

REALITY BLURS PRESENTS

# IRON DYNASTY

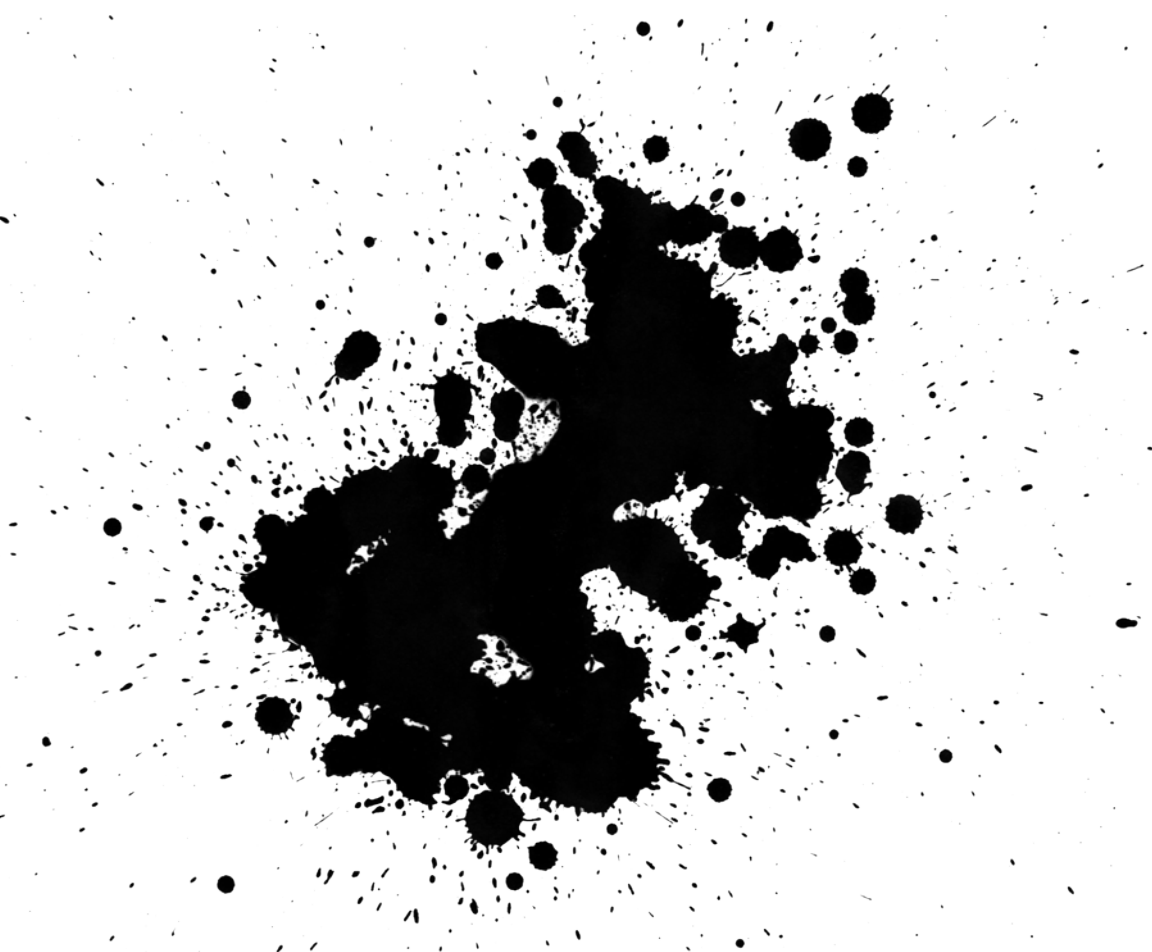
## WAY OF THE RONIN



# IRON DYNASTY

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WAY OF THE RONIN





*A special thank you to all you guys out there who did not give  
up hope that the Iron Dynasty would one day be realized!*

# IRON DYNASTY

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## WAY OF THE RONIN

BY

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# WELCOME TO THE IRON DYNASTY

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Inspired by countless samurai flicks, video games, classical literature, historical works, and a splash of anime, we present *Iron Dynasty: Way of the Ronin*.

Imagine you're watching one of those old chanbara flicks — you know, the ones loosely based on historical Japan, but kicked up about a thousand notches in the blood and gratuitous violence department, and the camera gives you a bird's eye view of a palatial estate. We see a couple of guards in cool armor moving around with those funky spears that have weird names, looking bored as all get out and probably wondering how many grains of rice they're earning, and we catch something at the top of screen right. It flickers for just a second, but now the camera zooms in just a touch, so we can make out the tantalizing shadow, a suggestion of someone with many degrees of wicked tucked away in his back pocket. This is a man with a plan.

We see him move up to the first guard, do a strike to the small of his back between those plates, and he crumples like day-old wontons. The other guard turns the corner and sees our hero, a ninja dude, dragging this guy into the shadows. I know I said ninja and hero altogether. Hang in there. It gets better.

The second guard throws his spear, and the ninja easily ducks out of the way, but it bought the guard enough time to whip out a slick, mahogany-handled flintlock. The camera does a quick close-up and we see this guard's lips peeled back in a taut grin as the crack of his pistol kills the silence. A quick scan to the left reveals the ninja's shadow double is hit center-of-mass and disappears, and we see the actual ninja drop down behind him, striking him in a nerve cluster that paralyzes instantly. The ninja disappears into the night, leaving the guard gasping his last breaths until he turns blue and falls over dead. Cue the slick, thick guitar riff and fade to black.

*Iron Dynasty: Way of the Ronin* introduces you to the world of heavy metal oriental action. You got the vibe now? You get a chance to become that ninja, that hero. Heck, any type of wicked-as-all-get out martial arts master you can think of (and maybe even a few you haven't). Grab your katana, strap on your sidearm if you're up to it, do a few leg stretches to limber up, and let's get going!

Regards,

Sean



# WORDS FROM A WISEMAN

---

*Ronin?*

*You say that is only the name for a masterless samurai? How wrong you are.*

*Look around you. The world has changed. The very land itself has changed. Magic is fading from sight, and those kikai — those machines, pollute even the air. Do you have a family? Do you have a clan? You say you may not be a warrior, and that may have once been true, but now we are all warriors. We fight for survival. We fight for another day. We have no masters to guide us — the best of the last age have fallen before the iron might of kikai. The craftsman who shapes metal and knows the secrets of gearcraft can make a machine that can easily crush a man who spent a lifetime on the battlefield? Where is the grace in that? Where is the honor?*

*So what if our new leaders let us carry swords and claim false freedoms? They can take them away at any time, and they treat us as little more than stray dogs nipping at their heels. There is only one way to make a difference, to restore honor to Konoyo and become a better man — embrace the Way of the Ronin. Find the warrior's heart beating within you, be you sinner or saint, and take to the roads. The spirits are hidden in the secret places, magic lies in ancient ruins, and some say masters can be found if one looks hard enough. What are you waiting for? There is nothing left for you here but dusty old words from a dusty old man who thirsts now for only the past, who finds solace only in sake. Become the hero you are meant to be. The Way of the Ronin is long, but if you wander long enough, you will become a kesshi, a hero of the people, and then...why then your adventures will truly begin...*

## HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE (PART I)

When one looks back at the last days of the Bright Empire, it is hard not to see the signs pointing to the future. Many consider the death of Emperor Emci, son of Karasu, as the end of the Empire, but the truth is, he served to usher in the new age and can be viewed as the kouso, the true founder of the dynasty, though he thought he served the best wishes of his people and his dream up until the last minutes of life. He passed unceremoniously in his sleep, and it

was a quiet winter morning when his daughter of nine took the throne. To see what happens next, it is best to go back a bit farther in the history of Konoyo and examine what brought things to this point.

## INTRIGUES & BETRAYALS

Karasu and Otomo were twins raised apart. Their father, Emperor Omu, planned for them to rule together, but it was not to be. Omu was assassinated by emissaries of Jade Creek Court, and Otomo was installed on the throne. Karasu, trained in an isolated temple in the mountains, could not be found to be contacted with the news. When he grew to young adulthood, he made his trek back to the palace and discovered to his dismay that his father had been slain, and his brother sat upon the throne.

Otomo received his brother graciously and told him of the great tragedy and how he could not be found. Otomo had been instructed to kill his brother, but could not go through with it and instead exiled him quietly to Kojin in the north for his own safety. His court agreed to the Emperor's terms, but the Regent Gi told his escorts to slay Karasu once they were well out to sea.

They traveled two days before attempting to slay him in his sleep. Karasu dispatched them quite readily, threw their bodies overboard, and dove into the cold dark waters where it is said he swam for three days before reaching the shores of Kojin a changed man. He looked to the south and vowed vengeance upon his former homeland before collapsing from fatigue. When he next awoke, he found himself lying next to a fire in a small hovel where a toothless woman grinned widely at him. "*We have seen your coming and wait to serve the Witch-King.*"

## THE RISE OF KARASU ROKKU

Karasu spent the next handful of years honing his powers and uniting the ancient lands of Kojin. They were a peaceful people, and he had been trained to be a leader of men. They easily fell under his sway, even as Mazika the Toothless tutored him in the ways of dark magics as, she claimed, she had tutored the current Witch-King, who had grown fat and uncaring upon his throne. By his twenty-third birthday, Karasu had unified the western half of Kojin under his banner and took battle to Kurokage, the Mountain Fortress, where he slew Witch-King Darakeru and devoured his flesh on the battlefield. No one questioned Karasu's ferocity, and all bent knee to him throughout the land. The whole of the land was named Karasu Rokku, the Raven's Rock, for his word was law — he was the new Witch-King.

The land and the future was his, but he knew in his heart these were not his lands and these were not his people, so he sired a son and ruled for seventeen years, teaching his son his secrets of magic and power, and kissed him on the cheeks and left him in the care of Mazika. He said he would return, but they both knew better, and Mazika wept for the only time in her life. It is said that her tears caused the lands to flood, drowning the giants and turning them to stone in wonder and amazement, forming the great reefs south of Kojin.



## LINES OF SUCCESSION

Through placing Otomo on the throne, the Jade Creek Court sought only to maintain the delicate balance of the period. If twin heirs were publicly known, the Imperial Palace's strength would weaken and countless attempts would be made on the ruler's life. They knew by slaying the former Emperor, they ensured his purity of vision for his lands and his people.

However, they did not count on the tenacity of Karasu, who returned to the Bright Empire after his twenty-two year exile in a small fishing boat. He traveled to the mountains in the north where he remembered hearing legends of the Oni-Kaji, the great ancient craftsmen, and sought to strike a bargain. He knew they were rumored to see through to the heart of things, and that is where they drew their power to create items of legend. He went to the highest mountains and was about to give up all hope when he incanted a little-used charm of clear seeing taught him by Mazika, and when he did, he found a secret pass, cleverly concealed. He made his way up higher, then higher still. At last he had found the Oni-Kaji, and he paid them tribute and then spoke to them of war.

Seven more years passed while the Ikusa Kikai, great machines of war, were built, and Karasu descended to the mountain temple where he had been taught all those years ago. The elder yamabushi there recognized him immediately and embraced him. They did not need to ask. The time had come. They followed him back into the mountain mists and descended again in machines of war and rage.

The palace did not know what had struck it. Suddenly, without warning, crows of fire touched down upon the outer walls, sending fear into the outer guards. Next came the thunderous roar of bamboo mortars that sent the walls splintering into a thousand pieces. Trained bushi wept and wailed as the shinjin, the metal gods, tore men asunder. When they reached the inner courtyard of the palace, only the most hardened warriors and samurai of Jade Creek stood fast. Karasu, it is said, walked upon the backs of ravens to the ground, while his brother came out in a litter of gold and jade, corpulent and fearful.

Karasu moved forward and pulled out his katana and knelt before his brother, offering him the hilt. Tears ran down Otomo's face as he took the blade. "*I am sorry, dear brother,*" the Emperor spoke. "*Rule well.*" He thrust the blade deep into himself and then raised it painfully up even deeper into his flesh. His white robes turned red. Karasu kissed his brother on the cheeks. "*You died well.*" Karasu, after twenty-nine years, had claimed his rightful place as Emperor of Konoyo.

The shinjin were lined along the front of the Imperial Palace, a reminder of the Emperor's might and majesty. Though no more machines issued forth from the mountains, there were rumblings on the wind and the spirits already knew what the future held. The Iron Dynasty had begun.

## ITOSHI ASCENDING: HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE (PART II)

When Itoshi, daughter of Emperor Emei, took the throne, she was just a child, protected and sheltered from the outside world by an Honor Guard of the seven best samurai in the lands. Each year, during the Festival of Flowers, each province would have contests amongst their samurai to find the best warrior in the land. These seven samurai would then go to duel the Honor Guard for supremacy. Should the challengers defeat her Honor Guard, they would become the Empress's new guard and the Honor Guard would return to their homes as Goshi, honored with land for their loyal service. Should the challengers fail, they would die. She kept her original Honor Guard for all of her seven years upon the throne.

### RISE OF THE MACHINES

Her first year as ruler was met with surprisingly little resistance, but the vast network of spies and contacts maintained by her regent, Shima of Jade Creek Court, let them know there was danger on the wind and, true enough, skirmishes began along provincial borders. Shima sat down and explained to young Itoshi her family's connection with the Oni-Kaji and the Emei Directive.

### DARK SECRETS OF THE BRIGHT EMPIRE

Karasu had struck a deal with the Oni-Kaji to provide them with certain goods upon his ascension to the throne in exchange for their craftwork. Upon hearing what these goods were, young Itoshi shrieked. Each year, the Oni-Kaji received payment in flesh and blood in an even exchange of one pound of metal for one pound of man. The Oni-Kaji would take no other payment then or now. Her father, foreseeing trouble on the wind, had continued Karasu's contract in what was explained to the higher members of court as the Emei Directive, which was to continue until Itoshi came of age when she might then address things. As it stood, close to a hundred machines awaited them in the hidden mountain fortresses of the Oni-Kaji. Shima sent emissaries and bushi to return with the kikai on a mission of suppression and reunification. In her heart, Itoshi feared that all that she loved was an illusion.

### REBELLION AVERTED

Caught off-guard by the waves of kikai coming down out of Yamakyojin and sweeping across the lands, the dissidents were quieted, and any thoughts of rebellion ended for the time. People everywhere were disturbed to discover such machines existed and in such numbers. Itoshi steeled herself to the wisdom of her father – the sacrifices made by her people made the world a better place. While never entirely comfortable with it, she reconciled her sorrow with the

preservation of the Empire, even agreeing to an official coronation ceremony on her sixteenth birthday.

## CELEBRATIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS

Itoshi embraced her regent's idea and invited kings, courtesans and people from as far away as Inan to the southwest. She also insisted on inviting her cousin, King Ikusuu of Karasu Rokku, better known simply as the Witch-King. The inner circle of the Jade Creek Court was none too happy at this news, and they set plans in motion to see that the invitation never arrived.

When her coronation day came, a raven flew in through the windows and transformed into a man. King Ikusuu had arrived, much to the surprise of everyone present. He was a tall, handsome man of dark complexion, with black hair and ebony eyes, and dressed in robes as black as night, stitched with silver threads. *"As a courtesy, I come, requesting my throne."* His words were deep and resonant. *"My line is as strong as yours, and I am your elder."*

Itoshi brushed back her golden hair and glared down at him. *"I am descended from the Ka, cousin. Whatever rights you may think you have, the gods think otherwise."*

When Ikusuu's hand dropped to his scabbard, Samurai Shosei stepped forward. Ikusuu appraised the man and grinned. *"Ah, so you wish to match blades with me?"* He tilted his head back and laughed. *"There is no shortage of hypocrisy within these halls, it seems. The time has not yet come for bloodshed, and I could certainly put a soldier like you to good use."*



Shosei spoke. *“Noble Witch King, I thank you for the kindness you pay me with your words, but I am sworn to the service of the Empress, and a blade cannot serve two masters. Perhaps you would like quarters to rest before the ceremony?”* He looked towards Itoshi, who nodded in turn, and continued, *“My men can escort you there.”*

Witch-King Ikusuu, honor allayed for the moment, visibly relaxed and rubbed his hands together. *“Perhaps. I prefer the halls of Kurokage to the Imperial Palace of Zuichi. Yet, I have heard the sake is good in these parts. Yes, I shall stay for the ceremony.”*

It is conjectured that this was the critical moment when two accidents of fate occurred. The first was the regent entering the room just when things were growing calm. Shima — well known for his promptness — had somehow overslept this day. The second was when he, a man of clear wisdom and wit, misspoke. *“He has no place in these halls, barging in like some kind of bandit.”* The regent produced a talisman from his folds. *“Be gone, dark child, go back to your lands of misery and myth.”* The talisman gave off a golden glow.

The Witch-King glowered and shook his head. *“I am not the monster you think. I know the old ways of power, that is true, but now you seek to dismiss me like some sort of creature from nightmare and myth. I am as real as the steel of my blade or the beating of your heart in your throat. I will cause no harm this day. My cousin deserves no such distress. Yet, I shall not be dishonored by being cast out by you or anyone. So stand down.”*

At that moment, the regent nodded, and from the shadows flew an arrow quick and quiet to pierce Ikusuu’s throat. He did not fold and fall to the floor, or even stagger for a moment before dying, as a lesser man would. In fact, he didn’t move at all. He reached up with one hand, pulled the arrow through, and cast it to the ground where it shattered like glass. There was no sign of injury.

*“You have added injury to insult. Strike me down as a common man? Utter madness. I shall not lift a blade against you unless you first lift one against me, but I shall tell you this — I will gaze each day into my magic mirror and watch as your kingdoms shatter and crumble around you, decaying like you would have my corpse. I shall now take my leave, but first, dear cousin, I still have my gifts for you.”*

The great doors opened, and two servants dragged in a large gilded crate. He bowed deeply, and his robes seemed to swallow him and fall to the ground, empty and lifeless. The servants fled the chamber and her Honor Guard looked uneasily about the room. Itoshi, a creature of light, clapped her hands gleefully and bid her attendants open the crate. The regent cautioned her against it. She scowled. *“You, Lord Shima, have caused enough trouble for one day.”* He said nothing, and she repeated her words. *“Open the crate.”*

The gilded box was opened, and within it was a great chest of gold, sixteen silver spears, eighteen oysters stuffed with pearls, and an ancient vase with a waxen seal. Itoshi’s eyes grew wide. *“Is this what I think it is, Lord Advisor?”* He nodded. *“Yes, Empress, it seems that the Witch-King had come with an offer of marriage.”* Her face grew hot. *“What’s in the vase do you think? Sake or some such for our wed-*

*ding night, I would imagine. We shan't have it wasted. I'm sure it is quite good, an exotic surprise for our coronation celebration. I shall drink to the honor of my cousin. Luckily, he had enough for both of us."*

## RECEPTION IN CRIMSON

The coronation was beautiful, and night fell across the reign of Empress Itoshi as people gathered at the Imperial Palace, word already spreading of the appearance of the Witch King and his gifts that would be revealed. Karasu Rokku was much feared and unknown, so it was no different than saying a dragon had descended from the heavens to be petted. No one could resist the allure. All gathered within the courtyard for the reception. The shadows of the Shinjin, the great metal gods, fell long as the sun disappeared beyond the mountains to the west.

People were examining the gifts of the Witch-King and marveling over their exquisiteness, when the Empress and her Honor Guard entered. Itoshi shone like a beam of sunlight, making her way through the ranks of the most high before ascending a platform, where a simple tarp was draped over something.

*"As some of you may have already heard, my cousin came by today and was ill-received in my house. He handled things with a graciousness rarely seen even within our own courts, gifting us with many wondrous things. However, should this contain what I think it does, we shall toast his safe journey home with our apologies and most sincere hopes that he may one day forgive us."*

Itoshi clapped her hands, and her servants pulled aside the tarp to reveal an ancient urn about five feet in height and four feet in diameter. She turned to Shosei, who handed her a small knife, and she cut through the thick wax on the top. She leaned forward to take a closer look just as a darkness seeped out and poured over her. Shima held up his brightly glowing talisman, but the darkness screamed and lashed out at him, breaking both talisman and man, as it faded away. Already, the Honor Guard formed a wall around the Empress and began moving with her. That is when the greater darkness contained in the vase awakened and swarmed out into the crowd.

What exactly happened next is unknown, as only bits and pieces have survived, like hearing a story told a hundred times. The Empress disappeared, and no one knows where she is to this day. The courtyard was slick with blood as the madness overtook many and countless fell.

The madness spread across the land for a time until the Honor Guard, under its leader, Shosei, brought order again to Zuiichi. Fractures had grown amongst the kingdoms and none knew if there would be any way to prevent them. A decision was made, and each of the Honor Guard took control of a Shinjin and a contingent of kikai and made their way to their home provinces. Shosei, native to the region, retained control of Zuiichi. They all agreed that this course of action would be the only way to preserve the remnants of the Bright Empire.

## THE RESTORATION

No one knows exactly what has happened to the samurai. Whether they were touched by madness that day, or the growing pressures of dealing with the darkness were too much for them, or just the normal temptations of power overwhelmed them. The Lord Generals, as they came to call themselves, all decided there should be a central leader, yet none could agree upon whom.

Shosei was the first to bring up war. *"I hold the central seat. I hold the palace. I preserve the traditions that honor Nagano. Should you wish to move me, you are welcome to try."*

As they returned to their provinces, they saw more kikai than ever before. Shosei had learned the secrets of the Empire. It was only a matter of time before they all did.

## ISOLATION AND CORRUPTION

Five years passed in relative peace between the provinces, not so much from the efforts of their High Lord Generals, but from the lands. They were changing. Whatever darknesses had been released from the vase had effected a transformation across the whole of the lands. Swamplands formed where none had existed. Dormant volcanoes awakened from a long sleep. The great forest of bamboo along the eastern coastline turned a deep blue.

Travelers began telling tales of strange spirits and creatures, the likes unheard of in ages, again walking in the lands of man. People began to travel less and less, and the wilderness began retaking stretches of road and field. The makoto said something had weakened the walls between worlds. The onmyoji, always few in number, retreated into hiding as word spread of their elimination by edict of the High Lord General. Some clever commoners had seen enough of the kikai by this time that they began to take stumbling steps in creating machines of their own. Many were impressed into the armies of the provinces. War was on the wind.

After the lands seemed to settle into their new forms, people thought less about the Empire and more about their homeland than ever before. Their Lord General was the law and their protector, and the story of the coronation was known to all. Provinces were renamed in honor of their new masters. New borders formed as old clans, houses, and families had to decide where their allegiances lay.

## THE FIRST WARS

Ikusa Kokoro, not surprisingly, drew first blood with its attack against Ato, leveling some of its greater cities to the ground and demanding fealty. Ato became something of a puppet nation at that point, its autonomy mostly focused on contending with Hinote Shima to the southwest. Sorimizu and Uma-Ko Ryoudo formed an alliance against Ikusa Kokoro, hoping that by dividing its attention both of them could survive while they built up their forces. Hinote Shima struck against Sorimizu but was repelled, due in large part to their water

## A FOUR CLASS SYSTEM NO MORE

In traditional Japanese history, there was a rigid class system that divided people into four main groups: samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants. However, at the time your adventures take place, although the divisions still exist, they have fallen apart quite a bit. While some of the older generation nobility may certainly frown at a commoner wearing a *katana*, it is not as likely to result in an instant beheading or immediate challenge.

You'll find that the traditions are strongest in the cities and especially in the province of Ikusa Kokoro, which prides itself on following the Old Ways. In most of the outlying areas they do not care, as long as you're not raising your arms against them. In fact, many heroes are often actively recruited to deal with the outbreak of supernatural phenomena across the lands in the wake of the Great Unrest.

However, when you do deal with nobility – and you know you eventually will – if you don't have a noble in your party, there are still several skills to keep in mind to help you along the way. Persuasion can certainly cover diplomatic actions, Knowledge (Etiquette) is quite helpful, and don't forget your character's defining interests. You never know when they may come in handy. If you're bold, you can even attempt a bit of Intimidation to get people to see things your way.

People are also going to pass judgment based upon how you're dressed. You may be of noble birth, but if you dress like a peasant and only bathe once a month, you're going to have less chance getting an audience with a local lord than the geisha in your party who spends all her money on lavish silks, perfumes, and cosmetics. If you want to be a noble or act like a noble, you must be prepared to part with your *bu* as readily as needs require.

One final note regarding the class system as presented: there are many ways to present a class system and we elected to bundle it into your Charisma, as is reflected by the Edges and Hindrances found throughout this book. The more important you are, the better people are going to treat you. If you're a scoundrel, they'll react to that as well. Such a light, fluid system can help the Sensei (Game Master) establish initial attitudes easily and put interactions more firmly into the roleplaying arena, and also enables you to focus on the more cinematic aspects of your campaign. The characters should be saving the world. Shouldn't they?



priests causing their fleets to languish. Seeing no point in continuing their useless assault, Hinote Shima struck out east against some of the outer islands of Doragon Mizu, taking them easily, but the Doragonians knew the razor reefs of their main islands would protect them well. Tetsu Sangaku fought a civil war early on, uniting houses and driving any of the Old Ways supporters out of their lands, taking their possessions as payment for their lives. Some blood was spilled with Tahata Gaki, but they found no profit in it and focused internally on their commodities. Few dare strike directly against Tetsu Sangaku, for it holds the lion's share of metal and craftsmen. What prevented Ikusa Kokoro from sweeping the whole of the kingdoms early on was their assault upon Karasu Rokku. Vast resources were wasted, and when redirected, there was no doubt that wars fought in the future would be hard won.

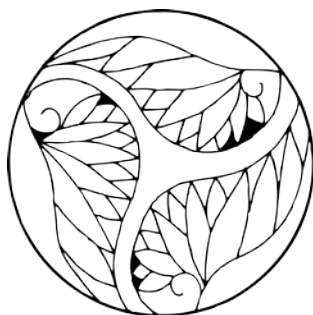
# Now

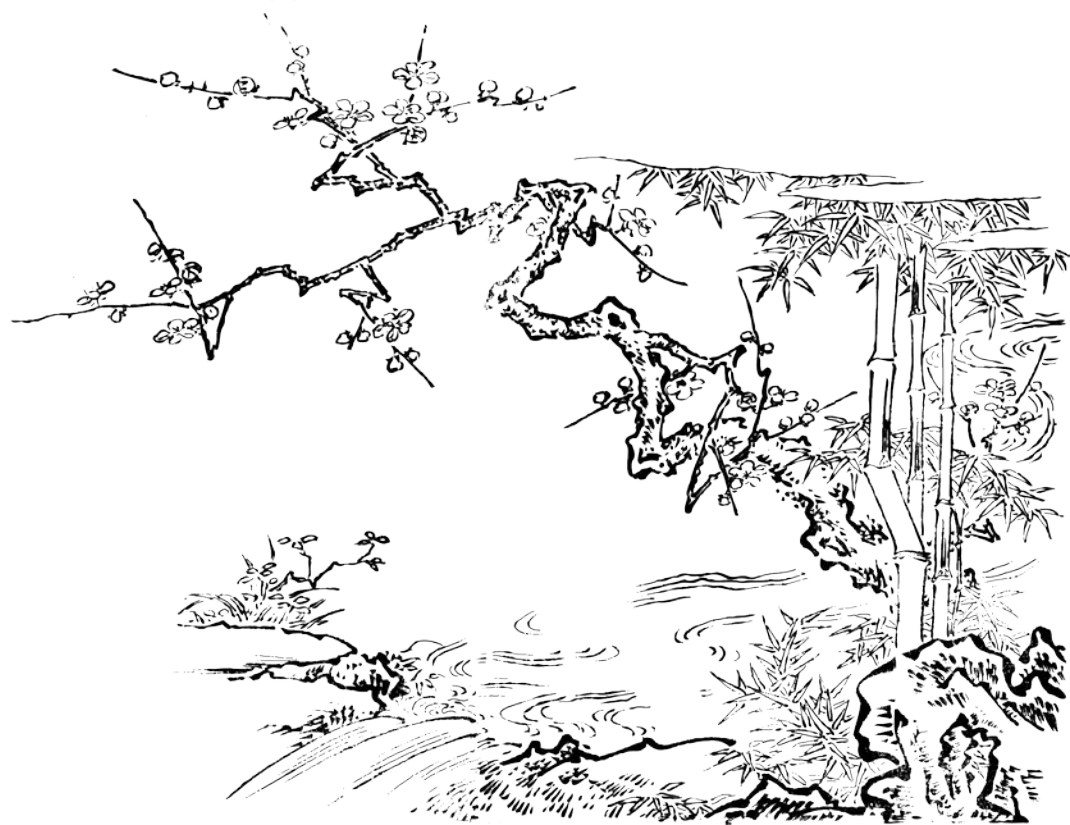
Twenty years have passed since the beginning of the Akigara (the Empty Throne) period. The lands are largely lawless. Travel is a risky proposition. Many cultivated fields have become overgrown, and border wars are quite common. The greater nobility have grown accustomed to the new order and do not even think of challenging one of the Lord Generals. However, scholars, sages, and priests know darkness gnaws at the land. Inventors see science growing at odds with nature. The common man cannot help but wonder what has happened to his world.

## RECENT HISTORY

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1428 | Ascension of Emperor Eramono                          |
| 1446 | The Birth of Twins, Karasu and Otomo                  |
| 1460 | Death of Emperor Eramono                              |
| 1462 | Ascension of Emperor Otomo (at sixteen)               |
| 1464 | Return of Karasu / Karasu's Exile                     |
| 1465 | Karasu begins his Kojin Campaign                      |
| 1469 | Karasu conquers Kojin/ Country renamed Karasu Rokku   |
| 1470 | Birth of Karasu's First Born, Shinzui                 |
| 1486 | Karasu's Quiet Return / Pact Struck with the Oni-Kaji |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1493 | The One Day War / Otomo's Suicide / Karasu's Ascension/<br>The Shinjin/ Beginning of the Iron Dynasty |
| 1506 | Death of Emperor Karasu   |
| 1509 | Ascension of Emperor Emei (at sixteen)  |
| 1529 | Birth of Itoshi / Death of Empress Sorairo  |
| 1538 | Death of Emperor Emei / Regent Period Begins  |
| 1541 | The Kikai Unification   |
| 1545 | Ascension of Empress Itoshi / The Crimson Coronation /<br>Darkness Spreads                            |
| 1546 | The Seven Sword Consortium / The Transformation Begins /<br>Isolationism Starts / Guns are developed  |
| 1551 | The Transformation Slows/ Border Wars Begin /<br>Provincialism Begins                                 |
| 1565 | Trade and travel hesitantly resume  |
| 1566 | Where your story begins...  |





# PATHS TO UNDERSTANDING

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*“The starting point of one’s career in no way reflects its end, anymore than the blacksmith can determine if the sword he forges will be put to true purpose or ill.”*

~Kano Yoshitoshi

A kesshi (hero) in *Way of the Ronin* can come from many walks of life and from many different paths. Having an idea of your character’s background or past profession helps shape them into a more rounded person. Below is a short list of character concepts to get you started thinking about what type of hero you wish to create.

## ANIMAL HANDLER

You are adept at handling beasts, some say you come by it naturally, but you have bites and scars across your hands and back to prove you’ve learned from past mistakes. You may have tamed the fire tigers at Hinote Shima, or been a horseman of Uma-Ko-Ryoudo, but you know there are wilder things out in the godless lands, and want to either make them bend to your will or die by your hand. The natural order has been upset. Who better than you to help bring it back into balance, or at the very least, be the master of this new dark age?

## ARCHAEOLOGIST

The past contains secrets and treasures, and you certainly can profit from both. The darkness changed the land and you. Once you may have been content to sift through dusty scrolls in a poorly-lit room, but no more. You want to see what the world holds in store for you and make your mark, so one day people will read of you in silent wonder.

## ARTISAN

You bring beauty into the world as best you’re able, or reflect its bitter truth. But you need bu, and waiting for it to come to you is getting you nowhere. You may have spent time starving in the cosmopolitan city waiting for a patron to find you, and who knows, you may have found one, but your spirit cannot be confined in a studio all day. You need fresh air, inspiration, and the freedoms that only the open road can bring.



## ASHIGARU

A soldier of one of the provinces, you trust in the generosity of your masters to ensure a brighter future for you and future generations, but you know in your heart the service you give is not at of which the heroes speak in books. The power you may enjoy, but it's as hollow as the victories you achieve, marching into towns and rounding up the malcontents behind the wake of a kikai advance guard. Is this the life you seek, or will you raise your spear for yourself and make your life your own?

## ATHLETE

You have spent your whole life training for that day when you could compete for the honor and glory of your homeland, but no one even talks of the Great Games any-

more. What did the training amount to? Will you allow yourself to be pressed into the local militia or have you spent your life working in the traveling caravans, displaying feats of strength for peasant folk in exchange for a hot dinner and a warm bath? You know you can do so much more, and there is no better time to show the world you can.

## BANDIT

You are a thief. Perhaps you do it because the pickings are easy or because you have no choice. One day, however, you realized that either choice is really no choice. The people you rob are even poorer than yourself, and the people who have what you want are better equipped, better able to deal with rogues like you. You must get better or at least get on the road. You've seen enough of this place. The world has opened back up, and you feel it's your duty to get out there, and see what isn't nailed down.

## BODYGUARD

You know how to fight. You're familiar with honor, whether from books or village elders, or maybe you're one of the dying breed of samurai still following the Old Way. You don't have any problem keeping your word, and you aren't

afraid to take up for others. You've finally realized that the entire empire needs protecting, and you're the one to do it or die trying.

## CRAFTSMAN

You find joy in your work, taking your time to perfect each creation. You may have even handled or worked on a gun or two, but you prefer the simpler, purer work of sword crafting and armor repair, and other natural things. Resources are getting rarer, and work has slowed in recent years. Something is out of balance — perhaps you have the tools to fix it?

## DIPLOMAT

You survive on your words and your wits. Whether you are one of the rarefied emissaries of a province, or more likely, a simple messenger, you take your job seriously. You have learned to keep secrets well. You know war is again in the air and hope you can prevent it. Or at least profit from it.

## ENGINEER

You sought to bring peace through prosperity. You began by making things to ease the burdens of the peasants, but unrest drove you to do things that you now regret. You have made weapons. You have made war. You have built siege engines, and you have worked on the mighty kikai. They are not metal monsters — yet they can bring a village to its knees. You know the dangers you have wrought upon the world, and are hoping you can undo these mistakes so the cherry blossoms can again bloom as brightly as they once did.

## ENTERTAINER

Whether you are an actor, an acrobat, or a geisha who served in one of the many tea houses scattered across the land, you know kindnesses are few and far between. You have seen tragic faces. You have borne the burden of bringing laughter into their hearts, if even for a short while. You know, now more than ever, the world needs your gift of distraction.

## GANSO

The elders don't want you to mess with machines and steam and gears. You have been told those are the playthings of the Oni-Kaji, the craftsmen of the gods, but you know those words are only ignorance voiced in fear. The machines sing for you. You have the gift, but even you may be scared to admit it. If the warlords knew your power, they would crush you. You can no longer maintain the illusion of mere tinkerer or simple craftsman. You must find the power you need to secure your position in the world, before you became a slave in every sense of the word.

## GUNSMITH

You have mastered the new craft — the weapon of the new age and the last remaining accoutrement of the rich and powerful. The high and the low seek you out to work for them. They want you as a simple puppet, a slave, locked away making gun after gun. How many lives have you already taken? How much blood is on your hands? What can you ever do to make the stains go away from your heart, and purify your soul? Or do you revel in it, wishing only to see the carnage you wreak firsthand?

## KENSEI

Called sword saint by some, you may be the master of many weapons, though the katana is by far the most common, for it is the weapon many who pursue your path first choose. You have learned to focus your body's energies into the blade; you hear it hum with your life essence as it becomes an extension of you. You feel the wind as it cuts through the air, as you move through your forms, as you practice for hours on end. You do not fight for the joy of killing — you fight for perfection. The weapon is your path, the brush you use to paint your

wisdom in crimson words upon the flesh of your foe. As much as you enjoy the enlightenment, you feel the pain it brings, realizing the imperfections abounding in the world around you are distractions, keeping you from reaching your ultimate ascendancy, and you must eliminate them regardless of the cost.

## KIKAI DRIVER

You are known as desu, death. You have been one of the rare few who have driven a kikai, controlled its movement, felt the power as you rained death upon the battlefield, slaughtering those who clung to their katana and their codes as easily as ripping a piece of rice paper. You either quit the service or could no longer live with your deeds, or perhaps you were no longer necessary. The rush of such





battle is not easily replaced, so now you go without your old kikai skin to test your own mettle.

## LITIGATOR

Ropes may bind, but you know words bind even tighter. With the broken caste system and the changing lands, the only constant people have is the law, and who knows the law greater than you? You have fought disputes over cattle and castles, estates and engagements, and may be rather cosmopolitan in your view of the world. You may be driven by greed, or have already gained your fortune, and now seek other horizons to conquer — and there are always new horizons.

## MAKOTO

The gods may be hidden behind the clouds, but you know they have left the kami to attend the lands in their absence, and they have you. Through your piety and simplicity, you have achieved a degree of enlightenment that enables you to interact with this world and the next. You have your feet in both spheres, and you know it is your responsibility to bring the world back to its natural harmony, its state of grace.

## MERCHANT

The clamor of coin has driven you to travel throughout the lands. You know no one gains wealth without indulging in dangers, and you are one who knows what goods are worth where, and how to turn a tidy profit when one does not exist. You are part appraiser, storyteller, and thief, yet you do all with a gentle smile and a twinkle in your eye. You know life is about risk. You live your life fully.

## NINJA

You belong to the night. You are a spy, a thief, an assassin. Your existence is denied, even by yourself. You represent yourself as a warrior, a cripple, or a traveling monk — they are all aspects of you. You are friends with death, and you have killed for reasons both great and small, but a greater truth has driven you to kill now for your most important client. Yourself. What drives you to do what you do? That is your greatest secret of all.

## NINJA MASTER

You have become shadow. You can kill swiftly and silently, but you have learned wisdom in your path. You have seen men's eyes glaze over. You have watched a geisha's last breath bubble to the surface of a sacred pond. It is all the same. Death is meaningless. Your tasks have been meaningless. You no longer wish to be a simple pawn in someone else's game. You remove yourself from that game. You play your own. That is the way of the master.

## NOBLE

You are one of the fortunate few born of the remaining houses beyond reproach. You may not have wealth, but you possess power that mere money cannot buy. This respect comes with responsibility — abuses of your position can often come with severe circumstances. While the laws allow certain latitudes to be given to you, those given over to excesses have met with untimely deaths. Do you seek to restore the Bright Empire, or are you content with your pale, fleeting glory?

## ONMYOJI

You command the raw energies that run unbidden across the land. You can pull it from the rocks, from the air, from your very soul. You can command the natural forces. You are not whispering to spirits, nor are you dependent upon machines. You have learned the secret words of power that allow you to command the forces of nature. You know the military wants you in their legions. Did you train in the temples, or did you learn from wise elders wishing to keep the power in the people's hands? You know of the purging across the land. You know your kind is few in number. You may have never met another who can do what you can do. Do you seek out others of your kind? Do you rise up in rebellion? Or do you wish to raise koi all your life?

## PEASANT

You have become strong plowing the fields when your oxen died. You have harvested the rice, and felt the weight of a scythe in your hand. You have played samurai with the scarecrow, and have never lost. The army comes and takes what they want, leaving destruction and ruin in its wake. You have seen your fellow countrymen starve to death, while the leaders grow fat and fill their grain houses to bursting. You have read the stories of the peasant who once rose to become Emperor. Will you replant the harvest and weep for the dead, or do you rise above your station?

## PHYSICIAN

The sick have always been, and always will be. In the villages, they die of strange things — sleeping sicknesses and stolen breath. In the cities, they die of stranger things — poisons and politics, crossed words and crossed swords. You stop the deaths when you can. You sew up wounds. You suck out poisons. You say the prayers you may barely believe that give hope to your patients. Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't. You see the land growing sick around you, and you want to heal it. Things are getting worse, and you cannot stem the endless stream of death. You pray some more and take to the roads. You have to believe in something, and if you must visit every town, village, and city to find the source of this death, you will do what you must. You are a healer. Death is your enemy.

## PRIEST

You know the gods and goddesses manifest themselves in little miracles every day. The sun rises. Flowers bloom. Seasons change. You tend the roadside shrines that most no longer notice, for the ways are dangerous and faith is fleeting. You do not need to be touched by the spirits to know this is true. You know that evil runs rampant across the land — oni grow bold and steal children away in the night, the seals on the ancient temples have cracked, you dreams of the lands being swallowed up in a darkness that never ends. You are the instrument of the Celestials, and you seek only to find the path to preserve things until their return.

## RONIN

You or your family once was part of a noble house. You served your masters well, but those days are no more. The house you served is likely gone, little more than a muttered memory, or just as corrupt as the dark heart of the Empire. What honor lies in that? You laugh at the irony. You have skills and abilities, you had honor and may still, but it is that code of conduct that forced you to wander the roads, with no last name, only memories. Is it possible to go back to the past? Is there redemption? Where does one stand for righteousness?

## SAMURAI

You are one of a dying breed, or the beginning of the new. You hold the honorific of samurai, which means you are a leader, but to many it is little more than a title. To others, it is highly revered and respected. You may be the ghost of an ideal, or a parody of a paragon, but you are real. You represent hope. You represent honor. Are you the dying breath of a dying age, or a gasping, grasping hand reaching into the wreckage of the past to preserve it into the future?

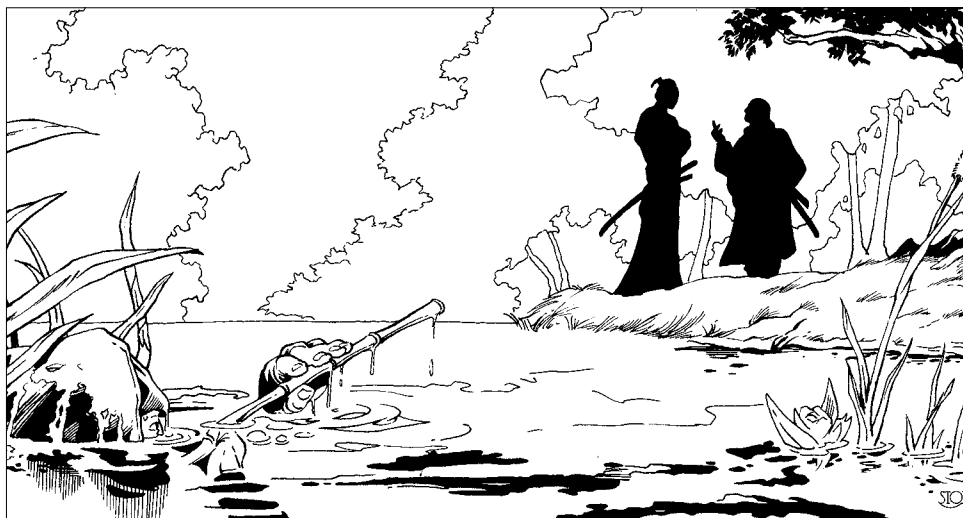
## SCHOLAR

You have read histories and strategies, and know this world is not what it was once was, nor what it was meant to be. You need more books, more knowledge, more fragments of history that cannot be gleaned from the scrolls you've read in the libraries. You must continue your research, you must learn the lore that can only be gathered by visiting the remote places, and you must record what you have learned if there is any chance of piecing together history. You know few books have been created in decades, and you wonder why that is. If honor is dying, is civilization already dead?

## SPY

You have insinuated yourself into courts in strange lands, learned their ways, and stolen their secrets. You do not kill — at least not directly — that is not your way. You represent yourself as peasant, priest, scholar, or swordsman — whatever role you need to play to get what you are after. You work for those

who can afford you and take the secrets of those who cannot — those whose secrets far outweigh the coin you collect. You know the layouts of the cities, where the best sake is brewed, and the finest places to get sushi. Your tastes are expensive, and the road you travel is dangerous. You live each day well, for who knows what adventures tomorrow may bring?



## WARRIOR

You are a sword. You are a shield. You do not fight for honor or glory. You fight to understand. You hone your craft. Perhaps something within you drives you to prove you are the best? Perhaps you merely fight for a coin or a warm bed? Few trust you, but fewer have any choice. You do what you do well. You fear little, and may be bought to delve in dungeons or fight duels. Your survival instincts have gotten you this far, so you've learned to trust them. Now those instincts tell you to prepare for a coming storm and battles that will test your skills. You welcome that storm.

## WISEMAN

You have forgotten more than the most learned scholar ever knew, and you cannot help but wonder to what purpose? If enlightenment comes with age, then you are as radiant as the sun. If you are still young, then you are a bundle of energy, wrestling with the majesty of your gifts and knowing the dangers that hubris can bring. You may have watched kingdoms fall or rise. You may remember the past as clearly as you remember the morning tea. You sense there is again change in the wind, and you have this one last chance to prevent the world from falling forever into a chasm, beyond which even the gods cannot save you.

## WOODSMAN

You shun civilization and its false trappings. You live off the land. You hunt. You fish. You know how to use a bow with deadly accuracy, and you prefer the quiet company you keep. You've seen the landscape change. You've seen snow on a summer's day, and you sense the land is not happy with man and his machines. Each year, the hunts grow harder, and you must go further into the forests in search of game. As reluctant as you may be, you feel driven to go once more into the lands of man and seek out the source of this blight.

## WRITER

You feel contentment as you crystallize thought with the stroke of your brush. You fashion the future and the past to suit your fancy. You create history at a whim. You know bits of random knowledge that you've stumbled across for inspiration, and you find inspiration in a hummingbird's fluttering, in the gentle falling of a cherry blossom, and in the cry of a newborn child. You often travel about from place to place, sharing stories, teaching the young ones to read, and learning of the world around you. You do not fashion yourself as a scholar or historian, but as a simple teller of tales. You have been saddened to learn there are fewer children in the villages, towns, and cities. Most people are oblivious to this, but you have to wonder why.

## YAKUZA

You live in the streets, the back alleys, and the sewers and ruins of cities and towns. You are tough. You fight with your fists, your wits and your knife, and you never back down from a fight. You keep things together. You laugh, realizing you live by a code when so few others do. You have your brothers. You have your clan of mongrels who claim you, and for whom you would gladly die. You don't care if the world gets swallowed up. What has it done for you? You hear the gang leaders talking in hushed tones, but you figure they're afraid of you. You're coming up fast, and they know it. You want to claim your territory. You're hungry, and you sense you'd better get yours soon, before things get any worse.

## YAMABUSHI

You are a mountain warrior. You have trained in one of the remote temples and learned the ways that are now forbidden. You know how to fight with your bare hands, your feet — your entire body is a weapon, though you can use a spear if you must, and you frequently carry one. The bow on your back is not for show. It is for when you cannot reach your opponent. You may appear as a simple priest to many, as you know little of the ways of the world, and it is true your masters sent you out for a simple reason: to fix what is wrong. You have yet to know what they meant by these scant words, but you know your masters always have their reasons and have never failed you before, so why doubt them now?

# SAMPLE KESSHI

## GANSO

You are the thinker, the maker, the paver of the road to the future. Some people fear you for what can do, but you know that the touch of iron and the sound of steam are the sounds of industry, and a way to a better life.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Gearcraft d8, Healing d6, Notice d8, Repair d8, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Curious, Hard of Hearing, Outsider

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Ganso), Level Headed\*, Student of the New Ways

**Powers:** *bolt (arrow thrower), healing (blood transfusion device)*

**Power Points:** 10

**Gear:** Tools, Wakizashi (Str+d6)

**Quote:** *“This is more than simple bamboo with metal bits, as you put it, my friend. This is the future.”*

## KENSEI

You have led a solitary life, alone with your thoughts and your weapon. You have learned much on your own, but have realized to achieve true illumination you must again go into the noisome world.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Ki Focus d8, Notice d4, Stealth d8, Survival d4

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Overconfident, Stubborn, Vengeful (Minor)

**Edges:** Ki Control, New Ki Power (Boost Trait)

**Powers:** *Boost Trait, Deflection*

**Power Points:** 10

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed), Wakizashi (Str+d6)

**Quote:** *“My mastery of my weapon is all that matters, for in this pursuit is truth. If I can do this one thing well, I will be remembered forever. If I must carve a path of blood to achieve this goal, so be it.”*

## MAKOTO

Once you were a youthful peasant tending the fields, when the voices first spoke to you. The elders thought you mad, but the kami kept you on your path, teaching you kindness and forgiveness and strength.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Prayer d8, Streetwise d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Heroic, Obese, Pacifist (Minor)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Makoto), Holy Warrior

**Powers:** *Blessed (Prayer), Boost/Lower Trait (Laying on hand)*

**Power Points:** 10

**Gear:** Bo Staff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands)

**Quote:** *“I did not choose the spirits — they chose me. I am honored to be so blessed, and will share my gifts with the world as best I’m able.”*

## NINJA

When many bold clans fought fiercely in the wars, yours did not. Your master tells you that shadows are the proper place for ninja, and this is why your clan survived. There is always a proper time to strike, and work to be had for those with open eyes. He cautions you to use discretion in your path, and never reveal your true nature.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Enemy (Minor, rival clan), Obligations (Minor; Clan), Vengeful (Major)

**Edges:** Shadow Arts, Thief

**Gear:** Ninjato (Str+d6), Shuriken (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: Str+d4, RoF: 3)

**Quote:** *“You thought we who have survived for so long would disappear? Why not? That is what we do best.”*

## ONMYOJI

Some onmyoji learn in the provincial towers, some from books, and others are gifted with a natural ability. You learned on your own — stealing knowledge from books and whispers — and have kept your secrets to yourself. You know the risks of your pursuit, but cannot help yourself. Knowledge is your drug.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Exiled, Greedy (Minor; Knowledge)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Onmyoji), Elemental Focus (Fire), Power Points

**Powers:** *bolt (flaming arrows), burst (shower of flames), smite (flaming weapon)*

**Power Points:** 15

**Gear:** Nage-Yari (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands)

**Quote:** *“Few dare walk my path. The Iron Dynasty frowns upon us unless we’re upon a leash, and the kami consider us presumptuous. I have the power, and dare any to take it from me.”*



## RONIN

Once you served a noble house, but that is no more. You are the last of a dying breed, and refused to bend your knee to a parody of the past. You have your sword. You have your skills. You will make your own path. You will survive.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d8, Stealth d6, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Disgraced (Minor), Heroic, Poverty

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes\*, Signature Moves (Katana)

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed)

**Quote:** *"I fought for my master's honor for many years, but he gave away what I would have died to protect, and I left his service. Now I wonder what purpose is there to be had in this new age..."*

## SAMURAI

You have commanded soldiers on the fields of battle, and you have been honored for your dedication and service. You have been given land and a title, and it is your duty to reclaim the lands lost. The respect is not the same as in the past, but the people will learn in due time.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(3)

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor (Bushido), Obligations (Minor; Lord), Vow (Minor; Reclaim the lands lost)

**Edges:** Command, Lord Samurai\*

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed), Hankyu (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6), Wakizashi (Str+d6), complete suit of fitted Medium Armor (+3), warhorse

**Quote:** *"I have spent my life serving my master. How could I abandon him when he needed me most? My word is iron. To this end, I have been given honorifics, but I would have done it for nothing, and this he knows. I take his gifts only because I have been commanded to."*

## YAKUZA

You have no honor. You have no respect for anyone or anything. You know the samurai are a sham and the realms are as petty, and the nobles are useless. You trust your knife and the friend at your back, but you never take your eyes off of him either. Your speed, your wits, and your fighting skills guarantee you'll be around for awhile.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Greedy (Minor), Obligations (Major; Yakuza), Wanted (Minor)

**Edges:** Connections (Yakuza), Mark of the Yakuza (Spirit)

**Gear:** Tanto (Str+d4), Tezemu Tanjuu (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6)

**Quote:** *“Clans are the past you say? We have our own clan. See this tattoo? It says I am a part of something greater than you might think. My brothers and sisters are in every city and town. You can’t escape us. One day we will be running everything. Everything.”*

## YAMABUSHI

Sent to the mountains in your youth for training, you spent the formative years of your life in seclusion and education. You mastered martial skills and learned about the world outside. Now you return to the world you left behind with great martial prowess and a renewed sense of hope.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10 or d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6 or d10, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7 or 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Heroic, Stubborn, Vow (Minor; restore hope to the people)

**Edges:** Close Fighting or Marksman\*, Empty Hands or Trademark Weapon (Hankyu)

**Gear:** Tonfa (Str+2) or Hankyu (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

**Quote:** *“I am the calm before the storm and the storm itself. I am heaven and sky and earth and rain. I am arrow and bow and fist and harmony. I am all things. I am no thing.”*

This yamabushi can be either melee or ranged focused. For a melee focused character, use the first die types for Fighting and Shooting along with the melee Edges. For ranged, use the second die types for Fighting and Shooting, change his Parry to 5 and use the ranged Edges. Finally, use the equipment as appropriate for your character.

\* Represents the free Human starting Edge up to Veteran in Rank.

## GROUP HARMONY

While everyone may well want to make a ninja or a samurai or some other sort of death dealer — and we’re certainly not discouraging this — keep in mind that not all fights are fought with swords and spells. A carefully placed word in the proper ear, or someone to repair that ivy-crusted machine can be just as handy, and who says either of those specialists can’t — if the situation demands it — deliver a mean, spinning round-kick?

If these roles are filled, you’re certain to achieve success and honor your ancestors in your quests throughout the lands — or at least not die the first time an oni rears its ugly head.

## TALKER

Whether in the high courts or the low lands, you can relate to people and manipulate them into sharing information and aiding you and your party as needed.

## HEALER

In the rough lands of Konoyo, it is often necessary to mend and tend to the wounds of others. You are key to keeping the group going as they progress throughout the lands.

## INFILTRATOR

Not all force can be dealt with directly, and there are times when it is both preferable and necessary to make entry into places one should not go, to do things best done under a veil of shadows. You possess a skill set some would consider downright criminal.

## THINKER

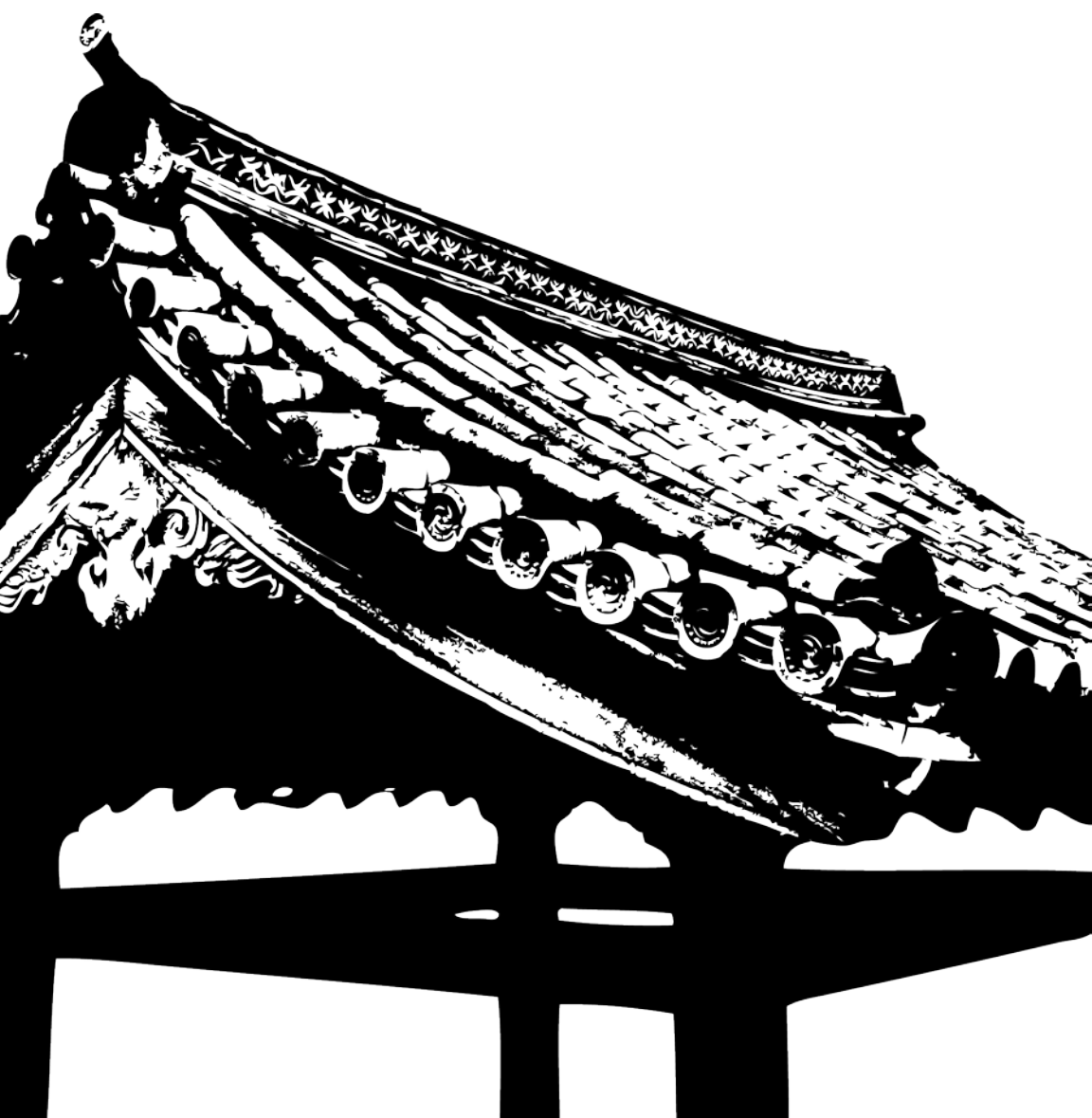
A scholar, sage, or mystic of some sort, you draw upon your knowledge of legends and lore, using information of the past to help you in the present.

## WARRIOR

By nimble blade or brute force, you possess the capability to protect yourself and those around you in the rough and tumble lands.







# CHARACTER CREATION

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Humans are the only playable race in *Way of the Ronin*. You get a free starting Edge, as per the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, of Heroic rank or less (as long as all other prerequisites are met).

## CHOOSE A HOME PROVINCE

You can hail from any of the nine realms of Konoyo. Look over the Races and Lands of Konoyo Overview (beginning on p. 131) for details on what suits you and your character concept the best.

## ASSIGN TRAITS

Now it's time to figure your hero's attributes and skills and determine your derived statistics.

### TRAITS

Your character starts with a d4 in each of his five attributes: Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, and Vigor. You then have 5 points to distribute among them as you choose. Raising an attribute a die type costs 1 point, and you may not raise an attribute above d12 at character creation.

### SKILLS

Next, you have 15 points to buy your character's skills. Raising a skill by a die type costs 1 point, as long as it's no higher than the attribute it's linked to. It costs 2 points to raise a skill above its linked attribute. Skills cannot be raised above a d12 at character creation.

All standard skills in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook are available in *Way of the Ronin*.

### DERIVED STATISTICS

The following statistics are based on the Traits you have chosen or are common to all characters, unless modified by Edges or Hindrances.

Charisma is equal to 0.

Pace is equal to 6".

Parry is equal to 2 plus half your character's Fighting die (2 if a character does not have Fighting).

Toughness is equal to 2 plus half your character's Vigor die.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

Remember, as a human hero, you get one free starting Edge of Heroic rank or less (as long as all other prerequisites are met.) Next, decide whether you want

to take any Hindrances to gain additional benefits. If you choose to take any Hindrances, you can use the points from them to gain any of the benefits below. You may take either 2 Major Hindrances (worth 2 points each) or a Major and 2 Minor Hindrances (worth 1 point each). You may take additional Hindrances beyond this, but you do not gain points for them.

For 2 Hindrance points you can:

- Raise an attribute 1 die type (you may raise an attribute before purchasing skills).
- Choose an Edge.

For 1 Hindrance point you can:

- Gain another skill point
- Gain an additional 500 bu

## GEAR

Your character starts the game with the following gear: the kimono he is wearing, a pair of sandals suitable to his station, and 500 bu worth of currency in whatever denomination is most befitting him. It is advisable to spend some of your wealth to acquire equipment, weapons, and other necessities to make your travels safer and more pleasant.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

Select a number of defining interests equal to half the character's Smarts die to round out your character, using the guidelines provided in the Final Touches section following.

### BACKGROUND

Your character is nearly done! All that's left is for you to put the last little bits together. Give your character some history and some flair. A name is always a good place to start, and from there you can think about his place in the world and what has driven him from the safety and shelter of the city, or the quiet pastoral solitude of the village.

## FINAL TOUCHES

### A CIVILIZED SOCIETY

Despite the recent outbreak of chaos, the characters of *Way of the Ronin* still are very much part of a cultured society. As such, they begin play with a number of defining interests equal to half their Smarts die. Any permanent increase in your Smarts during play grants you additional selections.

**Note:** these are additional little elements to round out your character and do not preclude your character having a more general knowledge of such things, based upon their background or upbringing as reflected in their Common Knowledge. When a character's defining interest comes into question, however, it is appropriate they receive a situational modifier of +1 for broad based (or

more useful) interests or +2 for more specific (or less frequently called upon) interests.

## SAMPLE DEFINING INTERESTS

**Culture:** Astronomy, Bonsai, Calligraphy, Classical Literature, Cooking, Cosmetics, Etiquette, Folklore, Gardening, Heraldry, Herbalism, Incense Ceremony, Massage, Origami, Tea Ceremony, Yakuza

**Craft:** Basket making, Jewelry, Lantern making, Lacquerer, Pottery, Sake Brewing

**Perform:** Acting, Comedy, Dance, Disguise, Juggling, Oratory, Percussion Instruments, Puppetry, Singing, Stringed Instruments, Wind Instruments

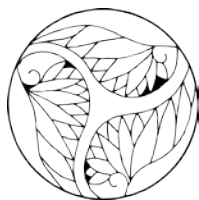
Players are free to come up with additional defining interests that fit their character concept, subject to their Sensei's approval. For a general guideline, the more esoteric knowledges grant a +2 to a character's roll, while practical interests, such as disguise, grant a +1.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *A samurai, a peasant, and a diplomat all examine a court document and need to make a Common Knowledge roll to detect whether it is a forgery or not. The samurai and the diplomat both have defining interests in Culture (Calligraphy), while the peasant does not. The samurai gets a Common Knowledge roll at +1, due to his broad based interest. The peasant, with no background knowledge of this topic, is at -2, while the diplomat, familiar with court documents due to his background, gets a +4 (+2 for his background and +2 for his specific interest).*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *A samurai, a soldier, and a yamabushi all see a banner on the horizon. The samurai, due to his specific background in Culture (Heraldry), receives a +2 to recognize it, the soldier receives no modifier, and the yamabushi receives a -2, due to his sheltered background and unfamiliarity with military accouterments. However, if the yamabushi had Culture (Heraldry) as a defining interest, he'd receive a +2 to the identification roll. In essence, his book knowledge of heraldry trumps his background's normal isolationism.*

## LANGUAGES

All the characters in Konoyo speak Naganese, the common language of the islands. Should you introduce other cultures into your setting, each character speaks a number of languages equal to half their Smarts die. One slot, however, must be devoted to Naganese.





## NEW HINDRANCES

### COMBAT NOVICE (MINOR)

Your character is inexperienced in combat and recovers slowly from shock and trauma. He suffers a -2 penalty to Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken. The character may use an Advance once he reaches Seasoned or any time thereafter to eliminate this Hindrance.

### DARK SECRET (MAJOR)

The character harbors a dangerous secret in his past that could endanger his very life and alter how he is perceived if it comes to light. Should anyone learn of it, the character suffers a -4 Charisma modifier related to any interactions with the person who knows the secret. If it becomes public knowledge during the course of play, the character loses this Hindrance and it is replaced with the Wanted (Major) Hindrance in addition to the -4 Charisma modifier.

### DISGRACED/DISHONORABLE (MINOR/MAJOR)

The character — or someone in his family line — has brought shame to his family. At the Minor level, the shame is often embarrassing and/or inconvenient. The character receives a -2 Charisma modifier when interacting with anyone recognizing his or her family name. The character is automatically the first upon whom suspicion is cast when a crime is committed in a community where he is present.

At the Major level, the character descends from a dishonorable house, has no clan, or is the subject of great shame (being branded a criminal, for instance). The character receives a -4 Charisma modifier when interacting with those who are aware of his status. If the character is caught committing any serious crime or is even located in the proximity of such an event, he is often summarily executed.



The character may reduce or eliminate the disgrace/dishonor over the course of game play. They may use an Advance at Seasoned or any time thereafter to reduce the degree of their disgrace by one category, i.e. Major to Minor. This may be done twice to eliminate the disgrace/dishonor completely.

### **EXILED (MINOR)**

The character has been banished from his home province for some serious past offense, real or imagined. Whenever he is in his home province, he is considered to have the Wanted (Major) Hindrance. Depending upon the local authorities' reaction to his return, the character could be banished again, branded, imprisoned, or worse.

### **LOW BORN (MINOR)**

While other characters may be born of low society, it is obvious that this character is not far removed from his peasant roots. He receives a -2 Charisma modifier, except among other peasants.

The character may reduce or eliminate this status over the course of game play. He may use an Advance at Seasoned or any time thereafter to eliminate this Hindrance.

### **OBLIGATIONS (MINOR OR MAJOR)**

The character is connected to someone or something that demands a portion of his time. This can vary from something as minor as checking on an ancestor's shrine to a major obligation of upholding the law or protecting his lord's holdings. Failure to fulfill such obligations will have serious repercussions.

A character with Obligations and Connections to the same organization has a special relationship with the group in question and gains a +2 or +4 bonus to Persuasion rolls (depending upon whether their obligations are Minor or Major). In essence, the Connection has a vested interest in the character and is more likely to want to see him succeed.

### **PRIDEFUL (MINOR)**

Some heroes (and villains) just don't know when to brag and when to act. Your character suffers from this affliction.

The character's first round in any combat must be spent announcing how great he is, or pronouncing the doom of those who oppose him. If for some reason your character must act instead, it costs him a benny.

A villain with this Hindrance never delivers a finishing blow to a foe. Instead, he leaves them to die, or orders his minions to finish them while he stalks off well out of earshot. Inevitably, these heroes survive their wounds, escape the minions, and so on.

# NEW EDGES

## BACKGROUND EDGES

### AUSPICIOUS BIRTH

The character's birth happened during a festival, a lunar eclipse, or some other such monumental moment. When they are dealt a Joker, they receive a benny in addition to the Joker's usual effect.

### ARCANE BACKGROUND (GANSO)

**Requirements:** Novice

**Arcane Skill:** Gearcraft (Smarts)

**Starting Power Points:** 10

**Starting Powers:** 2

**Powers from *Savage Worlds Core Rulebook*:** armor, barrier, blast, bolt, burst, dispel, entangle, fear, fly, greater healing, healing, light, obscure, stun

**New Powers:** mend, quake, succor

**New Edges:** Craft Device, Craft Greater Device, Elemental Understanding, Gadget

**Background:** Ganso are capable creators of wondrous mechanical devices beyond the realm of the mundane. Some say they are divinely inspired, while others believe they are the heralds of a new age. They are the creative visionaries of Konoyo, ever pushing beyond the boundaries of modern technology.

**Mechanics:** Each time the character gains a new Power, the player should write down a brief description of the specific device created. Each device has its own separate pool of Power Points. Should the character roll a 1 on his arcane skill die (regardless of the Wild Die) when using one of his gadgets, the device breaks or otherwise malfunctions. Fixing it requires a successful Repair roll and 2d6 hours of work. Other characters may use these devices as per Weird Science rules in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

### ARCANE BACKGROUND (MAKOTO)

**Requirements:** Novice

**Arcane Skill:** Prayer (Spirit)

**Starting Power Points:** 10

**Starting Powers:** 2

**Powers from *Savage Worlds Core Rulebook*:** armor, barrier, beast friend, boost/lower trait, deflection, detect/conceal arcana, dispel, entangle, obscure, quickness, shape change, smite, speak language, speed, telekinesis

**New Powers:** banish, bless, divine grace, prayer of purity, quake, warrior's gift

**New Edges:** Craft Device, Craft Greater Device, Holy Warrior, Kami Call, Spirit Bind

**Background:** Makoto are holy men who possess the Power to beseech the spirits of the natural world to act on their behalf. They are generally not part of any formalized religion, instead serving humanity in their own small way.

**Mechanics:** When a 1 is rolled on the arcane skill die (regardless of the Wild Die) the character has offended the spirits that grant him that specific Power. They must spend 1d6 hours in ritual prayer and make a successful Prayer roll to regain the spirit's good graces (and gain access to the lost Power again).

## ARCANE BACKGROUND (ONMYOJI)

**Requirements:** Novice

**Arcane Skill:** Spellcasting (Smarts)

**Starting Power Points:** 10

**Starting Powers:** 3

**Powers from Savage Worlds Core Rulebook:** detect/conceal arcana, bolt, dispel, environmental protection, quickness, smite, speak language, speed, stun, telekinesis, and teleport

**New Powers:** concentrate, eyes of the oni, quake, slumber

**New Edges:** Craft Device, Craft Greater Device, Elemental Focus

**Background:** The wizards of Ni-Ten, onmyoji learn obscure and difficult spells to master the natural world and those within it.

**Mechanics:** When an onmyoji rolls a 1 on his skill die (regardless of the Wild Die) he is automatically Shaken. Should he already be Shaken, he instead suffers a wound.

## DISTINGUISHED LINEAGE

**Requirements:** Novice

The character is descended from heroes and is meant for greatness. Once per session, when you spend a benny, you may add the re-roll total to your previous roll. The character's Reputation is increased by +10.

## HIGH BORN

**Requirements:** Novice

Your character is born into the noble caste. The character's Charisma is increased by +1.

## IRON HEARTED

**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d6+

Through his discipline and training, the character is able to ignore 1 point of wound penalties. This stacks with the Nerves of Steel and Improved Nerves of Steel Edges.

## MOST HIGH

**Requirements:** Novice, High Born or Goshi.

The character is among the highest tier of society and reaps all the benefits of the Rich Edge as well. His Charisma is increased by +2 (with the bonus for the High Born Edge already figured into this increase) and he has other responsibilities as determined by the Sensei to offset this increase. If a character taking this already has the Rich Edge, they instead gain the Filthy Rich Edge.

## STUDENT OF THE NEW WAYS

**Requirements:** Smarts d8+, Notice d8+, Repair d8+

This character has studied under engineers who have designed and developed kikai and other war machines, and is able to apply what he has learned in his daily tasks. He gains +2 to Repair, Notice, and Knowledge rolls on anything regarding metallurgy and mechanics.

## VIGOROUS

**Requirements:** Novice, Vigor d8+

By virtue of your amazing constitution, you gain a +2 bonus on all Vigor rolls made to resist the effects of alcohol, drugs, disease, poison, knockout gas, and so on. This bonus applies to Vigor rolls to resist the effects of such substances. If you fail, you are affected normally (e.g., you suffer extra damage from a poisoned blade or fall asleep when hit with a cloud of sleep gas). The bonus is not applied to Soak rolls.

## WARRIOR'S SOUL

**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d6+

The character has seen things that would make most men lose their minds. Through strength of will, he has hardened himself to these strange sights. The character gains +2 to Spirit rolls to resist Fear effects.

# COMBAT EDGES: FIGHTING STYLES

This special category of Combat Edges reflects the intensity and focus of the bushi class and martial artists in mastering the arts of war. Included are certain “Edges as maneuvers” that break the normal rules. When there is a deviation, both the standard way of doing things and the exception (the new way of doing things) are detailed.

## EMPTY HANDS

**Requirements:** Novice, Fighting d6+

The character is treated as armed at all times and does Str +d4 unarmed damage. His hands and feet count as weapons for purposes of other Edges.

**Normal:** A character throws a punch for Str damage and is treated as an Unarmed Defender, giving his opponents +2 to their Fighting rolls to strike him.

**EXAMPLE:** *Akira takes the Empty Hands Edge. He is now treated as armed and with his Str d6, does  $d6 + d4$  damage with a punch, pummel, or kick.*

## EMPTY HANDS MASTERY

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Empty Hands, Agility d8+

The character's Empty Hands Edge unarmed damage increases to Str+d6. He may knock opponents directly back d4 inches with a successful strike and d4 inches in any direction with a raise. Should the target strike a solid object after being knocked back, they are automatically Shaken.

**EXAMPLE:** *Akira takes the Empty Hands Mastery Edge. He is now treated as armed and, with his Str d6, does 2d6 damage with a punch, pummel, or kick. When he strikes an opponent, he may also elect to knock them back d4 inches as well. With a raise, he does 3d6 damage and may move them d4 inches in any direction.*



## GRAB AND HOLD

**Requirements:** Novice, Empty Hands

The character's intimate knowledge of wrestling maneuvers grants him a +1 to any opposed Strength or Agility grappling rolls. Additionally, he substitutes his Empty Hands Edge damage for normal grappling damage.

**Normal:** Akira has the Empty Hands Edge and does 2d6 damage with his unarmed strikes. When he grapples, he does only his Strength in damage.

**EXAMPLE:** *Akira studies sumo in Ato and learns the Grab and Hold Edge. Now, he may apply his Empty Hands Edge damage to grappled opponents, doing 2d6 damage to any within his iron grasp.*

## POWER MOVE

**Requirements:** Novice, Signature Moves

When using the Signature Moves Edge, the character gains the bonus damage for a raise and may Ace his damage roll when striking inanimate objects. In addition, he gains AP2 with his Signature Move weapons.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Ishon-a-san is an archer. He possesses the Signature Moves (Daikyu) Edge and learns the Power Move Edge. As such, he's learned a technique that enables him to fire his arrows with more force, enough to penetrate medium armor as though it wasn't even there.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Kandai is a student of black powder. He possesses the Signature Moves (Ikizuchi) Edge and learns Power Move. In this case, Kandai has learned to alter the gunpowder load just enough to give it more penetrating Power.*

**EXAMPLE 3:** *Turo is a martial artist. He possesses the Empty Hands Edge and the Signature Moves (Empty Hands) Edge. The Power Move Edge enables him to break bricks easily with his bare hands.*

## SIGNATURE MOVES

**Requirements:** Novice, any combat skill (Fighting, Shooting, or Throwing) d10+

The character gains a +1 to all skill rolls with one specific weapon type selected upon taking this Edge. This Edge may be taken multiple times, with the character selecting a new weapon each time he takes the Edge. A character may take this Edge for unarmed maneuvers as well, granting them the bonus with bare fisted strikes and grapples (this bonus does stack with Grab and Hold).

**EXAMPLE:** *Akira has the Signature Moves (Empty Hands) Edge. He gains a +1 to Fighting rolls when he attacks with a punch, pummel, or kick. His friend, Kūtai, has the Signature Moves (Katana) Edge and gains the same bonus when using any katana.*

## IMPROVED SIGNATURE MOVES

**Requirements:** Veteran, Signature Moves

The bonus from the Signature Moves Edge increases to +2.

## TAKEDOWN

**Requirements:** Novice, Fighting d8+

The character has learned how to throw or trip an opponent. Make an opposed Fighting roll versus the target. For each Size category difference, the

character incurs a -2 penalty. On a success, he may place his opponent in any spot within 1" of him. The opponent is now prone. With a raise, the opponent is prone and Shaken. If already Shaken, the opponent takes a wound.

## WEAPON FINESSE

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d8+

The character has learned true grace in combat. As such, he may use his Agility to determine the melee weapon damage cap or ranged weapon minimum attribute requirements, rather than Strength.

**EXAMPLE 1:** Nippo possesses a Str d4 and Agility d8. When using a katana (Str d8 requirement), he does 2d4 damage normally. Should he take Weapon Finesse, he does a d4 + d8 (as his Agility substitutes for Strength to determine the damage cap) and is considered to meet the minimum requirements to gain any benefits of the weapon.

**EXAMPLE 2:** *When using a bow with Weapon Finesse, Nippo does 2d6 damage and ignores any attack roll penalties he would otherwise incur due to his low Strength.*

## WEAPON FOCUS

**Requirements:** Novice, Signature Moves

Through experience or training, the character is better able to inflict damage with his empty hands or a specific melee or thrown weapon type chosen from among the Signature Moves he knows. His damage is increased by 1 die type. This may be taken multiple times. Each time it applies to a different weapon.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Samurai Aito has Signature Moves (Katana) and Signature Moves (Tanto). When he takes Weapon Focus, he must choose between katana and tanto. He selects Weapon Focus (Tanto). When he now uses a tanto, it does a d6 in his hands, rather than the d4 it did previously.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Kensei Kazuma is an elderly warrior with a Str d4, who is often underestimated by his enemies. With Weapon Finesse, he does d4+d8 (+2/two-handed) with his katana. He takes Weapon Focus (Katana), and this damage increases to d4+d10 (+2/two handed). If he had none of these edges, he would merely do 2d4.*

**EXAMPLE 3:** *Akira has continued to diligently train his body into a formidable weapon. He has Empty Hands, Empty Hands Mastery, Signature Moves (Empty Hands) and takes Weapon Focus (Empty Hands). He has devoted a lot of Advances to reach this point in his training but he now does Str+d8 damage with his bare hands and feet!*



## IMPROVED WEAPON FOCUS

**Requirements:** Veteran, Fighting d10+, Weapon Focus

The character learns further secrets of his Weapon Focus. The damage with the weapon in question is increased an additional die type.

**EXAMPLE:** *Samurai Aito now has Improved Weapon Technique (Tanto). A tanto in his hand now does as much damage as a katana, having increased two die types from the base d4 to a d8.*

## ZEN ARCHERY

**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d8+

Through great concentration, when the character aims, the range increment is reduced by 1 category.

**EXAMPLE:** *Rohin spends one round aiming at a target at long range. This provides the normal +2 bonus for aiming, but the target is now considered at Medium range (with a -2 penalty). Had he not aimed, he would need to roll an 8 (due to the -4 Long range penalty) rather than a 4 (as the +2 for aiming offsets the -2 Medium Range penalty).*

# COMBAT EDGES

## ARROW CUTTING

**Requirements:** Heroic; Fighting d10+, Signature Moves, Superior Defense

Due to intensive training and discipline, opponents attacking you with solid, physical projectiles use your Parry when resolving attacks as long as you're aware of the attack, able to move freely and using your Signature Moves weapon.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Yoshi has a Parry of 8. She is fired upon by two archers, one at Short range and one at Medium range. She rushes towards them, sword drawn. The one at Short ranges rolls a 5 to hit. It's not nearly enough to hit Yoshi's Parry as she knocks the first arrow aside with her katana. The second archer rolls a 9 to hit, but with the -2 penalty for Medium range, it becomes a 7. She cuts through the second arrow and grins as she engages the first archer in melee.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Tikero throws an earth bolt at Yoshi, not knowing she possesses the Arrow Cutting Edge. Yoshi easily parries the first bolt Tikero throws at her. On subsequent rounds, Tikero would be better served using another trapping that cannot be blocked such as air, water, fire, or void.*

## BATTLE HARDENED

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Spirit d6+, Vigor d8+

The character's conditioning reflects the rigors of a martial career. He gets +2 to Soak rolls.

## CLOSE FIGHTING

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

This Edge is especially useful for knife-fighters and martial artists who pride themselves on defeating their foes up close and personal. Close fighters move inside most weapons' reach, adding a bonus to the fighter's Parry equal to an enemy weapon's Reach +1 for that particular foe. No bonus is granted if the foe is unarmed or using a knife or other small weapon.

**EXAMPLE:** *Takumi possesses the Empty Hands Edge. He closes against an ashigaru with a naginata (Reach 1). While so engaged, he enjoys a +2 Parry.*

## IMPROVED CLOSE FIGHTING

**Requirements:** Novice, Close Fighting

Expert close fighters are able to best exploit their enemy's weak spots for quick and lethal kills. The character gets a bonus to his Fighting roll equal to his enemy's Reach + 1 for that particular foe.

**EXAMPLE:** *Takumi engages more spearmen (Reach 1) later on in his journeys. With Improved Close Fighting, he'd have a +2 bonus to both his Fighting and Parry rolls.*

## DISARM MASTERY

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Fighting d8+

The character excels at removing an opponent's weapon in melee combat. The character makes an opposed Fighting roll against his opponent. With a success, the opponent drops his weapon. If the character gets a raise, the opponent is Shaken and the weapon randomly flies 1d4 inches away, or the character may elect to take it, if he has one or both hands free.

## ENTANGLE

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Fighting d8+

This maneuver enables the character to trap one of his opponent's weapon arms, granting him an advantage in combat. The character makes a Disarm check to perform the action. Success indicates an opponent's arm is trapped, rather than disarmed. Whether this is through an arm lock or other means, the foe becomes an Unarmed Defender (unless he has two weapons or the Empty Hands Edge) and cannot withdraw from combat. The attacking character may continue to use a one-handed weapon or unarmed martial strikes against his foe. On his action, the foe may try to escape as per breaking a grapple.

## GROUND FIGHTER

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d6+, Fighting d8+

The character suffers no penalty to Parry or Fighting rolls while prone and may get up from a prone position with no movement penalty on its Action.

## HEIGHTENED SENSES

**Requirements:** Novice, Notice d8+

The character has learned to rely on senses other than sight. As long as the objective isn't purely visual (such as reading a sign), the character ignores 2 points of darkness or vision penalties.

### IMPROVED HEIGHTENED SENSES

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Heightened Senses

The character can function without sight perfectly fine. As with the Heightened Senses Edge, if the objective is purely visual, the character still suffers any darkness or vision penalties; but otherwise, darkness and vision penalties do not apply.

**Special:** If the character has the Blind Hindrance, the Rank requirement is reduced to Novice.

## LUNGE

**Requirements:** Novice, Fighting d8+

A lunge allows the character to extend the reach of any melee weapon or unarmed attack by 1. He may not use this Edge with First Strike, Frenzy, Sweep, or Nimble Strike.

## NIMBLE STRIKE

**Requirements:** Veteran, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

The character has learned to fight with great dexterity — moving in and striking quickly and then moving away before his opponent may strike. If the character can move at least 2" before making an attack against an adjacent foe, he may attack and withdraw from combat without his foe or other adjacent opponents receiving a free attack.

The attacker is still subject to attacks from foes with the First Strike or Improved First Strike Edges to whom he moves adjacent when using the Nimble Strike Edge.

## NINJA STRIKE

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Shadow Arts

The character is able to strike suddenly and without warning. The character describes a Trick then spends a benny to automatically get the Drop on his opponent.

## NI-TEN

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Two-Fisted, Fighting d8+

The character is trained in the art of fighting with two weapons. When using a melee weapon in each hand or when fighting unarmed, the character ignores the normal off-hand penalty and receives a +1 to Parry.

## ONE AGAINST MANY

**Requirements:** Novice, Fighting d10+

The character is a master of defending against multiple attackers, anticipating each foe's every move. Opponents gain no gang up bonus against the character.

## QUICK STRIKE

**Requirements:** Heroic, Quick, Agility d10+

The character has amazing reaction speed. Should he be dealt less than a 10 for initiative, his card is treated as a 10 of the same suit.

## RANGED PIN

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Shooting d8+ or Throwing d8+

The character can use a missile weapon to pin an opponent to a nearby surface. He must be within 1" of a wall, tree, or similar surface. The character makes a Shooting or Throwing roll at -2. If successful, the target is pinned and must make a successful Strength roll to break free. With a raise, the target must make his Strength roll at -2.

## RESOURCEFUL FIGHTER

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Smarts d6+

To this character, everything is a weapon. He does not suffer the normal -1 penalty for using improvised weapons.

## SCABBARD BLOCK

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+

The character may use his scabbard as a medium shield, gaining +1 Parry and +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit.

## SHADOW ARTS

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d8+, Smarts d6+

The character has learned ancient techniques enabling him to disguise his moves and confuse his opponents by using the interplay of light and dark to his advantage. He receives +2 to all Tricks. This ability does not work in areas of complete darkness.

## SHURIKEN STORM

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Throwing d8+

Warriors skilled with the shuriken have learned to throw them quickly in large quantities. If a character with this Edge does not move, he may ignore the Automatic Fire penalty for throwing multiple shuriken.

## SILENT KILL

**Requirements:** Veteran, Ninja Strike

The character has perfected the art of the stealth assassination. Whenever he successfully kills an enemy unnoticed in a single round, he may attempt one of two free actions. He may make a Smarts roll to pin the body in place, or he may make a Stealth roll to catch the body and quietly move and/or hide it, using the remainder of his movement to do so.

***EXAMPLE:** Suzuki, creeping along the rooftop of a corrupt merchant's house, drops down upon a sentry and kills him with one blow. He may then make a Stealth roll to catch the body and move it under the bushes before being spotted. With a success, the other guard at the end of the garden path never suspects a thing.*

## SUPERIOR DEFENSE

**Requirements:** Veteran, Block, Agility d8+

The character has mastered special defensive techniques. When the character uses the Defend maneuver, he is +4 to Parry instead of +2. When he performs the Full Defense maneuver, he adds +2 to his Fighting roll to determine his Parry.

# CREATION EDGES

## CRAFT DEVICE

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background

Whether he is an onmyoji crafting magical talismans, a makoto inscribing holy works, or a ganso designing incredible new devices, the character is able to create an item that adds +1 to an attribute roll. The attribute must be specified when the item is created. A character can take this Edge multiple times, applying it to a different attribute each time. If a device is lost or destroyed, the character creates a new such item upon his next Advance. The item is uniquely attuned to the creator and is useless in the hands of anyone else.

## CRAFT GREATER DEVICE

**Requirements:** Veteran, Craft Device

The bonus when using the item from the Craft Device Edge increases to +2.

## GADGET

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Ganso)

The character is capable of building a gadget that replicates any Edge the Sensei allows. Common sense should prevail in most cases. The governing factors are the ganso must meet the rank requirement of the Edge, and his Gearcraft skill must equal or exceed the highest skill or attribute die type requirement (if any) of the Edge in question (minimum d4). This gadget can be lost, broken, or stolen, but the ganso should be able to replace it within a week

or so of game time. Other characters may use the ganso's gadgets, but they may only use them for a length of time equal to or less than the ganso's rank in hours per day. For instance, a Novice ganso's Sandals of Speed (granting the wearer the Fleet-Footed Edge) can only be lent to other characters for up to one hour per day, while a Legendary ganso can lend them for up to five hours per day. The lending time need not be consecutive. The ganso, however, is not restricted by time constraints when using his own gadgets. A character can



take this Edge multiple times, each time granting the character a new gadget-embedded Edge. Edges that should be excluded include Arcane Backgrounds, Ki Control, Rich, and Filthy Rich, among others. Should an Edge have another Edge as a requirement, the pre-requisite Edge must be already incorporated into the gadget before the new one may be added.

**Note:** Gadgets do not stack with the Edge they are replicating.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Kandai is rather clumsy, but always wished to master the Acrobat Edge. Looking at the Acrobat Edge, he sees it requires Agility d8. His Gearcraft d8 means he just meets the requirements to build the Nimble Harness, a gadget that grants him all the benefits of the Acrobat Edge while he wears it, though he only has an Agility d4. Ahh, the wonders of science!*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Yokku decides he wants to build a gadget that makes him Rich. The Sensei tells him, “Nice try”, and Yokku goes back to the drawing board.*

**EXAMPLE 3:** *Tobo is always getting into scrapes and wants to build an automated abacus that gives him predictive hints in combat (represented by the Level Headed Edge). As he is Seasoned and possesses Gearcraft d10, he can certainly build the device by taking the Gadget Edge. Starting the next adventure, he has the Gadget (Level Headed) Edge, represented by his automated abacus gadget.*

## MARK OF THE YAKUZA

**Requirements:** Novice, Streetwise d8+, Connections (Yakuza)

The yakuza often get intricate tattoos as a source of pride. Among those dedicated to the yakuza, these tattoos take on a life of their own. Each tattoo adds +1 to an attribute roll. The attribute must be specified when the tattoo is created. A character can take this Edge multiple times, applying it to a different attribute each time. Anyone who sees these tattoos (which typically cover the torso) may make a Common Knowledge roll to identify the character as a member of the yakuza.

## GREATER MARK OF THE YAKUZA

**Requirements:** Veteran, Mark of the Yakuza, Mentor

The intricacy and power of the tattoo is increased. The attribute bonus increases to +2. The character may now arrange for any of his followers to gain the Mark of the Yakuza Edge when they gain an Advance, at which time the follower also gains the Loyal Hindrance toward this character.

**EXAMPLE:** *After a successful mission, Shou’s follower, Tenchi, rolls and successfully gains an Advance. Shou has the Greater Mark of the Yakuza Edge and he may opt to have Tenchi take the Mark of the Yakuza Edge. Tenchi gets +1 to an attribute roll and gains the Loyal Hindrance towards Shou.*

# KI POWER EDGES

These Edges are for those characters able to exert control over their life energy. With their Sensei's permission, any character (except those with Arcane Backgrounds) may take the Ki Control Edge when they Advance during the course of play.

## KI CONTROL

**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d8+, No Arcane Background

**Arcane Skill:** Ki Focus (Spirit)

**Starting Power Points:** 10

**Starting Powers:** 1

**Powers from *Savage Worlds Core Rulebook*:** armor, boost trait, deflection, healing, quickness, smite, speed

**New Powers:** analyze foe

**New Edges:** Elemental Affinity, Focused Mind, Focused Strike, Ki Mastery, Light Feet, New Ki Power, Quiet Contemplation

**Background:** Through mental focus and discipline, the character is able to tap into — and channel — his life energy to perform extraordinary stunts.

**Mechanics:** All Ki Powers have a range of self only, and there is no backlash when using them. Each Ki Power maintained subtracts 1 from the character's Ki Focus skill rolls (this effect is cumulative). Should a character later take the Elemental Affinity Edge, any elemental Powers taken have the standard ranges. The character may take the Power Points Edge once per rank as described in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

## ELEMENTAL AFFINITY

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Ki Control, Ki Focus d8+

The character gains the Elemental Focus Edge.

**EXAMPLE:** *The kensei, Yojimbo, already has the Ki Control Edge with the Ki Power of boost trait. When he advances to Seasoned rank, he decides to take the Elemental Affinity Edge and selects the Elemental Focus (Fire) Edge to reflect his hot tempered personality. Should he boost his Strength and enrich it with Fire, he is then wreathed in fire, and anyone touching or striking him in melee combat suffers an additional d4 fire damage and has a 1 in 6 chance of catching fire.*

## FOCUSED MIND

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Ki Control, Ki Focus d8+

Through experience and reflection, a character can learn to better control his flow of Ki. Each raise a character gets on his Ki Focus roll reduces the cost of a Ki Power by 1 Power Point. The character must have enough Ki to use the Power at its standard cost before rolling. The cost may never be less than zero.



## FOCUSED STRIKE

**Requirements:** Novice, Ki Control, Signature Moves

Due to his attunement with the world around him, the character may use his Spirit die as his Wild Die with all attacks that use the Signature Moves Edge. The Wild Die may not exceed his base skill die.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *A samurai with the Signature Moves (Katana) Edge, Spirit d10 and Fighting d10 rolls 2d10 for his Fighting roll instead of a d10 and a d6 (his normal Wild Die). Should he have Fighting d8, he would roll 2d8 instead.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *A yamabushi with the Signature Moves (Daikyu) Edge, Spirit d12 and Shooting d8 would rolls 2d8 for his Shooting roll instead of a d8 and a d6 (his normal Wild Die). Should he have Shooting d12, he would roll 2d12 instead.*

**EXAMPLE 3:** *Bari-san possesses the Signature Moves (Empty Hands) Edge and the Signature Moves (Katana) Edge. When he takes the Focused Strike Edge, his Spirit die becomes his Wild Die when fighting unarmed or with a katana, as long as it doesn't exceed his Fighting skill die. If his Spirit die exceeds his Fighting skill die, then his Wild Die is equal to his Fighting skill die (minimum d6).*



## KI MASTERY

**Requirements:** Heroic, Focused Mind

The character may attempt to activate a Ki Power as a free action, incurring no multi-action penalty. This may only be attempted once per round.

## LIGHTFEET

**Requirements:** Veteran, Ki Mastery

The character is capable of standing on and moving at his normal Pace across any surface without difficulty. When the character is Shaken, the surface no longer supports his weight, unless it could do so normally. If the character wants to engage in something a bit more spectacular, like wall running or moving up a vertical surface, he must make a successful Ki Focus roll. However, he may not end his turn upon a vertical surface or upside down, or gravity kicks in and he falls.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Two sword masters with the Lightfeet Edge engage in battle upon a lake. Should one become Shaken, he falls into the water.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Amon possesses the Lightfeet Edge. He can walk across icy paths, muddy roads, or even across the slender branches of a bamboo tree at his normal Pace. He must still, however, ascend the bamboo tree normally, by either climbing or jumping, unless he wants to attempt a Ki Focus roll.*

**EXAMPLE 3:** *Tozu throws a line from one rooftop to the next. He moves across the line with no problem due to the Lightfeet Edge. He is spotted, shot with an arrow, and Shaken halfway across the line. As the line is still strong enough to support his weight, he doesn't fall immediately. However, the Sensei may well call for an Agility roll at this point for him to maintain his balance.*

## NEW KI POWER

**Requirements:** Ki Control

The character gains a new Ki Power from the following list: analyze foe, armor, boost trait, deflection, healing, quickness, smite, or speed. This Edge may be taken multiple times.

## QUIET CONTEMPLATION

**Requirements:** Novice, Ki Control, Spirit d8+

The character is able to enter a deep trance and recharge 1 Power Point of Ki every 15 minutes. During the time of his trance, however, he is oblivious to everything short of direct injury. If the character is at full Ki, he may recover from Fatigue in half the standard time.

# POWER EDGES

## ELEMENTAL FOCUS

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Onmyoji) or Elemental Affinity

This Edge reflects an onmyoji or Ki Controller's understanding of the world around him and his ability to draw upon it for his magic. This elemental connection enables him to enrich existing Powers and allows him access to an additional list of Powers, based on the elements chosen. When casting a spell, the character may elect to enrich it prior to making his Spellcasting or Ki Focus roll. This enrichment costs no additional Power Points, but a spell may only be enriched with one element at a time from a single source. The character may take this Edge once per rank, selecting a new element each time. Whether a spell may be enriched with the offensive or defensive aspect of an element is detailed on the Elemental Focus Table (p. 59). Some Powers appear on multiple elemental lists, and if already possessed, do not need to be acquired again.

### EARTH

**Additional Power List:** armor, barrier, bolt, burrow, elemental manipulation (earth), mend, quake, summon elemental spirit (earth)

**Offensive Aspect:** Spells enriched by the Earth elemental trapping do an additional d4 earth damage.

**Defensive Aspect:** The target's skin hardens and becomes like stone, granting him +1 Toughness for the duration of the spell. Unarmed attacks do an extra d4 earth damage.

### AIR

**Additional Power List:** bolt, deflection, elemental manipulation (air), fly, invisibility, obscure, summon elemental spirit (air), telekinesis

**Offensive Aspect:** Targets of the spell must make an Agility roll or fall prone.

**Defensive Aspect:** The targets of the spell are surrounded by a protective whirlwind, making them harder to hit. All attack rolls against the targets are at -1 while the spell is maintained.

### WATER

**Additional Power List:** bolt, elemental manipulation (water), entangle, healing, greater healing, stun, summon elemental spirit (water)

**Offensive Aspect:** Targets of the spell must make a Strength roll or fall prone.

**Defensive Aspect:** The target is surrounded by a moving stream of water. Anyone touching or striking him in melee combat must make a successful Strength roll, or be knocked prone by the water.

## FIRE

**Additional Power List:** barrier, blast, bolt, elemental manipulation (fire), light, smite, summon elemental spirit (fire)

**Offensive Aspect:** Targets of the spell take an additional d4 fire damage and have a 1 in 6 chance of catching fire.

**Defensive Aspect:** Targets of the spell are wreathed in fire. Anyone touching or striking them in melee combat takes d4 fire damage and has a 1 in 6 chance of catching fire.

## VOID

**Additional Power List:** barrier, bolt, dispel, fear, lower trait, puppet, resurrection, teleport, zombie

**Offensive Aspect:** Targets of a spell tainted with the Void must make a Smarts roll or be Shaken. This can cause a wound to characters already Shaken.

## ELEMENTAL FOCUS TABLE

| POWER                    | OFFENSIVE ASPECT | DEFENSIVE ASPECT |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Armor                    | —                | x                |
| Barrier                  | —                | x                |
| Blast                    | x                | —                |
| Bolt                     | x                | —                |
| Boost Trait              | —                | x                |
| Burst                    | x                | —                |
| Lower Trait              | x                | —                |
| Burrow                   | —                | x                |
| Deflection               | —                | x                |
| Dispel                   | x                | —                |
| Elemental Manipulation   | x                | —                |
| Entangle                 | x                | —                |
| Environmental Protection | —                | x                |
| Eyes of the Oni          | —                | x                |
| Fear                     | x                | —                |
| Fly                      | —                | x                |
| Quake                    | x                | —                |
| Smite                    | x                | —                |
| Stun                     | x                | —                |
| Summon Elemental Spirit  | —                | x                |
| Zombie                   | —                | x                |

**Defensive Aspect:** The target of the spell is surrounded with a hellish glowing black aura, granting him +1 Toughness. Anyone touching or striking him in melee combat while in this state must make a Smarts roll or be Shaken. This can cause a wound to characters already Shaken.

**EXAMPLE:** *Korishi is an accomplished onmyoji, with the Elemental Focus (Fire) and Elemental Focus (Water) Edges. These Edges provide him with three different ways to use his existing spells of bolt and barrier — he may cast them with raw magic, or enriched with fire or with water. Offensively his fire bolts do an additional d4 fire damage and have a 1 in 6 a chance of catching the target on fire. His water bolts, on the other hand, do no extra damage, but instead force the target to make a Strength roll or fall prone. Defensively, a fire barrier does an additional d4 fire damage and has a 1 in 6 chance of catching the opponent on fire, while a water barrier knocks enemies prone.*

## ELEMENTAL UNDERSTANDING

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Ganso), Gearcraft d8+, Repair d8+

Through the scientific method, the character is capable of instilling his inventions with elemental Power. When taking this Edge, he selects an Elemental Focus he understands (see the Elemental Focus Edge). He does not, however, get access to any of the additional Powers associated with the Elemental Focus; he just gains the offensive and/or defensive aspect benefits which can be applied to the appropriate Powers (see the Elemental Focus Table, p. 59). A character can take this Edge multiple times, applying it to a different element each time. Should the character be able to emulate multiple elements, he elects which one he wishes to use prior to making a Gearcraft roll for the Power in question. This emulation costs no additional Power Points, but a gadget or device may only emulate one element at a time.

**EXAMPLE:** *Kandai is a ganso who has the Elemental Understanding (Earth) and Elemental Understanding (Fire) Edges. When he uses his bamboo mortar (a device which emulates the blast Power), he may elect to have it rain rocks or fire, but not both, and the blast effect chosen gains the offensive aspect listed under the chosen element emulated. He does not, however, get access to the additional Power lists of either element.*

## NEW DEVICE

**Requirements:** Veteran, Master of the New Ways

Each time this edge is chosen, the Journeyman Engineer gains the ability to create a new device.

Suggested devices are listed below:

Barrier (reinforced walls), Blast (catapult with fiery loads), Bolt (arbalest), Burrow (gearwork digger), Burst (fiery oil cannon), Entangle (tanglewire launch-

er), Eyes of the Oni (goggles), Light (tinkered lantern), Obscure (smoke bombs), Telekinesis (wood-and-gear crane).

## KAMI CALL

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Makoto), Spirit d8+, Prayer d8+

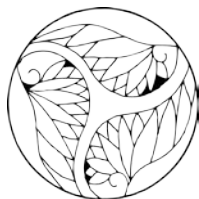
The character knows the pantheon of the kami and is able to call upon them in his time of need. Once per game session, he can attempt to beseech the gods for divine power. This divine intervention takes the form of a single use Power chosen by the character from his available Power list(s), regardless of normal rank requirements. The number of Power Points supplied by the gods for this Power is equal to half the character's total Power Points. These Power Points are limited for use strictly with the Power granted by the kami.

## SPIRIT BIND

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Arcane Background (Makoto), Prayer d8+

The makoto has the ability to bind a summoned spirit for an extended period of time. When any Power with a duration greater than instant is used, but before the arcane skill roll is made, the character may elect to attempt a spirit bind. This attempt costs 5 additional Power Points, which are lost if the arcane skill roll fails. These 5 Power Points do not begin to recharge until the spirit is freed. Success means the spirit is bound until released, granting the character the continual benefits of the Power. Should a character be Shaken or Wounded, he must make another successful Prayer roll to keep it bound (suffering wound penalties to the Prayer roll as normal). Freeing a bound spirit is a free action for the binder. Others may attempt to get rid of a bound spirit using the banish or dispel spells.

**EXAMPLE:** *Karamitsu is a frail makoto who is about to undertake a long journey. In preparation, he summons Bitu the Hitcher (using boost trait (Vigor) with the Spirit Bind Edge) with a standard success. The casting costs him the normal 2 Power Points for the boost trait spell plus 5 Power Points for the use of the Spirit Bind Edge for a total of 7 Power Points and results in Karamitsu's Vigor increasing from d4 to d6 until he releases Bitu back into the spirit world. The first 2 Power Points from the spell cost recharge normally but the remaining 5 Power Points are tied up in maintaining Bitu's connection to the mortal realm and do not start to recharge until Bitu is released.*



# PROFESSIONAL EDGES

## APPRENTICE ENGINEER

**Requirements:** Novice, Student of the New Ways

This character is able to apply his knowledge in new ways and is adept at mechanical work. When this Edge is taken gain the benefits of the McGyver Edge. Additionally, with a raise, he halves the time it takes to repair something.

## BEWILDERING WARRIOR

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Smarts d6+, Agility d6+

You have learned to distract your opponents with your unpredictable behavior in combat. You gain a +2 bonus to Smarts-based Tricks and +1 Parry when unencumbered.

## CAVALRYMAN

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d6+, Fighting d6+, Riding d6+

The character is trained to fight from horseback. He uses his Fighting skill when mounted, rather than the lower of his Fighting or Riding skills.

## ENTERTAINER

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Persuasion d8+

The character is a skilled entertainer and receives +2 to Persuasion rolls when performing in front of an audience. This also works when using Persuasion as Disguise (p. 101).

## GEISHA

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Persuasion d6+, Female

A cultured lady trained to provide entertainment and conversation, the character receives +2 to Persuasion rolls when dealing with characters of the opposite sex. She also gains an additional number of defining interests equal to half her Smarts die, at least one of which must be a performing art, should she not previously possess one.

## GOSHI

**Requirements:** Legendary, Samurai, Illustrious Worth

Recognized for his notable character, the goshi gains the Most High Edge with all the benefits it entails, including land, retainers and responsibility to his lord. The specific details of these benefits should be worked out with the Sensei.

## GUNSMITH

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d8+, Repair d8+

This clever character has learned the mysteries of black powder. He can make and repair firearms and mortars and can also manufacture powder bombs, grenades and pistol shot. The character receives a +2 to Repair rolls when creating weapons. See Firearms (p. 125) for further details.

## HERBALIST

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+, Healing d6+, Survival d8+

The herbalist knows the countryside well and knows what plants are both helpful and hurtful. He receives no penalty on Healing skill rolls for not having the proper equipment or tools in most situations. At the start of each session, the character makes a Survival roll to see what herbs he has collected in his travels. With a success, he begins the adventure with d6+1 herbs (2d6+1 with a raise). Each herb is treated as a Power Point the character uses to create specific effects, be they poisons, poultices, or herbs that impact a character's attributes. Each item's effect is equivalent to a normal success with the Power in question (ignoring any extra effects that occur with a raise). Often roots and leaves are simply ingested as the herbalist prepares them for personal use, but they may be placed in powder or liquid form as well, giving rise to the illusion among many that he uses potions. These herbal items do not carry over from one session to the next. They go bad, ruin, or what-have-you, between sessions.

**Contact Poison (2 herbs):** The character creates a poison that generates an effect similar to the smite Power. A dose must be applied to the weapon in question. If applied to a melee weapon, the effect lasts for three successful strikes.

**Note:** If applied to ranged or thrown weapons (such as twenty arrows or shuriken), the effect lasts until the dosed item is fired or thrown, or until the end of the game session.

**Light or Dark Herbs (2 herbs):** Light or Dark herbs generate an effect similar to the boost trait or lower trait Powers, respectively, with the exception that for the lower trait effect, the target must make a successful Vigor roll to avoid the effect rather than an opposed Spirit roll. The character must designate what attribute the herbs affect and the manner in which the herbs are applied (ie. powders may be absorbed, inhaled, or ingested, while a liquid form may be ingested or applied to a weapon).

**Note:** If applied to a melee weapon, the effect lasts for three successful strikes. If applied to ranged or thrown weapons (such as twenty arrows or shuriken), the effect lasts until the dosed item is fired or thrown, or until the end of the game session.

**Poultice (3 herbs):** The character creates a healing poultice that generates an effect similar to the healing Power. Though it staunches a wound immediately (automatically stabilizes a character from Bleeding Out in one round, although he remains unconscious until the wound is removed), it takes 10 minutes to remove 1 wound. It may also draw out poison or diseases at the Sensei's discretion. The character may travel with the poultice on with no ill effect.



## HOLY WARRIOR

**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Makoto), Spirit d8+, Prayer d6+

The effects of this Edge are identical to the Holy Warrior Edge in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

## HORSE ARCHER

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d6+, Riding d8+, Shooting d6+

This highly skilled rider has the Steady Hands Edge while on horseback and may use the aim maneuver while riding.

## JOURNEYMAN ENGINEER

**Requirements:** Seasoned, Apprentice Engineer

The character is able to create a device as per Gadgeteer once per game session. It has a number of Power Points equal to his Repair die type. He must have access to parts, and it takes a d20 minutes to create the device.

## LORD SAMURAI

**Requirements:** Veteran, Command

The character is recognized for his leadership ability and given the benefits of nobility in a chosen province in exchange for serving a noble house. He gains 5 Reputation, a suit of fitted medium armor and a warhorse. The character may not have the Disgraced or Low Born Hindrances.

## MASTER OF THE NEW WAYS

**Requirements:** Veteran, Journeyman Engineer, Repair d10+

Those with determination and available resources, with hard work can pull off feats of engineering, construction, mechanical gadgetry and (if they have access to such things) alchemical wizardry that amaze their allies and confound their enemies. This character gains a number of Power Points equal to twice his Repair die type for each item and may select any two powers listed in the New Device Edge (under Power Edges) at the start of each session (with the Sensei's permission and common sense — without access to the city, he's not going to be able to replenish some things). These Power Points do not regenerate normally, but the character may "scrounge" power points from one of his items to use in another with a d20 minutes and a successful Repair roll. As these are physical devices, the character will have to deal with the logistics of such things (as carrying reinforced walls, transporting a catapult, etc.). Once the Power Points are exhausted in any device, it is useless.

## MENTOR

**Requirements:** Novice, Fighting, Intimidation or Persuasion d6+, Streetwise d8+

The character has a way, whether through a glib tongue or a glare, of recruiting people to his cause, be it pillaging, prayer, or rebellious acts of heroism.



He attracts one pupil into his service per his rank of experience. The character replaces any lost pupils by actively recruiting them with a successful Streetwise roll with the following modifiers: +0 in a major urban area, -2 in villages, and -4 in more remote areas. Each eager pupil has nothing more than the clothes on their back and a general willingness to serve. It is the Mentor character's responsibility to equip and feed them. Determine each pupil's personality by using the Ally Personalities Table in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook and adjust accordingly. The template for the pupil character is found below.

**EXAMPLE:** *Shou is a Seasoned rank character when he becomes a Mentor. He immediately attracts two pupils. The player rolls on the Ally Personalities Table with the result that one of the men is crude and the other experienced. The Sensei may assign a -1 Charisma penalty to the first student and give the second one a free Advance and another roll on the Ally Personalities Table. The second roll may determine the experienced ally is lazy. So the character gets two pupils, Komatsu the Unclean and Kenta the Plump. Should either student die or run away, they are replaced with new pupils when Shou reaches his next Advance, and their personalities are determined as indicated above.*

## PUPIL

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Intimidation d4, Streetwise d4

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

At the end of a game session in which the pupils had a significant role (usually by participating in combat), roll a d6 for each one. On a roll of 5-6, they Advance just like player characters. On a roll of 1-4, they don't. Any replaced pupils start with the base stats listed above (all Advances from the lost pupil are discarded). Poorly treated pupils will refuse orders at the most inopportune moment, or may simply leave and must be replaced.

**Note:** The player may negotiate different skills as appropriate for his pupil with the Sensei, but they should not exceed a d6 in any particular skill, nor 8 skill points total distributed across the desired skills.

## MERCHANT

**Requirements:** Novice, Persuasion d6+, Streetwise d6+

An experienced broker of goods, the merchant gets +2 to Streetwise rolls for buying and selling items on the open market (see the Arms & Equipment section, p. 69). They are also skilled at evaluating the basic worth of goods. A merchant may evaluate the exact worth of a common item automatically and that of a unique or unusual item with a successful Smarts roll.

## MYTHIC WARRIOR

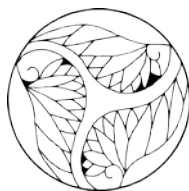
**Requirements:** Veteran, Warrior Soul

This warrior has made a living from fighting ghosts, oni and monstrous creatures. He never suffers from Fear effects and cannot be Intimidated.

## PROTECTOR

**Requirements:** Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+, Notice d6+

The character may be a bodyguard or just devoted to an individual. In either case, he can jump in front of attacks intended for another. Choosing a new person to guard costs the protector a regular action, and additional actions in the round cause multi-action penalties as normal. As long as the protector stays within 1" of the chosen person, any attack aimed at that person is automatically rolled against the protector instead. The character receives a benny each time he suffers a wound from such an attack during an encounter. If the protector Soaks the wound, he doesn't get the benny.



# SOCIAL EDGES

## CULTURED

**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d6+

The character has a refined air about him, increasing his Charisma by +1. Additionally, the character gains two additional defining interests.

## ILLUSTRIOUS WORTH

**Requirements:** Wild Card, Veteran

The character has a reputation that precedes him. He may add the absolute value of his Charisma score to Intimidation rolls.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Takumi is a mean drunk, and everyone knows this fact. Since he has the Low Born Edge, he has a -2 Charisma penalty. However, should he puff up and show how angry he can be, he receives a +2 bonus to his Intimidation rolls. He is a fierce drunk after all!*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Kurosawa is known for his noble character. Since he has the Most High Edge, he receives a +2 Charisma bonus and may apply this bonus to his Intimidation rolls should he need to dress down an oppressive soldier.*

## LOW PROFILE

**Requirements:** Novice, Wild Card

The character is less recognizable than might be expected. People encountering the character receive a -2 to Common Knowledge rolls to recognize him in addition to any other modifiers, and he receives a +2 to all Stealth (Blending) and Persuasion (Disguise) attempts.

## WELL CONNECTED

**Requirements:** Wild Card, Veteran, Connections

The character is more than capable of calling in favors when he needs them. He may spend a benny to get a raise on Persuasion rolls with his Connections. He may spend multiple bennies on the Persuasion rolls. Each benny thus spent grants one raise or turns an initial failure into a success.

**EXAMPLE:** *Kurosawa is in Kosu and needs the aid of his yakuza brethren. He has Connections (Nine Finger Clan). He makes a Streetwise roll to contact the local yakuza boss. Once in contact, he makes a Persuasion roll and gets a success. He may spend a benny at this time for a raise, or two bennies to get two raises. Thus, he can parlay a bit of shared information into the loaning of a thug, to the aid of five equipped thugs, or even the offer of financial aid, depending on the level of success achieved.*



# ARMS & EQUIPMENT

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*The lands, awash in blood and rebellion, are dangerous, and wise is the man who equips himself properly for his travels.*

## COINS OF KONOYO

With the advent of advanced manufacturing techniques, the Imperial Palace issued an edict standardizing the currency to a simpler, more manageable system throughout the Iron Dynasty. Though there are a number of greater valued coins, the three major coins are sen, bu, and rin. All of the provinces have their own treasuries and mints, and the economy is quite stable at present. The front of each coin bears the Regional Mon and the year of minting, while the back is stamped with the Imperial Seal. All coins have a small hole in them, ingots near one of the shorter ends and the other shapes (wheels, hexagons, and octagons) have a hole in the center, to make it easy to attach a length of thread or strip of leather for easy portage.

### THE IRON DYNASTY

| DENOMINATION      | VALUE  | METAL    | NICKNAME   | SIZE | SHAPE | WEIGHT |
|-------------------|--------|----------|------------|------|-------|--------|
| Imperial Dragon   | \$1000 | Platinum | Dragon     | 3"   | Ingot | 5/1    |
| Provincial Dragon | \$100  | Gold     | Provincial | 3"   | Ingot | 5/1    |
| Ryo               | \$50   | Gold     | Sun        | 2"   | Wheel | 20/1   |
| Yen               | \$10   | Silver   | Noble      | 1.5" | Wheel | 20/1   |
| Sen               | \$5    | Silver   | Merchant   | 1"   | Wheel | 20/1   |
| Bu                | \$1    | Copper   | Farmer     | 1"   | Wheel | 50/1   |
| Rin               | \$.01  | Copper   | Peasant    | .75" | Wheel | 100/1  |

### KARASU ROKKU

| DENOMINATION | VALUE | METAL  | NICKNAME  | SIZE | SHAPE     | WEIGHT |
|--------------|-------|--------|-----------|------|-----------|--------|
| Murder       | \$100 | Gold   | Two Wing  | 2"   | Hexagonal | 10/1   |
| Raven        | \$10  | Silver | Half Wing | 1"   | Octagonal | 20/1   |
| Rook         | \$1   | Copper | Nest      | 1"   | Wheel     | 100/1  |

Doragon Mizu, being an independent pirate state, has no official coins of its own, recognizing coins from any realm whatsoever. Typically, in their capital city of Makutu, they have a large enough treasury where they are able to exchange coins for travelers for those suiting their particular province or needs, for a service fee ranging from 10-20%.

Karasu Rokku is wealthier in some regards and poorer in others. Since it does not have to bear the burden of an ongoing war, the land is more pleasant, and the lords can rule with a more even hand than in the Iron Dynasty. However, the lower class has little hope for upward mobility without the prospect of turmoil and the chance for honor. Little money ever crosses their hands as they typically use the barter system within their communities for goods and services not provided by their Lord Samurai.

## EQUIPPING YOURSELF

Now, hurendo, you are aware of your strengths and weaknesses and are prepared to spend your coins judiciously so that you may honor your ancestors and yourself. Anything you think you may want on your journeys, you must purchase with 500 bu. Remember, this is an opportunity for you to procure black market items as well, so spend your funds wisely.

### THE ART OF BEING FRUGAL

Your coins do not go very far starting out, so you may wish to be judicious in your spending. There is always give and take in the savings, and this is no different — in preserving balance, when you spend less, you get less.

Items come in several grades in regard to quality: inferior, standard, good, and fine.

Inferior items are available for half their listed cost, representing previously owned or used items in poor condition. A sword scabbard is split and broken, and a blade is rusted, pitted and past its prime. Items that can break when used, such as a katana, or might be used with an attribute roll, such as a saddle, break or malfunction when the character rolls a 1 on the skill die (regardless of the Wild Die). If the character has the All Thumbs Hindrance, then items break or malfunction on a 1 or a 2 on the skill die (regardless of the Wild Die).

Items that don't typically break or malfunction, such as kimonos, can instead reflect on how people view the character. A dirty, ragged kimono with a cheap straw hat, ratty sandals, and a pitted katana through his sash is going to make people suspicious of him when he comes wandering into town. When wearing inferior clothing and/or carrying inferior weapons, the character suffers a -1 Charisma modifier per item (with a cumulative maximum penalty of -2).

Standard items have no associated drawbacks or bonuses associated with them. As the name would suggest, they are the standard for most items found in most areas.

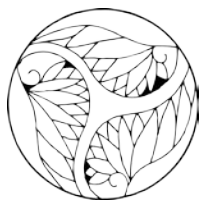
Finding things of good or fine quality is possible in any community. Multiply the cost of the goods in question by 5 or 10 times, respectively, to represent items with these qualities. These items do take a bit of hunting down and are most often available in the merchant districts of cities. When wearing good or fine clothing and/or carrying good or fine weapons, the character receives a +1 (for good items) or +2 (for fine items) Charisma modifier per item carried (with a cumulative maximum bonus of +2). Those people who are used to working with items of quality (i.e. criminals, merchants, or nobility) know quality when they see it and are more prone to pay attention to a person carrying such items. Heroes looking for good or fine quality equipment can make a Streetwise roll once per day in a sizable community. Finding anything of worth in a smaller community is a Streetwise roll at -2 (village) or -4 (rural community) and may be attempted once per week.

## SELLING ITEMS

Characters wishing to sell their goods in major urban areas must make a Streetwise roll to sell their goods for a quarter of its normal value, while a raise gives them half value. In smaller areas, such as villages or rural communities, the roll is at -2 or -4, respectively. In all cases, the Streetwise roll may be attempted once per week.

## THE BLACK MARKET

Characters may eventually need to obtain goods or use services not generally available, and at that point they will need to go looking for the black market. Finding it requires a successful Streetwise roll at -2 in major urban centers and -4 in villages or smaller communities. This modifier may vary depending upon the specific location. Once located, the character has to make a Persuasion skill roll to gain access to the black market contacts. These shady little markets are quite often set up anywhere from inside a portion of a warehouse in a bad section of a major city to a makeshift tent at a forest's edge outside of a village, and are typically ready to be moved at a moment's notice. As it deals in some dangerous goods, the black market is rarely in the same place two nights in a row. Attempts to locate the black market may be made once per week. The Sensei is encouraged to include other exotic and black market items of his own devising here as well.





## COMMON GEAR IN KONOYO

| GENERAL EQUIPMENT  | COST | WEIGHT | NOTES                      |
|--------------------|------|--------|----------------------------|
| Backpack, Wicker   | 5    | 2      | Holds 50 lbs.              |
| Basket, Large      | 3    | 1      |                            |
| Basket, Small      | 2    | 1      |                            |
| Blanket            | 1    | 1      |                            |
| Chopsticks         | 2    | —      |                            |
| Climbing Spikes    | 20   | 3      | +2 to Climbing rolls       |
| Cloth, Cotton Bolt | 25   | 5      |                            |
| Cloth, Silk Bolt   | 40   | 4      |                            |
| Cord, 10'          | 2    | 1      |                            |
| Fishing Net        | 3    | 1      |                            |
| Goza (straw mat)   | 5    | 1      |                            |
| Incense Stick      | 3    | —      |                            |
| Lantern, Hooded    | 10   | 3      |                            |
| Lantern, Paper     | 6    | 1      |                            |
| Lockpick           | 3    | 1      | +1 to Lockpicking rolls    |
| Mirror, Small      | 5    | —      |                            |
| Oil Flask          | 4    | 2      |                            |
| Pot, Iron          | 5    | 5      |                            |
| Rope, Hemp 50'     | 3    | 8      |                            |
| Rope, Silk 50'     | 7    | 4      |                            |
| Snorkel, Bamboo    | 2    | —      |                            |
| Sword Stand        | 10   | 2      |                            |
| Tent, Large        | 100  | 10     | Can shelter up to 6 people |
| Tent, Small        | 40   | 6      | Can shelter up to 2 people |
| Tobacco Pipe       | 3    | —      |                            |
| Tobacco, 1 lb      | 5    | 1      |                            |
| Torch              | 1    | —      |                            |

| LIVESTOCK        | COST |
|------------------|------|
| Dog              | 45   |
| Donkey           | 60   |
| Fish, Ornamental | 50   |
| Horse, Draft     | 200  |
| Horse, Riding    | 300  |
| Horse, War       | 750  |
| Ox               | 90   |

| SERVICES                  | COST |
|---------------------------|------|
| Actor, per performance    | 5    |
| Chef, per banquet         | 15   |
| Clerk, per month          | 18   |
| Courier, per day          | 3    |
| Dancer, per performance   | 8    |
| Doctor, per visit         | 10   |
| Gardener, per month       | 25   |
| Geisha, per evening       | 30   |
| Lantern Bearer, per day   | 5    |
| Lodging, Common           | 7    |
| Lodging, Quality          | 15   |
| Musician, per performance | 5    |
| Servant, per month        | 12   |
| Stabling, one night       | 3    |

| CLOTHING          | COST | WEIGHT |
|-------------------|------|--------|
| Boots, Hard       | 5    | 1      |
| Boots, Soft       | 3    | 1      |
| Cap               | 4    | —      |
| Cloak, Cloth      | 8    | —      |
| Cloak, Fur        | 10   | —      |
| Gloves            | 4    | —      |
| Hat, Fur          | 5    | —      |
| Hat, Straw        | 2    | —      |
| Loincloth         | 1    | —      |
| Outer Robe        | 3    | —      |
| Robe, Cotton      | 7    | —      |
| Robe, Fur Trimmed | 15   | —      |
| Robe, Silk        | 25   | —      |
| Sandals           | 3    | —      |
| Sash              | 1    | —      |
| Trousers, Cotton  | 8    | —      |
| Trousers, Woolen  | 6    | —      |
| Vest, Fur         | 5    | —      |
| Vest, Silk        | 10   | —      |

| FOOD & DRINK               | COST | WEIGHT |
|----------------------------|------|--------|
| Beer, Jar                  | 2    | —      |
| Food, Common Meal          | 5    | —      |
| Food, Exotic Meal          | 15   | —      |
| Food, Poor Meal            | 2    | —      |
| Grain, Horse 1 day         | 10   | 1      |
| Rice Cake, 1 day's rations | 3    | —      |
| Sake, Jar                  | 3    | —      |
| Tea, 1 lb                  | 12   | 1      |

# ARMOR

| ARMOR TYPES | ARMOR VALUE | ABBREVIATION |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Light       | +1          | L            |
| Medium      | +2          | M            |
| Heavy       | +3          | H            |

**Reinforced Armor:** Cost is x 3. Protection is +1, but weight is doubled.

**Nimble Armor:** Cost is x 3 and weighs half.

**Exquisite Armor:** Cost x 9. It has the benefits of both reinforced and nimble armor types.

Armor is purchased piecemeal. If the character wears a complete suit (or “yoroi”) of the same armor type, which includes a helmet, mask, vest, sleeves, gauntlets, leggings, and foot covers, he receives a +1 bonus to the armor value (i.e. Leather armor would provide Armor +2 instead of Armor +1).

Armor must be fitted to the user or he receives a penalty to Agility and related skill rolls equal to the highest armor value of the unfitted piece. Normal encumbrance factors do stack with this penalty.

**EXAMPLE:** *Hiroshi (Strength d8) discovers a chain vest and puts it on. Until fitted, he is at -2 to all Agility and related skill rolls. Should the armor weight also push him into the lightly encumbered range (between 5 and 10 times his Load Limit, or between 41-80 lbs for Hiroshi), he is at -1 to Strength and related skill rolls and -3 to Agility and related skill rolls.*

Armor can be fitted to the user with the appropriate tools and a successful Repair roll. The character takes a penalty to the Repair roll equal to the armor value of the piece of armor being fitted. Fitting takes a number of hours equal to each piece’s armor value. Each raise on the Repair roll halves the time to fit the armor properly.

**EXAMPLE:** *Toku is fitting Hiroshi’s chain vest for him. Toku must make a Repair roll at -2 (the armor value) to successfully fit it to Hiroshi’s torso. With a success, he fits the armor properly in 2 hours; with a raise, he fits it properly in only 1 hour.*

## ARMOR TYPES BY PROVINCE

Though armor is broken down in the general categories of light, medium, and heavy, the truth of the matter is that each province is known for making particular armor types. The thickness, quality, and materials reflect its relative protection value and strength.

Ato

Thinly cut stone sewn into leather looks crude and barbaric, but offers solid protection to the wearer.

**Reinforced:** Additional stone is added, greatly increasing its weight and defensive worth.

**Nimble:** The stone is cut thinner, covered in a light gloss, and sewn into leather.

**Exquisite:** Semi-precious stones are found that are light, tough, and eye-catching, and sewn onto the finest silk.

Doragon Mizu

The pirates typically use a hodge-podge of armor styles, but they do fashion armor out of cloth and leather that gives them an informal appearance.

**Reinforced:** Tightly woven cloth is sewn onto multiple layers of silk and leather.

**Nimble:** Silk is used as the base material and light metal links are sewn into it.

**Exquisite:** Silk stolen from Tahata Gaki is used to create an armor that is dyed in bright colors and extremely hard to come by.

| ARMOR PIECE       | ARMOR WEIGHT | COST (L/M/H)  | NOTES  |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--|
| Helmet            | 1/3/5        | 25/50/100     | 50% chance of protecting against a head shot   |
| Mask (Face)       | 1/2/3        | 15/30/60      | 50% chance of protecting against a head shot; in conjunction with a helmet, provides 100% protection against a head shot |
| Vest (Torso)      | 10/15/25     | 100/200/400   | —  |
| Sleeves (Arms)    | 3/5/5        | 50/100/200    | Must be attached to a vest or sewn into clothing   |
| Gauntlets (Hands) | 1/3/5        | 25/50/100     | —  |
| Leggings (Legs)   | 5/10/15      | 100/200/400   | —  |
| Footcover (Feet)  | 1/3/5        | 25/50/100     | —  |
| Barding           | 10/20/30     | 500/1000/2000 | For horses   |
| SHIELDS           |              |               |  |
| Small Shield      | 8            | 25            | +1 Parry   |
| Medium Shield     | 12           | 50            | +1 Parry, +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit  |
| Large Shield      | 20           | 200           | +2 Parry, +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit  |



ATO



DOROGON MIZU



HINOTE SHIMA



IKUSA KOKORO



KARASU ROKKO

## HINOTE SHIMA

Comprised of ceramic plates bound together on a light cloth mesh, this armor cannot be duplicated outside of Hinote Shima due to the extreme heats the Flame Callers can call forth.

**Reinforced:** The plates are sewn into leather.

**Nimble:** The plates are smaller, spaced about, and sewn onto either silk or iron links.

**Exquisite:** Double layers of light ceramic plate provide the finest protection to the wearer. They are typically painted in flame colors of orange and red and bear the Hinote Shima mon.

## IKUSA KOKORO

Classic armor constructed in the old tradition of bamboo and cloth. Lacquer, metal, and leather increase its relative strength, toughness, and weight.

**Reinforced:** A thin layer of iron better fends off blows.

**Nimble:** A layer of silk sandwiched between two layers of lacquered bamboo lightens the armor without decreasing its protection.

**Exquisite:** Thrice-lacquered bamboo overlaid upon silk and incorporating bits of iron creates armor both tough and light.

## KARASU ROKKU

The armor of the Raven is typically carved of metal and incorporates various degrees of bone that serve to lighten its weight and intimidate the enemy.

**Reinforced:** Five layers of rolled steel and various hard gothic elements are incorporated into the armor.

**Nimble:** Armor made of sorcerous magic combines bits of ground bone into the iron, making it tough and light.

**Exquisite:** Blending the finest talents of craftsman and void witch, this armor incorporates human bone inlaid into strategic points of the plate.

## SORIMIZU

Comprised of shells of all shapes, the armor is cunningly crafted to provide maximum protection that is striking to see.

**Reinforced:** The shells are linked together with bits of chain and backed with thick leather.

**Nimble:** The shells are bound with silk and leather.

**Exquisite:** The shells are brushed over with hot metal that toughens it while adding negligible weight and bound with silk.

## TAHATA GAKI

Despite their other shortcomings, Tahata Gaki is capable of making silk armor that is highly coveted throughout Konoyo.

**Reinforced:** Multiple layers of silk are sewn together in such a manner that it can catch and bind weapons.

**Nimble:** Spider silks are incorporated into the design, lightening the material.  
**Exquisite:** The rare silks of the Baku make the finest material that is both strong and lightweight.  
**Tetsu Sangaku:** Iron plates are used as base materials, but can be hammered into various thicknesses to provide varying degrees of toughness.

### TETSU SANGAKU

Iron plates are used as base materials, but can be hammered into various thicknesses to provide varying degrees of toughness.

**Reinforced:** The metal plates are double layered.

**Nimble:** Steel replaces the use of iron as the primary material of the armor.

**Exquisite:** Double layered steel makes armor that is tough and light.

### UMA-KO RYUUDO

Designed with flexibility in mind, the average armor is comprised of interlinking leather scales that are cured and lacquered over. Its relative strength is dependent upon the time spent to lacquer and treat the armor.

**Reinforced:** Iron plates are incorporated into the design.

**Nimble:** Smaller scales are more flexible and provide a greater range of motion.

**Exquisite:** Small steel scales are attached to the underside of the leather scales.

## AN ASIDE ABOUT SHIELDS

Shields were used in ancient times, but fell out of favor in the early 1400s, and were considered cowardly throughout the age of the Bright Empire. In the Iron Dynasty, the shield has gained favor on the battlefield due to the rise in *kikai*, as well as firearms and other deadly projectiles (such as mystical bolts and such). Many people steeped in tradition, however, will look poorly upon those who carry a shield. As a result, the shield bearer will suffer a -2 Reaction modifier in those instances.



SORIMIZU



TAHATA GAKI



TETSU SANGAKU



UMA-KO RYODO



# HAND WEAPONS

| WEAPON                  | DAMAGE   | WEIGHT | COST | NOTES  |
|-------------------------|----------|--------|------|--|
| <b>BLADES</b>           |          |        |      |  |
| Aiguchi                 | Str+1    | 1      | 10   |  |
| Bokken                  | Str+d6   | 3      | 200  | Blunt training weapon; no penalty for non-lethal attacks |
| Jitte/Sai               | Str+d4   | 1      | 50   | Parry +1 and +1 to Disarm attempts                       |
| Katana                  | Str+d8   | 6      | 500  | Does d8+2 damage when wielded 2 handed                   |
| Ninjato                 | Str+d6   | 4      | 300  | Black market; poor grade only                            |
| Odachi                  | Str+d10  | 12     | 400  | Parry -1; Reach 1; 2 hands                               |
| Shikomizue              | Str+d6   | 5      | 200  | Notice -2 to detect it as a bladed weapon when sheathed  |
| Tachi                   | Str+d8   | 8      | 300  |  |
| Tanto                   | Str+d4   | 1      | 25   |  |
| Wakizashi               | Str+d6   | 4      | 200  |  |
| <b>AXES &amp; MAULS</b> |          |        |      |  |
| Club                    | Str+d4   | 1      | 10   |  |
| Fang                    | Str+d8+2 | 8      | 300  |  |
| Fuetso                  | Str+d6   | 2      | 200  |  |
| Tetsubo                 | Str+d10  | 15     | 400  | Parry -1; 2 hands  |
| Kanabo                  | Str+d12  | 25     | 300  | Parry -1; Reach 2; 2 hands                               |
| <b>POLEARMS</b>         |          |        |      |  |
| Bo                      | Str+d4   | 8      | 10   | Parry +1; Reach 1; 2 hands                               |
| Nage-Yari               | Str+d6   | 5      | 200  | Parry +1; Reach 1; 2 hands                               |
| Naginata                | Str+d8   | 15     | 250  | Reach 1; 2 hands   |
| Sasumata                | Str+d8   | 20     | 400  | Reach 1; May be used to grapple; 2 hands                 |
| Yari                    | Str+d8   | 25     | 40   | Reach 2; 2 hands   |
| <b>EXOTIC</b>           |          |        |      |  |
| Gunbai                  | Str+d4   | .5     | 100  | May be used as a Small Shield in off-hand                |
| Kama                    | Str+d6   | 2      | 50   |  |
| Kawanaga                | Str+d6   | 5      | 300  | Reach 2; May be used to grapple; May be thrown           |
| Kusari-gama             | Str+d6   | 6      | 200  | Special; Reach 1; May be used to grapple                 |

| WEAPON      | DAMAGE | WEIGHT | COST | NOTES  |
|-------------|--------|--------|------|--|
| Nunchaku    | Str+d4 | 2      | 100  | Parry +1                                       |
| Shabo       | Str+1  | -      | 50   | Special; May be used with the Empty Hands Edge |
| Siangkam    | Str+1  | 1      | 100  | May be used with the Empty Hands Edge          |
| Tekko       | Str+1  | .5     | 100  | May be used with the Empty Hands Edge          |
| Tekko Kaggi | Str+d4 | 1      | 200  | +2 Climbing                                    |
| Tessen      | Str+d4 | 2      | 100  | Parry +1, may be thrown                        |
| Tonfa       | Str+2  | 4      | 200  | May be used with the Empty Hands Edge          |
| Uchine      | Str+d4 | 2      | 50   | May be thrown                                  |

## THROWN WEAPONS

| STANDARD  | RANGE  | DAMAGE | RoF | COST | WEIGHT   | SHOTS | MIN STR. |
|-----------|--------|--------|-----|------|----------|-------|----------|
| Fuetso    | 3/6/12 | Str+d6 | 1   | 200  | 2        | —     | —        |
| Tanto     | 3/6/12 | Str+d4 | 1   | 25   | 1        | —     | —        |
| Tousekiki | 4/8/16 | Str+d4 | 1   | 10   | 1        | —     | —        |
| Nage-Yari | 3/6/12 | Str+d6 | 1   | 250  | 5        | —     | d6       |
| Kawanaga  | 1/3/5  | Str+d6 | 1   | 300  | 5        | —     | —        |
| Shuriken* | 4/8/16 | Str+d4 | 3   | 5    | 1 per 10 | —     | —        |
| Tessen    | 2/4/8  | Str+d4 | 1   | 100  | 2        | —     | —        |
| Uchine    | 4/8/16 | Str+d4 | 1   | 50   | 2        | —     | —        |

## RANGED WEAPONS

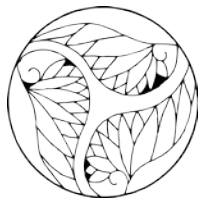
| WEAPON              | RANGE    | DAMAGE | RoF | COST | WEIGHT | SHOTS | MIN STR. |
|---------------------|----------|--------|-----|------|--------|-------|----------|
| <b>BOWS</b>         |          |        |     |      |        |       |          |
| Daikyu              | 15/30/60 | 2d8    | 1   | 300  | 5      | —     | d8       |
| Hankyu              | 12/24/48 | 2d6    | 1   | 200  | 3      | —     | d6       |
| <b>BLACK POWDER</b> |          |        |     |      |        |       |          |
| Arashi-ko           | 10/20/40 | 1-3d6  | 1   | 300  | 12     | 4     | d6       |
| Ikizuchi            | 10/20/40 | 2d8    | 1   | 300  | 15     | 8     | d6       |
| Tezemu Tanjuu       | 5/10/20  | 2d6    | 1   | 150  | 3      | 12    | d6       |
| <b>EXOTIC</b>       |          |        |     |      |        |       |          |
| Hukiya              | 4/8/16   | 2d4    | 1   | 100  | 1      | —     | —        |

# SPECIAL WEAPONS

| WEAPON          | RANGE    | DAMAGE | RoF | COST | MIN STR. | NOTES  |
|-----------------|----------|--------|-----|------|----------|--|
| <b>GRENADE</b>  |          |        |     |      |          |  |
| Thrown†         | 2/4/8*   | 3d6    | 1   | 75   | —        | Medium Burst Template                                    |
| Launcher†       | 5/10/20* | 3d6    | 1   | 75   | —        | Medium Burst Template                                    |
| <b>BOMB</b>     |          |        |     |      |          |  |
| Bakudan†        | —        | 3d6    | —   | 150  | —        | Small Burst Template                                     |
| Gunpowder Cask† | —        | 5d6    | —   | 250  | —        | Large Burst Template                                     |
| Issen*†         | 2/4/8    | —      | 1   | 10   | —        | Small Burst Template;<br>+2 to Agility Tricks;<br>Banned |
| Endan*†         | 2/4/8    | —      | 1   | 10   | —        | Small Burst Template;<br>mimics obscure Power;<br>Banned |

\* This weapon is banned and considered a ninja weapon. Possession of it may range from a -2 reaction up to imprisonment

† Shot costs 1 bu per shot; Black Powder costs 1 bu per round



## EAST MEETS WEST

The essence of *Way of the Ronin* is found in its Eastern influences. We've tried to minimize the pain some gamers experience with the strangeness of certain words and names as much as possible, but using Japanese names are necessary in certain situations and are just downright evocative. Imagine if we just said a samurai had a long sword? It's just not the same impact as when you say katana.

We know the names of weapons can get awfully confusing, so we've included a simple reference to help the gaijin in your group wrap their heads around it. Additional detail is found in the section following this one.

| EAST                    | WEST                                       |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>BLADES</b>           |  |
| Aiguchi                 | Short knife                                |
| Bokken                  | Wooden sword                               |
| Jitte/Sai               | Pronged Dagger                             |
| Katana                  | Single-edged sword<br>(favored by samurai) |
| Ninjato                 | Short sword (favored by<br>ninja)          |
| Odachi                  | Great sword                                |
| Shikomizue              | Sword cane                                 |
| Tachi                   | Long sword                                 |
| Tanto                   | Dagger                                     |
| Wakizashi               | Short sword                                |
| <b>AXES &amp; MAULS</b> |  |
| Club                    | Club                                       |
| Fang                    | Bullhook (elephant<br>goad)                |
| Fuetso                  | Axe  |
| Kanabo                  | Massive war club                           |
| Tetsubo                 | War club                                   |
| <b>POLEARMS</b>         |  |
| Bo                      | Quarterstaff                               |
| Nage-Yari               | Short spear                                |
| Naginata                | Glaive                                     |
| Susamata                | Man-catcher                                |
| Yari                    | Spear                                      |
| <b>EXOTIC</b>           |  |
| Gunbai                  | Wooden war fan                             |
| Kama                    | Sickle                                     |
| Kawanaga                | Grappling hook                             |
| Kusari-gama             | Sickle chain                               |
| Nunchaku                | Chain sticks                               |
| Siangkam                | Iron “arrow”                               |
| Shabo                   | Ring with wooden rod                       |
| Tekko                   | Brass knuckles                             |

|                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| <b>EXOTIC CONTINUED</b> |                |
| Tekko-Kagi              | Hand claws     |
| Tonfa                   | Baton          |
| Uchine                  | Small javelin  |
| Tessen                  | Iron war fan   |
| <b>THROWN WEAPONS</b>   |                |
| <b>STANDARD</b>         |                |
| Fuetso                  | Axe            |
| Tanto                   | Dagger         |
| Tousekiki               | Sling          |
| Nage-Yari               | Short spear    |
| <b>EXOTIC</b>           |                |
| Kawanaga                | Grappling hook |
| Shuriken                | Throwing stars |
| Tessen                  | War fan        |
| Tekidan                 | Grenade        |
| Uchine                  | Small javelin  |
| <b>RANGED WEAPONS</b>   |                |
| <b>BOWS</b>             |                |
| Daikyu                  | Long bow       |
| Hankyu                  | Short bow      |
| <b>BLACK POWDER</b>     |                |
| Arashi-ko               | Blunderbuss    |
| Ikazuchi                | Rifle          |
| Tezemu                  | Pistol         |
| Tanjuu                  |                |
| <b>EXOTIC</b>           |                |
| Hukiya                  | Blowgun        |
| <b>BOMB</b>             |                |
| Issen                   | Flash bomb     |
| Endan                   | Smoke bomb     |

## DESCRIPTIONS BY WEAPON CATEGORY

### BLADES

**Aiguchi:** A small knife of about 6" in length or less without a hilt. Typically used for domestic purposes.

**Bokken:** A wooden sword about the size and weight of a katana that is primarily used in training and by children.

**Jitte/Sai:** Any of a number of pronged daggers that has a large upward turning hilt providing excellent protection from attacks. Often used in the off hand by experienced bushi.

**Katana:** A single-edged sword that once was the symbol of the samurai class. Now, it is frequently found in the hands of common warriors and merchants. Its price makes it prohibitive for the average person, though ownership does not result in outright death. It is often called simply "the sword".

**Ninjato:** A short sword favored by ninja. It looks like an abbreviated katana, but its shortened length makes it excellent for using in low-ceilinged rooms. Ownership does not come without its consequences, as it is illegal to own in most provinces. Even in places where it is accepted, the bearer is viewed suspiciously (-2 Reaction).

**Odachi:** This great sword of a more civilized age looks like an enormous katana. The blade length is over 3'. Due to the difficulty of crafting them, they are generally not available and are only custom made. They often have inscriptions to the gods on their handle. They were especially valued by cavalymen during the last age.

**Shikomizue:** This appears as a normal cane or walking stick but actually conceals a hidden straight-edged blade.

**Tachi:** Worn with the edge down, this blade is about 6" longer than a katana, and is frequently used by cavalry. Many of the blades were cut down and refashioned into katana during the wars in order to provide more material for the construction of kikai, so they are uncommon in most cities, often popping up now from time to time.

**Tanto:** Single or double-edged, this knife is used primarily to stab, and is effective at doing so in close quarters. Often of utilitarian purpose or forged for the poor, little consideration is given to its aesthetic. It is balanced for throwing.

**Wakizashi:** Often called the companion sword, the wakizashi is generally worn together with a katana. It looks like a miniature katana as well, with a single-edged blade between twelve and twenty-four inches in length.

### CHANGING TIMES

During the early years of the last age, it was often more common for samurai to wear tachi and tanto, rather than katana and wakizashi. The pairing of weapons is called daisho which literally means "large and small". In the current age, most Lord Samurai wear katana and wakizashi with the addition of an ikazuchi to emphasize their station, even if they don't know how to fire it.

## AXES & MAULS

**Club:** A simple, crude weapon of metal or wood construction, it is favored by bandits and thieves.

**Fang:** A heavy metal club with a hook on one end that can be used to grapple an opponent or tear flesh with ease.

**Fuetso:** A hand axe, this weapon is often one used more out of convenience than for war. Fuetso designed for war are typically balanced for throwing as well.

**Kanabo:** An extremely heavy, wooden club about five feet in length, with iron studs running up and down its metal shod end. Due to its cumbersome nature, it is often only wielded by the strongest warriors and the most terrifying oni.

**Tetsubo:** A heavy wooden club encased in metal on one end, with studs running up and down the head.

## POLEARMS

**Bo:** A long staff made of hard wood or bamboo, the bo is often metal plated to prevent it from splintering and to give it extra heft.

**Nage-Yari:** A short-shafted metal or bone-tipped spear about three feet in length. It is good in melee, but is also balanced for throwing.

**Naginata:** A long wooden-shafted pole weapon with a slightly curved blade at one end. A sword-like guard separates the shaft from the blade proper. Once popular among the samurai class, it is a weapon commonly used by city guards.

**Sasumata:** A six foot long pole with a U-shaped metal head at one end, this weapon was first used by fire fighters, but soon found its way into the guard. It can be maneuvered over the target's head, arms, or torso, making struggling difficult. Metal spikes and barbs near the metal head serve to prevent the detainee from wrestling it free from the user.

**Yari:** A straight-headed spear that averages six to nine feet in length. Commonly used by foot troops throughout the lands.

## EXOTIC

**Gunbai:** A war fan that is typically made of wood and does not fold. It is often used by a Lord Samurai to signal his troops on the battlefield.

**Kama:** Once merely a sickle used in the field to harvest rice, this weapon has a razor sharp blade and is difficult to master.

**Kawanaga:** An easy weapon to conceal, this grappling hook is weighted on one end, and can be used to attack opponents with either the hook end or by using the weighted end to entangle them. It is favored by ninja for its utility. If hidden on the body, attempts to Notice it are at -2.

**Kusari-gama:** A length of chain ending in a sickle at one end and a heavy iron weight on the other. Even when the opponent is grappled; the character may still use the bladed end in close combat with no penalty.

**Nunchaku:** Two sticks connected with a cord and chain, the nunchaku was originally used by the village watch as a device to sound alarms, evolving into an impromptu weapon. It has gained favor due to its ease of concealment — if hidden on the body, attempts to Notice it are at -2.

**Shabo:** A ring worn on the finger with a ten inch long wooden rod used to strike pressure points. If the user knows Power Moves, the damage is increased by 1 die type instead. The weapon may also add 1 to the user's Agility Tricks, as these weapons are often used to strike their target to inflict great pain.

**Siangkam:** A narrow iron weapon that is about eighteen inches in length, used primarily for stabbing. It has a handle on one end, and a trained martial artist can also implement it into his fighting style.

**Tekko:** Appearing much like a horse stirrup, this device has a wooden crosspiece that is held by the user while an iron semi-circle covers his knuckles and increases the force of his blows.

**Tekko-Kagi:** This device is similar to the tekko, but attached to the metal semi-circle protecting the knuckles are three large metal spikes or claws that extend outward, making it useful for both combat and climbing. The user gets +2 to Climbing rolls except when scaling exceedingly hard materials upon which he cannot gain purchase.

**Tessen:** A folding fan with the outer spikes made of iron, it looks harmless when closed, and may be thrown as well. Most people won't pay attention to it when it is not in use, requiring Notice rolls at -2 to realize it's a weapon.

**Tonfa:** Originally made from millstone handles during a period when there was a weapons ban, the tonfa arose out of the need for self-defense. It consists of a wooden shaft about two feet in length, with a perpendicular handle near one end that allows the user to place it across his forearm when blocking attacks, or swing it around when attacking. It is typically used in pairs. Those with Empty Hands are able to use them with exceptional efficacy.

**Uchine:** Similar in appearance to a large metal dart with two feathers attached on opposite sides, the uchine can be used as a short spear in melee or thrown short distances with good accuracy.

## THROWN WEAPONS: STANDARD

**Fuetso:** This hand axe is perfectly balanced for throwing, but also has great utility in melee.

**Tanto:** A single or double-edged knife suitable for throwing or use in close quarters.

**Tousekiki:** A leather strap designed to propel a stone at high velocity. A skilled user can be quite deadly.

**Nage-Yari:** A short-shafted metal or bone-tipped spear of about three feet in length that is useful for both throwing and melee.

## EXOTIC

**Kawanaga:** This grappling hook can be thrown at an enemy while still holding onto it. Its maximum range is forty feet, and it cannot hit targets beyond that.

**Shuriken:** A small hand-held blade that can be fashioned in many configurations, used to both damage and distract. When thrown to inflict damage, they use the auto-fire rules. They may not be used for Suppressive Fire, however. A

handful of shuriken (3) can be thrown to aid in tricking an opponent. . When used in such a manner, the user gets +2 to Agility tricks.

**Tessen:** This war fan can be thrown to good effect at short distances, though it is far more often used in melee.

**Uchine:** This feathered metal dart can be thrown with reasonable accuracy, and makes a functional melee weapon as well.

## RANGED WEAPONS: BOWS

**Daikyu:** The long bow was once restricted to members of the bushi class, but is now commonly used by city guardsman, ronin, and adventurers. It boasts superior long-range accuracy.

**Hankyu:** The short bow is commonly used by ashigaru, town guards, and the common folk for hunting and sport.

## BLACK POWDER

**Arashi-ko:** This weapon is a hand cannon, often ornate in design. Its creation is inspired by the look of the earliest kikai. It has a flaring barrel often stylized to resemble a dragon's head. The intricacy of the clockwork mechanisms enable the device to automatically reload after each shot is fired. When fired, flames erupt a bit out of the end, as shots fan out at its target.

**Ikazuchi:** A more elegant variation of the arashi-ko, the ikazuchi carries a more focused load that enables the projectile to carry its force farther.

**Tezemu Tanjuu:** The handgun is named for the family that first fashioned it and introduced it to Konoyo. It originated in Tetsu Sengaku, and many variations of it exist, but owning an authentic Tezemu is a matter of pride in certain circles.

## EXOTIC

**Hukiya:** A hollowed out, lacquered tube of bamboo is the most common type of blowgun. It delivers darts or poison powders at short distances. The hukiya is favored by ninja and assassins for its silence and portability.

Damage listed is for a single dart. The weapon can also be used as a delivery system for powdered poisons. State whether a dart or powdered poison is being shot before rolling the dice. These powdered poisons ignore Armor and increase the damage by +4. The range listed above should be halved when shooting powdered poisons. On a roll of 1 (regardless of Wild Die) the powder poisons have been consumed and may no longer be used.

## BOMB

**Issen:** Only available on the black market, the flash bomb is a hollowed out eggshell filled with a special concoction of powder that erupts in a fiery light when thrown on the ground. It is designed to blind and distract.

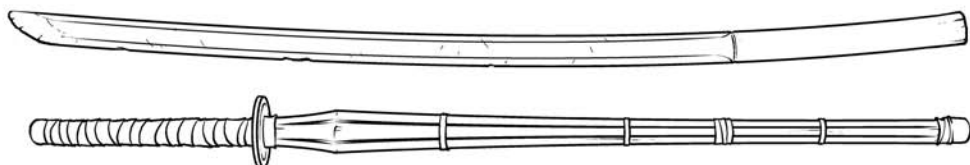
**Endan:** Similar in shape and size to the issen, but not nearly as volatile. The endan is thrown to the ground, setting off a tremendous cloud of smoke. It is only available on the black market.



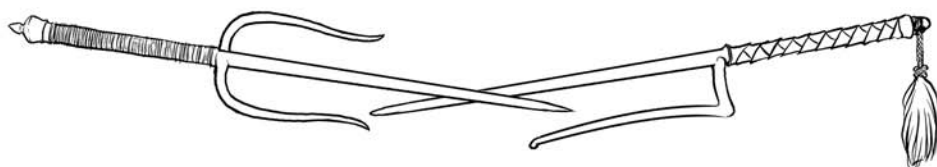
**AIDACHI**



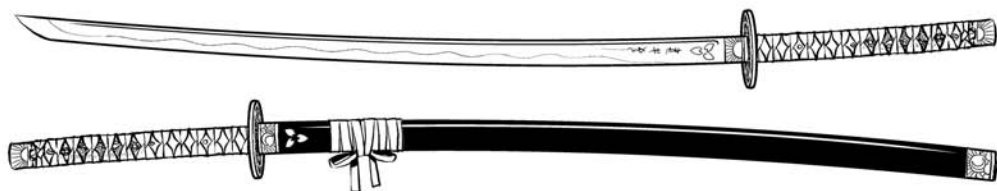
**BOKKEN/SHINAI**



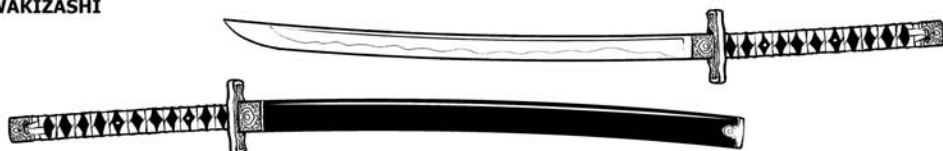
**SAI/JITTEI**



**KATANA**



**WAKIZASHI**



**TANTO**



## BLADES



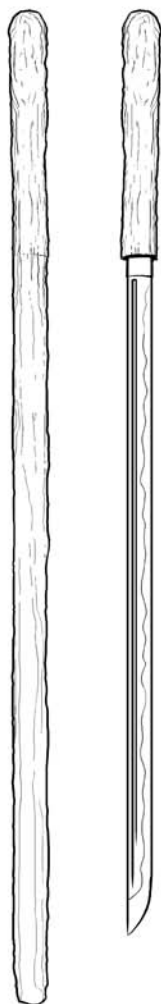
NINJATO



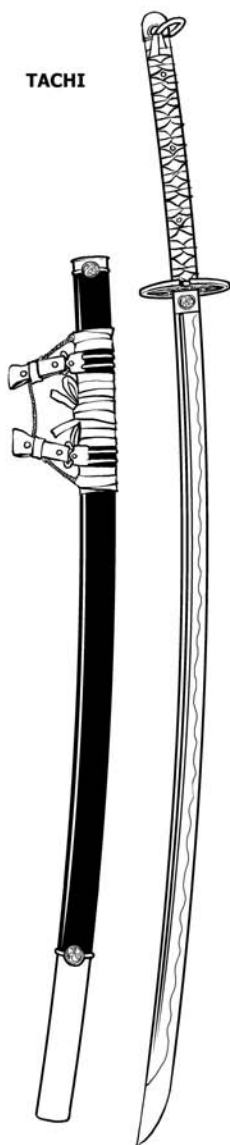
ODACHI



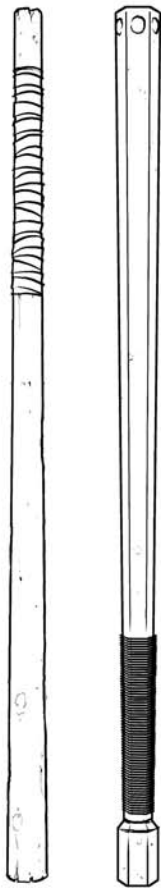
SHIKOMIZUE



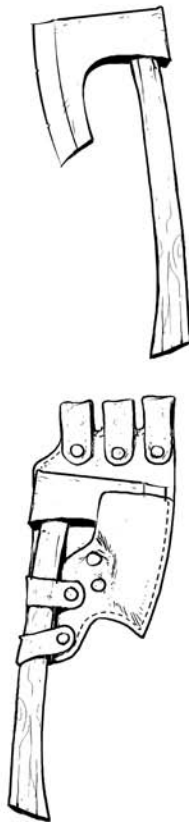
TACHI



CLUB



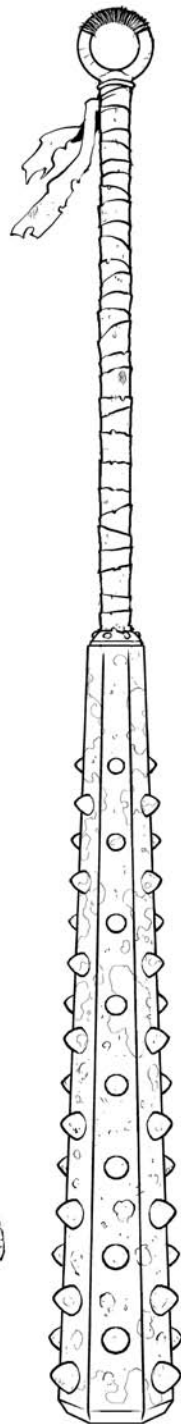
FUETSO



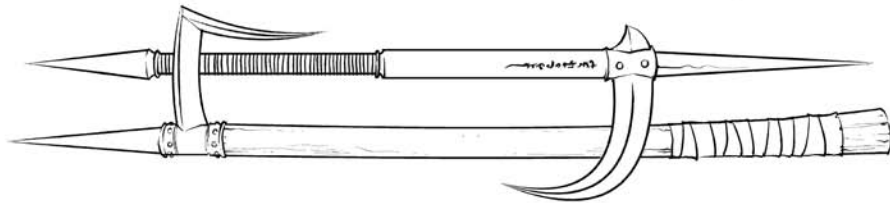
TETSUBO



KANABO



FANG



AXES & MAULS

NAGE-YARI



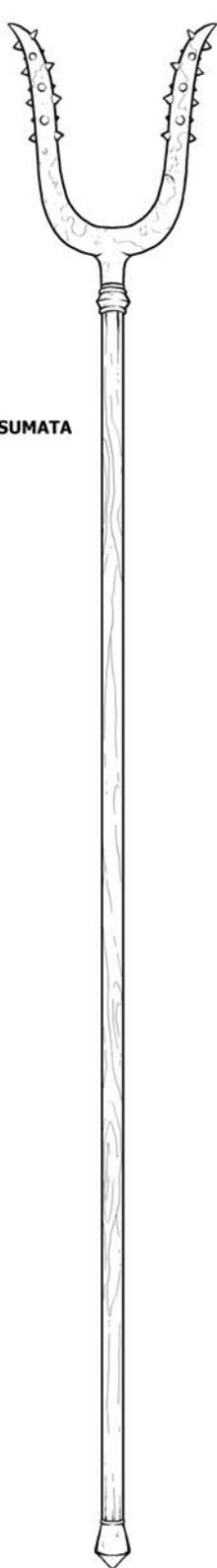
BO



NAGINATA



SATSUMATA



YARI

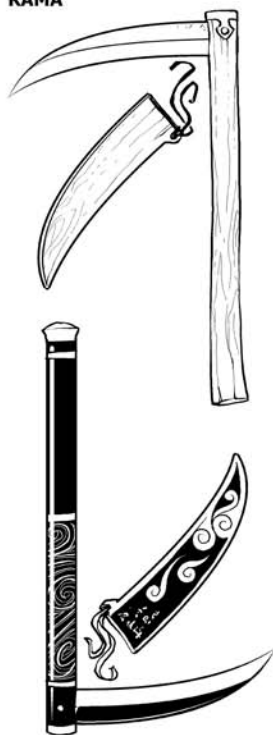


## POLEARMS

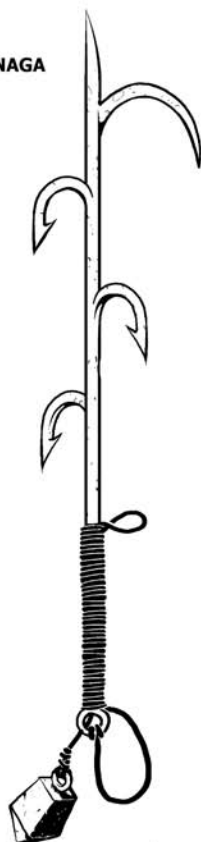
GUNBAI



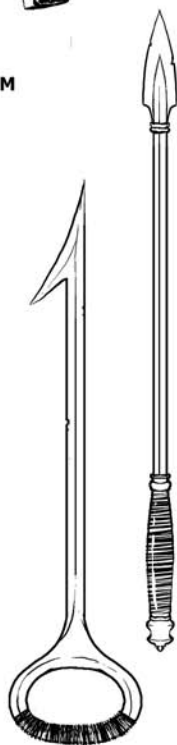
KAMA



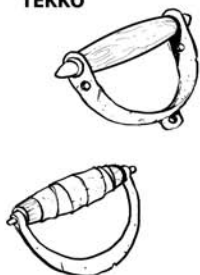
KAWANAGA



SIANGKAM



TEKKO

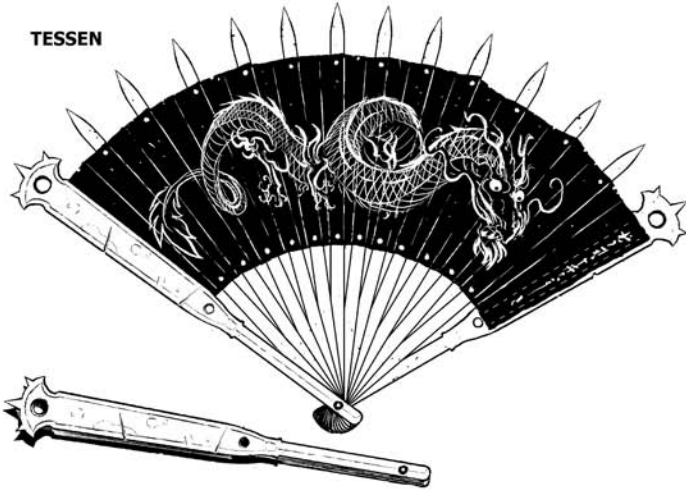


TEKKO-KAGI



EXOTIC

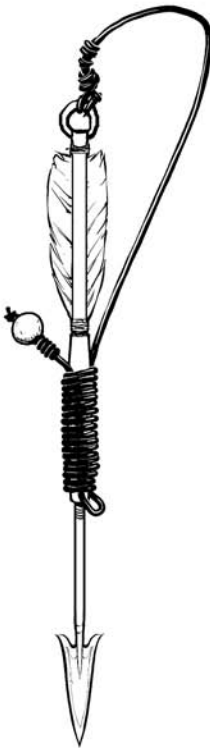
TESSEN



NUNCHAKU



UCHINE

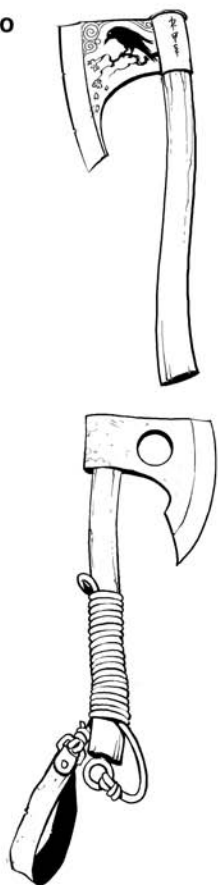


TONFA



THROWN

**FUETSO**



**TOUSEKIKI**



**TANTO**



**NAGE-YARI**



THROWN EXOTIC

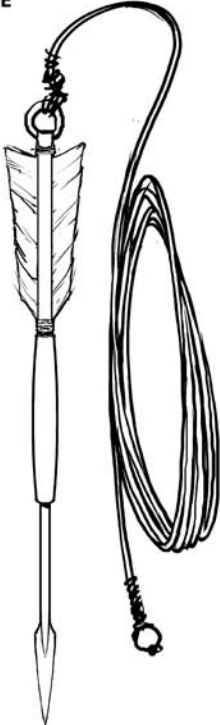
**KAWANAGA**



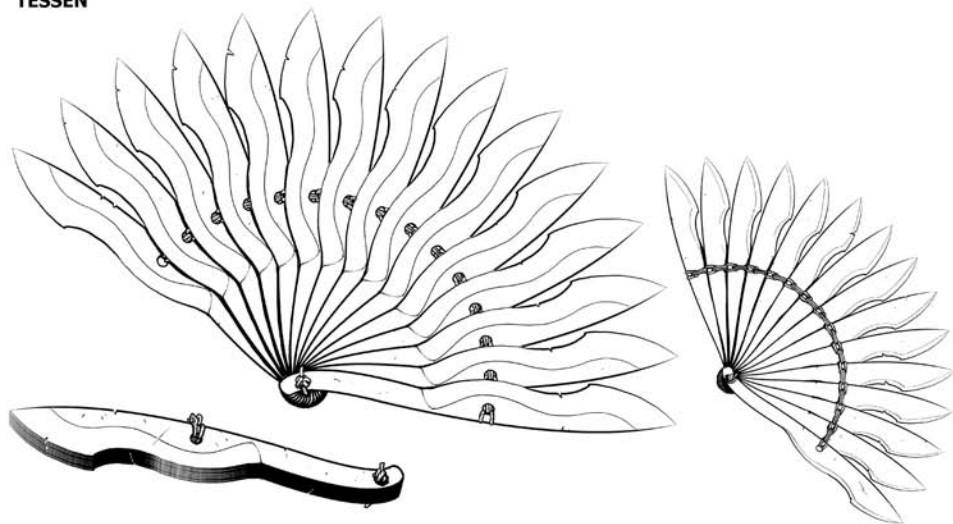
**SHURIKEN**



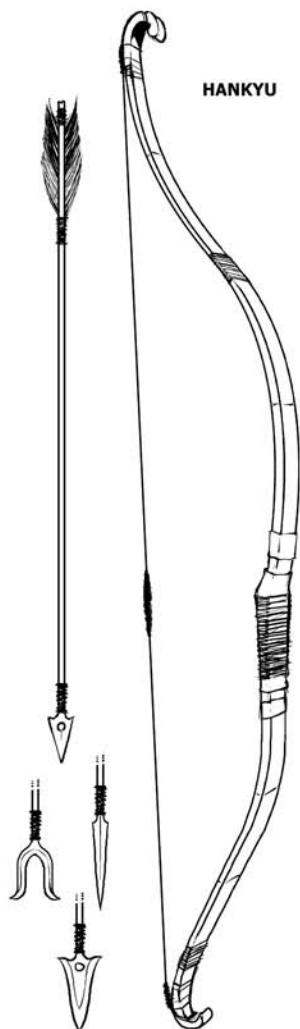
**UCHINE**



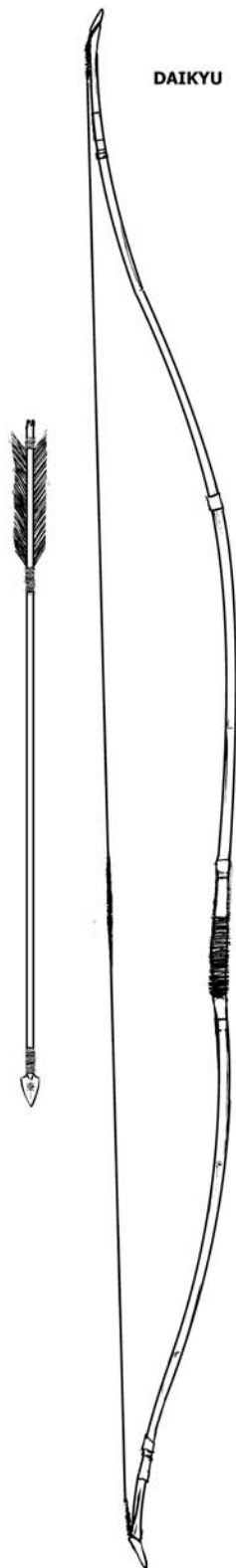
**TESSEN**







HANKYU



DAIKYU

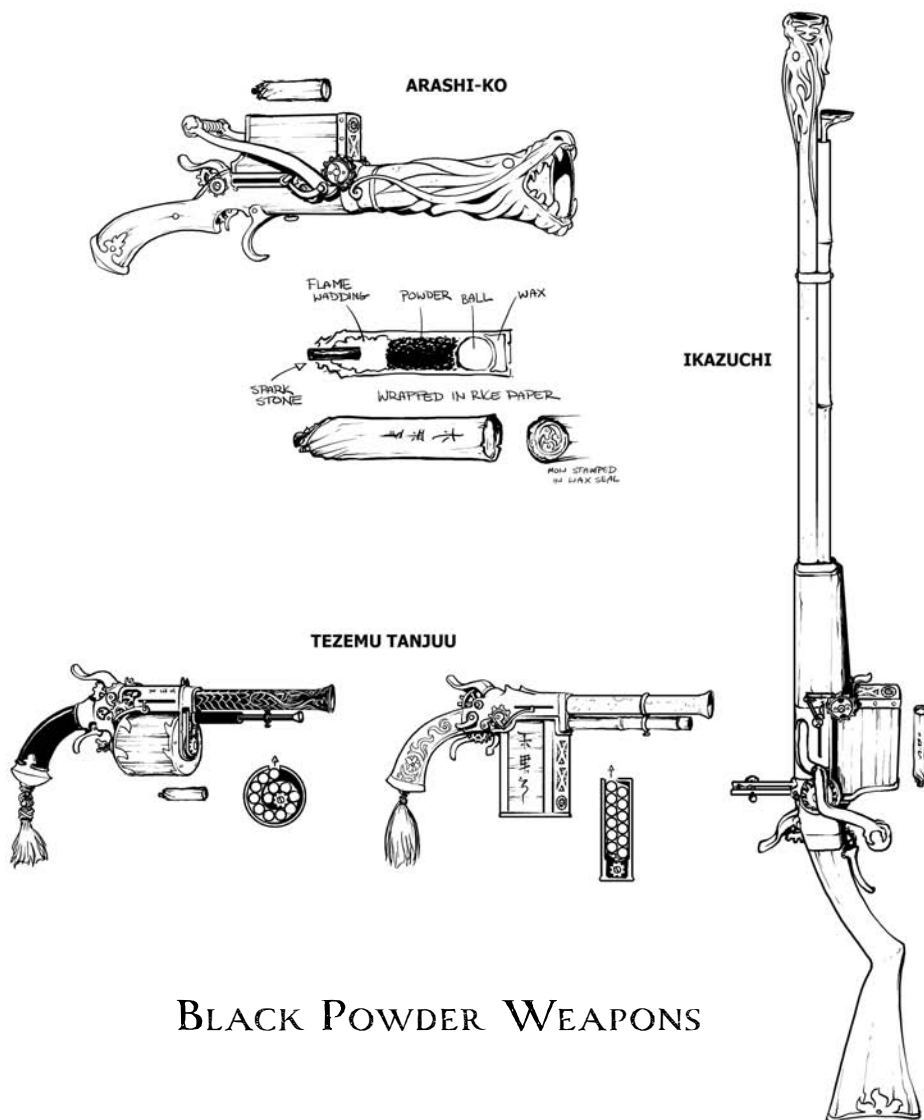


HUKIYA



ISSEN

RANGED



## BLACK POWDER WEAPONS

### THE IRON OF THE DYNASTY

Black powder weapons, commonly called burakku, are the last symbols of the remaining nobility. Possession of burakku is illegal throughout Ni-Ten. Karasu Rokku has a complete ban on them for the entire population, while Doragon Mizu doesn't care. Some say this is a way to differentiate between commoners and people of the higher caste, but the accurate assessment is that the governments don't want to allow such powerful weapons in the hands of the populace at large. Many yakuza turn a tidy profit selling weapons procured through raids on the black market.



# SETTING RULES

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The rules of *Way of the Ronin* expand the base system of *Savage Worlds*. By carefully introducing a few overarching variances here and there, our goal is to capture the feel of mythic oriental fantasy and put you firmly in the role of the hero. In this section, we discuss existing rules and their place within this setting, detail new key elements, and generally make certain you are ready to bring honor to your ancestors. Let us begin!

## VARIATIONS ON A THEME: HOW EXISTING RULES INTEGRATE INTO WAY OF THE RONIN

*Savage Worlds* provides a wealth of options. Here is where you find out how existing skills and Edges mesh into the core fabric of Iron Dynasty.

### PRONE

Characters can go prone at any time during their action. Standing up from prone costs 2" of a character's movement. Prone targets gain -2 cover, though attackers within 3" ignore the modifier.

A character cannot get up from prone as a free action when attacked in melee. While prone, his Parry is reduced by 2 and he must subtract 2 from his Fighting rolls. The Ground Fighter ability eliminates this penalty.

## WHAT IS EXCLUDED

### SKILLS

**Guts:** Characters do not need this skill, as it is now covered by a general Spirit roll. Specifics are found in the Key Elements section (beginning on p. 108).

### HINDRANCES

**Yellow:** This Hindrance is renamed Coward. He subtracts 2 from all of his Spirit rolls for Fear checks.

## EDGES

**Noble:** Many nobles in Konoyo are not necessarily rich, therefore the High Born Edge replaces the Noble Edge, as a higher station has certain intangible benefits that simple wealth cannot buy.

**Florentine:** The Ni-Ten Edge replaces this Edge, with its own benefits and requirements.

**Mentalist:** No psionics exist in *Way of the Ronin*, so this Edge is irrelevant.

**Rock and Roll!:** No fully automatic weapons exist in Konoyo, so this Edge is irrelevant. See Shuriken Storm for using thrown weapons.

## MODIFIED EDGES

**Rich:** Starting monies are the same, but in bu.

**Filthy Rich:** Starting monies are the same, but in bu.

**Two-Fisted:** A character with the Empty Hands Edge may take this Edge to make any two unarmed strikes against his opponent with no multi-action penalty.

**Soul Drain:** This Edge is available to onmyoji only.

**Champion:** Arcane Background (Miracles) is replaced with Arcane Background (Makoto) and Faith d6+ is replaced with Prayer d6+.

**Holy/Unholy Warrior:** Arcane Background (Miracles) is replaced with Arcane Background (Makoto) and Faith d6+ is replaced with Prayer d6+.

**Mr. Fix It:** Arcane Background (Weird Science) is replaced with Arcane Background (Ganso), Weird Science d8+ is replaced with Gearcraft d10+, and Knowledge (Science) is dropped.

**Wizard:** Arcane Background (Magic) is replaced with Arcane Background (Onmyoji), Knowledge (Arcana) d8+ is replaced with Spellcasting d10+.

**Strong Willed:** Characters with this Edge also get +2 to Spirit rolls for Morale and Fear rolls.

## EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS: NEW SKILLS AND USING EXISTING SKILLS IN NEW WAYS

Four new skills exist in *Way of the Ronin* and are detailed as follows:

**Ki Focus:** This skill is used by characters with the Ki Control Edge to activate their Ki Control Powers.

**Gearcraft:** This skill is used by characters with the Arcane Background (Ganso) Edge to use their Powers. More mundane uses include understanding strange machines and technological devices. To build or understand standard devices, a character uses his Repair skill.

**Prayer:** This skill is used by characters with the Arcane Background (Makoto) Edge to use their Powers. This skill also covers general knowledge of philosophy and the spirit world at large.

**Spellcraft:** This skill is used by characters with the Arcane Background (Onmyoji) Edge to use their Powers. This skill also covers a general knowledge of the arcane.

## INTIMIDATION AS INTERROGATION

Want to pull the facts out of someone? Then Intimidation is key. The character simply makes an opposed roll against his opponent's Spirit. Since he has had to capture them to even initiate an interrogation, he should start off with a situational modifier of +2 (with other adjustments as the Sensei sees fit). With a success, the character is able to obtain some minor piece of information, maybe more if the opponent realizes the character could get the information from multiple sources, or if the person interrogated is more afraid of what the character can do to them than their boss. With a raise, the character is able to either obtain a major piece of information, if the person interrogated knows any, or a willingness to help — treat this effect as eliciting a friendly result on the Reaction Table (see the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook). Two or more raises and the person interrogated spills everything they know. An interrogation session cannot be attempted more than once per day on a given hostage.

## PERSUASION AS DISGUISE

Does the character want to actively pass himself off as someone else? That's an active use of the Persuasion skill. If the character is just trying to pass himself off as an anonymous noble, he may just need to make a successful roll. If he wants to pass himself off as a specific individual, the character makes an opposed Persuasion roll versus the target's Notice, with a -4 penalty if the target knows the individual in question. If the character gets into a prolonged interaction, he will be making continuous opposed rolls, so this is not something he would want to do for too terribly long unless he is extremely talented.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Geisha Yumi wants to pass herself off as lesser nobility (Lady Aoziro) to get into a royal party. She acquires suitable clothes and approaches the guard. He has an initial reaction of Neutral. It is his job to keep out the riff-raff, and if he does not, the blame falls on him. If he is the sole guard, the Sensei may determine that Yumi needs a Friendly reaction from him to get inside. The guard doesn't know Yumi and wants to keep his job. If Yumi successfully improves his attitude, he will let her in with no problem; otherwise, he will need some sort of bribe to motivate him.*

# DISGUISE MODIFIER TABLE

| SITUATION                       | MODIFIER* |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Proper Disguise                 | +2        |
| Specific Individual             | -2        |
| Different Caste                 | -2        |
| Different Gender                | -2        |
| Individual Well Known to Target | -4        |

\* **NOTE:** *These are cumulative modifiers.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Once admitted to the party, Yumi encounters the host, Lord Satchigami, who has met Lady Aoziro (the person Yumi is impersonating) before. Yumi must now make an opposed Persuasion roll at -4 (+2 due to her having a proper disguise but -2 for impersonating a specific individual and -4 for the target being well known to Lord Satchigami; Total: +2-2-4 = -4) versus her host's Notice. Luckily for Yumi (who makes a successful opposed roll), the Lord is a bit in his cups, and she successfully manages to break away from the conversation before he sees through her disguise.*

# PERSUASION AS SEDUCTION

Seduction is used to establish a close, romantic relationship with an NPC (usually of the opposite sex) with the intent of changing the NPC's disposition towards the character.

A Seduction attempt can be classified using two numeric ratings: Difficulty and Depth (x/y). The Difficulty (x) indicates the NPC's initial reaction (a modifier to the Persuasion roll — see the Seduction Modifier Table), while Depth (y) indicates the number of successes required to seduce the target. Each attempt takes one hour. Each raise over the standard TN 4 halves the attempt's required time and counts as an additional success. If a 1 is rolled on the Persuasion die (regardless of the Wild Die), then the target has rebuffed the advances of the character, and all accumulated successes are gone. Should the seducer be rebuffed a second time, then he has completely repelled the target by his advances, and all further Seduction attempts suffer a -2 penalty. A roll of snake eyes (critical failure) results in the seduction target being angered, with no possibility for success on further attempts.

**EXAMPLE:** *Hishikawa is attempting to seduce a minor yakuza functionary (initial reaction: Uncooperative) in order to get her to give him access to her boss's office. The Seduction has Difficulty/Depth: -2/2. He must achieve two successes in order to have a successful Seduction. He achieves an 11 with his initial Persuasion roll, so it takes him only half an hour to successfully seduce the functionary (a success and 1 raise on the first Persuasion roll, for a total of 2 successes).*

## SEDUCTION MODIFIER TABLE

| NPC INITIAL REACTION | MODIFIER |
|----------------------|----------|
| Hostile              | -4       |
| Uncooperative        | -2       |
| Neutral              | +0       |
| Friendly             | +2       |
| Helpful              | +4       |



## REPAIR AS FORGERY

Does the character need to dummy up some papers to get through the checkpoint? The character is using Repair to manufacture paperwork to make it appear as if it came from a legitimate source. Forged documents are often used as an aid in helping a person pull off a disguise, as well as supporting information. Should the character have some background in dealing with documents, something to work from as a base document, and access to the proper tools, he may attempt to draft travel papers, edicts, and more. Official papers bear waxen seals and governmental stamps to reduce the risk of forgeries. The Sensei is encouraged to set the difficulty reasonably high.

## STEALTH AS BLENDING

Does the character wish to blend into a crowd of commoners so the guards pass him by? That's an excellent use of Stealth. This can certainly be modified



by your appearance (at the Sensei's discretion) and definitely by what you're wearing. More memorable or distinctively dressed people have a harder time blending in. That's a sad fact, but it's true.

**EXAMPLE:** *Yumi has left the party, but one of the guests, a spy herself, realizes Yumi did not belong there and has begun pursuit. Yumi notices her tail as she reaches the market and attempts to lose herself in a group of washerwomen winding their way home. Since Yumi is attractive (-2 modifier) and nicely dressed (-1 modifier), the Sensei gives a -3 modifier to her Stealth roll. Had she at least a round head start, she certainly could have muddled her appearance to help her blending efforts. As it is, her red silk dress and perfect complexion give her away.*

# EXTENDED TRAIT CHECKS

Situations often arise when the Sensei wants a bit more structure on how to handle events that may take place over a period of time. Certainly, it is within the discretion of the Sensei and the philosophy of the game to simply hand-wave the event, or give it a modifier (based upon their intuitive experiences with the system). While this is acceptable and practical in most situations, some folks feel more comfortable with mechanics to aid them in their decision making process. For them, Extended Trait Checks (ETC) are the way to go.

- An ETC is comprised of three parts:
- *Difficulty*: how hard is it to accomplish the task?

| DIFFICULTY | MODIFIER |
|------------|----------|
| Trivial    | No roll  |
| Simple     | +2       |
| Easy       | +1       |
| Basic      | 0        |
| Tricky     | -1       |
| Hard       | -2       |
| Very Hard  | -3       |
| Impossible | -4       |

**Remember:** these modifiers stack with any others the character may bring in, but should, in and of themselves, be the total factors the Sensei sees fit to bombard the party with to reach the difficulty.

- *Depth*: how many opportunities exist for failure?  
Depth represents how many successes are needed to accomplish something. Obviously, if no roll is involved, this is irrelevant; by default anything requiring a roll has a depth of one. This marries with duration in regards to accomplishing something.

| DEPTH        | SUCCESSSES REQUIRED |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Basic        | 1                   |
| Intermediate | 2                   |
| Advanced     | 3                   |
| Complex      | 4                   |

- *Duration:* how long does it take to complete each phase of the task?

#### DURATION

1 round

5 rounds

1 minute

10 minutes

1 hour

12 hours

1 day

1 week

1 month

6 months

Completing an ETC is done like any other trait check in SW — the requisite attribute or skill die is rolled, and modifiers are factored into the equation. Each attempted roll denotes one unit of duration. More than one success can be earned by a single roll. A one on the skill die (regardless of Wild die) indicates the loss of all accumulated successes. A critical failure indicates bad consequences (to be determined by the Sensei or stipulated by the appropriate section). A normal failure indicates the passing of one unit of time with no change in progress.

## STRUCTURE

The format for presenting extended checks is as follows: trait (difficulty/depth/duration).

This integrates into existing materials where a standard roll would be written out long hand as trait (0/1/1) — the action takes one round to attempt with no penalty. Something more complex might be written as Repair (-1/2/1 hour).

## CONSEQUENCES

The only time to use Extended Trait Checks is when time matters. Frequently, this is not the case, but in any situation where time is a factor, or consequences for failure exist along the way, extended checks increase the dramatic tension.

## ACCOMPLISHING SOMETHING

Let's look at some practical examples of how this can be used in game:

Use Repair (-2/3/1 rd) to disarm a bomb that is set to go off in 5 rounds. Here, the consequences are clear: if success is NOT achieved, there is going to be an explosion.

Yoko (Repair d8) encounters a bomb, but doesn't have any tools. She makes her first roll at -4 (-2 for hard, -2 for lack of tools). She rolls snake eyes, gets a critical failure, and blows up.

Haretsu (Repair d8) comes equipped to the scene. He is at -2 to his roll for the difficulty of the task — the bomb is comprised of strange ticking gears and valves that seem to have little purpose other than distracting him. He needs to get 3 successes in 5 rounds or he's toast. Round 1: he achieves one success. Round 2: no successes. Round 3: a one on the skill die — all accumulated successes are lost. Round 4: he gets two successes. Round 5: he achieves the final success and the bomb is defused.

Let's see how this plays out in game:

- *Round 1:* the first gear is broken
- *Round 2:* Haretsu fumbles with the device, unable to make headway
- *Round 3:* a turned valve causes the steam to heat up internal elements even faster
- *Round 4:* he manages to shut down the motor, but the valve is still releasing small bursts of steam, and the heating element pulses as it cools down, but is it in time?
- *Round 5:* muttering a small prayer, he turns one more valve, and the gunpowder and element is ruined — the bomb is defused.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

These rules provide a clear-cut way for the Sensei to manage Extended Trait Checks. Simply ask yourself the three questions and list them, with a consequence at the end of the time frame. The Sensei should prepare ETC ahead of time until familiar with the system, and then use them on the fly as circumstances dictate.

We'll examine one scenario through this lens:

Oni loom on the fringe of the Cobweb Swamps, but the characters learn of a broken kikai within some ruins nearby. They need to get in and get it working again before the voracious oni discover them. The Sensei decides the oni will find the party in three hours, at which point combat will ensue.

The kikai is in a section of ruins that Ikusa Kokoro often uses to dump old war machines, and there are rusted hulks that have been picked over by ignorant scavengers. Still, refitting them to this purpose could be easier, so the Sensei sets the difficulty to tricky (-1). He decides it is an intermediate task — going through the muck and removing parts, and then effecting the repairs is comprised of two discrete actions (2 successes needed). Finally, he sets the duration at one hour. The roll is presented as (-1/2/1 hr). If all goes well, there should be no problems — they'll be long gone before the oni discover them.

- *Hour 1:* One success. Some good parts are located, but they need to be cleaned up, as they are rusty.

- *Hour 2:* Critical failure. The parts are far rustier than thought and gear wheels break apart and go flying when the kikai is started. (Luckily no one is hurt.)
- *Hour 3:* Oni can be heard rustling around the outskirts of the ruins — they have detected a scent, but cannot locate it yet. A success and two raises are rolled. The ganso scrambles to discover some parts in the rusting shell of a kikai and finds they are in surprisingly good condition. He hurriedly works to replace the parts in the broken kikai and manages to pull it off just in the nick of time. Hissing and bellows from the oni who just missed a meal can be heard as they head out of the ruins. Two successes were what he needed to make the roll. Had this roll been made initially, they would've been long gone (having discovered the parts and completed the repairs in his first effort).

Total time spent in the ruins: 3 hours.

Remember: ETCs should serve as an adjunct to the existing system, not overpower it.



# KEY ELEMENTS

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The following sections detail the fundamental underpinnings of *Way of the Ronin*, from the role of the hero through the way of the warrior, and culminating with detailed rules on building and destroying your reputation, the persistence of the caste system, and how to conduct duels of all kinds.

## KESSHI: MYTHIC HEROES

Your character is a hero. He does not run away from battle. He embraces it. As such, Spirit rolls are used when the character encounters something the Sensei deems overwhelmingly, mind numbingly terrifying (most often, this encompasses creatures with a Fear rating.) Rejoice! Your character has just saved a few skill points he might have considered spending on the Guts skill. Go learn a weapon or something. Remember, the Warrior Soul Edge adds a bonus to a character's Spirit rolls to resist Fear effects, and the Mythic Warrior Edge makes a hero immune to Fear effects and Intimidation.

## MODIFIED POWERS

### SPEAK LANGUAGE

In addition to humanoid languages, this Power enables the caster to also converse with spirits of nature, including plants, animals, and rocks, and also even the dead. Their intellect and ability to interact with the character, however, is up to the Sensei, as it is quite probable a tree has a different perspective on life than a rock, for example.

## NEW POWERS

The following new Powers are available to various arcane types as delineated under the various Arcane Background descriptions in the New Edges section (starting on p. 42).

### ANALYZE FOE

**Rank:** Novice

**Power Points:** 1 – 2

**Range:** Smarts x 2

**Duration:** 3 (1/round)

**Trappings:** Mystical sense, spiritual advice, ancestral knowledge

Knowledge is power, and being able to judge the strength of a foe before engaging him in combat can be highly advantageous. The character makes a Ki Focus skill roll opposed by the target's Spirit. On a success, he gains a +1 bonus to Trait rolls to directly affect the target, and the target suffers a -1 penalty to Trait rolls to directly affect the caster. With a raise, the effect is increased to +2 and -2 for both. In addition, for 2 Power Points, a success allows the caster to learn of a single Immunity, Invulnerability, or Weakness of the target (if one exists), and a raise allows the knowledge of two.

## ANCESTRAL CALL

**Rank:** Seasoned

**Power Points:** 4

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 3 (1/round)

**Trappings:** Gestures, ghostly form, prayer, whispered words

The makoto who knows this secret prayer is able to summon forth an ancestor from his line to aid himself or others in combat. With a successful arcane skill roll, the recipient gains the benefits of a single Combat Edge chosen by the caster. The caster (not the recipient) must be one Rank higher than the Rank requirement of the Edge, but ignores other requirements, even those requiring other Edges. For the duration of the spell, the recipient gains all the benefits of the Edge. Edges gained through this power provide no additional benefit if the character already has the Edge.

## BANISH

**Rank:** Veteran

**Power Points:** 3

**Range:** Spirit

**Duration:** Instant

**Trappings:** Burst of light, chanting, prayer slip

This Power enables the makoto to cast oni and spirits out of the mortal sphere. The makoto makes an opposed Prayer roll versus the target's Spirit. On a success, the target is Shaken. On a raise, they are sent to their proper plane of existence. Lesser oni and spirits (Extras) are permanently banished, while Wild Card targets are banished for 1d6 days.

## BLESS

**Rank:** Novice

**Power Points:** 1

**Range:** Spirit

**Duration:** 10 Minutes (1/10 minutes)

**Trappings:** Chant, Simple prayer

Makoto are able to call upon the spirits to strengthen the target's morale. On a success, the target gets a +2 to Spirit rolls (+4 with a raise).



## CONCENTRATE

**Rank:** Seasoned

**Power Points:** 4

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** 3 (2/round)

**Trappings:** Locking runes, meditation, spirit maintenance

Onmyoji maintaining powers may be disrupted and distracted. The concentrate power keeps their mind focused on their magic, even when their bodies and minds are being assaulted. With a success, the caster's powers may not be disrupted while the power is active. With a raise, the caster also suffers no penalty to arcane skill rolls for maintained powers.

## DIVINE GRACE

**Rank:** Seasoned

**Power Points:** 2

**Range:** Spirit

**Duration:** 3 (1/round)

**Trappings:** Chant, ghostly form, glowing eyes

Makoto are capable of imbuing the target with the spirit of a dead champion, granting them all the benefits of the Champion Edge.

## EYES OF THE ONI

**Rank:** Novice

**Power Points:** 1

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 10 Minutes (1/10 minutes)

**Trappings:** Glowing red eyes

This Power grants the target the ability to see in total darkness with no penalty.

## MEND

**Rank:** Novice

**Power Points:** Special

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Trappings:** Power word, prayer slip

This Power allows the character to restore any one non-magical item with a successful arcane skill roll, provided all the pieces of the item are present. A magical item can be repaired, but it requires a raise on said roll. The Power Point cost is 1 Power Point per 5 pounds (or fraction thereof) of the item being mended.

With a success, the item is as good as new. A failure means it is repaired, but flawed, and the item is now considered of inferior quality and behaves as such (more information about item quality in The Art of Being Frugal section, p. 70). A critical failure results in the item being broken beyond repair, even through the use of this Power.

## PRAYER OF PURITY

**Rank:** Seasoned

**Power Points:** 2-6

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** Instant

**Trappings:** Blinding light, simple prayer

This power is identical to blast, except it is centered on the caster and only affects spirits, oni, and undead.

## QUAKE

**Rank:** Seasoned

**Power Points:** 3

**Range:** 12/24/48

**Duration:** Instant

**Trappings:** Foot stomp, shout

The caster creates a minor earthquake that causes everyone in a Large Burst Template to make a successful Agility roll or be knocked prone. Should the caster get a raise on his roll, any target failing to make their Agility roll is Shaken as well.

## RESURRECTION

**Rank:** Legendary

**Power Points:** 30

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Instant



**Trappings:** Brilliant glow, chant, prayer

This Power enables the character to return the recently dead to life. The target may not be more than an hour deceased. With a success on the Spellcasting or Ki Focus roll, the target returns to life with all abilities intact, but his Vigor die drops a die type permanently (minimum d4) due to the rigors of returning to life. A raise on the Spellcasting or Ki Focus roll means the resurrected target suffers no such ill effect. Should the target have a d4 Vigor at the time of resurrection, a raise on the Spellcasting or Ki Focus roll is required to restore them to life.

## SLUMBER

**Rank:** Seasoned

**Power Points:** 2

**Range:** Smarts x 2

**Duration:** 1 minute (1/minute)

**Trappings:** Blow powder or lotus blossoms, gestures, sing lullaby

This Power is favored by those who place a high priority on stealth. The caster chooses where he wants to center the spell and places a Medium Burst Template. He then makes an arcane skill roll. With a success, any living creature (not undead or constructs) within the area must make a Spirit roll, at -2 if the caster scored a raise. Those who fail fall asleep. Loud noises awaken the sleepers as if they were sleeping normally. When the duration expires, the sleepers wake up naturally.

## SUCCOR

**Rank:** Novice

**Power Points:** 1

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Trappings:** Curative tonic, paddled device

Succor removes one Fatigue level, two with a raise. It can also remove a character's Shaken status.

Succor may be used to restore consciousness to those who have been Incapacitated due to wounds as well, though the wounds remain. It does not stop bleeding or otherwise stop mortal wounds from worsening, however.

## SUMMON ELEMENTAL SPIRIT

**Rank:** Veteran

**Power Points:** 5

**Range:** Smarts x 3

**Duration:** 3 (1/round)

**Trappings:** Substance of the element

This Power enables the caster to bring forth an elemental spirit from its source element. The source element must be within the caster's range when the summons is made or the attempt automatically fails. The summoned spirit is completely

under the control of the caster. Use the elementals listed in the *Savage Worlds* core book for statistics. With a raise, the creature is larger than normal. Add Size +2 to its template, and increase its Toughness by 2; if the Size is then +4 or greater, use the rules for Large or Huge creatures with regards to bonuses to hit by attackers.

## VOID WALKER

**Rank:** Heroic

**Power Points:** 5 + 1 per additional walker

**Range:** Spirit  $\times$  10 in miles

**Duration:** Instant

**Trappings:** A dark, unholy rent in space

This power enables the caster to travel through great distances—alone or with others—by moving through the Void—a dark, extra dimensional space. The Void Walker makes an arcane skill roll minus the number of companions. Each additional round the caster concentrates reduces the penalty by one. The use of this power takes the character a minimum of 10 miles—the power of the Void is too imprecise to allow for shorter journeys. Any who see the characters come through the Void must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken as the characters' flesh and bones reassembles before them.



# THE PERSISTENCE OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

Despite the movement away from the Old Ways, remnants of them still exist in society. Although it is permissible for segments of society to intermingle in ways they might never have done before (when would a commoner challenge his betters and not be cut down outright?), people of higher station still get privileges and vestiges of their former powers that commoners can only aspire to reach. The three major stations of Konoyo society are as follows: Nobles, Commoners, and the Low. After the formation of the Iron Dynasty, the warrior class, formerly a division unto itself between the nobles proper and the commoners was merged into the noble class.

## STATION

|                     |
|---------------------|
| Noble               |
| Most High/Goshi     |
| High Born/Samurai   |
| Common              |
| Merchants/Commoners |
| Low                 |
| Low Born            |
| Disgraced           |

## REPUTATION

In Konoyo, honor has largely gone by the wayside with the collapse of many of the noble houses, the consolidation of military forces, and the rise of technology making the dominant houses largely independent. The warring period has made many merchants and artisans wealthier than some samurai, who now often marry into these lesser families. What has largely replaced honor in many people's minds is the worth of the individual. Clan connections and family reputations notwithstanding, the individual is judged primarily on his own merit. Generally, a character's Reputation can rise through the undertaking of great deeds and fall through acts of failure and malice. Reputation can range from Horrific (-100) to Peerless (+100).

## YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU...

As a character's Reputation grows, people have a greater probability of recognizing him as word of his description and deeds spread throughout Konoyo. In fact, he may well be recognized by accident or through prideful speech. To see if the character is recognized, people he encounters make a Recognition

| REPUTATION | CATEGORY     | BENEFITS  | RECOGNITION<br>CHANCE |
|------------|--------------|---|-----------------------|
| -100       | Horrific     | Fierceness+4                                    | +10                   |
| -99 to -90 | Terrible     | Sidekick  | +9                    |
| -89 to -80 | Despicable   | Major Enemy                                     | +8                    |
| -79 to -70 | Repugnant    | Connection                                      | +7                    |
| -69 to -60 | Villainous   | Mentor  | +6                    |
| -59 to -50 | Evil         | Fierceness +2                                   | +5                    |
| -49 to -40 | Threatening  | Minor Enemy                                     | +4                    |
| -39 to -30 | Corrupt      | Reward  | +3                    |
| -29 to -20 | Rogue        | Connection                                      | +2                    |
| -19 to -10 | Scoundrel    | Fierceness +1                                   | +1                    |
| -9 to +9   | None         | The character is unknown to the world at large. | +0                    |
| +10 to +19 | Notable      | Charisma +1                                     | +1                    |
| +20 to +29 | Favored      | Connection                                      | +2                    |
| +30 to +39 | Honorable    | Reward  | +3                    |
| +40 to +49 | Valiant      | Minor Enemy                                     | +4                    |
| +50 to +59 | Virtuous     | Charisma +2                                     | +5                    |
| +60 to +69 | Venerable    | Mentor  | +6                    |
| +70 to +79 | Most Favored | Connection                                      | +7                    |
| +80 to +89 | Illuminated  | Major Enemy                                     | +8                    |
| +90 to +99 | Mythic       | Sidekick  | +9                    |
| +100       | Peerless     | Charisma +4                                     | +10                   |

roll (Smarts check). On a success, the person recognizes the character. There's a +1 bonus for every level of Reputation (positive or negative) a character has.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Yoshi has a Reputation of Honorable and enters a local tavern. There is a contingent of Ikusa Kokoro guards. Should they notice him, they make their Smarts rolls and add +3 for his Reputation. If they succeed, they pay their regards to him and tell him to watch himself while in the royal city.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Kurosawa, once a samurai, is now Corrupt. He enters an old sake house where a local ashigaru spots him. The ashigaru makes a Smarts roll at +3 to recognize him. Recognizing Kurosawa, he sighs and approaches him. "You were once a great man," he says to the former samurai. "Yes," replies Kurosawa, pausing to slosh around his sake cup. "And this," he continues, raising the cup, "was once merely rice."*

## REDUCING YOUR NOTORIETY

A character may use clothing, disguises, and other such means to blend in with the masses (see Stealth as Blending p. 103). Obviously, if a character obscures his features, then it's harder to be recognized.

## THE BENEFITS OF REPUTATION

As characters progress and become known for their heroic deeds, they gain the benefits for their good (or bad) reputation.

**EXAMPLE:** *Yoshi started out as a humble peasant. As he wandered the countryside, he became known for his bold acts of bravery and his daring swordplay, having bested over ten of the finest swordsmen in the land and eventually achieving Valiant Reputation (Reputation 40).*

Let's work through the benefits he gained as he progressed to his current stature and how it might unfold over the course of play.

| REPUTATION | BENEFIT     | INTRODUCING INTO GAME PLAY   |
|------------|-------------|--|
| Notable    | +1 Charisma | Yoshi, though a bit coarse, grows popular for his noble deeds and good works.  |
| Favored    | Connection  | Instrumental in driving away the Ice Giant invasion in Hinote Shima, he gains the favor of the Church of Flame, now numbering them among his Connections.  |
| Honorable  | Reward      | For his participation in repelling an invading force of Ikusa Kokoro, he is granted the title of Defender, giving him the rights of nobility within the province in accordance with Sorimizu's laws. |
| Valiant    | Minor Enemy | General Nikumu of Ikusa Kokoro, disgraced by his losses against Yoshi time and again, is consumed with Yoshi's rise and now seeks his downfall.  |

## **CHARISMA**

This bonus indicates the favor people feel towards you for your good deeds. You only gain this bonus after you have been recognized.

## **CONNECTION**

The character gains a Connection as per the Connections Edge appropriate to the situation. You'll definitely want to make sure it works into the scenario and character history, and the Sensei may well suggest connections you're unaware of that may fit your style. If the character's reputation falls below the minimum required to qualify for this benefit, he loses the Connection. When he qualifies for a Connection through an increase in Reputation, he may select the one he had previously or a new one, subject to the Sensei's approval.

## **ENEMY**

The character gains a nemesis as per the Enemy Hindrance (selected at the Sensei's discretion). Whether through rivalry, jealousy, or some other unknown reason, the enemy works against the character at every available turn. Should a character's Reputation fall below the minimum to qualify for this benefit, his Enemy has deemed him currently not worth the trouble. When the character's Reputation again grants them the Enemy benefit, it is up to the Sensei whether the same or an altogether new Enemy arises to create havoc for him. When the character gains the Major Enemy benefit, this means the current Minor Enemy has stepped up his efforts at the character's destruction, unless the Minor Enemy has already been dealt with in the storyline, in which case the character gains a new Enemy, subject to the Sensei's discretion.

## **FIERCENESS**

This benefit indicates the fear people feel towards the character for his dark work. Fierceness grants the character the listed bonus to Intimidation, Streetwise, and Taunt rolls, as well as Spirit and Smarts rolls when resisting Test of Will attacks. These bonuses are not cumulative and only apply after the character has been recognized.

## **MENTOR**

The character gains all the benefits of the Mentor Edge, attracting pupils to him. Should he already possess the Mentor Edge, the number of his pupils is doubled. These pupils leave if the character's Reputation falls a category. If they were following a good man, the goods given to them are returned. If they followed a dark master, they return none of their belongings.

## **REWARD**

The character is granted a gift for his activities. An honorable character may gain a minor title, a decorative sword, a fine horse, or even special favor with

his Connection. The exact details should be worked out with the Sensei and integrated into the character's storyline.

## SIDEKICK

The character gains the Sidekick Edge. Once gained, the Sidekick stays with him regardless of the rise and fall of the character's Reputation. This benefit can be gained multiple times if the character's Reputation falls and then rises again to a level where this benefit is granted. However, the character can only have one Sidekick at any given time, so unless the previous Sidekick has died, gaining this benefit a second time is of no value to the character.

## GAINING REPUTATION

When characters complete a mission, word travels across the lands and their Reputations are affected by it. It is not unusual for the characters' Reputation to rise and fall as they progress. Remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained. The main ways to gain and lose Reputation are through adventuring and dueling.

## ADVENTURING

Successfully completing a mission: 1 to 3 points of Reputation. This can be a positive or negative modifier, depending on the character's actions and goals, subject to Sensei's discretion.

# DUELING

## FORMAL DUEL

Defeating an opponent with a superior Reputation category: 2 points of Reputation

Defeating an opponent with an equal Reputation category: 1 point of Reputation

Defeating an opponent with an inferior Reputation category: 0 points of Reputation

Losing a duel: -2 points of Reputation

## STREET DUEL

Defeating an opponent with a superior Reputation category: 1 point of Reputation

Defeating an opponent with an equal or inferior Reputation category: 0 points of Reputation

Losing a duel: -2 points of Reputation

**NOTE:** *A character's Reputation category may not increase more than one step per adventure, though it may fall as far as the situation dictates without restriction (as far as the gods decree!).*

## THE FORMAL DUEL

A risky way to increase your character's Reputation is through exercising his martial prowess. In a word: dueling. Characters who take this route can become well known throughout Konoyo for their skill and daring. A character may only increase their Reputation through this method by defeating individuals with a Reputation category greater than or equal to their own. Once you've bettered an individual, you may gain no further Reputation by dueling with him again.

### THE CHALLENGE

A formal duel goes through a process of challenge and acceptance under the following conditions:

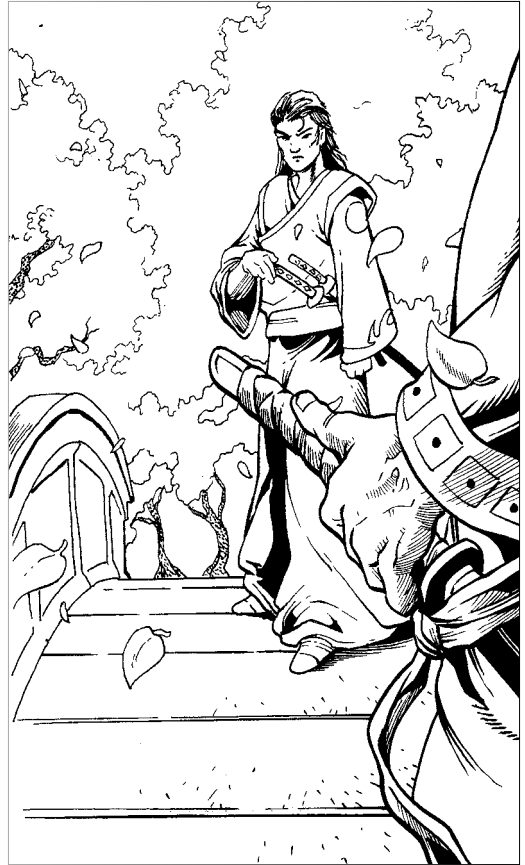
1. Characters of different stations may decline challenges with no loss of Reputation. In fact, should the challenger be of a higher station, he loses 1 point of Reputation if the challenge is declined.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Samurai Edo is enraged and challenges Merchant Hitoshi to battle. Hitoshi declines with no loss of Reputation, but Samurai Edo's Reputation is slightly stained for deigning to challenge someone of a lower station.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Hitoshi later changes his mind and challenges Edo. He risks no Reputation loss for issuing the challenge, nor does Edo risk any for declining it.*

2. Characters of equivalent stations may decline challenges with no loss of Reputation if they are the one challenged and their Charisma is higher than that of the challenger. Should the challenger have a higher Charisma, he loses 1 point of Reputation if the challenge is declined.

**EXAMPLE:** *Samurai Edo (Charisma +1) angers his goshi, Lord Taketa (Charisma +2). They both are of the same Reputation category. Should Edo refuse to please his lord with the requested duel, his Reputation decreases. However, if Edo challenged Lord Taketa, the goshi could refuse with no loss*





*of Reputation due to his lord's superior grace. A character may lose no more than 1 point of Reputation per day in this manner. However, if Lord Taketa continues to ask for a duel and Edo continues to be obstinate, Edo's Reputation deteriorates each day he refuses his lord's request.*

3. If the characters are of equivalent station and Charisma, then whoever declines the challenge loses 1 point of Reputation.

**EXAMPLE:** *To restore his Reputation for declining to battle Lord Taketa, Edo rides out on the field and challenges the first samurai he encounters, Samurai Takezo. Takezo, having the same Reputation and Charisma as Edo, discovers he is in the same quandary in which Edo found himself with his own lord. Should Takezo decline and suffer a loss of Reputation, or should he risk a duel?*

4. A challenge must be publicly given or posted in a public forum. Public postings decrease the targeted character's Reputation 1 point per week. This tactic may not drop the target more than one Reputation category, but the effect lasts until the challenge is accepted or the target's Reputation category has dropped by one level.

**EXAMPLE:** *After being publicly called out, Edo suffered his loss of face and went to the countryside. Lord Taketa, still furious with Edo, invests in public postings throughout the city and countryside. As long as Edo is still within the province and Taketa continues with the upkeep of the fliers, Edo's Reputation continues to crumble until it has dropped one Reputation category.*

## SAVING FACE

Rather than lose Reputation, the character may opt to spend a benny immediately in order to "save face" in declining a challenge. He may still lose Reputation for not being true to form at the end of the session, at the Sensei's discretion. Once a character has saved face, he may not be challenged again by the same party for a week's time.

## WHY CHALLENGE SOMEONE OF A DIFFERENT STATION?

A time may come when the character has developed quite a strong Reputation and can no longer find a worthy challenger among fellows of equal station. They must seek out champions of greater renown to prove their skills, wherever those challengers may be.

**EXAMPLE 1:** *Musashi is a warrior of Low station and gained great renown for his dueling skills. He can no longer find a better swordsman among his station and, thus, begins his travels to find greater warriors against whom to prove his mettle.*

**EXAMPLE 2:** *Goshi Sakamoto has gained a strong Reputation from the many duels and battles he's been in over the years. Should he decide to increase his Reputation as a warrior, he must seek out the finest warriors among the lower stations. This proves a difficult challenge in and of itself as Sakamoto automatically risks a loss of Reputation for merely challenging a person of lower station.*

## ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Once the challenge is accepted, the challenger gets to choose the melee weapons, as well as the place and time of the duel. The challenged party selects whether it is to first blood or to the death. Duels are dangerous, and since tempers tend to run high, it is not unusual for a friendly duel to first blood to become a fight for life after all!

Examples of weapon choices include swords, axes, spears, and so on. Should both combatants possess the Signature Moves Edge for different categories of weapons (unarmed vs. katana, for instance), the challenger may select the weapon on which his Signature Moves Edge is based in order to increase the Reputation reward for winning the duel by 1 point. Should the challenger choose this option and lose the duel, he loses twice the normal amount of Reputation (-4 points). If both combatants possess the same Signature Move Edge weapon category, there is no additional reward or risk for winning or losing the duel.

## THE DUEL PROPER

Formal duels are often held on private estates, in tea gardens, or places of great natural beauty and significance. Traditionally, they are most often conducted during the Hour of the Dragon (10:00 A.M.) and are properly called the Dragon's Due when fought to the death, or Dragon's Blood when fought to first blood. The parties typically start about 6' apart, unless otherwise stipulated by the challenger.

Characters in a formal duel normally begin with weapons unsheathed and in their hands. Each character starts on Hold. Agility rolls determine who acts first in the initial round. After this initial round is complete, initiative cards are dealt and normal melee rules apply.

### **DRAGON'S BLOOD**

The duelists fight until one party wounds the other. If one character kills another in a single blow, it is a forgivable accident. If a duel, however, goes past first blood, then the party choosing to continue the fight suffers an immediate loss of 1 point of Reputation and may be subject to further sanctions from his goshi or other superior, if they have one, at the Sensei's discretion.

### **DRAGON'S DUE**

The duelists fight until one party is dead. Upon striking the killing blow, tradition dictates the victor severs the opponent's head from his body.

## **DUELING RULES**

In a formal duel, both parties must agree upon what is permissible.

- Armor and Shields?
- Ki?
- Magic?
- Magic Items?
- Other Weapons?

Should the challenger and challenged not come to an agreement on these points, either party may decline to participate without a loss of Reputation. If one of the characters is being obviously obstinate about agreeing to reasonable terms in order to avoid the duel and not suffer potential Reputation loss, he may suffer other consequences (i.e. perhaps additional challengers come forth to demonstrate that this character is a potential coward by declining every duel that comes their way), subject to the wisdom of the Sensei.

### **DISHONORABLE ACTS**

Should a character be caught violating any of the terms of the duel, he automatically forfeits any chance of gaining Reputation, though he may still lose it as a result of losing the duel. The best a character in this state can hope for is to break even. As a formal duel is most often a witnessed event, it's necessary to ascertain whether or not someone notices a cheating act. Make an opposed group Notice roll versus the cheater's Smarts. Common sense should prevail in most cases.

### **STREET DUELS**

Sometimes a duel may be fought over lesser slights and insults. Duels of this type are commonly known across Konoyo as street duels, since they are sudden, often bloody, and most often arise in the busy thoroughfares of major urban

areas. One samurai's scabbard may brush against another's in a busy market square, and tempers can flare. Should such a situation arise, the Sensei may elect to use the following system as a quick means to determine whether or not a street duel ensues:

## PERCEIVED SLIGHTS OR INSULTS

Generally, NPCs with a lower Reputation rank do their best to avoid their betters. In the event that a situation arises involving lesser slights or insults, make Recognition rolls for each participant to see if they recognize one another, and then have the NPC roll on the Reaction Table (see *Savage Worlds* core rulebook) to determine the initial reaction of the NPC to the character. If either the NPC or the character judges (correctly or incorrectly) the other person to be of a higher Reputation, they may apologize (unless the NPC's initial reaction is Hostile). The degree of sincerity of the apology depends upon the NPC's initial reaction. Should the character be of higher Reputation, and the situation involves an NPC with an Unfriendly reaction, for example, the NPC makes the apology through gritted teeth and is obviously disrespectful.

Should the NPC be of a superior Reputation rank to the character, he provokes a duel on a Hostile result (see the following Provoking a Duel section), demands an apology on an Unfriendly result, and makes an apology himself to the offending character on a Neutral or better result.

Regardless of Reputation, should the NPC have a Hostile reaction, he tries to provoke a duel.

## PREVENTING A DUEL

In the event an NPC is about to provoke a duel, the character may attempt to stop him by using Persuasion using the normal rules for NPC reactions in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook. Should he adjust the NPC's attitude to Neutral or better, cooler minds prevail, and the NPC goes his separate way without incident. Intimidation may also be used to get the challenger to back down. In this case, it is treated as a Test of Wills using Intimidation resisted by the target's Spirit.

## PROVOKING A DUEL

A character may provoke an NPC into a duel through the use of Persuasion (challenging his honor/status — roll on the Reaction Table in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook, and remember that the Charisma modifiers affect this roll as normal), or with a Taunt (challenging his bravery/skill — treat this as a Test of Wills using Taunt resisted by the NPC's Smarts).

An NPC, on the other hand, provokes a duel by simply issuing a challenge.

- In the case where the NPC is provoking the duel, the player determines his character's fate as follows:
- If the character is of a higher Reputation rank than the NPC, he may refuse with no Reputation penalty.

- If the character is of equal Reputation rank with the NPC, but has a higher Charisma than the challenger, he may refuse with no penalty.
- If the character is of equal Reputation rank, but has a Charisma equal to or lower than the challenger, he must spend a benny to save face (see the Saving Face, p. 120) or lose a point of Reputation if he refuses the duel.
- If the character is of a lower Reputation rank, he may decline the challenge with no penalty, causing the challenger to lose one point of Reputation in the process.

## THE DARK SPIRAL

### BAD ATTITUDES AND DUELING

A character with a negative Reputation does not lose Reputation for refusing a duel from someone with a positive Reputation. In essence, they have discarded the Old Ways, and it does not bother them one whit. However, characters pursuing this path have their own issues to contend with. A character with a bad Reputation may increase his worth among unsavory sorts by dueling people with a worse Reputation category than they have. Characters with bad Reputations lose 1 point of Reputation for refusing a challenge from someone with a worse Reputation category, regardless of station, as it is viewed as a sign of weakness.

**EXAMPLE:** *Kurosawa is Evil (Reputation -50) and wants to earn more dark renown. To this end, he challenges Shingen the Repugnant (Reputation -70). Should Shingen refuse, he'd lose a point of Reputation, and drop a Reputation category to merely Villainous (Reputation -69), thus losing the Connection he had gained as a result of his Repugnant Reputation.*

### DUELISTS WITH NEGATIVE REPUTATIONS

A character with a bad Reputation may decide how his Reputation is affected when he wins a duel. If he wants to work toward redemption (a positive Reputation), he may put his points as a positive modifier towards his Reputation score. Should he want to be known for his ferocity and heartlessness, he may put it as a negative modifier towards his Reputation score, thereby increasing his bad Reputation. However, when he loses a duel, the lost Reputation points always move the Reputation towards zero.

**EXAMPLE:** *Kurosawa is Evil (Reputation -50) and is challenged by Musashi the Peerless (Reputation +100). He can turn down the duel without a loss of face. What does he care for the Old Ways or honor? However, he lusts for an opportunity to engage his old foe in battle. He accepts the challenge and loses the duel to Musashi's superior swordplay. As a result, his Reputation drops two points to Reputation -48 and his new Reputation category is Threatening. Additionally, he loses the Fierceness +2 advantage that his former Evil Reputation had earned him.*

# MYSTERIES OF THE BLACK POWDER

Gunsmiths are adept at making weapons and ammunition. These rules do not allow characters to make cannon, kikai, or other war machines, but they can rearm themselves without access to a town.

Unless stated otherwise, the character requires raw materials equal to half the cost of the finished item, a set of gunsmith's tools, and a source of heat to work any metal needed to create any of these weapons. Working without tools imposes a -2 penalty on a gunsmith's Repair rolls. The Sensei has the final word on whether the necessary components can be found.

## FIREARMS

Firearms require specialty parts, such as the barrel, lock and trigger mechanism. These can be purchased together or salvaged from damaged weapons (at no cost). Without a proper workshop, the gunsmith can only cobble together a makeshift weapon — good for emergencies, but not to be relied upon for extended use. In other words, treat it as an inferior item. A one on the Shooting die (regardless of the Wild Die) indicates the weapon explodes, doing 3d6 damage to all in a Small Burst Template around the wielder.

With a successful Repair roll, a gunsmith can manufacture a makeshift firearm in three hours. A failure means the gun is inaccurate (-1 to Shooting rolls), while a critical failure ruins the lock and trigger, rendering the gun useless.

Regardless of how well the gun is made, a one on the Shooting die (regardless of the Wild Die) causes it to malfunction beyond repair (if made in a workshop with the proper tools) or explode (if made without the proper tools and workshop). Firearms are still a relatively new technology to Konoyo, and perfecting the art of crafting long-lasting items has not yet been reached.

## GRENADES

Grenades can either be thrown (Range: 2/4/8) or fired from a grenade launcher (Range: 5/10/20). A character wishing to create a grenade needs 1 pound of metal (usually iron or brass), 10 shots of powder, and a small length of fuse.

Crafting the grenade casing requires one hour and a successful Repair roll at -2. On a success, the casing is constructed correctly. Failure means the casing fails to set properly — damage is reduced to 2d6 in a Small Burst Template. A critical failure ruins the casing and the gunsmith needs a new batch of metal. The fuse can be set to delay with a successful Smarts roll. Failure means the bomb goes off 1d6 rounds earlier or later than expected.

## PISTOL SHOT

Shot is made by pouring molten metal — usually lead because of its low melting point — into a mold. After the metal has cooled, the mold is opened and the shot filed smooth. A batch of twelve shots can be made every 30 minutes. Producing a batch of shot requires a successful Repair roll. Failure means the shot is poorly formed and using it imposes a -1 penalty to Shooting rolls. A critical failure ruins the entire batch.

## BOMB (BAKUDAN)

Black powder can be used to make a low-powered explosive. A standard bomb requires 10 rounds of shot and powder.

Creating a single powder bomb requires a successful Repair roll and 30 minutes work. No tools or heat sources are required. The user bundles the shot and powder into a leather sack, pot, or other container, then sets a small fuse into it. The fuse is set as with grenades, above.

**Bigger Bombs:** A cask of gunpowder causes 5d6 damage in a Large Burst Template. If additional bombs are rigged to explode at the same time, roll their damage separately.

## FLASH BOMBS (ISSEN)

A character can make a batch of flash bombs by mixing sugar, black powder, and other chemicals together. The trick is mixing the ingredients in the proper composition. A batch of six flash bombs can be made every 60 minutes. Producing a batch of flash bombs requires a successful Repair roll at -2. Success indicates the batch is successfully created. Failure indicates the ingredients fail to blend properly and are ruined. A critical failure indicates the creator, and everyone in a Small Burst Template, takes 2d6 damage as his unstable concoction blows up in his face. Considered a tool of ninja, they can draw unwanted attention to those who are found with them in their possession. If they get wet, they are ruined. They are typically used in close combat as a distraction, but can be thrown as well (Range: 2/4/8). They do no damage, but add +2 to Agility Tricks, as they explode in a sudden flash of light in a Small Burst Template. When used, a 1 on the Agility die (regardless of the Wild Die) indicates the flash bomb is a dud and does not add its bonus to the Agility Trick.

These bombs are not fused. Striking them with moderate force is enough to cause them to explode.

It takes 30 rounds of black powder to make 6 flash bombs at a cost of 30 bu, or 5 bu for each flash bomb. It costs 10 bu for each flash bomb to buy on the black market.

## SMOKE BOMBS (ENDAN)

A smoke bomb is made by modifying the black powder base with additional chemicals through a careful heating process. Combining them in the proper



mixture takes time and patience. A batch of six smoke bombs can be made every 60 minutes. Producing a batch of smoke bombs requires a successful Repair roll at -2. Success indicates the batch is successfully created. Failure indicates the ingredients fail to blend properly and are ruined. A critical failure indicates the creator, and everyone in a Small Burst Template, takes 2d6 damage as his unstable concoction blows up in his face. Considered a tool of ninja, they can draw unwanted attention to those who are found with them in their possession. If they get wet, they are ruined. They explode upon impact when thrown (Range: 2/4/8), creating a smoke bomb in a Small Burst Template that is otherwise identical to the obscure Power. Effects last for 3 rounds, and attacks into, out of, or through the area of effect suffer the standard penalty for absolute blindness of -6. When used, a 1 on the Throwing die (regardless of the Wild Die) indicates the smoke bomb is a dud and does nothing.

These bombs are not fused. Striking them with moderate force is enough to cause them to explode.

It takes 30 rounds of black powder to make 6 smoke bombs at a cost of 30 bu, or 5 bu for each smoke bomb. It costs 10 bu for each smoke bomb to buy on the black market.



## MASS BATTLES IN WAY OF THE RONIN

With the political tensions high between the provinces, it is easy to fan the flames of war. In fact, Matters of State enable the Sensei to set how prevalent skirmishes and outright war are in any given campaign.

*Art of War*, the battle rules for Iron Dynasty, allows players to go into exquisite detail in playing out any sort of conflict that occurs in the setting. Game groups differ — and this is a roleplaying game after all — so there is another way to handle this, and that's using the Mass Battle rules found in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

To that end, a quick and dirty set of rules are in play.

In the Setup phase of Mass Battles, when determining the size of the armies, consult the following:



## TROOP VALUE TABLE

1 special = 10 elite = 20 regulars

1 elite = 2 regulars

1 regular = 1 standard unit

4 peasants = 1 regular

## CLASSIFICATION TABLE

Special = Kikai, elemental, animated statue, and so on

Elite = Wild Card, samurai, onmyoji, and so on.

Regulars = Ashigaru, guards, yakuza, and so on.

Peasants = Untrained troops, rabble, and so on.

**EXAMPLE:** *If a force from Ikusa Kokoro sought to stop a peasant uprising and sent 2 Void Walkers (elite), 1 kikai (special), 1 Wild Card (elite), and 10 samurai (elite), they would have a total value of  $4 + 20 + 2 + 20 = 66$ . The 80 peasants who take up arms would have a value of 20. Ikusa Kokoro would begin with 10 tokens and the peasants would begin with 3. This uprising will probably not last long.*

**Purists take note:** These guidelines differ ever so slightly from what is found in *Art of War* to better emphasize the heroic aspects of *Way of the Ronin*. For the more accurate value of each army, we suggest that the Sensei use the point values from *Art of War* for determining the “Step One: Setup” of the Mass Battle Rules.

## THE MAKINGS OF A LEADER

Since Mass Battles is, at its heart, opposed Knowledge (Battle) rolls, whenever you need to determine the tactical ability of an NPC commanding forces, roll a d10, consult the following and add it to any basic archetype.

|     |                        |
|-----|------------------------|
| 1   | Knowledge (Battle) d4  |
| 2-6 | Knowledge (Battle) d6  |
| 7-8 | Knowledge (Battle) d8  |
| 9   | Knowledge (Battle) d10 |
| 10  | Knowledge (Battle) d12 |



# KONOYO: THE KNOWN WORLD

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The Iron Dynasty encompasses the five mainland provinces of Ni-Ten (Ikusa Kokoro, Sorimizu, Tahata Gaki, Tetsu Sangaku, and Uma-Ko Ryoudo) and the adjoining islands of Ato and Hinote Shima. To the north is the great island home of the ancient kingdom of Karasu Rokku. The island clusters of Doragon Mizu enjoy relative freedom, as they are not deemed worth the trouble to govern. Collectively, all the islands are known as Konoyo, the World.

## RACES: PEOPLE OF KONOYO

### THE DAAKU

Said to be descended from dragons, the Daaku are found predominately in the provinces of Sorimizu and Ikusa Kokoro. They are heavy-framed and of dark complexion, with brown hair and eyes ranging in color from hazel to green. The men grow rich, thick beards that often whiten early and are braided with bits of jade. Those living along the coast braid their beards with coral. Their women are among the most beautiful in the lands. Nobles descended from the Daaku typically dress in apparel with a dragon motif, and women often dye their hair in shades of blues and greens and wear matching makeup.

### THE HANIWA

The Children of the Earth are commonly found throughout all of Konoyo, with the exception of Karasu Rokku where they are less frequently encountered. They have light to medium frames, with hair color ranging from brown to black to the less common red. They tan easily, and nobles descended from this line take care to cover up when outside.

### THE KA

Known also as the “Golden Ones”, the Ka are said to be descended from the gods themselves. Most noble lines are able to trace their ancestry back to the Ka in some fashion or another, though they appear more like the dominant race of their province. A true Ka has blonde or white hair with blue-silver or golden eyes and is quite striking in appearance. The Most High have preserved

their bloodlines and may readily claim Ka as their heritage. It is not uncommon for many marriages to be arranged by the pedigrees of the families in the hopes of having a Ka offspring which is said to bring good fortune. However, Ka women have had wars fought over them in the past.

## THE KOJIN

The Children of the Raven are the natives of Karasu Rokku. They tend towards dark hair and dark eyes with “noble skin” that does not darken. Typically, they dress in fashions of the kingdoms through which they travel, so they do not draw attention to their lighter skin tones. Their frames are most often light but can range to heavy. They are rarely found living in the Iron Dynasty.

## THE JOMON

Of wiry build, the Jomon are the seafaring peoples of the Doragon Mizu islands. Most have black hair and hazel eyes and have seen and heard a lot about Konoyo from an early age. They are often quite nimble and friendly.

# PROVINCES: LANDS OF KONOYO

From the ruined devastation of Ato to the glorious peaks of Tetsu Sengaku, from the ominous isle of Karasu Rokku down to the white sands of Doragon Mizu, Konoyo is a world of danger and splendor. And the people? Oh the people each follow their own paths. Be it the sumptuous decadence of Hinote Shima or the wild plains of Uma Ko Ryoudo, the traveler must realize that once she goes beyond her borders, she is entering a world of magic and mystery and dangers all their very own.

Of even greater import than a character’s racial heritage is the selection of his or her home province. This can shape a hero’s outlook and attitude and certainly serves to color other’s initial perceptions. A player should review the following provinces and select the one that best suits the type of character he wishes to play. Ultimately, the Sensei dictates the direction of the campaign and provincial relationships are fluid at best. Note: a player should not allow the choice of province to restrict her character type.

**EXAMPLE:** *Marianne has her heart set on being a ganso. Reading through the various provinces, she is drawn to the darkness of Karasu Rokku and looks forward to the roleplaying opportunities and challenges that most certainly will arise from this choice. This land of dark magic has little use for technology, so she would be a rarity among her people. This combination suggests to her an interesting backstory and her Sensei’s eyes glitter with delight at the story possibilities...*

# ATO



**Economy:** Their defeat by Ikusa Kokoro has temporarily put this province into great turmoil. This, however, has greatly benefited the economy. Ikusan administrators oversee important concerns, such as the jade and antiquity trades. Their rich, fertile lands allow them to easily grow abundant crops. The excess, formerly traded with its neighbors, now is transported on ships to secret locations under the direction of the High Lord General. Thus the people, though well-fed and cared for, are generally poor, possessing little personal property. The kowtowing court of Ato is allowed special dispensations for their loyalty to Ikusa Kokoro and enjoys lavish wealth and personal belongings. They use a portion of their wealth to buy back some of their grain from the corrupt Ikusan administrators to placate their population, promoting complacency in their people.

**Religion:** Uzume is the principal goddess of the land and many of the temples in her honor also serve as glorified gambling halls.

**Personality:** Atons are treacherous, hedonistic liars. Under compulsion, they can be industrious and productive. Otherwise, they are a lazy and effete people who love to eat and gamble. No crime is more disdained by an Aton than failure to pay a gambling debt. In general, they are a conniving and cowardly nation, prone to silence and subterfuge. Their one anomaly is their passion and unparalleled dominance in Sumo wrestling, in which they boast an unbroken winning streak since the sport began. Even Ikusa Kokoro holds deep respect for the tradition and took pains to avoid damaging the Golden Dojo, where the Sumo events are held, during their conquest.

**Legal System:** As a puppet government of Ikusa Kokoro, their laws are, for all practical purposes, identical. They retain their sovereignty, however, when it comes to settling disputes. Wrestling is used to resolve debts, crimes of passion, crimes of honor, and petty theft. Both parties may retain a champion to fight in their place. The state sponsors the auditorium, and people pay to watch. The crowd determines the winner in the event there is no clear victory after an allotted time period. This method has served to both entertain the masses and make Ato's legal system the most profitable model in all of Konoyo. For more serious crimes, there is a tribunal composed of powerful merchants, nobles and officers chaired by Ato's Lord General. In theory, they are his advisors, and he is an autocrat.

**Allies:** Ikusa Kokoro has a vested interest in Ato, and inland military personnel serve as directed by their administrative representatives. While Ikusans frequently direct operations, their troops are rarely placed on the front lines, operating more in a cleanup capacity, to their own frustration.

**Enemies:** Hinote Shima is Ato's chief enemy, as it is the wish of Ikusa Kokoro to eliminate this hostile threat. More often than not, however, Ikusa Kokoro uses Ato as a stepping stone for dealing with threats from Hinote Shima and Sorimizu.

**Associated Element:** Earth



## DORAGON MIZU

**Economy:** A trade economy operates among the people of Doragon Mizu. While they have a number of port towns dotted along the smaller islands that operate with a basic use of coins culled from the Empire, they are more used to dealing regularly and openly with black market goods. More and more skilled craftsman and tradesman, disenchanted with the Iron Dynasty, have sought shelter in this more open society, and are generally welcomed with open arms. Thus Doragon Mizu is growing rapidly with each passing year. Their shipbuilding, while always quite good, has grown by leaps and bounds with the addition of these talents, and they are poised to be the dominant naval force.

**Religion:** While few temples are found among the islands, there are a number of shrines dotting numerous places, paying tribute to gods of sea, wind, luck, and storm.

**Personality:** Doragonians value personal honor. They are generally kind and compassionate toward their fellow citizens. Few in number and clannish by nature, trust is essential to their way of life. They never give a person who deceives them a second chance to do so. Once caught in a lie, a person is not believed again unless the truth of his statement is obvious or provable. They can be an unforgiving people — their survival depends on it.

**Legal System:** Doragonians believe in trial by combat. When one of the participants is helpless (a woman, an injured man or a child) a member of the bushi caste serves as champion for the duel. In all cases, the winner of the duel is deemed in the right. The loser, if he does not surrender and accept judgment first, is dead. The only penalty among citizens is ohineri, blood debt. The ohineri is a specified weight in iron that must be paid within one year. Any person who fails to make good on this debt is banished.

**Allies:** Doragon Mizu honors a trade pact with Uma-Ko Ryoudo. In exchange for providing ships, they receive horses.

**Enemies:** While raiders are typically not well thought of to begin with, Hinote Shima gives no quarter when dealing with them. This has curtailed Ato's activities against Hinote somewhat, but they know if they show signs of weakness, then others may follow suit. Thus, shipwrights have begun to build warships called coast-busters to deal with them.

**Associated Element:** Water

# HINOTE SHIMA

**Economy:** Hinote Shima is a prosperous nation. It is heavily involved in trade with Sorimizu, Karasu Rokku, Ato, and even Tetsu Sangaku. Fine mines and high-quality stone are found in its hills. The plains are heavily-exploited agricultural areas, and due to the constant warmth of the volcanoes, enjoy a year-round growing cycle. This makes rice the nation's greatest trade commodity, despite its limited arable lands.

**Religion:** The people of Hinote Shima revere Uzume above all others, though there are also a great number of Flame Callers who attend to the kami of the volcanoes.

**Personality:** The Shimans are dedicated to the pursuit of wealth and sensual pleasure. They are cunning, treacherous and undependable as a rule. The higher the station of the individual, the more pronounced these traits appear. The lower classes, however, revere their Lord General and would willingly die in defense of their country.

**Legal System:** The Temples of Fire, favored by the Lord General, administer all justice in Hinote Shima. A high priest hears both sides of all cases before handing down his verdict for minor crimes. For the more serious crimes of theft and murder, a trial by fire must be undertaken by the accused. He is forced to thrust his hand into a flame and proclaim his innocence. Should he shout or pull out his hand before he finishes his claim, he is guilty. A thief is blinded and murderers are branded on the forehead before being banished into the mountains. Those marked in either way are shunned by the population at large. The penalties for lesser crimes are corporal punishment and imprisonment (at hard labor). The death penalty, when handed down, is a great spectacle, as the guilty party is burned alive.

**Allies:** Sharing a pact with Sorimizu, Hinote Shima also enjoys the unlikely favor of Karasu Rokku.

**Enemies:** Hinote Shima makes no apologies for their hatred of Ikusa Kokoro. In addition to their easily defensible position, they inherited many disillusioned people from Ato. These exiles fought against the Ikusan invasion or lost loved ones in the conflict.

**Associated Element:** Fire







## IKUSA KOKORO

**Economy:** Ikusa Kokoro is quite metropolitan, having amassed great wealth in battle, and the province is home to some of the finest minds throughout Konoyo. They possess a broad spectrum of industries, textiles and porcelain craft being chief among them. They rely heavily upon Tetsu Sangaku for raw materials, primarily iron and other metals.

**Religion:** Citizens of this kingdom worship the Elder Gods of War. Its citizens are religious and devout. In the lower classes, the worship of the Elder Gods of War is not as prevalent as worship of gods of commerce, luck and other things important in day-to-day survival for the poor.

**Personality:** Ikusans are devoted to honor, truth and lawful obedience. This is most notable in the highest tiers of society, as most men consider their word a sacred promise. They generally do not lie and become violently agitated if it is suggested that they have done so. As long as a foreigner comports himself with honest dignity and respects the Old Ways, he is treated fairly. Those who fight and serve in the military believe they are fighting to preserve justice and are morally compelled to unify all the lands. To other nations, this frequently translates into a terrifying, almost cruel, zeal.

**Legal System:** Ikusa Kokoro has a formal court system. Cases are decided by five judges. Three votes are required to convict or acquit a suspect, regardless of abstentions. All convictions are final unless the case is appealed to the High Lord General before the sentence is carried out (only those of high station or great wealth have any real chance of having an appeal granted). Penalties under Ikusan law are servitude, imprisonment, slavery and banishment. The new dynasty has abolished the death penalty.

**Allies:** Ikusa Kokoro rules over the puppet state of Ato.

**Enemies:** Ikusa Kokoro does not officially recognize the independent governance of any of the other provinces, considering them rogue warlords who ignore the authority of the High Lord General. In practice however, emissaries are well-regarded, and gifts are encouraged for the High Lord General's indulgence. Other provinces have learned that paying tribute often drops them down the list of potential targets.

**Associated Element:** Void

# KARASU ROKKU

**Economy:** Karasu Rokku is noted for fine craftsmanship, luxury goods, exquisite spices and poor-quality metal goods. The river basins of the nation are irrigated agricultural zones. The hills and mountains produce good quantities of most metals and high-quality stone. Karasu Rokku imports textiles, drugs and forged metal.

**Religion:** Karasu Rokku worships Elder forces of the earth and the elements, as personified by their mountains and lakes. Magic and miracles reinforce the strength of their beliefs.

**Personality:** The inhabitants of Karasu Rokku live in constant peril of their masters. They have become survivors. Most are patriotic people who freely sacrifice their personal desires for the good of the nation. They are kind and compassionate toward fellow citizens. Their attitude towards strangers upon their native soil is seen as aloof, withdrawn, and suspicious. Unlike the mainlanders, they distrust new technologies, preferring magic and faith.

**Legal System:** Karasu Rokku had an absolute monarch, the Witch-King, an unbroken hereditary line since 1044 until Karasu disrupted it in 1469. Karasu Rokku introduced the Compass Council to provide a hand in daily governance. Nobles may slay felons without a trial. Nobles convicted of crimes against commoners may be stripped of all land and rank, though this rarely happens in practice. Despite what outsiders may think, Karasu Rokku is a civilized and refined land with an efficient justice system.

**Allies:** Through a series of mutually arranged marriages among various houses, Karasu Rokku has grown closely tied with Hinote Shima since 1546. Longstanding trade pacts with Tetsu Sangaku ensure quality metal works.

**Enemies:** Ikusa Kokoro is the long-standing nemesis of Karasu Rokku. It also has a deep-founded hatred for the pirates of Doragon Mizu and will go out of its way to destroy them when encountered.

**Associated Element:** Void





## SORIMIZU

**Economy:** Sorimizu has massive agricultural regions along its rivers. Its cities are manufacturing centers that equal even Zuiichi in the production of luxury items and common goods. The lack of natural resources forces Sorimizu to import quality metal and other goods from neighboring provinces. While their iron work is inferior to that of the other provinces, in other areas, with the exception of ship construction, their goods are superior.

**Religion:** Except for a compulsive loathing for all human sacrifice, Sorimizu is tolerant of all religious practices. This has led to the rise of many questionable cults throughout the countryside and urban areas. It is not uncommon to even see temples dedicated to Kishimo-Jin.

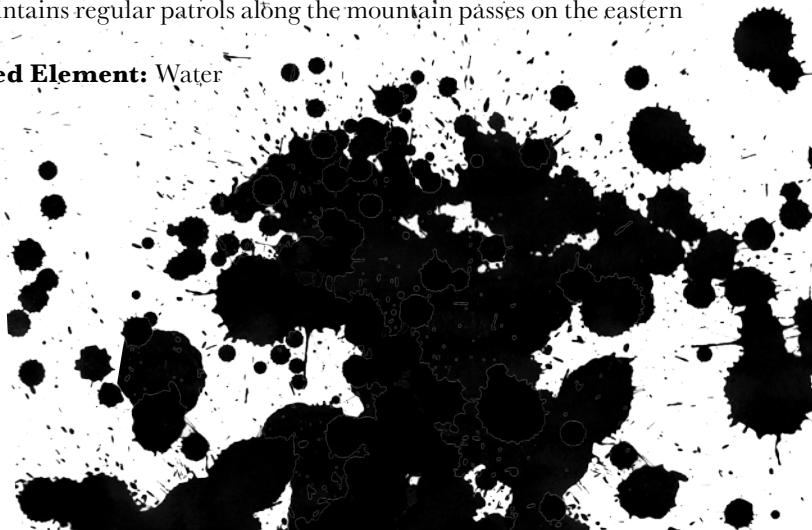
**Personality:** Sorimizians prefer a sedate, luxurious life without stress, where only minimal effort is required to survive. Under pressure, their slothfulness changes to frenetic, purposeful activity demonstrating amazing competence and ingenuity. They are a clever and devious people when their survival demands it. In normal times, Sorimizians are a calm and curious people who enjoy strangers, especially those who bring interesting tales from faraway lands.

**Legal System:** No centralized legal system exists. Each community is expected to police their own people and dispense justice in a manner befitting the crime. Typically, this duty falls upon the village elders. In theory, the noble classes are immune to prosecution, but in practice, they are often taken before the Lord General for justice.

**Allies:** Sorimizu has a non-aggression pact with Hinote Shima and Ato and imports most of their metal goods from Tetsu Sangaku.

**Enemies:** The neighboring kingdom of Ikusa Kokoro is a constant threat. Sorimizu maintains regular patrols along the mountain passes on the eastern border.

**Associated Element:** Water



# TAHATA GAKI

**Economy:** The Tahatans are the poorest people of all the provinces. The swamplands nearly destroyed their infrastructure, and the fallen barriers between the two planes threaten them with mind bending abominations on a regular basis. They do, however, manage to survive their harsh environment through raids into neighboring lands for goods and slaves. People have come to call them the Marauders.

**Religion:** The Tahatans follow a perverted version of their old religion, seeking protection against the supernatural from their gods. It combines the practices of a civilized faith with wizardry and shamanistic practices. It is a strange, potentially dangerous faith. Their makoto are dangerous and very powerful, both feared and obeyed. Makoto native to the land are few and far between.

**Personality:** The Tahatans have grown vicious. They enjoy cruelty, mutilation of the helpless, and all kinds of perverse, unnatural pleasures. Their rulers are arrogant megalomaniacs. Survival in this nation demands that a man be cunning, pragmatic and ruthless. The same applies for women and children, perhaps more so. Tahatan nobles are the cruelest and most perverted, without the slightest decency toward themselves or others. They consider kindness to be the last refuge of the weak — and they never tolerate weakness. Magic-users are feared, and superstitious citizens have been known to kill them at the slightest provocation.

**Legal System:** There is little power in the hands of the individual, and the Tahatan courts do not attempt to hide it. Judges are quick, decisive, and always favor the side that brings them the most personal gain. Nobles are rarely brought to justice, while outsiders are often severely fined, regardless of the charge. Visiting nobles are another story; those foolish enough to announce their lineage are often held for ransom.

**Allies:** None.

**Enemies:** They view all nations with jealousy and take what they want without remorse. Their swampy, desolate land is used as a shield against invaders.

**Associated Element:** Void





## TETSU SANGAKU

**Economy:** Tetsu Sangaku has rich mines and fine craftsmen. The majority of all land holdings are considered the personal property of the Lord General that he allows others to use at his whim. This is mainly lip service, as properly maintaining such a stranglehold on the economy would far outweigh the benefits he receives through a general stipend from his people. The nation is the leading producer of kikai throughout the provinces, but only possesses a small standing army of them, preferring to avoid war and create a larger profit by selling them to other factions. Due to the threat of Doragon Mizu, however, the nation must maintain a strong naval presence as well as gun mounts in ports of call.

**Religion:** Despite the materialism of their society, most of the inhabitants are deeply spiritual, owing to the great number of mendicant monks roaming the area and the countless roadside shrines and temples maintained by the secretive yamabushi. Some of the yamabushi have fallen under the charismatic sway of the Lord General and train the people.

**Personality:** The Tetsuns, as they call themselves, are largely dedicated to the pursuit of personal wealth. When dealing with foreigners, they are arrogant and aloof, knowing their commodities are in high demand and it is foolish to affront them. They have no love of war and prefer to employ others to fight for them, when they have a choice. They are a pragmatic people who are capable of great valor — when it is absolutely essential that they be valiant.

**Legal System:** Each community appeals to the local elder, who acts as both judge and jury. Typically, heavy fines are imposed in lieu of any sort of corporal punishment. Often, papers of purpose are drawn up for those individuals wishing to commit some sort of non-legal activity, granting narrow permissions to perform such acts as long as recompense is made to the elders. This has led to communities being simultaneously orderly and chaotic, with a preponderance of gambling houses and dens of ill repute.

**Allies:** Karasu Rokku is dependent enough on Tetsu Sangaku's raw metals to fight on its behalf, should the need arise.

**Enemies:** Chiefly Doragon Mizu. Ikusa Kokoro dislikes its dependence upon Tetsu Sangaku's hard iron and engineers and would surely sweep in and restore them to the proper path if the opportunity arose.

**Associated Element:** Earth

# UMA-KO RYUUDO

**Economy:** While the populated centers primarily use currency, a complicated barter system operates on the plains. The finest horses in all of Konoyo are bred here and are much sought after. Generally, few are sold. Their chief export lies in rich mineral deposits and precious raw metals that run through their heartland. Clever engineers and select onmyoji are able to coax such goods from the ground while still preserving the natural environment as much possible.

**Religion:** Due to their nomadic nature, the people of Uma-Ko are deeply spiritual, paying homage to spirits of nature above all, and the gods of wind, rain, and storms. Formalized temples in urban areas are heavily influenced by their wandering roots and offer worship to dozens of spirits, as well as provide special sites for ancestor worship.

**Personality:** The Horsemasters tend to be harsh, boorish and arrogant. They seldom accept defeat with any grace and have a long memory when they are wronged. Despite these traits, most are honorable, honest and truthful in dealing with others. They will lie when their survival depends on it, but are honest most other times. The people of the Horselands value personal survival above all else, with the exception of the military elite, for whom honor and duty are more important.

**Legal System:** The Horsemasters use trial by combat (to first blood only) to resolve minor crimes and trial by fire for major crimes, such as stealing horses or personal property. In trial by combat, the first one cut is guilty. He must pay a steep fine or be banished until he pays the debt. In trial by fire, the suspect thrusts his hand into a flame and slowly states his innocence. If he pulls his hand out or makes any sound other than his declaration before he is done, he is guilty. The penalty for guilt in these cases is death.

**Allies:** Besides a non-aggression pact with Karasu Rokku, Uma-Ko Ryuudo has formed an allegiance with Doragon Mizu. This development has created a degree of tension between the Horsemasters and Tetsu Sangaku.

**Enemies:** Tahata Gaki and Ikusa Kokoro are their chief enemies, due mainly to expansionistic policies. With Tahata Gaki, it is a matter of expansion tendencies as they move out of their swamplands, while Ikusa Kokoro considers it their divine right to control all they survey.

**Associated Element:** Air



# LOST IN TRANSLATION: A KONOYO LEXICON

See also East Meets West weapons list p. 83

**Angura:** any underground complex, often home to things that fear the light of day or refuse to die

**Anoyo:** The Other World, inhabited by spirits

**Ashigaru:** a soldier of one of the provinces (one of the archetypes)

**Bakemono:** a spirit of the dead, one type of Obake

**Bakeneko:** a shapeshifting ghost-cat

**Baku:** a creature with the lower body of a giant spider and the upper body of a man.

**Bushi:** warrior

**Daaku:** race of people found primarily in Sorimizu and Ikusa Kokoro, said to be descended from dragons

**Daisho:** The pairing of weapons, literally meaning “large and small”.

**Desu:** death, a nickname for kikai driver

**Dragon’s Blood:** a duel fought to first blood

**Dragon’s Due:** a duel fought to the death

**Ganso:** inventor

**Ghost Dragons:** White Ninja

**Goshi:** landed nobility akin to the landed knight

**Haniwa:** the most common race of people found in Konoyo, known as “Children of the Earth”

**Hebi:** intelligent shapeshifting snakes

**Henge:** animals that can transform themselves into humans or other entities, usually mischievous in nature

**Heya:** sumo training hall

**Inari:** a greater kami

**Inugami:** shapeshifting dogs that are among man’s staunchest allies

**Iron Dynasty:** the mainland provinces of Ni-Ten and the adjoining islands of Ato and Hinote Shima

**Iron Fire:** Black Ninja, a mercenary force of ninja

**Jade Creek Court:** a shadow organization comprised of many disenfranchised political powers that wish to restore the Bright Empire to its former glory.

**Jomon:** the native seafaring people of the Doragon Mizu islands

**Jorogumo:** enchanted spiders gifted with the ability to shift into the form of man.

**Ka:** a race of people with blonde or white hair, also known as the “Golden Ones”

**Kami:** lesser spirit

**Kappa:** turtle-shelled men

**Kensei:** sword saint / weapons master

**Kesshi:** hero

**Ki:** spiritual energy

**Kikai:** two-legged mechanical war machines

**Kitsune:** foxes with human intellect and magical abilities that grow with their age and wisdom

**Kojin:** Race of people native to Karasu Rokku, also called the Children of the Raven

**Konoyo:** the Known World, comprised of the five mainland provinces of Ni-Ten, which along with Ato and Hinote Shima form the Iron Dynasty, as well as Karasu Rokku to the north and the southern sea-island chain of Doragon Mizu.

**Kouso:** founder of the dynasty

**Kurai:** see Waivaan

**Magasasu:** evil kami that lust after the flesh and possess the bodies of innocents or an animal to satisfy their physical desires

**Makoto:** holy man

**Mon:** crest

**Mujina:** Shapeshifting badgers that delight in deceiving and frightening humans

**Naganese:** the common language of Konoyo

**Ni-Ten:** all of the mainland provinces of Konoyo, comprised of Ikusa Kokoro, Sorimizu, Uma-Ko Ryoudo, Tahata Gaki, and Tetsu Sangaku; also a two-weapon style of fighting

**Ninja:** assassin

**Obake:** a living thing or supernatural creature that has temporarily taken on the guise of a ghost, or an actual spirit of the dead.

**Odaku:** a shapeshifting demon with a foothold in both worlds, its natural form is grey and ghoulish, with curled claws and long fangs

**Ohineri:** blood debt; In Doragon Mizu, the penalty (apart from death) for losing a trial by combat. The ohineri is a specified weight in iron that must be paid within one year.

**Okami:** rare shapeshifting wolves, the White Wolves of Ikusa Kokoro, they are allies of man

**Okotta:** the Enraged, the ghost forms of warriors that died in battle fury

**Okudden:** secret information

**Oni:** demon

**Oni-Kaji:** great ancient demon craftsmen

**Onmyoji:** wizard

**Red Wolves:** nickname for the standing army of Ikusa Kokoro

**The Removed:** an elite order of samurai that patrol the major population centers of Hinote Shima

**Ronin:** masterless warrior



**Samurai:** “knight”

**Sashimono:** back banner, the Arcane Sashimono is a back banner blessed by the spirits

**Sensei:** Game Master

**Shinjin:** the metal gods, the greatest of all war machines, fashioned after the likeness of the Celestials by the Oni-Kaji

**Tanuki:** a shapeshifting raccoon dog, typically jolly and of a friendly demeanor

**Tengu:** raven man

**Teppi:** an ancient doorway between places

**Tsukumogami:** artifact spirits that vary in appearance, depending on the type of item from which they originate

**Uzume:** the principal goddess of the lands

**Veeru:** the veil between Konoyo, the Known World, and Anoyo, the Other World

**Void Walker:** onmyoji trained in martial arts and specializing in void powers

**Waivaan:** often called Kuria (the Gloom), a two-legged serpentine creature with black scales and bat-like wings

**Yakuza:** gang member

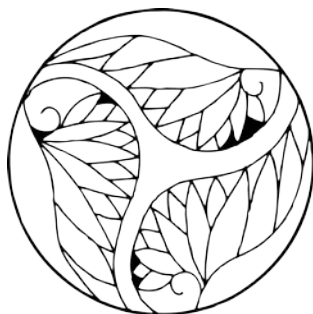
**Yamabushi:** mountain warrior / martial artist

**Yokai:** strange, unclassifiable creatures that may possess the traits of other creature types and are easily confused with oni

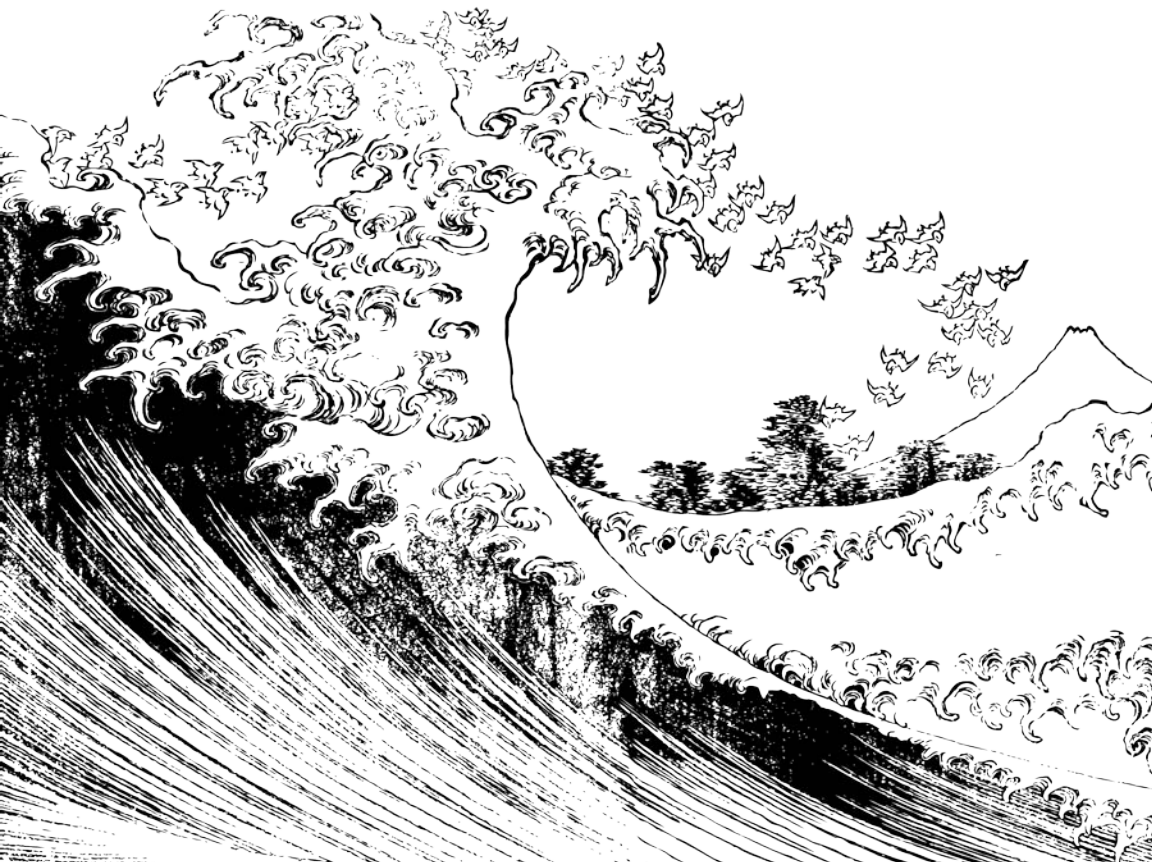
**Yoroi:** a complete suit of armor comprised of the same material.

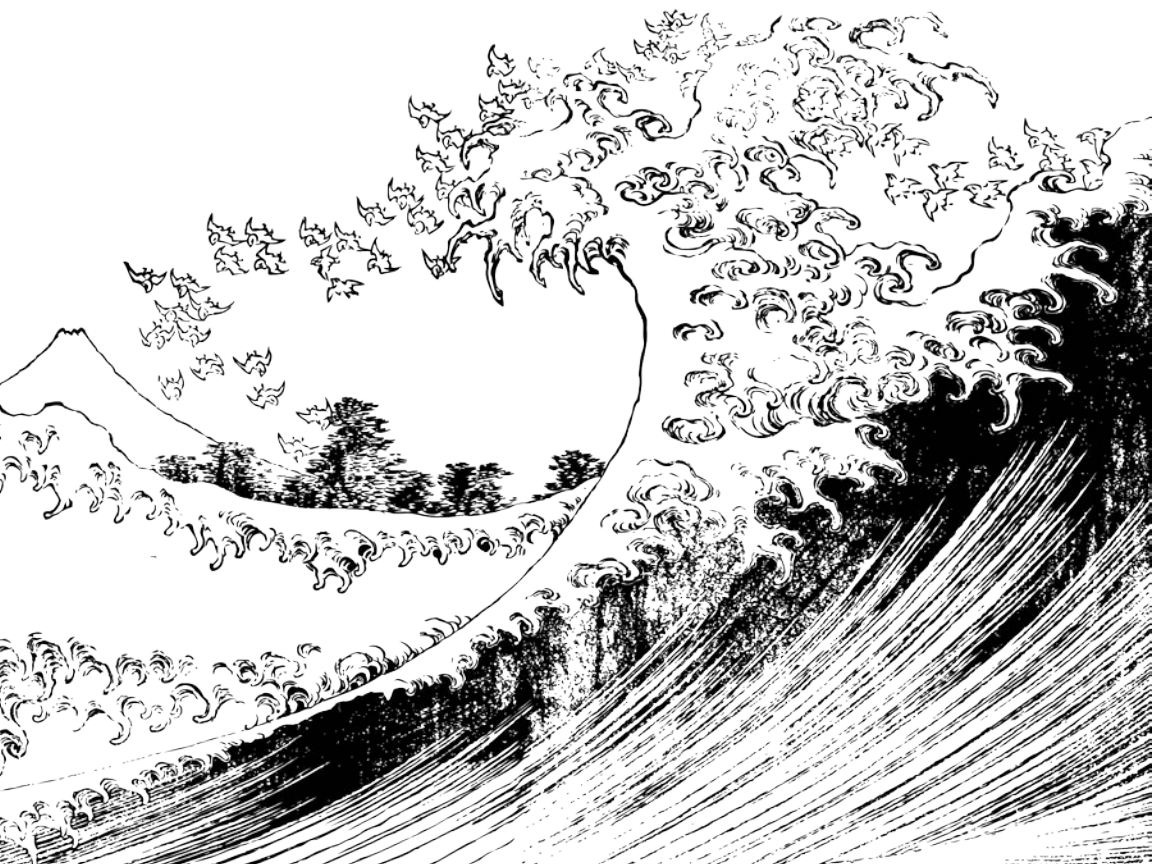
**Youba:** the onmyoji that serve the Witch-King as wives, concubines, and soldiers, they are deadly mistresses of the void

**Zuiichi:** capital city located in Ikusa Kokoro the greatest metropolitan area in all of Konoyo



# SECRETS OF THE SENSEI





# SECRETS OF THE SENSEI

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Herein the most honorable master of the game shall learn those bits of knowledge that shall aid in facilitating game play and the enjoyment of all involved.

## THE REALMS OF KONOYO

The Iron Dynasty is comprised of Ni-Ten (the five mainland provinces of Ikusa Kokoro, Sorimizu, Tahata Gaki, Tetsu Sangaku, and Uma-Ko Ryoudo), as well as the island provinces of Ato and Hinote Shima. To the north is the great island home of the ancient kingdom of Karasu Rokku. To the southeast are the island clusters of Doragon Mizu. Collectively, all the islands are known as Konoyo, the World.

Anoyo — the other world — is the realm of spirits and myth, rarely traveled by mortals as it is the dreamlands of great dangers, and home to the Oni-Kaji, the Celestial Palace. In its fissures and fractures live countless oni, tengu, and baku that sneak through when they can.

Veeru is the veil that separates these two lands. It is dangerously thin in some places. These places become natural energy pools that attract the darkness, in turn corrupting and tainting the land. These tainted areas, brimming with black power, provide promise of great adventure to those willing to take the risks.

## ADVENTURES IN KONOYO

In *Way of the Ronin*, adventure lurks in every shadow and around every turn, and all points in between. This section gives the Sensei the information he needs.

### ATO

Formally known as Ato Buta Akujin, the Ruins of the Evil Pig God, this province once known as Sakura was the best the Bright Empire had to offer with its fine universities, principled martial arts schools, beautiful fields of cherry trees and delicately tiered irrigation systems. After being crushed by Ikusa Kokoro as an example of its military might, it is now little more than a blighted land. Rubble and burned-out buildings are dotted across the countryside, where devastating craters still scar the earth. Grass refuses to grow in many of inland regions, but the western part of the isle is still the most fertile in all of Konoyo, producing great amounts of grain and rice. The Lord General is thought to be quite insane, and the lands are largely lawless. Ikusa Kokoro troops have

a standing presence, but do little to keep order in the land unless breaches interfere directly with them. The Veeru is quite weak here, and wandering bands of bandits and pig oni fight for scraps amidst the ruins.

## SETTLEMENTS

### BANSAN

**Population:** 200

This palatial estate is home to Bara, the old master of the Golden Dojo, who built his fortune teaching the sumo arts to a generation. There is a large training facility located here, to which a number of pupils have traveled to learn his secrets.

### GANTOU

**Population:** 75

Overlooking the shoreline, this ancient tower still reflects the delicate artistry of the past. It is decorated with great bas-relief carvings that depict onmyoji communicating with the gods interwoven with cherry blossoms and dragons rising from the sea. Rumor has it that the kikai were not able to harm it, and the red wolves of Ikusa Kokoro refused to raze it to the ground. It is said Omiki teaches the lost arts — in defiance of the laws — to those who brave his dozen trials.

### KAIGYO

**Population:** 300

This small village is the center of black market operations across Ato. All illegal goods come in through its port. The blacksmith, Yotarou, is also an apt gunsmith.

### KUNEN

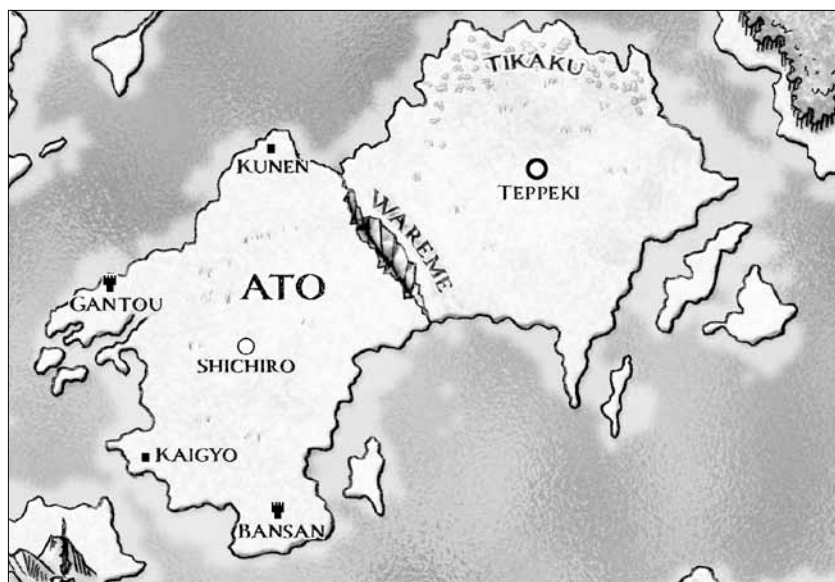
**Population:** 400

This small port town lives in constant fear of raids from Sorimizu, but also enjoys a degree of prosperity and support from Ikusa Kokoro as warships frequent its harbors.

### SHICHIRO

**Population:** 3500

The largest settlement left in Ato, Shichiro houses the palace of Lord General Zuku. The guards do what they can to keep the streets free of crime, and maintain order in this unruly community that has become a haven for gamblers, cutthroats, and criminals who escape here from other places. It is not uncommon for people across Konoyo to be exiled here. The Golden Dojo is due east of town, and there are a number of gambling dens and tea houses dotted all along the road.



## FACTIONS

**Lost Blossom Clan:** The black market operations in Ato are dominated by this gang. It began strictly as a female brigade of ninja that once worked for House Sakura, but it has taken on more of a yakuza structure, with lower level operatives being street thugs and bandits. The ninja themselves stay removed from lower level operations, with the exception of Kansaku, reserving their talents for mercenary work abroad. The clan works for nearly any party or cause, except those favoring Ikusa Kokoro. This has caused many encounters with Iron Fire over the years, one of the few ninja families that care only for coin.

## LEADER

Lord General Zuku is, to put it simply, quite mad. He spends much of his days half naked upon his throne, feasting upon boar and oni, while sumo constantly wrestle in the ring set into the center of the royal floor. Women dance in gossamer sheets, while priests recite prayers and musicians play. He is fat and greasy, and far deadlier with his blade and temper than one might think. If anyone crosses him, he has been known to kill them, dress their flesh, and eat them in what he calls “a ceremony of strength”.

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Bara:** A large bear of a man of advancing years, Bara is a master of wrestling and the art of sumo. He is grey-bearded, baldheaded, and is quite a taskmaster. He longed to adventure in his youth, and is a great supporter of kesshi he encounters.

**Omiki:** An onmyoji who is one of the few elemental masters left in the world. His techniques are harsh and unforgiving, but his pupils are among the best the Iron Dynasty has to offer. His top students are taught the secrets of the void, and often go on to become Void Walkers in Ikusa Kokoro.

**Minister Iryoku:** A sly, treacherous man who is the de facto power behind the throne. He manipulates petty nobles and diplomats with great style and ease, and is greedy and corrupt. If it were not for his expert handling of relations with Ikusa Kokoro, Lord General Zuku, in a fit of lucidity, would have replaced him ages ago.

**Kansaku:** This lady is the last legacy of House Sakura. She is also a master ninja, as all women of the noble line have always been. She wants to restore her fallen country to its greatness, so has fallen in with rogues and cutthroats, the only people she can now consider her allies. She is beautiful, clever, and maintains a public identity as a geisha in Shichiro, where she frequently serves the royal court. She is cold and patient, and knows that killing Zuku would serve no purpose at present.

**Yotarou:** The eyes and ears of Minister Iryoku. He is entrenched in black market dealings, works closely with Lost Blossom Clan, and knows the political winds from across the waters, accomplishing all from his small shop. He seeks only a comfortable life, good food, and much profit.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Wareme:** This mighty crack in the earth was the first casualty of the land. It was formed when Ikusa Kokoro invaded Sakura and devastated it with a barrage of kikai. This abyss is said to break the Veeru, a fact supported by the large number of oni that constantly crawl out of the dark recesses of the underworld and run across the land.

**Tikaku:** The name given to the vast array of ruins dotting the northeastern lands of Ato, this region is full of oni and outlaws that prey upon the adventurers seeking their fortunes in the crumbling buildings and subterranean cesspools. Enough treasures are found to encourage people to risk their lives to be one of the lucky few — most emerge wounded, or worse, not at all.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- It is said that the Nine Pearls, a necklace of inestimable worth, was lost in the sacking of Sakura, and that it still exists in Tikaku. Others claim that it is not of Konoyo, but is in fact the Tears of Amaterasu that fell to earth when her favored city was burned to the ground.
- The Lord General is mad, the wise men say, because his daughter was kidnapped by Ikusa Kokoro and locked away in Isei. If she is restored to him, he will be made right.
- The Banner of the Dragon Princes is buried in a sacred shrine in Zukoto that only the pure may enter. He who can prove his worth and appease the dragons can rebuild Doragon Mizu to its former glories.

# DORAGON MIZU

This sea-island chain is little involved in the ongoing conflicts of the mainland and relatively unaffected by the diseased darkness spreading throughout Konoyo, but it has dangers of its own. Many despots have come here seeking to lay claim to the fertile lands and people, but they are repelled by the loose alliance of pirates, cutthroats, and thieves that make this place home. The provinces, by and large, ignore them as a horse ignores flies, slapping them down only when they grow too annoying.

## SETTLEMENTS

### WATANABE

**Population:** 9,250

This thriving port city is a haven for rogues, pirates, and scoundrels of all types. It has been laid to waste and rebuilt so many times that it has become an interesting collection of old architecture and new. Each time it has been rebuilt, the walls are restored and reinforced, making it all but impregnable to cannon and other such artillery at this point. What little law there is comes down from the Dragon Princes, the association of Pirate Captains that prey upon the provinces.

## FACTIONS

**Araiso:** As with most things in Doragon Mizu, this militant group puts a premium on freedom and liberty, but bonds together to repel any invaders into the lands. Araiso works closely with Paama to coordinate defense strategies.

**Paama:** Keeping the sea lanes clear is essential for Doragon Mizu, and under the watchful stewardship of Seisei and his small fleet, little trouble comes unbidden or unchallenged.

**Dragon Princes:** The most powerful pirate captains share responsibility for maintaining Doragon Mizu. This mainly amounts to establishing treaties among the various ships, keeping their crews in check, and pitching in for the upkeep of Watanabe. The rest of the island chain is left pretty much to its own devices, looking to Araiso to step in when things get out of hand.

## LEADER

**Araisio:** This young lady serves as the Speaker of the People, a role that has grown to great prominence as Doragon Mizu expands. Though she works closely with the Dragon Princes, she has grown more independent, possessing wisdom beyond her years. She is of royal blood, having descended from the Karasu Rokku line, but keeps this a closely guarded secret. Some believe her to be a dabbler in magic, but no one has any proof.



## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Seisei:** A man born beyond Konoyo, Seisei is somewhat of a mystery. He is about six feet tall and of broad build with a tan complexion. He speaks with a strange accent, and sports an eye patch. He calls himself a naval engineer of many wars and has the battle scars to prove it. Seisei has become key to protecting the sea lanes around Doragon Mizu in his role as leader of Paama.

**Kurasuto:** An old monk from Tetsu Sengaku, this man tends the lighthouse and lives a solitary life. He speaks in riddles, but his words contain wisdom for those who bother to sort them out.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Zukoto:** The Cave of Skulls is located on a small island south of the main chain. It is where pirates and criminals are buried. Many say the caves are haunted, and adventurers who venture there claim it is a gateway to the underworld.

**Toudai:** The Beacon is a lighthouse that is said to be a thousand years old. It sits in the bay of Watanabe, and its light is always burning, day and night.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- Stories say that Doragon Mizu was once more than a confederacy of pirates, and its people enjoyed a great friendship with the Dragon Palace below the waves. As a gift, the Dragon Palace bestowed upon them a ward of protection, known as the Banner of the Dragon Princes.

The covenant with the Dragon Palace was broken when Doragon Mizu designated a king, but was forgiven. That is, until they began to conquer the neighboring lands, using the banner and secret words of power to bring the dragons under their control. Dragons cannot be controlled by man, and the island kingdom was razed. One day, they say, a hero will come to the land, reunite the people, and restore their friendship with the dragons.



# HINOTE SHIMA

Scarcely touched by the blight, this beautiful island is lush and green, and nearly tropical due to its many active volcanoes. It is known for its decadence and decay, and its open contempt for Ikusa Kokoro. Remnants of many noble houses fled here during the war, and continue living as they once did, ignoring the new regime with drugged indifference. The Flame Callers hold court for the Lord General and tend to matters of state. The Lord General stays locked away in his palace with his women and his wine.

Kitsune are common in the mountains, and there is an abundance of oni in the wildlands. The province doesn't care — there are some who enjoy dining on the delicacy that is demon's flesh, and hunting oni provides great sport. The Removed is an elite order of samurai that patrol the major population centers, enforcing the law and preventing outright chaos. Part of their indoctrination into the order requires self-castration to grant them clarity in their duties and to eliminate distraction.

## SETTLEMENTS

### BURU

**Population:** 440

This community is known for its Cherry Festival, held each spring. Wine flows like water, and ancient fertility rituals are performed that bring a new decadence to the land. Hedonists travel from across Hinote Shima to be a part of the debauchery. The rest of the year, Buru makes its wine in preparation for next year.

### DOUSHUU

**Population:** 19,500

A city of spires and many simple wonders, Doushuu is a cosmopolitan melting pot of many cultures. Nobility of many lands come here to live in peace and comfort, having all their needs met. Opium dens abound, and all manners of gambling can be found. The port brings in many exotic treats from across Konoyo, including slaves, spices, and strange relics. The yakuza have a running battle with the guard for control of the black market, but the city continues to maintain its superiority.

### IRO

**Population:** 4800

Seekers of sensual pleasure look no further than this town, where any desire can be had for a price. Tea houses are found on every street corner, and the gambling dens specialize in brutal blood circle combats. Alchemical shops offer herbal remedies for every affliction, as well as potions guaranteed to bring long life and love.

## ISHII

**Population:** 125

This small community is known throughout Konoyo for its “spicy” sake that is said to be an aphrodisiac. The Shen family has been making it according to an ancient recipe rumored to have been given to them by the gods.

## KATAKU

**Population:** 11,500

At odds with their debased nature, many of Hinote Shima are devoutly spiritual, and nowhere does it show more than in Katakū. The central Flame Caller temple is located here, and the steam shrines serve to let the supplicants cleanse themselves of their sins. The central hub of the city, known as the ivory steps, is comprised of white cobblestone. No alcohol, gambling, or tea houses can be found within, only scholars, saints, and contemplatives meditating upon the duality of man.

## KOTI

**Population:** 500

The massage parlors of Koti are the finest in all of the land. The sake is cheap, and the fish is so plentiful as to be free. A small spring in the center of the island can cure any ill and heal any wound. The tengu guard the spring, and let only those they deem worthy use its curative powers. The Drunk Kensei makes his home here, and can be found staggering down the streets or stumbling through the woods practicing his forms.



## KYASHA

**Population:** 350

To enjoy life fully, one must be fit. This is the mantra of Kyasha, exemplified by its people. Everyone here is slim, sleek, and in fine form. Many travelers visit this place to partake of their fitness regimen, but find its austerity a stark contrast to the more luxurious attractions the rest of the land offers.

## MIGOTO

**Population:** 475

This tower looks as though it is crystallized flame. Architects and engineers spent a dozen years to combine form and function, providing a deadly, eye-catching first line of defense for the land. The most expert war engineers and military men headquarter here, away from distractions and conduct training operations, often using oni for target practice. The manufacturing center for kikai is based in an underground facility below the main tower.

## NAKASHIMA

**Population:** 400

This sprawling plantation nearly spreads across the whole of the island, encompassing sugar cane and cotton fields. The family, one of the wealthiest in all of Konoyo, gifted some of the land to Hinote Shima to use as a military base, ensuring the finest protection for its crops. Delicious rum is made here and shipped abroad. The port is a simple affair, but has batteries of guns (akin to those found on kikai) mounted on both sides of the single point of entry.

## NAZO

**Population:** 25

This ancient stone monolith is said to be the spear point of the gods, broken when they forged Konoyo. Standing over forty feet tall and etched in shifting sigils that defy translation, a small number of yamabushi have devoted themselves to a life of service in maintaining its surface and striving to understand its meaning.

## RABU

**Population:** 75

This town sits on an island forbidden to visitors. Upon it, metal and gunsmiths work on developing better firearms, as they push the new age of iron further.

## YAMASAKI

**Population:** 300

A secret kept by the Lord General and his highest advisors is that this tower houses an abundance of onmyoji. It is a strategic military position, and many kikai and ships are based here for rapid deployment, but the sheer mystical might is comprised of over seventy-five practicing onmyoji known as Tenbin.

## YOBIRIN

### **Population:** 200

This small community is best known as the home of the Bowmen of Ko. Yearly archery contests are held here, and rare is it that anyone bests them. The finest archers are pressed into service during wartime, as they are as deadly as any kikai.

## FACTIONS

**Binta:** The yakuza of Doushuu are brash, arrogant, and unafraid. They wear full face tattoos showing their loyalty to Hitokage. Their outright contempt for authority and street battles with the guards have garnered them great notoriety, and an even greater body count. Survival in Binta is typically measured in months, not years.

**Bowmen of Ko:** This ancient order of yamabushi descended from Kazangansen to refine their craft, and set up the small community of Yobirin that has outgrown them in the last four hundred years. Their original stone temple sits on the western side of town and once served as the gathering place for the citizens when the weather grew bad.

**Flame Callers:** Certain individuals feel the draw of the fire and are called upon to master this deadly element. They are trained in an ancient tradition of spiritualism and mysticism and are empowered to uphold the laws of the land. Many go on to become leaders of state, serve the government, and take to the battlefield with a zealot-like passion.

**Tantan:** The elite cadre of guards found in Doushuu has been essential to keeping the peace on the streets, and maintaining some degree of order amidst the decadence. It is constantly struggling to destroy Binta for good, but it has so far been unsuccessful. Many former samurai from shattered clans across Konoyo have found their place here. Tantan also is an adjunct to the military, and can be summoned up for active service at any time. A few Flame Callers number among its ranks.

**Tenbin:** Members of this military order of onmyoji often go on to become Flame Callers. They are unswervingly loyal, and many of the advanced practitioners have an affinity to one or more elements.

## LEADER

Lord General Musaboru is a lover of life. He is tall, handsome, and looks surprisingly young despite his advanced age. More so than any other Lord General, he fights his base urges through a disciplined regimen of training and herbs. He cannot help but give in about once every new moon, and goes about the lands carousing for a week or more at a time, causing great joy and outrage during his journeys. When he is suffering such a fit, he is prone to carnal acts and misdeeds that cannot bear description.

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Taisu:** The Kensei of Koti is easily mistaken for a worthless drunk at first glance. Close inspection reveals his true nature — that of a keen and clever weapons master of the first order. He has a pair of fangs hanging across the tattered satchel slung over his back, jangling next to his sake jars as he wanders about the island, observing the heron and sipping from time to time. He is unshaven and unfriendly, but he respects persistence and knows many secrets of Hinote Shima's past.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Kazangansen:** This huge, sprawling mountain range, known as the Dragon's Spine, runs along the eastern seaboard, and contains underground lava streams. Many broken cities are buried amidst the nooks and crannies, as are the ghosts and oni that prey upon the past.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- Nazo whispers secrets to kesshi that seek it out.
- The Kensei of Koti knows how best to hunt waaiven.
- The kitsune of Kazangansen are a friend to man and know where the lands' secret treasures lie. In trade for services rendered, they are willing to share locations of some of the ancient sunken cities scattered about Hinote Shima.



# IKUSA KOKORO

The center of the Empire, this province is known for its aggressive, expansionistic behavior. It follows the Old Ways to an extent, but has a decidedly draconian approach to dealing with any variations away from tradition, often killing and imprisoning those outsiders it considers a threat to the New Old Ways. Despite, or perhaps because of such policies, these lands are perhaps the most stricken by corruption and open rebellion. Supernatural threats are rare, as the Red Wolves — the nickname for the standing army — patrol the lands regularly, and are fully prepared to deal with such things.

## SETTLEMENTS

### HINOMI

**Population:** 350

This watch tower was established after a surprise naval invasion by Hinote Shima. Some of the finest ganso in the land gave their lives in making this the “unbreakable fire tower”. Hinomi hosts a large presence of Void Walkers who serve as adjuncts to the garrison stationed here.

### INAN

**Population:** 280

This small village is constantly bustling with travel to and from Zuiichi, and is home to the “Little Great Market”, the open air marketplace that sets up along the roadside just north of the town, as laws prohibit direct competition of outsiders with the locals.

### IPPIN

**Population:** 1275

Famous for its dramatic plays and comedies, Ippin is known as the Artist’s Refuge, boasting numbers of cheap rooms, sake, and stage halls. It is the fashion of the cultural circles to visit the town each fall, and see the greatest plays by the likes of Kaneko Wasa and friends.

### ISEI

**Population:** 280

Known as the West Prison, Isei keeps the Hundred — the most dangerous enemies of the Empire — isolated here. According to ancient tradition, each spring the ten most deadly occupants are sent to Hinote Shima for sacrifice to ensure the continued peace and prosperity of the Empire.

## ITOU

**Population:** 300

Known as the Spire of Madness, Ito keeps political prisoners, the insane and personal enemies of the Empire locked away. The High Lord General does not want any of his dirty little secrets leaking out, or whispered by the dead.

## MAKITA

**Population:** 180

The northernmost population center in the province, Makita is in constant fear of attack from Karasu Rokku. They are isolated and largely ignored, and hold firmly to old concepts of warfare and honor. Technology is frowned upon and rarely seen. The hamlet is known for its namesake, the Makita family, brewers of the finest sake in the lands, found chiefly in the capital of Zuiichi.

## MUKA

**Population:** 3720

This town holds all of the major amenities of the capital, and is a favored retreat of the rich and decadent. Muka makes no apologies for catering to this group. Six playhouses, a dozen bars, and numerous massage parlors line the town square. Aside from this, it is known for Crystal Palace, a renowned geisha house.

## NEKO

**Population:** 4240

Self-sufficient in many ways, Neko has weathered wars, regime changes, and tumultuous times, which have only reinforced its independent ways. Citizens care little for outsiders and visitors, wishing only to pursue their own paths to enlightenment and wealth, and their port attests to that. Neko is the largest exporter of black market goods out of Ikusa Kokoro (and into Ato) and pay officials well to see that their trespasses are beneath notice.

## SEISEI

**Population:** 161

A close-knit agrarian community, Seisei has grown used to a steady influx of travelers, both local and foreign. The Wardens maintain a small presence here, coming frequently from the mountain passes to trade goods and resupply.

## SHIONI

**Population:** 464

This small village is known for its culinary delights, such as smoked squid and octopus. It is considered virtually lawless by Imperial standards, with an exceedingly corrupt government infrastructure making it a favored haven of cutthroats and scoundrels. They have a thriving black market and slave trade.



## SUKI

**Population:** 297

Once a proper town, Suki was nearly devastated by the Old Wolf and is now used as an example of the ferocity of the *kikai*, marking the introduction of the Iron Dynasty for many scholars. Not allowed to rebuild, old temples and buildings still bear the marks of destruction. Ghosts are said to haunt the streets at night, and a suffocating air of oppression hangs over its citizenry.

## TORANSU

**Population:** 480

This black basalt edifice stands over sixty feet in height and is the ancient training ground of the Order of the Void. Once it was dedicated to mastery of all elements by the Masters of the Five, but in 1545, with the spreading darkness, one of Itoshi's last Imperial commands was to discover the source of the darkness, and drive it back. The Order of the Void was formed and did just that, but paid a terrible price in the process—losing hundreds of the Bright Empire's finest *onmyoji* as they plumbed the secrets of the stars.

## TSUYOKI

**Population:** 12,287

The second largest settlement in *Ikusa Kokoro*, Tsuyoki is broadly known for its fine arms and armor, and is the only licensed manufacturer of black powder and gear crafted weapons outside of Zuuichi.

## ZUIICHI

**Population:** 125,000

The Heart of the Heart, Zuuichi is the greatest metropolitan area in all of Konoyo. Its streets are constantly bustling, and anything can be had here, for a price. There are shrines and altars to all manner of gods, both known and unknown.

## FACTIONS

**Nine Fingers:** This *yakuza* clan prides itself on discreet violence, strong-arm tactics, and running a successful black market operation. Interestingly enough, Nine Fingers is presently opposed to the Empire for its increased raids upon their operations, and their incorruptibility. Nine Fingers wants the Bright Empire restored because it understood the necessity for a respected, orderly criminal element. Members of this clan are indoctrinated through a series of tests designed to show their unwavering loyalty, support, and ability to generate revenue. Successful candidates gain Connections (Nine Fingers) and Obligations (Nine Fingers: Major). Once you are in Nine Fingers, you are in for life. Fail to help fellow Nine Fingers? Death. Failure to pay your dues? Death, if you're lucky — a suicide mission if you're not.

**Order of the Void:** Masters of life and death, the Order of the Void, known to most as the Void Walkers, are the most feared military unit in the Old Wolf's arsenal. They wear simple black breeches, black tunics trimmed with red and black slippers. They carry no weapons, and most shave their heads, though it is not mandated by the Order. Void Walkers are generally soft-spoken and quiet, unless provoked to rage, and then display a strangely detached brutality that can prove to be quite disconcerting. Most military commanders defer to their wisdom and advice when offered, though that is rare.

## LEADER

High Lord General Kyojin Yuuddai, known as the Old Wolf, is a brilliant strategist, samurai, and was the leader of the Seven. He wants to hold the Empire together, by whatever means necessary. He considers any transgressions to the Old Code a necessary evil. He is a firm believer in ancestor worship, honor, and the ways of the past, but knows the *kikai* are essential for preserving the peace, and thus has come to embrace technology and even help it thrive.

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Lord Kojima Takumi:** This cold man is the Keeper of the Void Walkers. He spends the bulk of his time serving as the eyes and ears of the High Lord General, coordinating these efforts from his small estate just north of Suki, the place of his birth. He is solitary by nature, but does have a weakness for women and wine that he indulges on occasion.

**Lady Haru:** Proprietor of Kouseki, she received her title from Lord Kojima himself on one of his tours of the land. This amuses her, as she is a loyal agent of Jade Creek Court. She shares many secrets of her house with others loyal to her cause.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Kouseki:** The finest geisha house in the province, operated by Lady Haru. Massage, gambling, drinking, and companionship are all available within its walls. The geisha are carefully trained, and most are descended from broken houses.

**Ekou:** The first blood spilled in the last days of the Bright Empire stained this land forever red. It has attracted a small community of pilgrims that grows more each year, and they gather to light candles and pray for the lost souls.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- Some say that the blood pact with the Oni-Kaji must be broken, but first one must find the Celestial Key. Scholars say this relic could only be in the armory beneath the Imperial Palace.
- If a body of a pure soul falls in battle, one can bury them in the red soil of Ekou, mutter the somber words of return, and they will rise again.

# KARASU ROKKU

The bringer of the darkness to Ni-Ten, Karasu Rokku is its own kind of decadence. A land where ancestor-worship is taken to a perverse level, where skins of the enemy are worn and bones of the fallen are worked into the metal, the Children of the Raven are thought of as demons, and travelers to the province are considered mad. While the soldiers and old nobility still practice the rites and rituals of witchcraft, the common person lives in relative peace. There is no threat of great wars on their soil — few would know what to do with this land — but the Witch-King lusts for the throne of the Empire. It is his by blood right. He is in direct line to the throne, and he is why the Iron Dynasty was established. People are naturally suspicious of foreigners inland, though visitors are not uncommon in the port cities. The lure of exotic treasures and ancient magic, and even the foolish notion of slaying the Witch-King have driven adventurers to journey here to meet their doom and feed the ravens. They say no one returns from the wilds of Karasu Rokku.

## SETTLEMENTS

### HISHU

**Population:** 44,000

Wrapped by high walls of baroque design, Hishu is a massive port city filled with danger for those who don't know its catacomb streets and dark back alleys. Exotic spices fill the air in its famous marketplace, and anything can be had for a price.

### HOSHI

**Population:** 750

This remote town is a haven to pirates, cutthroats, and thieves. It trades regularly with Doragon Mizu, giving it a rather eclectic mix of available items. Some travelers come to hear tales about the small unnamed islands off the coast that are said to contain ancient ruins.

### KOHANA

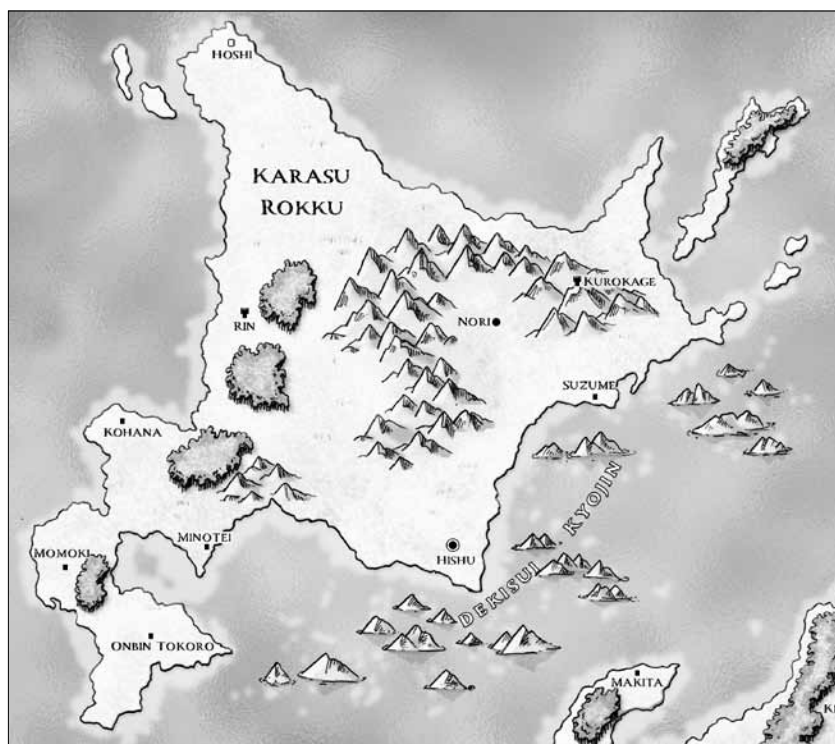
**Population:** 400

This small fishing village is home to Karasu, the finest swordsman in the kingdom. He is only a youth, but many believe he is possessed by the spirits of the ancestors.

### KUROKAGE

**Population:** 500

Known across the land as the Tower of Bone, this is the Witch-King's seat of power, and it is here that the void witches are trained as they have been for



centuries. It is a military base, and here, too, are crafted the giant statues that are whispered to life to fight for his cause. It sits high atop the great mountain, and the only way to reach it is through the ancient arts.

## MINOTEI

**Population:** 400

This fishing hamlet has a history of producing heroes and for creating the first blood circles in Konoyo. The children are all trained from an early age to fight, hunt, and develop their survival instincts. At the age of eleven, they are taken to the mountains to the east and must survive three days on their own before rejoining the community. Over half the children die.

## MOMOKI

**Population:** 250

This community is responsible for managing the great peach orchards, a responsibility handed down by the Witch-King himself. The town boasts a fine blacksmith who dabbles a bit as a gunsmith.

## NORI

**Population:** 19,700

This small city nestled in the valley is beautiful and serene until night falls, and then it becomes a strange place where spirits roam and dark pacts are made. Foreigners are forbidden to come here. Some have defied the laws of the land and made the trek anyway, and have come away changed.

## ONBIN TOKORO

**Population:** 325

A peaceful community of priests who practice martial arts and archery, their number is frequently called upon in times of war. Many of them develop ki mastery from their rigorous training. Visitors are warmly received.

## RIN

**Population:** 400

This watch tower houses soldiers, youba, and dark priests ready to be dispatched across the breadth of Karasu Rokku at a moment's notice. They are the enforcers of the Witch-King's law, and are not to be trifled with.

## SUZUME

**Population:** 250

Despite being located just inside the barrier reefs, this small fishing town is often raided by Doragon Mizu. Two large animated statues of skeletal warriors now guard the port. Youba, awaiting their turn with the Witch-King, live here as well.

## FACTIONS

**Buramisuto:** An ancient order of assassins founded in 688 are headquartered in Nori, but are frequently dispatched to Ni-Ten to conduct missions of import to the kingdom. Trained ninja all, some also have mastered one or more of the elements.

**Kunai:** The chief order of yakuza operates in a shroud of secrecy, as its existence is a threat to the kingdom. Masters of stealth and subterfuge, gang members use a combination of street smarts and ninja technique to amass their wealth. They are very careful about dealing with outsiders when opening the black market up to them. While based in Hishu, the order has tendrils all across Karasu Rokku, and has recently gained a foothold in Sorimizu.

**Kuranei:** A new order of archers, this group is trained in traditional methods of zen archery, making them very deadly. They use black tipped arrows dipped in a poison that causes excruciating pain.

**Meishou:** These crafters are hand-selected by the Sword of the Witch King to sculpt the animated statues that are scattered about the kingdom. They have been working with youba to create fully self-aware golems, but their efforts have met with limited success.

**Youba:** The onmyoji that serve the Witch-King as wives, concubines, and soldiers are deadly mistresses of the void and willingly embrace death, for they feel it brings them closer to truth.

## LEADER

The Witch-King rules from his loft high above the land and rarely travels abroad since he last visited Ni-Ten to propose to his second cousin. He appears to be no more than twenty, but is in his late sixties. Pacts were made in his youth that sealed his fate. After unleashing the darkness into the world, he has felt sorrow, regret, and rage. He wishes to restore the Bright Empire more than anything, but knows he must betray his people to do so — the people who would devour his flesh if they knew his heart's desire.

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Battiri:** The Sword of the Witch-King takes his role very seriously. When not training his men at Rin, he often roams the lands in disguise, serving as hero or villain as the mood suits him. He keeps a close eye on the political landscape in Ni-Ten, and is responsible for all intelligence gathering. Battiri longs to challenge the Witch-King, but fears the youth Karasu may be a better sword than either he or the Witch-King, and he doesn't want to risk his life twice for the same purpose. He hopes to pit the two against each other, and slay the winner at his leisure.

**Karasu:** Only seventeen years of age, this black-haired, sullen youth is a kami-possessed kensei. He keeps much to himself and is being carefully watched by the Witch-King, who fears the boy may one day unseat him.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Dekisui Kyojin:** Known as the Drowned Giants, this immense mountain range sank over eight hundred years ago, and indicates that Karasu Rokku was once a part of the mainland.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- Care should be taken when walking the streets of Hishu alone, for death lurks in the very air, and under no circumstances should a stranger eat food offered freely, nor give their true names.
- Historians say that Dekisui Kyojin will one day rise from the waters, making Ni-Ten whole again.
- Anything the heart desires can be found at the Bazaar of Nori for a price.

# SORIMIZU

Rivers and streams divide the lush lands of Sorimizu, and it is their rich crops and fine cities that time and again drive Hinote Shima to seek to break these easy-going people. To look at its prosperity, one would not think they were in a constant struggle for survival. They tend their fields and still work to rebuild, but, as the gentle oxen, they are deceptively strong, working at a steady, continuous pace to complete their goals. Dangers do exist, however; kappa are abundant in many placid ponds, tengu frequently harass travelers and priests, and oni find refuge in the woods. Sorimizu tends to be methodical, and has made no concerted effort to clear the forests of the dark, and instead looks to heroes to do its work for it, welcoming travelers openly. Prosperity is largely due to this policy, coupled with the Lord General empowering the nobility with the authority to rule as it has always done. In rare cases of abuse, the Lord General gets involved and this is a public spectacle and a reminder for the accused to know his boundaries. Usually he dispatches them in a rare performance of surprising speed and grace belying his girth.

## SETTLEMENTS

### GO-SUTO

**Population:** 300

The Tower of Contemplation stands on the northernmost outcropping of Sorimizu, at the end of a hilly, narrow peninsula traversed by numerous brackish tributaries that make the low-lying areas completely treacherous for foot traffic, and all but impossible for horses and *kikai*. Built in 1288, Go-Suto stands over forty feet in height and is one of the oldest standing structures in Ni-Ten. It is the home of the Lost Brothers and has been the refuge of Tenkei for the last forty years. There are many nests of kappa in the waters about the tower. These nests pose a serious threat to any traveler thinking twice about visiting Go-Suto.

### ISSHO

**Population:** 2500

This quaint little town is home to Michi Academy, one of the finest institutes of higher learning in Konoyo. Their rigorous training includes extensive martial arts and historical studies. Three of the Seven underwent their core training here, before moving on to more advanced studies. Despite the wishes of the Lord General, this is the one remaining martial school that has not been shut down.

### JAIJEN

**Population:** 300



A sleepy little settlement far removed from the battle scarred lands, Jaijen has never directly been impacted by the wars of the rest of the world, though some of its people have. In recent years, it has begun to garner attention as an ideal location for a military outpost.

## KARA

**Population:** 40,000

The capital, known as the Jewel of the Waters, is an enormous fortified city rivaling that of any throughout Konoyo. It houses half a dozen factories that are constantly churning smoke into the air as they turn raw materials into much needed goods. Automated looms, assembly line weapon manufacturing, and a munitions center are among their more notable advances of late. Agricultural processing and storage plants comprise the remaining three. A garrison of kikai is stationed along the Conflux, the great lake formed by the meeting of Two Rivers.

## KINZOKU

**Population:** 4000

Known as “the Stone Anvil” to the locals, Kinzoku houses a disproportionate preponderance of traditional craftsmen who disliked the technological advances and shift to more rigorously enforced governmental policies in larger urban areas. The locals cause few problems and are beneath most notice. From time to time, pressure is exerted on them to pay greater tribute both within



and without. In stoic provincial fashion, they do so, without vocalizing their grievances. In private, they have been stockpiling weapons, armor and other assorted devices, such as handcrafted pistols, giving them a large black market. Kinzoku considers itself a friend to Jade Creek Court, giving active agents easy access to their wares, and discounted rates.

## KUNREI

**Population:** 30,000

An ancient port city, Kunrei is walled on three sides and nestled into high cliff walls to the east. It is a towering city of spires and delicate detail, and was spared the hardships of war. The fleet is stationed here, while the provincial shipyard is located on the southern side of the island. A small contingent of kikai patrol the western reaches of the island, keeping it free from oni, pirates, and ne'er-do-wells.

## NIHANA

**Population:** 750

This small fishing village is unremarkable, except for one fact: it houses the Sleeping Loon, the only known academy of magic within the borders of Sorimizu, which, when all things are considered, makes it pretty remarkable after all. The operations of the Sleeping Loon are overseen by Shimizu Daichi.

## RIRAKKASU

**Population:** 500

A tiny village famous for its merchants and river men, Rirakkasu is also the central headquarters for the Hands of Fate.

## SHINJU

**Population:** 200

Followers of the Old Ways, the Shinju family has a large estate decorated in classic imperial fashion, complete with a full standing court. Dubbed the Wolf Den, Sorimizu allows it to stand, as they have spies within the household closely following any communiqués with Ikusa Kokoro.

## FACTIONS

**Hands of Fate:** An affiliation of murderers, cutthroats, and thieves, the Hands of Fate posit themselves in direct opposition to Nine Fingers, and the two groups are mortal enemies. Hands of Fate was established by Ishida Jiro, the cousin of Nine Fingers clan leader, Ishida Michio. They have no moral compass, wishing to keep the lands in chaos while they reap the rewards. Hands of Fate maintains a stranglehold on the black market throughout the major cities of Kara and Kunrei.

**Lost Brothers:** After the cessation of the Border Wars, many disenfranchised samurai found themselves homeless. Rather than wander the lands without

purpose, the war hero Hiroshi joined the meditative order of the Illuminated located in Go-Suto. Other ronin sought out the sanctuary, and Nakemura Sakura of Jade Creek Court convinced him to organize these lost brothers into some kind of military unit. Hiroshi found wisdom in these words, and left the order of contemplatives to again take up arms. The Lost Brothers are known as heroes to the common people, largely ignored by Sorimizu, and a thorn in the side of “the Wolves” owing to their frequent raids over the mountains, striking at Ikusa Kokoro.

**The Illuminated:** Located in the major cities and scattered throughout the breadth of the province, these thirty-seven scholars travel in their quests to understand what has thrown the balance off in the world, and what can be done to restore it. Though they originally wanted to find a means to awaken the Empress Itoshi, they are now divided concerning the path to choose. The two main leaders are Noshi and Madoka. The thirty-seven meet every spring and fall at Shig’s Tea House in Kara to compare notes.

**Wolf Den:** A group of Imperialist sympathizers, the Wolf Den is located at the Shinju Estate. There are fifty to seventy-five supporters on hand at any time, but only a fraction of them are capable of handling arms. The rest either talk politics or hope to take advantage of Shinju’s generosity, and are willing to put up with the old man’s rambling.

## LEADER

Lord General Kokawa Tomatsu earned the nickname Tsunami when he slew over a hundred enemy soldiers in battle during the Border Wars. He is heavy-set, with silvery white hair, a pot belly, and the hint of a smirk just touching his eyes. He is the undisputed master of the traditional *odachi* and believed to be the fiercest warrior of the Seven. Kokawa believes the time of Empire has passed and refuses, against even the words of his own counsel, to strike into Ikusa Kokoro, only keeping his troops in fighting trim through occasional raids and sporadic exercise regimens.

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Madoka:** A charismatic young scholar and a leading member of the Illuminated, who wants to lift the curse off the Empress. She believes that is the first step towards restoring balance to Ni-Ten, and setting the Bright Empire back on the path to greatness. She spends a great deal of her time in the capital city, but regularly visits Shinju as often as her schedule allows, as she has grown fond of Takamuri Hiroshi.

**Noshi:** A fat little stump of a man, who is as arrogant as he is brilliant. He wears spectacles, disheveled clothes, and while not indifferent to the Empress’ plight, feels that there is perhaps a greater truth in advancing the causes of Sorimizu, and by extension, the Illuminated.

**Shimizu Daichi:** A former imperial sorcerer who managed to escape the Purging. Lord General Kokawa Tomatsu issued a Provincial Edict reestab-

lishing the Starry Arts after the Border Wars began. Daichi was given a full pardon, and is the Sleeping Loon Headmaster with the primary directive of training onmyoji for battle.

**Shinju Mamoru:** A man in his early seventies who remembers how things once were. He longs for the past and the splendid beauty of the Empire, and refuses to let go of the hope that Ikusa Kokoro is doing the right thing. To that end, he is willing to betray his province, his home, for the greater good of the people. He was a general in his younger days, but that honorific was stripped from him after the Lord General's ascension and the subsequent Border Wars. His anger knows no bounds, and he is willing to assist anyone he believes will further his dream of restoring the Empire to its former glory.

**Tenkei:** An ancient scholar who was once known as the Speaker of the Gods. He lives a life of simple isolation in Go-Suto. He is a weathered man with a clean shaven head and brilliant blue eyes, and a temper like an angry oni. He dresses like a simple peasant, and carries no weapons, just his sake bottle and a walking stick.

**Takamuri Hiroshi:** A decorated warrior of advancing years, who faithfully served the Empire before the Akigara Period and the rise of the Seven Swords Consortium. He is disgusted by the corruption and greed of these samurai who serve to only to indulge themselves without regard to their people. As such, Hiroshi actively recruits talented warriors to join his cause of open rebellion against Ikusa Kokoro. He is well connected within Sorimizan circles, and his reputation makes it difficult to take action against him without provoking open war. He is the known leader of the Lost Brothers, and has a bounty on his head of over one hundred dragons at any given time.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Kuranei Kozi:** One of the oldest temples in all of Sorimizu and home to over forty mendicants who spend the bulk of their time traveling and administering to the needs of the downtrodden throughout the lands.

**Twin Hills:** North of Jaijen, is the site of an ancient battlefield where the dead rise when the stars are right.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- Kuranei Kozi, the Red Temple, is said to be more than a just a home to monks, but also a reservoir of great mystical energies.
- Morin, the border forest, is rumored to be haunted by ghosts and tengu. No one should ever travel alone in those woods.
- Rirakkasu is believed by some to be where the “Tortoise” or “slow battle” style of martial arts emerged.

# TAHATA GAKI

This vile land is the most dangerous in all the continent of Ni-Ten. Here, the Veeru has broken apart, and the baku freely walk from one world to the next. It is a land of brackish swamps and cobwebbed forests. Spider folk roam the forests, and those who make their homes here have made their peace as best they can, often performing regular worship and giving tribute to one unearthly master or another to protect them. Little is done for the people — they are left to their own devices. The Lord General is often away, leading campaigns or covert operations into neighboring lands to steal goods and people. Great ruins and sunken cities abound untouched, for the locals have no interest in them, and only the most fool-hardy dare brave the dangers.

## SETTLEMENTS

### KASUMI

**Population:** 420

On the northern border of the province, this village is often used as a staging area for raids into the mountains. Some merchants let their greed overcome their fear, and come to trade here, hoping their coins will protect them. Inferior silks can be had for a fair price, but the best to be had here are both rare and dear.

### KOHAKU

**Population:** 400

Known far and wide for its amber deposits, the crafters of this town are said to be able to catch bits of ki within its yellow-gold depths. Selling and trading of amber with outsiders is strictly forbidden, though other commodities are regularly available.

### MIZUKI

**Population:** 275

Though this port town enjoys the singular quality of being beyond the massive swamps and mire, its citizens have a close relationship to them. The herbalists of Mizuki are able to dredge up rare and wonderful plants from the bogs, and many merchants across Konoyo come here to vie for them.

### RIN

**Population:** 45,000

Screams can be heard echoing across the muddy streets of the ramshackle city known as the House of Pain. The people have no fear of the denizens of the swamp, for what they face is far worse — the baku run this city under the direct authority of the Lord General. Outsiders must tread carefully and



conceal their wealth, or their property may seized by guards at any time. Life is a privilege within these walls, and few outsiders are allowed within them.

## SHIZOKU

**Population:** 300

The last of the samurai of Tahata Gaki held their ground on this sacred land, and over half of them died before the Lord General ceded it to them, saying she didn't want it anyway. The servants spend much of their days shoring up the lands that constantly waste away, while the surviving samurai struggle to honor their ancestors and repel incursions from oni and baku.

## YORI

**Population:** 4,500

Once a beautiful, musical town, the past is a forgotten thing. The people of Yori know only sorrow. Empty geisha houses line the streets amidst abandoned playhouses. Only the gambling dens survive, where life is cheap and sake is cheaper. Hired swords are always available, looking for a way out, regardless of the risks.

## FACTIONS

**The Forgotten:** Onmyoji who posit themselves as nature's caregivers try to mend the spirits of the past, and restore the lush lands where only mire exists. They wander the swamps, identified only by the amber chains about their necks, and press any stranger they encounter for news and gifts.

**Zeizei:** These raiders are based out of Yori and are typically formed to go on suicide missions to gather goods and wreak chaos upon Uma-Ko Ryoudo. The Lord General often leads the forces on its raids.

## LEADER

Lord General Okoridasu longed to be the finest warrior and always took to the battlefield in the full armor of a man. When she became one of the Seven, she shed her disguise and revealed her identity — rather than be impressed, most laughed at her. She contained her scorn and her rage. Neither had any place in the heart of a samurai. Now that she controls Tahata Gaki, she feels slighted, cast aside — she was once of Uma-Ko Ryoudo, displaced by the Lord General. No matter. She makes the people suffer and takes her frustrations out on them. The baku tell her they will make her powerful if only she listens, and she does listen...

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Ibo:** The most powerful baku in the land, Ibo is a master of the five elements, and is convinced that love is the sixth. She seeks to conquer it as well. To that end, she is actually a bit friendly and inquisitive when interacting with lovers and strangers.

**Pesuto:** An old oni who lives in the woods, she is a dangerous trickster who has been known to carry her jokes too far, with often deadly results.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**The Grand Palace:** Located in the center of Rin, this crumbling building stands over forty feet tall and is the highest structure in Rin. It is overrun with vines, and ancient oaks have worked their roots into the foundation. It stands as a reminder of the past, as great handiwork and craftsmanship still shine through it all. Within the palace is a different place, well maintained and full of treasures from across the land.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- One's eyes should not be trusted within the borders of Tahata Gaki — nothing is ever as it seems. Friends become enemies, and enemies become worse. Dangers abound. Preparation is essential in traveling the few settlements, for the people have become monsters themselves. Keep to the low roads and go only where you must. Still, great wealth lies buried in the sunken cities located within, tempting all to risk death or worse.
- Friends can be had in Shizoku, where the Old Ways are preserved and honor still means something. If one needs warriors at one's side, there are worse choices than these men.

# TETSU SENGAKU

A land broken-up with ancient mountains and holy temples, Tetsu Sangaku focuses internally on profiting from war by providing valuable iron ore to other provinces. Freed from the threat of invasion, the people are some of the wealthiest in Ni-Ten, making them a ready target for pirate raids. The temples have been forbidden but allowed to exist, as it is deemed a waste of resources to root them out. Their craftsmanship is legendary, but the troops only get the cast-offs and inferior quality weapons, the best going to export and as payment to the samurai. In the recesses of the mountains tengu abound, constantly railing against both temples and miners. Oni are uncommon, but when they grow to a threatening level, tengu and temple men set aside their differences to defeat a common enemy. Ancient, labyrinthine caves run under the whole of the land, some collapsed due to mining accidents. Rumors of dragons have been whispered, but none have seen such mythical beasts in a thousand years.

## SETTLEMENTS

### ENMUE

#### **Population:** 120

Sequestered in the shadow of the mountains, this ancestral home of the Lord General is in the care of his immediate family. It is lavished with gold leaf and the finest accouterments, and is the most ostentatious estate in all of the land.

### HASHIMOTO

#### **Population:** 380

This estate is considered the gateway of iron, as many ore deals are brokered here. Servants function as both porters and shipwrights as part of their regular duties, and there is even a small tavern and lodging house for those wishing to stay overnight.

### INOUE

#### **Population:** 270

This mining town sits at the base of the Kubome, the iron mountain, which is believed to have a limitless supply of the ore in the ground below.

### KANEKO

#### **Population:** 47,000

This finely crafted city exemplifies function above form. Over half of it is heavily industrialized, with refineries that remove the impurities from the iron before it goes to market. Armors of all makes and provincial design can be had here. Weaponsmiths constantly work at their forges, and engineers oversee the construction of kikai from perches atop tall scaffolds. The city is a



throne of activity and normalcy reminiscent of the old days when the Bright Empire was in its glory.

## **SAMURAKAMI**

**Population:** 350

This small town manufactures black powder as its central industry. A military garrison makes up nearly half its population. Visitors are discouraged, but tolerated.

## **TAKAKI**

**Population:** 18,000

Known for its scholars and fine universities, many provincials send their children here for study in times of peace, though it is known the government often holds them for ransom in times of war. The Library of the Thousand Scrolls is located here, and is a collection of the most influential works that were spared from the ravages of the war.

## **YAMADA**

**Population:** 400

Having refined the tiered growing processes to a high art, the Yamada family has fantastic wealth, but hides it well. A humble estate bounded by high walls, most of its greatest secrets are hidden below in an elaborate underground labyrinth of rooms and treasure vaults.

## **FACTIONS**

**Kinka:** The merchant's guild controls all business within Tetsu Sengaku, whether legitimate or not. It manipulates the economies of other provinces



as well, with some of the finest scholars tasked with keeping up with the projected supply and demand of all goods across the Iron Dynasty. It retains a small standing army to deal with any issues it may have with its employees, and pays regular tribute to the Lord General to see that its business dealings go unimpeded.

**Kouzai:** This guild rivals Kinka in its strength. Comprised of craftsmen and artisans, it constantly wages a war for better wages and working conditions that often erupts into out and out street battles, forcing the government to intercede and fine both parties.

## LEADER

Lord General Akogi drowns his enemies in molten iron and encases them in gold. This is a well known fact. He displays them in his receiving hall. The rest of the palace looks like an immense treasury, with statuary and the finest of paintings adorning the walls. By contrast, his servants look like true peasants, dressed in rags and often dirty. He spends his days deep in thought, or in discussions with Kinka.

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Yokote:** The Lord General's military advisor, this man of middling years and trim build pushes to expand the empire to enrich it, but he is often at odds with Zatto, who dislikes the probabilities of victory. This frustrates Yokote to no end, forcing him to conduct random police actions to generate enough revenue to support his campaigns to the south.

**Zatto:** This bespectacled scholar is one of the most powerful men in all of Tetsu Sengaku, and thus Konoyo. He is of slight build and flawless intellect. He oversees Kinka and has the ear of the Lord General, and is the driving force behind the land's economic greatness.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Sukai:** This mountain temple is just one of a number hidden away in the mountains, but it became well known when its yamabushi single-handedly repelled an effort of invasion by Uma-Ko Ryoudo.

**Tenma:** This orchard grows fruit that is said to make demons sleep and men fearless. It is guarded by angry oni who do not wish the fruit to get out into the world.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- Kubome is said to be the mountain home of the Oni-Kaji. Its peak is constantly shrouded in mists which are believed to be the steam coming off the bellows, and the ringing thunder their hammers working fine metal.
- Gold has been discovered in an ancient sunken city found beneath the mountains bordering Tahata Gaki, and some say a battle between the two provinces is inevitable.

# UMA-KO RYODOU

The people of this province have always had a strong, independent streak. They claimed the Empire needed them more than any other realm. As the breeders of the finest horses, the backbone of a traditional military, this statement was well founded. The collapse of the Bright Empire did little to crush them; the wars and the chaos renewed their fighting spirit, and they abandoned their cities for the most part, and took to the plains. The population centers, known as shadow towns, have become home mainly to the best and worst Konoyo has to offer. Yakuza have set up shop and run things from the shadows, scraps of nobility from across the land live in small estates and luxurious apartments, mercenary groups and bandit kings use them as bases — and the Lord General, known as the Horsemaster to his people, allows it all. Here the focus is on keeping the trade routes clear, travel safe, and the horses well tended. Culminating this process, the gatherings — what others would refer to as impromptu trading posts — are safest of all. Ghosts are common in the shadow towns, and travelers are warned that they are safer beneath a night sky than beneath a roof in these lands, and it is by and large true.

## SETTLEMENTS

### HARA

**Population:** 280

This sacred open air temple also served as the first trading post in the days of the rebuilding. It is attended by lovely maidens and makoto.

### IMAI

**Population:** 475

This town in the center of Uma-Ko Ryoudo is controlled by the Lord General and his men. There is a great well and plenty of stabling. Wild horses are brought here to be broken and tamed.

### KEI

**Population:** 287

Breeding the finest war horses for over five hundred years, the House of Kei is wealthy and well protected by a contingent of military guard.

### KIYOMIZU

**Population:** 144

Each season, the estate hunts the wild stallions of the orchard and captures as many as it can, releasing fillies to replace those they take. They rate horses by seasons: the more seasons a horse can evade them, the cleverer it is, and thus more valuable.



## OGAWA

**Population:** 2700

This town is run by Hakage and his cohorts, men of the Muma. It is one of the most dangerous civilized areas in all of Ni-Ten, though secrets can be learned in the moldering old libraries found here.

## OKAMOTO

**Population:** 168

This military installation is charged with patrolling the outer edges of the bog and preventing invasion from the east. Many battles are fought along the fens.

## SASAKI

**Population:** 22,000

One might think a city governed by disaffected nobility might be run poorly, but Sasaki has grown and prospered. It operates on the traditions of the Old Ways, and a subculture has arisen within its streets. The Horsemaster's forces come and go as they please and are not subject to the city's laws for fear of reprisal, but all other visitors are. In return, Sasaki provides for all the Lord General's military needs — weapons, armor, kikai, and even men.

## SHIBATA

**Population:** 4,600

This town is primarily made up of outcasts with nowhere to go after the wars turned their world upside-down. Deserters have taken it over, and are in constant battles with bandits who would wrestle it from them. Periods of peace are punctuated with sudden violent outbursts that paint the streets with blood.

## YOKOYAMA

**Population:** 300

The Lord General stations his most seasoned soldiers here at Yokoyama and frequently visits this spot. The tower serves as home and school to his ganso, onmyoji, and priests. The walls are reinforced with thick iron on the inside, and several cannons (like those found on kikai) are mounted on turrets. This tower has never fallen.

## FACTIONS

**Datenshi:** The nomad yakuza of Uma-Ko Ryoudo ride like demons, making night raids into trading posts, villages, and even the temple of Hara itself. They rarely sleep, keeping themselves awake with the juice of the kuri bean that serves as a stimulant.

**Muma:** A dark cult founded in Tahata Gaki and sent into Uma-Ko Ryoudo to cause trouble, this group does just that. They serve the kami of the void, and can speak with — and raise — the dead. They have abandoned their duties and wish only to bring up the sleeping masters buried far beneath the lost seals.

## LEADER

Lord General Ibaru keeps himself in fine form with a daily training regimen and is constantly on the go, parading around the trading posts and entertaining ladies across the land. He is the most down-to-earth of the Seven, but keeps a dark secret — he was raised in Tahata Gaki. He is the only Lord General to have found inner peace, and he will go to any lengths to keep it.

## CITIZENS OF NOTE

**Hakage:** This onmyoji is a master of the void and a speaker to the dead. He commands respect from baku, and has a number of them as personal bodyguards and servants.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Aori Bukemori:** The blue bamboo forest is perhaps the most transformed place in all of Ni-Ten. Once it was a normal stand of bamboo, but it soon was overrun by strange storms and lightning that lasted for years. When the great storms subsided, the forest of exotic bamboo was found there. It is believed that the Veeru was weakened, if not destroyed entirely here. Few folks go in, and fewer come out.

## WHISPERS & RUMORS

- The great libraries once were found in Uma-Ko Ryoudo, but many were sacked by Tetsu Sengaku during the Border Wars. However, Ogawa still stands, and it contains many scrolls of the masters.
- The best place to get a horse is to catch one in the forest of Kiyomizu, as these make steeds of legend. However, if you are seen with the horse before it is broken, certain death awaits.



# KESSHI TALES

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*Way of the Ronin* encompasses a world of action, adventure, and intrigue. In the pages that follow, we guide you through the steps we take to create compelling stories, and include a few adventures to get your gang swinging swords, muttering magic incantations, and fending off ninja in no time!

## KESSHI TALE MAKER

The following tables aid the Sensei in creating a Kesshi Tale for immediate use. Remember, the more time you put into developing your scenarios the better, and it is thus recommended that the wise Sensei roll a few of these ahead of time, flesh them out a bit, and keep them tucked away in his voluminous sleeves, just in case. Doing so allows him the opportunity to create a compelling pattern of intricate adventure pleasing to both himself and his players.

To randomly create a Kesshi Tale, you will roll for a *Hook* to determine how the heroes get involved, a *Lynchpin* to determine the central focus of the tale, a *Central Location* and *Proximity* to see where the tale takes place, a *Plot Type* for the main meat of the scenario, and a *Plot Complication*, because nothing is ever simple.

### HOOK

| d6 | Hook                          |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Caught Up in Events           |
| 2  | Mistaken Identity             |
| 3  | Motivation                    |
| 4  | Supporting Cast (Ally/Friend) |
| 5  | Rumor                         |
| 6  | Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival)   |

**Caught up in Events:** The heroes find themselves in the middle of the plot, whether they like it or not.

**Mistaken Identity:** One or more of the characters has been wrongly identified or contacted regarding the lynchpin.

**Motivation:** The Sensei drives the story forward through the use of one or more of the kesshi's Hindrances, such as loyalty, greed, or heroism.

**Supporting Cast (Ally/Friend):** Someone familiar and friendly with one or more of the heroes asks them to look into the state of affairs revolving around the lynchpin.

**Rumor:** Through the grapevine or words on the wind, the characters' curiosity is aroused.

**Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival):** Someone who holds the kesshi in disdain comes to them to investigate the matter concerning the lynchpin.

## LYNCHPIN

The lynchpin is the central focus of the entire tale, though it may never make an appearance at all. It is not necessarily a protagonist, though it (or its agents) can be. Roll on this table and then go to the appropriate Lynchpin sub-table, starting below.

| <b>d6</b> | <b>LYNCHPIN</b> |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 1-4       | Person          |
| 5-6       | Creature        |
| 6         | Object          |

### LYNCHPIN - PERSON

The lynchpin is always a Wild Card. Determine exactly who they are on the Supporting Cast table (p. 197).

| <b>d6</b> | <b>PERSON</b>                        |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1-2       | Supporting Cast (Friendly)           |
| 3         | Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival)          |
| 4         | Supporting Cast (Military/Political) |
| 5         | Supporting Cast (Rich/Noble)         |
| 6         | Organization                         |

**Supporting Cast (Friendly):** This person is someone who begins with a positive reaction to the heroes, or has existing connections with them.

**Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival):** This character is someone who begins with a negative reaction to the heroes, and wants to best them in some way. They may be past acquaintances or colleagues who have had a falling-out.

**Supporting Cast (Military/Political):** This individual is someone either connected to or working directly for a military force, or involved in politics in some way, shape, or form.

**Supporting Cast (Rich/Noble):** This fortunate soul was either born into or has acquired great wealth, power, or position, and begins with a neutral attitude towards the kesshi.

**Organization:** This group can range from a benign brotherhood of monks to a sisterhood of yakuza. The Sensei can either create an organization or roll on the Supporting Cast table (p. 197) to determine the central focus of the group. Its exact size is at his discretion.

## LYNCHPIN - CREATURE

The Sensei has a great deal of latitude with the direct involvement of an entity in the storyline. The more powerful and intelligent entities should be pulling the strings from the shadows. If the Sensei wants a more common creature type, he may select one himself by referring to the Creatures of Konoyo section beginning on page 249.

| d20   | CREATURE                                     |
|-------|--|
| 1     | Tsukumogami                                  |
| 2-4   | Henge  |
| 5-9   | Yokai  |
| 10-12 | Obake  |
| 13    | Magasasu (to be possessed by an evil spirit) |
| 14-20 | Oni  |





**Tsukumogami:** By no means enchanted, these artifact spirits vary radically in appearance, depending on the type of item they originate from, as well as the condition that item is in. More details may be found in the Creatures of Konoyo section, beginning on page 249.

| <b>d10    TSUKUMOGAMI ARTIFACTS</b> |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1                                   | Lantern            |
| 2                                   | Eating Utensil     |
| 3                                   | Plate              |
| 4                                   | Furniture          |
| 5                                   | Tool               |
| 6                                   | Drinking Vessel    |
| 7                                   | Musical Instrument |
| 8                                   | Clothing           |
| 9                                   | Keg                |
| 10                                  | Holy Object        |

**Henge:** Shapeshifting animals of a mischievous nature, they often imitate women. More details may be found in the Creatures of Konoyo section, beginning on page 249.

| <b>d8    HENGE</b> |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| 1                  | Tanuki   |
| 2                  | Kitsune  |
| 2                  | Hebi     |
| 4                  | Mujina   |
| 5                  | Bakeneko |
| 6                  | Okami    |
| 7                  | Jorogumo |
| 8                  | Inugami  |

**Yokai:** Travelers in Konoyo refer to strange, unclassifiable creatures as yokai. Often unique in nature, yokai may possess the traits of other creature types and are easily confused with oni by less seasoned kesshi. The Sensei should generate the yokai using the Creature Creation tables (beginning on p. 206).

**Obake:** There are two main types of obake. One is a living thing or supernatural creature that has temporarily taken on the guise of a ghost, while the second type, referred to more precisely as bakeneko, is an actual spirit of the dead. From a Sensei’s perspective, they operate the same way mechanically.

Though their motivations can certainly be different, the two are virtually indistinguishable, so the type of obake is at the Sensei's discretion.

#### **d20 PERSON OR CREATURE**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1-15  | Person (Roll on the Supporting Cast table p. 197)      |
| 16-20 | Creature (Roll again on the preceding Creatures table) |

**NOTE:** *The person or creature gains the Monstrous Template: Ghostly.*

**Magasasu:** Not all kami are benign. Some kami lust after the flesh and possess the bodies of innocents or an animal to satisfy their physical desires. Roll on the Person or Creature table above.

**Note:** The person or creature gains the Monstrous Template: Kami-Possessed, or the Sensei may instead roll on the Creature Creation tables (beginning on p. 206) for a more fully developed kami.

**Oni:** Demons come in all shapes, sizes, and have predilections ranging from human flesh to the terror in a young girl's eyes. The Sensei should generate the oni using the Creature Creation tables (beginning on p. 206).

## LYNCHPIN - OBJECT

#### **d6 OBJECT**

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1 | Artifact         |
| 2 | Invention        |
| 3 | Art Object       |
| 4 | Military Object  |
| 5 | Relic            |
| 6 | Book / Knowledge |

**Artifact:** An ancient object of any of the other types.

**Invention:** A device built for a specific purpose.

**Art Object:** An article created primarily for its aesthetic worth.

**Military Object:** An item made for war: it can be made by man or monster, or forged by the ancient Celestial craftsmen, the Oni-Kaji.

**Relic:** A holy object of any type.

**Book/Knowledge:** Whether a bound book, a tattered pamphlet, or the scribbles of a madman on a prison wall, there is a tantalizing bit of secret lore for those who seek it out.

## LOCATION

The main focus of where the story takes place can be every bit as important as what it is about. Roll on this table as many times as needed to flesh out your adventure.

| d6 | LOCATION                    |
|----|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Angura                      |
| 2  | Battlefield                 |
| 3  | Castle/Estate               |
| 4  | Exotic                      |
| 5  | Important Building/Landmark |
| 6  | Population Center           |
| 7  | Residence/Lair              |
| 8  | Ruins                       |
| 9  | Temple                      |
| 10 | Wilderness                  |



**Angura:** Any complex located below ground — a dungeon, sunken city, or forgotten tomb — is known to travelers as angura. Often home to things that fear the light of day, or worse yet, refuse to die, an angura can contain great treasure or links to the past.

**Battlefield:** Whether ancient, recent, or current, the battlefield is often home to hungry ghosts and oni that feed upon ancient misery and fresh pain.

**Castle/Estate:** Ranging from grandiose to crumbling decrepitude, castles and estates are typically home to the rich and noble classes, be they merchant or samurai. Castles can be found throughout the countryside, while estates are more common on the outskirts of developed regions, with some actually located within the larger cities.

**Exotic:** Though magic in the hands of man is waning, mystical elements still struggle for survival, and sometimes this manifests

— castles appearing overnight upon mountains that never were, or a ghost temple on the roadside that leads to places far beyond. Other strange places are permanent fixtures and have been for centuries, such as Aori Bukemori along the eastern seaboard, and Seishin, where it is said the Oni-Kaji work unceasingly.

**Important Building/Landmark:** Ranging from the Imperial Palace in Ikusa Kokoro to the Sky Temple of Anrui, these places are generally well known, to the locals at least, if not across the whole of Konoyo.

**Population Center:** Villages, towns, cities, and even the moving trading towns of Uma-Ko-Ryoudo all count as population centers. Any permanent or semi-permanent structure falls in this category. The Sensei can particularize it even more to include those places that might otherwise seem rather ordinary — a tea house, a merchant square, or the theater — for an intriguing change of pace.

**Residence/Lair:** A home of unassuming appearance, a residence is the place where anyone (or anything) lays their head, be they peasant, priest, oni, or beast.

**Ruins:** During the war that ushered in the Empty Throne period, many villages, cities, temples, and towers were shattered. The shifting geography caused famous towns to vanish, and long-buried secrets to rise to the surface. Many elders recall the stories of places from their youth, and every community has their secrets to share, but few dare brave the dangers lurking in such places.

**Temple:** A place of spiritual or physical enlightenment, or sometimes both, a temple is the home of the holy, or at least those who aspire to be. As dojo, with the exception of heya (sumo training halls), were officially outlawed by Imperial decree at the end of the last age, some weapon masters donned robes and made temples their new home. Some temples contain mountain priests who are masters of various martial arts, and do not trust strangers easily.

**Wilderness:** Woods, forests, cave systems, and mountain ranges are all included here. These are the lands away from the safe roads and havens of civilization. Travelers beware.

## PROXIMITY

How far away the central location of your story is from the characters can be determined on the table below. Should you rather leave it entirely up to fate, you can skip this table and roll on the Provinces table instead.

| d6 PROXIMITY |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1            | Local      |
| 2-3          | Regional   |
| 4-5          | Provincial |

## **d6    PROXIMITY**

---

6      Konoyo

**Local:** Within an hour or two of travel by foot.

**Regional:** Within a day or two of travel by foot.

**Provincial:** One or more provinces away.

**Konoyo:** Anywhere in the lands the Sensei deems suits his story best.

## **PROVINCES**

### **d20    PROVINCE**

---

1-10    Local

11      Regional

12      Ato

13      Doragon Mizu

14      Hinote Shima

15      Ikusa Kokoro

16      Karasu Rokku

17      Sorimizu

18      Tahata Gaki

19      Tetsu Sengaku

20      Uma-Ko Ryoudo

## **MATTERS OF STATE**

If your game is set in the current age, there is the looming threat of war. This can be as pronounced as you desire, ranging from something in the background that has little impact on the characters' lives, to occasional trouble with minor skirmishes and squabbles, to the characters getting caught up in the grand sweeping problems of border wars and full scale invasion.

The use of this table is entirely optional. The Sensei can use it to add flavor and depth to his game, or select one that is most appropriate to his tale. He is free to add bonuses to this roll as tensions rise to reflect the increased likelihood of military action(s).

### **d20            MATTERS OF STATE**

---

1-10      All's Quiet

11-16     Rumors of War

17-19     Clashing Swords

20+      Blood Falls Like Rain

**All's Quiet:** Everything is in a relative state of calm. Peace has broken out across the land, and there is little visible military activity. In these times, any given province may be licking its wounds from a recent defeat, celebrating a recent victory, or secretly preparing for upcoming engagements. In any case, the lands are easily traveled and borders are crossed with little difficulty.

**Rumors of War:** Peace is an uneasy thing to keep, and diplomatic relations are delicate at best. Military forces are present along the borders and in major population centers. Elite forces practice military drills throughout the land under the guise of regular patrols. It is safe to assume political intrigues are rife.

**Clashing Swords:** The Lord Generals embrace insult easily, using it as an excuse to flex their muscles. When things have reached this level, talk is of little use and border skirmishes are regular occurrences. Threats of out-and-out war loom on the horizon. There is a heavy military presence along the borders and in major population centers. Kikai and other special forces are strategically positioned throughout the land, and are prevalent in port cities.



Elite forces frequently conduct raids into enemy territories with much fanfare. The heavily patrolled borders force people to gain egress under the cover of night or through remote wilds if they aren't beyond reproach (such as nobles and emissaries).

**Blood Falls Like Rain:** Major military actions are under way. The Lord General can be seen amassing his troops and giving speeches. Kikai and special branches put on public displays of force. In these trying times, uprisings are frequent, as opportunistic nobles and samurai with secret agendas may seek to expand their own power. War is everywhere, within the borders and without, and kikai perform regular patrols throughout the whole of the land — it is not uncommon to see them in fishing villages and towns of little strategic importance. Border wars are common as are full scale military invasions. No one is permitted to enter or leave a province as borders are made fully secure. Sea travel is restricted, and trade goods may be held at a premium. Getting in and out requires serious connections or deep pockets, usually both.

## PLOT TYPE

| d20 | TYPE            |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1   | Quest           |
| 2   | Adventure       |
| 3   | Pursuit         |
| 4   | Rescue          |
| 5   | Escape          |
| 6   | Revenge         |
| 7   | Mystery         |
| 8   | Rivalry         |
| 9   | Temptation      |
| 10  | Metamorphosis   |
| 11  | Transformation  |
| 12  | Maturation      |
| 13  | Love            |
| 14  | Forbidden Love  |
| 15  | Sacrifice       |
| 16  | Discovery       |
| 17  | Wretched Excess |
| 18  | Ascension       |
| 19  | Descension      |

**Quest:** The heroes seek out the lynchpin. They undergo trials and tribulations as they travel across the land, visiting people and places, each with its own complication before finding who (or what) they are after (if ever). Investigation and intellectual challenges are every bit as common as subterfuge and swordplay. The Sensei should challenge the kesshi to question their beliefs, and present them with interesting choices and dilemmas. Exploration is often the watchword in this type of adventure, as the characters often travel to remote and exotic locations in pursuit of their goal.

**Adventure:** This type of scenario immediately thrusts the kesshi into the action and often begins “in medias res”. The plot hook comes quickly, followed by a number of complications over the course of play. While the adventure frequently shifts between many locales, it can vary wildly from being quite similar to a quest in its location changes (though loaded with more physical than mental challenges), or can focus entirely on just one place and goal, such as getting the lynchpin from the abandoned temple in the forest, or the home of a greedy merchant. The obstacles to getting there and back can be as convoluted as the Sensei finds necessary to weave an enjoyable tale.

**Pursuit:** The kesshi must either evade or capture the lynchpin, as appropriate. For example, if the lynchpin is an item, the heroes may seek to keep it out of the hands of the onmyoji lusting after its power. If the lynchpin is a creature, they may be trying to track it back to its lair to end its reign of terror upon a small village. In this scenario type, the kesshi are either the hunters or the hunted, and the roles can often change over the course of play as events unfold.

**Rescue:** The characters must rescue the lynchpin (or its potential victims) from someone or something (this can be determined with another random roll) at the Sensei’s discretion. For example, a diplomat travelling across the wildlands may have been captured by bandits and must be saved to prevent the wholesale destruction of a village.

**Escape:** Someone or something has captured the heroes, and they must fight for their freedom. A paranoid noble might think they’re asking too many questions about him and throw them into the dungeons. A group of oni may have them trapped within a castle, or they might even be trying to somehow rid themselves of a cursed item that keeps returning, despite their best efforts.

**Revenge:** Though honor is thought to be lost to many in the lands of Konoyo, there are many who still hold to it, as a traveler might hold onto his coat on a winter’s day. Someone has been offended by the actions of the characters, or those close to them, and seeks vengeance. Alternately, someone may seek out the kesshi to be to the tools of revenge. Regardless, the lynchpin is at the center of it all. For example, could it be a shapeshifting oni seeking to cause chaos and pit one side against the other, and it’s all just some horrible misunderstanding? It’s up to our heroes to find out.



**Mystery:** Legends and lore abound in the enchanted lands of Konoyo. It is difficult to turn over a stone without discovering one. This type of tale demands deliberation and careful consideration, as it is difficult to run impromptu without proper planning. The Sensei presents some enigma to the heroes, who must then set out with action and intellect to peel back the veil and decipher the clues.

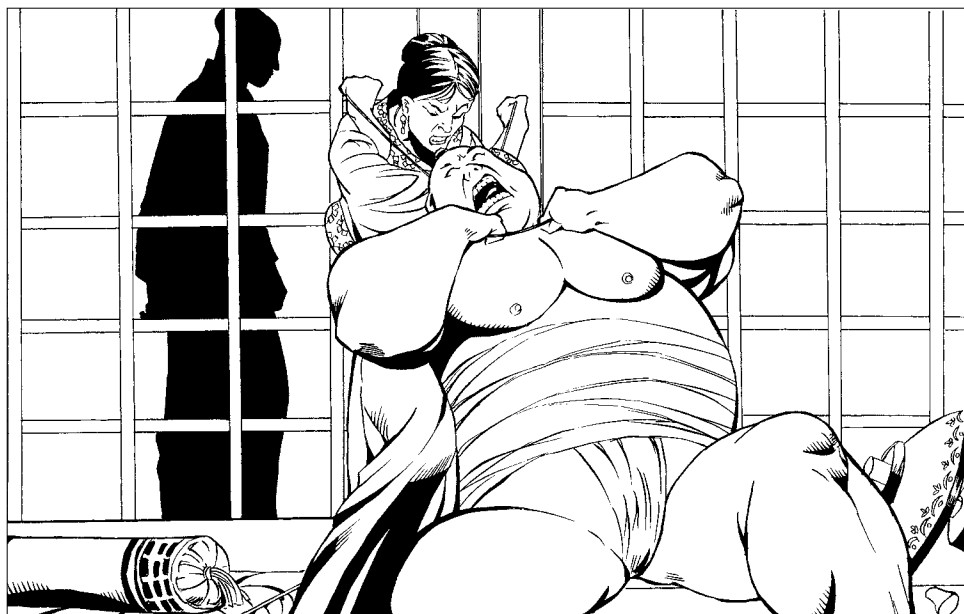
The lynchpin of the scenario can serve in whatever function the Sensei desires, but is ultimately the root cause of the mystery. This scenario requires critical thinking and often regular interactions with any number of NPCs. Multiple clues should be made available to drive the story forward, with a mix of complications that can send the kesshi down various paths. The key is to keep a definite focus on driving the story forward, and to remember that action is a great tool for doing so. Are the heroes about to discover the secret lair of the local yakuza gang? If so, the gang might suddenly put out a bounty on the characters, or hire a ronin to put the matter, and the characters, to rest once and for all.

**Rivalry:** Tensions abound in Konoyo. With the various factions often at odds against one another, be they neighboring provinces, lords seeking to expand their power bases, or the various shadow organizations operating on the fringes of society (such as ninja clans, yakuza gangs, and so on), there is always trouble brewing just under the surface. Depending upon the lynchpin, hook, and locale, our heroes can find themselves opposed to old friends (such as trying to recover a lost relic before the Band of Seven does), allied with one faction (such as fending off bandits from a small village), or caught somewhere in-between (the kesshi are exploring an abandoned temple when two warring factions decide it would make an excellent outpost).

**Temptation:** The lynchpin holds the promise of something — great knowledge, power, or wealth — in exchange for transgressing normal societal mores or the boundaries of good sense. The darkness that has blackened the heart of Konoyo has corrupted more than one mortal, and demons often offer up quick paths to success that lead to eternal damnation. If that were not enough, the Celestials—the ancient gods who have abandoned the lands— sit far removed in their lofty thrones, and send out kami to test the resolve of man. The characters may be tempted themselves, or get drawn into the tale by someone who has carelessly made a dark pact.

**Metamorphosis:** This plot focuses on physical change. In Konoyo, this can take many forms. People can change as a result of a cursed relic, an invention malfunctioning, or the darkness of the land seeping into them. The land itself has changed in the past century, so our heroes may want to explore the mountain that erupted from the earth the night before. With kami, oni, tengu, ghosts, and mischievous kitsune running about, anything is possible.

**Transformation:** This plot deals with the internal workings of a character and works especially well for those occasions when political intrigues take center stage. The lynchpin serves to provide a finer edge to one or more kesshi, offering greater insight into their own characters and the world around them.



A difficult one to pull off, it can be supremely gratifying to impact the kesshi's relationships with their world and those within it. As might be expected, robust roleplaying challenges abound. How well do the heroes know their patron, Lord Oninoshi? Would it surprise them to know he is both an exile from Karasu Rokku and an ally to Jade Creek Court? The impact of such a plot usually has ripple effects in subsequent campaign play, so deliberate on how great a transformation you want to put into play.

**Maturation:** Someone or something is growing up. In some stories this can be a joyous thing. And in *Konoyo*, it can be. However, that is usually not the case. Perhaps an old oni needs to pass on its power to the firstborn son of noble blood? What of the smoldering dragon egg that is carefully nurtured in Hinote Shima? How would the balance of power shift then? What if the mad ganso in the woods has suddenly perfected his differential engine, and it contains the Celestial spark? Even a treasured katana displayed in the diplomat's office may have needed time to draw in enough mystical energy before it could fulfill its long-dead master's purpose.

**Love:** The lynchpin determines the type of love — is it obsession (as with an object), eros (as with a person), or does it enter some stranger territories (with a creature as the focus)? Our heroes enter the story and have to sort out all the details. Love in *Konoyo*, to put it simply, is complicated — especially when one considers the tangled web of personages, provinces, and politics. Are the kesshi out to help two lovers from warring clans come together? Are they hired to keep them apart? Is it real love, or is it merely masking some more malicious intent, such as the young geisha girl's adulation for the fat, balding

silk merchant? Alternately, one of the characters is the actual focus of another's attention for better or ill (as this other might certainly use any and all resources at their disposal to see that their love is required).

**Forbidden Love:** There is little that is forbidden in Konoyo, but the mixture of demon blood and man nears the top of the list for all cultures. Forbidden love can be between man and a supernatural creature, man and machine, or man's worship of things far worse. When an object is the central focus, perhaps it is something gifted from one to another to cement their bond, or a person has an unnatural attachment to the device that is destroying their commu-

nity. Is the Lord General of Tahata Gaki offering his firstborn to the shadow oni to create a binding pact? You can turn this around as well. What if one of the kitsune fell in love with an explorer and returned to civilization? What of a ghost that possesses a small child and refuses to surrender the body? With many creatures capable of shapeshifting and strong spirit magic, anything is possible.

**Sacrifice:** What is heroic adventure without the potential for sacrifice? This plot type generally focuses on the performance of a selfless deed, either by the characters or their companions, or alternately, one that the heroes must prevent. Will the noble kensei hold his sword to preserve honor? Will the honest diplomat lie to save lives and prevent an incident? Will the characters take the small child to the mountaintop to surrender it to the Oni-



Kaji? Shall the ganso give away his finest creation to the enemy or face destruction? Sacrifice is a common theme throughout Konoyo, with becoming enemies of the state to restore the Bright Empire to glory being the greatest one of all.

**Discovery:** There are two main branches of this plot type in *Way of the Ronin*. One is the introduction of an item or person that takes the kesshi into an action-oriented adventure quite similar to a quest, only in this case it is a quest for truth, and the focus is more intellectual than physical. However, forces generally want to keep their secrets to themselves. Ultimately, this game leads them down an investigative pathway whereby information about the lynchpin is revealed that eventually results in the uncovering of even greater truths. Is the dagger found in the back of the geisha's neck just a dagger or does it reveal that Iron Fire is again in the region? Why kill this girl? Could she have been a secret spy with orders of her own, or a disaffected member of Iron Fire? What of the Red Master whose name keeps cropping up? Is he really just the contemplative he professes to be? Every question should raise two more, until resolution is finally achieved or the characters abandon their journey. Intersperse with frequent swordplay and an occasional mystical element to keep the action high.

**Wretched Excess:** With the old class structure shattered, opportunity for corruption is legion at every level. Fat merchants break trade agreements and line their pockets with coin from deals struck in the darkness with yakuza, who run vast black market networks. Ganso have made some tasks trivial for the rich, and this causes the poor to grow poorer. The people of each province have distinct vices, and the elements that come to the fore in this type of tale involve those who have so indulged their sins that they have become unbound by social mores and are worse than the monsters in the wilds. The lynchpin should serve to contrast the choice of the characters to embrace the Way of the Ronin, and free themselves from the very machine that threatens to devour their souls.

**Ascension:** This plot focuses on the rise to power and can be gradually interwoven amidst other tales. On its own merit, this theme can easily capture a session of game play or encompass the entirety of a campaign. There are those out there who seek to control things through deception and duplicity, and others who cloak their causes in the armor of truth with a sword of justice, such as Jade Creek Court. Will the characters intercede to enable truth to prevail, or do they prefer the status quo of a country built upon lies and the death of tradition? The heroes can serve as pawns in the service of a lord or lady with aspirations of making a difference when they gain enough favor, but will it be too late when the opportunity comes, or will they be satisfied with title and land of their own? Will they make a difference or succumb to creature comforts? Will the new leaders be any better than those they moved to replace, or will things grow worse?

**Descension:** The spiral downward is a plot type that is easily touched upon by the Sensei. The lynchpin can be a path of destruction causing madness and decay, ruin and death all around it. A once-noble scholar can be corrupting his students with half-truths, an ancient cursed katana may cause its owner to perform dark deeds, or a makoto may have succumbed to temptation and calls upon the spirits with selfishness in her heart.

## PLOT COMPLICATION

| d10 | COMPLICATION                                  |
|-----|---|
| 1   | Supernatural                                  |
| 2   | Person (Roll on Supporting Cast Table p. 197) |
| 3   | Betrayal                                      |
| 4   | Trap/Ambush                                   |
| 5   | Rescue Supporting Cast                        |
| 6   | Chase   |
| 7   | Natural Hazard                                |
| 8   | Shock/Revelation                              |
| 9   | Discovery                                     |
| 10  | Political/Military                            |

**Supernatural:** Something seeks to obstruct the heroes' path to success.

**Person:** Someone causes problems for the characters.

**Betrayal:** Someone close to the kesshi turns on them at a critical moment.

**Trap/Ambush:** Someone or something poses a very real threat to the party's survival.

**Rescue Supporting Cast:** An associate of one or more of the heroes gets into trouble and requires them to set aside other matters to aid him.

**Chase:** During the course of the tale, the kesshi find themselves involved in a chase. Whether they are the pursuers or the pursued depends upon the type of story they find themselves in.

**Natural Hazard:** A physical obstacle presents itself to the heroes, and they must surmount it in order to proceed.

**Shock/Revelation:** The characters learn something that shakes their beliefs.

**Discovery:** The heroes find someone or something is not what it seems, and this knowledge forces them to reconsider what has proceeded beforehand.

**Political/Military:** The kesshi have been determined to be either allies or adversaries of local government or military agencies, and must perform some task or prove their innocence for the group in question.

# ALLIES

Typically, one or more supporting cast members are interwoven into an adventure to help the heroes on their journey. Roll on the Supporting Cast Table to find out who is willing to help them. Roll on the Provinces Table (p. 188) to determine where the character is from.

| <b>d100</b> | <b>SUPPORTING CAST</b> |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 1-2         | Animal Handler         |
| 3-5         | Archaeologist          |
| 6-9         | Artisan                |
| 10-13       | Ashigaru               |
| 14-15       | Athlete                |
| 16-19       | Bandit                 |
| 20-21       | Bodyguard              |
| 22-25       | Craftsman              |
| 26-29       | Emissary               |
| 30-31       | Engineer               |
| 32-36       | Entertainer            |
| 37-40       | Ganso                  |
| 41          | Kikai Crewman          |
| 42-44       | Litigator              |
| 45-47       | Makoto                 |
| 48-51       | Merchant               |
| 52-54       | Military Officer       |
| 55-57       | Ninja                  |
| 58          | Ninja Master           |
| 59-62       | Noble                  |
| 63-65       | Onmyoji                |
| 66-68       | Peasant                |
| 69-71       | Physician              |
| 72-74       | Priest                 |
| 75-77       | Ronin                  |
| 78-80       | Samurai                |
| 81-83       | Scholar                |
| 84-86       | Soldier                |
| 87-89       | Warrior                |

| <b>d100</b> | <b>SUPPORTING CAST</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 90-92       | Wiseman  |
| 93-94       | Woodsman   |
| 95-96       | Writer   |
| 97-98       | Yakuza   |
| 99-100      | Roll a d4, ignoring duplicate results as they arise:   |
| Special*    | 1 <b>Ghost:</b> The character gains the Monstrous Template: Ghostly<br>2 <b>Nobility:</b> Adds the High Edge to the character, making him noble. Should they already possess this, they are Most High.<br>3 <b>Oni:</b> The character gains the Monstrous Template: Demon-Blooded or may fully develop the person on the Corrupted Humans tables below.<br>4 <b>Youth:</b> The character gains the Young Hindrance. All attributes drop 1 die type, but the character gains 1 Fortune. |

*\*The special quality adds an overlay to the supporting cast member. This quality can be rolled more than once, so you could, potentially, have all four of them.*

## THE CORRUPTED

Whether touched by a mad kami or tainted by the land itself, the corrupted are humans whose flaws are amplified ten-fold. There is a darkness that is gnawing away at the heart of the former Bright Empire, turning heroes into tyrants and beasts. Any character of this nature gains the following new edge:

### CORRUPTED

This character is so twisted, he no longer suffers the effects of Fear nor can he be Intimidated. This is identical to the Combat Edge: Mythic Hero.

| <b>d10</b> | <b>RANK</b> |
|------------|-------------|
| 1          | Extra       |
| 2-3        | Novice      |
| 4-5        | Seasoned    |
| 6-7        | Veteran     |
| 8-9        | Heroic      |
| 10         | Legendary   |

A d6 roll determines sex (1-3 Male, 4-6 Female) and a roll on the Supporting Cast table (p. 197) indicates their baseline statistics, abilities, and skills.

| RANK      | HINDRANCES | EDGES | MINOR GIFTS | MAJOR GIFTS |
|-----------|------------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| Extra     | 1          | 1     | 1           | —           |
| Novice    | 2          | 2     | 2           | —           |
| Seasoned  | 2          | 3     | 2           | —           |
| Veteran   | 2          | 3     | 2           | 1           |
| Heroic    | 2          | 4     | 3           | 1           |
| Legendary | 2          | 5     | 3           | 2           |

**Extra:** Slightly touched by the dark, this individual has minor powers, but is struggling with his twisted nature.

**Novice:** This person has been corrupted to the point that he commits self-serving acts on a regular basis, but may still maintain a civil appearance should the need arise.

**Seasoned:** This person no longer cares what is right or wrong, as long as it furthers his agenda. He is known in his community for his ambiguous acts.

**Veteran:** This character is known throughout the land for acts of great evil. Depending on the province, he may have a bounty on his head or be praised for his mystical strength.

**Heroic:** Greatly altered by dark forces, this individual is known throughout the lands for his evil might and deeds.

**Legendary:** This individual has left his humanity behind, embracing what he has become. He may be unrecognizable as having ever been human. Alternately, he may be able to conceal his grotesqueries and power altogether, preferring to operate through others.





## HINDRANCES TABLE

Roll a percentile die and consult the following chart to determine the character's Hindrances. If you roll the same Hindrance more than once, disregard the second result and roll again. See the Considering the Corrupted (p. 204) for information on how to use the individual's Hindrances to build a distinctive character for your villain.

| <b>d100</b> | <b>HINDRANCES</b>       |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 01-03       | All Thumbs              |
| 04-07       | Anemic                  |
| 08-11       | Arrogant                |
| 12-15       | Bad Eyes (minor)        |
| 16-17       | Bad Eyes (major)        |
| 18-20       | Bad Luck                |
| 21-23       | Big Mouth               |
| 24-25       | Clueless                |
| 26-27       | Code of Honor           |
| 28-30       | Curious                 |
| 31-33       | Death Wish              |
| 34-36       | Delusional (minor)      |
| 37-38       | Delusional (major)      |
| 39-41       | Elderly                 |
| 42-44       | Greedy (minor)          |
| 45-47       | Greedy (major)          |
| 48-50       | Hard of Hearing (minor) |
| 51          | Hard of Hearing (major) |
| 52-54       | Lame                    |
| 55-57       | Loyal                   |
| 58-60       | Mean                    |
| 61-63       | Obese                   |
| 64-66       | One Arm                 |
| 67-69       | One Eye                 |
| 70-72       | One Leg                 |
| 73-75       | Outsider                |
| 76-78       | Overconfident           |
| 79-81       | Small                   |

**d100     HINDRANCES**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 82-84 | Stubborn                                     |
| 85-87 | Ugly   |
| 88-90 | Vengeful (minor)                             |
| 91-92 | Vengeful (major)                             |
| 93-95 | Wanted (minor)                               |
| 96-97 | Wanted (major)                               |
| 98-99 | Roll again and add a Hindrance               |
| 100   | Gain an extra Gift (roll on the Edges Table) |

## EDGES TABLE

Roll a percentile die and consult the chart below. Disregard and reroll duplicate Edges. Should a result require certain Edges or skills to be at a given level, then the necessary prerequisites should be added to the character immediately.

**d100     EDGE**

|       |                       |
|-------|-----------------------|
| 01-02 | Alertness             |
| 03-04 | Ambidextrous          |
| 05-06 | Attractive            |
| 07-08 | Very Attractive       |
| 09-10 | Berserk               |
| 11-12 | Brawny                |
| 13-14 | Fast Healer           |
| 15-16 | Luck                  |
| 17-18 | Great Luck            |
| 19-20 | Noble                 |
| 21-22 | Quick                 |
| 23-24 | Rich                  |
| 25-26 | Filthy Rich           |
| 27-28 | Block                 |
| 29    | Improved Block        |
| 30-31 | Combat Reflexes       |
| 32-33 | Dodge                 |
| 34    | Improved Dodge        |
| 35-36 | First Strike          |
| 37    | Improved First Strike |
| 38-39 | Fleet-Footed          |
| 40-41 | Florentine            |
| 42-43 | Frenzy                |

| <b>d100</b> | <b>EDGE</b>                         |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 44          | Improved Frenzy                     |
| 45          | Giant Killer                        |
| 46-47       | Hard to Kill                        |
| 48          | Harder to Kill                      |
| 49-50       | Level Headed                        |
| 51          | Improved Level Headed               |
| 52-53       | Marksman                            |
| 54-55       | Nerves of Steel                     |
| 56          | Improved Nerves of Steel            |
| 57          | No Mercy                            |
| 58-59       | Quick Draw                          |
| 60-61       | Rock and Roll!                      |
| 62-63       | Steady Hands                        |
| 64-65       | Sweep                               |
| 65          | Improved Sweep                      |
| 66-67       | Trademark Weapon: Fighting          |
| 68-69       | Trademark Weapon: Shooting          |
| 70          | Improved Trademark Weapon:          |
| 71          | Improved Trademark Weapon: Shooting |
| 72          | Two-Fisted                          |
| 73          | Command                             |
| 74          | Fervor                              |
| 75          | Hold the Line!                      |
| 76          | Inspire                             |
| 77          | Natural Leader                      |
| 78          | Ace                                 |
| 79          | Acrobat                             |
| 80          | Gadgeteer                           |
| 81          | Unholy Warrior                      |
| 82          | Investigator                        |
| 83          | Jack of all Trades                  |
| 84          | McGyver                             |
| 85          | Mentalist                           |
| 86          | Mr. Fix It                          |
| 87          | Scholar                             |
| 88          | Thief                               |
| 89          | Charismatic                         |
| 90-91       | Connections (Sensei determines)     |
| 92          | Strong Willed                       |
| 93          | Beast Bond                          |

| <b>d100</b> | <b>EDGE</b>                      |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 94          | Beast Master                     |
| 95          | Danger Sense                     |
| 96          | Healer                           |
| 97          | Dead Shot                        |
| 98          | Mighty Blow                      |
| 99-100      | Roll again and gain another Edge |

## MINOR GIFT TABLE

| <b>d100</b> | <b>MINOR GIFT</b>                                     |
|-------------|---|
| 01-04       | Increase Strength +1 die type                         |
| 05-08       | Increase Agility +1 die type                          |
| 09-12       | Increase Smarts +1 die type                           |
| 13-16       | Increase Spirit +1 die type                           |
| 17-20       | Increase Vigor +1 die type                            |
| 21-24       | Increase Pace +2, Running d8                          |
| 25-28       | Blessed Parry. Increase Parry +1                      |
| 29-32       | Blessed Toughness +1                                  |
| 33-36       | Gift of Tongues. Charisma +1                          |
| 37-40       | Seductive. Charisma +2 with opposite sex              |
| 41-44       | Quick   |
| 45-48       | Followers (as Legendary Edge, but does not gain Rank) |
| 49-52       | Hardy   |
| 53-56       | Infravision   |
| 57-58       | Immunity Fire   |
| 59-60       | Immunity Cold   |
| 61-62       | Immunity Electricity                                  |
| 63-66       | Low Light Vision                                      |
| 67-71       | Razor Claws (retractable. Str+d4 each)                |
| 72-74       | Jumping (may jump Pace x2)                            |
| 75-78       | Knowledge (Lore) +1 die type                          |
| 79-83       | Cloak of the Shadow +2 die Stealth                    |
| 84-88       | Free Edge (roll on Edge table)                        |
| 89-90       | Immune to Poison                                      |
| 91-92       | Immune to Disease                                     |
| 93-96       | Uncanny Senses (+2 die Notice)                        |
| 97-99       | Roll a second Minor Gift.                             |
| 100         | Roll a Major Gift (see below)                         |

## MAJOR GIFTS TABLE

| d100  | MAJOR GIFT                       |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 01-04 | Maximize Strength d12 or +1      |
| 05-08 | Maximize Agility d12 or +1       |
| 09-12 | Maximize Smarts d12 or +1        |
| 13-16 | Maximize Spirit d12 or +1        |
| 17-20 | Maximize Vigor d12 or +1         |
| 21-24 | Increase Pace +4, Running d10    |
| 25-28 | Blessed Parry. Increase Parry +2 |

### CONSIDERING THE CORRUPTED

When building a dark villain, give some thought to the source of his abilities. The Hindrances, Edges, and dark gifts bestowed on him should reflect his inner nature.

The greater his power, the more obvious this should be: slight or easily concealed for an extra or novice, while a legendary tainted one should be quite horrid.

#### SAMPLE HINDRANCES

**Bad Eyes:** eyes ooze constantly

**Death Wish:** the character struggles with his dark nature, but must complete some task before he is free.

**Ugly:** the skin is scabbed or badly scarred

#### SAMPLE EDGES

**Brawny:** his muscles ripple unnaturally whenever he exerts his strength

**Quick Draw:** his weapon flies into his hands of its own accord

#### Sample Dark Gifts

**Blessed Parry:** he glows a sickly green when attacked

**Low Light Vision:** he has cat's eyes

**Uncanny Senses:** he has a third eye

#### CREATURES

The same care should be applied to the monstrous abilities generated for newly created creatures, while taking steps to integrate them into their basic form.

| <b>d100</b> | <b>MAJOR GIFT</b>   |
|-------------|---|
| 29-32       | Natural Armor (Hide or Scales) +2   |
| 33-36       | Gift of Tongues. Charisma +2  |
| 37-40       | Very Seductive. Charisma +4 with opposite sex   |
| 41-44       | Earth Meld (as the Burrowing Monstrous Ability in <i>Savage Worlds</i> core rulebook)   |
| 45-48       | Ethereal at will once per day for 1d12 rounds   |
| 49-52       | Fearless  |
| 53-56       | Infection through bite. If wounded, Vigor is reduced 1 die type<br><b>DISEASE EFFECTS:</b><br>01-25 Vigor reduced to d4<br>26-50 Permanent Level of Fatigue<br>51-75 Visions of Hell. Spirit die reduced to d4<br>76-100 Stunted. Reduce Smarts to d4 |
| 57-58       | Invulnerability<br><b>WEAKNESSES:</b><br>01-20 Holy Water<br>21-40 Holy Relic (Blessed Weapon)<br>41-60 Magic<br>61-80 Fire<br>81-100 Sunlight  |
| 59-60       | Paralyzing Touch. (As per <i>Savage Worlds</i> core rulebook)   |
| 61-62       | Poisonous touch or bite<br><b>POISON EFFECTS:</b><br>01-25 Vigor reduced to d4<br>26-50 Permanent Level of Fatigue<br>51-75 Visions of Hell. Spirit die reduced to d4<br>76-100 Stunted. Reduce Smarts to d4  |
| 63-64       | Slow Regeneration   |
| 65-66       | Fast Regeneration   |
| 67-71       | Razor Claws (retractable. Str+d8 each)  |
| 72-74       | Size Increase +1  |
| 75-78       | Knowledge (Lore) d12 or d12+1   |
| 79-83       | Stun Attack)  |
| 84-88       | Wall Walker   |
| 89-90       | Fiery Breath (Cone Template. Agility -2 to dodge, 2d10 damage)  |
| 91-92       | Gain Prehensile, spiked tail. May Tail Lash, an extra attack, and damage is Strength +d6-2, and provides Reach.   |

| <b>d100</b> | <b>MAJOR GIFT</b>  |
|-------------|--|
| 93-95       | Dark Pet (select animal, add d3 monstrous abilities, and make Wild Card) |
| 96          | Dark Servant (select Servitor/Independent Race or create a new creature) |
| 97-99       | Roll an additional second Minor Gift and reroll this Major Gift.         |
| 100         | Roll a second Major Gift   |

## CREATURE CREATION

These tables are used to design unique enemies for your group to encounter. The two main types are shown below, and the Sensei should start with the appropriate baseline and flesh it out from there.

### LESSER ONI

These statistics represent a standard oni.

**Attributes:** Agility: d6; Smarts: d6; Spirit: d6; Strength: d6; Vigor: d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6



**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Special Abilities:**

- **Arcane Resistance**
- **Claws/Horns**
- **Low Light Vision**
- **Monstrous Abilities:** (2)
- **Monstrous Edges:** (2)
- **Dark Gifts:** (2 Minor or 1 Major)

### GREATER ONI

Dangerous alone and deadly in groups, the greater oni is able to tap into a dark reservoir of evil.

**Attributes:** Agility: d6; Smarts: d6; Spirit: d6; Strength: d8; Vigor: d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8(2)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2**
- **Claws/Horns**
- **Improved Arcane Resistance**
- **Low Light Vision**

- **Monstrous Abilities:** (2)
- **Monstrous Edges:** (2)
- **Dark Gifts:** (2 Minor or 1 Major)

## BASIC YOKAI

The starting point for a terrible, new creation of the Sensei’s devising.

**Attributes:** Agility: d6; Smarts: d4; Spirit d6; Strength: d6; Vigor: d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Special Abilities:**

- **Monstrous Abilities:** (2)
- **Monstrous Edges:** (2)
- **Dark Gifts:** (3 Minor or 1 Major)

## BASIC FORM

This table provides the Sensei with a general idea of what the new race looks like. All creatures begin Size 0 (human equivalent) and are bipedal. Roll a d6, on a 5-6 the creature is a Wild Card.

Roll d10 to determine the creature’s basic anatomical form.

| d10 | FORM   |
|-----|--|
| 1   | Insectoid (roll 1d6. 1-4 normal, 5-6 winged and can fly (Pace x3, Climb is equal to Pace). Natural Armor +2, Claws/Bite Str +d4, Burrow ½ Pace, Agility +1 die, Vigor +1 die |
| 2   | Mammalian (Roll 1d6, 1-5 normal, 6 is winged and can fly (Pace x2, Climb is equal to pace). Claws/Bite Str +d6   |
| 3   | Aquatic d6 Swimming, Vigor +1 die  |
| 4   | Dinosaurian Size +2, Strength +1 die, Natural Armor +2, Claws Str +d4, Bite Str +d6  |
| 5   | Reptile Bite Str +d8. Weakness: Cold. Vigor +1   |
| 6   | Silicon Based Armor +4, Pace is halved, can burrow through rock. Vigor +2 die  |
| 7   | Living Darkness. Stealth d6+2. Shadow Walk(Pace x3 from Shadow to Shadow) All damage in Shadow is halved. Weakness: Direct Light (Suffers as if Fatigued level One)          |
| 8   | Arachnid. Gain six arms and two extra attacks per round at no penalty. Wall Walker. Bite Str +d4+Poison (Vigor –1, or suffer additional 2d4 damage)                          |
| 9   | Bizarro. (Roll 2 Extra times on Monstrous Table)   |
| 10  | Roll again, but creature gains masked ability  |



# FEAR

Some monsters can appear quite terrifying. Roll a d6 to determine Fear.

| d6  | FEAR   |
|-----|--------|
| 1-4 | None.  |
| 5   | Fear-1 |
| 6   | Fear-2 |
| 7   | Fear-3 |
| 8+  | Fear-4 |

**NOTE:** Results of 7 or greater can arise due to certain monstrous abilities found in the *Monstrous Abilities* table.

# MONSTROUS ABILITIES

If a duplicate result is rolled, reroll. Always take the greater result if a second roll is required. For example, between Size -1 and Size -2, simply take the -2. They are not cumulative. Should rolls arise that inspire you to modify the creature's basic appearance, do so.



| <b>d100</b> | <b>ABILITY</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 01          | Aquatic   |
| 02-03       | Armor +2  |
| 04-05       | Burrowing   |
| 6           | Elemental   |
| 1           | Air   |
| 2           | Earth   |
| 3           | Fire  |
| 4           | Water   |
| 5           | Void  |
| 6           | Elemental Affinity (roll again to determine type)     |
| 7           | Ethereal  |
| 8           | Fear -1*  |
| 9           | Fear -2**   |
| 10          | Fearless  |
| 11          | Gargantuan  |
| 12          | Undead  |
| 13-14       | Hardy   |
| 15-17       | Shapeshifting   |
| 18          | Greater Shapeshifting                                 |
| 19-20       | Infection   |
| 01-25       | Vigor reduced -1 die                                  |
| 26-50       | Agility reduced -1 die                                |
| 51-75       | Spirit die reduced -1 die                             |
| 76-100      | Stupidity. Reduce Smarts -1 die                       |
| 21-23       | Infravision   |
| 24-25       | Immunity: Fire  |
| 26-27       | Immunity: Cold  |
| 28-29       | Immunity: Disease                                     |
| 30-31       | Immunity: Poison                                      |
| 32-33       | Immunity: Electricity                                 |
| 34-36       | Low Light Vision                                      |
| 37-38       | Paralysis (as per <i>Savage Worlds</i> core rulebook) |
| 39-40       | Poison  |
| 01-25       | +1d6 damage   |
| 26-50       | +2d4 damage   |
| 51-75       | +2d6 damage   |
| 76-100      | +2d8 damage   |
| 42-43       | Slow Regeneration                                     |

| <b>d100</b>                   | <b>ABILITY</b>  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 44-45                         | Fast Regeneration   |
| 46                            | Reduced Size -1   |
| 47                            | Reduced Size -2   |
| 48-49                         | Increased Size +1   |
| 50                            | Increased Size +2   |
| 51                            | Increased Size +3   |
| 52                            | Small (Size -2) Reduce Str -1 die   |
| 53                            | Large (Size +4) Increase Str +1 die   |
| 54                            | Large (Size +5) Increase Str +2 die   |
| 55                            | Large (Size +6) Increase Str +3   |
| 56                            | Huge (Size +7) Increase Str d12+1   |
| 57-58                         | Increase Strength +1 die  |
| 59-60                         | Increase Strength +2 die  |
| 61-63                         | Increase Toughness +1   |
| 64-65                         | Increase Parry +1   |
| 66-68                         | Wall Walker   |
| 69-70                         | Flight (Pace x2, Climb is Pace) Gains wings   |
| 71-73                         | Horns (Str +d6) (Gore attack if charged at least 6". +4 damage.)  |
| 74-75                         | Go for the Throat   |
| 76-78                         | Fleet Footed  |
| 79-81                         | Prehensile Tail Gain Prehensile, spiked tail. May Tail Lash, an extra attack, and damage is Strength +d6-2, and provides Reach 1        |
| 82-83                         | Stretchy. Can squeeze through spaces 1/4 of size, but at 1/2 pace   |
| 84-86                         | Improved Frenzy   |
| 87-89                         | Pounce. Leap 1d6", gain +4 to attack and damage, but Parry reduced -2   |
| 90-91                         | Webbing. Shooting roll for a small burst area, up to Str x2 distance. Web has Toughness 7, all caught suffer -4 to all physical actions |
| 92-94                         | Limbs/Tentacles (d6)  |
| 95-96                         | Spit Attack. Str x2 distance. 2d6 damage. Various trappings   |
| 97                            | Roll again, add an extra Monstrous ability  |
| 98                            | Roll again, and add an extra Edge from Monstrous Edges below  |
| 99                            | Roll again, and add a Minor Gift  |
| 100                           | Roll again, and add a Major Gift  |
| * Increase Fear by one step   |   |
| ** Increase Fear by two steps |   |

## MONSTROUS EDGES

Roll a percentile die and consult the chart below. If an Edge is rolled twice, simply discard it and roll again. Should a result require certain Edges or skills to be at a given level, then the necessary prerequisites should be added to the creature immediately.

| <b>d100</b> | <b>EDGE</b>  |
|-------------|--|
| 1           | Masked   |
| 2-4         | Alertness  |
| 5-6         | Ambidextrous   |
| 7-8         | Berserk  |
| 9-10        | Brawny   |
| 11-13       | Fast Healer  |
| 14-15       | Quick  |
| 16-18       | Block  |
| 19-20       | Improved Block   |
| 21-22       | Combat Reflexes  |
| 23-24       | Dodge  |
| 25-26       | Improved Dodge   |
| 27-28       | First Strike   |
| 29-30       | Improved First Strike  |
| 31-32       | Fleet-Footed   |
| 33-34       | Florentine   |
| 35-36       | Frenzy   |
| 37-38       | Improved Frenzy  |
| 39-40       | Hard to Kill   |
| 41-42       | Harder to Kill   |
| 43-44       | Level Headed   |
| 45-46       | Improved Level Headed  |
| 47-48       | Marksman (Add Shooting d6, or increase by 1 die type)  |
| 49-50       | Nerves of Steel  |
| 51-52       | Improved Nerves of Steel   |
| 53-54       | Steady Hands   |
| 55-56       | Sweep  |
| 57-58       | Improved Sweep   |
| 59-60       | Trademark Weapon: Fighting (Fighting d10, or increase +1 die type, Demonic Blade Str +d6)            |
| 61-62       | Trademark Weapon: Shooting (Shooting d10, or increase +1 die, Demonic Shooting weapon, 2d6, 6/12/48) |
| 63-64       | Improved Trademark Weapon: Fighting (Demonic Blade Str+d8)   |
| 65-66       | Improved Trademark Weapon: Shooting (Demonic Shooting weapon, 2d8, 12/24/72)                         |
| 67-68       | Two Fisted   |
| 69-70       | Command  |
| 71-72       | Fervor   |

| <b>d100</b> | <b>EDGE</b>        |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 73-74       | Hold the Line!     |
| 75-76       | Inspire            |
| 77-78       | Natural Leader     |
| 79-80       | Ace                |
| 81-82       | Acrobat            |
| 83-84       | Investigator       |
| 85-86       | Jack of All Trades |
| 87-88       | McGyver            |
| 89-90       | Scholar            |
| 91-92       | Thief              |
| 93-94       | Charismatic        |
| 95-96       | Strong Willed      |
| 97-99       | Danger Sense       |
| 100         | Healer             |

## MONSTROUS ABILITIES

### ELEMENTAL

The creature is of the elements and gains the following abilities — no additional damage from called shots, Fearless, and immune to disease and poison.

### ELEMENTAL AFFINITY

The creature is linked closely with one of the five primal forces: air, earth, fire, water or void. As such, its attacks gain the benefits of the associated force, and it is immune to any attacks of like kind. For example, a wolf with Elemental Affinity (Earth) may bite its targets and its rocky teeth add a d4 extra damage. Likewise, if attacked with an earth bolt, it suffers no damage.

### MASKED

The creature is capable of masking its true appearance through the use of illusion. It may maintain this guise only while awake; when sleeping, the mask is gone. A creature with the Fear ability does not cause fear unless it is seen unmasked.

### SHAPESHIFTING

The creature is capable of shifting forms, including basic clothing, but not weapons or gear. It may maintain this guise unless Shaken, at which time it must make a successful Spirit roll or revert to its original nature.

### GREATER SHAPESHIFTING

This creature is not only capable of shifting forms, but may also generate basic weapons and gear that last as long as they are within Spirit inches of the creature. It only reverts to its natural form when it so desires, or when it is killed.

## LIMBS/TENTACLES

These appendages allow a creature to take an additional physical action per tentacle or extra limb each round, with no off-hand or multi-action penalty. It may also use the appendage to take a sustained action, such as grappling someone.

# MONSTROUS TEMPLATES

While monstrous abilities delineate a specific ability available to a creature, a Monstrous Template is comprised of a combination of attribute modifiers and monstrous abilities. To avoid confusion, when using a template the Sensei should incorporate the benefits of a template into the NPC/creature rather than just listing the template as it stands.

## CLOCKWORK

Add this template to any creature or NPC (such as a samurai or ninja) to represent a clockwork creation. It gains the following:

- **Armor +2 (metal plates)**
- **Construct**
- **Fearless**

## DEMON-BLOODED

A person or creature with this template is a mixture of man and monster and gains the following:

- **Arcane Resistance**
- **Fear (-d4)**
- **Strength +d4**
- **Toughness +2**

## GHOSTLY

A person or creature with this template gains the following monstrous abilities:

- **Ethereal**
- **Fear (-d4)**

## KAMI-POSSESSED

A person or creature possessed gains the following:

- **Arcane Resistance**
- **Fear (-d4)**
- **Large (+2 to be hit)**
- **Pace: +5**
- **Size +2**
- **Strength +d6 die types**



# CAMPAIGN FRAMEWORKS

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The *Way of the Ronin* setting is broad enough to encompass a wide variety of campaign types and play styles — just think of all the samurai flicks out there! The adventures are limitless, ranging from ninja assaulting a hidden fortress, to mass havoc on the fields of battle where blood is measured in buckets, to high intrigues over tea on palatial estates, where the world outside is a dim, petty thing.

We present seven campaign frameworks that focus on the varied aspects of *Way of the Ronin*. Each includes a list of suggestions for hero types (kesshi), scenario locations, enemies and rewards, and we've also included a Savage Story Arc for each. While not a fully detailed Plot Point, each Savage Story Arc presents a specific campaign framework as applied through nine possible scenarios. The wise Sensei can use these as written to get started quickly, or as simple suggestions on how to build your *Way of the Ronin* campaign.

## HEROES OF THE PEOPLE

In this campaign, the heroes take up the defense of the common man. It starts out small by helping someone in some minor way, but grows over the course of the campaign as the heroes continue to come to the aid of larger and more influential groups against greater and more powerful enemies.

**Matters of State:** All's Quiet

**Common Paths:** Ashigaru, bandit, bodyguard, diplomat, ganso, gunsmith, kensei, ninja, noble, ronin, spy, warrior, yakuza

**Starting Provinces:** Sorimizu, Hinote Shima, Doragon Mizu

**Central Locations:** Palaces, dungeons, forests, caves, towns, sunken cities, remote mountain tops, haunted monasteries, remote islands

**Suggested Enemies:** Ninja, pirates, spies, bandits, yakuza, oni, Yokai

**Rewards:** Honor, respect of the people, relics, tales to tell, immortalized in song

### THE SEVEN, OH, Y'KNOW... (SAVAGE STORY ARC)

- 1: The kesshi have left the last town behind and are wandering down the road, when they see a young woman assaulted by roughs. The heroes rescue her, whereupon she reveals she is a noble and convinces them to escort her to her village.



- 2: The heroes discover the village is being threatened by bandits and intervene to protect it. This garners them a small arsenal of weapons, a handful of horses and a humble base of operations, plus the admiration of the villagers.
- 3: An emissary is sent from the closest city to call upon the kesshi. A lesser noble is serving as a front for a gang of smugglers and cannot be touched by the magistrates. They hope the heroes can find some way to close down the smuggling operation quickly and quietly.
- 4: Seven Sisters — an organization of dangerous female yakuza with ninja training — do not take kindly to having their supply chains interrupted. They stage an attack on the kesshi, who must fend it off.
- 5: Word of the kesshi's deeds has reached a local samurai. He regrets his inaction against Seven Sisters, but they recruited his daughter, and he dares not raise his sword against them. He reveals the location of their secret mountain fortress. If the kesshi can free her, he pledges to lend them support in future struggles.
- 6: In the wake of their recent raid, disturbing reports begin coming in to the heroes. Seven Sisters have brought in outsiders for help — some say dark sorcerers from Karasu Rokku or worse — and demand the heroes surrender



themselves, as they begin raiding multiple towns simultaneously. Will the kesshi surrender themselves without a struggle? Will the samurai fulfill his promise of aid?

- 7: The local samurai is slain, and his daughter is nowhere to be found. Was she kidnapped, or is she somehow responsible for his murder? It is up to the heroes to find out, but no sooner do they begin their investigation when a friendly tengu appears to tell them of the secret hot spring located in a remote valley that can bring the samurai back to life. But they must hurry, and the way is fraught with peril. When they finally arrive, they discover the hot spring is home to an ancient onmyoji who does not appreciate trespassers and has no desire to share the spring's healing powers.
- 8: The restored samurai vows vengeance against his traitorous daughter, but needs the kesshi's help. He does not know that she has become possessed, and her body is little more than a shell for a powerful kami. Can they restore her soul without destroying her body in the process? After a brief encounter, they discover her seemingly boundless power. A wise man tells them of three black pearls that can lure the kami out of her body. Each is guarded by a vicious oni, each more terrible than the last. The heroes must descend into the Blood Oni Caves to gain the pearls, little realizing they must fight the first two demons again on their way back out.
- 9: The pearls do indeed lure the kami out of her body, but it leaps into a kikai and begins wreaking havoc across the countryside, destroying dams and forcing the kesshi to come to the aid of the locals. Eventually, the heroes manage to catch up with the kikai, just as it makes it back to the crossroads where their adventures began. A battle ensues, and when destroyed, the kikai explodes, shattering the Veeru. The kesshi must drive back an overwhelming demon horde and seal the rift in this grim struggle for survival.

## FIELDS OF BLOOD

The heroes advance from being lackeys of one of the warlords to becoming actual generals on the field of battle. They serve in various capacities along the way — spy, thief, warrior, and saboteur — until the climactic battle to conquer an enemy land. This campaign type is driven by its missions and directives from “on high”, so it is important that the characters do not feel like puppets, nor that their actions are unimportant. It is critical to convey the sense that the fate of every success hinges upon the completion of their task(s), no matter how mundane said mission may appear to be. Varying the adventures between small operations and large scale battles provides an opportunity to focus on key points in an ongoing war without descending into repetition.

**Matters of State:** Rumors of War, Clashing Swords, Blood Falls Like Rain

**Common Paths:** Ashigaru, bandit, bodyguard, diplomat, ganso, gunsmith, kensei, ninja, noble, ronin, spy, warrior, yakuza.

**Starting Province:** Karasu Rokku

**Central Locations:** Palace, dungeon, cities (especially the seedier parts), borders, battlefields, forests, castles, towns.

**Suggested Enemies:** Ninja, pirates, spies, diplomats, bandits, yakuza, agents of Hinote Shima, servants of Karasu Rokku, samurai from other provinces, oni, tengu, yokai

**Rewards:** Honor, glory, land, wealth, spoils of war

## GLORY TO THE WITCH-KING! (SAVAGE STORY ARC)

In this particular campaign, the kesshi are the loyal supporters of Karasu Rokku in its bid to claim the throne of all of Konoyo. They begin as a special unit of secret advance scouts, and soon grow in prominence and prestige. Eventually, they are elite forces and generals whose actions can determine success or victory on the battlefield.

- 1: Shadow Wolves — spies of Ikusa Kokoro's High Lord General — have landed upon sacred soil, and the heroes must dispatch them before they return to their ship. It is a game of cat-and-mouse, wherein the kesshi are surprised to discover the spies had snuck aboard a merchant ship from Hinote Shima. The Shadow Wolves were sent to get an accounting of military forces. Is the Old Red Wolf preparing for an attack?
- 2: The kesshi are sent to Ikusa Kokoro aboard a small skiff, arriving under the cover of night. They make it to shore without incident, but discover the borders are heavily guarded. The heroes have orders to sneak into the interior without being discovered and await further orders at The Two Kings, an ancient tavern. Will the heroes be able to do so without compromising their plans?
- 3: Ingo, a mystical emissary of the Witch-King, greets the kesshi and tells them that warships from Karasu Rokku have reached the shoreline, and Ikusa Kokoro prepares for war. He gives them the location of the Red Wolves' chief war engineer, Masuta the Butcher, with orders to kill the man. He warns that it is a secret military installation located deep underground, and Masuta trusts no one, and is always flanked by two powerful guards. Do they destroy the entire installation, or just the man responsible for so many deaths?
- 4: In the course of dispatching Masuta, the heroes discover schematics for Ijin, a giant kikai. Ingo tells them that this news is too late for the last battle — over a hundred troops and an animated statue were destroyed by the metal giant, but all hope is not lost. The kesshi must fight their way to the front to give the information to the general just before the troops next take the field. This gives them a decided edge in battle, as Ijin has an exploitable weakness, granting +2 to Knowledge (Battle Rolls). A mass battle ensues. The heroes may participate as they best deem appropriate (see Mass Battle Rules p. 128 for additional details).
  - Force: Ikusa Kokoro: 10 tokens, General (WC), Knowledge (Battle) d10
  - Force: Karasu Rokku: 6 tokens, General (WC), Knowledge (Battle) d10



If Karasu Rokku wins, the battle becomes known as The Death of Ijin and there is a notable turn in the morale of Karasu Rokku.

If Karasu Rokku fails, “death of honor” becomes a rallying cry for the Witch-King’s army, and it fights on.

- 6: The ability of the heroes to gather intelligence is too important — they must gain more. On their return to the capital city, they are confronted by agents of the Jade Creek Court, renegade nobles with their own agenda. Running battles across the countryside occur daily with this group that is nearly as powerful as the heroes. The agents quit harrying the heroes just outside of the city. The heroes find that Ingo has been murdered in his room. Were the agents a delaying tactic? Is Ikusa Kokoro onto them?
- 7: The ghost of Ingo tells them his work is not yet done and where a secret cache of kikai is located. The heroes must raid the military installation and either steal or destroy the kikai. Outside of the installation, they fight one last wave of Jade Creek Court agents, before fighting ashigaru, samurai, and two kikai.
- 8: The destruction of the kikai has all but crippled the Red Wolves. Many of the troops, their morale crushed, flee the battlefield. The heroes can pitch in, either by adding their kikai to the token count (+1 token per kikai), by adding their trait rolls to the mix, or both.
  - Force: Ikusa Kokoro: 4 tokens, General (WC), Knowledge (Battle) d10
  - Force: Karasu Rokku: 6 tokens, General (WC): Knowledge (Battle) d10
- 9: The heroes are commended for their work, but their job is not done. They are to lead a force into the Imperial Palace, and root out the High Lord General. They are met by Void Walkers (onmyoji trained in martial arts and specializing in void powers) and the elite palace guard. Fighting through them and waves of lesser ashigaru, they ultimately reach the private chambers of the

High Lord General. His servants are found twisted and dead, drained of all life energy, and he is gone. For now, it seems, Karasu Rokku holds the throne. That's the easy part. Keeping it is the hard part...

## VENGEANCE IS MINE!

In this oriental staple, someone the heroes know, or even one or all of the heroes, have been grievously wronged, and it is up to the heroes to set things right. Usually, much bloodshed is involved as the wrongdoers have done some extremely nasty things to the heroes, justifying their lust for vengeance. The heroes quite frequently are all orphans, have all been raised in the same village, or have all studied under the same master (or any combination thereof). If you want to play this one over the top, give everyone the Common Bond edge (ignoring normal prerequisites) and the Loyal Hindrance at the start of the campaign.

**Matters of State:** All is Quiet, Rumors of War

**Common Paths:** Yamabushi, ninja, samurai, ronin, onmyoji, makoto, ganso, warriors.

**Starting Provinces:** Tetsu Sangaku, Tahata Gaki, Doragon Mizu, Hinote Shima

**Central Locations:** Remote mountain temples, mysterious forests, bandit forts, dungeons, elaborate cave systems, sunken cities

**Suggested Enemies:** Rival clans of like characters, ninja, makoto, warlords, ashigaru, oni

**Rewards:** The scarlet spatter of blood across one's face as the last enemy falls, all else is gravy

### LAST OF THE SCARLET BROTHERHOOD (SAVAGE STORY ARC)

The heroes have all grown up together in a remote mountain temple as applicants of the Scarlet Brotherhood. It is a peaceful, tranquil place, far away from the politics and intrigues of the outside world.

- 1: The old wise master gathers together his pupils before him in the courtyard just as the sun rises. He looks very tired and sad as he instructs them on the last task they must complete to be accepted into the Scarlet Brotherhood. The temple is nestled high on the mountainside, and the heroes must ascend to the peak and return with a tengu egg. The journey should take no more than two days. There is an old trail leading up, and several ruined shrines and false paths, but when they arrive at the top, they must engage in a contest of skills with the old crone for her to surrender the prize they seek.
- 2: Upon their return, they find the temple in flames and ruin. Everyone is dead, cut into pieces with skill and precision. The body of the master is pinned to the wall in the main shrine, dead as all the rest. A piece of wall crumbles, revealing a hidden staircase. Running down, the heroes encounter a temple dog (use lion stats) between them and a wall of ninja attire, finely crafted ninja swords,

and shuriken. Do they leave before the place collapses or try to overcome the dog and get the goods? Why is the tengu egg vibrating?

- 3: The ghost of the old master appears before the heroes, and tells them they have passed their final test, and now stand as the sole survivors of Scarlet Brotherhood, a secret ninja clan. He regrets that their training has come to an abrupt end when there was so much left to learn, and that he must ascend the Celestial Mountain. He tells them there is one who can help them on their path in the Imperial City. They must search for the sign of the Black Lotus. The journey to the Imperial City leads to encounters with tengu who have followed them down the mountain, wishing a revenge



of their own. Finally the characters put their talents to the test against a gang of mysterious kensei, before reaching the outskirts of the city.

- 4: The Imperial City is a tremendous, noisome place. There are steam rickshaws in the streets and the clatter of hooves upon rough cobblestones. Signs of industry are overtaking traditional ways, as rich nobility are guarded by clockwork samurai, and a few iron waaiven are seen in the skies overhead. The kesshi's quest for the Black Lotus takes them to a small, rundown shop in the roughest part of town. Within is a man slumped over a desk, surrounded by empty sake jars. At a crooked angle, a certificate hangs on the wall that reads: Hitochi, Scholar of Considerable Note. This bleary-eyed man is Zaru, Hitochi No More, a brilliant drunken scholar who immediately springs up to fight them, and then noticing their stance, smiles and slumps back down. *"You fight rough, but I recognize the style. How may Zaru help the Scarlet Brotherhood?"* When told of their situation, he sends the heroes for sake while he thinks, but not just any sake. He wants the Golden Jar belonging to the yakuza clan leader, Akusai. This leads the kesshi into the underbelly of the city, where they must fight waves of yakuza who do not welcome trespassers. Facing down the clan leader and his men is no easy feat. When the Golden Jar is brought to Zaru, he

nods and downs it one big gulp before speaking. *“You have determination. That is good. Akusai and his thugs are as nothing compared to what you must brave before you are ready to face Iron Fire.”*

- 5: Iron Fire is a rival ninja clan of the Scarlet Brotherhood. Their location is unknown, but Zaru has deep knowledge of myth and history. He tells them of a cherry tree in the Valley of the Waaiven that blooms once a year. The heroes must take a blossom from this tree and feed it to a kappa that will then tell them Secrets of the Sea. When they have accomplished this task, they are to return to him, and he will be able to help them further.

**Note:** Secrets of the Sea enables a character to move and breathe freely underwater, but the mind of man cannot contain it for long, and it vanishes after a year, never to return.

- 6: Upon returning to the scholar’s shop, the heroes find the old man gone. There are signs of a struggle and an unconscious man on the floor, a tattoo on his arm indicating his local yakuza gang affiliation. There is also a dead Iron Fire ninja in the corner. The heroes learn their purpose was to exact revenge for stealing the Golden Jar. When they make it back into the sewers, it is disturbingly quiet. The remnants of the yakuza gang are all dead, slain by Iron Fire. The characters encounter clockwork ninja and must battle through several waves of them before fighting Ezi, Akusai’s younger brother, and freeing Zaru, who is battered and bloody.
- 7: At Zaru’s direction, the heroes set out to the sea to beseech the Dragon Oracle. They journey to the Isle of Lost Oni, for only there can one descend to the Dragon Palaces with any hopes of achieving an audience. The oni are pitiable things, feeding upon each other’s flesh, but they all unite when they smell man. This quickly becomes a game of cat-and-mouse, as the heroes must avoid the lumbering greater oni and fight off the numerous lesser oni, until they make their way through the mountain cave system and discover the ancient Mouth of the Dragon, an elevator that descends to the ocean’s floor.
- 8: At the bottom, the kesshi find a glowing crystal that casts off a pale glow, not unlike torchlight, that they can use for illumination. They can see the splendid Dragon Palace, lying beyond a treacherous coral maze. Bones and debris scattered near the entrance to the maze begin to move, and figure rises, shaking off rust and bits of barnacle. It is a machine of metal encased in delicately spun glass. *“I am the Crystal Guardian. Long has it been since man has known the Secrets of the Sea, and longer than that since man has dared to seek an audience with the Oracle. You must journey through this maze. If you do so, the Oracle will guide you along your path.”* The heroes must proceed through the perilous and complex maze in order to reach the palace on the other side.

The Oracle appears as a simple man dressed in blue silk robes, with a full golden beard and clever eyes. He is a shapeshifting dragon, attended by a dozen maidens of inestimable beauty. He tells them he has expected their coming, and presents them with the answer to achieving their vengeance. *“Iron Fire hides within Sorimizu, but where, I cannot say. It flits about like the dragonfly.*

*Go there and seek one of the hebi. They are greedy little beasts with beady little eyes and will surely know.”*

- 9: Finding a hebi is a challenge, but once located, its demands are simple. It wants its fill of sake, which is quite a lot. In fact, it will keep drinking until the characters finally threaten it with bodily injury, and only then will it say it has had enough. It knows what they want. Iron Fire keeps their headquarters on a riverboat that works its way across Sorimizu through rivers and channels. The hebi knows it will be passing through in two days, as it always does. It laughs, shifts into a snake, and slides off into the waters.

Boats come and go, but finally a graceful one with fine rigging, a metal deck and reinforced hull comes through. The captain is alone on deck, manipulating the controls handily through a clever contraption of levers. The boat undoubtedly belongs to Iron Fire. The heroes must make their way on board, or flush out Akusai and his men for the final confrontation and revenge that is sweet. Akusai will fight to the death, but certainly Iron Fire will continue on. The big question that faces the characters is whether to rebuild the Scarlet Brotherhood, prepare for other challenges, or disband altogether to take a simple, more peaceful life.

## HUMBLE SERVANTS

The heroes, whether willingly or unwillingly, serve a higher power. This could be a secret school of ninja, diplomats for Doragon Mizu, or even a retired hero who lives vicariously through their deeds and good works. Alternately, the characters could be forced into servitude by a powerful oni, and while they go about the demon’s mysterious tasks, strive to find a way to break the mystical shackles binding them. Clans abound, and are easily created at the Sensei’s whim, that can encourage through means polite and profane to get the characters to do what they want. Important things to remember in this style of campaign is to provide a narrative that the players can sink their teeth into, so that you can get buy in, and to intersperse the regular storyline with little side tangents that focus more on what the characters want than what their patron may desire. Ultimately, this campaign can work quite well — the kesshi trade a bit of flexibility to gain a patron in return. The Sensei gets to craft a structured story arc with little concern of it going too far off the rails — but players are the whetstone that keeps the wit sharp.

**Matters of State:** All’s Quiet, Rumors of War

**Common Paths:** Ashigaru, bandit, bodyguard, diplomat, ganso, gunsmith, kensei, ninja, noble, ronin, spy, warrior, yakuza.

**Starting Provinces:** Ikusa Kokoro, Ato

**Central Locations:** Palaces, dungeons, cities (especially the more seedy parts), borders, battlefields, forests, castles, towns.



**Suggested Enemies:** Ninja, pirates, spies, diplomats, bandits, yakuza, agents of rival clans, old enemies of their master, samurai from other provinces, oni, tengu, yokai

**Rewards:** Honor, glory, a position of power, land, wealth, spoils of war

## SHADOW WOLVES (SAVAGE STORY ARC)

The heroes all serve at the mercy and pleasure of Ikusa Kokoro. As servants of the High Lord General, they enforce the laws of the land, lay waste upon interlopers, and eventually rise in power and prestige to become champions of the realm, working at restoring the glories of a unified Ni-Ten. They learn, however, that others do not share this view.

- 1: Ikusa Kokoro holds a yearly tournament to find the best and brightest across Ni-Ten. This is an ancient tradition of the Bright Empire, yet few outside of the province still honor it. The heroes participate in various contests, and their presence catches the attention of the Grand Chancellor who requests an audience with them. As they enter the private receiving room, iron gates fall over the doors, and the Grand Chancellor sits high above them in a balcony. A dozen soldiers line the walls of the room.

*“You have power and potential,” he says to them. “We are honored you participated this year, but you must understand, your energy cannot be allowed to run rampant, unchannelled. You would cause great damage to the lands... to our people. You must join us. If you survive this trial, you will be allowed to serve your country well.”*

A shackled young girl, obviously from Karasu Rokku stock, is brought out from a cage. Dressed in rags, with bones in her hair and her body adorned with tattoos, she is wildly beautiful. She is a void witch. *“Battle her, and we can determine how best you will serve us.”* The shackles fall from her wrists, and she grins at the heroes revealing teeth filed to points.

If the heroes refuse to fight or are defeated, the Chancellor nods. *“You have not yet learned to master that which we see, the power coursing through you. We will teach you to master yourself, so that you can do what must be done.”*

If the heroes defeat the void witch, the Chancellor claps his hands. *“Excellent. You will serve your master well. I am pleased that my eye for talent has not faded. These past years, we have had no candidates worth this test, and our dear little oni has gone quite hungry.”*

He will then clear the chamber and come down to join the characters. *“It has been a dozen years since we have seen the likes of you. You will become Shadow Wolves. You will serve his High Lord General in matters of the utmost secrecy and discretion. You will be the long, warm knife in the cold night. You will be the noise that causes the people to jump, and check their windows at night. You will be the conscience of a people who are forgetting the foundations of the Iron Dynasty. You will serve to remind them all — peasant and noble alike — that Ikusa Kokoro knows no bounds. We move into the future by holding close the past.”*

He tells them they will begin work immediately by suppressing a peasant revolt along the borders, and that Lady Ittou will fill them in on the details. She awaits them at sunrise at the Broken Dojo. He presents them with a simple ivory key.

- 2: The Broken Dojo appears to be an abandoned temple located on the outskirts of the Imperial City. It is overrun with weeds and there is a high stone wall surrounding it. Rusty over chains bar entry from the front, but the key easily opens the padlock, after which the chains slide aside under their own volition, and the door opens wide.



Within, the place looks neglected, but overall in good repair. A woman dressed in IK armor is in the courtyard, going through her kata. Her blond hair flies about her as she performs graceful movements with her katana. She finishes up a few minutes later, and gestures them over. *“Let us see who the old fool has given me this time.”* Silently, she looks them over with eyes like chips of ice. Her features are fine, yet harsh. She is obviously Lady Ittou, a Golden One.

*“You will do hard things, but honor is about hard things. You will serve me without question. From this day forth, all contact with the Chancellor ends. You are in my charge now, and you will bring no dishonor to me. I will help you walk along the path, but I cannot walk it for you. You will grow weak, but I cannot carry you. Your blood will make the grass grow if you fail, and that is a good thing. If you survive, you nurture the land in other, better ways. Try to keep the grass from growing.”*

*“You are to go to the border village and destroy the demon there that has brought it to madness. Cut down anyone in your way. There will be people in your way. Our people. Ignore their cries. Kill them, and bring back the amulet you find in the demon’s clutches.”* She leads them to the musty hall where a small boy, dressed in black and red stands waiting. His head is shaved, and his eyes look sorrowful. He speaks in a small voice.

*“If you think you are saving lives and choose not to do this right thing, tomorrow the madness will spread and even more useless deaths will be required, and I will be forced to add your names in my prayers for forgiveness.”*

He bows to them and spreads his hands, creating a Void Gate. *“Through, now,”* he says through clenched teeth. The characters are transported to the village, and must fight their way through a horde of entranced peasants who try to thwart them at every turn, before facing down a kami-possessed blacksmith. The amulet does not look like much. Once it’s in their possession, the boy appears to take them back.

- 3: Lady Ittou is nonplussed by their first outing. *“Fortune favors the fool and the blind, and you have the fortune to be both. There is no economy in your motion. Each death is a tear upon your soul. When you can fight with no blades then you have mastered eternity.”*

She tells them that they must now go to the Red Temple of Sorimizu and use the Amulet to unlock the seal. Again, Ikko will open the way. This time as they step through, Ikko is slain by an archer’s arrow through the eye. The characters find themselves in a battle between oni and yamabushi, and must slay both sides in their quest to unlock the seal. Once unlocked, the oni cease attacking, but the yamabushi begin to wail and attack with renewed vigor. The heroes must battle their way out of Red Temple, down the mountainside, and find their way back to the Broken Dojo.

- 4: Lady Ittou greets them impatiently. She tells them opening the seal has brought chaos into Sorimizu. The lives lost and troubles within have averted a great border war, as Sorimizu must turn its direction inward, instead of expanding into Ikusa Kokoro territory. Lady Ittou mourns little for the death of Ikko, only noting the inconvenience this has brought to her plans. She tells them they must now proceed to Uma-Ko Ryoudo, purchase five of the finest horses they can find from the horse trader, Kodoro, and return as soon as possible.

Kodoro is difficult to find, but the party eventually locates him in a remote valley in Uma-Ko Ryoudo. He is a short, squat man with a long, fine beard who reeks of sake. He has the horses they need, but will not take coin for them, instead requiring them to perform a service for him. He lost his horse, Sutoomu, to the swordsman Ehou in a game of chance. Ehou cheated, but he cannot prove it, and Kodoro wants his horse restored to him. Ehou is an onmyoji as well as swordsman. He and his gang of roughs control the operations of a local trading post, and he is well respected. Sutoomu is stabled on his personal estate when he is not in the fields. The heroes must find some way to get the horse without drawing undue attention.

- 5: Lady Ittou is pleased that the horses have been acquired, and tells the party that they are to present them as a personal gift to the Lord General of Tahata Gaki, who will not be able to resist such an attractive present. She warns them that the Tahatans are xenophobic by nature, and will suspect they are up to something. “*Naturally,*” she says, “*they are right.*” She tells them that once they have reached his estate, they will be escorted to private chambers, and that an audience will be arranged the following day. And they will be killed during the night, unless they are clever, and do as she directs — they are to break into the armory and take a dozen shuriken and a vial of toxic spider venom. They are then to make haste back to her immediately. The Lord General will be so pleased with his prize that he’ll be occupied for days.

The characters execute this plan up to the point of escaping the estate, when they are confronted and confounded by baku and other nastiness before returning to Lady Ittou. “*I am surprised you have accomplished this very good thing. Now rest. Tomorrow you set sail for Ato.*”

- 6: At dawn Lady Ittou is practicing once more in the courtyard. She speaks to them as she moves through her kata. “*Ato has invaded our shoreline. The imbeciles think they can spill our blood on our land? We have crushed them before, but in their insolence, the dogs forget their master. A lesson must be taught.*” She hands them the shuriken and vial of venom. “*You must assassinate the Lord General’s daughter. You must make it look like Tahata Gaki has performed this deed. The Lord General will fear we were behind it, but will be even more afraid that Tahata Gaki now lusts after their pitiful island. It will be amusing, and the troops of Ato will certainly either be diverted to deal with the perceived threat of Tahata Gaki, or retreat back to the ruins of their homeland. Now go. A ship awaits.*”

The characters sail to Ato and make their way to the ruined palace of the Lord General. The guards are heavy, mean, and dangerous. Getting into the palace is difficult, but they find the sleeping quarters of the Lord General’s

daughter, a pathetic creature of pasty flesh and insatiable appetites. The poison works quickly.

- 7. Lady Ittou is pleased with their performance, and tells them one last task remains.

She kneels down and twists a cobblestone. The fountain slides aside, revealing stairs leading to an underground complex. *“This place was built ages ago with magics beyond our own. Our engineers, nevertheless, still try to fathom its secrets.”* She takes them further, until they come to a very ancient machine that is overrun with steam gauges and is chugging along. It looks like a doorway. *“We call this the Teppu. It is an ancient doorway between places. It is currently set to take the travellers to Karasu Rokku.”* She tells them they are to go there and slay the advisor to the Witch-King himself. *“He is crafty in the ways of war, and speaks of invading our lands. His name is Counselor Ikidumaru, and he is a dangerous man full of deception. Once this deed is completed, go into the highest tower, and you will find the way home.”*

Once through, the characters find themselves surrounded by an overwhelming force. Ikidumaru stands before them grinning broadly. *“It seems our dear Ittou has done her job well. Take them to the dungeons.”* The heroes are imprisoned, but are able to escape. If they go into the highest towers, they do find a broken-down Teppu, and must either repair it themselves or locate someone to fix it for them. The way out of the castle any other way is certain doom.

The heroes arrive back at the Broken Dojo to find everyone is dead, save for Lady Ittou, who is nowhere to be found. Should they try to find the Chancellor, he is missing as well. Who is behind all of this? As the characters work through this, the White Ninja attack. *“You have done enough damage to this land,”* the leader proclaims. The ninja fight until they are becoming overpowered, and retreat into the night. A prayer slip is found on one of the dead ninja. On it, directions to the rendezvous point arranged between the ninja and their master can be puzzled out. It is a simple tea house located in the spice district.

- 9. In this final chapter of this story arc, the characters discover who has been manipulating them and why. The Sensei can take one of the following two approaches:

Lady Ittou is working with Karasu Rokku and has been using the characters to manipulate events. She is waiting in the tea house, and is not surprised to see them walk in. In fact, she asks them to join her for tea. *“It has been done well, my agents of chaos. Wheels have been set in motion by your actions that cannot be stopped, even if you try to kill me, which I would strongly advise against. This nation is weak, its honor corroded. The Raven will purify, pick away the putrid, rotting flesh, and leave clean bone. You have done good service, my Shadow Wolves, and there is a place for you, if you would like it...”*

Lady Ittou openly weeps. *“I am glad you have sent for me...”*, then her eyes grow wide with surprise. *“How foolish, this is a trap. Get out. Get out.”* A huge explosion hurtles the heroes off their feet, possibly stunned. The Grand Chancellor stands in front of them. *“She was innocent, you silly, silly fools. As for me? I am not as weak as you may think. The High Lord General cannot conduct the affairs of state these days.*

*He merely walks about muttering and flying into terrible rages. Solace was found only your arms, and you laugh at me. You refuse me? Me? I run these lands. You claim to have honor and respect? You love only the idea of it. The grandeur. There is only blood. There is always blood.”* He grips his head and falls to his knees. The amulet about his neck, a prize he took from the raid into The Broken Dojo, begins to pulse. He rises to his feet. He raises the amulet high above his head and beams of light transform his men into monstrous things, even as he transforms into a monstrous, evil form.

Either way...the end will be the same. There will be a battle. There will be blood. Someone will make the grasses of Ikusa Kokoro grow this night.

## ENEMIES OF THE STATE

Whether troublemaking ronin, self-serving yakuza, or idealistic rebels, the heroes are on the outside of society looking in and at odds with one or more forces in power. This is typically on a provincial level, but as their reputation (or infamy) increases, could expand across the whole of Ni-Ten or even Konoyo. This style of game provides a lot of freedom for the characters, so the Sensei needs to be on his toes. Usually the goal is to amass great personal wealth, property and power, to upset the status quo, or possibly to see how much havoc they can cause before going down in a blaze of glory. If they survive, so much the better, as this means they must now contend with being the status quo themselves.

**Matters of State:** Rumors of War, Clashing Swords

**Common Paths:** Yakuza, ronin, yamabushi, ninja, ganso, onmyoji

**Starting Provinces:** Ikusa Kokoro, Doragon Mizu

**Central Locations:** Military installations, cities, back alleys, black market, underground, rooftops, dimly lit rooms, palatial estates

**Suggested Enemies:** Other shadow organizations, provincial guards, military forces, onmyoji, samurai, kensei

**Rewards:** Fame (or infamy), spoils of war, history scrawled in blood

## AGENTS OF JADE CREEK COURT (SAVAGE STORY ARC)

The characters all have a reason to dislike the status quo in Ikusa Kokoro, and have proven themselves to be worthy Agents of Jade Creek Court, a shadow organization comprised of many disenfranchised political powers wishing to restore the Bright Empire to its former glory. They are long on ideas, but short on men of action. The heroes serve as agents in this cause and work to disrupt and challenge Ikusa Kokoro at every level. The main elements to stress are personal interactions, political intrigues, and tense battles against overwhelming forces. This could be considered a revenge tale, but it is specifically targeted at an entire ideology rather than a particular person. The point is to undermine the existing structure while putting a new one in place without anyone being the wiser.

- 1. The characters have been recently recruited by Jade Creek Court, but some within doubt their loyalties, so the heroes must become public outlaws. Their first assignment is to intercept and rob a tax collector's caravan, and present his head on a yari in the Imperial City. Once this is done, Jade Creek Court has no doubt that the heroes belong to them, and the characters gain the Wanted (Major) hindrance and Common Bond (regardless of normal requirements).
- 2. Jade Creek Court wants the heroes to procure firearms for the cause. The Black Market doesn't deal with strangers, and the characters must establish a relationship with Nine Fingers Clan to have any hope of gaining access in Ikusa Kokoro. To do this, they must bring a gift of some sort to Tihedo, the clan leader. They learn he has a thing for demons, so they must track down an oni, and gift him with it. Easier said than done. Afterward, they can make the buy, but guards have been put on high alert and interrupt the transaction. The characters must fight their way out, and Nine Fingers Clan is none too pleased.
- 3. Nine Fingers Clan contacts the characters with an assignment to mitigate their resultant losses that will benefit both of their causes. If the characters poison an important dignitary staying in the red light district, then all is forgiven. Jade Creek Court approves, and directs the characters to move ahead. The dignitary is a visiting ambassador from Tetsu Sangaku who is negotiating weapons deals with the High Lord General. This requires some tricky work to get into the tea house, navigate past the guards, and poison his beverage. Getting in and out without notice brings the best results, but Nine Fingers Clan cares only that the target is killed — they aren't known for finesse.
- 4. The heroes must now hunt the kitsune known as the White Fox, which is difficult at best. Jade Creek Court knows he is no friend to the Imperial City, and wants to recruit him for their plot to replace the High Lord General with someone sympathetic to their cause. The kitsune's name is Akuto, and the High Lord General's men killed his entire family for sport while he was out hunting. If the heroes exact revenge against the man in charge, he will happily join their cause. By beating the bushes, they discover this man is none other than the High Lord General's son, Kusotare, who is now a Field Commander.
- 5. Jade Creek Court has procured invitations for the characters to a dinner at the Imperial Palace. Clothing and credentials have been arranged for them, as well as Akuto. The kitsune tells them it's the only way he can mimic the High Lord General's form. However, his Imperial greatness sends regrets that he cannot attend, and it is up for the characters to navigate out of the dinner party and through the massive hallways to locate the High Lord General, who is having a tryst with one of his concubines in the wine cellar.
- 6. The heroes next act is to break into the nearby military warehouses and plant explosives in all the kikai. The facility is heavily guarded by soldiers and a contingent of Void Walkers. If they succeed, the Imperial City's mechanical forces are crippled.
- 7. The next item of business is to destroy the Ikusa Kokoro warships on both the northern (facing Karasu Rokku) and southern (facing Ato) coasts. By doing



this, all available kikai will be diverted to protect the province from outside incursions by those who would exploit this weakness in Karasu Rokku and Hinote Shima. The first fleet attacked is guarded by light forces; however, the second fleet so assaulted will be heavily guarded and prove much more difficult.

- 8. Now that all the kikai are otherwise occupied, Jade Creek Court wants the characters to incite an uprising in the Imperial City, particularly outside of the palace. They will need to distribute guns to various friends of Jade Creek Court, and avoid heavy patrols. After the guns are distributed, they must use a waridake to send up a signal from the Prison Tower, the highest point in the city, for everyone to attack.
- 9. The palace should be in an uproar from the recent outbreaks. The guards are doubled around the palace, but it is rumored that the High Lord General escaped. A handful of kikai are in the courtyard, while onmyoji and Void Walkers patrol the hallways and Iron Fire patrols the grounds outside. The characters must get Akuto into the chambers and place him as the High Lord General, while eliminating any that might happen upon them or know the truth.

With Akuto in place it is questionable how long he will be able to maintain the facade. Will the real High Lord General rally his men? Will the province become divided? Will power go to Akuto's head, or will Jade Creek Court be able to successfully effect change in the province and begin their quest for the Empress Itoshi in earnest?



## THE QUEST FOR...

This campaign revolves around the heroes trying to obtain something, usually an ancient relic or artifact of considerable power. Perhaps it is something necessary to obtain ultimate victory on the battlefield and dominance over the Iron Dynasty, if not all of Konoyo. Alternately, they may have to gain some esoteric bit of information, locate some person, or complete a series of trials to prove their worth; in this latter case, it would be a quest for acceptance or recognition. This style of campaign gives the Sensei an excellent opportunity to expose the party to the breadth and depth of Konoyo with the added benefit of leading them to dangerous places they may not otherwise wish to go. Strange and lively touchstone characters should appear at random intervals to both aid and infuriate the party on their journey.

**Matters of State:** All's Quiet, Blood Falls Like Rain

**Common Paths:** Spy, warrior, entertainer, yamabushi, onmyoji, ganso, makoto, wiseman, scholar, kensei

**Starting Provinces:** Hinote Shima, Tahata Gaki, Tetsu Sengaku, Ato

**Central Locations:** Ruins, dungeons, caves, mountain temples, lost tombs, hidden cities

**Suggested Enemies:** Rival groups, ninja, spies, yakuza, oni, yokai, samurai, kami-possessed creatures

**Rewards:** The object of the quest, okudden (secret information), forgotten spells, martial techniques, fame, fortune, glory



## PROPHECY TWIST (SAVAGE STORY ARC)

A twist of fate brings the heroes into contact with an oracle who believes that they are the chosen ones meant to restore the goddess of the sun, Amaterasu. They must complete a series of difficult tasks to gather potent artifacts, all necessary to break the curse on the goddess.

The heroes are pulled back in time by a witch's incantation, and awaken in a small mountain cave located in Veeru. A beautiful witch explains that they must save the world, and that only they can find the Orb of Yuugen, the Lost Orb of Knowledge. She points out several history scrolls where they have already done this good thing. However, they must first complete a series of trials to show the Celestials that they are worthy of taking up this quest. The heroes then set out, complete the trials, and return to Kurokami who is pleased with their progress, takes the items they have located, and sends them on the second leg of their adventure to a mountain peak. The heroes encounter the Guardian of the Peak, and return to her with a broken shard of mirror. After acquiring two more pieces, a spell is shattered, revealing Amaterasu, who has been so trapped. The kesshi are rewarded for their good deeds.

- 1. The characters are in the marketplace when an explosion erupts, sending them hurtling headlong into a pile of rubble. As they dig themselves out, they find they are in a dimly lit cave, its floor etched in runes and occult symbols. Its occupant, a beautiful, raven-haired woman, explains to them that they must prevent the future from happening. She tells them she is the oracle Kurokami of Karasu Rokku, and that she will help them do this good thing. She is certain that they have their doubts and explains how her cave sits in the Veeru, and that time floats by like a stream, and that events can be plucked out, caught, but it is like tickling fish and is not easy. If they kill her, they will be trapped. If they do as she asks, as they are destined to do, they will help restore balance to the world. She tells them to look for the raven, as it will guide them and bring them back to her when they are in need. Kurokami touches each in turn as they go into the Veeru; they feel its coldness sapping away their strength as they fall unconscious.
- 2. The heroes find themselves doused with water, as a shopkeeper apologizes for the collapse of the building, finding fault with engineers. They are back in the marketplace. Was it all just a dream? No. They each have a small burn on their arm from Kurokami's touch. It stings slightly, but is healing fast. A raven flitters over atop a stack of books, pulls one out, and tosses it towards the characters. The shopkeeper shoos the bird away, and it flaps off. The book falls opens to a page detailing the Iron Glove of the Glutton.

The story reads: In ages past, Ato was called Sakura, and was a source of great pride for Ni-Ten. The gods even honored Sakura's champion with a gift of metal gloves that could create a doorway between the lower world and higher worlds. They were known as the Gauntlets of the Gate. With the fall of Ato and its turbulent subsequent years, the pair was separated — one was kept in the impregnable armory of Ikusa Kokoro while the other was gifted to

the mad Lord General, who promptly gave it to his cook, causing it to become known as the Iron Glove of the Glutton. How such an item fell from grace reflects upon the state of things. When the Bright Empire dimmed, so did our souls. One need not wonder why the gods have abandoned us.

The heroes must journey to Ato, find their way into the royal kitchen, and defeat Kentaka, the immense Aton cook, who is a retired sumo champion with an insatiable appetite and excellent culinary skills.

- 3. Once the glove is acquired, the raven appears and pecks out the dead chef's throat, revealing a scroll case poking through the folds of fat. Within is a legend: "One might not sympathize with the plight of the Tahatans, but their fate is not a simple one, and they are to be pitied more than feared. They have swamps, spiders, and legion other threats, but one brave man plucked up the courage to lead his village across the borders into Uma-Ko Ryoudo. The baku got them hopelessly lost, but that was only the start. Next, the villagers were given a lantern and a chance; each death will make the lantern burn through the perpetual haze. So, starved and mad, they began to kill one another, and the flame burned brightly as it devoured these souls. Soon, only the leader was left and he was found dead just twenty yards from where they first set out. This cursed item, this Lantern of Lost Souls, was found curled lovingly in his arms. It is said the Lantern finds those who are lost in the swamps, and they are never seen again.

The heroes must go to Tahata Gaki to find out the truth of the matter. The lantern is kept by the baku. They can try to track down the baku (a difficult task at best), or they can actually lose themselves in the swamp, and the lantern will find them. In the latter case, once procured, the lantern bestows upon all party members a -4 to all Notice, Survival, and Tracking rolls, and it cannot be lost. The only way to eliminate the penalties is to give it a soul or a blood sacrifice (the penalty is one less for each "wound" or "extra" that is sacrificed to it). Once the characters manage to escape the swampland, the lantern loses its cursed properties, and the raven comes to take them back to the cave.

- 4. Kurokami is delighted with their progress, and tells them that next they must seek out the Everburning Oil of the Oni-Kaji on the Celestial Mountain. The raven can take them there, so they do not have to fight their way to its peak, but they must find their own way back, as it is too tricky to fool the Celestial defenses a second time. Once there, they see a dozen Oni-Kaji, massively huge demons, working upon their forges. The kesshi may be able to sneak up to one and steal its oil, which is their sweat. If caught, the Oni-Kaji will be amused and present the heroes with a challenge of some sort. Succeeding will net them the oil they request.
- 5. Once the mountain is descended, the kesshi encounter a holy man. *"You have visited the Oni-Kaji. I can smell their stench upon you. Little good can come to you. However, little harm can come to us. Only the salamanders of Hinote Shima can ignite that oil. Believe me, I have tried."* His eyes grow wild. *"Give it to me! Give it to me!"*

The raven descends and opens a portal. Whether the characters wish to fight the holy man or follow it through is up to them, but the portal closes rapidly.

They find themselves at the base of an active volcano on Hinote Shima. The temperature is tremendous. The characters must anoint themselves in some of the oil (it only takes a drop per person) to gain immunity for themselves and their gear from the heat and fire. They fight their way through various nasty creatures that have adapted to the extreme temperatures, such as fire oni, and can light the lantern with the fire. When they do so, they can see through to the veil, create a portal of their own accord, and make their way back to the cave.

- 6. Kurokami is thrilled at their accomplishments. *“Now that you have lit the lantern, the outside world will push back. That light is pure and beautiful.”*

*“You have completed the first part of your quest, but the second still remains. There is a mirror broken into three shards that are scattered about this land. You must find the pieces and restore it. Doing this will begin to restore balance.”*

Indeed, the heroes are able to survey the land and find there is a tall tower made of ice, a dungeon, and a floating rain cloud above the small island. The cave’s back wall reveals a secret passage by the lantern’s light that is the entrance to the dungeon. The tower is locked, and there is no way to reach the floating cloud hovering just above the tower from the ground. The dungeon it is.

Within the dungeon are numerous encounters with rock spirits, culminating in a final battle with a great earth spirit that must be defeated to get the shard it guards.

- 7. The icy tower is cold within, and the floor is difficult to walk upon. The kesshi must figure out how to climb to the top of the castle and defeat the water



spirit guarding the second shard. After doing so, the castle becomes stone, and they can climb one of the battlements to reach the cloud and get the final shard.

- 8. The winds buffet the characters from all directions, causing their eyes to water. They must work their way into the center of the vortex and defeat the air spirit there to get the final shard. This is not easy. There are four lesser kami (one representing each direction of the wind) that must be defeated. With each defeat, the force of the wind is reduced until finally the air spirit can be challenged.
- 9. The pieces, once brought to Kurokami, are placed within a handled frame hanging from her belt. Once whole, she transforms into a beautiful, glowing golden-haired woman — Amaterasu, the Goddess of the Sun, and the kesshi have broken her curse. She is weak and near helpless in her present state. As the sun breaks out overhead they discern their location is part of the Doragon Mizu island chain. Then the sea darkens and begins to roil — something came back through the Veeru with them! It is a mighty void demon, with its minions. The heroes must use their wits, resources, and the prizes they have collected to put it down. When they have done so, the sea settles down, and they can bask in the glow of their success.

## WINDS OF FORTUNE

This campaign is a simple one: the heroes are not concerned with affairs of state or the politics of man. Here they wish mainly to hunt down monsters and collect treasure. The act is its own reward. That is not to say they don't take jobs, but they do so only when it suits them, which is when monsters and treasure are involved. They are beholden to no man, house, or faction, but are their own masters. The focus is on travel to wild unexplored places, ancient dungeons, and crumbling ruins. Interesting complications can cause various realms to vie for their attention, but are secondary in nature. The heroes ultimately pursue whatever catches their fancy. It is up to the Sensei to be prepared with multiple possibilities, and let them have the freedom to explore as they will. A continuing storyline may certainly not be as important in this style of campaign as it is in others, but that is entirely dependent upon the group. Remember: it is possible to give them both a degree of free reign and structure, if you're willing to make the story worth their while.

**Matters of State:** All's Quiet

**Common Paths:** Ronin, entertainer, onmyoji, ganso, kensei, ninja master, peasant, yakuza, warrior

**Starting Provinces:** Ato, Sorimizu, Hinote Shima, Doragon Mizu

**Central Locations:** Dungeons, tombs, islands, beneath the sea, bamboo forests, ruined cities, caverns, swamps

**Suggested Enemies:** Monsters of every vile variety, oni,

**Rewards:** Treasure they find along the way, public acclaim

## THE MONSTER HUNTERS (SAVAGE STORY ARC)

The characters are all members of Yuushi, a loose alliance of adventurers, who find work on bounty boards and in guild halls across Konoyo. They soon learn that The Akogi, a merchant guild dating back over a hundred years, is looking for the most capable heroes to find rare exotic herbs and hunt down yokai. It is dangerous but rewarding work. This campaign takes characters across all points of Konoyo while giving them a light, central framework to work within.

- 1. The heroes see a small yellowed flyer on the wall of the Yuushi house in Sorimizu. It states simply “Hunters Wanted for Jobs Big and Small”. Konwa, the retired adventurer who runs the house notices them looking it over, and tells them that the only reason that one is still posted is out of respect. The Akogi are as old as Yuushi, and most Yuushi worked for them during the days of the Bright Empire. Nowadays few wish to wander the dangerous lands working for them, but they do pay well, and there is profit to be had in their employ. He is happy to arrange a meeting with Akogi Aburami if they are interested, as he lives in the city.

Aburami is a fat, jolly man who dresses in simple attire, though his modest house is well-appointed. He tells them he can set them up with jobs throughout Sorimizu, and whenever they wish to work further afield, he can let them know when that comes up as well.

The first job is to collect Kappa shells and the herbs of the marshlands.

- 2. When the characters tire of working for Aburami or wish to seek more challenging work, he tells them that Akogi Shin is looking for able-bodied men in Ikusa Kokoro.

Shin is a thin spare man who lives on a modest estate in the Imperial City. He tells them he seeks the pelts of the white wolves of the forest (for which he'll pay a premium), horns of the black oni, and the blue lotus blossoms of Aori Bukemori.

- 3. Akogi Kaisoku sends a messenger on horseback to the Akogi House of Ikusa Kokoro when the heroes have proven themselves there. The messenger says that he would be most honored to meet with them, and there are stabled horses for each, should they decide to come.

Next the heroes meet Akogi Kaisoku, a deeply tan, robust man of middling years with a shaved head and heavy paunch. He runs the Akogi House from a trading post in central Uma-Ko Ryoudo. He tells them his wants are simple: the tattoos of yakuza infesting the broken cities, and a rare spice-mold that grows in the ruins. When they have collected a certain number of these items, Kaisoku is pleased and recommends they go to Tetsu Sangaku to seek out the Akogi there.

- 4. Akogi Kyori lives on his own mountain estate, shared with a temple of yamabushi. He has servants aplenty. He tells them he is poor, and cannot afford that which his richer brethren can, but he would offer them a fair sum if they can track down a number of items he needs. His list is a mixed lot: tengu tongues, tiger claws, and snow leopard skins. He is also willing to scrape together coin for any mountain herbs they gather.

- 5. An emissary of Tahata Gaki intercepts the characters after they've completed a mission. He says that Akogi Sukihara wishes to meet them, and will do so on the border of the land. She is a thin woman who looks as though she is dying, though this is her natural state. She tells them the Akogi of her province have great difficulty in finding any who can satisfy their needs. She wants them to come to her land and collect webs of the baku, swords of the okotta, and the exotic swamp flowers known as eimin (that can be brewed by those with skill into a deadly poison). When satisfied, she gives them the note from Doragon Mizu.
- 6. The note tells them how Akogi Gongu requests an audience aboard his ship. Sea Lord Gongu deals in black market goods and gets most of what he needs from the other Akogi, but there are certain items even they can't get, and he hasn't the time or men willing to do so for him. Scattered about the sea isles of Doragon Mizu are a number of things for which he will pay top coin: waivaan scales, hebi eyes, and silver grass that grows only on the rocky peaks of the islands.
- 7. Akogi Ribenzi is a dour, taciturn man. He is of average build, but has a decided limp. He tells them he is excited to meet them and has heard they can get many things with great ease. What he wants most is as follows: pig oni snouts, rare Sakura crafted pottery (unbroken) found in the ruins, and the legendary black rice seed that is rumored to grow deep beneath the earth. Once these items are acquired, he tells them a ship will take them to Akogi Aiyoku of Hinote Shima who has jobs of her own for them.
- 8. Akogi Aiyoku is a beautiful young woman who caters to an exclusive clientele. She tells the party that she aims to satisfy her patrons' every desire, and if they do they same, they will be well rewarded. She gives her list as oni meat, kitsune fur, salamander skins, and burning bamboo blossoms. She has every confidence they can get these items with little difficulty and waits to celebrate their successes.

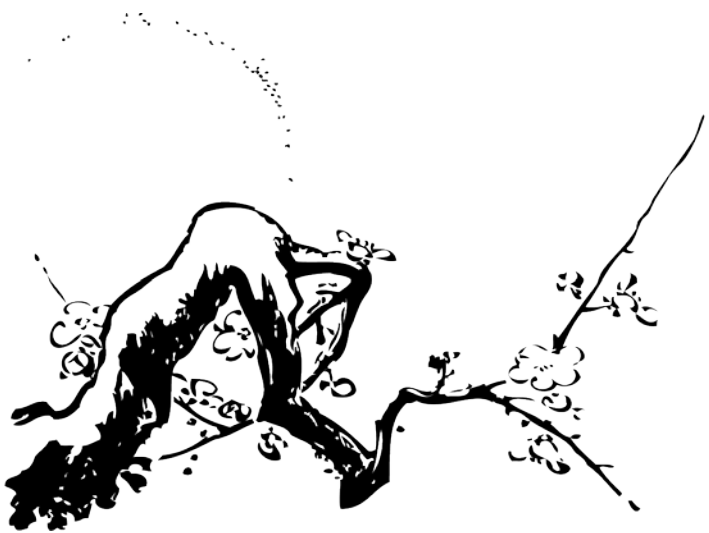
When they gather all her things, she tells them that the Akogi Iku wants to discuss their future, and that a ship awaits in port to take them to Karasu Rokku.

- 9. The Akogi in Karasu Rokku is called the Bone Palace, and Iku is known and revered as a Witch-Lord. His heavy tattoos stand out in contrast to his pale skin. He wears his hair braided with bone down his back and dresses in white robes. He is rich beyond imagining, and tells the characters the same. "I will not give you deceptions like my brothers. They seek to recreate the Towa Elixir. They seek to live forever. I have no need of such things. There is beauty in death, after all. I want secrets. Secrets only the dead know. Fetch these things to me, and I will give you land and titles, if you wish, or coin and safe passage back where you can buy your own. It makes no difference to me. I do not need many things. Just three. Get them and the world is yours."

He wants them to bring him an obake, a magasasu, and bakeneko. If the party gathers these creatures, they can retire in elegance or take to the roads anew, having made important connections throughout Konoyo.







# PEOPLE OF KONOYO

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## ANIMAL HANDLER

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Outsider

**Edges:** Beast Bond

**Gear:** Knife (Str+d4), various animals

## ARCHAEOLOGIST

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Antiques) d8, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Stubborn

**Edges:** Scholar (Antiques and History)

**Gear:** Digging tools

## ARTISAN

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Art) d10, Notice d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Curious

**Edges:** Alertness

**Gear:** Relevant media

## ASHIGARU

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d4, Shooting d8

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6/7; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Low Born

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes

**Gear:** Leather Armor (+1 torso), Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, 2 Hands) or Ikizuchi (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d8, ROF: 1; 1 Action to reload)

## ATHLETE

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Sports) d8, Notice d6, Throwing d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Clueless  
**Edges:** Fleet Footed  
**Gear:** Relevant training aids

## BANDIT

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Lock Picking d6, Notice d4, Stealth d8  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5  
**Hindrances:** Greedy  
**Edges:** Thief  
**Gear:** Knife (Str+d4)

## BODYGUARD

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8  
**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6  
**Hindrances:** Loyal  
**Edges:** Protector  
**Gear:** Wakizashi (Str+d6)

## CRAFTSMAN

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Knowledge (Craft) d10, Notice d6, Repair d8  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5  
**Hindrances:** Cautious  
**Edges:** Gunsmith  
**Gear:** Relevant tools

## DIPLOMAT

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Etiquette) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8  
**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5  
**Hindrances:** Cautious  
**Edges:** Charismatic  
**Gear:** Fine clothes

## ENGINEER

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Notice d6, Repair d8  
**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5  
**Hindrances:** Cautious  
**Edges:** Connections  
**Gear:** Surveying tools

## ENTERTAINER

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d8, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Overconfident

**Edges:** Charismatic, Entertainer

**Gear:** Change of clothes, overnight bag

## GANSO

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Gearcraft d10, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

**Hindrances:** Outsider

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Ganso)

**Powers:** armor (steam powered bamboo suit), bolt (arrow thrower)

**Power Points:** 10

**Gear:** Devices, tools

## KIKAI CREW MEMBER

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Loyal

**Edges:** Ace, Steady Hands

**Gear:** Kikai

## LITIGATOR

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Law) d10, Notice d6, Taunt d6, Persuasion d8, Intimidation d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Cautious

**Edges:** Strong Willed

**Gear:** Fine suit, leather satchel

## MAKOTO

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Prayer d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Heroic

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Makoto)

**Powers:** boost/lower trait, deflection

**Power Points:** 10

**Gear:** holy scrolls, wakizashi (Str+d6)

## MERCHANT

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Obese

**Edges:** Merchant

**Gear:** Various goods and merchandise

## MILITARY OFFICER

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor

**Edges:** Command

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed), Wakizashi (Str+d6)

## NINJA

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Greedy (Major)

**Edges:** Acrobat, Quick, Shadow Arts, Thief

**Gear:** Ninjato (Str+d6), Shuriken (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: Str+d4, RoF: 3)



## NINJA ASSASSIN

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Lock Picking d8, Notice d6, Stealth d10, Throwing d10

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Greedy (Major)

**Edges:** Acrobat, Fleet Footed, Ninja Strike, Quick Strike, Shadow Arts, Silent Kill, Thief

**Gear:** Ninjato (Str+d6), Shuriken (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: Str+d4, RoF: 3)

## NOBLE

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Family History) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

**Charisma:** +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor

**Edges:** High Born

**Gear:** Rich clothing

## ONMYOJI

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d8, Spellcasting d10

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6 (1); **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Curious

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Onmyoji)

**Powers:** bolt, smite, speed

**Power Points:** 10

**Gear:** Staff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach 1, two hands)

## PEASANT

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Farming) d6, Notice d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Low Born

**Edges:** -

**Gear:** Farming tools

## PHYSICIAN

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Healing d10, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Notice d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Pacifist (Major)

**Edges:** Healer

**Gear:** Herbs, tonics, and poultices

## PRIEST

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Theology) d10, Notice d4, Persuasion d10

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Vow: Enlighten Others, Poverty

**Edges:** Charismatic

**Gear:** Holy scrolls

## RONIN

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Disgraced

**Edges:** Block, Combat Reflexes, Signature Moves (Katana)

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed), Wakizashi (Str+d6)

## SAMURAI

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor (Bushido), Obligations (Lord)

**Edges:** Block, Combat Reflexes, Connections (Lord), Samurai, Signature Moves (Katana)

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed), Wakizashi (Str+d6)

## SCHOLAR

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Knowledge (Geography) d10, Knowledge (History) d10, Notice d6,

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Stubborn

**Edges:** Scholar

**Gear:** Various charts, scrolls

## SOLDIER

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Overconfident

**Edges:** Brawny

**Gear:** Hankyu (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, RoF: 1), Wakizashi (Str+d6)

## WARRIOR

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty

**Edges:** Battle Hardened, Brawny, Combat Reflexes

**Gear:** Odachi (Str+d10, Parry -1; Reach 1; 2 hands), complete fitted suit of Leather Armor (+2)

## WISEMAN

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Ki Control d10, Notice d4, Survival d4

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Heroic, Outsider

**Edges:** Empty Hands, Ki Focus, New Ki Power (x2), Power Points

**Powers:** boost trait, deflection, healing

**Power Points:** 15

**Gear:** Walking stick, sake

## WOODSMAN

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Healing d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Outsider

**Edges:** Woodsman

**Gear:** Knife (Str+d4), waterskin

## WRITER

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Investigation d8, Knowledge (Calligraphy) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6

**Charisma:** +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Curious

**Edges:** Cultured

**Gear:** Ink, quills, rice paper

## YAKUZA

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Obligations (Major)

**Edges:** Attractive, Connections (Yakuza), Mark of the Yakuza (Spirit), Strong Willed

**Gear:** Wakizashi (Damage: Str+d6)





# CREATURES OF KONOYO

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## BAKU

A twisted hybrid of spider and man, the baku has the lower body of a giant spider and the upper body of a man. It fights with a tachi, but takes any opportunity to poison its enemies, watching them writhe in pain with great glee.

**Attributes:** Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

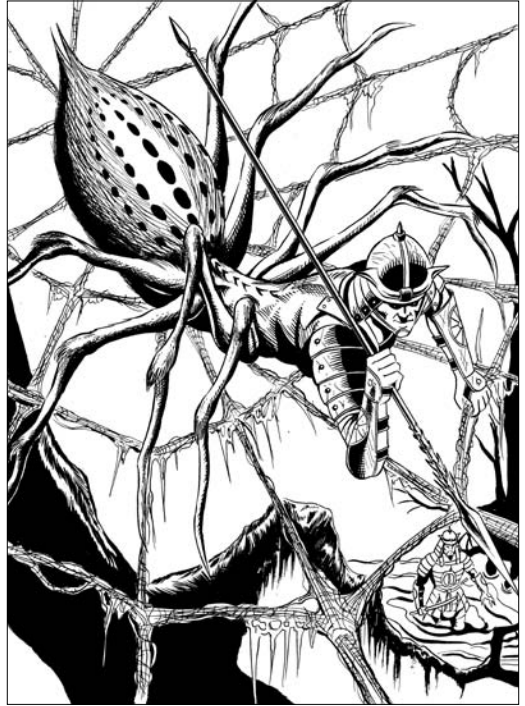
**Skills:** Fighting d12, Notice d8, Stealth d12

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8(2)

**Gear:** Tachi (Str+d8)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Carapace
- **Bite:** Str+d4
- **Burrowing (6"):** Baku can meld into and out of the ground.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Baku roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Poison (-4):** The bite of the baku causes instant paralysis for those who fail their Vigor roll. It lasts for 2d6 minutes.
- **Spider Walk:** Baku ignore terrain movement penalties.
- **Weakness:** (counts as oni)
- **Weakness:** (counts as evil)



## BEAR

These large, intelligent beasts roam the mountains and forests of Konoyo and are extremely territorial. They can tear a man apart in moments and are difficult to put down.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swim d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

### Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Size +2:** Bears can stand up to 8' tall and weigh over 1000 pounds.



## BOAR

Wild boars roam the forest and plains, and are attracted to the scent of fresh blood. They are voracious, unpredictable fighters, and often go into a rage when encountered.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

### **Special Abilities:**

- **Berserk:** When a boar is Shaken, it goes berserk. It gains +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls and its Toughness, but Parry is reduced by 2.
- **Gore:** If a boar can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to damage.
- **Tusks:** Str+d4.

## DEER

Wild deer of Konoyo are often considered signs of good omen by day and a bad omen at night. They have grown unafraid of man in recent years, and will attack if they feel threatened.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Notice d8, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

**Special Abilities:**

- **Antlers:** (Buck only) Str+d6
- **Bite:** Str
- **Fleet-Footed:** Deer roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Gore:** If a buck can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to damage.

## ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

Living spirits of the earth, flame, water and wind, these kami rarely manifest unless summoned by powerful onmyoji.

### AIR SPIRIT

Manifesting as a whirlwind, the air spirit is mercurial and difficult to control. It holds the power of the tornado and can send foes flying across the battlefield with a mere gesture.

**Attributes:** Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Special Abilities:**

- **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots, Fearless, immune to disease and poison.
- **Flight:** Air Spirits fly at a rate of 6" with a climb rate of 4".
- **Gale Force Blast:** Projects a blast of wind using the Cone Template. Characters under the cone must beat the spirit's Shooting roll with Agility or suffer 2d10 damage, plus the target must make a second Agility roll or fall prone
- **Push:** The Air Spirit can push a single target 1d6" directly away from itself. The target may make a Strength roll against the attack, with each success and raise reducing the distance moved by 1")

### EARTH SPIRIT

A man-shaped amalgamation of rock, earth, bamboo and grass, the earth spirit is nature manifest in all its terrifying strength. It fights with brutish strength, shattering shields and samurai with equal ease.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11(4)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +4:** Rocky hide
- **Bash:** Str+d6
- **Burrowing (10"):** Earth spirits can meld into and out of the ground.
- **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots, Fearless, immune to disease and poison.

## FIRE SPIRIT

Difficult to look at, the fire spirit crackles in a roughly man-shaped flame. It burns the ground beneath its feet and can turn its enemies to ash. It is the devastating power of the sun.

**Attributes:** Agility d12+1, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Shooting d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

### Special Abilities:

- **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots, Fearless, immune to disease and poison.
- **Fiery Touch:** Str+d6; 1 in 6 chance of catching fire (see the Fire section of the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook).
- **Flame Strike:** Project a blast of flame using the Cone Template. Characters under the cone must beat the spirit's Shooting roll with Agility or suffer 2d10 damage, plus the chance to catch fire (see the Fire section of the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook)

## WATER SPIRIT

Appearing as an ephemeral, translucent woman with blue-green skin and kelp twisted in her hair, the water spirit has lured many men to their doom. She has the power and rage of a stormy ocean, and a laugh like a spring's day.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

- **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots, Fearless, immune to disease and poison.
- **Gush:** Project a torrent of water using the Cone Template. Characters under the cone must beat the spirit's Shooting roll with Agility or suffer 2d10 damage, plus the target must make a Strength roll or fall prone.
- **Slam:** Str+d6, target must make a Strength roll or fall prone.

## GIANT SPIDERS

While these large arachnids live in nests, they frequently hunt afield when prey is scarce. Their lairs are littered with brittle bones and rusted blades.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d12+2, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4
- **Poison (-4):** The bite of the spider causes instant paralysis for those who fail their Vigor roll. It lasts for 2d6 minutes.

- **Webbing:** The spiders can cast webs from their thorax that are the size of Small Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 3/6/12. Anything in the web must cut or break their way free (Toughness 7). Webbed characters can still fight, but all physical actions are at -4.

## HENGE

Henge are animals that can transform themselves into humans or other entities, usually mischievous in nature.

### BAKENEKO

Evil and corrupt, the bakeneko is the ghost-cat, and is a shapeshifter of the first order. Unlike other shapeshifters that descend from a line of henge, the bakeneko can gain its abilities in a variety of ways: it may reach a certain age, be kept a certain number of years, grow to a certain size, or be allowed to keep a long tail. In the last case, the tail splits into two and is referred to as a nekomata.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

#### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4. The bakeneko may do this in its natural form.
- **Ethereal:** The bakeneko may shift into an Ethereal state as a full round action.
- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The bakeneko can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.
- **Long Tail:** The bakeneko's tail functions like a Tentacle for the purposes of attacks and grappling.

### HEBI

The Tsuchinoko variety of snake is found near large bodies of water. Known as the snakes of Sorimizu, they are scattered about Konoyo. Hebi are those that have been gifted with intelligence, the gift of speech, and the ability to shapeshift into a short squat person, usually a man. They are wide of girth, greedy, love to lie, and have a taste for alcohol. They have no love for mujina. They frequently rob, but rarely kill.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

#### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4. The hebi may do this in its natural form.
- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The hebi can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.
- **Toxic Touch:** Any creature suffering damage or a Shaken result from the hebi's bite must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.

## INUGAMI

Once found throughout Ato, these shapeshifting dogs are now scattered across all of Konoyo. Born of an old, proud breed, they are one of man's staunchest allies. Many of them died on the battlefield when Ato fell to Ikusa Kokoro's superiority, but they continue to resist. Inugami enjoying serving as scouts and forward observers, where their speed and ability to navigate undetected serves them well.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d12

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6. The inugami may do this in its natural form.
- **Fleet Footed:** Inugami roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The inugami can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.
- **Group Tactics:** Inugami gain double the gang up bonus when attacking in tandem with a +4 maximum.

## JOROGUMO

Unlike the baku, the jorogumo are enchanted spiders gifted with the ability to shift into the form of man. They are primarily found in Tahata Gaki, as it is friendly to their kind, and some believe they helped form the matriarchic society found in that desolate swampland. If given due respect, they return it in kind, but wish to always be treated with respect and deference. Their memories are long, and they do not forget a slight.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d12

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6. The jorogumo may do this in its natural form.
- **Entangle:** The jorogumo may cast the entangle power once per round.
- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The jorogumo can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.
- **Poison:** The venom of a jorogumo is deadly. If a target is bitten (with a Shaken or wounded result), he must make a Vigor roll or die within 24 hours.
- **Wall Walkers:** Jorogumo can move easily along any surface in either form.

## KITSUNE

Touched by Inari, a greater kami, kitsune are foxes that have been given human intellect and magical abilities that grow with their age and wisdom. Their personalities vary much as humans do, with one exception — they rarely fight with their own kin, preferring instead to meddle in the affairs of man from

time to time. The more tails a kitsune has — and they may have as many as nine — the older, wiser, and more powerful it is.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite:** Str+d6. The kitsune may do this in its natural form.
- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The kitsune can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.
- **Many Tails:** Each tail beyond the first gives the kitsune an additional wound level and an increase in Smarts by 1 die type.
- **Powers:** A kitsune gains one Power or Monstrous Ability of the Sensei's choosing for each of its tails. If the tail is cut off in combat (-4 to hit rolls), it loses that ability until (and if) it re-grows a new one.

## MUJINA

Shapeshifting badgers that delight in deceiving and frightening humans, mujina often take on a sinister aspect — such as a faceless woman — out of sheer delight. They are frequently found in the wilderness areas of Sorimizu and have a loathing for hebi, often attacking them on sight.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite:** Str+d6. The mujina may do this in its natural form.
- **Fear -2:** Mujina can turn into a horrible looking creature.
- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The mujina can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.

## OKAMI

Known as the White Wolves of Ikusa Kokoro, okami are shapeshifting wolves that are very rare, having been hunted down by Ikusa Kokoro as enemies of the state. They are one of the few henge that are allies of man, and retain their loyalty to the lost Empress Itoshi, refusing to recognize the High Lord General. Okami do not serve on the battlefield due to their dwindling numbers but function instead as spies, ninja, and geisha.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Stealth d10

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

- **Bite:** Str+d6. The okami may do this in its natural form.
- **Fleet Footed:** Okami roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Go for the Throat:** Any raise on a hit roll automatically strikes the target in its weakest armored location.



- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The okami can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.

## TANUKI

The raccoon dog of Konoyo, it is most often found in the mountainous regions of Tetsu Sangaku. Typically jolly and of a friendly demeanor, some tanuki are not particularly bright or have a mean streak, and take their brand of humor beyond acceptable bounds. Curious to a fault, they often sneak into human villages in human form, disguised as travelers from neighboring provinces.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d6. The henge may do this in its natural form.
- **Greater Shapeshifting:** The tanuki can look like humans with ease and maintain the form indefinitely.

## KAMI-POSSESSED CREATURE

This unfortunate animal has been claimed by a malicious spirit. Its form twists and grows as the darkness within it pulses, and it is in extreme anguish as a result. This tormented creature soon is in an agonizing fit of rage, and hunts down others in a bid to end its suffering or share its pain.

For a Kami-Possessed Creature, start with a natural creature, such as a bear, deer, tiger, etc. and add the following abilities: Fear, Large Target (+2 to be hit), Size +5, increase its Strength steps and Pace by 5.

Let's use a typical boar who's recently gotten possessed as an example:



### KAMI-POSSESSED BOAR

A great bristly beast with tusks like short spears and an air of corruption about it, this boar hunts down humans and terrorizes villages. It can speak in short, grunting bursts.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 11; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12

Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** When a boar is Shaken it goes Berserk. It gains +2 to Fighting and Strength rolls and it's Toughness but it's Parry is reduced by 2.
- **Fear:** A Kami-Possessed creature is fearsome to behold.
- **Gore:** If a boar can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to damage.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a Kami-Possessed creature due to its large size.
- **Size +5**
- **Tusks:** Str+d4.

## KAPPA

Kappa are twisted looking turtle-shelled men with wrinkled greenish-grey skin, inhuman strength, and webbed, clawed hands. Drawn into battle by the prospect of feasting on the flesh of the enemy dead, they fight with single-minded focus.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d4, Stealth d8, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

### Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic**
- **Armor +2:** Tough shell.
- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Fearless:** Kappa are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Low Light Vision:** Kappa ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

## OBAKE

There are two main types of obake. One is a living thing or supernatural creature that has temporarily taken on the guise of a ghost, while the second type, referred to more precisely as bakemono, is an actual spirit of the dead. From a Sensei's perspective, they operate the same way mechanically. Though their motivations can certainly be different, the two are virtually indistinguishable, so the type of obake is at the Sensei's discretion.

To create an obake, one simply adds the Monstrous Template: Ghostly to any creature, and keep in mind an obake can shift from either form (material or ethereal) as a full round action.

### BAKEMONO PEASANT

The hapless form of a simple peasant who was wronged and still walks the earth.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6



**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidate d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4, Throwing d12

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Gear:** Thrown objects (Str+d4)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Ethereal:** Ghosts are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Fear -2:** Ghosts cause Spirit checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen.

## ODAKU

The odaku is a shapeshifting demon with a foothold in both worlds. Its natural form is grey and ghoulish with curled claws and long fangs.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 12(3)

**Gear:** Sword (Str+d8, Reach 1), Plate Armor (+3)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Claws:** Str+d4
- **Hardy:** Odaku do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Size +2:** These creatures stand 8' tall.

## OKOTTA

Called the Enraged, the okotta is a ghostly warrior that died in battle fury. It appears in a white kimono, wields a silvery katana, and has no legs beneath its robes. Its only purpose is to kill.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Fear:** Okotta are frightening to behold.
- **Fearless:** Okotta are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head).
- **Weakness (head):** Shots to an okotta's head are +2 damage.

## LESSER OKOTTA

Having only a tenuous grasp on the physical world, this lingering spirit still fights with all the anger it can muster, which is a frightening amount.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

**Gear:** Katana (Str+d8/+2 two handed)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Fear:** Lesser okotta are frightening to behold.
- **Fearless:** Lesser okotta are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head).
- **Weakness (head):** Shots to a lesser okotta's head are +2 damage.

## ONI

Demons take many guises in Konoyo, but some frequently make their way with alarming frequency into the land, or have established a foothold in the landscape, to warrant ready identification.

### BLACK ONI

This vile nocturnal creature stands over six feet tall and has great black horns and enormous bat-like wings. Its claws are long and sharp, and its eyes are red. It is cowardly by nature, only attacking in packs, and often raids farms and villages. It does enjoy human flesh and feeds off of fear, often capturing a young child when the opportunity arises, taking it to its cave, and relishing the child's dying cries before feasting upon it.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d12

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

#### Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Resistance:** +2 to Trait rolls against opposed powers; Armor +2 versus damage causing arcane powers.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Flight:** Black oni have a Flying Pace of 12" with a Climb of 6".
- **Low Light Vision:** Oni ignore penalties for Dim and Dark.

### PIG ONI

Most common in Ato, the pig oni appears as a strange hybrid of man and swine. It has a muscular human body with a great gut that ripples muscle as it moves. It has the head of a pig with great sharp teeth. Most, but not all, lack the horns common to the typical oni. Its skin ranges from a deep, almost angry red causing them to be confused with the red oni, to a pale pink. It has a voracious appetite and is surprisingly fast despite its apparent bulk.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10(2)

#### Special Abilities:

- **All Fours:** If a pig oni has nothing in its hands, it may lope on all fours for a d10 running die.
- **Arcane Resistance:** +2 to Trait rolls against opposed powers; Armor +2 versus damage causing arcane powers.
- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.



- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Hardy:** Its great girth makes a pig oni hard to hurt. A second Shaken result does not become a wound.
- **Insatiable Appetite:** Whenever it downs an opponent, a pig oni must make a Spirit roll or begin eating it. It can attempt a Spirit roll each round to overcome its hunger and stop. If attacked, it is free to act normally.
- **Low Light Vision:** Oni ignore penalties for Dim and Dark.

## RED ONI

By far the most common of the oni, the red oni often roams the wild lands feasting upon travelers and animals alike. It is strong and stupid and is usually found in groups of six to sixty. They have a great sense of smell and are cunning hunters. It typically carries a tetsubo and dresses in a loin cloth made from some unfortunate beast.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Resistance:** +2 to Trait rolls against opposed powers; Armor +2 versus damage causing arcane powers.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Low Light Vision:** Oni ignore penalties for Dim and Dark.



## RED OGRE ONI

A red oni of great strength and power, it is smarter than its smaller kin, and is usually solitary though it will dominate random oni clans it comes across as suits its nature.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

**Gear:** Tetsubo (Str+d12, Parry -1; Reach: 2)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 to Trait rolls against opposed powers; Armor +4 versus damage causing arcane powers.
- **Low Light Vision:** Oni ignore penalties for Dim and Dark.
- **Size +3:** The ogre oni is usually 8' in stature and weighs over 600 pounds.
- **Sweep:** An ogre oni can swing his weapon around him striking all adjacent with a Fighting roll at -2.

## SALAMANDER

An elemental creature living in hot springs and volcanoes, this fiery lizard with molten skin sometimes wanders across the land in search of a new home. It is extremely aggressive and territorial. Its brutal flaming attacks often leave samurai cooked alive in their armor.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(2)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** (lava hide)
- **Flaming Bite/Claws:** Str+d6+d4, 1 in 6 chance of catching fire.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Salamanders roll d10s instead of d6s when running.

## SWARM

Swarms may be made of most any small creatures such as insects, rats or flocks of birds, among others. They are often pulled together by bored, mischievous spirits to annoy wandering adventurers.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Notice d6

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Sting:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).

- **Split:** Some swarms are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by -2 (to 5 each).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round. Swarms are usually foiled by jumping in water (unless they are aquatic pests).

## TENGU

Appearing as wandering monks or simple mendicants from a distance, these mystical warriors often challenge heroes as a test, or for their own amusement. Up close they are tall and slender, with dark complexions, glittering black eyes, and unnaturally sharp features. They cast the shadow of a bird regardless of their form. When gathered in a murder (a group of four or more), they are especially dangerous.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d12+2, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 6

**Gear:** Tachi (Str+d8)

### Special Abilities:

- **Defensive Shapechanger:** When Shaken, a tengu may shift into crow form. Make a successful Spirit roll to shift form and fly away its pace as a free action. On a raise, the opponent does not get a free attack when it withdraws from combat.
- **Expert (Fighting):** Tengu are legendary fighters and gain a d10 Wild Die with their Fighting rolls.
- **Fearless:** Tengu are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Weakness:** Counts as oni.
- **Weakness:** Tengu are easily insulted. Opponents get +2 to Taunt attempts.

## TIGER

The tiger of Konoyo is not afraid of man. It is a huge beast that is as vicious as it is deadly. Once thought extinct, when darkness fell across the land this dangerous creature once more began to hunt in the forests and mountains, and to a lesser extent, the plains throughout Ni-Ten. Rarely is it seen on any of the other islands.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

### Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Fleet-Footed:** Tiger's roll d10s instead of d6s when running.

- **Rake:** A tiger that gets a raise on its attack roll has pinned its target while raking with its claws and teeth. The opponent may only attempt to escape the pin as his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll.
- **Size +2:** Tigers weigh over 500 lbs.

## TSUKUMOGAMI

By no means enchanted, these artifact spirits vary radically in appearance, depending on the type of item they originated from as well as the item's condition. It is said that an object may gain a spirit on the hundredth year of its creation. Heavily used items can have tears that form dangerous eyes and sharp teeth. Other items may manifest faces and appendages, giving a warm and friendly appearance.

### SMALL

Encompassing such things as lanterns, candlesticks, pots and kettles, a small artifact spirit is typically a nuisance at most, unless they gather to harass en masse.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 2

#### Special Abilities:

- **Bash:** The small artifact spirit is able to fling itself at a target for Str+d4
- **Size-2:** Attackers subtract 2 from attempts to strike this artifact spirit.

### MEDIUM

Stoves, dressers, and chairs are examples of artifact spirits. It is capable of doing some real damage on its own, should it wish.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

#### Special Abilities:

- **Bash:** This artifact spirit may strike a target for Str+d6.
- **Size-1:** These objects are still relatively small.

### LARGE

Training dummies, beds, and other such items are examples of these artifact spirits.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

#### Special Abilities:

- **Bash:** This artifact spirit may strike its targets for Str+d8.



## WAIVAAN

A serpentine monster began to be seen in some of the remote regions of the land after the darkness fell. These are not the sea dragons of myth that dream in their sea palaces. The waivaan is a pale comparison. While its form is sleek and its black scales glitter in the light, its wings are cruel and bat-like, its features are harsh and its eyes are dead and lifeless; its two legs are bony and hard edged. It can speak, but seldom does. It is often called Kurai — the Gloom.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidate d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13(2)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Scales
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+d8
- **Flight:** Waivaan have a flying Pace of 24", with a Climb 6".
- **Hardy:** Waivaan do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.

- **Size +3:** Waivaan have a wingspan of 40'.



## WOLF

While found in great numbers within the borders of Ikusa Kokoro, packs of black wolves roam throughout all of Konoyo, generally under the dark of night. They fight intelligently, generally fanning out about their enemies and picking off the weak, before focusing their attention on the larger threats.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's

soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.

## YOKAI

Travelers of Konoyo refer to strange, unclassifiable creatures as yokai. While no two look alike, a common form is that of a hideous, malformed man-beast, with warts and scars, oozing slime from its eyes as it scratches itself with blood-encrusted, yellowed nails the size of daggers. Should the Sensei wish to create a more unique monster, then he should use the Creature Creation tables (beginning on p. 206).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d4, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(1)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Thick Hide
- **Claws:** Str+d4
- **Hardy:** Yokai do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Size +2:** Yokai are large creatures.

## ZOMBIE

Even death is no respite from the sins of the samurai, as sometimes the dead arise and seek out revenge upon the living.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6

**Pace:** 4 (d4 running die); **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str
- **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head).
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.

## FINAL OBSERVATIONS ON ADVERSARIES

While lynchpins are always Wild Cards, you may opt to include other levels of threats in your adventures as well. Here are a few variations:

**Minion:** Weaker even than an Extra, any hit equaling his/its toughness takes it out of the battle.

**Henchman:** This character/creature gets a Wild Die for his/its actions, but is otherwise identical to an Extra.

**Really Tough:** The character/creature gains the Hardy monstrous ability, and may be of any difficulty type.

Elevating a character/creature to Wild Card status should be reserved for those fights that you want to be set pieces.



# THE MIGHTY KIKAI

---

The finest engineers in the land craft the strange war machines known as the *kikai*. Standing roughly fifteen feet in height, *kikai* are bipedal steam-powered vehicles crafted out of bamboo, wood or iron, and sometimes a mixture of all three. With knowledge paid for in blood, *kikai* — war walkers — are the marvels of modern warfare. They can raze a village to the ground in minutes, or destroy a squad of battle seasoned samurai in the blink of an eye. They bring death. They bring destruction. With the promise of peace, they bring chaos to an already chaotic world.

These war machines are restricted military devices. Possession of one by an individual or group (regardless of affiliation) is punishable to the strictest extent of the law — usually death, and if not, exile. Operating a *kikai* uses the Driving skill. Attacking someone with the *kikai* stomp uses the pilot's Driving skill roll as the attack roll. A *kikai*'s maneuverability is based on its class and indicates how far it must go in a straight line before attempting a turn that does not require a skill roll. Otherwise the *kikai* operates as a vehicle. Additional details about *kikai* are outside of the bounds of *Way of the Ronin* and can be found within *Art of War*, the military companion work.

The following are basic designs available to all provinces with *kikai*, or as mercenaries to those without them. Variations of *kikai* exist within each province, usually emphasizing the element associated with it.

**Note:** Karasu Rokku and Doragon Mizu do not allow, own, or operate *kikai* within their realms.

## LIGHT KIKAI

Constructed primarily of bamboo and wood, a light *kikai* is used mainly as an advance scout. Its superior speed and maneuverability is offset by its relatively low defenses.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 12/24; **Toughness:** 9(3); **Crew/Passengers:** 1+1

**Class:** Light (1" before turn); **Ammo:** VH

**Weapons:** Cannon (15/30/60, 3d6, Turret); Stomp (d6+9)

**Notes:** Armor +3, Driver (Driving d10, all others d6), Gunner (Shooting d10, all others d6, Steady Hands), Legged (treat each inch of difficult terrain as 1.5")

## MEDIUM KIKAI

The medium *kikai* is an amalgamation chiefly of wood with some metal reinforcements. Bamboo is still used in its shell to lighten its overall weight and make it more maneuverable than the heaviest *kikai*, though its speed and weight is roughly the same. It sports a heavier cannon, and its good weight and

overall toughness enables it to crush through foot troops with only a slight risk of sustaining serious damage.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 6/12; **Toughness:** 12(4); **Crew/Passengers:** 1+1

**Class:** Medium (2" before turn); **Ammo:** H

**Weapons:** Cannon (20/40/80, 2d8, Turret); Stomp (d12+12)

**Notes:** Armor +4, Driver (Driving d10, all others d6), Gunner (Shooting d10, all others d6, Steady Hands), Improved Stomp (d8+d10), Legged (treat each inch of difficult terrain as 1.5")

## HEAVY KIKAI

The heavy kikai give the Iron Dynasty its name. Modeled after the original Kikai, it is durable, tough, and packs serious firepower — with the long range on its cannon, all enemy forces are at risk. Not indestructible by any means, the Lord General is advised that hails of arrows can sometimes cause serious damage to the large engines required to propel it forward. Heavy kikai are often sent out to suppress village uprisings and civil discontent.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 3/9; **Toughness:** 15(5); **Crew/Passengers:** 1+1

**Class:** Heavy (3" before turn); **Ammo:** H

**Weapons:** Cannon (30/60/120, 2d10, Turret); Stomp (d10+15)

**Notes:** Armor +5, Driver (Driving d10, all others d6), Gunner (Shooting d10, all others d6, Steady Hands), Legged (treat each inch of difficult terrain as 1.5")







# TWENTY MYSTIC RELICS

---

In the lands of Konoyo, magic items are rare and highly coveted prizes. The creation of such relics is thought to be a lost art, or else a closely guarded secret held by a select few practitioners. Many adventurers spend their lives wandering into the dark and dangerous places of the world seeking such treasures. Few return.

## AMULET OF AFFINITY

Once commonly bestowed upon heroes of a province, these powerful items have been lost for centuries. They imbue the possessor with the ability to infuse their attacks with an Elemental Affinity. Each item possesses 10 PP, and activating it uses 2 Power Points and lasts for 3 rounds.

Roll 1d6 and consult the table below.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Earth – The character does an extra d4 damage.  |
| 2 | Air – Targets hit by an attack imbued with Air must make an Agility roll or fall prone.   |
| 3 | Water – Targets hit by an attack imbued with Water must make a Strength roll or fall prone.   |
| 4 | Fire – Targets hit by an attack imbued with Fire take an extra d4 damage and have a 1 in 6 chance of catching fire (see the Fire section, p. 59). |
| 5 | Void – Targets hit by an attack imbued with the Void must make a Smarts roll or be Shaken. This can cause a wound to troops already Shaken.       |
| 6 | Greater Amulet of Affinity: It has an additional 5 PP and has two affinities of the Sensei's choosing.  |

## ARCANE SASHIMONO

Appearing as finely crafted back banners, these artifacts were once quite common before the Splintering, but most have been destroyed in battle. The few surviving known examples are great prizes of the High Lord General, though there are rumors some may still be found in the ruins of Ato. Each sashimono has been blessed by the spirits to protect its wearer from magic. When the wearer is the direct target of a spell or arcane effect, roll a die. If the roll is even, the effect is directed back at the attacker (or negated if the effect is inappropriate).



## THE BONE SPEAR OF OHMAE JUNZO

Carved from the thighbone of an oni, this bone spear is jagged and fearsome to behold. In battle, the user gains the benefits of First Strike. Should he already have First Strike, he gains the benefits of Improved First Strike. Should he have that as well, he gains the benefits of No Mercy with all strikes of the spear.

## BOOK OF THE FIVE MASTERS

Composed by the great hero, Zyoki, this book recounts his secret techniques of learning and allows any who read it and spend an advance to take the Empty Hands edge without meeting the prerequisites. Afterward, the book vanishes. If the user already possesses Empty Hands, they may spend an advance to gain Empty Hands Mastery without meeting the rank requirement or prerequisites.

## THE BROKEN BOKKEN OF KUNDA JUNICHI

Offensively useless, this bokken belonged to the master kensei, Kunda Junichi who used it when he made the legendary Mad Charge into the Tiger's Jaws. He managed to cut a swath through Ikusa Kokoro's finest archers before his bokken broke, and he fell before their relentless assault. When used, it gives its possessor the benefits of the Arrow Cutting edge. Scholars believe if the missing pieces can be found and the bokken somehow repaired (perhaps by a visit to the Oni-Kaji of the Mountains of the Mists?) that the weapon's true nature will be revealed. Why else would a master swordsman use only a wooden training weapon in battle?

## FAN OF THE NORTH WIND

This mystic weapon belonged to Master Watabe Bunjiro, a mighty onmyoji of the first order. This gives the benefits of Elemental Affinity (Air) to any powerful onmyoji (must have 15+ PP) that wields it.

## FLUTE OF THE FORGOTTEN

This artifact enables the wearer to recall bits of legend and lore. When they play it for ten minutes or more, they may make a Knowledge (Legends) roll at +2 as the flute begins to shift the tune to something that would jog the player's memory (such as a war song for a tattered banner or a dirge for an old grave).

## HAMMER OF TAKARA MABUCHI

A great hero of the Bright Empire, Mabuchi was presented with this gift when he drove the sea demons from Hinote Shima. This well-balanced hammer (+1 to attack) possesses both Elemental Affinity (Fire) and has the Smite power. It has 10 PP and recharges at the rate of 2 points per hour.

## THE IRON BOW OF NAKAGAWA FUMIKO

The finest archer of the last age was Nakagawa Fumiko, who was unrivaled in grace and cunning. Disguised as a young peasant boy, she entered the Emperor's Tournament and bested the meditative monks of the Silent Brotherhood, who had gone undefeated for centuries. Akechi Ekiken, their champion, broke his silence when he lost by noting that the Silent Brotherhood had still gone undefeated by any man, and Fumiko was found out. The Emperor repealed his law that women could not fight on the battlefield, and opened future tournaments to all newcomers. Ekiken was cast out of the Silent Brotherhood for speaking, and courted Fumiko, who refused to marry him until he offered her a gift she could not refuse — the bow that was named in her honor. Scholars of recent ages conclude he made a compact with the Oni-Kaji, for this bow is of craftsmanship beyond human ken, giving the benefit of Zen Archery to its user. A raise made on a Shooting roll with the bow does an extra d10 damage, rather than a d6.

## KATANA OF THE MOONLESS NIGHT

This feared sword once belonged to Kogo Yu, Mistress of the Seven Deaths, and gives the user the benefits of Cat's Eyes and No Mercy when in use.

## THE KETTLE OF CONTEMPLATION

A battered bronze kettle etched with tiny little foxes, this innocuous-looking item enabled the Peach Guard to hold the pass at Ichimaru for two days until reinforcements arrived. Crafted by the kitsune as a gift for a kindness, the kettle can brew tea in twenty minutes that immediately restores a person's vitality (eliminating all Fatigue) when they drink a cup. There is enough for six cups of tea. If one drinks the entire kettle of tea (10 minutes to drink), all wounds and fatigue are eliminated. This item was in the possession of Ikusa Kokoro, but was lost at sea over a century ago, and has surfaced twice since then: once in Tetsu Sengaku, and more recently in Tahata Gaki.

## MASK OF THE RED LION

Made of iron and inlaid with rubies, this mask is fashioned in the shape of a horned lion's face. This terrifying item enables the wearer to roar mightily (as per Stun power). It contains 5 PP for this purpose and recharges at the rate of 3 points per hour.

## THE MIRRORED RING OF MIZUTANI SUMIKO

Sumiko was a thief who was known for her luck. She stole this ring from an onmyoji while visiting Doragon Mizu and she wore it until her luck ran out. This silver ring gives the character to gain +2 to all Tricks when worn.

## ORB OF RESURRECTION

Purported to be the right eye of a Celestial, this ebon orb enables a character to return the recently dead to life. The bearer must make a Spirit roll. With a success, the deceased comes back with all wounds healed and all abilities intact, but his Vigor permanently drops a die type due to the rigors of return. A raise on the roll means the character suffers no such ill effect. Should a character already have a d4 Vigor, a raise is required to restore them to life. The orb only has enough Power Points for one resurrection attempt and is drained in the process. Rumor has it, there is a makoto who lives in the blue bamboo forest who knows how to restore the item's magic.

## THE PRAYER SLIP OF A THOUSAND BLESSINGS

Illuminated words of the Enlightened One upon simple strips of paper are imbued with great and wondrous magic. A prayer slip may do any number of things. If worn into battle, they give the wearer the benefits of the Dodge edge, as friendly kami help protect him in battle. If swallowed, they gift the person with the power to Speak Languages (5 Power Points and recover 1 point per hour). Finally, if a prayer slip is burned, the character is gifted with an epiphany (1 immediate free advance of their choosing, regardless of rank requirements). The Enlightened One freed himself of his mortal coil over a thousand years ago, so these have grown passing rare over the centuries, yet they do turn up in the oddest of places.

## THE SILK GAUNTLETS OF TANIKO SAJI

This pair of fine silk gloves was made for the famed courtier, Taniko Saji. When first put on, the gloves immediately mold to fit the wearer's hands. When the wearer is threatened, the gloves become as hard as metal. This gives the user the benefits of Danger Sense and the Empty Hands Edges.

## SHURIKEN OF SERENITY

This unique artifact was used by the White Ninja of the Second Age, and was part of a complete set of ninja tools carved for the master that have been lost after the rise of Ikusa Kokoro. A successful strike with this weapon does no damage, it instead prompts the target to make an immediate Spirit roll or immediately fall asleep for a d6 rounds. It returns to the wielder in a d4 rounds after each use.

## SHUSAKE'S STONE ODACHI

This weapon was crafted for the great hero of the north, Ino Shusake. He was a giant of a man with incredible strength, and it was rumored only he could lift this weapon. To wield it properly, a character must have a d12 Strength. The

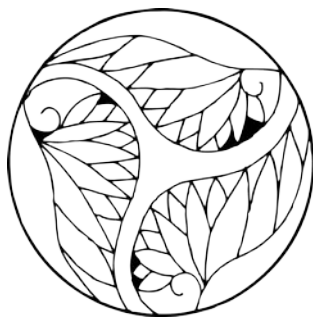
strong character gains +1 to hit with it and +1d6 damage to all Wild Attacks made with this monstrous blade.

## THUNDEROUS PEARL OF SHIZUMA SEIHACHI

Created by the mad onmyoji, Seihachi, the Thunderous Pearl appears as a simple, flawed black pearl. When hurled at an enemy (standard Throwing roll), it reveals its true nature, exploding for 2d6 damage in a Small Burst Template. It re-forms and returns to the thrower's hand the following round. There are said to be thirteen of these black pearls, and it is rumored that if they are all brought together, they may possess other, darker magics.

## YOKOKAWA'S LUCKY STONE

This simple black worry stone confers great luck to its owner. The possessor gains 1 extra benny per session, and whenever they are dealt a Joker in combat they gain another benny.



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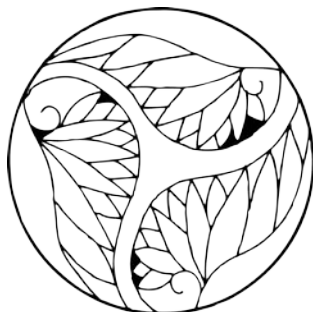


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# KONOYO

- HAMLET / MANOR
- VILLAGE
- ▼ TOWER
- ◆ TEMPLE
- TOWN
- WALLED TOWN
- CITY
- WALLED CITY



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