of the individual to surmount any obstacle. By knowing his own abilities and admitting his own limitations, a samurai can overcome them and become more than the sum of his strengths.

SENSEI

DOPOPO

Sensei of the Monkey Clan

[Samurai 10/Fighter 3; Monkey Bushi 5]

A short time after the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, a young ronin caught Toku's eye. Impressed with his skill, Toku offered the man fealty, and Doppo accepted. He spent the War of Spirits alongside Toku and his men, slowly mastering the fighting style of the Monkey Clan and, in many cases, improving on it.

Doppo's personal style is unique. He is a heavyset man, and his demeanor is such that most believe him to be a jolly, clumsy fool. This is what he wishes them to think. He is actually one of the finest warriors the Monkey Clan has, and is certainly the best instructor they have ever had. Under his direction, the young samurai of the Monkey Clan can live up to Toku's lessons.

Mechanical Notes: Doppo's training reflects a wide variety of styles, including both precision and power. He possesses all feats and skills of the Monkey Clan.

ADVANCED MONKEY TRAINING

TOKU'S LESSON

MONKEY TECHNIQUE FEAT

You have mastered the first lesson of Toku: that no task is truly beyond your reach, that there is no foe you cannot defeat.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +5 or higher, Void Use, must be honorable, any non-chaotic alignment.

Effect: By spending a Void point, you receive an enhancement bonus to your next roll equal to your level in the samurai class.

FORTUNE'S FAVOR

MONKEY TECHNIQUE

FEAT

A favored quote of Shinsei among the Monkey is that "fortune favors the mortal man." In failure, you find only an opportunity for success.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +8 or higher, Concentration (4 ranks), Iron Will.

Effect: Once per combat, you may immediately re-roll any single missed attack roll.

MONKEY BUSHI SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Beginning Honor: 2, plus five boxes

Skills: Athletics, Defense, History, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, and any one skill.

Starting Outfit (all average quality):

Katana, wakizashi, yumi with 20 arrows of any type, light armor, kimono, traveling pack, 4 koku and any one weapon.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Toku's Lesson

The first lesson taught to the students of the Monkey school is that nothing is impossible. The bushi may add twice his School Rank to any roll with a TN of 15 or higher.

Rank 2: A Will of Steel

A student of the Monkey Clan knows that the will of the resolute man is insurmountable. By spending a Void Point, the bushi may reduce any Wound penalties by an amount equal to his Willpower. This lasts for a number of rounds equal to the bushi's School Rank.

Rank 3: The Strength of One Man

When faced with superior numbers or a more experienced opponent, the Monkey feels no fear, but instead redoubles his efforts. When facing multiple opponents or an opponent of higher Insight Rank, the bushi may add his Honor to all attack and damage rolls.

Rank 4: Forge Your Own Fate

Man is not bound by the fate given him by the Heavens. Instead, each man has the ability to choose his own destiny. A samurai who realizes this can move with both speed and certainty. The bushi may make two attacks per round.

Rank 5: Fortune Favors the Mortal Man

The true student of the Monkey knows that failure is merely another opportunity for success. If the bushi fails at any roll, he may immediately make another attempt, rolling two additional dice more than normal. The TN for the task does not increase. This may be done a number of times per day equal to the bushi's School Rank.

SHIRO MORITO DOJO

"The Great Clans ignore us. The Steel Chrysanthemum believes we are beneath his notice. They call us filthy ronin and cast us from their thoughts and vision. But they are wrong! And now we shall show them what it means to ignore the thunder!"

— Morito to his men before their attack on the forces of Hantei XVI

HISTORY

A lifetime ago, a young man endangered the beloved steeds of the Utaku Battle Maidens in his enthusiasm to serve the Unicorn Clan. Cast out from the clan, he found his own fate in an empire torn apart by the ravages of the Clan War. Time and conflict forged in him the steel that he would one day use to form the Ox Clan.

The Ox Clan was born in the chaos of the War of Spirits, brought together by the aged ronin Morito, who had proven his courage and mettle to the Emperor Toturi time and time again. Occupying the northern reaches of the Dragon Heart Plain, the Ox prevent the barbarian Yobanjin tribes from invading Rokugan. And

in return for their service, the Ox Clan are mocked and belittled by those they protect.

Born of the Unicorn, the Ox Clan train their samurai in the ways of mounted combat. Unlike the Unicorn, the Ox consider a steed to be a tool and a weapon, not a partner. They are taught to use a mount as an advantage and, when it no longer serves them in battle, to dismount and continue.



ONEGANO

Cavalry Master of the Ox Clan

[Fighter 8/Rogue 4/Samurai 4; Ox Bushi 5]

The enigmatic ronin Onegano joined Morito's fledgling cavalry forces near the end of the Clan War. He rarely speaks, and never discusses his past. Morito recognized a kindred spirit, however, and the two spent much time between the Clan War and War of Spirits developing the combat techniques that would one day become the Ox Clan bushi school. Now Onegano serves as the master instructor at Shiro Morito, where all Ox bushi are trained. He is stern and unforgiving, but only because that is what an Ox must be to survive.

Mechanical Notes: Onegano's abilities emphasize his extensive cavalry training. Unknown to most, he also has an extensive background in trickery and deception.

ADVANCED OX TRAINING

LEGACY OF THE FOUR WINDS

OX TECHNIQUE FEAT1

The Ox are taught to lash out at anything that attacks them, for only by unrelenting, ferocious assault can they hope to survive the trails of the Empire.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +8 or higher, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack.

Effect: You may immediately make one attack of opportunity per round against anyone who attacks you in melee, even if it is not an attack that normally provokes an attack of opportunity.

WAY OF THE OX

OX TECHNIQUE FEAT1

Few bushi in Rokugan can match the fury of a mounted Ox warrior.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +3 or higher, Mounted Combat, Dex 13+.

Effect: When on horseback, you double all higher ground bonuses against opponents on foot.

OX BUSHI SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Agility

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

Skills: Horsemanship 2, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Lore (Kolat), Yomanri, any one skill.

Starting Outfit (all average quality, one fine item): Katana, wakizashi, light armor, dai-kyu and 20 arrows of any type, yari, kimono, steed, 4 koku.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Legacy of the Four Winds

The cavalry of the Ox Clan specializes in lightning-fast raids on horseback, quickly dismounting to wade into combat on foot. The bushi may add twice his Horsemanship skill to his initiative roll for the first round of any skirmish while on

foot. If the bushi is on horseback, this bonus receives an additional +5 and lasts for two rounds rather than just one.

Rank 2: The Wind Blows Many Ways

The warriors of the Ox are taught to react with the speed of the wind, adapting to any situation. This versatility allows them to succeed at a wide variety of tasks. The bushi receives a number of free Raises per day equal to his School Rank to be used on any bugei skill. The bushi receives an additional two free Raises that may only be used while on horseback.

Rank 3: Thunder and Fury

Accustomed to the speed and fury of mounted combat, Ox samurai often strike far faster than their opponents anticipate. If on horseback, the bushi may make two attacks per round. If unhorsed, the bushi may make a second attack per round if he succeeds on a Reflexes roll versus a TN of 10.

Rank 4: The Blade upon the Wind

Ox samurai are accustomed to charging into combat, striking out at their opponents as they rush past them upon their steeds. As such, they have mastered the art of the lightning strike, hitting and moving as far out of range as possible to complicate any counter-strike. While on foot, the bushi may add +8 to his TN to Be Hit for the round if they win initiative. This bonus is increased to +12 if the Ox is mounted.

Rank 5: Fast and Furious

In mounted combat, there is little more deadly than the Ox warrior. When rolling any bugei skill while mounted, any die that rolls less than the bushi's Horsemanship skill is considered equal to his Horsemanship. On foot, dice that roll less than half the bushi's Horsemanship (rounding up) are considered equal to half his Horsemanship. Dice that roll a one are not affected by this ability.

KYUDEI SUZUME DOJO

"Strength lies not in the sword arm, nor in the power of one's magic. Strength comes from purity of mind and purity of spirit. No blade can match the keen edge of the well-educated mind, and no spell can overcome the spirit of the just."

— Suzume Yugoki, daimyo of the Sparrow Clan

HISTORY

Reclusive and unassuming, the tiny Sparrow Clan is often overlooked by the Empire at large. Rarely have the samurai of the Suzume family emerged from their barren lands to experience the wonders of Rokugan, and rarer still have the clans taken notice of such individuals. Only since the final days of the Clan War and the ascension of the decidedly unorthodox Suzume Yugoki to daimyo of the clan has this changed. Yugoki has encouraged the Sparrow to take a larger role in the affairs of the Empire.

The samurai of the Sparrow Clan are a contemplative lot. Their training focuses as much on the arts of meditation, calligraphy, and study of the Tao as it does on the katana. The Sparrow are scholar-warriors, a bizarre brand of bushi who defeat their foes through observation and analysis.

SENSEI

SUZUME MOCHIKO

Sensei of the Sparrow Clan

[Courtier 8/Samurai 8; Suzume Bushi 5]

As the youngest child of the Sparrow daimyo, Mochiko knew she would never lead the clan. This never concerned her. Indeed, it allowed her to find her own path, which she found to be kenjutsu. Mochiko is one of the finest masters of the sword the Sparrow Clan has ever seen. She could be recognized as a great master throughout the Empire if not for her humble nature and quiet devotion to the Tao.

Mechanical Notes: Mochiko's abilities center around precision and speed, with a wide variety of Knowledge skills.

ADVANCED SPARROW TRAINING

PURITY OF PURPOSE

SPARROW TECHNIQUE FEAT

A Sparrow accepts his destiny, and ignores all obstacles that attempt to keep him from it.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +4 or higher, must be honorable.

Effect: With a successful Knowledge (Shintao) check (DC 20), you do not suffer penalties for being reduced to 0 or fewer hit points and cannot be stunned, staggered, or knocked unconscious. You remain conscious and fully active. If you are reduced to -10 hit points, you die normally. This feat's effects last for one round per Honor rank you possess. After it expires, you are considered fatigued until you receive at least eight hours of rest, and must rest an additional eight hours before you can recover hit points or spells (if you can cast them) naturally.

NEW FAMILY

Suzume

Benefit: +1 Awareness

The samurai of the Sparrow Clan have elevated storytelling to a high art, as more permanent artworks disintegrate in the Suzume lands' humid climate.

SUZUME BUSHI SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Beginning Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

Skills: Bard, Calligraphy, History, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu, any Lore skill, any High skill.

Starting Outfit (all poor quality, one item average quality): Katana, wakizashi, helm, kimono, traveling pack.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: All Things in Time

The Suzume are renowned for their patience, even in combat. At the beginning of the round, a Sparrow may voluntarily lower his own initiative to raise his TN to Be Hit by half that amount (round up). His TN may not be raised by an amount greater than twice his Reflexes, and he may not use this technique while making a Full Attack. At this rank and

each subsequent rank, the Sparrow receives a Free Raise on any single Lore skill of his choosing. This benefit may not be changed to another skill, although the Sparrow may choose a different Lore skill with each increase in rank.

Rank 2: Purity of Chi

As he advances in his training, the Sparrow becomes suffused with the aura of the righteous. The Sparrow's TN to Be Hit is increased by +5 against any human attacker with lower Honor.

Rank 3: Wisdom is the Greatest Weapon

Advanced students of the Suzume are storehouses of information, versed in putting their knowledge to use. If the Sparrow possesses a Lore skill that pertains to his opponent, he receives an additional attack per round when facing that opponent.

This technique requires specific knowledge. If a Sparrow were facing a Matsu bushi, then Lore (Matsu) or Lore (Lion) would be sufficient, but not Lore (Bushido). Against Shadowlands creatures, specific skills are required, such as Lore (Oni). Lore (Shadowlands) is simply too diverse.

Rank 4: Quiet Spirit, Steady Blade

By preparing the body and mind through careful meditation, the Sparrow frees himself from all distraction and focuses on the task at hand. If the bushi spends 30 minutes in meditation each morning, he may make a Meditation/Void roll versus a TN of 10. For every 3 points by which he surpasses the TN, he gains a Free Raise to use in combat that day. The bushi may gain no more Free Raises than he has ranks in Shintao.

Rank 5: Purity of Purpose

The Sparrow recognizes his destiny and accepts it, affording him a strength of spirit that most will never achieve. By spending a Void Point, the Sparrow may ignore Wound penalties for a number of rounds equal to his Shintao skill.

KYUDEN MIYA DOJO

"They travel to the far reaches of the Empire, bringing the word of the Emperor to the people everywhere. They are his voice and his hand, an extension of his divine persona. Without them, how many tens of thousands would live without knowing the joy of the Emperor's will?"

— Doji Nagori

HISTORY

The Miya are the voice of the Emperor, the descendants of the herald who traveled Rokugan with the word of the fledgling Empire's defeat of Fu Leng. Since that time, they have brought news of the Emperor's proclamations to those across the land who would otherwise remain ignorant of his words. They are neither warriors nor courtiers, and yet must be both, for the expanses of land between the holdings of the clans can be perilous indeed, as can the tempers of men.

Miya heralds, called shisha, are trained in the basics of combat, but place much more emphasis on horsemanship and diplomacy. Over the centuries, these skills have served the family much more effectively than the arts of war. A common saying among the Miya is that "there are no Miya heroes."

SENSEI

MIYA YASOMA

Master Shisha of the Miya

[Courtier 12/Samurai 6; Miya Shisha 5]

Yasoma was the most prominent shisha active during the War of Spirits. He rode furiously across the face of the Empire, often going for days on end without rest and stopping only to change horses. Closed meetings between the Emperor Toturi, his generals, and Miya daimyo Miya Yumi were often open to Yasoma, for Toturi and Yumi trusted him as they trusted no other. Sadly, Yasoma received a serious injury during the war's last days that removed him from duty permanently. He has taught at the primary Miya dojo ever since, recently having risen to master sensei.

Yasoma is nothing if not devoted. He instills in his students a burning passion for duty and an eagerness to give their lives and souls in the name of the Emperor. His students revere him, and he is wholly devoted to them in return.

Mechanical Notes: Yasoma possesses a wide variety of cavalry-related abilities, including all Miya-specific feats.

ADVANCED MIYA TRAINING

FIRE AND ICE

ANCESTOR FEAT: MIYA SATOSHI

Like your ancestor, you can force others to bow to your will with a simple look or turn of phrase.

Clan: Imperial families

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +5 or higher, must be dishonorable.

Effect: You receive a +4 competence modifier to all Intimidate checks. Also, you may use Intimidate in any situation that would normally call for a Bluff or Diplomacy check.

HAND OF THE EMPEROR

IMPERIAL TECHNIQUE

The aura of honor and passiveness that the Miya project can stay the hand of even the most dishonorable assailant.

Clan: Imperial families.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +4 or higher, must be honorable.

Effect: Opponents must make a Will save (DC 10 + your overall character level) or be unable to attack you. If you attack them first, this ability is negated.

SATOSHI'S LEGACY (NEW PATH)

During the Clan War, a particularly vicious individual named Miya Satoshi ousted his father, the venerated Miya Yoto, and seized control of the Miya family. His plan was to make the Miya more militaristic, adopting the tactics of the Matsu family with whom he had trained. Although Miya Yumi ultimately thwarted him, Satoshi had supporters among the younger Miya. A very few still adopt his philosophy today, in the face of the vast majority of the family which strongly discourages such practices. These supporters insist that Satoshi's more destructive actions were fueled by the madness

of Kenshin's Helm, the nemuranai that corrupted and destroyed him. Yumi, now daimyo of the Miya, still mourns her cousin's demise, and allows his teachings to continue, although she has students of Satoshi's Legacy carefully observed for any signs of a betrayal of her trust.

Technique Rank: 3

Path of Entry: Miya Shisha 2

Path of Egress: Matsu Bushi 1

Technique: Fire and Ice

The samurai has learned the crude yet effective methods of the infamous Miya Satoshi. He may add his Intimidation skill to all Courtier and attack rolls.

KYUDEN OTOMO DOJO

"The clans care for the Emperor's land. The Seppun defend his person. The Miya spread his word. Only the Otomo protect his honor. Only the Otomo ensure that his sovereignty is never questioned. We must be more respected than the Crane, more ferocious than the Lion... and more devious than the Scorpion. The Emperor shall remain the sole authority in the Empire, even if it is because we crush all who threaten his power."

— Otomo Gosaiko, master instructor
of the Otomo Seiyaku

CHILD OF WATER

NEW D20 SYSTEM™ FEAT:

Child of Water [Technique]

The fluid, graceful essence of the Water Dragon permeates your actions.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +10 or higher, Depths of the Void, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Void Use.

Special: This feat can only be taught to others by Akodo Kaneka.

Effect: At the beginning of a combat encounter, before initiative is rolled, you may expend a Void point to double your base attack bonus for the duration of the first round.

NEW 15R RPG 2E SYSTEM TECHNIQUE:

Child of Water (Ronin Technique)

Type: Otokodate

Required Traits: Water 5

Required Skills: Battle 5, Kenjutsu 5

Other Requirements: Must have Honor of at least 3

Location: Mobile

Technique: (15 points) The fluid, graceful essence of the Water Dragon permeates your actions. During the first round of any combat, you may add twice your Water Ring to your initiative. Additionally, you may add twice your Water Ring to the first attack roll you make each round, whether it is a duel, skirmish, or battle.

This single otokodate-style Technique is currently known only to Akodo Kaneka himself. While it is possible that he could teach it to others, Kaneka is wary of sharing his secrets.

NEW KATA

SWORD OF THE SUN

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This kata was recently developed by Toturi Tsudao. Though she will gladly teach it to any who would learn, thus far only Kitsu Dejiko has mastered the form. Using this kata, you make a complex overhead stroke that reflects the rays of the sun directly into an opponent's eyes. This maneuver may only be attempted once per opponent per use of the kata, and only in the presence of the light of the sun. Creatures without eyesight are not affected.

D20 SYSTEM:

Requirements: Strength of Purity (twice), Weapon Focus (Katana).

XP Cost: 4,000

Effect: As a standard action, you may target one creature within fifty feet with a blinding attack. The target must make a Fortitude save vs. DC 10 + your Dexterity modifier + half your character level. If this save fails, the target is stunned and blinded for 1d10 rounds. In addition, you inflict an additional 1d6 damage on any melee attacks against an affected opponent. This is a supernatural ability.

LSR RPG 2E SYSTEM:

School: Akodo Bushi 2 or Seppun Miharū 2

Cost: 8

Effect: Choose one opponent within fifty feet. This opponent must make a Perception check vs. your Agility x 5 or be stunned by the brilliance of the sun for 1–10 rounds. If your opponent is stunned, you deal an extra 1k1 damage with this attack, and all further attacks you make against him while he is blinded.

HISTORY

Since the first Hantei built his great city, the Otomo have protected the Emperor by subverting conspiracies among the clans that would his power. By keeping the clans in opposition to one another, they ensure that there will always be those who desperately need the Emperor in order to keep the peace throughout Rokugan. Only twice in the history of the empire have the Otomo failed in their duty: when the consortium called the Gozoku seized control of the Emperor in the fourth century, and when the Scorpion traitor Bayushi Shōju launched a coup to kill off the Hantei line almost two generations ago.

The Otomo produce very few warriors. Their children are instead trained from an early age to observe and manipulate all those around them. In all the Empire there are very few individuals who can gain as much information from a casual observation as an Otomo, and even fewer who can use that information to such ruthless yet effective ends.

SENSEI

OTOMO GOSAIKO

Master Seiyaku of the Otomo

[Courtier 18; Otomo Seiyaku 5/Doji Courtier 1/Bayushi Courtier 1]

Early in her life, the sensei of the Seiyaku identified Otomo Gosaiko as a child with incredible potential. Even in play with other children she showed an amazing aptitude for manipulation. At her gempukku, she was given the incredible task of seeing that an ambitious young courtier of the Scorpion who had been disrupting the court was dishonored. In less than two days, Gosaiko had arranged events that led to the courtier's expulsion from the clan. She was immediately given a prestigious post in Otosan Uchi.

Age has only made Gosaiko more dangerous. Courtiers across the Empire fear the sweetness of her smile, and there is considerable debate among young courtiers as to whether getting her attention is a blessing or a curse.

Mechanical Notes: Gosaiko has a wide variety of abilities that boost her Charisma and diplomatic skills.

ADVANCED
OTOMO TRAINING

DIVIDING THE STARS

IMPERIAL TECHNIQUE

With a phrase or two, the Otomo can alter the perception of others toward an individual, turning enemies into friends or, more often, friends into enemies.

Clan: Imperial families.

Prerequisites: Bluff (8 ranks), Diplomacy (8 ranks), Sense Motive (8 ranks).

Effect: When discussing an individual in court, you may make a Diplomacy check (DC 10 + the individual's overall level) to cause all listeners to make a Will save (DC 25) or move one attitude level in a direction of your choosing regarding the individual (see *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*,™ page 149). If you exceed the DC of your initial Diplomacy check by 10 or more, you may choose to have them move two levels instead.

VIRTUES OF COMMAND

IMPERIAL TECHNIQUE

The highest-ranking members of the Otomo speak with the voice of the Emperor himself, and can command any samurai just as their lord could.

Clan: Imperial families.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus of +8 or higher, Diplomacy (15 ranks), Void Use, Ear of the Emperor, Dividing the Stars.

Effect: You may issue a command to anyone with the samurai class, which they must follow. If they refuse, they must either make a Will save (DC 30) or be so dishonored that seppuku or being made ronin are the only possible results.



THE OTOMO INFILTRATORS (NEW PATH) HISTORY

It is the role of the Otomo not only to manipulate the affairs of the Great Clans, but to remain as informed as possible about their plans as well. Toward that end, the Otomo have guests present at virtually every winter court in the Empire. A small number of Otomo, after having learned the very basics of their family's school, train with their allies in the Crane Clan so that they can glean as much information as possible during their time with the other clans.

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Otomo Seiyaku 1

Path of Egress: Doji Magistrate 1

Technique: Eye of the Emperor

Much like iaijutsu duelists, the Otomo are gifted at assessing an opponent with a single glance. The Otomo may observe an individual for one minute, then make a Perception roll versus an TN equal to $5 + (5 \times \text{the individual's School Rank})$ to determine one of the following about the individual: highest Trait, highest Skill, most expensive Advantage, most costly Disadvantage, Honor, or Glory.

THE SEPPUN GUEST HOME

"All my life, I have striven for discipline, dedication, and piety. In my arrogance, I believed that I had achieved them. It was not until I met the lowest ranked among the Seppun guardsmen in Otosan Uchi that I realized I do not even understand what those words truly mean."

— Akodo Shikatsu

The Seppun family is wholly devoted to two things: the safety of the Emperor and the study of the Tao of Shinsei. Although their place in Rokugan allows them access to resources other families would exploit, the Seppun have no use for power. They are a sect of pious warriors who exemplify all that it means to be a dutiful samurai. Throughout history, the Emperor has placed absolute faith in the Seppun who protect his person and his Empire by filling the ranks of the Imperial Legions.

The training of the Seppun instills in them a deep respect and reverence for the Emperor and for the lessons of the Tao. They are taught to protect their charge at all costs, gladly sacrificing themselves if they must. They are also taught how to resist the impurities of the corrupt, including the Shadowlands and the Living Shadow as well as more mundane influences such as opium and sake.

SENSEI

SEPPUN KOGOSHI

Sensei of the Seppun Guest Home

[Human Samurai 20; Seppun Miharu 5]

No one outside the Seppun can remember when Seppun Kogoshi and his fellow sensei Seppun Masamitsu were not the sensei of the primary Seppun dojo, located at the family's guest home just outside the Imperial Palace.

These two men and the building in which they instruct their students are suffused with the essence of Tengoku, the Celestial Heavens. Even the most disrespectful student who studies here emerges a devout, focused warrior.

Mechanical Notes: Kogoshi has a multitude of Void-related abilities as well as a huge number of feats, both combat and kiho.

ADVANCED SEPPUN TRAINING

SEPPUN MIHARU (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The miharu are the elite bushi guards that defend the Emperor's person. While samurai of other clans or families are often assigned to the Imperial Guard, few if any are ever allowed to train with the miharu, and none are ever allowed to perform their duties without several Seppun present.

In addition to guarding the Emperor's person, the Seppun consider it their duty to investigate any potential threat to his person. Recognizing that the Emerald Magistrates themselves are overtaxed, the Seppun train a small number of their miharu in the Emerald Champion's dojo, giving them the skills and techniques necessary to ferret out anyone or anything that could pose a threat to their sacred duty.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Seppun Miharu, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Family: Seppun.

Base Attack Bonus: +10

Feats: Depths of the Void, Void Use, Weapon Focus (katana).

Honor/Alignment: Any lawful non-evil.

CLASS SKILLS

The Seppun Miharu's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Shintao) (Int), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), and Tea Ceremony (Wis). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle and Tea Ceremony skills are described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2+Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Seppun Miharu prestige class.

The Clouds Part (Ex): The miharu is ever vigilant. He cannot be caught flat-footed, regardless of the circumstances, unless his opponent first wins a contested Wisdom check.

Never in Darkness (Ex): Miharu are trained to resist any and all temptation. At 1st level, the miharu gains a +10 enhancement bonus to all Will or Fortitude saves to resist any influence that would impair his duty, including fear, fatigue, seduction, bribery, charm, or even the pleas of his own dying children. This bonus increases to +15 at 3rd level.

The Sun's Light Reveals: The purity of the miharu's spirit allows him to perceive the true nature of things. Beginning at 2nd level, the miharu may benefit from the spell true sight as if cast by a 16th level sorcerer twice per day. This increases to four times per day at the 4th level. This is a spell-like ability.

Heaven Never Falls (Ex): At the beginning of each day, the miharu declares who his charge is. At any point during the day, if the charge is attacked within 50 feet of the miharu, the miharu may spend a Void point to transfer all damage from the attack to himself instead. This may be done a number of times per day equal to the miharu's class level.

The Speed of Heaven (Ex): The miharu's purpose is clear, and he acts with certainty. The miharu gains an additional partial action per round.

THE SEPPUN MIHARU (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Seppun Miharu 3

Path of Egress: Imperial Magistrate 3 (the Seppun does not have to pay the experience point cost normally required to learn Imperial Magistrate techniques).

Technique: Divine Hunter

Nothing can hide from the righteous. The Investigator may add twice his Honor Rank to any Hunting or Investigation roll.

TABLE 9-1: THE SEPPUN MIHARU

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	The Clouds Part, Never in Darkness +10
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	The Sun's Light Reveals 2/day
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Heaven Never Falls, Never in Darkness +15
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	The Sun's Light Reveals 4/day
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	The Speed of Heaven

CHAPTER TEN:

DOJO OF THE SHADOWLANDS

Taji took a look behind him, toward the great protective shell of the Kaiu Wall. During his training at Sunda Mizu he had often journeyed to the Wall, looked beyond it. He had only stepped beyond it once before, during his gempukku. He and a group of other Crab had gone into the Shadowlands, attacked a goblin patrol, and returned with their heads. Satisfied that they had met the requirement needed to become true Crab, they hurried home. He had not even spent the night in the dark lands.

But he had spent long enough there.

The others had been afraid. They looked upon the stunted trees and the blackened landscape with fear. Taji had not understood that. When he had looked at the obsidian plains of the Shadowlands, he saw a strange beauty that reflected something deep in his soul. He felt different.

He felt at home.

Something within him had told him to keep his feelings to himself, and he did. Until today. Today, he had abandoned his duties on the Wall and strode out into the Shadowlands alone, without any jade to protect him. There was no turning back now. The archers on the Wall had already opened fire on him when they realized what he was doing. Luckily, he was now out of range.

"I am here," he whispered to nothing. "I am ready."

"Excellent," said a voice from the darkness. Suddenly a tall, skeletal man with great glowing eyes stood on the blasted path before Taji. Though every Crab instinct in his body told him that this was something he should fear, hate, destroy, something stronger told him that he had found what he was looking for.

"What are you?" Taji asked.

"I am Tsukuro," it said. "I am here to take you to the Temple of the Forsaken. There, you will begin your training anew."

Taji looked back at the Wall behind him. A sudden chill passed through his body.

"Regrets?" Tsukuro asked. "Are you thinking of turning back to the Wall?"

"No," Taji said. "I was just thinking of how ugly it looked there. Of how I would like it to be gone."

"Good," Tsukuro chuckled. "Good..."

THE TEMPLE OF THE FORSAKEN

Classes: Berserker, Daigotsu's Elite Guard (Prestige), Fighter, Monk, Samurai

Schools: Black Guard, Daigotsu's Elite Guard, Daigotsu's Legion, Temple of Onnotangu

HISTORY

The history of the Temple of the Forsaken begins at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. Many samurai from different clans were lost to the Shadowlands during that epic struggle, including several great heroes of the Empire. Knowing they could never return to Rokugan, many of these fallen warriors banded together in an attempt to preserve their minds through the practice of their schools' ancient secrets. This slowed but did not halt their corruption. Indeed, they would have become mindless, gibbering beasts of the Shadowlands like so many others if not for the timely arrival of Daigotsu.

THE MOTO BLACK GUARD

Although the Dark Moto no longer exist as such, having been crushed by the forces of Moto Gaheris, there are still many corrupted Unicorn among the Lost. One, a particularly vicious individual named Otaku Daiken, has resurrected the techniques once practiced exclusively by the Dark Moto. How Daiken learned these secrets is uncertain, as he fell during the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, after the Dark Moto's destruction. Some speculate that he is guided by the spirit of Moto Tsume himself, but none know for certain.

As the spiritual heir of Fu Leng, Daigotsu rebuilt the Shadowlands to his liking. He allowed the samurai at the Temple of the Forsaken to retain their minds, although their flesh and spirit were already consumed. Warriors with the tactics of samurai and the power of the Taint were of far more use to Daigotsu than slaving animals in armor. With the new Lord of the Shadowlands' blessing and endorsement, the creatures that were once men began training at the Temple of the Forsaken with renewed vigor.

At present, the Temple of the Forsaken is the primary dojo for Daigotsu's rank and file. Vast legions of the Lost have trained there over the years, filling Daigotsu's armies with willing and well-trained soldiers that lust for the destruction of the Empire.

TRAINING

As might be expected, almost all training conducted at the Temple of the Forsaken is martial. It is, in fact, the most grueling and punishing training regime that has ever existed in Rokugan or beyond. Only the supernatural strength of those who train there allows them to survive the rigorous program of instruction, and even then many find their immortal bodies permanently shattered by the sheer punishment they receive.

All weapons that samurai are traditionally train in are used in the program at the Temple of the Forsaken. Students are allowed to choose their own personal weapons, typically those weapons they specialized in when fighting alongside their clansmen in Rokugan. There are former Crab who use the tetsubo, former Dragon who utilize a daisho, former Crane who fight iai-style, and every other possible permutation imaginable.

Obviously, the dojo does not offer a gempukku as the ceremony exists in Rokugan. There is, however, a final test that all students must pass before they are considered soldiers worthy of serving in Lord Daigotsu's army. Students demonstrate their worthiness by slaying a more powerful opponent. This coincides with Daigotsu's campaign to destroy all creatures in the Shadowlands not loyal to him. Dissenting oni, pockets of disruptive bakemono, and even patrols of Hiruma scouts have all been targets of questing students. Those who return with evidence of their victory are accepted without question. Those who do not are rarely heard from again.

SENSEI

Any member of Daigotsu's Legion has the right to assume the position as master sensei. All that is necessary is to kill the current individual holding that title. Mirumoto Taki has held the position for over a decade now, and has not been challenged in at least six years. The fate of the last man to challenge him was so gruesome that none dare oppose him.

MIRUMOTO TAKI

Sensei of the Lost

[Samurai 10/Dragon Swordmaster 5/Daigotsu's Elite Guard 5; Daigotsu's Legion 5/Mirumoto Bushi 3]

Once a hero of the Empire, Taki now trains the Lost in the skills they will need to overthrow it. If anything remains of the noble samurai that once served the Dragon Clan, it is buried deep within the black heart of an inhuman predator. Taki is an unforgiving taskmaster who destroys those he deems unworthy at the first sign of weakness.

Over the years, the Taint has wracked Taki's body, destroying his humanity and giving him power undreamed of by mortal men. He no longer has need of weapons, although he practices with them all to remain strong. His form grows less and less recognizable as human with each passing year, and his dark urges grow more powerful each day.

Mechanical Notes: Taki has abilities that reflect his sheer power and bestial nature. He possesses a wide variety of Taint-related powers as well as a few lingering Dragon Clan feats that he has not yet forgotten.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

GOJU

[Fighter 15/Daigotsu's Elite Guard 5; Daigotsu's Legion 5/Daigotsu's Elite Guard 1]

This enigmatic individual is known only as Goju; he was once a minion of the Lying Darkness, but was lost to the Shadowlands when that entity was destroyed. This massive warrior is Daigotsu's personal yojimbo and champion, and is referred to by many Legionnaires as the Obsidian Champion. Though he never speaks, he somehow makes his wishes known to Daigotsu's Elite Guard, who follow his orders as they would the Dark Lord's.

ADVANCED TRAINING

HUNGER OF THE MAGGOTS

SHADOWLANDS TECHNIQUE FEAT

You feast upon the souls of those you kill, regenerating your physical form with their spiritual energy.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +5 or higher, Taint modifier of +2 or higher.

Effect: At the end of any combat round in which you kill an opponent, you regain 5 hit points.

THE SHADOW DRAGON

SHADOWLANDS TECHNIQUE FEAT

The essence of corruption that permeates your being taints everything that you touch, spreading quickly to the bodies of those you kill.

Prerequisite: Taint modifier +8 or higher.

Effect: At the end of a combat round, you may choose to reanimate any creature you killed during that round exactly as the spell animate dead as cast by a 16th level sorcerer.

DAIGOTSU'S LEGION

Note: Daigotsu's Legion is intended as an NPC-only school.

Benefit: +1 Stamina

Skills: Intimidation, Jiu-jutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore (Shadowlands), any two skills.

Beginning Honor: None

Outfit (all average quality): Katana, wakizashi, light or heavy armor, yumi with 20 arrows of any type, rotten kimono, any one weapon.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Fury of the Panther

Like a predator in the night, the Legionnaire strikes quickly and precisely. When making a Full Attack, the legionnaire can add his Fire Ring to his attack roll.

Rank 2: The Vulture's Talons

The aggression of the Legion is boundless. When attacking, the Legionnaire may Raise by any number rather than only by 5, and gains the benefit of an additional Raise for every additional 5 points by which the TN is raised. Additionally, the Legionnaire's maximum number of Raises is no longer restricted by Void, but rather by his Taint Rank.

Rank 3: Ashen Wing Strike

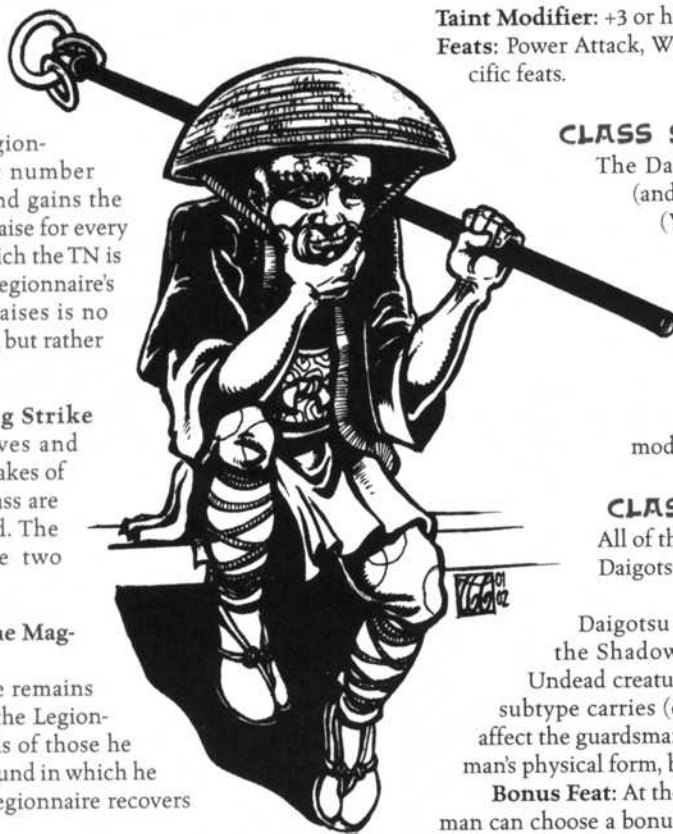
The Legionnaire moves and strikes as swiftly as the flakes of ash from a burning carcass are borne away by the wind. The Legionnaire may make two attacks per round.

Rank 4: Hunger of the Maggots

As vermin feed on the remains of the dead, so too does the Legionnaire feed upon the souls of those he kills. At the end of any round in which he kills an opponent, the Legionnaire recovers two full Wound ranks.

Rank 5: The Shadow Dragon

The essence of corruption surrounds the Legionnaire, permeating all he touches. At the end of any round in which the Legionnaire kills an opponent, he may spend a Corruption Point (see *Way of the Shadowlands*) to have the creature rise again as a zombie the following round. The undead creature will follow simple orders given by the legionnaire.



DAIGOTSU'S ELITE GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

A tiny handful of those in the vast legions at Daigotsu's command prove themselves worthy to serve the Lord of the Shadowlands personally. These rare few serve as his bodyguards, personal champions, and troubleshooters. In many ways, they are comparable to the magistrates of the Shadowlands, as they are enforcers of Daigotsu's will and can serve as judge, jury, and executioner for any who dare oppose the Dark Lord.

Hit Die: d12.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become one of Daigotsu's Elite Guard, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +9

Taint Modifier: +3 or higher

Feats: Power Attack, Weapon Focus, at least two clan-specific feats.

CLASS SKILLS

The Daigotsu's Elite Guard's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Shadowlands) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), and Spot (Wis). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Daigotsu's Elite Guard prestige class.

Shroud of Death: The chosen of Daigotsu manifest the spiritual energies of the Shadowlands. The guardsman gains the Undead creature type and all the immunities that subtype carries (except for critical hits, which still affect the guardsman). This does not change the guardsman's physical form, but simply confers the abilities.

Bonus Feat: At the 1st, 3rd, and 5th levels, the guardsman can choose a bonus feat. This is above and beyond the bonus feat that all characters receive every third level. These bonus feats may be chosen from the feats listed in the Fighter class description (see the *Player's Handbook*™).

Power of Corruption: Beginning at 2nd level, the guardsman may double his Taint modifier for any one task that could normally benefit from the use of the modifier. This may be done twice per day. At 4th level, this may be done a number of times per day equal to the guardsman's level in this class.

TABLE 10-1: DAIGOTSU'S ELITE GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Shroud of Death, Bonus Feat
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Power of Corruption 2/day
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Power of Corruption level/day
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Critical Hit Immunity, Bonus Feat

Critical Hit Immunity: At the 5th level, the guardsman can no longer be affected by critical hits. This immunity functions exactly as the ability of Undead creatures.

DAIGOTSU'S ELITE GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Daigotsu's Legion 3, or any Great Clan bushi school 3

Path of Egress: Moto Black Guard 1

Technique: Embrace of Darkness

The bushi embraces the power of the Taint. He gains a Carapace rating equal to his Taint rank.

NIKUSHIMI SHINDEN

Classes: Berserker, Fighter, Ranger, Samurai

Schools: Tsuno Bushi

HISTORY

The fearsome new foes that have besieged the Empire in recent months are called the Tsuno. These massive horned beasts, nearly twice as tall as humans, are notorious for their

lightning raids. They strike without warning and disappear just as swiftly. These creatures fought beside the Onisu that slew Emperor Toturi, and organized the daring raid upon the Lion Clan's Kitsu Tombs. They are savage, powerful, and incredibly well organized. Though none in the Empire realize it yet, the Tsuno also possess a startling intelligence and culture of their own. In temples deep in the Shadowlands they train and educate young Tsuno to become warriors, preparing them to strike against their human foes.

The largest of these dojo is called Nikushimi Shinden: the Temple of Hatred. Though it has only been in the Shadowlands a short time, the temple is a massive stone structure that seems as if it has been a part of the surrounding landscape for countless ages. The walls of the temple are deeply carved with the strange cuneiform language of the Tsuno and feature sculptures of famous Tsuno warriors of days gone by. The Tsuno claim that the temple has always existed, though the Tsuno themselves are apparently recent arrivals in Rokugan.

If pressed, the Tsuno would say that they brought the temple with them when Daigotsu invited them to the Shadowlands.

TRADITION

The Tsuno have a warrior tradition as strong as any Great Clan's, and consider themselves more honorable than human samurai. To Rokugani eyes, Tsuno honor is twisted indeed. The Tsuno have a distinct pecking order, and treat those Tsuno beneath them little better than animals. They are vicious and cruel in combat; their weapons and fighting styles are designed to inflict the most pain possible, and they often leave horribly disfigured enemies alive rather than killing them outright. (In Tsuno belief, to bear pain well demonstrates great strength. Thus, to inflict horrible pain upon an enemy and allow him to live is a noble gesture — you're allowing him to show how courageous he truly is.)

Tsuno have an intense hatred of humankind and consider them animals to be exterminated. This hatred seems especially focused upon the Lion Clan and anyone or anything associated with Toturi I. Even their allies among the Lost are met with disdain and disapproval; Tsuno troops prefer the company of ogres and trolls to that of Tainted humans.

The sole exception to this rule seems to be Daigotsu, whom the Tsuno treat with the respect and reverence due to divinity.

TRAINING

Tsuno training is harsh, to say the least. Tsuno are given real weapons the day they begin their training. Though not all practice duels are to the death, all use deadly weapons. Injury is common, and those students who injure themselves so badly that they cannot fight are expected to destroy themselves (in a ceremony eerily similar to Rokugani seppuku).

Tsuno are often left in harsh areas of the Shadowlands in groups (known as packs), which they are expected to survive via team work and interdependence. These pack members become fiercely loyal to one another, to the point where — rumor has it — they can read one another's thoughts and share one another's pain in combat. While the truth of this assertion is known only to the Tsuno, these creatures have been observed to sacrifice their lives for fellow pack members. In addition, a Tsuno warrior will never leave the corpse of a fellow pack member behind on the field of battle.

TSUNO

Earth: 4

Fire: 2

Agility: 4

Water: 3

Air: 2

Reflexes: 3

Shadowlands Taint: 4 (Considered Lost)

Honor: 2

Rolls When Attacking: 4k4+4 (Tsuno blade); 3k3 (unarmed)

Rolls For Damage: 6k3 (Tsuno blade); 3k2 (unarmed)

TN to be Hit: 20 (Light Armor)

Carapace: 5

Wounds Per Level: 10: +5; 20: +10; 40: +15; 50: Dead

Special: Tsuno can move Water x 10 feet in a round, or twice that distance if they take no other action in that round.

d20 System™ statistics for the Tsuno can be found in *Oriental Adventures*™, though you may wish to consider changing their Advancement to "By Character Class" and granting them fighter as a favored class so that they can attend the Tsuno bushi prestige class presented in this book.

Tsuno Blade (New Weapon): Tsuno blades are massive curved swords that can be wielded only by creatures of Tsuno, ogre, or troll size. They inflict 3k3 damage. (In the d20 System,™ Tsuno blades are Huge falchions.)

The most powerful elite troops of the Tsuno are known as the Ravagers. Ravagers are not made, they are born, and they are the natural leaders of Tsuno packs. Occasionally a Tsuno Chieftain will order an entire pack of Ravagers to be trained together. These elite fighting units are the terror of the Shadowlands. It was just such a unit that overwhelmed the Lion troops protecting the Kitsu Tombs.

SENSEI

Tsuno dojo are always led by an elderly Ravager, too old to effectively fight anymore but too wise for his experience to be wasted. These grizzled old Tsuno are expected to be merciless in the training of their students; the world has shown the Tsuno little reason to have mercy for others.

TSUNO KIZUATO

Sensei of Nikushimi Shinden

[Samurai 13; Tsuno Ravager, Tsuno Bushi 5]

Kizuato is a gnarled, battle-scarred old Tsuno who is still somewhat spry despite his old age. He wears full armor at all times and still carries his massive Tsuno blade. Kizuato is intrigued by human tactics and fighting styles, for all of his fighting experience was accumulated in the world from which the Tsuno originated. He has instructed his students to capture human samurai alive, so that he might study them and their techniques. Thus far, he is unimpressed with the specimens his students have attained. He wonders if all humans are as weak as these, or if his students have simply been unable to capture a quality specimen.

NIKUSHIMI SHINDEN BENEFITS

There are no benefits to attending the Nikushimi Shinden dojo other than the fact that those who do so are obviously powerful Tsuno with many allies among their deadly race.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

TSUNO KURUSHIMI

[Samurai 11; Tsuno Ravager 5]

Kurushimi leads the Ravager pack that invaded, overwhelmed, and looted the Kitsu Tombs, capturing the brother of the Lion Champion, Matsu Domotai. The bold and successful attack has won him much esteem among his fellow Tsuno, though Kurushimi has not allowed the success to swell his head. He has currently occupied his days with the torture and interrogation of Domotai, as well as the study of the scroll stolen from the Kitsu Tombs. Kurushimi is considering turning the Lion over to his old sensei, Kizuato, when he is finished with him.

But not yet.

TSUNO RAVAGER

Earth: 6

Fire: 4

Water: 4

Air: 3

Reflexes: 4

Shadowlands Taint: 6 (Considered Lost)

Honor: 2

Rolls When Attacking: 5k4+5 (Tsuno blade); 4k4+4 (unarmed)

Rolls For Damage: 7k3+5 (Tsuno blade); 4k2+5 (unarmed)

TN to be Hit: 25 (Light Armor)

Carapace: 7

Fear: 3 (must roar to produce Fear)

Wounds Per Level: 15: +5; 25: +10; 45: +15; 60: Dead

Special: Tsuno can move Water x 10 feet in a round, or twice that distance if they take no other action in that round.

d20 System™ statistics for the Tsuno Ravagers can be found in *Creatures of Rokugan*.™

A note on Tsuno honor: Tsuno honor is an enigma. A player character who behaves like a Tsuno would never be able to maintain the Honor levels these creatures apparently have. Though by Rokugan standards Tsuno are despicable, dishonorable creatures capable of a wide variety of evil acts, all magical effects that target Honor affect them as if they had the Honor listed in their statistics.

TSUNO BUSHI (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To become a Tsuno bushi, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Race: Tsuno (any type).

Base Attack Bonus: +10

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Huge falchion)

CLASS SKILLS

The Tsuno bushi's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Iaijutsu Focus (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Sense Motive (Wis), and Swim (Str). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions. The Battle skill is described in *Rokugan*™. The Iaijutsu Focus skill is described in *Oriental Adventures*™.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2+Int modifier.

TABLE 10-2: THE TSUNO BUSHI

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Kill Your Weakness
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	I Never Stand Alone
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Tsuno Technique
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Slaughter is in the Blood
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Undying Vengeance

THE TEMPLE OF ONNOTANGU

With the naming of the Living Shadow and the destruction of its influence, the misguided sect of monks who courted both the Shadow and the Taint have been wholly consumed by the effects of the Shadowlands. They no longer possess Shadow abilities of any sort, and have an equal number of suitable Shadowlands powers (as detailed in *Way of the Shadowlands*).

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Tsuno bushi prestige class.

Kill Your Weakness (Ex): At 1st level, the Tsuno learns to draw strength from his own pain. For each 10 points of damage a Tsuno suffers, he gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC. The maximum dodge bonus he gains cannot exceed twice his level in this class.

I Never Stand Alone (Su): At 2nd level, the Tsuno gains an unerring sense of the exact locations of all his pack mates within 100 feet. If any pack mates are beyond this distance, he unerringly knows the direction in which he must travel to find the nearest pack mate outside this distance.

Tsuno Technique (Ex): At 3rd level, the Tsuno gains the ability to take a five-foot step before making a Cleave attack, once per round.

Slaughter is in the Blood (Ex): At 4th level, the Tsuno learns how to gain momentum from the deaths of his foes. For each enemy that falls before the Tsuno bushi's blade, he gains a cumulative +2 insight bonus to his melee attack rolls and weapon damage rolls for the rest of that round.

Undying Vengeance (Su): At 5th level, if the Tsuno bushi is wounded in combat by an opponent, or wounds an opponent, he may choose to unerringly track that opponent thereafter. The Tsuno may track only one such opponent at a time. An *evil ward* spell (see *Magic of Rokugan*) or other effect that prevents scrying or divination will foil this tracking ability.

TSUNO BUSHI SCHOOL

Note: This school is intended for Tsuno only, and is thus intended as an NPC school.

Benefit: None (Tsuno only)

Skills: Battle, Defense, Iaijutsu, Lore (Shadowlands), Tsuno Blade 2, Bugei Skills of choice

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes (see the note on Tsuno honor in the sidebar)

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Kill Your Weakness

The Tsuno tolerate no weakness, least of all within themselves. As things grow more dire, a Tsuno bushi becomes ever more indefatigable. A Tsuno bushi's TN to Be Hit is increased by any Wound penalties he currently suffers, to a maximum bonus of his Insight Rank \times 5.

Rank 2: I Never Stand Alone

Tsuno bushi are taught to fight as a pack, and to rely upon one another. A Tsuno bushi knows the exact locations of all

his pack mates within one hundred feet. If any pack mates are beyond this distance, he unerringly knows the direction in which he must travel to find the nearest pack mate outside this distance.

Rank 3: Tsuno Technique

At this level the Tsuno bushi has learned the rapid, yet accurate sword strike that allows two attacks per round when using a Tsuno blade.

Rank 4: Slaughter is in the Blood

The Tsuno bushi thrives on violence, and the death of his foes only increases his momentum. If the Tsuno kills an opponent, he gains a number of free Raises on his next melee attack roll equal to the dead opponent's Insight Rank. If the opponent has no Rank, he gains a single free Raise. If the attack is not made within one round, the free Raises are lost.

Rank 5: Undying Vengeance

For the enemies of the Tsuno, there is no escape. If the Tsuno bushi is wounded in combat by an opponent, or wounds an opponent, he may choose to unerringly track that opponent thereafter. The Tsuno may track only one such opponent at a time. An *Evil Ward* spell or other barrier that protects against magical detection foils this tracking ability.



CHAPTER ELEVEN:

DOJO OF THE RONIN

The Crab general shook his tetsubo in the air at the head of his army and began to proclaim his lineage and deeds. "I am Toritaka Gonsui! I slew the Crane commander Daidoji Kakono at the battle for Black Crane Palace!"

The ronin commander Kuso could barely keep from yawning as the Crab droned about how his style was the best, his sensei was the best, his family was the best, and his clan was the absolute best. Kuso adjusted his swords as this went on, and twirled his yari one or two times, testing the weight of the weapon. It had been a gift of the Crane samurai who had purchased the services of him and his men. It was a good spear. Kuso suddenly realized that the Crab was done, and expecting a reply from the enemy commander.

"Oh," Kuso grumbled. "My apologies, Crab-sama!" the ronin called across the field of battle. "I did not mean to hold up your glorious and complete victory." Kuso's voice carried unmistakable sarcasm. The Daidoji pikemen and other Doji soldiers under his command didn't miss the chance to laugh at their enemy.

"I am Kuso!" he bellowed, mocking the Crab's wide stance and large swings. "I have been paid for the Battle of Drowned Honor! I have been paid for the Battle of Broken Ground! And now I have been paid by the Crane to fight the Crab! I was trained on the field of battle, and I have no sensei." The ronin's voice suddenly became deadly serious, and his comical movements stopped as he lowered the spear to point at the Crab general. "I have no sensei, save survival. You are a Crab, and you understand what it is like to live every day of your life as if the next depended on it. I ask you now, have you ever had such desperate fury turned against you?"

Kuso wasn't surprised when the Crab had no answer.

Unlike typical dojo, ronin dojo usually aren't selective or jealous of other dojo. Wave-men rarely join together and

settle down, and those who invent their own techniques are even less common. Of course, they still pick and choose whom they teach their secrets to, and aren't fond of those who would spill their secrets. In most cases, however, they accept anyone who shares their ideals and seems loyal.

Training and gempukku also take a different meaning within these dojo. As most wave men have earned their "coming of age" on their own by merely surviving, a gempukku within one of the bands sometimes involves the new member showing that he has grasped the ideology of his new brothers. More often than not, though, the "gempukku" of these groups is nothing more than surviving his first battle. (See *Way of the Wolf* for more information on these and other ronin brotherhoods.)

THE EYES OF NANASHI

Classes: Fighter, Monk, Inkyo, Sohei

Techniques: Righteous Fury, Law of the Heavens

HISTORY

The Eyes of Nanashi, established nearly sixty years ago, are the city of Nanashi's official wardens, and are as honorable and organized as any clan unit. They work closely with the monks who have retired into the city, and receive a large portion of their training from these ancient men and women.

The Eyes of Nanashi are fiercely loyal, and expect the same from any ronin who joins. Unlike many ronin dojo, only those who understand honor and who attempt to follow its path are allowed within its walls.

The dojo itself is a converted temple, as the monks who once meditated there have thrown their resources in fully with the samurai who make up the Eyes. The dojo sensei resides here along, with several monk sensei who have found a perfect place to help spread the teachings of Shinsei.

TRAINING

The Eyes of Nanashi train only those interested in upholding the tenets of bushido and the way of the Emperor's Law. Many ronin attempting to find an easy place to sleep or think the Eyes are just shiftless ronin who "have it good" are quickly turned away by the Eyes themselves or the training.

Shinsei's Tao is learned beside swordplay, along with the finer points of the law and the proper way to execute its dictates. Gempukku consists of passing a law exam as well as quoting several passages from the Tao while performing a complex kata with a polearm. Of course, after the rigorous training laid down by the unforgiving monks of the dojo, this test seems rather tame.

Once he has passed this test, a ronin is considered a full member of the Eyes of Nanashi, and an equal partner in their interests. These interests coincide directly with the city they live in, and members of this group are often sent on missions that reflect this.

SENSEI

The Nanashi dojo has seen only three different sensei since its founding. The humble monks that reside in the school have no interest in taking full control of the place, and never have attempted to do so when a vacancy in the position arises. The position of master in this dojo is a dangerous one, as he becomes the de facto leader of the Eyes, and must maintain a careful balance between the interests of his ronin brothers and the watchful eye of the nearby Lion Clan.

KYOME

Master of the Nanashi Dojo

[Samurai 15/Fighter 3; Ronin, Insight Rank 5, Righteous Fury and Law of the Heavens]

The aging and stern lord of the Nanashi dojo now answers to the simple name of Kyome, but it was not always so. Kyome never speaks of his past with the Crane Clan, nor the dishonor he suffered in their service. If pressed, he will admit his expulsion from his family was deserved; he quietly suffers his fate with the dignity of a samurai.

For now, he is content to finish his life as a master to ronin who cling to honor despite their status. He cares little for the monks of the city; he believes they are biding their time to make Nanashi theirs. Kyome knows the nearby Lion would have offered him fealty long ago if it were not for his Crane heritage, and thus resents them, as well. All Kyome cares for in this world is his students, and his diligence in his position and almost fatherly concern with them shows it.

Mechanical Notes: When he was a Crane, Kyome was a talented duelist and magistrate. His skills and abilities favor a cultured and "peace-minded" approach to combat and life. He is still a samurai of great skill, however, and is quite capable of enforcing the Empire's law without pretty words.



ADVANCED EYES OF NANASHI TRAINING

RIGHTEOUS FURY IRONIN TECHNIQUE FEAT

You have been trained in the basic concepts of the Eyes of Nanashi style.

Prerequisites: Acceptance into the Eyes of Nanashi, Lawful, Honor 2 or higher.

Benefit: You may add half of your honor rank (rounded up) to your Armor Class. Your Initiative is raised by your honor rank.

LAW OF THE HEAVENS

IRONIC TECHNIQUE FEAT

The monks of Nanashi have taught you Shinsei's more martial truths.

Prerequisites: Righteous Fury, Knowledge (Shintao): 8 Ranks, Cleave.

Benefit: Your Diplomacy checks receive a synergy bonus equal to half of your Knowledge (Shintao) ranks, rounded down. You also gain a +2 holy bonus to your attacks against opponents of honor rank 1 or 0.

LAW OF THE HEAVENS

Ronin Single Technique

Type: Otokodate (Eyes of Nanashi)

Required Traits: Fire 3, Water 3

Required Skills: Kenjutsu 3, Kuenai 2, Law 3, Meditation

Other Requirements: Honor of 2.5 or higher, 2-point obligation to the Brotherhood of Shinsei

Location: Nanashi Mura

Technique: (7 Points) Members of the Eyes of Nanashi understand the elusive truth of enlightenment through the pursuit of honor. The ronin may add his Shintao rank to all Law rolls, and to all his attack rolls against characters with 1 honor or less.

THE WEAVERS

Classes: Rogue, Ninja

Techniques: Twist the Weave, Cutting the Weave

HISTORY

The ronin brotherhood that calls itself simply the Weavers has had a tumultuous history recently. Though they have never been on the legal side of the Empire, they did their best to avoid suspicion and provide their services to those who would gain nothing from exposing them. To be precise, the Weavers are merchants of many fine wares, including assassination. Their organization was exposed a generation ago, when Imperial Magistrates came hunting what they called "Kolats."

Through careful evasion and study, the Weavers learned of the shadowy Kolat conspiracy, and discovered that the Weavers had actually been their pawns. The ronin brotherhood could think of only one way to remove the Kolat from their operations — become useless to the shadowy organization. They attempted to find a place to call their own, and thus become far less of a traveling resource to the Kolat.

They found a willing lord in the Ox Clan Champion, Morito. Looking to expand the numbers and influence of the Ox, Morito offered the Weavers control of a small town in his lands in exchange for their fealty. The Weavers now claim their own home and dojo, and have used the past fifteen years to institute their own trade routes and services. The Weavers still train their members in the art of assassination, though they have not hired themselves out for such contracts since their exposure. They do not mind; freedom from the influence of the Kolat is at present worth living quietly in the village of the Ox. Soon, however, that will change.

TRAINING

An initiate into the Weavers must show promise in two areas — commerce and assassination. Because of this stipulation, and since nobody outside the group knows what qualities they seek in new recruits, the Weavers are perhaps the smallest well-known gathering of ronin. Though the occasional dismissed merchant or financially-inclined retainer can find employment among the Weavers (an innocent patsy is a useful tool to them from time to time), most who come to them because of their obvious reputation are turned away politely.

Almost without exception, membership to the Weavers is by invitation, when the superiors of the ronin band see talent. The judgment of these men and women has never been wrong, and no new recruits have thus far needed to be "silenced" after the Weavers reveal their true selves.

After this initial contact, the ronin is trained in the more refined points of both trade and murder, stressing the subtle aspects of both. In a ritual that can only be called bizarre, the initiate receives full status in the Weavers once he conducts business with a challenging client, then kills the client silently the same night to retrieve whatever it was that was sold. Strange as it is, this gempukku ceremony has served the Weavers well.

SENSEI

As in many ronin brotherhoods, the sensei of the Weavers is also their leader. The master of the Weavers has never considered taking the title of "sensei," but with the sudden addition of holdings, including a dojo, to the band's property, it does not seem improper.

NANEKO

Master of the Weaver Dojo

[Rogue 13/Ninja 4; Ronin, Insight Rank 5, Twist the Weave, Cutting the Weave]

Naneko can claim one thing that many ronin will never be able to — comfort. She was born into the Weavers, and became one of its most useful members as she came of age. When the Magistrates came for her "family" of the brotherhood, the current Weaver leader was the first to be taken away. It was Naneko's quick thinking that allowed as many of the Weavers to survive as they did. It became apparent that she was the most qualified person to lead at the time, and the Weavers followed her every whim.

Those whims have brought them fortune and comfort in the middle of the fledgling Ox Clan's lands. Naneko loves her extended family dearly, and will do anything to protect them. However, any warmth in her cold heart is reserved for them alone. She is, at her core, a ruthless and cunning master of manipulation and lies. She is able to bargain with the most miserly Yasuki, and end men's lives as surely as a master Shosuro assassin. Her plans for the Weavers are great, and soon she intends to reveal the true value she and her band can bring to Lord Morito. She has no doubt the Ox Daimyo will see the worth in their services.

Mechanical Notes: Naneko's skills favor stealth, commerce, and social interaction, nothing else. She is adept at killing, but is not a master of arms. Her attacks, both social and physical, rely on a quick maiming or murdering blow which leaves her opponent at her mercy.

ADVANCED WEAVERS TRAINING

TWIST THE WEAVE

IRONIC TECHNIQUE FEAT

You have undergone the Weavers' intense training in the arts of subtlety and stealth.

Prerequisites: Void Use, Hide: 6 Ranks, Move Silently: 6 Ranks, acceptance into the Weavers.

Benefit: If you ever spend a Void Point on a Hide, Move Silently, or Bluff roll, you gain benefits as if you had spent two.

CUTTING THE WEAVE

IRONIC TECHNIQUE FEAT

The complex training of the Weavers has made you a cunning and ruthless opponent against those who attempt to overpower you.

Prerequisites: Twist the Weave, Mobility.

Benefit: If an opponent attacks you and receives a bonus other than his Base Attack Bonus, ability score bonus, or bonus granted from an item, you gain a +2 circumstance modifier to all of your attacks against him until the end of the next round.

CUTTING THE WEAVE

Weavers Single Technique

Type: Juzimai

Required Traits: Perception 4, Fire 4

Required Skills: Acting 3, Commerce 2, Knife 3, Kuenai 3, Poison 2, Stealth 4

Other Requirements: Clear Thinker, 2-Point Obligation to the Weavers, Insight Rank 3

Location: Ox Clan lands

Technique: (8 points) The Weavers understand that the way of trade can be applied to social interactions, and the easiest time to strike a man is when he is confident he cannot be beaten. The Weaver may add his Commerce rank to all Awareness rolls, and any time an opponent makes one or more Raises when attacking him, his next attack against that opponent gets a Free Raise.

THE MACHI-KANSHISHA

Classes: Fighter, Rogue

Techniques: Smoke and Mirrors, Clouded Mind

HISTORY

Perhaps the least organized of the major ronin brotherhoods is the Machi-Kanshisha, who are little more than organized enforcers. They did not come together for any other purpose than the lure of Kaeru koku — they are all employed by the Kaeru family in the City of the Rich Frog.

At first, their numbers were few. However, as the interests and holdings of the Kaeru grew, so did their need for armed enforcers. The word spread from ronin to ronin that a rich family would hire capable ronin able to keep in line for an employer. An offer like that attracted many wave-men; in fact, the Kaeru family was able to pick and choose from among them to find the ronin who best suited their interests.

Eventually, these men were gifted with a barracks built for their "order." The small training room included there is called a dojo pridefully by the members of the Machi-Kanshisha, though it is little more than a large room with a mat on which to spar. However, the ronin employed there can claim a master, a sensei, a duty, and (most importantly to many of them) steady pay. They do not hesitate to point out this is much more than many ronin can boast.

TRAINING

Training is a practical matter within the Machi-Kanshisha. As the Kaeru all but rule the City of the Rich Frog, their bushi fill the role of enforcers and peace keepers within the city. There is very little need to teach new members the Emperor's Law, however — the Machi-Kanshisha are the Kaeru's enforcers, not the Empire's. New recruits are repeatedly informed that the Kaeru rule the City of the Rich Frog, and it is their duty to serve the Kaeru.

To help facilitate the image of magistrates and protectors, the Machi-Kanshisha do their best to keep their swords sheathed, even in combat. As a mark of their acceptance into the brotherhood, a new recruit is presented with a long iron smoking pipe that is used as a bo. It is not uncommon for a member of the Kaeru guard to bludgeon an offender into submission, then quietly sit down and relax by smoking with the weapon he just used.

The practices of this ronin brotherhood favor practicality over the concepts of honor and bushido. They are, after all, not proper samurai, and in the employ of a family that has no legal claim on the city it all but openly runs. While the members of the Machi-Kanshisha are fairly loyal to one another, they do not go out of their way to assist one another or further each other's development unless instructed to do so.

SENSEI

The master of the Machi-Kanshisha dojo is always appointed by the Kaeru family leaders. The sensei is the master of the ronin brotherhood, and the family expects him to keep his enforcers in line and on duty.

RENSEI

Master of the Machi-Kanshisha Dojo

[Fighter 11/Rogue 5; Ronin, Insight Rank 5, Smoke and Mirrors, Clouded Mind]

Rensei is pretty happy with life, but you would never know it by his demeanor. The Kaeru picked him out of the Machi-Kanshisha a generation ago, because they recognized a motivational leader when they saw one. He inspires greatness in others by causing them to fear him. Though the Kaeru are powerful and influential, many of their hired ronin fear their sensei more than the family itself.

The master of the Machi-Kanshisha doesn't care. He approaches his duty with the stance of a businessman. He is paid for results, and he applies pressure and words to achieve them. Rensei secretly hopes the Kaeru will offer him true

fealty some day; he has been a ronin his entire life, and quietly wishes to know if true service to a lord is as satisfying as the samurai say.

Mechanical Notes: Rensei is a thug. He fights dirty, cares little for whatever it takes to get a job done, and is more likely to use a direct approach than a subtle one. Rensei is hardly stupid, however, and is clever enough to use tactics that give him an advantage when pure battle prowess won't see him through.

ADVANCED MACHI-KANSHISHA TRAINING

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

IRON TECHNIQUE FEAT

You have been trained by the Machi-Kanshisha in the use of a staff or smoking pipe as a weapon.

Prerequisites: Acceptance by the Machi-Kanshisha, Weapon Focus (Staff).

Benefit: You may use an iron smoking pipe as a staff, provided it is at least the proper length for your size. Your attacks with a staff are +1 to hit and damage, and if you attempt to disarm an opponent with your staff and fail, your opponent does not automatically get a chance to disarm you.

CLOUDED MIND

IRON TECHNIQUE FEAT

You have absorbed the Machi-Kanshisha's creed of quick, decisive force.

Prerequisites: Smoke and Mirrors, Power Attack.

Benefit: You may spend a Void Point when making an attack with a staff to attempt to stun your opponent. If the attack succeeds, the opponent must make a Fortitude save with a DC of 10 + the attack's damage. If the save fails, the opponent is stunned as if affected by the *daze* spell. If the attack does not hit, the Void Point is still spent.

CLOUDED MIND

Machi-Kanshisha Single Technique

Type: Otokodate

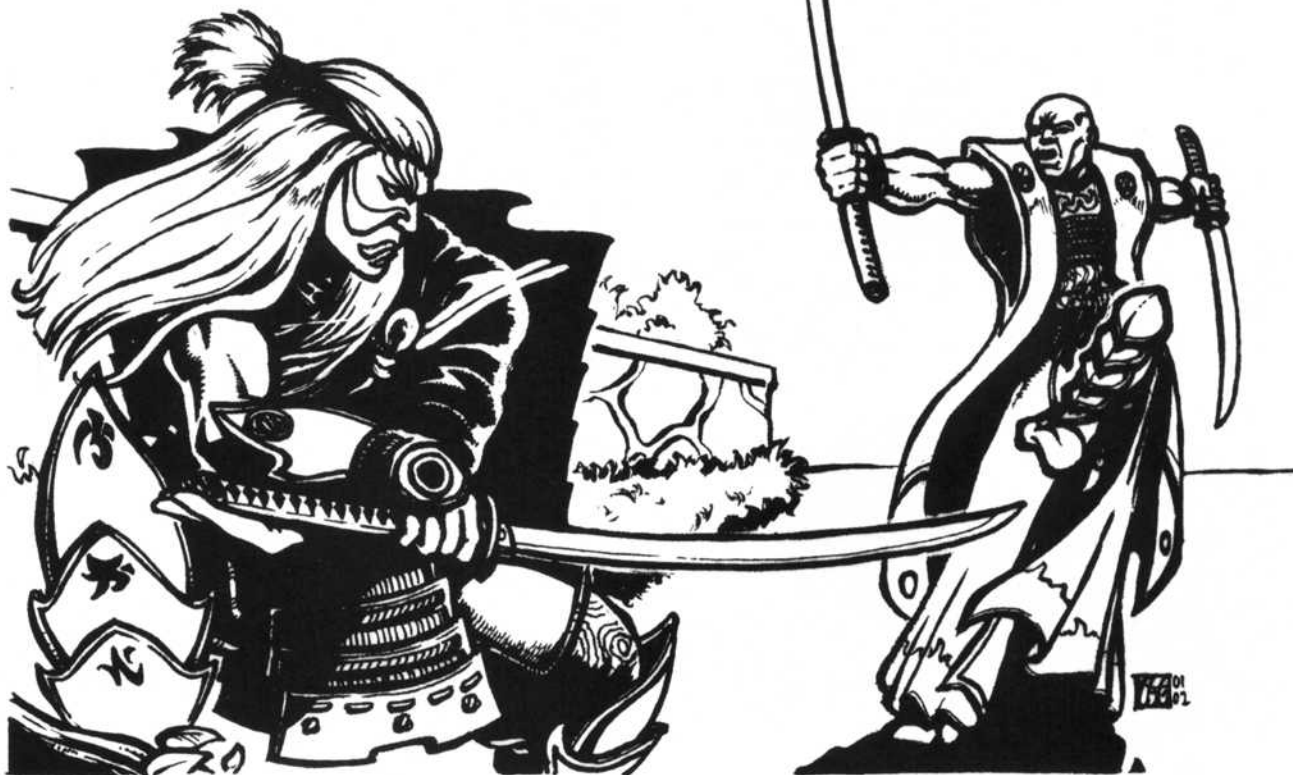
Required Traits: Agility 4, Water 3

Required Skills: Bojutsu 3, Commerce 2, Intimidation 2, Kuenai 2

Other Requirements: Patron (Kaeru Family), Insight Rank 3

Location: City of the Rich Frog

Technique: (8 points) The enforcers of the Machi-Kanshisha are taught to defuse a violent situation quickly and smoothly with their staffs. This technique teaches a precise and quick strike to an opponent's skull with the end of the staff, causing disorientation. The ronin spends a Void Point and makes a raise with a bo staff (the Free Raise granted by the Smoke and Mirrors technique qualifies). If he strikes his target, the target must make a simple Earth roll. The TN of this roll is equal to the total attack roll made, and if the roll is failed, the target is considered to be one Wound level lower for two rounds. This technique cannot bring the target below the Down Wound level. Multiple uses are cumulative.



NEWS OF THE EMPIRE

Those of you who were first introduced to the world of Rokugan through the d20 sourcebook, *Rokugan*, may notice a few references to events that have taken place since the history described in that book. The world of Rokugan is a living, breathing, ever-changing place where major events occur all the time. This section is intended to bring you up to date on events that have happened in the Empire since the release of *Rokugan*, especially those centering on the recent L5R CCG expansion, *An Oni's Fury*, and appearing in weekly fiction on the Alderac Entertainment Group website. (This fiction can be found at <http://l5r.alderac.com/fiction/>.)

As a final attempt to broker peace among her siblings, Toturi Tsudao arranged a meeting of the Winter Court at Kyuden Miya. This conference ended in tragedy due to the meddling of a Pekkles no Oni dispatched by Shahai. Unbeknownst to the Winds, a second Pekkles was also sent, in the guise of a herald (shisha) named Miya Gensaiken. This herald has attached himself to Toturi Sezarū as an advisor, and has privately begun to plot the ruin of his new master.

Sezarū was later attacked in the Twilight Mountains by Daigotsu himself, in the form of a powerful demon known as an Onisu. Sezarū's aide Asako Ryoma was slain during the battle. Only the quick action and brave spirit of Sezarū's yojimbo, Toturi Koshei, kept the Wolf from losing his life as well.

In a duel with the Elemental Masters, Tamori Shaitung surprised both Phoenix and Dragon by defeating all five Masters in a desperate, all-or-nothing attack. The six shugenja were swallowed by the earth, and then seen no more.

Beneath the crust of the earth, the Masters discovered none other than Shaitung's Tainted father, Agasha Tamori. Now serving Daigotsu as the Dark Oracle of Fire, it was Tamori who apparently caused the volcanic eruptions in Dragon lands and instigated the war between the two clans, in order to deflect the Phoenix-Lion alliance from its planned assault on the Shadowlands.

Master of Water Isawa Riake was killed in the battle that followed. Only Master of Air Isawa Nakamuro and Tamori Shaitung escaped intact by fleeing into the volcanic tunnels. The remaining Masters were sealed in a stone prison deep within the earth and left for dead by the Dark Oracle.

Asahina Sekawa won the Test of the Jade Champion, securing the position as foremost shugenja magistrate of the Empire. During the test, an Onisu known as Hakai staged a horrific attack upon Kyuden Nio, the site of the tournament. The castle was destroyed and many were killed, including Asahina Tamako and Asahina Kimita, the uncle and sister of the new Jade Champion. Luckily, the intervention of Naka Tokei, Grand Master of the Five Elements, combined with the power of the new Jade Champion, drove Hakai from the scene.

The Shadowlands Horde staged a surprise attack upon the Kaiu Wall, a large number of their forces appearing within the boundary of the Wall itself. None know how these troops appeared, but their surprise attack in broad daylight overwhelmed six of the Wall's twelve major guard towers before help could arrive. Crab Champion Hida Kuroda is believed to have been slain during the attack, leaving the mantle of leadership on the uncertain shoulders of his twin brother, Kuon.

Hantei Naseru enjoined the Dragon magistrate Kitsuki Remata to investigate the mysterious lineage of Akodo Kaneka. Remata discovered that Kaneka was in fact related to the central family line of the Yasuki even more closely than Yasuki Hachi. When he learned of this, Kaneka led an army of Lion (with the support of the Scorpion) to seize the Yasuki lands himself "in the name of peace." The Crab were allowed to draw upon the lands' resources so long as they did not contest Kaneka's presence. The Crane were ordered to leave the lands immediately.

Yasuki Hachi and Kitsuki Remata both suspect there is more to this than there seems, and continue to investigate the matter.

Phoenix Champion Isawa Tsukune answered the call of Osano-Wo, Fortune of Fire and Thunder, and ascended into the heavens as the new Fortune of Rebirth.

The Tsuno staged a savage attack upon the Kitsuki Tombs, looting all of the sacred magical texts therein and kidnapping Matsu Domotai, brother of Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro. Nimuro immediately demanded retaliation against the Shadowlands, recalling the majority of the Lion units which had been committed to assist the Phoenix against the Dragon.

Without a Champion or the Elemental Council to guide them, and lacking strong aid from the Lion Clan, the Phoenix began to lose ground in their war against the Dragon. Desperate for any edge against his foes, Shiba Aikune, son of Shiba Tsukune, found and unleashed the power of Isawa's Last Wish, a lost artifact created by the Phoenix Thunder. Though the power of this relic is unimaginable, Aikune seems fully capable of controlling it.



"THIS IS NOT JUST A BLADE. THIS IS ONE
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TECHNIQUE. YOU ARE NOTHING BUT ANOTHER
OPPONENT UNWORTHY OF ITS EDGE!"

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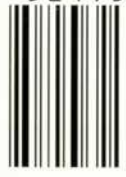
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