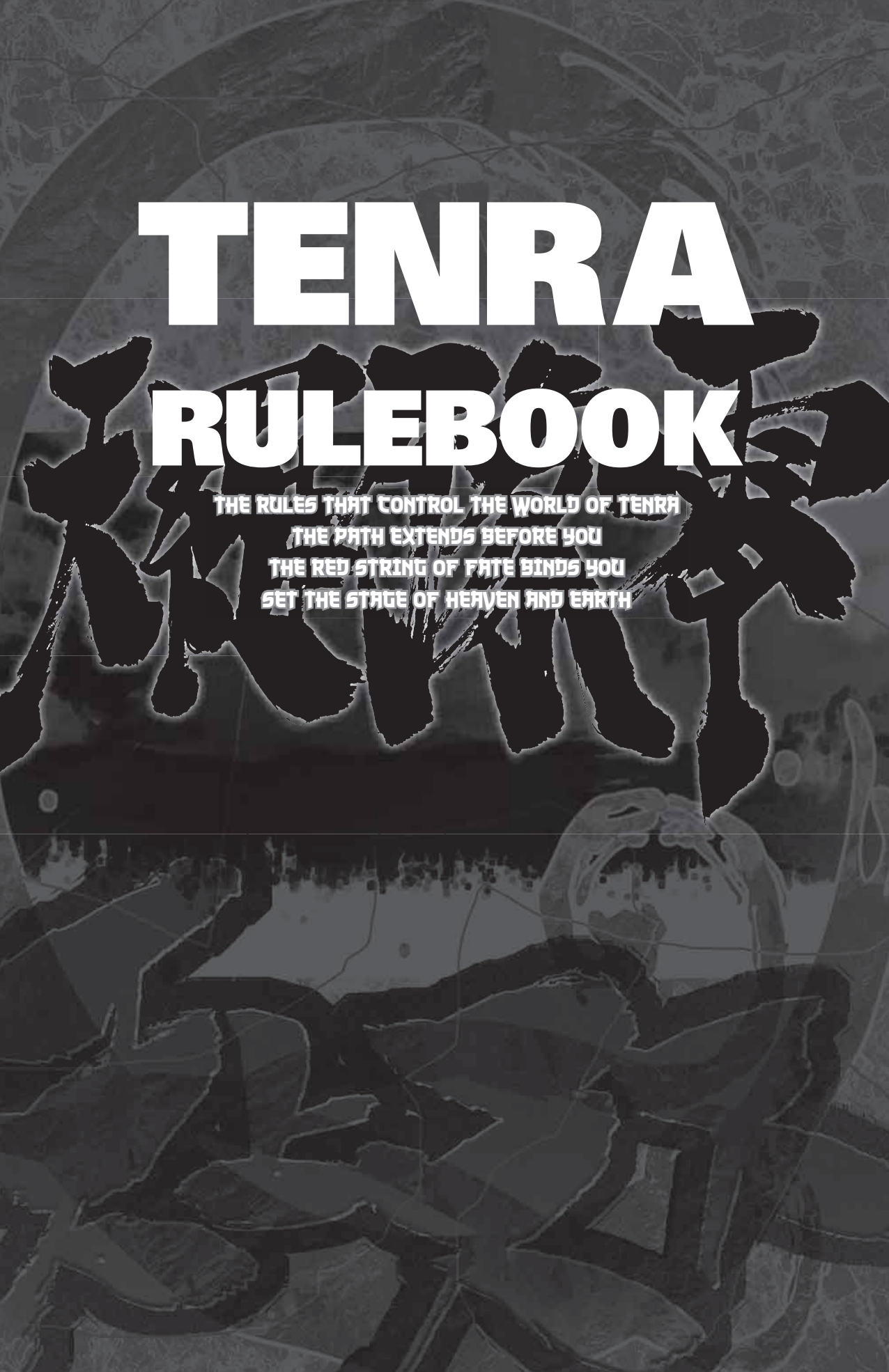

TENRA
RULEBOOK
THE RULES THAT CONTROL THE WORLD OF TENRA
THE PATH EXTENDS BEFORE YOU
THE RED STRING OF FATE BINDS YOU
SET THE STAGE OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

TENRA BANSHO ZERO GAME RULEBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME 4
INTRODUCTION 11
BASIC ACTIONS 29
THE KARMA SYSTEM 49
BASIC COMBAT 75
WHAT IS THE ZERO SYSTEM? 99
ZERO ACT AND THE EMOTION MATRIX 130
SCENARIO CREATION 145
ARMOUR 173
ONMYOJUTSU RULES 190
SAMURAI ABILITY 215
BUDDHIST MAGIC 220
KIJIN AND MECHANICA RULES 229
KONGOHKI 243
NINJUTSU RULES 256
KUGUTSU AND THE BUTTERFLY DREAM 269
ANNELID RULES 273
ONI RESONANCE 282
SHINTO RULES 287
THE AYAKASHI 292
THE ART OF WAR 304
ONE TENRA: AGAINST THE TIDE 321

TENRA GLOSSARY 344
MEDIA RESOURCES 352
ADVICE 358
INTRODUCING THE WORLD OF TENRA 370
222 THINGS TO DO IN TENRA 375
NAMES 382
ARCHETYPES 389
CREATING NEW ARCHETYPES 416
WEAPONS AND WEAPON CREATION RULES 419
SAMPLE CHARACTERS 427
EMOTION MATRIX 449

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Tenra Bansho Zero: Tales of Heaven and Earth Edition is dedicated to Satoru Hosono (1973-2006), for without whom I would never have been introduced to the wonderful world of Japanese-born role-playing games or the people who play them.

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THESE ARE THE WORDS
THAT CRAFT THE WORLD
THEY GRANT THE ABILITY TO CRAFT
THE VERY TALES OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

WELCOME

Welcome to the world of Tenra, a vast land of endless feudal war, a land of incredible tales that you and your friends will create.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

This book takes us behind the scenes of Tenra, a "Hyper-Asian" setting of fantasy, swords, technology and magic introduced in the world guide. This book is a tool for you and your friends to use to create thrilling tales within the world of Tenra. It is a tabletop role-playing game: A rulebook, informational resource and play guide. This book and some friends are all you require to play the game.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A role-playing game is a form of creative entertainment that you engage in with your friends. It's an ancient form of entertainment given new form. Behind all of the gloss, dice, and rules this game simply comes down to telling stories with your friends.

Together with a group of friends, you will create a tale. The story will have a backdrop, the world of Tenra. It will have unique and interesting characters, which you will role-play: You will pretend to be those characters, guiding their actions and speaking through them. Using some rules and a little creativity, a story will develop. There will be crises and climaxes, and the characters will change as you pass from chapter to chapter in the story.

By the end of one session of about 4-6 hours, you and your friends will have an original story, a unique tale which you have created together. That's the kind of entertainment that role-playing provides. That's what a role-playing game is.

CONSOLE RPGS AND TABLETOP RPGS

Many of us are familiar with the idea of video games known as Role-Playing Games or RPGs. Final Fantasy and Mass Effect are the kind of games that you play on a video game console. The difference between console RPGs and tabletop RPGs is a basic one: In console RPGs, the author has the story written from beginning to end. You may be presented choices throughout the game, but you still must follow the plot of the pre-determined story. You are the sole player of the game.

With tabletop RPGs, several friends play at once. Almost like a theatrical play, they serve as both the actors and the audience. The player choices matter in tabletop play: The game will shift and change, grow and develop, all as the players make choices throughout the game. The players—by role-playing their characters' actions—write the story in real-time. There is no pre-determined path and no "correct way" to do anything. The players make it up as they go along.

HOW IS TENRA BANSHO DIFFERENT FROM OTHER RPGS?

If you are familiar with tabletop role-playing games in general but are not familiar with Tenra Bansho Zero, after you look through the world and setting sections to get an idea of how the world works, you will want to carefully review the rules sections. While characters and combat work in similar ways to other popular role-playing games, the flow of the game operates in some small but fundamentally different ways than many RPGs you are familiar with: The Karma system and Zero System will have rules which are surprisingly different from other tabletop RPGs. Please familiarize yourselves with them, as Tenra Bansho has some interesting things that set it apart from similar fantasy games, and take a while to get used to. Things like:

- The Emotion Matrix, which determines what your character initially thinks of other characters when they first meet.
- Aiki chits, which are a mechanism for players outside the scene rewarding good role-playing and adherence to character background.
- The Karma system, which reflects how your character's personality grows and changes throughout the game.

Familiarize yourself with these unique bits before your first game, and your game session will flow much more smoothly.

WHAT DOES TENRA BANSHO ZERO MEAN, ANYWAY?

- In short: "All Things in Heaven and Earth"
- It is a play on the Buddhist expression *shin-ra-ban-shou*, a concept which connotes "The Universe", "Nature", "Heaven and Earth", "Everything that Exists". It originally hails from the Dhammapada, a Buddhist scripture written in Sanskrit and later translated into Chinese. The Chinese character for Shin (nature; forest) has been replaced with Ten (heaven; sky) to make a unique word that plays on this expression.
- Tenra is the name of the land featured in the game (both the planet and the string of continents). The hidden Sanskrit meaning of the word is "eternal".

- "ZERO" is the moniker for this new edition of the game, which features tightened rules for Karma, drama and story.

Tenra Bansho is the original name of this role-playing game, originally published in Japan in 1997. The game was redesigned, re-conceptualized, and republished in a new edition in the year 2000. This new edition was called Tenra Bansho Zero. The "Zero" referred to a new beginning in the year 2000, and the system that made all the drama and action happen was labeled the Zero System. This English version of the game comes directly from the Zero edition of the game. Since Zero referred to a new beginning for the game, we thought it would be fitting to keep that title as Tenra Bansho Zero finds a new beginning in the English-speaking Western world.

Tenra Rules Lexicon

Here we will introduce the special words used in the rules sections of Tenra Bansho Zero. Throughout the rest of this book, the words here will be used without explanation. If you know the meaning of the words below beforehand, you'll effectively pick up the rules of the game.

Game Master or GM

This is the person in the group who is in charge of the game. She is responsible for the flow of the game, setting the stage and creating scenes, and creating the adventure scenario in which the other players will play. She also creates conflicts for the characters, and describes what happens when the players react to those conflicts. The GM is also the referee and judge of the rules.

Player or PC

The rest of the participants in the game aside from the GM are players. Each player is in charge of a Player Character (PC), which they guide through role-play. Players who take part in a scene are called "acting players", and a player who takes the role of an important character for that scene is called the "scene player".

Player Character or PC

These are the heroes and characters that the players use to tell a story, as opposed to the background characters that the heroes meet, which are called NPCs.

Non-Player Character or NPC

These are the various story characters that the Game Master controls, such as townspeople, leaders, and villains. They interact with the PCs. Sometimes the players will take on the roles of these NPCs as well.

Acts

Acts are units which show the passage of time, just like acts in a play, movie, or anime. Think of acts as chapters of a novel. Normally, one game session is organized into 3-5 acts.

Scenes

An act is further broken down into scenes, just like a TV show or anime. Scenes are the where the actual role-playing happens. They are small chunks of time or space in which the story, drama and action occurs. Strings of linked scenes become an act.

Intermission

Intermissions are the phases of rest between two acts. During an intermission phase, Kiai becomes replenished, character Fates and Destinies may change, and changes to the characters are recorded on character sheets.

ZERO ACT

The first act of the game is called the Zero Act, and is meant to introduce the characters, introduce major NPCs, and for the GM to assign each character a Destiny. Each character gets one single scene in the Zero Act.

AIKI, AIKI CHITS

Aiki (pronounced: Eye-Key) means harmony or kinship. Aiki chits are rewards that the players or GMs give to players who are role-playing well. Whenever someone has their character do something cool, or something that is interesting in the context of that character, that player will receive an Aiki chit from the other players. Aiki is later converted into Kiai. It is recommended that the players use poker chips, coins, colored stones, paper strips or other physical artifacts to represent Aiki chits.

KIAI, KIAI POINTS

Kiai (pronounced "Key-Eye") is literally a "fighting spirit" or a yell used in martial arts. It is a symbol of character power. Spending Kiai lets the character do incredible acts of skill and grace, usually in the form of rolling extra dice, or gaining extra successes. Power comes with a cost, though: Whenever Kiai is used, it will turn into Karma. The word "Kiai" is made up of the same two Japanese kanji pictographs as "Aiki", only reversed—They are two sides of the same coin.

KARMA

Karma is gained when Kiai points are spent. They represent the pollution of the character's soul or show the strength of the character's ties to the world of flesh and suffering. Karma is strongly tied to the 108 Buddhist Defilements or "Sins", the afflictions caused by human suffering that afflict the mind and body. Only through cutting ties to the physical world can these defilements be reduced or eliminated.

FATE

Fates represent the PC's relationships and connections with the world. Each Fate can be an emotion towards another character, a thing the character did in her past, a motivation, a belief, and so on. Fates are the beliefs that move the character to act day to day. A character's Fate could also be a trauma, a reason to continue living, or even a sin that they committed.

DESTINY

Destiny is a special kind of Fate which the GM assigns to each PC at the beginning of each gaming session. It is a goal that the player should try to act out through their PC during that session. It is the character's mission in that scenario.

ASURA

When you crave for unattainable things, when you're plagued by the loss that you feel when you realize you cannot change or let go of attaining your goals, and when you cannot forget the pain of wanting things out of your reach, you lose the part of you that makes you human. You either actively or inadvertently destroy everything that you once loved. You become an Asura (pronounced Ah-Shur-Ah)—also known as a Lost Soul—a demon in human guise. You reveal yourself to be evil, and your PC becomes an NPC under the GM's control.

AUDIENCE

In each scene, the GM and a few of the players will participate, role-playing their characters. The players who are not actively taking part in the scene are the audience, just like the audience of a Kabuki or Bunraku play. They have a role in awarding good role-play and character expression with Aiki chits.

Scene Judge

This is an optional rule for beginning players. The role of the scene judge is to give Aiki chits to the other players. As other players role-play well, they should be encouraged as well as given Aiki chits by the GM or scene referee. The scene referee changes from scene to scene. In normal games of Tenra Bansho Zero, the scene referee is not used and all players reward each other with Aiki chits.

The Basic Rules of Role-Play

Tenra Bansho Zero is like a play or story that everyone participates in creating. The goal of the game is to engage in the fun process of creating that story through their characters, and enjoying the story as it unfolds.

The GM's Powers and Abilities

For the player who participates as the GM, there are some additional powers and abilities that come with the job. Of course, they should stick to the rules as much as possible. Moreover, they should try their hardest to apply the rules impartially to all the players.

If the GM makes a mistake in the application of a rule, they should apologize immediately and use the correct rule from that point on. Don't try to "rewind time", as it were, and try to reapply the correct rule to the situation. Think of it like a referee's call in a sports game; it shouldn't be undone. What's past is past. Just make an effort to use the correct rule or judgment in the future.

1: Rule Changes and Cancellation

The GM is allowed to change rules or decide to work around or outside of the rules at any time.

2: Decide How to Use Rules to Resolve a Situation

In situations where the rules don't clearly cover how to resolve a situation, the GM can decide which rules should be used or how to resolve that particular situation.

If the GM faces a situation where the rules don't apply at all or where the PCs want to do something not covered in the rules, please use the following criteria when thinking of a judgment:

Does it feel like it fits the atmosphere of the scene?

Does it sound cool?

Does it seem to fit inside the plans of the rest of the adventure?

Does it add to the fun of the players?

3: Canceling the Effect of Another Player's Action

If the player decides to do something that completely counteracts the atmosphere of the game, the GM can say that it didn't happen, and have the player choose their action again. The GM should never have to use this power often with a focused group of enthusiastic players, but it is there as a sort of "emergency break", just in case.

4: Deciding the Actions of the Rest of the World.

The GM can control the basic actions of the NPCs without making them roll dice. They simply succeed or fail at tasks as the GM decides.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Tenra Bansho Zero is a type of game where there are no winners or losers. However, if the players don't have any goals to work for, they certainly won't be able to play the game well. We've gone ahead to set victory conditions for the game, both for the players and for the GM in a game of TBZ. The more of the conditions you fulfill, the closer you are to "victory", as it were, in the game.

THE GM VICTORY CONDITIONS, IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE:

1) You helped the players have as much fun as humanly possible.
2) You help bring the characters to life in a way that the players say, "I want to play this character again someday!"
3) The players tell you the session was interesting and enjoyable.
4) You helped each of the players take the stage, and show off or express themselves in their own ways.
5) The players thank you for your effort in doing all the above.
6) You helped create an interesting story.

If the GM filled more than half of the above conditions, then the GM has achieved a "victory". She can go ahead and tell others that she successfully mastered Tenra. However, don't quit just because you're ahead! Try to do even better! Moreover, if you suffer a "defeat", then regroup, focus on the victory conditions and try again later. Don't give up!

THE PLAYER VICTORY CONDITIONS, IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE:

1) You had fun over the course of the session.
2) You helped the other players to have as much fun as you had.
3) You get the GM to say, "That was cool!" or "That was great!" when you do something.
4) You were able to encourage the other players and keep them involved.
5) You took the opportunity to show off or express yourself.
6) You helped create an interesting story.

If the player filled more than half of the above conditions, then they have achieved a "victory". The player can go ahead and tell others that she mastered Tenra as well. If you suffer a "defeat", then regroup, focus on the victory conditions, and try again later. Make sure to stand tall and not to blame the others if you are "defeated".

THE FINE PRINT

This section just has some small elements to be aware of when reading through the rules sections of this book.

RULES ABOUT DICE

This game uses six-sided dice, the kind that come with most board games. When we refer to rolling dice or "making a roll", we mean rolling these six-sided dice. Usually the players will roll with one Attribute and one Skill. You will often see statements like "Make a Spirit: Willpower roll" or "Roll against the opponent's Agility: Melee Weapons". See the basic rules section for more details on how to make these rolls.

ROUND UP FRACTIONS

Any time you take a fraction of a number in the game, you will always round up to the highest full number, no matter what fraction of a number results. 10 / 3 = 3.3, which in Tenra rounds up to 4.

Concept Text

In the sections of text labeled "Concept", we will explain the hidden meanings behind the rules, how they affect play, and why they exist. There are rules that give the power to the GM to make rule changes or make decisions based on rules, and we wrote the Concept sections to emphasize that there is often more to the rules than meets the eye.

GMs should read the Concept sections, so that their decisions take the reasons behind the rules into consideration. Once the GM is aware of the purpose behind the rule, it will help the GM make better on-the-fly rules decisions in the game.

Tenra, Tenra Bansho, Tenra Bansho Zero, TBZ

Throughout the game we will make reference to all of the words above. Tenra Bansho and Tenra Bansho Zero refer to the game you hold in your hands. Sometimes we use "TBZ" as a shorthand of "Tenra Bansho Zero". The world "Tenra" alone may refer to the game, but more often than not it refers to the game world, as the setting the stories take place in is a land called Tenra.

Gender, Grammar and Third Person Pronouns

Throughout the text, we will indiscriminately use male and female pronouns (he/she) when using third person in the rules: The Japanese printed language simply *has no regular-use pronouns*, so we've had to do our best to add them in to this English version. In many sections we refer to the GM as "she" and the players as "he". In the rules sections, we tend to alternate using one pronoun (she) in some chapters (Like this one, for instance. Did you notice?) and the other pronoun (he) in alternate chapters. In the end, this is a game to be enjoyed by both men and women. In Japan, for example, Tenra Bansho is a roleplaying game that is traditionally very popular with female players!

The game is set in a fantasy analogue of Japan during its Sengoku period—"Warring States Era"—of several hundred years ago. Back then, there were traditional roles set for men and women. There is no reason whatsoever to emulate the gender roles of historic Japan in this fantasy game. Think of it more like an anime or manga-ized fantasy world, where women and men can (and often do) trade gender roles and break cultural, caste and gender stereotypes. Play with modern sensibilities to culture and gender, and have fun with bending or breaking those stereotypes!

Victory in a Game With No Losers

Tenra Bansho Zero is different than most console and board games, as there are only winners. Defeating a player doesn't lead to victory for the GM, and trouncing a GM does not make the players winners. It's important to understand that in this game, "Playing in a way that benefits everybody" usually begins with "Play in a way that is fun for yourself, and don't ruin the fun of the other players". Or, more colloquially, "Don't be a jerk". This is a game for the kind of people who think "If I help others have fun, I'll probably have fun myself".

Let's aim for that kind of play. Play with friends you trust, enjoy their company, and push each other to higher levels of enjoyment. It's that simple. It takes a while to get used to role-playing games like Tenra Bansho Zero, but we're confident you can quickly have successful game sessions.



THERE IS ANOTHER YOU
A YOU WHO EXISTS IN THE WORLD OF TENRA
HERE YOU WILL TAKE FORM

INTRODUCTION

You've read or at least skimmed through the world section, and have seen the kinds of people that inhabit the volatile world of Tenra. Now it's time to experience it. It's time to play the game.

This section details the methods for bringing to life another side of you, a part of you which will live in the world of Tenra. These are the character creation rules.

In Tenra Bansho Zero, there are a large number of pre-made characters available so that you can quickly pick one and jump right into playing the game. If all of the players each choose one of the characters in that section, everyone will be able to begin the game quickly.

For people who are new to playing Tenra Bansho, or people playing at a game convention or other place where time is limited (like a spontaneous game with friends), we suggest you use one of the many sample characters found in the back of this book. However, for people who really want to get into making a character from scratch, we have rules that explain how to create new characters.

DECIDING WHAT TO PLAY

The first step to creating a character in Tenra Bansho Zero is to first understand what kind of game you are going to be playing this time. More often than not, the Game Master will have at least some idea for an adventure scenario, if not an entirely prepared adventure

from start to finish. In this situation, the GM will share with the group some of the ideas that she had for the scenario. The players can from there decide what kinds of characters to play.

The best thing to do is to not decide alone what kind of character you want to play, but to bring your idea to the table. Share your idea with your fellow players and see what they think. They might have some suggestions to make your character idea more exciting, or perhaps be inspired to come up with a character type that complements your choice.

Sometimes the GM will have a scenario that is very focused, where the GM will create a few characters to be used in that scenario. Each player will pick one of the prepared characters, and play out that role in the game.

Other times, the GM will have a simple, short outline of a scenario. Or perhaps the GM is going to wing it, and have no prewritten scenario at all, instead basing it on the role-play and choices of the players. In these situations, the players will be given more freedom to choose their characters.

Compare the following game introductions, and think about the kind of character that you might choose for it:

1) Prewritten Scenario

GM: "Hey everyone, I've put together a 'Ninja Clan War' scenario. Basically two ninja clans duke it out for supremacy of the domain. I'd like you all to make ninja characters, or at least character types that will work well in a ninja village."

2) Scenario Outline

GM: "Hey everyone, we were talking earlier about a change of pace, and Jason was interested in a court drama game. So I was thinking of running a game where all the players are nobility. It's going to be high drama, with lots of backstabbing and intrigue. I have some ideas for the scenario, but nothing set in stone. So feel free to choose any kind of character that you want, but make sure that you think about your Station, Empathy and Willpower scores, because there's going to be a lot of talking and confrontation, and maybe one fight, if any."

3) From Scratch

GM: "Thanks for coming. I don't have any prewritten scenario today, but I have a few loose ideas. So let's talk about what kind of game we want to experience, and what kinds of characters you want to play. When we're done, I'll need about 10 minutes to jot some notes down, and we'll be ready to play."

Choosing a Sample Character

When choosing characters, here are some things to consider:

- Does the GM require that certain character types are chosen for the scenario?
- What kind of character do you really want to play? Is there a character type you haven't played yet, and want to give it a shot?
- What would work well with the other characters? If the other three players are all playing kugutsu, would it be more fun to play a kugutsu as well? Or would it be more interesting to play a different kind of character, to accentuate the difference between your character and the others?

In the end, play what you want to play. Share your ideas with the other players, and listen to what they think of your idea. The final decision rests with you, though.

There are no wrong choices in character creation. The focus of Tenra Bansho Zero is on the characters, their struggles, and the stories that emerge. You don't have to balance the party as you might in an online roleplaying game: "We don't have a healer. Somebody needs to be the group's healer. Who is going to be a Buddhist Priest?" Don't consider strategic party balance for overcoming combat challenges: Instead, consider what would make for a more entertaining time for everyone. A good GM will make sure to change the scenario in a way where any character choice is valid.

Finally, do not be concerned if everyone is interested in playing the same character type. You can have a game with four samurai, and yet each samurai is different, both in abilities and especially in personalities. One might be young and rash, another might be old and jaded. One might have Art of War skills, while another has annelids or limited onmyojutsu skills. Even in a group where everyone picks the same general character archetypes, you can still have a great range of actual characters: So don't be afraid to pick the character type you want to play, even if other players are choosing similar types.

If you are a brand new player to Tenra Bansho Zero, it would probably be best not to choose character types like onmyoji or shinobi, as they have magic or special abilities that take a little while to get used to. For your first game, it might be better to stick to the character types that don't have as many special exceptional rules: samurai, kugutsu, kijin and the like. Having said that, if you are really interested in a particular kind of character for your first game, go for it! Just be ready to spend a little extra time learning the special rules that go with that character type.

COPY THE CHARACTER SHEET

Copy the sample character you chose from the back of the book, or print out the sample sheets of those characters from the Tenra Bansho Zero website. Just copy the needed information like Attributes and Abilities, Soul points, Wound Levels and the like.

MAKE THE CHARACTER YOUR OWN

From this point, the players can make small changes to the sample character templates to make the characters their own. The players should help each other come up with a suitable 'Tenra-like' character. Come up with names and genders, perhaps a very brief backstory for the character. Work with the other players to make sure that the characters will be able to interact easily.

NAME

In this book and on the website we've provided several tables of cool 'Tenra-sounding' names for you to make use of. Most characters will not require a last name (traditionally only lords and other higher members of the caste system have last names), but instead have a single name or nickname. For characters of nobility, they will have a first and last name, and be called almost always by their last name. Nicknames in English (or Japanese) are also very common for seasoned adult characters, too ("Yellow Knife"; "Gonta the Weaver"; "Ayame the Headhunter"; "Shadow Edge"). Buddhist Monks, Onmyoji, and samurai often have names that might be cool ("Ten Blades"), flowery ("Red Lotus"), or esoteric ("Symphony of Clouds"). Kongohki and Monks (once they join the order) almost always have descriptive, poetic names that are based on words and not human names.

Another effect is to add a nickname to a first or last name for extra effect: "Hawk Murakami", "O-Ren the Songbird", "Magobei the Snake".

GENDER AND AGE

Choose these freely. Gender won't be an issue, and age will rarely matter. However, the GM will sometimes have a scenario planned where "This is a samurai scenario; children characters wouldn't work for this scenario" or "You are all going to be surviving orphans at a temple, so older folks wouldn't fit in this scenario". If the GM has prepared a scenario, listen to the description of it and choose an age that fits from there.

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CLASS

Tenra is a world at war. The traditional status and severe restrictions of a classic social position system are not strongly enforced in this world as they were in real Japan. It is the kind of world where the power a person wields—moreso than their social standing or gender—influences others. Having said that, a loose caste system is still in effect in Tenra, just as it was in old Japan: First vassal warriors, then farmers, then artisans and lastly merchants.

CHARACTER IMAGE

The player should feel free to describe the character's image: the clothes she wears, her looks and style, the things she carries, etc. The color of your kimono, the condition of your sandals, the look of the weapon you carry, your posture, grooming or bearing… all these are little touches that bring out the interesting parts of your character, making her more lifelike for the other players.

CHANGING FATES

For your first game, it is recommended that you keep the Fates for the characters as-is to get used to how they work. From your second game onward, feel free to change the Fates written on your character sheet to whatever you want. Some of the Fates that automatically come with pre-made characters might not be fitting for the scenario. If you or the GM don't think a particular Fate is relevant for the scenario, change it to a Fate that works for you.

Character Creation From Scratch

The rules for character generation from scratch are for those people who aren't satisfied with using pre-generated characters, or when your group has more time to work together to make new characters.

It's been suggested above that for your first game you should choose a pre-generated character. Making a character from scratch is not hard, but it can be a little time consuming the first time you try. It can take up to thirty minutes to customize a character from scratch your first time, but in time you will probably be able to create a character in five minutes or less once you become used to the system.

Characters made from scratch are created from archetypes. Essentially, you pick and choose two to four (or more) archetypes which will determine your starting skill levels, special abilities, equipment, special effects, and more. All you really need to do is choose 2-4 archetypes and you are ready for play, though in some cases players will want to customize their characters further.

CHOOSE ARCHETYPES

Archetypes are brief descriptions of elements that make a whole character. Some describe the focus of the character, like "samurai" or "Shinobi". Others give describe their jobs, or other roles or qualities like "Weaponmaster", "Doctor" or "Wanderer".

The first step is to skim through the archetypes section of the rulebook and look for the archetypes that appeal to you. If you want a specialized character like a samurai, kongohki, onmyoji, annelidist, oni or the like, you will want to first pick the archetype that will give you those special abilities. From there, look at the skills which the archetypes provides, as well as the unique Fates that the archetype comes with. Sometimes you will want to pick up an extra archetype ("Hard Luck" is a popular choice) because it provides your character with an exciting starting Fate.

If you want to play a character with magic powers, specialist abilities, or unusual equipment, it's necessary to select an archetype that provides those abilities. Later on you have the opportunity to raise your starting basic skills like Melee Weapons or Pillow Arts, but if you want to be able to use Ninjutsu, Wormcharm, Resonance, or Interface, you will have to buy an archetype during character creation that grants those abilities.

If you want to play something other than a human like a kugutsu, ayakashi, or oni, you need to choose that race's archetype package, called a "species package". Humans do not need to take any special packages for their race.

It is possible to combine several archetype packages together to make unique characters. The one exception is that you cannot take more than one of the aforementioned "species" packages (i.e. "half-oni *and* kugutsu"; "ayakashi *and* oni").

Character components like age and gender are not defined by archetypes, so you can choose these freely. Write your chosen archetypes on a blank character sheet (either copied from the book, or downloaded from the Tenra Bansho Zero web site).

KARMA COST

Each archetype you choose has an associated Karma Cost. When you calculate the total Karma for your chosen archetypes, the total for your starting character must be less than 108. You are free to choose as many packages as you want as long as their combined Karma does not exceed 108. However, you probably don't want to build your character with too much starting Karma at first, as you won't have much room to spend Kiai points during the actual game. A good starting place is somewhere between 50 to 90 Karma. Less than 50 and you may have a hard time accomplishing goals. More than 90 and you will find yourself with a powerful starting character, but one who is very close to becoming an evil NPC, an *asura*.

The total amount of Karma of your archetypes is your character's total starting Karma. Please write it down on the character sheet.

KARMA COST

Starting characters have a trade-off that you will see in play: You can choose to start off with a potentially powerful character with a high Karma cost, like 100 or above. You can also choose to start off with a potentially weak character, with a starting Karma of 50 or so. The difference is that the high Karma character will always be walking the line of Good vs Evil, and will not be able to perform as many wild feats using Kiai points at first. However, the character with the lower starting Karma may not have as many nifty abilities, but she will be able to spend Kiai wildly and do incredible things without having to worry about the consequences.

For new players, we suggest a starting Karma somewhere around 60-90. Once you become used to the way the game works, you'll be able to see the long-term effects of starting off with higher or lower Karma.

ATTRIBUTE COST

Some of the character archetypes have something called Attribute Cost. We will explain this in detail soon, but it means that you will have a "minus" when it comes to spreading a number of points (usually 40 at character creation) amongst your Attribute scores like Body, Spirit and Station.

SKILLS

The archetypes list the skills the character will receive, and the level they are set at. An archetype that lists the skill "Movement: 3" means that the character sheet will have a final rank of 3 in movement, so they should have "Three Dots" total filled in under the movement skill. Since the movement skill is a generalist skill which every character starts out with one dot already filled in, the player will only need to fill in two more dots in that skill for a total of three filled-in dots.

OVERLAPPING SKILLS

If you pick multiple archetype packages and get the same skill more than once, it is called an *overlapping skill*. You may change either of the overlapping skills to another basic skill on the sheet. If the overlapping skills are Specialist skills (skills that start at "No Skill"/"Zero Dots", usually magic and special abilities like Ninjutsu, Onmyojutsu, Etiquette, Strategy and the like), you can change one of the skills to either another specialty skill or basic skill. If the overlapping abilities are both basic skills (skills which every character starts at a rank of "Unskilled"/"One Dot", like Melee Weapons and Movement), you can only take another general skill and not a specialist skill.

At this time, you are not able to increase the level of any of these stacked skills: That is, you cannot add them together to get a higher level of ability (Example: If you choose two archetype templates and get "Melee Weapons: 2" and "Melee Weapons: 3", then you keep "Melee Weapons: 3" and pick another general skill to set at 2 like Movement or Evasion. You do not add them together to get "Melee Weapons: 5").

IMPOSSIBLE ARCHETYPE COMBINATIONS

In the various archetypes, there exist some packages that cannot be combined. For example, if you choose a kugutsu, you cannot combine that with a samurai because of their magical bodies. Please read the archetype description for details on possible combination restrictions.

TRADING ATTRIBUTE POINTS FOR GENERAL SKILLS

At the cost of one attribute point (the points that you use to spread amongst your starting attributes) you can either gain one single skill rated at 3 (Advanced), or two skills rated at 2 (Skilled). You can only do this with general skills (the ones that start out at 1, or "Unskilled"), not specialist skills. Specialist skills can only be gained by taking the appropriate archetype which contains that skill.

SOULGEM AND CUSTOM WEAPONS

If you want to start the game with a soulgem weapon, please look at the weapons section in the appendix. If you plan to take part in a fierce battle, soulgem weapons are very useful in the hands of seasoned warriors.

It costs five points of Karma to purchase each soulgem weapon. The weapon comes fully loaded with its capacity in soulgems: A soulgem-katana with a capacity of 6 soulgems starts out fully loaded with its six soulgems. To purchase additional soulgems to use later (ammo bags and the like), it costs 1 additional Karma point for

every 5 soulgems at character creation. During gameplay more soulgems can be acquired.

Some players may want to create customized weapons for their characters: Soulgem swords or rifles with a higher capacity or rate of fire, or perhaps an unusual wicked-looking weapon that was inspired by some manga, anime or video game. A player can use the weapon creation rules in the weapon list appendix to create a custom weapon. Custom weapons cost an additional attribute point to take during character creation. Please see the weapons list and custom weapon creation rules for more information.

ATTRIBUTES

In TBZ, all player characters have seven attributes: Body, Agility, Senses, Knowledge, Spirit, Empathy and Station. When you try to complete actions in the game, the attributes represent the number of dice that you will pick up and roll for that action. Here is what each attribute represents:

Body: Muscular power, physical energy and stamina

Agility: Pure speed, dexterity, reflexes, and quickness

Senses: Your five senses

Knowledge: Education, reason, logic, understanding

Spirit: Guts, fighting spirit, willpower and sixth sense

Empathy: Sympathy, emotional control, the ability to manipulate people or relationships

Station: Social standing, Eminence, social class, and influence in the world of Tenra

Example Attribute Ranges:

1-3: Normal for average people. Pretty low for most player characters.

4-6: Normal range of PC attributes.

7-8: Excellent/high range for PC attributes.

9+: Supreme PC attributes.

ASSIGNING ATTRIBUTE POINTS

You have 40 points to spread amongst your seven attributes. Make sure that you take into account any attribute cost that your character archetypes have, or attribute points which you traded in for skills, mechanica, or custom weapons. Divide the remaining attribute points amongst those attributes however you wish. The number of points you assign to an attribute will become that attribute's final value.

The lowest you can have an attribute is 1, and the highest is 10. However, it's best to try to keep your attributes around at least 3 or higher. That way you will roll at least three dice for any given action.

Spend all of your 40 points. Do not leave any points unspent, as they can't be used after character creation. Remember that you may also spend these attribute points to raise the level of generalist skills.

RECOMMENDED ATTRIBUTES

Some of the archetypes you choose for your character will indicate if there are attributes that you should focus on more than others. If the archetype lists a recommended attribute, you'll probably want to start that attribute off at 6 or higher (for example, Knowledge for onmyoji characters). However, there is no rule forcing you to do so, this is simply guidance to help you create an effective character.

Some of the archetypes list arms or equipment that have a minimum Station requirement. In cases where a number is written after Station, that means that you

must take at least that score or higher in your station attribute to be allowed to take that archetype.

ATTRIBUTE RESTRICTIONS

Kongohki, oni, half-oni and kugutsu archetypes have special requirements for attributes. Many require you to put one attribute higher than all of the others. Others, like the kongohki, start out with some attribute scores set in stone. Please follow the specific rules listed on those archetypes.

CONCEPT: The Meaning of Attributes

Player Characters in the world of Tenra possess attributes that are higher than most normal people. This is a way to make the players understand that the character is not a regular human being. She is something much more. This is something that the players should remember. Their PCs are not necessarily do-gooder heroes, but they certainly are something more than the everyday people that populate the world, and are capable of moving and shaking the foundations of Tenra.

SUB-ATTRIBUTES

There are three sub-attributes for each character: Vitality, Soul, and Wounds.

VITALITY

This represents a character's physical durability and ability to take physical punishment and wear. You can think of them as being like Hit Points (HP) from console, online, or other tabletop role-playing games. These decrease as the character takes damage in a fight. When Vitality reaches 0, the character passes out and is out of the fight, though she does not die. The maximum number of Vitality is the total of Body plus Spirit.

Body + Spirit = Maximum Vitality

SOUL

This represents a character's force of will and ability to take mental or spiritual stress. They act like Magic Points (MP) in popular console or online role-playing games. Soul points decrease as you use magic and other special abilities like Ninjutsu or Buddhist Magic. When Soul reaches 0, the character falls unconscious. The maximum number of Soul is the total of two times the total of Knowledge and Spirit.

(Knowledge + Spirit) x 2 = Maximum Soul

WOUNDS AND THE WOUND TRACK

The Wound Track is a way to represent serious injuries in a way that encourages role-playing. Aside from Critical and Dead conditions, there's no real rule punishment for stacking up wounds. To see how these work in more detail, please refer to the Combat rules section.

You calculate your Wound Track by the method below. Remember to always round up for any fractional number to the next whole number (A score of 5 in Body, divided by 4 for Critical Wounds, becomes 2 Critical Wound boxes.) On the character sheet for each injury value, count the number of boxes you need to leave open (for your Body, Body ÷ 2, etc) and blacken out the boxes left over in pencil.

- **Light Wounds**: The same as Body
- **Heavy Wounds**: Body ÷ 2
- **Critical**: Body ÷ 4
- **Dead**: 1 (Always just one)

Characters that have a variable Body attribute like samurai and annelidists (or the kongohki/armour "Meikyo Bonus") do not suddenly raise or rewrite their Wound Track or increase their Vitality score when they activate their higher adjusted body score. Rather, the wound track is calculated at their 'default resting state',

before the effects of the samurai shiki or annelids or Karma, and stays at that range even when their bodies are boosted.

EQUIPMENT AND MONEY

Equipment and starting money entirely depends on the Station score. Station is your social status, rank, and political power in the world of Tenra. It defines the things you are able to use your resources to purchase and carry with you and the social level of equipment that you're allowed to use.

In olden days of historic Japan, only true mono-no-fu (samurai) or vassal warriors were allowed to carry katana or other weapons. Anyone who wasn't of the correct rank who was caught with a katana was severely punished or executed. In Tenra, Station represents your ability to get your hands on otherwise restricted weapons or equipment, usually through political power and social status.

If there's no information in the rules about the equipment you feel want your character to have, feel free to take it if it makes sense ("an extra kimono", "a pet frog", "art supplies for my paintings"). However, in the case of weapons, make sure you have a high enough station to possess that weapon. Please see the weapons list for more information on the station score for various weapons.

Any other equipment you want to take, feel free to look through the sample characters or check with the GM to see if it's okay.

In regards to money, there are not really any definite rules to how much you start out with, other than what is already written in the character archetype. Just have the characters carry as much money that would be appropriate to that character type. If you're really in a pinch and need to know how much money and resources a character would be able to gather as per their station, around Station x 500 *mon* worth should do. But remember, this is a game about drama and action, don't get too caught up in buying stuff and worrying about what you can or cannot buy. Money—in this game—is used mostly for show, drama, and role-play purposes.

HEALTH, SOUL AND NEGATIVE NUMBERS

It may be a little hard to grasp at first, but it's possible to get "Negative Damage" when using Soul and Vitality. If your Vitality or Soul goes below zero, you simply pass out; that's all. You'll stay that way for however long is dramatically appropriate (but certainly not realistic): A few minutes, a few hours, even a few days.

There's no limit to the amount of Negative Damage you can take. For example, if you fell 3,000 meters from the sky and landed on solid rock, and take all that damage in Vitality (and none in Wounds or the Dead Box) you will simply only pass out. But eventually (a few hours? 50? GMs should be careful not to be too easy on the players, but don't try to mimic reality too much, and certainly do not bore the players) you'll wake up, stand up, and say, "Damn, that was a close one. I thought I was a goner for sure!"

Or, as a player, you may think it would be interesting or cool to take some of that damage in wounds. That way, you can act cool and have your character say, "Crap. Well, there goes that arm" or something like that. It's always best to aim for the coolest or most interesting result when interpreting damage.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Gunpowder pistols, soulgem spears, samurai-shiki, magic spells, annelids, and yoroi armours are all set and limited to specific archetypes only. Please look at those archetypes to find out more about

their equipment. You can only get that kind of equipment by taking the appropriate archetype.

Once you have some experience with the system, you can choose to substitute or customize your character's starting special equipment. For example, you might want to change your starting annelid loadout from the standard one on the annelidist archetype. Or you might want a four-legged war platform yoroi armour with more guns and no melee weapons instead of the standard one that is written on the armour rider archetype. You can manipulate your starting special equipment, but because of the time required to read those sections, it's suggested that for your first few games of Tenra you simply stick with the equipment listed on your archetype.

STARTING FATES

When you choose your character's archetypes, you'll notice that they have Fates set in them. Write those Fates onto your character sheet.

For starting characters, you are initially limited to two Fates. If you choose three or more archetypes, please just pick two of the Fates which you like the most from your collection of archetypes and write them on the character sheet. One Fate will be rated at 3, the other at 2; you may freely choose which of these two ratings applies to which Fate. If there are any special conditions regarding Fates in the character archetype, please take note of them.

SPECIAL CHARACTERS AND POWERS

There are some special archetypes that have special rules, powers or conditions applied to them. Some have special equipment or abilities. Please read the following section to see which powers apply to which character types, and what special conditions they have.

MEIKYO, THE CLEAR MIRROR

Agents of the Shinto Priesthood, yoroi armour-riders and some of the other archetypes start out with a meikyo soul mirror, and have the ability to enter or manipulate the realm of Reflection.

By using two objects called a Soulcord (which looks like a cable that stretches from the Meikyo to the Helm) and Interface Helm (a visor, helmet, or other headpiece that covers the eyes and ears), these characters can interface with the intangible information-based world known as the Reflection. When they do so, they can use all of their general skills at the same level as their Interface skill. Interface effectively replaces these skills while in the Reflection.

For example, while interfaced with a yoroi armour, instead of using Agility with Melee Weapons when you are attacking an enemy with your armour, you use Agility: Interface to make melee attacks. This applies to Notice, Evasion, Movement, and all other general skills as well.

The Reflection is also a means of long-distance communication. If you acquire both a meikyo soul mirror-disk and have ranks in the Shinto skill, you have the ability to enter the Reflection and communicate messages through other soul mirrors. This ability is usually limited to agents of the Shinto Priesthood. However, it is possible for two soul mirror users to form a temporary network between them for communication, like instant communication over the Internet. Feel free to decide limits of meikyo use with the GM when you're playing.

Also, feel free to describe the mysterious Reflection world as you explore it: There is no set appearance of the world behind the meikyo soul mirrors. However, it might help to consider it like a futuristic magical

Internet controlled by one agency: The Shinto Priesthood. What it looks, feels, and sounds like, and how you communicate within it, is up to you.

Meikyo mirrors are special objects meant solely for their owners: it is impossible to acquire one through money or other means.

KARMA AND SOUL MIRRORS

Both the character and the character's meikyo accumulate Karma separately. When you create your character, find the overall Karma cost of your character. The armour-rider's Karma will start at 10, while all the other Karma for that character goes into the armour-rider's (or puppeteer's) soul mirror. Keep track of these numbers separately: Meikyo users start off innocent, with very little accumulated Karma until they experience more and more of the world.

For example, if you have a total starting Karma of 80, that means that your character only has 10 Karma herself, and your meikyo soul mirror controlling the armour has accumulated 70 Karma. You will keep track of your meikyo's Karma separately, because as it increases towards 108 it grants a bonus to the user when using the meikyo (piloting an armour, for example). Later in the game, the meikyo user will be able to take in the meikyo's Karma in order to sublimate it.

Kongohki are different. With kongohki, their meikyo is actually part of their body. Therefore, all of their personal Karma is the same as their meikyo's Karma: They are one and the same, and do not get tracked separately.

For all meikyo users, including kongohki, there is a type of special bonus to actions that comes from using a soul mirror with accumulated Karma. This bonus is called a Meikyo Bonus. It is described in detail in the armour and kongohki rules section, and again in the Karma rules section.

KONGOHKI OVERDRIVE ABILITY

Kongohki have the ability to temporary boost their speed, movement, attacks and the like to incredible levels. This ability is called "Overdrive". It allows the kongohki to move at incredible speeds in combat. Please see the combat rules or kongohki rules for more information on the Overdrive ability.

ANNELID IMPLANTATION

Annelidists are people implanted with creatures and control those creatures by using a skill called Wormcharm. For starting characters, each annelid has an ingestion/implantation/infestation cost that must be bought in Karma.

When a character implants herself with an annelid in the actual story, the player has to pay the annelid's implantation cost in Kiai points. During the game, annelids can only be implanted during an Intermission phase. Do not forget that the Kiai spent to implant the annelids in this manner immediately becomes Karma.

ONI RESONANCE

It is said that oni and half-oni get their mystical powers through their magical hearts. The special abilities that are available to them because of their horns and hearts are called "Resonance". For complete rules on how to use Resonance, please see the oni Resonance rules section.

Pureblood oni can spend extra Karma (5 points each) to use the special Resonance abilities of Gale and Bless. Please read the Archetype and Oni Resonance Powers sections carefully when you are creating your character to find out how these abilities work.

SAMURAI ABILITY

Some of the archetypes have "samurai" listed in their equipment sections. These are no mere warriors; these characters have special abilities, as they have gone through the mystical and painful samuraization surgery. Through verbal and mental commands, they can cause their bodies to increase in size and even mass, growing muscle and chitin plates all over their bodies: The exact nature and form of the transformation is up to the samurai player. Samurai also receive special abilities granted by the shiki spirit which inhabits their form. They can only receive these abilities for a certain amount of time: The time duration and Soul Point cost to activate the samurai abilities varies from person to person. Write down the samurai shiki's abilities in the notes section of the character sheet and note the Soul cost to activate the samurai.

While we suggest simply using the samurai abilities listed in the archetype, experienced players who want to try a different samurai loadout can pick a different one from the samurai rules section. For experienced Tenra players who want to try experimenting with the samurai's shiki abilities, they can use the onmyoji Shiki creation rules to come up with different shiki to possess their bodies. You can find more on shiki creation in the Onmyojutsu rules section, and various samurai loadouts in the samurai rules section.

DARK ARTS OF THE SHINOBI

The Dark Arts is another type of soulgem-based surgery that elite ninja use to implant gems inside their body. This procedure allows them to stock dark magic into their bodies that make it easier to perform special ninja arts. When they use their ninja arts, the amount of Soul consumed is reduced, down to a minimum of one point of Soul per ability.

Ninja that go through this procedure are from that point forward called "Shinobi". They can reduce the cost of using their special ninja arts: They can reduce the Soul cost of activation of all ninja abilities by one point for each five points of Karma added to the archetype. Remember to mark down any additional Karma cost on your character sheet.

Karma Cost ÷ 5 = Number of Soul Points reduced from the cost of activating any Ninjutsu ability

Example: Genta the Claw is a shinobi of some renown. Genta's player decides to ignore the Karma cost of the Dark Arts of the shinobi template, and instead spend 30 Karma during character creation on the Dark Arts to make them more powerful. This 30 Karma, divided by 5, means that Genta's Dark Arts rating is 6. This means that whenever Genta performs a Ninjutsu ability, he subtracts 6 from the listed Soul cost of that ability, down to a minimum cost of 1 (Ninjutsu abilities cannot be reduced to a zero or "minus" cost because of the Dark Arts).

One character cannot be both a samurai and undertake the Shinobi Dark Arts. You can still combine the archetypes to create a samurai-ninja (as crazy-badass as that sounds) who can use Ninjutsu abilities, but the samurai will not be able to reduce the Soul cost of the Ninjutsu abilities like a pure shinobi can by use of Dark Arts.

KIJIN MODIFICATION

If you choose a kijin archetype, you are able to implant more kijin robotic/cybernetic implants (called *mechanica*) if you wish. Look at the Mechanica Data section for more information. Most mods have an attribute cost, so reduce your attribute pool by the listed number when making your character. Add the attribute cost to the cost listed in the archetype. Also write down any attribute or other benefits the mechanica bring.

THE KUGUTSU BUTTERFLY DREAM

Kugutsu have the special ability to use the illusions cast upon them to affect other people: Kugutsu can make people enter the "Butterfly Dream", a strange dreamlike hypnotic state.

If the person is sleeping, the kugutsu can make them dream without any effort. If the person is awake, they have to use their Performance or Pillow Arts skill to affect them. The opponent rolls their Spirit: Willpower, and if the kugutsu is successful the opponent is pulled into the kugutsu's dream world.

The Butterfly Dream happens in a moment of time outside of the normal flow of time. A dream is acted out in a Scene, just like any other Scene in the game. The people involved in the dream are usually limited to the kugutsu and the person or people that she pulls into the dream. It is possible for other characters to enter the Dream of the Butterfly, but they will be figments controlled between the kugutsu and the GM.

Also, if a kugutsu pulls another PC into the Butterfly Dream by force (or when asleep), the kugutsu chooses one of the PCs Fates or their own Fates. The situation acted out in the dream must somehow involve that Fate. It would be a good idea to discuss with the GM the details of the dream before starting up the dream scene. For more details of the Butterfly Dream, see the kugutsu rules section.

YOHJUTSU: AYAKASHI ABILITIES

If you choose an ayakashi or half-ayakashi archetype, you can gain some of the sorceries and unearthly abilities of the ayakashi called "Yohjutsu".

To learn about the various ayakashi powers, please see the ayakashi rules section.

You can reduce the Karma cost of yohjutsu abilities by taking one or more Weaknesses. The amount of Karma reduction is listed in the Ayakashi section. In short, a Weakness of 2 gains 5 points of Karma back, a Weakness of 3 gains 15 points, a Weakness of 4 gains 35 points, and a Weakness of 5 is worth 75 points. However, you cannot reduce your total yohjutsu Karma cost lower than 0. See the ayakashi rules chapter for more information on ayakashi abilities and weaknesses.

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER CREATION

In this next section we'll take a look at building a sample character from scratch. Character generation will happen in the following order:

1) Work with the group and GM to choose a general character type.
2) Pick Archetypes.
3) Divide up attribute points.
4) Work out skills.
5) Choose weapons.
6) Calculate total starting Karma.
7) Choose and record starting Fates.

WORK WITH THE GROUP

It turns out that for this example scenario, the Game Master will be running a game about mercenaries. All character types are welcome, but ones that work well as mercenaries (or would make a good contrast to mercenary characters) are welcome. Thinking for a little, you decide to make an armour hunter: An ex-armour rider who now has dedicated her life to single-handedly toppling those mechanical monsters. The GM and other players give a thumbs up and offer a suggestion or question or two about your character's background ("Perhaps you are the daughter of a feudal lord?" "Did you turn your back

on your family after you stopped being an armour rider?" etc). With a general idea of a character, we're ready to flesh them out.

PICK ARCHETYPES

After flipping through the archetypes section of the rulebook, a few fitting archetypes stand out. Armour Hunter is a given. This character used to be an armour pilot, so Former Armour Rider looks like a fitting archetype. Perhaps the character's yoroi armour was destroyed in a rout, and nowadays because of her experience and background, she makes a living hunting the very armours that she used to pilot. Finally, the Mercenary archetype looks useful, so we'll add that one to the mix. We can make an interesting character with these three archetypes, so we'll use them for now:

Archetype	Karma Cost	Attr. Cost
Former Armour Rider	10	0
Mercenary	30	0
Armour Hunter	30	1
Total:	70	1

The starting Karma Cost must be less than 108. We're at 70 to start off with, and that is a good number: Not too low, and not too high. 60-90 is a good range for starting characters.

We will now jot down the archetypes we chose on the character sheet, as well as the total Karma cost and attribute costs.

DIVIDE UP THE ATTRIBUTE POINTS

Next we divide 40 points amongst the various character attributes. However, because of the attribute cost of 1 (due to taking the Armour Hunter archetype which includes a custom weapon, the ZAKT-8 blade), we'll actually begin with 39 points to spread around.

Looking at the three archetypes chosen, we see they recommend having a decent starting Body, Agility and Senses. It will probably be best to start out with 6 or more points in these attributes. Also, it appears that we will start out with the fearsome armour hunter weapon called "ZAKT-8", a huge modified yoroi shortsword. This weapon requires a starting Station of 4, so we must have 4 or more in that score as well.

There are many ways we can divide up the 39 points amongst the attributes. For now, we will divide them like this:

Body	*7*
Agility	*8*
Senses	*6*
Knowledge	*3*
Spirit	*5*
Empathy	*6*
Station	*4*

After writing the above on the character sheet, we then look on to the sub-attributes and fill those in as well:

Vitality: Body + Spirit = 12 points

Soul: (Knowledge + Spirit) x 2 = 16 points

Light Wounds	(Body)	□□□□□□□
Heavy Wounds	(Body/2)	□□□□
Critical Wounds	(Body/4)	□□
Dead	(1)	□

After we've marked the above on the sheet, we'll move on to the next section.

CALCULATE SKILLS

Looking at our three chosen archetypes, we see that they provide us with the following skills:

Former A-Rider:	Interface	3
	Etiquette	2
	Art of Rule	2
Mercenary:	Melee Weapons	3
	Marksman	3
	Information	3
Armour Hunter:	Melee Weapons	4

It looks like we've got two counts of Melee Weapons, so this is an overlapping skill. We'll keep Melee Weapons at 4 (from the Armour Hunter template), and move the second Melee Weapons score of 3 (from the Mercenary archetype) over to another general skill. We'll choose the general skill Notice which is currently 1 for all characters, and turn it into a Notice score of 3 .

CHOOSE WEAPONS

Because we picked the Armour Hunter archetype, we'll start out with a ZAKT-8 Yoroi-killer sword. After checking with the GM, we'll add a simple light katana shortsword as well. It's mostly going to be for show or used as a backup weapon, though. A shortsword's Station requirement is 2, so we can own it with no problem.

The ZAKT-8 comes fully loaded with 8 soulgems at no cost, but it doesn't have any extra ammo. We'll take 15 extra soulgems in case the character gets in a difficult battle. Soulgems cost 1 Karma point for 5 extra soulgems, which means that we'll have to increase our starting Karma by 3 points: It is a small price to pay to be able to power up one of the most dangerous weapons in the game.

CALCULATE TOTAL STARTING KARMA

We've already totaled our starting Karma for the three archetypes we picked, making sure that they don't go over 108. We started with 70 points in Karma. We added 3 points for the extra soulgems. Therefore, our total starting Karma is going to be 73 points. We'll record this on the character sheet, and track the rise of our Karma over time.

CHOOSE AND RECORD STARTING FATES

This is one of the more exciting steps of character creation: We're going to decide what the character cares about at the beginning of the game! As we'll see, these Fates will change over time as the story progresses. However, for now we will look at the three archetypes and choose the two Fates that appeal to us the most. Looking over the three available Fates, these seem to be the most interesting to us, so we'll write them down. We'll fill in three dots for one Fate, and two dots for the other:

Emotion: Hatred of Yoroi Armours 3

Emotion: Attracted to Strength 2

The current Fate Cost of these Fates is 10 points (A Fate rated at 3 costs 10; a Fate rated at 2 costs nothing; see the Karma rules for details), which is always the same for most starting characters. We'll write "10" under "Fate Cost" on the part of the character sheet which lists the Fates.

WRITE INFORMATION ON THE CHARACTER SHEET

As we go through the creation process, we're writing in words and numbers, as well as filling in dots for skills and Fates, on the character sheet. Once we've come to this point all that is left to note on the character sheet are any special rules or extra equipment that our archetypes grant us. This is where we would list our samurai powers or Ninjutsu abilities in the notes section of the character sheet.

The character that we made, however, has only her two weapons, 15 soulgems, and three coppers/*mon* to her name (by player choice). She's pretty poor, which is always a great starting motivation to seek adventure and danger… perhaps not for fortune, but at least to eat a hot meal.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Since we've finished all the above, the last steps are to decide a character name or nickname, as well as personal touches.

First, let's pick a name. We're going to make this character a female, in her late teens (probably just a few years after coming of age and not being able to resume duties as an armour rider). The character used to be an armour rider, so she probably had a full honorific last and first name. Now, though, she is a rough-and-tumble mercenary, so more likely than not she goes by her given name and has thrown away her last name.

She might take on a nickname later once she takes on a few more scars as a mercenary. But for now, we'll call her "Kirie" (KIRI-E), her first name, and say that at this point she has no interesting nickname (but may pick one up later). She hasn't told anyone her last name, and does not know if she'll ever speak it again.

As for possessions, we will note that she has 15 extra soulgems. Just as a character touch, we'll give her some money. Kirie's player decides that she has 3 mon to her name, about enough to pay for her next meal and maybe a mat to sleep on. Kirie will have to take a job soon in order to eat.

Next, we'll think about a few personal touches, like speech mannerisms. In Japanese there are various different ways to say words like "I" or "You", depending on how casual or honorific you were attempting to be. We don't have this sort of variance in English (like the polite and old-school "*Wata-kushi*" and "*Anata-sama*", or the aggressively, almost threateningly, casual "*Ore*", "*Boku*", "*Atashi*", or "*Anta*" and "*Omae/Omee*"), so we'll just make note of the fact that, even in polite company, she often talks plainly and casually with others even above her station. She's not so rough and uncouth to use casual speech in front of a lord, but she sure doesn't use polite or honorific speech unless she needs to.

A range of speech types includes Always Honorific, Polite, Plain/Normal, Casual, Rough and Uncouth. We'll call her speech "Casual". She's got a loose tongue after a few years as a mercenary.

With these last few touches, we're done. We are now ready to get started in an actual Tenra Bansho Zero scenario.

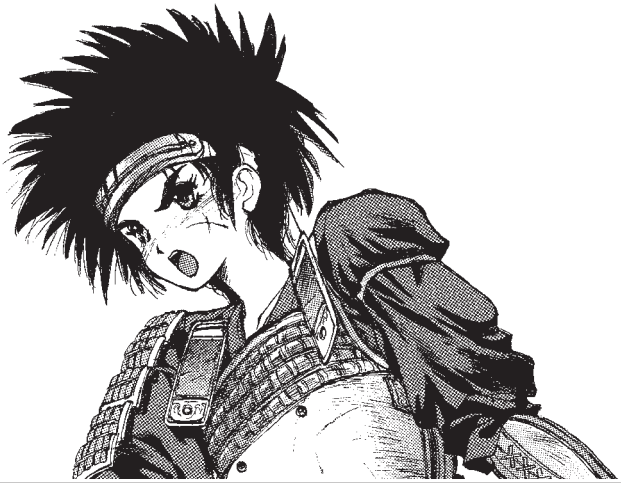
OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

In truth, your character is absolutely ready for play at this point. You don't have to think too much more about the character's past, mannerisms or beliefs. Anything important you can bring up in the actual game through role-playing.

However, if you want to give your character a little more flavor, here are some questions you can ask yourself as if you were your character. They might provide interesting answers that you can bring into play:

Character Questionnaire

1) Is there a story behind your name?
2) Does your age and sex affect your personality?
3) What kind of body type do you have?
4) Hair color? (usually black or brown)



5) Skin color? (light, dark, etc)

6) Eye color? (usually black or brown)

7) What kind of lifestyle do you live?

8) Can you bring yourself to kill a person?

9) What do you think of death? What do your personal or religious beliefs tell you about death?

10) What is your purpose in life?

11) In one word, how would you describe your personality or self?

12) Is there anything or anyone that you love?

13) Is there anything or anyone that you hate or fear?

14) Is there anything that you don't want to do, or would refuse to do?

15) What is one thing that you would like to do soon?

16) If you left your family to travel, why did you leave them?

17) Do you know anything of the Shinto Priesthood? What do you think about them?

18) Do you know anything of the oni people? What do you think about them?

19) Do you know anything of annelidists? What do you think of them?

20) Lastly, what is your greatest hope?

TENRA BANSHO ZERO

NAME

Kirie

Age: Older Teen | Sex: Female

Concept: Gruff and quick-tempered ex-armour rider turned armour hunter

Archetypes: Former Armour Rider, Mercenary, Armour Hunter

Karma Cost: 70 | Attribute Cost: 1

VITALITY

Body+Spirit: 12 Max 12

SOUL

(Spirit+Knowledge)x2: 16 Max 16

KIAI

Current | Spent

KARMA

Total: 73

Armour Rider: —

Armour Meikyo: —

FATES

What do you Live For?

Cost ●●●○○ Hatred of Yoroi Armours	Cost ○○○○○
Cost ●●○○○ Look Up to the Strong	Cost ○○○○○
Cost ○○○○○	Cost ○○○○○
Cost ○○○○○	Cost ○○○○○

2 Dots: 0 3 Dots: 10 4 Dots: 30 5 Dots: 70
Total Cost Cannot Exceed Current Total Karma

Total Fate Cost: 10

WOUNDS

□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ Light (Body)	□□□□□ □□□□□ (+1) Heavy (Body/2)
□□□□□ (+2/Vitality Decrease) Critical (Body/4)	□ (+3) Dead

WEAPONS

Rating, ROF, Range, Ammo	
ZAKT8	+6, ROF 8, -, Ammo 8
Shortsword	+2, -, -, -

POSSESSIONS

15 extra soulgems
3 mon

SKETCH



BODY 7 /

Unarmed Combat	●○○○○
Wormcharm	○○○○○

AGILITY 8 /

Movement	●○○○○
Melee Weapons	●●●●○
Evasion	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Ninjutsu	○○○○○
Criminal Arts	○○○○○

SENSES 6 /

First Aid	●○○○○
Notice	●●●○○
Marksman	●●●○○
Pursuit / Hunt	●○○○○
Forgery	○○○○○

KNOWLEDGE 3

Information	●●●○○
Onmyojutsu	○○○○○

SPIRIT 5

Willpower	●○○○○
Resonance	○○○○○
Interface	●●●○○
Buddhist Magic	○○○○○

EMPATHY 6

Persuasion	●○○○○
Pillow Arts	●○○○○
Perform	○○○○○

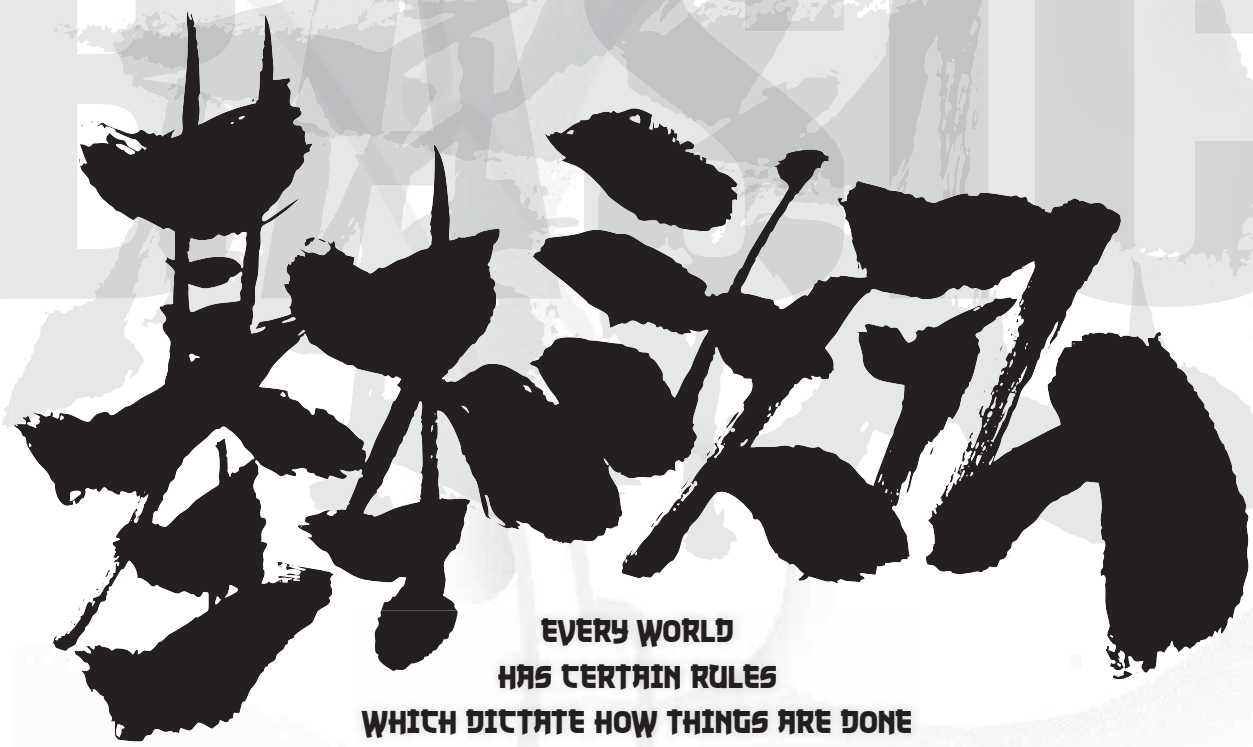
STATION 4

Strategy	○○○○○
Etiquette	●●○○○
Shinto	○○○○○
Art of Rule	●●○○○

ART OF WAR: OTHER

	○○○○○
	○○○○○

ベン・モルガン平成二十二年



EVERY WORLD
HAS CERTAIN RULES
WHICH DICTATE HOW THINGS ARE DONE

BASIC ACTIONS

You're running through a battlefield. Swords are clashing all around you, bullets are whizzing past, and the screams of the fallen are deafening. Can you make it through without being hit or fazed?

This is the kind of thing that the resolution system behind the game of Tenra Bansho helps determine. In media like dramas, movies, books, anime and manga, the characters often engage in duels of wits, challenges of the mind, physical struggles or outright fights. In those media the outcome is pre-decided and written by the author. The fate of the characters is left entirely up to the author or director.

However, in role-playing games, the players often do not know if their characters will succeed at a difficult challenge or not. We use cards, dice, or other randomizing tools to help determine whether the character succeeds or not, and then watch the story develops based on those results. Success leads to the next step in the scenario, and failure also leads to progress through interesting and dynamic follow-up challenges. Having a game system in place of a single author amplifies the thrill of each conflict.

In Tenra Bansho Zero, the game system takes the form of rolling several six-sided dice. It is recommended that you have several dice available during play.

When the characters in the story come upon a challenge, the resolution system follows the following steps:

1) The GM decides initial success or failure

2) The GM decides the skill that should be used for the challenge

3) The GM decides which attribute should be used with the skill

4) The difficulty number of the challenge is decided

5) The dice are rolled

6) The player counts successes

7) The outcome is determined

Initial Success or Failure

Characters do things. They do things because they want to affect the world, or because situations were forced upon them by other characters. When the GM presents a challenge to a player, the first step is determining if the character is immediately successful or not.

A fun and interesting challenge is a challenge where success *or* failure could lead to exciting results. This is important to remember, especially for beginning Game Masters. If the challenge is one where the result of failure simply is not fun ("Jump over a cliff or die"), or would prevent the adventure from continuing forward ("Find the clue: If you can't find the clue, you can't proceed"), then it is not an interesting challenge. Simply have the result be a success for the player, and move on to the next, more interesting challenge. Alternately, the player and the GM might consider that failing a challenge would be a far more fun result than success. In this

BASIC ACTION SUMMARY

Here are the absolute basics of the resolution system of the game:

Attribute: This is the number of six-sided dice you roll.

Skill Level: This controls the number (or less) needed on the face of the rolled die for that die to count as a success: 0 (No Skill, impossible to perform), 1 (Unskilled), 2 (Skilled), 3 (Advanced), 4 (Master), or 5 (Supreme).

Successes: The number of dice that, when rolled, came up equal to or lower than the Skill Level.

Difficulty, or Challenge Rating: The number of successes you need to clear a goal (usually "1"). Scoring a number of successes equal to or greater than this rating means that the character succeeded at the task.

Rolling: Roll your attribute in dice, and count the number of dice rolled that came up at the same rank as your skill or less. Each of these dice are a "success".

Example: Rolling your Agility: Melee Weapons. If your Agility is 6 and your Melee Weapons is "3 dots", then you roll 6 dice: Any die that has a 1, 2, or 3 on it is a success, and any die that has a 4, 5 or 6 on it is a failure. If your skill was "2 dots", then any die with 1 or 2 on it is a success, and any die with 3, 4, 5 or 6 on it is a failure.

"AWESOME" TRUMPS DICE

On some occasions, a player will describe a solution or do something so cool when presented with a challenge that the GM wants it to happen that way. You'll know it if you see it: A player suggests a solution or describes an action so fun or interesting that the other players sit there in awe for a second before they reply. Usually Aiki chits start flying as well. In that case, as a GM don't let the dice get in the way: If you're the GM and you think that the player's action was too cool not to happen, simply let things happen in the way described. This also rewards your players for being creative and really pushing on making the story as interesting as possible. Save the dice for another future action.

Final approval of this is up to the GM.

Use this guideline in moderation, though. The dice add a thrill to every encounter, make sure you don't opt out of using them too much!

case, the GM will describe the event as an automatic failure and move the scenario forward.

In other words, don't even pick up the dice if the result of failure (or success) would simply stop the game, or bring a result that isn't interesting or fun for anyone (instant character death, for example).

If you have found a situation where winning and losing are both viable, interesting options that won't bring the game to a halt, this is an interesting challenge. It's time to translate this challenge into a die roll.

DECIDE A SKILL

The GM decides which skill is applicable to the roll in question. For assistance, please read the skill descriptions in this chapter carefully. Just choose the one that seems most appropriate for the task at hand. In many situations, two skills will seem equally relevant to the task at hand. If two skills seem to be equally applicable in a particular situation, then simply let the player use the higher of those two skills.

The GM has final say on which skill is applicable to a specific situation. Remember that as a GM you're not out to choose a character's weaker skills to make them fail, rather you're attempting to be a fair arbiter of which skill seems to be the best fit for the character's action.

REGARDING SKILLS

Skills usually represent a character's innate talents as well as ability learned through practice and study. The skills are divided into several classes:

Skill Level	Dots/Rank
No Skill	0
Unskilled	1
Skilled	2
Advanced	3
Master	4
Supreme/Special	5

The number of the rank (the number of dots filled in on the character sheet) that a skill has represents the skill level of the character.

A quick way to remember the words associated with skill levels is through their first letters: NUSAMS: No Skill, Unskilled, Skilled, Advanced, Master, Supreme. If you want to remember the skills only by their rank/number, that's fine too.

You will note that many of the skills listed on the character sheet have one dot in them by default. These are general skills that most human beings have innately. Also, many skills have no dots in them. These are specialty skills that require specialized training and talent to have. There is no Unskilled Level in specialized skills; You either don't have it, or you are at the rank of Skilled (or higher) in that skill.

"Supreme" represents the pinnacle of human, or perhaps inhuman, ability. The highest most characters will climb to is a skill level of 4, or Master. Supreme skill represents inhuman or magical ability, unique or unnatural training, or just that the character is that one person in a million at the peak of human perfection. The character simply has a sublime Zen-like mastery of that skill (or perhaps a skill boosted with dark magic, forged on the fires of corruption, sacrifice and unbridled inhuman ambition).

DECIDE AN ATTRIBUTE

After choosing a skill that is applicable for the task, the next step in the resolution system is to pick the attribute that fits best for this challenge.

On the character sheet, the skills are grouped under their "recommended attribute" (Sneak is under Agility, Information is under Knowledge, etc). This is simply a good default attribute to


DOING THINGS
I'm going to get across the river by jumping over it
The GM decides which skill is appropriate
What should we use here?
Hmmmm... "Movement" maybe?
Hmmm. Which attribute... "Agility" looks like the best fit here...
The GM chooses which attribute the player should use
Looking at your character sheet can help you quickly pick out an attribute that matches the skill
The best attribute to use will depend on how you visualize the situation
Like, for lifting weights you'd probably use "Body"...
Then you just roll a number of dice equal to your attribute score. I get to roll 8 dice!
AGILITY: 8
Your skill level will determine the die value needed for a success. Count the number of dots filled in for that skill. Then look at the value on the die. If the number on the die is equal to or less than that skill number, that die counts as a success!
My Movement skill is 3 dots (Advanced), so any dice rolled that come up as 1s, 2s or 3s are successes!
U S A M S
MOVEMENT
4!
You don't want to have to roll a small number of dice over and over again for each skill check, so try to have about 10 or so dice ready when you play. You can buy them anywhere.
1-2 Dice
Bad
Normally you only need one die to be a success to actually succeed at an action
DIFFICULTY
Yay!
Crap!
When it comes to harder situations, the GM may set the difficulty number higher.
On the other side of the river is a sheer cliff, so the difficulty will be 3.
Huh???
If the total number of success dice are equal to or greater than the Difficulty number, you succeed!
Count your successes and compare to the GM's difficulty. If you roll equal or greater, you succeed!
Only two successes... Not enough to beat a difficulty of 3...
Oops, you fail. You fall into the river!

fall back upon. However, any attribute can be coupled with any skill when creating a challenge, if it fits.

For example, going into a town and quickly assessing where the village elder must live (without talking to people or getting the lay of the land first) will probably be a challenge involving the Information skill with its default attribute of Knowledge. However, if a character comes across a dead body in the woods littered with arrows, and wants to determine where the arrows were made or which group uses this kind of arrow, a fitting roll would be Marksman with Knowledge (instead of Marksman with the default attribute of Senses; the challenge is testing the character's ability to know about the arrow or gather information about them, not to fire an arrow).

In cases where it is hard to decide a fitting attribute, simply use the default attribute for that skill.

DECIDE THE DIFFICULTY OF THE CHALLENGE

At this point, the Game Master should determine how difficult the challenge is. Since the player is not rolling against another character (see Opposed Actions), the GM will have to set the difficulty at one number, usually between 1 and 6. This is called the "Challenge Rating" or "Difficulty".

The player will soon roll the dice and determine how many of their dice are successes. The GM will have to reveal now how many successes are required to overcome the challenge.

In most cases, simply getting one single success means that the character succeeded at the task. One success is all that most rolls require. However, if it is more fitting that the task is dramatically harder, more challenging, or requires more risk to pull off than other challenges in the game, then the challenge rating for that challenge will be higher.

The GM should reveal to the player how many successes are needed before the dice are rolled. The success number should not remain hidden from the player. This helps them understand how challenging the task is, as well as if they want to bring in other resources (like other characters, or the spending of Kiai points) to assist in succeeding at the task.

The Difficulty/Challenge Rating determines the number of successes the player needs to roll on the dice to accomplish the task successfully.

CHALLENGE RATING

1 You could probably do this in your sleep

2 If you have some skill in it, you probably won't fail

3 With practice, skill and innate ability, you can do it

4 People with advanced training at least have a chance of doing it

5 Extremely difficult

6 Almost Impossible

It is not suggested that you make difficulties higher than six, except in extremely rare circumstances such as the player wanting to do something physically impossible yet the GM wants to give them some remote chance instead of saying "No" outright.

ROLL THE DICE

At this point, now that the player knows the difficulty of the task, she will roll dice and measure success. The player rolls a number of dice equal to the attribute score used for this challenge. The dice are rolled in front of everyone.

COUNT SUCCESSES

When the dice are rolled, the player will make use of the skill's value and count the successes. A success is any die that comes up with a number of pips equal to or lower than the character's skill level. In other words, rolling low ("ones") is better than rolling high ("sixes").

For example, a player is using her Movement skill to leap through a forest canopy to pursue a foe. The character's Movement skill score is 2 ("Skilled"), represented by two filled-in dots on the character sheet. Any die rolled that comes up showing 1 or 2 pips is a success. Any die that comes up showing 3, 4, 5 or 6 pips is a failure and is not counted.

If you are rolling your Notice skill, and your notice skill has 4 dots on your character sheet (indicating that you are a Master of Noticing), then any die that comes up as a 1, 2, 3, or 4 is a success. Any die that comes up as a 5 or 6 is a failure and is not counted.

Compare the number of successes the player got with the challenge rating that the GM set. If the player gets a number of successes that equals or exceeds the challenge rating, then their character succeeds at the action. If the player gets a number of successes which is lower than the challenge rating, then their character fails.

It can take a little bit of time to get used to the system, but simply remember:

- Attributes represent how many dice are rolled in challenges.
- Skills represent the number of "pips" a die must have, when rolled, to count as a success.
- You are attempting to roll many dice, and trying to roll them as low as possible (ones and twos in most cases). You then count the number of dice that were successes.

Determine What Happens

The last step in this process is determining what happens based on the results. The GM is the one who usually describes what happens based on the die roll, whether the result was a failure or a success.

The GM can also invite player input. Or, she might ask the player:

"You succeed. What happens?"

Or:

"You fail. What happens?"

In this case, the player can describe the result. The GM has final say as to whether it happened that way or not. The best thing a GM could do when letting the player describe the outcome (success or failure) is to let the player describe the gist of what happens, then the GM restates that result, adding in details and continuing forward from there.

CHALLENGE RATING LIMITS

The max challenge rating is usually 6. For extremely rare cases, you can make it higher than this. However, remember that while all challenges shouldn't be easy, the object as GM isn't to beat up the players from game start to finish with high difficulty numbers. In most cases, 1-3 successes should suffice for easy to moderate tasks, and 4-6 successes should be fine for a challenge rating that is "hard" to "impossible".

Remember that the number of dice that the player can roll is based on their attribute. There is a finite limit (which can be bent or broken by spending Kiai, more on that later) to the number of dice a player can roll for a task.

If you want to determine the odds that your character can beat a particular task, you can calculate the character's average success rating for that skill. It's s simple mathematical process:

AUTUMN RAIN'S JUMP

GM: Autumn Rain, a mercenary on the run, now knows well the price of retreat. The tide of battle turned against her company, and—as mercenaries do—they dispersed and ran away. Autumn Rain finds herself alone as she is running along a forested mountain path. Through the bitter cold and the rain, she finds herself talking to herself to keep her mind focused:

Player: "Those Rasaku Clan bastards. The first sign of trouble and they tuck tail and run…"

GM: Suddenly, the path opens up into a 4-meter-wide pit. Must have been a stray artillery shell.

Player: "…I can make it."

With that, Autumn Rain leaps up, her body silhouetted against the surrounding trees for several seconds.

After deciding that this is an interesting roll (she decides failure means that the enemy troops catch up to Autumn Rain and capture her), the GM thinks about the difficulty. Autumn Rain is running up a sloped mountain path. On top of that, the rain has made the ground slick. The 4 meter distance will be hand-waved by the GM: Many characters in manga and anime can jump that far with no problem. The GM decides that the challenge rating will be based on the skill Movement, and have a challenge rating of 3. Autumn Rain's player uses her Agility score with this roll. Since her agility is 8, she picks up and rolls 8 dice, and compares the numbers that come up against her Movement score to find successes. Her Movement skill is 3, so any die that comes up a 1, 2 or 3 is a success. She is looking for 3 or more of these successes, since the GM announced that the challenge rating is 3.

She rolls the dice, and gets 5 successes.

GM: Autumn Rain's form floats through the air in a magnificent arc, landing squarely on the opposite side of the pit and tucking into a roll. Glancing quickly back to the enemies chasing after her in the distance, she snorts in defiance then turns to run the rest of the distance to the nearest town.

Average Success Rating = Attribute x (Skill Rating ÷ 6)

In the "jump" example, Autumn Rain's average success rating for Movement skill tasks based on the Agility attribute would be 8 x (3 ÷ 6), or 4.

It's a handy equation to have if you want to see if your character has a decent chance of succeeding at a task without the aid of Kiai points.

CONCEPT: WHY USE A GAME SYSTEM?

For many people used to online chat-based role-playing games where people make up results on the fly, or computer-based role-playing games where the results are decided by the computer, it's probably a good idea to understand why this game uses dice and "challenge ratings" and the like.

First, not knowing the outcome of a conflict, where both winning and losing could result in interesting results, is entertaining.

Second, it's a way for tasks to have their outcome decided in a non-arbitrary way. Sure, the GM decides a difficulty rating, but from that point on it's up to the player whether they succeed or fail.

Third, it interjects some chaos into play: Watch as skilled people fail, or unskilled people succeed, and decide how that came to be. This chaos creates some interesting story twists!

The GM is given a lot of power in this game: She decides the difficulty of tasks, where the story turns and leads after the dice hit the table, etc. The GM has to decide what to do when a task or conflict isn't really covered by the rules. Overall, the GM should strive to remain fair and balanced. They shouldn't strive simply to shut the players down if they try new things by using the rules as a wall: Rather, they should use the rules to support the players in their character's acts as the story develops. The Zero System chapter gives more tips on how to run a fair and exciting game of Tenra Bansho Zero.



OPPOSED ACTIONS

An opposed roll happens when one character does something, and another opposes them either directly or indirectly.

The opposing or defending character rolls an appropriate attribute and skill combination. Count the successes that result. This number of successes will now be the difficulty number or challenge rating for the aggressor.

If the aggressor gets more successes than the defending character, the aggressor succeeds.

If the aggressor gets fewer successes than the defender, then the defender succeeds instead.

If their results are a tie, both players pick up the exact number of dice they just rolled, keeping all modifiers for spent Kiai and the like in place, and roll again. They do this until one character wins.

OPPOSED ACTIONS

When one PC is working against an NPC, or two PCs are working against each other, both players (or the player and GM) roll dice against each other and look for successes; the side with the most successes wins that conflict. It's that simple.

There are times when both players will have the same number of successes. When this happens, both sides simply pick up the dice and roll again, repeating this until one side wins. On these rolls, the dice and bonuses do not change. If you spent Kiai points to gain more dice, or used Kiai to gain a temporary skill level bonus, those continue to remain in effect until one side gets more successes than the other. At this time, time "stops" within the game until the roll ends with a clear winner, then "resumes" when a victor emerges.

EVERYDAY POSSESSIONS

In the game of Tenra Bansho Zero, there's no real sense of keeping track of money. Even though your character might have written down "10 mon" or "5 ryo" on the sheet during generation, that's more of a color item to give you some details about what kind of character they are. Players shouldn't worry about how much money their characters have, or how much they need to buy stuff. Instead of that, use common sense and role-playing to determine what your character might get a hold of, or how much things cost. If you decide you need something that's well within your character concept, you have it. If you need something that falls outside of your character concept for that time, work it out with the GM. The GM will either let you have that resource outright, or perhaps work out details to get one.

Money shouldn't really be treated as anything more than color for the game. Sure, there's the Japanese expression "Yoh

THE HIDDEN INFILTRATOR

Autumn Rain has infiltrated the estate of a noble bushi. She pulled away a ceiling board in the entryway, and has just climbed up into the rafters. She passes over a room containing the lord and his highest paid ronin, talking and drinking sake a few meters below her. She passes over a small hole in the ceiling tile, casting an almost imperceptible shadow below. The ronin's instincts flare up, and he slowly begins looking around the room.

"…Damn. Does he sense me?"

The tension rises, thick as a fog.

The GM calls for the player to make a roll to stay hidden, to effectively cover her presence by remaining still and holding her breath. This roll, the GM decides, will be based on the attribute Spirit and the skill Stealth. The Ronin will oppose by rolling Spirit and Notice, to try to detect (even without realizing it) the ki or presence of the intruder.

Autumn Rain's player rolls and gets 3 successes. The GM rolls for the ronin and gets 3 successes, too. Since it's a tie, it's a do-over: They both pick up their dice and roll again. This time Autumn Rain gets 3 successes, and the ronin gets 2. Autumn Rain wins this conflict.

Suddenly, the master calls to the ronin while tapping his empty sake glass with his lacquerware fan, breaking the tension in the room and the ronin's concentration. The ronin nods subtly and pours more sake in the lord's cup. Autumn Rain continues to move forward in the ceiling rafters.

no naka wa kane ja", or "Money makes the world go round". However, how much money you have on your sheet isn't important. It's how it is used in the game that's important. It's not about how much you have or lose, but how money can make the situation more interesting:

GM: The mob boss looks you up and down. "I know I told you ten ryo. But you botched that job up. Got one of my men killed. Here's five ryo, and you should count yourself lucky I give you that much."

Player A: "We agreed on ten. The price… is ten. Your man got himself killed. If you're going to back out of our arrangement…" I say as I slooooowly lower my hand to the hilt of my sword, looking at the other guards with as much of a fierce glare as I can muster.

Player: Muroku needs a horse.

GM: Sure, he's a samurai. I can imagine you have enough money to buy one at the next town, no problem.

— Or —

Player A: Muroku needs a horse.

GM: Hmmm. You just escaped from your bandit captors, who took all of your possessions. You fought your way out, and barely managed to keep your trusty katana. You'll probably have to work at it. Either steal a horse from the bandits, or perhaps find a job as a bodyguard for a few days once you get to town.

Player B: What if Muroku has an old friend in town who could lend him a horse?

GM: That's a good idea, too. So which do you want to do? Steal one from the bandits? Or get to town and find your friend? The latter one will involve more in-character role-playing.

Player A: Hmmm. I want to get back at the bandits. I'll steal one of their horses.

GM: Cool. I'll make that the next scene, we'll see if you can steal that horse or not, and maybe find out more about the bandits in the process.

Equipment Repair

Sometimes kijin mechanica, gemblades, and other special equipment purchased at character creation can become "broken". This doesn't necessarily mean that they are forevermore unusable.

Instead, it is just that they don't provide their dice or other special bonuses anymore. The equipment is effectively "tapped out". Equipment only becomes broken if it works for the story; equipment has no hit points or wounds. Instead, the GM may simply rule that an item needs repair. Breaking or damaging equipment may be a result of a failed skill roll (the GM should discuss this possibility before the roll occurs).

For example, a gemblade would no longer provide its damage bonus, nor would it be able to use soulgems or gunpowder. The same is true for kijin mechanica. Their effects are lost, their die bonuses and the like no longer work. In cases like mechanical eyes, it isn't that the character becomes blind: They can still see, but the in-game mechanical bonuses are lost until they can be repaired. A gemblade might be cracked in half, or simply dulled, requiring repair to return it to its natural condition.

Repair can happen during intermissions or at the end of a game session. There's no "repair roll" or anything like that. All that is required is the permission of the GM. Usually this means that the character took the time to seek out a repairman, or made the necessary repairs herself.

If it makes sense in-game, and the player agrees to it, then a piece of equipment like a gemblade could be totally annihilated, destroyed without possibility of repair.

FINDING SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

During the course of a scenario, a character might find an excellent new gemblade or stumble upon a cache of hundreds of soulgems. During the adventure, the character can use these as she sees fit. However, to keep this equipment from one Act to the next, the player has to spend the Equipment Cost of the equipment found, as per the chart below. The GM may rule that a player can keep special equipment from one Act to the next, but before the game ends the character must spend the cost if she wishes to keep the equipment.

If the player doesn't spend the cost (on the Equipment Cost chart) of the newly found equipment by the last act of the scenario, then that equipment is lost. Your onmyoji character might obtain thousands of soulgems at the end of a scenario that focuses on a mining conspiracy, but start the next scenario with that character with only 20 soulgems (4 Kiai points' worth) in her pockets, having left the rest, given them to someone, or spent them all on sake and fancy kimonos. The choice is up to the player.

EQUIPMENT	COST IN KIAI
Special Weapons*	10
Gemblades	3
Gunpowder Weapons	2
Buying New Soulgems (per 5)	1
Buying New Shiki Prayer Slips (per 10)	1
Mechanica	attribute penalty x 10
Annelids	annelid cost

* Includes armour, kongohki, kijin weapons and equipment, as well as customized weapons.

GUNPOWDER AMMUNITION

Like soulgems, gunpowder weapons require ammunition to function. However, lead and gunpowder bullets are not nearly as hard to acquire as soulgems. Bullets for gunpowder weapons are completely refreshed during each intermission phase of the game. There is no Kiai cost for replenishing gunpowder ammo.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Kongohki and kijin mechanica, as well as the armour hunter's ZAKT-8, all are special equipment which requires an attribute cost to initially purchase during character generation. When these are chosen at character creation, they are effectively a part of the character (in both the physical and philosophical meanings).

Damage, destruction and loss may be interesting to portray in the game, but unlike other equipment it can mean life or death for the owning character.

That's why the intermissions give the players a chance to quickly heal any damage to this equipment. In most cases permanently denying this equipment from the player would really mess up the initial character concept. That's why the player has so many chances to replenish and repair her character's equipment. That's also why the player has the final say in the permanent loss or destruction of specialized equipment: It might make the story "cooler", but it's good to make sure the character's player is on board with that decision as well.

While upkeep should be spent for new equipment gained, some GMs may want to wave away the idea of equipment damage. Sometimes it can be interesting in a game, other times threatening players with equipment failure or damage can simply get in the way of the story. If you want, feel free to treat equipment damage and failure as optional, unless the rules specifically call for it (Some Arts of War require the destruction of the attacker's weapon).

Skill List

The skills below are listed under their default attributes. Remember that in play you can couple any skill with any attribute, depending on what your character is trying to do. Some examples are provided for each skill of cases where you might pair another attribute with the skill. Many skill usages overlap with each other, as the skills have multiple purposes and usages.

Skills are listed by Skill Name and Skill Type. There are basically two types of skills: General and Specialist. General skills are skills that everyone starts off with as Unskilled (one "dot" filled in on the character sheet). These are skills that anyone can quickly raise through self-training and practice. Specialist skills can only be bought through choosing special archetypes which provide them. These skills represent special training and background that most common people cannot hope to attain, and always start out at Skilled (2 dots) or higher.

You can pick up a general skill at the Skilled (2 dot) level any time in the game by spending the requisite Kiai (5 points). You can also spend Kiai to raise a general skill up a level any time during the scenario. You may raise a specialist skill up one level any time during a scenario you wish as well. However, if you want to take a specialist skill for the very first time (raising one of these skills from 0 to 2 dots, or No Skill to Skilled), you must wait for the next Intermission phase to gain that specialty skill.

A number of specialist skills are classified as elite skills. Elite skills are specialist skills that require special upbringing from childhood, or induction through an intense training regimen. A character can gain these skills like other specialist skills, however they need a good reason (or story idea) for how they were able to take such skills. Decide with the GM and the other players how that might have happened.

Body Class Skills

Unarmed Combat—General

This is the skill and the art of fighting unarmed, or using special "open hand-based" weapons. This ability can also be used for spiritual or open-minded actions like detecting an opening in the enemy's defenses, or feeling a "killing intent" from the spirit power of a nearby enemy.

BODY: Attacking and defending

SENSES: Sizing up the enemy and guessing their general strength or skill

KNOWLEDGE: Recognizing the opponent's style or weapon

SPIRIT: Detecting a killing intent from an open or hidden enemy

STATION: Demonstrate your martial ability through words or physical actions

Wormcharm—Specialist

This is the skill that is used when an action deals with annelids in any way. Finding annelids, knowledge of annelids, caring for them and using them all fall under this skill. When employing combat-based abilities, this skill is used as well: Couple it with Body for melee worm attacks, or with Senses for projectile attacks.

BODY: Making melee attacks with annelids

AGILITY: Catching wild annelids

SENSES: Finding annelids; making annelid ranged attacks

KNOWLEDGE: Annelid knowledge

EMPATHY: Caring for annelids

STATION: Information about the Mushi-tsukai, Nests and rank in Annelid-user society

AGILITY CLASS SKILLS

MOVEMENT—GENERAL

Almost every physical action falls under this skill: Lifting heavy objects, climbing up a cliff face, jumping over obstacles, swimming, maneuvers in the air or while falling, leaping from tree to tree, or riding a horse or carriage. All these things and more fall under the Movement skill.

BODY: A hard endurance run, lifting heavy things

AGILITY: Quick sprints, falling without hurting yourself

STATION: Riding a horse

MELEE WEAPONS—GENERAL

This skill involves the use and knowledge of any and all melee weapons. There's also a mental aspect which encompasses things like detecting an enemy's killing intent, or seeing through an enemy's stance or defenses.

AGILITY: Attack and defense actions in melee combat

SENSES: Determining the relative power or skill of an enemy

KNOWLEDGE: Knowledge of weapons

SPIRIT: Detecting an enemy's killing intent, either open or hidden

STATION: Intimidating others

EVASION—GENERAL

This skill is used to escape dangerous situations. In many cases it is a simple dodge, and can be used against an opponent attacking with any kind of weapon. However, if this skill is used you can not make a counter-attack (see the Combat section for more details).

AGILITY: Dodge an attack

SPIRIT: Detect the presence of others

STATION: Demonstrating your power

STEALTH—GENERAL

This is the art of doing things without being seen. Hiding in shadows, or moving without making noise. If you are trying to do something without someone else noticing, they will usually make a roll to resist using Notice. This ability can also be used to hide from armour and devices with the Soulfind ability.

AGILITY: Moving stealthily, hiding without being noticed

SENSES: Detecting ambushes, optionally use in place of Notice to detect hidden people

SPIRIT: Hiding your own ki-presence, holding your breath, blending in with the environment

NINJUTSU—SPECIALIST (ELITE)

This is the elite skill of the ninja and shinobi of Tenra. This skill represents high-level specialist training and Spartan-style rearing. At the command of their clan's leader they would quickly take part in dangerous missions. This skill is not really used like normal skills, but rather shows the rank and power level of the ninja. Please see the Ninjutsu section for ninja abilities and descriptions.

You should write your clan or style name in next to the Ninjutsu skill (Ninjutsu: XYZ Clan). If you are training in more than one style or under more than one clan, then write each Ninjutsu ability separately.

CRIMINAL ARTS—SPECIALIST

Pickpocketing, lock picking, applying or treatment of poisons, setting up or dismantling traps, or tricks of the hand used in criminal activities, all these fall under criminal arts. It also represents knowledge of crimes and their punishments, as well as knowledge of the criminal underworld, and connections within it.

AGILITY: Pickpocketing, springing locks or traps, sleight-of-hand tricks

SENSES: Spotting traps, detecting poison

KNOWLEDGE: Criminal knowledge, knowledge of the underworld society, poison lore

SPIRIT: Intimidation

EMPATHY: Finding or keeping underworld connections

STATION: Intimidation based on social status

Senses Class Skills

FIRST AID—GENERAL

This skill covers the treatment of common injuries and illnesses. This is an important skill in the world of Tenra, a world without prestigious medical colleges and the like: Home doctoring, plant-based medicine, bone-setting, and homeopathy are the common tools of this skill. Please see the Combat Section for more information of the rules usage of this skill.

SENSES: Actually performing first aid, finding medicinal plants

KNOWLEDGE: Herbal lore, doctoral knowledge

NOTICE—GENERAL

This is the skill used to find hidden people or things. It can also be used to detect killing intent from a hidden foe (to prevent an ambush), or a person's physical presence. It also involves the use of all five senses, including hearing, touch, and taste (and perhaps even the sixth sense).

SENSES: Finding hidden or hard-to-find people or things

SPIRIT: Detecting killing intent or a human's ki-presence

MARKSMAN—GENERAL

The Marksman skill covers all weapons that fire, shoot, or are thrown by hand including shuriken and kunai, bows, gunlances, gunpowder weapons and heavy weapons. Unlike other weapon skills, this skill cannot be used to defend or gain a counter-attack. The mental aspects of this skill include repair, assembly and knowledge of missile weapons, as well as detecting ambushes, sensing killing intent and the like.

SENSES: Firing weapons, throwing kunai

KNOWLEDGE: Knowledge of missile and thrown weapons

SPIRIT: Detect killing intent, sensing an ambush

STATION: Intimidating foes

PURSUIT—GENERAL

This is the skill of using tracks and knowledge to hunt down people and animals. It's also a skill that can be employed to shake off a pursuer by covering one's tracks and blending in. It can cover everything from knowledge of animal movement habits, to understanding the psychology of the criminal mind.

SENSES: Spotting clues, tracking down prey

KNOWLEDGE: Knowing common runaway and refugee hideouts

SPIRIT: Covering your tracks, blending into a crowd

FORGERY—SPECIALIST

This skill covers lots of things, including cutting coins or counterfeiting, creating fake documents or passes, crafting keys, or engineering small devices or traps. This skill also covers the knowledge of all the above (and the network of other people who do them), as well as the ability to spot

or size up the quality of a forged work. In social situations, this skill can be used to find forgers or other related connections.

AGILITY: Creating a fake or forgery by hand

SENSES: Engineering, creating or setting traps, spotting fakes

KNOWLEDGE: Knowledge of precious metals, crafting techniques and the like

EMPATHY: Finding or keeping connections in forgery circles

STATION: Knowledge of and connections with fences and other people who move stolen or forged goods

KNOWLEDGE CLASS SKILLS

INFORMATION—GENERAL

Also known as, "Ahh, I've heard of this before…", this is the general skill of trivial knowledge. It's also the skill of having one's ear to the ground, of knowing the lay of the land (both physically and socially) of towns you visit, and hearing the latest big news.

KNOWLEDGE: "I heard about this from a doctor friend of mine…"

STATION: "I heard this rumor about Lord Kagehisa when I was at court, talking to his entourage…"

ONMYOJUTSTU—SPECIALIST

This skill covers all training, knowledge and use of Taoist summoning magic. It also represents knowledge of mechanisms, armours, samurai, and other objects powered by magic. Please see the Onmyoji section of the book for more details of the use of this skill.

KNOWLEDGE: Knowledge of magical devices and spirits

STATION: Influencing other onmyoji, using your reputation as a Taoist summoner

ART OF WAR—SPECIALIST

This skill represents one's level of mastery in a particular Art of War discipline. This skill is not used like normal skills, but rather simply shows the level of power and influence in that discipline or art. You should write down the art studied next to the skill name (Art of War: XYZ). If more than one Art of War is learned, then record that instance of style separately. For more information, see the Art of War rules section.

SPIRIT CLASS SKILLS

WILLPOWER—GENERAL

More a reactive skill than an active skill, this skill represents one's mental and spiritual fortitude, and the ability to resist everything from persuasion, seduction and swindling from even charismatic people. It's not a skill that you will roll actively often, but it's an important skill where you may find yourself in trouble if you don't take it.

BODY: Resisting torture, enduring physical stress

SENSES: Sizing up another person

KUGUTSU SKILL— SPECIALIST (ELITE)

This skill is rare, only taken by kugutsu-maker players or NPCs. It involves the knowledge and history of kugutsu, as well as how to make and train them. Since it is a rare skill, it does not normally appear on the character sheet. You may write it in under the Knowledge attribute area.

AGILITY: Carving and forming the kugutsu

SENSES: Assembling the kugutsu

KNOWLEDGE: All knowledge regarding kugutsu and their makers

EMPATHY: Training a kugutsu

STATION: Knowledge of and influence in kugutsu-maker circles.

KNOWLEDGE: Resisting being swindled

SPIRIT: Resisting intimidation or temptation

EMPATHY: Resisting temptation

STATION: Resisting intimidation or temptation by virtue of your nobility or social status

RESONANCE—SPECIALIST (ELITE)

Resonance is the extraordinary power that oni and half-oni call upon. Only those who have chosen the oni or half-oni templates can make use of Resonance. Resonance uses the power gathered in the oni heart called "Earth" (Dii) or the horn called "Heaven" (Alu) to perform almost magical feats.

BODY: Using Dii power

SPIRIT: Using or resisting Resonance

EMPATHY: Using Alu power

STATION: One's standing in oni shaman circles

INTERFACE—SPECIALIST (ELITE)

This elite skill makes use of a meikyo soul mirror to access the Shinto Priesthood's all-prevalent Meikyo network. Typically, this skill is used by riders to pilot yoroi armours, by Shinto agents to access and contact others through the meikyo network, or by Shinto puppeteers to hijack control of a yoroi or kongohki. To make this skill work, Karma should be kept as low as possible. This is because if too much Karma builds up, the soul mirror will cease responding to the user and become clouded.

When utilizing the power of a meikyo soul mirror, all general skills are actually performed using the Interface skill. All other specialist skills cannot be used with the Interface skill (you must rely on that specialist skill instead).

BUDDHIST MAGIC—SPECIALIST

This skill represents one's ability to exercise Buddhist Magic. Its practitioners believe in the endless circle of reincarnation, and strive to help save other souls through the powers bestowed upon them. The way they go about that practice depends on the sect they belong to. Please note that this skill does not equal belief: One can still be a devout Buddhist without having the ability to use or master the rare powers of unique Buddhist monks. For more information on Buddhist magic, please see the Buddhism rules section.

Empathy Class Skills

PERSUASION—GENERAL

This skill is the art of using talking, conversation and social influence to move the hearts of others. Everything from chiding someone to fast talk, moving someone to tears or inciting a rebellion and more, is covered by this generally useful skill. When influencing another, the opponent makes a Willpower, Persuasion or Art of Rule counter-roll to resist. If the opponent loses, then their character either believes in what they are told, or at the very least gives the speaker an ear.

BODY: Physical blustering

AGILITY: Fast-talk, quickly explaining something away

SENSES: Getting common rumors started

KNOWLEDGE: Discussion, theorizing

SPIRIT: Stopping someone in their tracks with a commanding or powerful tone, moving someone to action

EMPATHY: Flattery

STATION: Starting rumors in court, using social rank instead of words to influence others

PILLOW ARTS—GENERAL

This skill covers everything from seduction to using one's sexual or sensual appeal to get things done. Various sub-uses will be left up to the reader's imagination.

SENSES: Finding an attractive person in a crowd, spotting people interested in you

KNOWLEDGE: Knowing who is seeing who in a social environment

SPIRIT: Resisting seduction

EMPATHY: Seduction, talking, flattering, gauging interest

STATION: Resisting seduction, or using one's political weight to seduce another

PERFORM—SPECIALIST

Musical instruments, dramatic acting in traditional plays, singing and otherwise entertaining are all covered by this skill. This skill may also provide a source of small income when performing in a large town or city square in a pinch.

BODY: Physical performances, dance, taiko drums

AGILITY: Traditional dances, biwa, shamisen

SENSES: Acting

KNOWLEDGE: Knowledge of songs and plays, performers and artists

EMPATHY: Singing, vocal performances

STATION: Influence in performer circles

STATION CLASS SKILLS

ETIQUETTE—SPECIALIST

This is the skill of behaving in a way that wouldn't embarrass one's self or others in front of people of high status. It also includes skills or knowledge of tea and tea ceremony, poetry, small social dances, and the skilled use of supremely polite-form conversation.

AGILITY: A small ceremonial or social dance

SENSES: Polite entertainment, calligraphy

KNOWLEDGE: Poetry, tea and tea ceremony

EMPATHY: Conversing with nobility, social maneuvering

STATION: Saying and doing the proper thing

SHINTO—SPECIALIST (ELITE)

This elite skill represents one's standing within the Shinto Priesthood. Characters that have this skill have some relation to the Priesthood, usually a wandering Gyoshi (Shinto priest) or Miko (shrine maiden). Please see the Shinto section for more details on the use of this skill and the powers associated with it.

This skill is special: Without GM permission (and a good explanation), you must wait for Intermissions to raise the level of this skill. Normally you cannot use the Skill Boost Kiai ability on this skill as it represents rank, but GM permission may override this (to access higher-level Shinto abilities) if there is a good story explanation for why the player has an affinity with local kami.

ART OF RULE—SPECIALIST (ELITE)

This skill represents the schooling and training that one receives when preparing to be a ruler. It includes learning the Machiavellian teachings required to gain power, politics, political subterfuge, negotiation, diplomacy, and always showing one's best qualities while hiding the worst. One's "noble airs" are covered by this skill, which makes it useful when resisting Persuasion or Pillow Arts. Successors to a throne or the heirs in a noble family commonly have this skill.

KNOWLEDGE: Negotiation, political information, political history, famous political works and edicts

EMPATHY: Pure charisma and leadership

STATION: Politics, the ins and outs of court, manipulation of the court, diplomacy

STRATEGY—SPECIALIST

Some people grow up studying styles of leadership, tactics, group combat, and war formations. Sometimes this knowledge comes from studying classical war journals in cloistered halls, other times this knowledge is passed down from captain or general to son, or through grassroots knowledge gained as a leader in times of war.

Not only limited to martial combat, well-schooled ministers and leaders have keen insight into the battlefield-like conditions of social machinations, plots, and manipulation. Classical knowledge of great works of fiction and political journals can teach one to be an expert tactician in social schemes.

This skill allows one to anticipate the outcome of a martial skirmish or even social machinations, and maneuver one's resources in a way which greatly benefit their goals.

Once per act, a character may roll a Station: Strategy roll against a difficulty of zero, and "bank" all of the successes made for later. In later rolls made by themselves or their allies, they can convert some or all of those "banked" successes into bonus dice on a one for one ratio, which can be given out by the strategist. Any dice left in the "bank" at the end of the act are nullified.

SKILL GROUPINGS

For ease of getting into play, the skills have been grouped into categories with their suggested base attribute. If you want to organize the skills in other ways (for example, if you want to create a new character sheet for your group), feel free if you think it will help play. Here's another sample breakdown of skills into other categories:

COMBAT GROUP
Evasion/Agility
Melee Combat/Agility
Unarmed Combat/Body
Marksman/Senses

PHYSICAL GROUP
Movement/Agility
Stealth/Agility
Notice/Senses
Pursuit/Senses
Criminal Arts/Agility

MENTAL GROUP
Willpower/Spirit
Persuasion/Empathy
Pillow Arts/Empathy
Interface/Spirit

SUPREME ARTS GROUP
Wormcharm/Body
Onmyojustu/Knowledge
Resonance/Spirit
Buddhist Magic/Spirit
Ninjutsu/Agility
Shinto/Station
Art(s) of War

KNOWLEDGE GROUP
First Aid/Senses
Forgery/Senses
Perform/Empathy
Etiquette/Station
Information/Knowledge
Art of Rule/Station
Strategy/Station

This effect in the game represents that the situation is going exactly as the strategist planned. The strategies must be present in the scene when rolling this ability.

Strategy rolls can also be used against set difficulties to remember historical records of war or politics, recognize political or martial traps, or carefully calculate the resources required to overcome an opponent.

KNOWLEDGE: Military history, weapon knowledge, knowing the size of a neighboring lord's army.

EMPATHY: Understanding the movements of the enemy leader, anticipating an opponent's next step.

STATION: Crafting strategies, plotting war council machinations.

KI-PRESENCE AND KILLING INTENT

You will notice that many combat and notice skills allow the user to detect another's presence, detect a person's ki-presence, or detect killing intent.

Ki-presence (or *kihai* in Japanese) is that feeling you get when someone is watching you: Hairs stand up on end. You feel like someone is watching you or you feel that "someone is here, in this room" (or house). It isn't used like a sonar or a game of "Hot/Cold" to zone in on enemies, nor is it used to detect friends who are far away. Rather, it's primarily used to sense the presence (or hear the breathing or heartbeat) of people who are physically near you: The ninja hidden in the rafters making his way over your head, or the samurai who is hiding three meters away in the closet, ready to pounce.

Killing intent (or *sakki* in Japanese) is the ki-signature that is generated of boiling hatred, anger and force when an assassin or other enemy makes that fatal stab. A warrior walking into battle will be afire with unmasked killing intent. A rifleman will aim her killing intent at the target she fires at. The best assassins will attempt to hide their killing intent (and their cover) until the precise moment of the killing blow. Killing intent might be felt right before an ambush in the woods; or perhaps you detect almost beams of pure hatred from the eyes of the mysterious girl in the marketplace, watching you from afar, giving you goose-bumps or making the hairs on the back of your neck stand up or the candles in the hall flicker as if a slight wind was blowing over them.

TAKING NEW SKILLS

General skills and most specialist skills can have their level permanently increased (think of it as a "level up") by using Kiai at any time during the game. You can also pick up new general skills (starting at "two dots") any time during the game as well. However, new specialist skills can usually be only gained during Intermissions.

SKILLS EXPRESS THE CHARACTER

The skills in the book represent the things that will appear most in the game. There are things like physical skills, combat skills, mental and magical skills. The skills that the player chooses become what that character is about. Things like specialist skills and especially elite skills can really define a character's role and set them apart from others.

Three samurai built using the same skills and attributes can still have very different backgrounds, personalities and fates. However, you may want to explore a character's individuality further by crafting a character with unique skills. Pick something that you think would express your character in a new or interesting way.

This represents the downtime required to study and learn the ins and outs of those specialist skills.

While it may make things interesting to bend that rule, having a character suddenly say, "Hey everyone. I know I kept it a secret until now, but actually I've had extensive Onmyojustu training as a child. I didn't want to use these skills, but I see now I have no other choice…", it could also be disruptive to the feel of the game. Always work it out in advance with the GM: The fewer random "Oh yeah, I'm awesome at XYZ, too!" twists, the more stable the game will be.

For those elite skills like Ninjutsu, Shinto, Interface and the like, the downtime of the Intermission required to gain these skills might represent the intense short-term training, or relearning what was once learned and forgotten, or perhaps a secret revelation about the character: She was always a member of the Priesthood, and just now became "activated".



THE THREAD OF KARMA IS THE STRONGEST THREAD
NOTHING YOU WIELD CAN SEVER IT
NOTHING YOU CARRY CAN DENY IT

THE KARMA SYSTEM

Within the game Tenra Bansho Zero is a subset of rules which focus on the psychological condition of your character. That rules system is called the Karma System.

The Karma System is the backbone of this game. While these rules are an important part of playing Tenra Bansho, they are fuzzy rules, rules that don't rely on hard numbers and math. For those of you familiar with role-playing games, you understand that the actual act or role-play is not something that can be quantified in a number or rolled on dice. The Karma System attempts to bridge the gap between qualitative role-playing and quantitative character change.

The Karma System is made up of four inter-linked concepts: Kiai, Aiki, Karma and Fate. Let's take a look at each element in detail.

KIAI

Kiai is synonymous with a character's potential power. The more Kiai a character has, the more power and influence the character can exert on the world. Kiai is represented in a pool of "points" that the player spends. Kiai is sometimes called "Kiai Points".

The word "Kiai" comes from Ki (spirit/chi) and Ai (joining/harmony), together meaning "fighting spirit". It's the martial yell that martial arts practitioners scream while attacking, generating a forceful spirit to overcome obstacles. In the game Tenra Bansho Zero, Kiai represents the character's force of will, and how she exerts herself upon the world. If the concept of Kiai is hard to remember at first, think of it as "focus".

Kiai has two major roles in the game. The first role is explosive power, the ability to do heroic or mythic deeds. Many tabletop games have this kind of pool of points: They are sometimes called "Hero Points", "Action Points", or "Fate Points". The second role of Kiai, albeit a lesser-used one, is character development. Just like "experience points" in many tabletop and console games, Kiai is used to raise attributes, skills, and gain new abilities or equipment.

Kiai starts at 0, but there is no upper limit to the amount of Kiai you can have. When Kiai is spent, it turns into Karma during Intermissions (special scenes that occur between acts of the game). Kiai must be recorded carefully: Not only the Kiai pool that you currently have, but every spent point of Kiai has to be recorded as well. Make sure to note spent Kiai carefully, as each point turns into a point of Karma later.

Aiki Chits

Aiki is the player currency of the game, a reward for good role-playing. When the players receive this reward, it is passed to them in the form of what are called Aiki chits. Aiki chits can be pieces of paper, coins, poker chips, or other physical, tactile counter. They are given to the players by the other players and GM as a small reward for excellent roleplay.

WHAT IS KARMA?

Doing good things leads to "Good Karma", and doing bad things leads to "Bad Karma": Good things come to those who have good karma, and bad things happen to those who have bad karma, right?

Not really: That's Hinduism.

In Buddhism, *all karma is "bad".*

In Buddhism, there is just one kind of karma. Karma (or "goh" in Japanese) actually means "actions". It represents the actions that people do in the world. In Buddhism, as people care more about the world, they become bound to it. Eventually, as karma amasses, they are tied to the cosmic cycle of life and rebirth. Karma is such a burden that the more you gain, the more perverse your actions and emotions can become. You can start to love something so much that you would destroy it, or everything around it, in order to preserve it.

You can love your kingdom and become so attached to it that you make brutal war on your peaceful neighbors in order to keep your kingdom safe from the threat you perceive.

You can care for your wife or husband so much that you want to protect them from the influences of other people, seeing every friend or neighbor as a threat.

Your love for a person, organization, activity, object or goal can become so strong that you cannot let it go. You would do anything, kill anyone, even tear down the world in order to mistakenly pursue that love.

Emotions and emotional ties to the world are a very human thing. However, too much of a good thing leads to pain, as well as being trapped in the cosmic cycle of rebirth, of which escape is the "goal" of Buddhism.

If the concept of Karma is hard to understand, you can get by for now by thinking of Karma as "Sin". Although it differs significantly, especially how it is gained (caring too much vs doing actual evil), the term makes a good substitute at times.

Aiki is the reversal of the same characters which make up the word "Kiai". "Ai" and "Ki" together mean "A Harmony of Spirit". It represents the fact that when you gain Aiki chits at the table, you are receiving them because your spirit is joined to that of the other players: You have made them laugh, gasp, or say "That was cool!", and they in turn reward you for it with praise. If the word "Aiki" is hard to remember at first, think of it for now as "Praise from the audience".

Aiki chits turn into Kiai points through what are called "Fate Rolls". Aiki can also be spent to gain new Fates. Finally, Aiki chits themselves may be spent in the same way as Kiai, although they do not generate Karma.

We will look further into the role of Aiki chits throughout this chapter.

KARMA

Karma is the sound of your soul tearing itself apart. It is the act of destroying the world because you cannot keep your strong emotions in check.

Karma starts as a number between 1 and 108, and usually signifies the power level of a PC. If it goes below 0 or above 108, the character becomes an NPC.

We will look further into the game rules of Karma, how it is gained and lost, further in this chapter.

FATES

Fates in this game represent the PC's past, the things they accomplish, their goals, beliefs, and desires, all expressed as abilities. They represent an event that had some sort of impact on the character's heart. That impact might have come from a past trauma, or developed from a reason for living, or perhaps from the shame of a transgression.

Each Fate has a type, as well as an ability scale (like other skills and abilities) rated 1-5. The higher the Fate's rating, the more the character feels strongly about that particular Fate. Fates assist in the conversion of Aiki chits to Kiai points, as well as showing the psychological state of the character: Essentially what they care about, and how much they care about it.

DESTINY

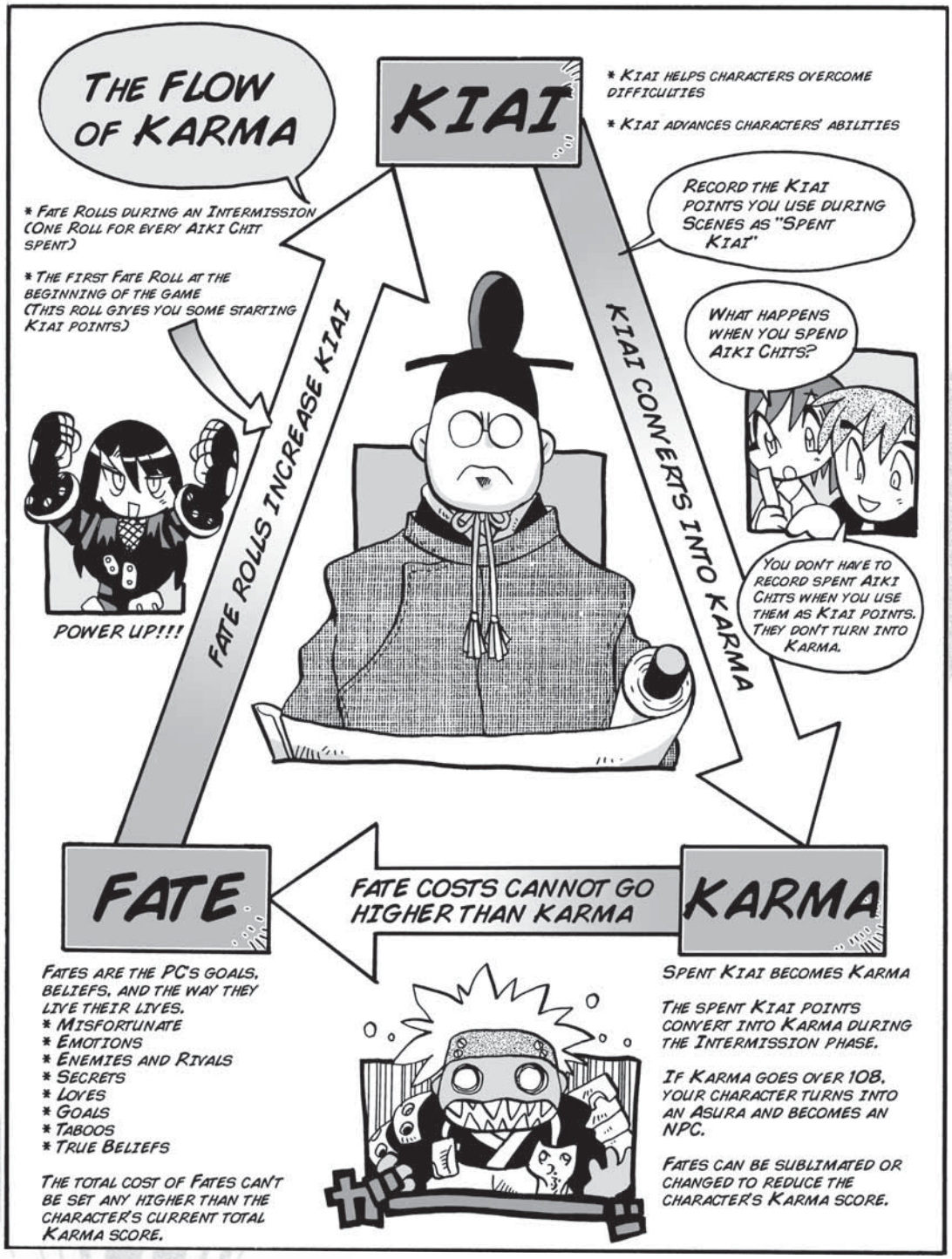
A Destiny is a particular type of Fate which is given by the Game Master to the player during the Zero Act. It represents the character's goal for this particular story. By pursuing their Destiny, the character will progress through the scenario or adventure. The players should take careful note of this Fate, and are encouraged to make use of it through the game. Mechanically, Destinies function exactly the same as Fates.

The Destiny represents the character's role in the scenario. If a player is new to role-playing, or at a loss as to what to do, they should follow the Destiny their GM gave them. Doing so will ensure that the scenario unfolds smoothly, and that the player character has a solid path and role-play opportunities to follow in the game.

AIKI CHITS

Aiki chits form the core "economy" of the game. To understand how and why they work, you need to know a little about Japanese Kabuki theater, which Tenra Bansho attempts to emulate in style.

Kabuki theater is similar to Western-style theater, but there are a few poignant differences. The makeup, the music, and the stage tricks aside, the biggest difference is the role of the audience. In Western


THE FLOW OF KARMA
KIAI
* Kiai helps characters overcome difficulties
* Kiai advances characters' abilities
* Fate Rolls during an Intermission (One Roll for every Aiki Chit spent)
* The first Fate Roll at the beginning of the game (This roll gives you some starting Kiai points)
Record the Kiai points you use during Scenes as "Spent Kiai"
What happens when you spend Aiki Chits?
You don't have to record spent Aiki Chits when you use them as Kiai points. They don't turn into Karma.
POWER UP!!!
FATE ROLLS INCREASE KIAI
KIAI CONVERTS INTO KARMA
FATE
FATE COSTS CANNOT GO HIGHER THAN KARMA
KARMA
Fates are the PC's goals, beliefs, and the way they live their lives.
* Misfortunate
* Emotions
* Enemies and Rivals
* Secrets
* Loves
* Goals
* Taboos
* True Beliefs
The total cost of Fates can't be set any higher than the character's current total Karma score.
Spent Kiai becomes Karma
The spent Kiai points convert into Karma during the Intermission phase.
If Karma goes over 108, your character turns into an Asura and becomes an NPC.
Fates can be sublimated or changed to reduce the character's Karma score.

theater (Shakespeare, etc), the audience stays silent and enjoys the performance. In kabuki theater, the audience participates: They yell and holler during the action scenes or when the actor strikes a classic dramatic pose. When the actor delivers one of the famous lines within the play (usually striking a traditional kabuki *mie* pose), the audience goes nuts. The serious kabuki fan will scream out to the actual actor: "Way to go Ichikawa!" "You tell 'em, Nakamura!" Even if the audience knows what's coming up next (and the kabuki enthusiast almost always does, being familiar with the play before watching it), seeing the actor play up their backstory or deliver a set line in a certain way, is part of the dance or exchange that happens between kabuki actors and audience.

In Tenra Bansho, the Aiki chits help replicate the same kind of feel of the flow of kabuki theater. A player (the "actor" in a scene) entertains the other players (the "audience") through cool or interesting role-playing, great ad-lib lines, or specifically by acting up their character's Fates. The other players will certainly smile, say "That's awesome!" or laugh. But they will also give the acting player a reward in the form of an Aiki chit ("Awesome line, Mary: Here, take an Aiki chit"). Each scene the players will usually receive 2-3 or more Aiki chits, depending on how much they exert themselves and play up their role.

There are two systems of handing out Aiki: The main method is called "The Audience", where all players can award Aiki chits at any time. The optional method is called "The Scene Judge", where one player per scene takes on the role of the audience and awards Aiki chits to the acting players.

The Aiki chits themselves can be coins, poker chips, slips of paper, colored glass beads (such as "life counters" used in collectible card games) or other physical pieces. You will need about fifteen to twenty Aiki chits per player, including the GM. If you have different colored chits, you could use one color to count as a "ones" chit, and another color to count as a "fives" chits.

The system of giving Aiki chits is a soft rule, not as mechanical as rolling dice or adding combat modifiers. However, this system is the core of the most important rules set of the game. Make sure that all the players understand it well, and that the GM and experienced players set an example of giving Aiki chits for the new players of the game.

Asking "How many Aiki chits should a player receive in a scene?" is a little bit like asking, "How much money should I tip my waiter?" The answer is a subjective "It depends". However, a good rule of thumb is this: The players should try to aim at receiving about 2-3 Aiki chits per scene through role-playing, perhaps 4-5 or more if the scene is long or the player is simply bringing the house down.

The Audience

In the default method of gameplay, all of the players at the table (including the GM) can award the acting players Aiki chits at any time. The role of the audience is simple: When they are entertained, they award the acting player an Aiki chit. There are some things to look for when awarding Aiki chits:

- Does the acting player express their character's Fates? If so, give them a chit right there. Make sure you read and understand the PCs' Fates.
- Did the player entertain you? Did they say something really cool or really funny without distracting from the scene? Give them a chit.

- Did the player say or do something that pulled at your heartstrings, something that moved you? Give them a chit.
- Keep an eye on the player's role-playing. Some players are more comfortable with acting than others. Don't judge one player's role-playing based on another's, but rather against their own skills. If a player has a hard time coming out of their shell and acting out their part, reward them when they make an effort.

Each player should keep three Aiki chits in their hand or somewhere near them on the table. Award the chits as you see fit. When

CONCEPT: AIKI CHITS AND HURDLES

It takes a few minutes to get used to handing out Aiki chits to the players at the beginning of the game, even for long-time players of Tenra Bansho Zero. Giving Aiki chits is a process which is like the heartbeat of the game, and an indicator of the game's pacing. During the Zero Act, the giving of Aiki chits may be a little haphazard: Acting players might get Aiki chits for almost every line they say, or else the players might forget to give out Aiki chits, even when they are awestruck by something cool an acting player said or did. Soon, though, you'll see that the Aiki chit giving begins to normalize in the first act, and from that point on the flow of chit giving will rise and ebb as expected throughout the game.

At the beginning of the game, though, it's very important to not keep extreme standards for role-playing: The acting players are just getting used to their characters. Award them quickly for interesting/fun lines, or for acting upon their Fates in even a small way. Don't set the award hurdles too high at the beginning: Keep them low. Award early and regularly. Over time, the hurdles will naturally rise and even out for each player as they settle into their character and the game.

AIKI CHITS AND SUBJECTIVITY

"What is cool" is going to be different for each player at the table. It's subjective. It's the classic "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" expression, applied to role-playing. However, you will see when you actually play that no matter how much you might be wary of the subjectivity involved in relying upon the players to reward "what is cool", the players will ultimately be properly rewarded for their role-playing and cool lines. There is no need to worry about playing to what the audience (or scene judge) thinks is cool over what you, as an acting player, thinks is cool in order to be rewarded. Unless someone actively acts like a jerk to the others, the system of Aiki chit giving normalizes over time and does function as intended.

"Jason likes things that Elizabeth doesn't like." That's always going to be true. That doesn't mean that if Jason is the scene judge you should roleplay your character one way, and if Elizabeth is the scene judge you should roleplay your character another way. In fact, that kind of nuanced acting and role-switching is pretty much impossible when your head is busy just trying to stay in character over the course of the scene.

The other players are presumably your friends, or at least people who you respect enough to sit together over the game table. They'll recognize your cool lines. They'll give you Aiki chits when you bring out your character's backstory and motivations (Fates). They'll reward you when you push your limits. And you will do the same for them. Don't sweat subjectivity; the system works as intended. Thousands of players in Japan and the West have seen this truth for themselves in play since the release of the game in Japan. Everyone will have a good time. Try it and see for yourself!

you run out of chits, or at the beginning of the next scene, pick up three more and repeat the process. Having three chits at a time helps keeps the pace, making sure that the acting players in the scene don't receive too few or too many Aiki chits. Once all of the players have played a few games of Tenra, you can just keep a large pile of Aiki chits in the center of the table and give them to the acting players from there.

The players should keep the Aiki chits they receive somewhere on their character sheet to differentiate their own Aiki chit pile from the chits they are giving to other players.

Keep in mind that you don't award too few Aiki chits. When the role-playing becomes intense, it's easy to be moved by the action or dialogue, and in the process forget to award the acting players Aiki chits. You can reward players after the fact. When the scene closes, you can award players after the fact for their role-playing or for hitting their Fates ("Oh, you really played up your 'Love of the Princess' Fate in that last scene. Here, take an Aiki chit. I got sucked into that great dialogue you had with the GM and forgot to give you the chit then…").

LOOKING AT PLAYER FATES

The players will be intimately familiar with their own character's Fates. However, it is important to learn the Fates and Destinies of the other player characters when they appear in their scenes. Knowing them will help you, the audience, understand what nuances of the player is aiming for in their role-play. If you don't know what the acting PC's Fates are, you won't be able to reward that player properly, so make sure to familiarize yourself with the session log sheet (if you are using it) or the Fates written on that player's character sheet.

When you give Aiki chits to a player for role-playing their Fates, call attention to the Fate in question you are rewarding: "Here, take a chit" is fine. However, "Interesting play off of your 'Fear of Divine Wind' Fate. Here, take a chit" will let the other players know your reasons for awarding that Aiki chit, as well as remind them of what the acting player has on their character sheet.

GIVING TOO MANY CHITS

In the Audience mode, anyone (including the GM) can give a player an Aiki chit to the players in the scene as per the guidelines above. However, for one cool line, or one great expression of a Fate, the player only gets one chit. If three players are entertained enough by the acting player's role-playing, and they all reach out to give the acting player an Aiki chit, that player will only receive the first one, and the other two players withhold their chits: That player won't get three Aiki for just one single in-character line.

If you see the players giving too many chits (such as a player receiving five or more regularly in every scene, continuously), you can talk to them about it during the next Intermission. However, most Aiki chit inflation originates from the GM giving too few chits. If the GM makes sure to reward good role-playing and acting on Fates, it sets an example and pace for the other players to reward the players as well: Not too little, not too much.

This system is pretty much impossible to "game" to your advantage. Any attempt to do so will likely be seen as cheesy, and you won't get rewarded. For example, a PC might have a Fate of "Goal: Gain Freedom". If the player suddenly blurts out (in character) "I wish I had my freedom!" apropos of absolutely no other dialogue or event in the scene, and holds out her hand to the other players, no one is going to

reward her. But if she brings up that Fate in an interesting way that entertains the other players or makes them take notice, or simply ad-libs really cool lines of dialogue, the other players will reward her, and rightfully so. It's nigh-impossible to "game the system" in unfavorable ways when the goal of the system is the entertainment of everyone at the table.

Beyond that, don't worry about giving too many Aiki chits. Too many is better than too few, and over time you will get used to the flow of the game.

GIVING CHITS TO NPCS

While they cannot make physical use of them, you should also reward the GM with an Aiki chit if they engage in some great role-playing through an NPC. GMs need love too!

The GM will sometimes assign players to play the roles of NPCs that appear in a scene (giving them an Aiki chit to pull them into the scene). These temporary NPCs won't have Fates, but the player may still entertain the audience through role-playing. Those players can still be awarded Aiki chits for entertaining the others while they are taking on the roles of NPCs.

Optional Rule: Scene Judge

The second method of distributing Aiki chits is the Scene Judge method. It is an optional rule, and if used, it completely supersedes the Audience method. Read and be familiar with the above default method of play before reading further.

In the Scene Judge method of gameplay, the GM elects one player to become the scene judge at the beginning of the scene. The scene judge gets three Aiki chits and acts as the audience. This player pays attention to the acting players and hands out Aiki chits in the exact same method as the audience gameplay method. If they are using the session log sheet, they will also fill in a "Scene Judge" check box next to their name, indicating that they acted as a scene judge.

When the scene judge hands out the last of the chits, it's time to find a new scene judge. The GM will pick a new scene judge, and the new scene judge will pick up three Aiki chits. The GM may simply allow the existing scene judge to pick up another three Aiki chits and act again as scene judge for the rest of that scene.

The Aiki chits can provide a good pacing mechanism to the novice GM. When the scene judge runs out of chits, it's a sign for them to start wrapping things up (either soon or shortly). The acting players have been rewarded, the players have been entertained, so now it's time to move to the next scene. If the GM thinks that there is more to be pulled from the scene, then they should feel free to continue onwards with a new (or the same) scene judge, but the last Aiki chit being spent may become a helpful indicator of the pacing of your scenes. Speed them up or extend them as you need.

CHOOSING THE SCENE JUDGE

The scene judge will usually be a player whose character does not appear in that scene. Additionally, the scene judge should be a player who has the most Aiki chits. The player with the most Aiki chits can focus on the players with fewer Aiki chits. That way, there is less of a chance of a lopsided distribution of Aiki chits per player, with one player having tons of chits while the other players have few.

SCENE JUDGE AND SCENES

Just because a player is a scene judge doesn't mean they cannot participate in the scene. You can have an acting character also be the scene judge, but it can be hard to remember

to reward the other players when you are also role-playing in that scene. That's why the scene judge is usually a character who is not in the scene. However, that scene judge has just as much right to push their PC into a scene as any other player. When that happens, either let that person continue to be the scene judge or pass the role to any players left without PCs in the scene.

GM AS JUDGE

The scene judge is one of the non-GM players at the table, acting as the "audience" for the other players. However, the GM always has the power to give Aiki chits just like a scene judge does. If the GM is entertained by the role-playing of the acting players or sees a character's Fate being played in a particularly interesting way, they always have the ability to give them Aiki chits at any time. However, just as the default audience rules, the GM should not give an Aiki chit to a player at the same time as the scene judge: They only earn one chit per "line."

WHY THE OPTIONAL SCENE JUDGE RULES?

The scene judge rules for Aiki chit distribution are nothing more than training wheels for the audience method. The audience method is a less structured but more rewarding method of distributing Aiki chits. The scene judge method is more structured, more calculated. There is some overhead and added handling time (passing sheets, chits etc) as the scene judge changes from scene to scene. However, it's a good and simple method to get used to the idea of rewarding your fellow players for how they entertain you or play up their character goals. Not many other tabletop role-playing games do this kind of thing (or certainly not as much, or in a method as central to the rules as Tenra Bansho does), so it might take a little getting used to.

The scene judge rules make it easy for one person to look over the session log sheet (or notecards, or character sheets) to see what the acting players' characters have as Fates. The scene judge rules also control the distribution of Aiki chits, as the person with the most Aiki chits will often be the next scene judge (giving the other players an opportunity to keep up or surpass that leading player). Over time, and maybe a game or two under your belt, you'll find yourself naturally gravitating to the audience method, because you'll soon remember the other PC's Fates without being reminded, and you'll be constantly aware of how many Aiki chits each player has, as well as how much effort they are putting into their characters.

Use the scene judge rules once or twice to get the players used to the Aiki chit system. But when you start to find yourself wanting to naturally reward the acting players with Aiki chits (but cannot because you are not the scene judge), then it's time to make the switch over to the default Audience rules system.

USING AIKI CHITS

Using Aiki chits is not nearly as complicated as the methods in which they are distributed. There are two places where the players use them: during scenes and during intermissions.

DURING SCENES

USE AIKI AS KIAI

Players can spend an Aiki chit in order to use it as Kiai (See the Kiai rules in this chapter for how to use Kiai.) One Aiki chit grants one point of Kiai for immediate use. It's usually a poor trade because Aiki chits

can be used to make Fate rolls to get far more points of Kiai. However, spending Aiki can be helpful in a pinch.

The main benefit of spending Aiki chits as Kiai points is that Aiki chits spent in this way do not add to the "spent Kiai" pool, so it doesn't increase Karma. This is the only Karma-free way to spend Kiai points.

BRING ANOTHER PC INTO THE SCENE

This is a method most commonly used by the GM after the scene is underway in order to draw in the other players into the scene (usually as their PCs, sometimes temporarily to play the role of an NPC within the scene). The GM or player gives a player a single Aiki chit and, in return, the receiving player jumps into the scene as their PC or an NPC.

ADJUST THE EMOTION MATRIX

When a player rolls on the Emotion Matrix, the GM can offer them Aiki chits to move up, down, left or right one or more spaces. One chit is given for each single space moved. Another player can also offer their own Aiki chits to another player to guide them to Emotion Matrix results.

If the player rolling on the Emotion Matrix wants to move towards an emotion that interests them, they can spend their Kiai for each square moved. See the Emotion Matrix rules for more information on this action, as well as why the GM or other players would want to adjust the matrix roll.

During Intermissions

MAKE A FATE ROLL

This is the most common use of Aiki chits. At the end of the intermission, the players exchange their Aiki chits for Fate rolls. Each Aiki chit is traded in for one roll, until all Aiki chits are spent and the player is left with a pool of Kiai. See below for how to make a Fate roll.

A player can make a Fate roll during a scene (with the GM's permission), or even during combat as an action. However, instead of using the character's highest Fate, the player makes the Fate roll against the Fate which is most applicable to that scene or situation.

TAKE OR GIVE A NEW FATE

When it is time to take new Fates during the intermission, a player can give themselves a new Fate ranked at 2 for a cost of one Aiki chit. They can offer another player a new Fate ranked at 2, in which case (if the other player accepts) they actually give that player the Aiki chit instead of discarding it.

Fate Rolls

Fate rolls are the most common use of Aiki chits. During the intermission, a player makes a roll using the PC's Empathy as the attribute, and the Fate's rank in dots as the actual skill. This roll will result in a number of successes. Every single one of these successes become Kiai points, and are recorded on the character sheet in the Kiai pool. If the player has eight Aiki chits, they can make eight Aiki rolls in a row and hopefully gain a large pool of Kiai in the process.

The player chooses whichever Fate they want to use to make the Fate roll. Of course, this means that the player will use their highest-ranked Fate, the one with the most dots in it (usually 3 or 4). In this way, the character becomes stronger (or gains more potential) through the things that the character cares about. If the player doesn't feel they have a single Fate which applies to their character any longer, they should be encouraged to spend one Aiki chit to buy a

new Fate (see the "No Self Phase" section later in this chapter for the rules on buying new Fates).

Fate rolls can be made during the game as well. A player can make a single Fate roll in a scene, or make a Fate roll as a combat action. However, at those times the player must roll against the most applicable Fate for that scene or situation, as approved by the GM.

USING KIAI

The legends of Tenra are filled with stories of people doing incredible deeds: Single samurai who face off against armies of 5,000 and survive, or Onmyoji who destroy entire cities with their rampaging summoned shiki. Kiai represents the explosive power that these heroes draw from to perform these acts of legend.

Kiai comes from Aiki chits in the methods explained above. Kiai becomes a pool of points which the players can use to have their characters do those legendary acts or improve their abilities. Keep careful track of spent Kiai, as later it becomes Karma. Here are the ways in which Kiai can be used.

DICE BOOST

The most common use of Kiai is to boost the number of dice rolled for a skill roll. Each extra die costs one point of Kiai. Before a skill roll is made, you can spend any number of Kiai points to gain an equal number of dice to roll. There is no upper limit to the number of dice that can be purchased in this manner: 50 points of Kiai can be used to roll 50 additional dice on a skill roll. Once. And with monstrous karmic fallout.

SKILL BOOST

Another common use of Kiai is to raise the level of the skill temporarily before a roll is made. This can only be done with general skills, not specialist skills. Three points of Kiai will raise a skill level by one level (from 1 to 2, 2 to 3, or 3 to 4). A skill can be raised more than once in this manner (for example, spending 9 Kiai to raise a skill level from 1 to 4 for one roll). The skill boost can raise a skill to a maximum level of 4. This can only be done before the dice are rolled. This can also be combined with the dice boost or other Kiai effects. This is a temporary effect, and the skill returns to normal levels after the roll is made.

If you use a dice boost or skill boost and roll a tie against an opponent outside of combat, you pick up all dice and reroll them. You keep all the effects of dice boost and skill boost when you reroll the dice in this manner.

SUCCESS BOOST

After the roll is made, you can buy additional successes. You can do this to increase the level of success on a successful skill roll, or else turn a failure into a tie result or even a success. Each success after the roll is made can be purchased for three Kiai points. Any number of successes can be purchased in this manner.

INTERRUPT ACTION

Two Kiai can be spent to take an action that interrupts another character or NPC before they make a roll. This allows you to take an action before the other character can act. Another player cannot interrupt an interruption in progress: only one interruption can happen at a time. In other words, if Player B declares an interrupt on Player A's action, Player C (or any other player) cannot say, "I will interrupt that interruption, and do this…"

In combat, an interrupt to take a combat action costs three Kiai points: Two points for the interrupt action, and one for the additional action.

Multiple Combat Actions

For the cost of one Kiai, you can take another combat action. This can be done any number of times. These additional combat actions happen after all of the other characters act in that round.

If you want to make an additional action in combat before the other characters have a chance to act, you have to couple the combat action with an interrupt action (3 Kiai total per interrupted combat action). Taking multiple combat actions can make combat a little confusing, so make sure to declare your actions with the GM in order to help keep things in order.

Protect

When another character is hit in combat, you can spend 1 Kiai to have your character jump in to protect that character. There are two types of "Protection", Before and After.

Before: If you declare that your character will Protect another before the attack/counter-attack or attack/defense roll is made, your character jumps in and makes the defense roll for the other character. If you succeed, your character cannot make a counter-attack. If you fail, you take the damage as normal.

After: If you declare that your character will Protect an ally after the attack/counter-attack or attack/defense roll is made (and your ally presumably failed), the damage that the ally takes is automatically transferred and applied to your character: Your character does not roll to defend, she simply takes the damage intended for the other character.

Emotion Matrix Shift

When you roll on the Emotion Matrix, you can pick another emotion (usually near the one you landed on). It costs one Kiai to shift the matrix one box left, right, up or down. In other words, add or subtract 10 to the "10s die", or add or subtract 1 to the "ones die". If you land on one square of the Emotion Matrix, and you really want to instead take an emotion which is two boxes away (one shift to the right, and one shift up), it would cost two Kiai points to take that emotion. The GM may haggle with you, offering Aiki chits to move to yet another emotion in the matrix.

See the Emotion Matrix rules for more information.

Gain Equipment

Useful new equipment is purchased in Karma, not in copper or gold. Equipment is purchased usually during the intermission phases, but it can be purchased in a scene with GM permission.

Soulgems cost 1 Kiai for a set of 5. Shikigami prayer strips for onmyojutsu summoning cost 1 Kiai for 10 strips. Soulgem weapons cost 5 Kiai, while gunpowder weapons cost 3. Annelids require a number of Kiai equal to their cost. Mechanica cost an amount of Kiai equal to 10 times the attribute cost of the equipment.

A character can receive a new weapon in the middle of a scenario as part of that scenario, but they must pay the Karma cost to keep it by the end of the next intermission. Otherwise, that equipment cannot be used. Instead, it is lost, discarded, or given away.

Raise Attributes

10 Kiai can be spent to raise any attribute by one point. This can be done at any time. Armour attributes can only be raised in this manner during intermissions: It is

expected that the armour was tuned-up or upgraded by a skilled armour-maker or onmyoji.

Take New Skills

A new generalist skill can be taken for a cost of 5 Kiai. This raises it from 1 to 2 (or Unskilled to Skilled.) Generalist skills can be raised at any time. A specialist skill can be taken for 5 Kiai as well (raising it from 0 to 2), but specialist skills can only initially be purchased during an intermission. This represents the downtime required for a character to be trained in an entirely new ability.

Raise Skills and Abilities

All skills can be raised at any time in the scenario. The only issue is that GM permission is required to take a skill at a rank of 5/Special, as those abilities are usually game-changing. Otherwise, if you have the Kiai, you can increase your skills and abilities on the fly whenever you wish.

- Raising a skill from 2 to 3 (Skilled to Advanced) costs 10 points.
- Raising a skill from 3 to 4 (Advanced to Mastery) costs 20 points.
- Raising a skill from 4 to 5 (Mastery to Special) costs 40 points and requires GM permission.

Starting Kiai

Before any play begins, each player makes a single Fate roll to create their character's starting Kiai pool. Roll against the highest starting Fate (usually with a rating of three), and take that many Kiai points before play begins. For this roll, if you do not start with at least a minimum Kiai pool of three points, raise your starting Kiai to three.

Kiai After the Scenario

When the scenario is over, any Kiai the PC has left disappears. It does not carry over to future scenarios. Because it disappears without being used, this Kiai does not become Karma.

Alternate Rule: Minimum Kiai

Fate rolls can produce wild results. Even a character with a high Empathy attribute could roll cold dice and end up with few successes over multiple Fate rolls. If the player wishes and the GM allows, they can forfeit rolling dice for Fate rolls and instead take a number of Kiai points equal to the number of their highest Fate.

Example: Lord Kagetora has a Fate ranked at 4 dots, "Emotion: Hatred of the Steel Horse Clan." This is his highest ranked Fate. His Empathy attribute is 7. However, the player has had a run of poor dice rolls and is wary of getting few successes again. So during the intermission's Fate roll segment, Kagetora's player decides to cash in all of his eight awarded Aiki chits and turn them into Kiai using the Minimum Kiai rules. He multiplies the number of Aiki chits (8) by the value of his highest Fate (4 dots) and takes a total of 32 Kiai points. He might have been able to roll many more successes if he rolled his Fate normally, but this time, Lord Kagetora's player doesn't want to take any chances.

If the highest ranked Fate is higher than the character's Empathy attribute, then use the Empathy attribute as the Minimum Kiai score.

Example: Flower-of-Iron is a kongohki with a Fate of "Sealed Memories" ranked at 5 dots. However, his Empathy attribute score is 3. He will only be able to receive a maximum of 3 Kiai points per Aiki chit spent using the Minimum Kiai rules.

Karma

All spent Kiai points become Karma at the beginning of the Intermission.

The upper limit of Karma for all characters is 108: This is the number of Buddhist "attachments, defilements, sins". If the character's Karma exceeds at 108 by the end of the Intermission, that character becomes an Asura and the character is immediately retired, becoming an NPC.

Karma can be reduced by sublimating (erasing) or changing Fates.

Asura

Asura are lost souls, people who have utterly destroyed themselves in the pursuit of their fate. They give up trying to change their fate and simply resort to stopping at nothing to attain their goal. They cannot change; they refuse to give up what they view as their goal or destiny. They make a decision, even unconsciously, to give up on being human, to abandon their soul, and to simply be carried away by their unattainable fate.

People who become Asura don't simply snap and run around killing people recklessly like berserk savages. However, if normal people were to watch the Asura's actions, they simply wouldn't understand the seemingly insane connections between their obsessive actions and their goals.

Asura are not a "species". They are not a category of race or creed. They are people who act in the same manner of the Asura of ancient Buddhist mythology. Asura are consumed by their emotions, obsessed with violence and unable to calm their raging spirits. The common people of Tenra view Asura as true demons of pure evil, emerging from the heavens and fallen to the earth, or else nefarious inhuman monsters who happen to wear a human skin over their own.

Asura cannot be reasoned with, nor can they be empathized with. The only thing they care about is the fulfillment of their goals or destiny. Anything that gets in the way is ignored, discarded, or destroyed. Their goals are given preference above everything. They did not become Asura because they couldn't fulfill their fate. Rather they became Asura because it was impossible for them to let go. Everything else is secondary to the pursuit an Asura's chosen fate.

BECOMING ASURA

When a PC's total Karma plus spent Kiai goes over 108, they are in danger of becoming an Asura. In the next intermission, if they do not reduce the total of Karma to 108 or less, that character becomes an Asura. PCs can attempt to lower their Karma through changing or sublimating Fates, or they could simply make the conscious decision to become an Asura.

If a character becomes an Asura, the character sheet gets passed to the GM. They become an NPC. If the player of that character had any Aiki chits left unspent, each Aiki chit is multiplied by the PC's Spirit: The character gets that many additional Kiai points, which the GM can use for this Asura in the same ways that players can use Kiai.

In the end, the concept of Asura is a wall which should not be breached, a line in the sand which you should not cross, a mechanism to promote change of one's goals and beliefs (Fates). However, if the player thinks it would make for a great story to have the character lose control and become an Asura, that line in the sand can be crossed, that wall breached.

See the Scenario section for more details on what to do when a player character becomes an Asura.

VOLUNTARY ASURA

The player can keep an eye on their Kiai, Karma and Fates and make sure that they can avoid becoming an Asura during the next intermission.

In some rare cases, the player will decide that becoming an Asura is the most interesting option for their character, even though it means that the PC will be taken away from them and made into an NPC. This sort of decision comes usually towards the end of the scenario. If the PC has more than 108 Karma, and the player decides that this is the best option, they should discuss it with the GM. The GM may allow them to become an Asura immediately.

This is an option, but ultimately a sorrowful one. There is no return once a character becomes an Asura. It is likely that the other characters will have to destroy the Asura. However, on rare occasions, a player may want to take this option if they think it fits their character. The GM should never pressure or suggest the player go that route.

FATES

Fates are the things that a character cares about. It's the relationships they maintain, the paths they walk, the goals they wish to attain, the acts they must never do, their backgrounds and histories. Picking Fates and role-playing them is central to the game, the core of Tenra Bansho Zero. The players will pick interesting Fates to act out in character, appealing to the audience through dramatic or cool lines, in-character actions, and general role-play. The more you act out your Fates, the more Aiki chits you will collect from the other players.

PC Fates are generated from character archetypes, created by their player, given by another player, or assigned by a GM (these are called Destinies). Players should put some thought into Fates they create for themselves. When making Fates, you will want to choose something that you find interesting for your character, as well as something that you'll be able to role-play in a scenario. If a Fate is too subtle, it will be hard for you to portray, and the audience to spot.

DESTINIES

During the first act of the game, the Zero Act, every player will receive a special Fate from the GM. This Fate is called a Destiny, but rules-wise, it functions the same as a Fate. This special Fate shows the character's role in the scenario, what they should do in order to navigate or "succeed" in the scenario. Of course, players are free to plot out their own direction in a scenario and ignore or even sometimes go against their Destiny. But if a player can't decide their next course of action, at the very least following or playing up their Destiny will keep the game "on track".

WRITING FATES

Fates are written down on the character sheet. If you are using the session log sheet, you will also make note of your Fates on that sheet as well. The session log sheet can be passed around to the audience members so that they remember your character's motivations. Update the sheet during the intermission when your Fates change.

If you are not using the session log sheet, a good idea is to write down all of your character's Fates on a notecard. Leave the notecard in front of your character sheet, so that any other player can grab it and look it over when your PC is in a scene. This way, the audience can try to empathize with

your character, understand which goals or emotions you are role-playing, and perhaps reward you as appropriate with Aiki chits.

The "No-Self" Anatman Phase

The intermission phases of the game, which happen between acts (usually 2-4 intermissions per game), is a time for the players to rest, decide the next course of action for their characters and the scenario, and make deep changes to their characters. The players will make changes to their PC's Fates during the intermission, in a structured method called "The Anatman Phase" or "The No-Self Phase". Their character's personality will start to change as they begin to care about new things, become concerned more with goals and relationships, start to change their relationships with the things they care about, or even stop caring about things altogether. See the Zero System rules chapter for more information on the structure of intermissions.

There is a Buddhist expression known as "Anatman" in Sanskrit, which in Japanese is called "Shogyo-Mujoh". In English, we call it "The Impermanence of Worldly Things" or in simple shorthand "No-Self". It means that the self (the body, the mind, ideals and personality) is always changing: You are never the same person from moment to moment. There's a similar expression from the Greek Pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus, who expressed the same idea in his expression, "You cannot step twice into the same river." The world, and the self within it, is always changing. Your characters will change as well.

Just as four kanji make up the Japanese expression "Shogyo-Mujoh", four actions make up the No-Self Phase. Each action is done together in a group before the next action is taken, and the order of the actions is very important. Those actions are:

- *1 Create new Fates*
- *2 Raise the level of Fates*
- *3 Sublimate (discard) Fates*
- *4 Rewrite Fates*

Again, this order is important: Once the group gets to the third step and start to sublimate their Fates, a player cannot go back a step and raise another Fate's level, not until the next intermission.

After the four steps are complete and the No-Self Phase is over, the players should record the changes in their Fates on the session log sheet or Fate notecards.

Fate Costs

One thing that the players should remember at every step during the No-Self Phase is that the Fates have an associated cost which has to be accounted for. The cost of the Fate is related to its level (the number of dots associated with that Fate: 2, 3, 4 or 5). The total cost of all PC Fates must be less than that PC's total Karma score. The character can only care about so many things, and the Karma score represents that character's capacity for caring about their Fates.

Calculating the costs of PC Fates is sometimes jokingly referred to as "Doing your Fate taxes". Early in the game, it is almost impossible to exceed your total Karma score. After the second or third intermission, though, the players have to be careful that their total Fate costs do not exceed their Karma score.

Fate Rank	Fate Cost
2	0 points (free)
3	10 points
4	30 points
5	70 points

STEPS OF THE NO-SELF PHASE

CREATE NEW FATES

You may create one single new Fate for your character, at the cost of one Aiki chit.

This is an important step of the No-Self Phase, and most players will want to create new Fates for their characters during the first and second intermissions. New Fates give your character new directions, and more capacity to receive Aiki chits.

Players will roll on the Emotion Matrix, but these do not automatically become Fates. Instead, if the player wants their PC to have a relationship with another character tied into a Fate, they will need to spend the Aiki chit and write in the nature of that relationship (or feelings towards that person) as a Fate. However, the Emotion Matrix is a great starting place for generating relationship-based Fates, especially because many relationships will change over the course of an adventure.

The player spends one Aiki chit, and writes down the Fate (the type of Fate, and the Fate itself) on their character sheet. This Fate will start at a rating of 2. Remember that new Fates do not have a Fate cost, so don't worry about picking up new Fates. The maximum number of Fates a character can have is eight: Seven Fates and one Destiny. However, many characters hover around 4-6 total Fates.

FATES AIMED AT OTHER PCS

Many relationship or emotion Fates are tied to other PCs: "Fear of Kawagoe", "Love of the Spiral Princess", "Anger towards Crimson Fist", "Friendship with O-rin". If you create a Fate for yourself where the target of your emotion is another player's PC, give that player your Aiki chit instead of discarding it.

GIVING FATES TO OTHER PCS

You can assign Fates to other PCs as well. Give the PC's player an Aiki chit, and tell them the Fate you wish their character to

FATE BALANCE AND FATE ROLLS

You will see later that there is a limit to the level and power of the PCs Fates. In short, you could have many Fates ranked at "4" and "3", or one single Fate ranked at "5" with few other Fates. Having a higher ranked Fate means that you get more Kiai points when making Fate rolls. So why not always aim to raise one single Fate to the highest possible level, a rank of 5, in order to increase the possibility of Kiai payout for Karma rolls?

The reason is that this will leave you little room for other Fates. If you have any other Fates at all, they will be few, and be low in rank. This means that on your character sheet, you will only have 1-2 Fates that the audience will be able to use to award you Aiki chits, even though one of them is ranked higher. You have to engage in the same behavior over and over again to get Aiki chits, and over time, that becomes very hard. You will end up earning less Aiki points through your Fates, but those that you do earn have a much higher chance of cashing out as Kiai.

Compare that to a character with one Fate ranked at 4, and several others ranked at 3 and 2: This character is more balanced in the things they care about, and the player can role-play out far more Fates. This means that there are more opportunities for the audience to award them for role-playing their character.

Breadth of character and higher possibility of receiving Aiki chits, or very focused character with less of a possibility of receiving Aiki chits: This is a decision you'll have to make in play as you decide what your character cares about.

have. If they accept, they receive the Aiki chit and write down that Fate. If they don't want to take that Fate, you can keep your chit.

Since you can only create one new Fate for your own character per intermission, encouraging the players to assign each other Fates will help everyone increase their total Fate count.

RAISE FATE LEVELS

In the second step of the No-Self phase, the players can raise any and all of their Fates up by one single level: Fates ranked at 2 dots can be raised to 3 dots, and so on. There is absolutely no cost to do this (Aiki chits, etc). Simply add a new dot to the Fates you wish to raise by one level.

However, this is where you need to keep careful track of your Fate costs, so that they do not exceed the PC's current Karma score. Use the Fate Cost table to calculate the new total cost of all the Fates, ensuring that it is less than Karma. If you accidentally exceed the Karma score, then "undo" adding dots to Fates until their total no longer exceeds your Karma score.

If you have a Fate on your sheet which you don't particularly care too strongly about, you don't have to raise it. You can imagine how strongly your character cares about her Fates, and try to increase the important ones accordingly, while leaving the less important ones as-is. However, at the beginning of the game, it is important to start raising Fate levels right away. This eventually leads to having more higher-ranked Fates (3-4 dots) which you can later sublimate or change in order to reduce your rapidly increasing Karma.

SUBLIMATE FATES

The third step in the No-Self Phase is the sublimation of Fates. If there is a Fate that you no longer care about (a goal that has been achieved, or perhaps a Fate that you as a player never really felt all that strongly about), you can now remove it from play. Draw a line through it to sublimate it, but still leave it on your sheet for now (don't actually erase it from your character sheet). If you want to sublimate a Destiny, please check with the GM to make sure that it is okay to do so.

The sublimation of Fates instantly results in a great reduction of total Karma. When you remove it from play, you immediately lower your total Karma score by a number equal to that Fate's current score: Fates ranked at 2 do not lower Karma at all; Fates ranked at 3 lower it by 10, Fates ranked at 4 lower Karma by 30, and if you sublimate a Fate ranked at 5 dots, your Karma drops by 70 points.

This is one of the two ways you lower your Karma in order to avoid becoming an Asura. It is important to raise the levels of Fates throughout the game so that you can knock them out and lower your Karma score.

REWRITE FATES

The last step in the No-Self Phase is rewriting Fates. When you rewrite a Fate, you change one aspect of it. For example, if you had a Fate of "Emotion: Anger towards Crimson Fist", you can change the Fate to something like "Emotion: **Friendship** towards Crimson Fist" or "Emotion: **Undying Hatred** of Crimson Fist". Or perhaps "Taboo: Must not Kill" can become "Taboo: Can only Kill in Self-Defense".

If the Fate is a relationship (like the above example towards a fictional monk named "Crimson Fist"), feel free to change the nature of the relationship or emotion, but leave the target (the character to which the Fate is directed) unchanged.

When you rewrite a Fate, you lower that Fate by one rank down to a minimum of 2. You also lower your Karma by the difference between the Fate ranks:

TABLE: REWRITING FATES

Rank Change	Karma Reduction
2 → stays 2	0 points
3 → 2	10 points
4 → 3	20 points
5 → 4	40 points

Rewriting Fates is the other way to reduce Karma and reduce your chances of exceeding the Karma threshold to becoming an Asura.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

You will be adding Fates to round out your character's personality and creating new avenues to receive Aiki chits. You will be raising Fate levels in order to drop them later (through sublimation and rewriting.). You sublimate Fates that no longer apply to your character in order to lower your character's Karma. You rewrite Fates to also lower your Karma, as well as to express change in your character.

One way of looking at the No-Self phase is simply a way to manage keeping your Karma below 108. The system can be "gamed.": You can simply start erasing and rewriting Fates on your character to do nothing more than avoid becoming an Asura, and story be damned. However, take a look at your character after you make those changes. See what the changes mean for your character. You will find that these changes will make sense for your character, and you'll start imagining reasons for why it makes sense. No matter how you erase or rewrite Fates, the changes will make sense in the end with a little interpretation.

Game the system all you want. You'll realize quickly that no matter how you manipulate the Fates on your character just to manage your Karma—without thinking about your character or the story—a story will begin to emerge anyway.

TYPES OF FATES

There are several categories of Fates. You don't have to actually write the category down when deciding on a new Fate, but the categories will help you quickly come up with an applicable Fate that works well within the game.

GOAL

A goal is one of the most common types of Fate, next to Emotion. This is a goal that your character has, a mission or task that they feel obliged to complete. Once a goal is completed, this Fate can be sublimated.

Characters with their dreams or hopes as goals can become very optimistic characters. Characters who tell the others about their goals through role-playing, or complain when they drift further from their goals, will likely receive Aiki chits.

EMOTION

Emotion-based Fates are the easiest to create and role-play, and they are perhaps the core Fates for Tenra Bansho Zero. You choose a target of the Fate (another PC or NPC in most cases), an emotion towards that target, and role-play that out in scenes. These Fates can be rewritten during the No-Self Phase to reflect that the character's feelings towards that person or object change over the course of the game.

As the game progresses, a PC might start to develop contradictory or inconsistent emotions towards a single target at the same time: In those cases, instead of rewriting one Fate over and over, take a second Fate against that same target with that second emotion, and play them both out over the course of the game.

Emotions are powerful, and since people are emotional animals, emotion-based Fates are easy to create and act out.

SECRET

This type of Fate means that the character has a Secret. Of course, this secret is known to none of the other characters. However, this Fate type can represent a secret that is even hidden from yourself. For example, some kugutsu do not even know that they are kugutsu; others do not realize that their friend is actually their long-lost sibling, and so on. Any time you reveal the secret, or the events in the scene play out so that your secret is at the center of them, you will likely receive an Aiki chit.

If you reveal—intentionally or unintentionally—your secret to everyone, it can probably can no longer be considered a secret: Target it for sublimation in the next intermission.

LOVE

Love is an emotion, of course, but it is much stronger than the "Emotion" Fate type conveys. Falling in love with someone, and then having your character act on that emotion throughout the game, will define your character and possibly result in Aiki chits for role-playing.

Perhaps you are in a loving relationship, or maybe you love someone but have not confessed your feelings to them yet. If your love is forgotten, or you break up with that person, or your love becomes unrequited, then it is likely that you can sublimate this Fate in the next intermission… or will you? An unrequited or unfulfilled love cannot be erased so easily. Perhaps it would be more interesting or dramatic to keep that love-based Fate going for a while longer, until you can finally let it go.

In one famous real example (from a Tenra Bansho "replay", a presentation of an actual session of the game in screenplay format), a samurai character fights against a deadly opponent in the final boss battle. The session was long, the player was lucky with Fate rolls and role-played well, and had amassed a huge pool of Kiai. The player looked at his formidable opponent, then down at his pool of Kiai points, then his Karma total. He "did the math". Then he attacked the enemy twice (he had to attack twice, to first break the enemy's Dead box, then to finish him off), with two powerful attacks, rolling 30 bonus dice for one, 20 bonus dice for the other, raising his melee weapons skill level, and buying extra successes. In the end, he ended up having a spent Kiai and Karma total of 168.

Since that was the last scene of the game, the last intermission and epilogue began. With 168 Karma, the player had a plan, based on the calculations he did earlier: He sublimated all of his Fates ranked at 4 and 3, four Fates in total. The only ones he had left were ones Fates ranked at 2 dots. This immediately lowered his Karma to 108 exactly: His character was safe, and did not become an Asura.

Then the GM asked him, "Well, you just burned through all of your Fates. What does that mean?" The player thought about it for a second, then determined that his character was struck hard by his enemy in the battle, and almost died. When he eventually came to a few weeks later, he had amnesia. He couldn't remember who he was or what he was trying to do. In the end, the story followed the player's actions: Even though he was "gaming the system" in order to be as effective as possible without becoming an Asura/NPC, the player inadvertently created a great story twist for his character.

In fact, a follow-up game was played, where the still-amnesiac samurai PC was in the employ of an onmyoji sorceress as a bodyguard. The sorceress was evil, and the other PCs were attempting to stop her while at the same time trying to protect the samurai, and to help him recover his past. At the same time, the samurai player chose the Fate "Background: Lost Memories" in order to connect that condition to his character.

In the end, making decisions in the game based on reasons of rules efficiency or effectiveness can cause real interesting twists in the stories and characters, or even create new stories out of nothing.

ENEMY

This person must be broken or destroyed. This is a person, group or organization that you cannot forgive or forget, and you will not stop until they have fallen at your hand. This is a very easy Fate to role-play, and it's also a very easy Fate to sublimate: When you finally reach your goal of defeating that enemy, the Fate can be erased. Perhaps over the course of a scenario you can learn to let those feelings go, or come to a new understanding of the person who you thought of as "the enemy".

Enemy-type Fates work great as Destinies. If the GM hands out an enemy Destiny, odds are there's no question of "But what should my character do?" It's a pretty simple goal: Defeat that enemy!

MISFORTUNE

Something happened in your past (either long ago, or even something that happens in the course of the game) that defines you. If your actions reflect the fact that you were affected by that misfortune, you are likely to get Aiki chits. If you forget this misfortune, overcome it, come to terms with it, or forgive yourself for the misfortune, you can target this Fate for sublimation.

TABOO

There is something that you absolutely must not do. Every time you act upon that taboo, you will likely receive an Aiki chit, whether you follow the restrictions of that taboo or cast it down. Taboos make for very powerful and dramatic Fates.

Just because this action is a taboo does not mean that you can never do it. In fact, in most cases, it's just a matter of time until you do, or that you come to a new understanding of your taboo. In those cases, target this Fate for rewriting or sublimation in the next intermission.

BACKGROUND

Background Fates are rare, since most character backgrounds worth role-playing will fall into the categories of Emotion, Goal, Misfortune, etc. However, there are a few characters with "set backgrounds", like the kongohki, where their Fate is tied to their very being (In the case of the kongohki, they have one Fate called "Sealed Memories", which represents the memories of their earlier human life, suppressed by the meikyo soul mirror they inhabit).

While most other backgrounds will fall into other Fate categories, if you can think of something about your character's past that affects them, that can be role-played out in front of the other players and will emerge in the scenario, then consider Fate with a type of "Background".

OTHER

You can make up any kind of Fate of your devising. However, it's a good idea to stick to the basic types above. Over time, you won't even need to write the "type" of archetype you have, you'll naturally create a Fate that falls into one of the basic categories above.

FATES AND APPEAL

The Fates you choose for your character are your own. You can aim to choose Fates for your character that will appeal to the other players, interesting ones that will likely get a rise out of the others (and award you Aiki chits in the process). However, don't aim to solely appeal to the others in ways that will change your character in ways you don't want to pursue.

FATE PATTERNS

After playing the game a number of times, you will start to notice that Fates fall into a number of patterns. Knowing these patterns may help you pick Fates to better serve your player goals.

CLOSED FATES

Backgrounds, Taboos and Misfortunes usually fall into the pattern of a "Closed Fate". These kinds of Fates are great for setting your character's background and past, making them believable. However, they're not as easy to bring clearly across through role-play, and they're very hard to rewrite. Usually, players have to sublimate them in order to gain Karma from them.

OPEN FATES

Open Fates are easy to create and role-play.: These represent relationships with the other characters, as well as emotions towards other characters and organizations. They are easy to create and use in play. They are also easy to change and rewrite during the No-Self phase. However, they are harder to sublimate. Once you have a relationship with someone, it may be harder to justify completely severing your Fate with them unless they die, leave or otherwise stop being a part of the character's life. They are great for character background and rewrites, but harder to gain Karma from than scratch-off Fates.

SCRATCH-OFF FATES

Enemy Fates, as well as Fates that represent specific attainable goals, fall into this pattern. Once the goal is attained or the enemy defeated, you scratch them off your sheet. These Fates are easy to sublimate, and result in a great one-time drop in Karma.

Scratch-off Fates will help keep your character from becoming an Asura, as long as their goals get fulfilled, or they find a good enough reason to abandon them.

DEAD FATES

The pattern to watch out for is "Dead Fates". These are Fates where the target simply won't appear in the game. For example: "Loyalty to My Family" in a session where your character's family will not appear in any form; "Love of my Sister" in a game where your sister won't appear because your character is thousands of miles from home. These "Dead Fates" might make your character seem more interesting and give them more of a human feel, but they won't contribute to the game.

It will be very hard to get Aiki chits from these dead Fates. Since the target does not appear in the game, these Fates cannot be easily rewritten or sublimated. They sit there on the character sheet, unused. They won't help your character out, and they won't keep the character from becoming an Asura.

As a GM, if you see a player taking a dead Fate, or if one of the Fates from their chosen archetypes or character sheet is a dead Fate, talk them out of it. Let them just make that element a part of their personality, just not codified and written on their sheet as a true Fate. Ensuring that players avoid dead Fates will help the player in the long run as their Karma starts to build up.

Some of the Fates that appear on the sample characters might be dead Fates. If the sample character comes with a pre-written Fate that is not likely to come up in play, or you have a better idea for a Fate, go ahead and change it.

KARMA AND MEIKYO

When a character is interfaced with a meikyo soul mirror, like in the case of an armour rider or Shinto puppeteer, the Kiai and Karma rules work slightly differently. The PC has a total Karma, and the meikyo also has its own Karma pool. Unlike the normal rules for spent Kiai, which becomes

Karma later during the intermission, Kiai used when interfaced *immediately* becomes Karma added to the meikyo's Karma pool.

Kiai spent by the PC when not interfaced is added to the PC's spent Kiai pool, which will later become Karma during the intermission as normal. In the case of kongohki, their very existence is tied to the meikyo soul mirror. Kongohki have a single Karma pool just like every other character, and Karma works exactly the same for kongohki as it does for all other character types.

MEIKYO BONUS

Karma weighs on the soul, and it has a strong effect on meikyo. Any machine powered by meikyo will receive a bonus to its physical properties when it gains Karma. The more Karma a soul mirror has, the stronger the interfaced Body, Agility and Senses attributes become. This effect is called the Meikyo Bonus:

MEIKYO KARMA	BONUS
0-20	+0
21-40	+1
41-60	+2
61-80	+3
81-100	+4
101-108	+5
109+	+6

APPLYING THE MEIKYO BONUS

The Meikyo Bonus applies to all die rolls. An armour or kongohki with a Karma total of 70 would add three dice to every physical die roll made.

However, note that the attributes don't actually increase. Even though there is a bonus generated from Karma which adds dice to physical attribute rolls, the Wound Gauge and Vitality Point pool don't increase: They will stay the same.

Your meikyo bonus can increase over the course of a single roll. For example: An armour rider is interfaced with a yoroi armour and the meikyo's Karma is 60. The meikyo bonus is currently +2. The pilot spends three Kiai to gain three bonus die on a combat roll. This raises the meikyo bonus from +2 to +3. However, for that roll the meikyo bonus stays at +2. From the next roll onwards, the rider will be able to roll three dice for future rolls.

MEIKYO AND ASURA

When a human interfaces with a meikyo mirror (in the common case of an armour rider), the total Karma of both rider and meikyo cannot exceed 108. If a rider tries to interface with a meikyo, and the total Karma at that moment of Interface is over 108, the meikyo will reject the rider. She will never be able to interface with that meikyo ever again.

If the user is interfaced with a meikyo, and while interfaced, the total Karma of both rider and meikyo/armour rises to exceed 108, the soul of the armour rider becomes trapped within the meikyo. The meikyo user will forever be tied to that meikyo, and effectively dies. The meikyo user (and her armour) immediately becomes both an Asura, and an NPC. This is an exception to the rules regarding normal characters: Non-interfaced characters have until the next intermission to lower their Karma below 108 before they turn into an Asura. Interfaced users like armour riders and puppeteers whose combined character and meikyo Karma goes above 108 will become Asura immediately.

Remember that kongohki, whose souls are already bound to a meikyo, work as normal human characters. Their Karma is not divided between "rider" and "meikyo",

and their Karma can exceed 108. All is well if the player can reduce the kongohki's Karma below 108 in the next intermission.

Reducing Meikyo Karma

Karma amassed by meikyo soul mirrors needs careful attention. As mentioned above, having too much total Karma when interfacing with a meikyo results in the interface failing and the meikyo rejecting the user. Gaining too much Karma while interfaced means that the user can become trapped inside the meikyo forever, their armour going on a rampage or running away, while their bodies inside waste away and die. However, there are two methods for reducing the Karma held by meikyo soul mirrors: Calling upon a Buddhist monk, or taking the meikyo's Karma into oneself.

MEIKYO CLEANSING

Some Buddhist monks are capable of performing a limited amount of ritualized magic. One of these rituals is called "Meikyo Cleansing": Through chant and prayer, they can cause the Karma amassed by the mirror to dissipate. Please see the Buddhist Magic rules for more details on the Meikyo Cleansing power. If this spell is performed on a kongohki, or an Asura armour rider whose soul is permanently trapped within a meikyo, the meikyo's Karma can be reduced to 0. If that happens, the soul is set free and passes on safely to the afterlife. Perhaps it will eventually reincarnate one day.

MEIKYO AND FATES

The main way for a rider or meikyo user to reduce the Karma held in a meikyo mirror is to accept it into their own spirit. During an intermission, the rider can cause the meikyo's Karma to transfer into her own by raising her own Fate levels. This is done during the Raising Fate Levels step of the "No-Self Phase". When Fates rise from one level to the next higher level, the rider can choose whether or not to reduce the meikyo's Karma at that time, taking on that Karma herself.

If a Fate rises from 2 to 3 dots, the meikyo user can choose to accept 10 points of Karma from the meikyo. If a Fate rises from 3 to 4 dots, the user can choose to take in 20 points of Karma from the meikyo. If a Fate rises from 4 to 5 dots, the user can choose to burden herself with 40 points of Karma from the meikyo. The meikyo's Karma cost can lower with each raise of a Fate's level, and that amount is added to the meikyo user or armour rider.

The rider can then sublimate or change her Fates to reduce her Karma as normal.

Himenkyo

The kimen-style technology that has been propagated by the Northern Court of the Priesthood does not accumulate Karma. This means that kimen armour riders can interface with kimenkyo mechanical mirrors without fear of being trapped inside. Kimen technology is weaker and thus does not gain the meikyo bonus of pure meikyo-style technology. However, a kimen armour rider can exceed 108 Karma while interfaced without fear of becoming an Asura, as long as that Karma is reduced during the next intermission.

KIMEN KONGOHKI

Kongohki created with kimen technology are simply not as powerful as their soul mirror-based kongohki counterparts. They do not receive a meikyo bonus. However, they still their Overdrive ability. That still makes them formidable opponents and terrors on the battlefield.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KARMA RULES

In closing, the Karma rules are centered around one thing: Creating and getting into a story that is fun and exciting, both beautiful and sorrowful, enjoyable and painful. It requires the cooperation of all the players to make this happen. If the game session is a canvas and the players the painters, the Karma rules are the paints.

The players play the roles of their characters, and the GM coordinates the action and flow of the game. Together, the drama develops through play. Fates are the players' influence over what happens to their character and the story. Destinies are the GM's "message" to the players, as to what their role is in the story that unfolds. The Karma system brings that out to the forefront in a way where an entire story can be told, from start to finish, over the course of a single session. It condenses the action and drama into a short time period, and emphasizes change in the player characters and surrounding events.

When you engage with the Karma rules in Tenra Bansho, you need to remember the mantra of the creator of the game, Jun'ichi Inoue: "Everything exists for the sake of the drama." Your characters are the tools you control to make the story more interesting for everyone. The characters are the resolute, unbreakable entities, the focus at the center of the story. The story that develops from your characters and your role-play is your story, your own unique mark left on the world of Tenra.


USING KIAI
MOVE ON THE EMOTION MATRIX
For every Kiai point you spend, you can move once up, down, left or right on the Emotion Matrix.
You can do this right after you get the results of the initial matrix roll.
ROLL MORE DICE FOR ONE ACTION
One Kiai point for each extra die
You must declare this before you roll dice.
TEMPORARILY RAISE YOUR SKILL ONE STEP
You can't raise the level of specialist skills you don't have.
Also, you can't raise a skill to "Supreme" (5) level.
Raising the skill level one step costs 3 Kiai.
Declare this before you roll.
This only lasts for one action.
MAKE AN ENTRANCE INTO A SCNE
Spend 1 point of Kiai
'Scuse me, coming through!
If you aren't already there
INCREASE THE NUMBER OF YOUR SUCCESSES
Each extra success costs 3 Kiai
Declare this after you roll the dice
Lesseee... I need 3 more successes to do this action. That's 9 Kiai. Hmmm...
INTERJECT AN ACTION WHEN IT'S NOT YOUR TURN
Anytime
1 Kiai each time
INTERRUPT ANOTHER PERSON'S ACTION
2 Kiai points each time
Before the other person completes their action
DEFEND ANOTHER PERSON
You take their damage... But you don't get a counterattack!
1 Point
Before they record the damage
RAISE AN ATTRIBUTE BY ONE POINT
Each attribute point costs 10 Kiai.
Oooh! I can crush soda cans now!
You can do it anytime.
RAISE A BASIC SKILL UP TO SKILLED (2) RANK
5 Kiai
You can do it anytime.
GAIN A NEW SPECIALIST SKILL UP TO SKILLED (2) RANK
5 Kiai
Only during an Intermission
IMPROVE A SKILL FROM SKILLED (2) TO ADVANCED (3) RANK
Anytime for both
10 Kiai
20 Kiai
IMPROVE A SKILL FROM ADVANCED (3) TO MASTER (4) RANK
IMPROVE A SKILL FROM MASTER (4) TO SUPREME (5)
You must get the GM's permission first
40 Kiai



WHAT KILLS A PERSON
IS NOT A BLADE
IS NOT SKILL
IT IS THE WILL TO MURDER
THAT ALL HUMANS POSSESS

BASIC COMBAT

The combat system of Tenra Bansho works very much like the combat of any console RPG that you may have played.

Combat is broken down into rounds. One round lasts just the amount of time needed for all characters to act. This can range from a few seconds in quick exchanges, to up to a minute per round in great battles. The length of time is an abstraction and is rarely important. What is important is how a round of combat plays out: What is at stake? What will the characters gain if they win? What will happen if they lose? With those things in mind, combat begins.

Combat begins with the character with the highest Agility. If two or more characters are tied for Agility, then compare their Body scores, then Senses, then Knowledge to determine order. Each character takes an action, then the spotlight passes to the next player character or enemy character. Here is the order of actions in a combat round:

THE ROUND BEGINS

1) Declare Actions
— *Rest*
— *Wait*
— *Moment of Truth*

2) Move (up to Agility x 10 meters)

3) Take an Action

— *Attack action*
— *Special ability*
— *Samurai form*
— *Start up a yoroi armour*
— *Fate roll*
— *Cheer*

4) Half-action

— *A quick activity, either before or after the action*

The Round Ends

Interaction Phase

— An upkeep phase between rounds where some record-keeping is done

Next Round Begins.

Declaring Actions

When a round starts, it is assumed that the character will take normal actions like moving, attacking, or using special abilities and the like. If you want to Rest, Wait, or declare a Moment of Truth, you have to say so now before you take any further action.

REST

If you declare that you are resting, your character pauses to collect her breath, to get her bearings and to rest (as much as possible on the battlefield). The character gains back one point of Vitality. You may not move or take any actions, though you may defend yourself if attacked (and initiate counter-attacks).

WAIT

If you declare a Wait action, your character will skip her turn, and instead act later than she would have acted. You can later declare—at any time later that round—that you want to take an action. If many players declare that they are waiting, and then all of them decide that they want to go at the exact same time, then those characters who waited will act in their turn order.

MOVEMENT

If a player decides to move their character to a new location, she does so now. She can move up to her Agility score times 10 in meters per round, if you are keeping careful track of distance in a battlefield. In most cases, battles in Tenra Bansho Zero are skirmishes between small groups of characters. In these situations, if the field of battle is not very large (the inside of a tea house or store room, a forest path a few meters wide, etc), simply move to a new location, or describe moving closer to or further from an opponent.

Actions

Actions are the core of the combat round. It is where the actual fighting occurs.

Every round, you may perform only one action. These actions (sometimes they are called "combat action", "full action", or "major action" to distinguish them from half-actions) are the important or

Optional Rule: MOMENT OF TRUTH

Once per session, one single character can use a Moment of Truth to spend a large amount of Kiai at one critical moment. The Type Zero rules section has a more detailed description of what this does. When this special action is declared, all action stops. No one else can take an action, and no one can interrupt nor jump in with an action until the Moment of Truth is resolved.

When the Moment of Truth is declared, note that the player's Kiai pool is at risk. They should try to use as much Kiai power as possible, because at the end of the round all of that character's unspent or unused Kiai points disappear.

common actions like attacking, using special equipment, powers, etc. They are a separate concept from half-actions. In a tie for time between a full action and a half-action, the full action happens first, the half-action second.

ATTACK ACTION

An attack is the most basic action to take in a round. Using Unarmed Combat, Melee Weapons or Marksman skills, the attacker selects a defender and makes a die roll to try to hit the defender. See the Attacking and Damage section below for more details on resolving attacks.

SPECIAL ABILITY

Onmyojutsu, Samurai Transformation, The Butterfly Dream, Wormcharm, Resonance, Buddhist Magic, Ninjutsu, Arts of War, Shinto Magic and Ayakashi abilities all usually require a full action to perform.

FATE ROLL

In combat, it is possible to make a Fate Roll, using an applicable Fate to the situation at hand. Sometimes the highest Fate score can be used for this roll. At other times a lower, more applicable Fate will have to be used instead (at the GM's discretion). That player should describe how the situation affects their character's Fate. This is usually done if Kiai points are needed in a hurry, or the character wants to take an action to spend on some melodrama. See the Zero Rules and Karma sections of the rules to learn more about Fate Rolls.

CHEER ON

Most player characters will be working together towards a common goal, and many will take emotional Fates with each other. By taking an action to perform a Cheer On roll, one character can give Aiki chits directly to another character. The cheering character must have a Fate aimed at that character somehow. It doesn't have to be a nice Fate (it could be things like "Hatred", "Must kill", etc), but some sort of Fate specifically towards that target character must exist on the giving character's sheet. The cheering character should roleplay out how she is cheering on the other character (a pep talk, screaming out enthusiastic commands, etc). The cheering character can then give the target character a number of Aiki chits from her own pool to the target, up to her own Empathy attribute score.

If the giving character does not have Aiki chits but has Kiai points, those can be traded in for Aiki chits and given as well: Every one Aiki chit costs the giver three Kiai points to convert. Be careful, though; the giver must erase those Kiai points, and mark each one spent as Karma. Carefully record the Karma gained by spending Kiai in this manner.

DEFENSIVE ACTIONS

A note on defending: It does not cost an action to defend, so you do not ever have to declare a defensive action. Using Evasion, Unarmed Combat or Melee Weapons against an incoming attack can happen at any time and as many times per round as needed. However, you can only roll a defense once against an incoming attack. For example, you can't fail at using Melee Weapons to parry an incoming sword strike, then say that you're going to try to defend against that same attack again using Evasion. Only one defense per incoming attack roll, but you can defend any number of attacks aimed at you that round.

That holds true for ideas like a single attack of one thousand incoming arrows. It's absolutely better for the GM to treat that as "one 1000-arrow attack" or"5 200-arrow attacks" instead of rolling to evade each of the 1000 individual arrows.



A SIDE BENEFIT OF CHEERING A COMRADE ON

A character can cheer on another character as many times as she wishes in a combat scene. This is a good way for a good roleplayer whose character has a low combat ability to give a low-Empathy/high combat ability character a chance to beat a challenging foe. Rack up those Aiki chits or Kiai points, and spend them on friends!

Or, alternately, you could make that finishing blow yourself, trading in a huge pile of Kiai to gain a large number of dice and temporary skill bonuses. See the Karma section for details on how Aiki chits, Kiai points and Karma works.

Some special abilities from Buddhist monks, onmyoji and ayakashi (like the "Possession" ability) require a Willpower roll to resist. This resistance roll is treated as a defensive action; the target does not have to spend an action trying to defend against mental or spiritual attacks.

HALF-ACTIONS

When a character acts, she can perform one action and one half-action. A half-action can be performed either before or after their major action, whichever the character wishes. A half-action allows the character to take small, quick, simple actions. Things like dropping an item, switching weapons, yelling something, or moving a little can be performed during the half-action phase. Also, if the player calls a Moment of Truth, this is considered a half-action. The GM will have final say if a lengthy action can be performed as a half-action, or if it will require a full action to perform. A good rule of thumb for the GM is that if it takes about five seconds or less, it is a half-action. No attacks or other damaging actions can be performed during a half-action. Also, remember that in a tie for speed, full actions occur before half-actions.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL HALF-ACTIONS

- Readying a weapon
- Moving 10 meters or less
- Yelling a sentence or two
- Give a shiki spirit a command
- Call a Moment of Truth
- An exciting athletic stunt
- Anything that takes about 5 seconds or less
- A half-action can not cause damage to an enemy

CONCEPT: THE LENGTH OF A COMBAT ROUND

While, conceptually, a combat round usually involves a few quick sword strikes and lasts a couple seconds, the official default length for a combat round is one minute, unless the GM declares otherwise. This gives the players enough time to formulate actions without worrying about if the action they want to take is an Action or a Half-action. As mentioned above, though, the concept of time is elusive in a combat round, and everyone deciding that each round is only a few seconds long (10, 20) by default might add a bit of cinematic action to the game.

The GM might decide that a close-quarters combat between one player and three assassins might have rounds which last ten seconds each. The GM might decide that a full-scale battle between two warring factions on a bloody battlefield might be one minute or more per round.

In the end, there are tactical choices in the combat of Tenra Bansho Zero, but time really isn't all that important in most games. The only time you would really want to define the length of a combat round might be if some players are in the middle of a fight, while other players are in another location trying to do something tricky at the same time. In either case, round length is a matter of action and cinematic flavor: Distinctions for Actions and Half-Actions won't change if a round is ten seconds or ten minutes (A ten minute mass battle round length won't give the character 4 actions and 60 half-actions, for example, even though that would be more realistic) When all else fails, though, the official default length for a combat round is one minute.

Interaction Phase

The interaction phase is the name of the period which occurs between the end of one round and the beginning of the next. It's a period of quick bookkeeping, status checks, and preparation for the next round. Think of a potentially infinite number of potential combat rounds: Interaction phases are the "glue" which holds the combat rounds together.

If your character is wounded, the interaction phase is the time where you mark down loss of Vitality due to wounds or where your character might pass out or die.

Here are some other things which occur during the interaction phase:

- Environmental or special damage: Fire, acid, poison, loss of Vitality points due to the Critical Wound track being marked
- Passing out or dying because of wounds
- Shiki spirit appearing after a summoning, or disappearing when dispelled
- Regaining Vitality or Wounds from shiki, annelids or innate ayakashi abilities

Finally, the GM has the ability to declare an Intermission if she wants. This might be used to break up a long combat scene, or to take a much-needed break. However, be careful: Calling for an Intermission in the middle of a combat scene could break the tension and mood if done poorly or too often. We don't recommend doing it often, but it's there as a possibility if it is needed.

Attacking and Damage

Fighting with fists, swords and magic is a big part of the combat system. In this section we'll discuss how to make attacks, take defensive actions, make counterattacks, and deal damage. In the section below, the person making attacks will be called the *attacker*, and the target of the attack will be called the target or *defender*.

Hitting a Target

When an attacker makes an attack against a defender in melee or unarmed combat, both sides roll an attack against each other at the same time! The attacker and the defender roll their respective combat skills (in close combat this is usually Body: Unarmed Combat, or Agility: Melee Weapons) and count the number of successes. The person with the most successes wins: It doesn't matter if they were the attacker or the defender, the person with the most successes is the one that hit, and caused damage to, their opponent.

Unarmed Combat can be used to defend or counterattack against Melee Weapon attacks with no penalty: Most martial artists train themselves to fight against armed opponents.

In a case where the attacker is using her Senses: Marksman skill against a defender (using Unarmed Combat, Melee Weapons or Evasion), roll and count successes. If the attacker wins, damage is dealt to the defender. If the defender wins, no damage is returned to the attacker: The arrow, knife or shuriken was deflected or caught, not fired back against the attacker. The bullet bounced off the blade or the samurai used her training to narrowly take cover; she cannot fire the bullets back at the attacker.

Remember that fire attacks, attacks which use spiritual or magical force, explosive attacks like mortar and bombs, and other incorporeal attacks can only be defended against using the Evasion skill.

If both sides roll the same number of successes and get a tie, then neither side succeeds. In a normal non-combat opposed roll, you would normally "freeze time", ignore the tie and roll the dice again until one side simply ends up with more successes. However, in combat, that attack simply does not succeed and is not re-rolled. In a swordfight, one can envision this easily: Swords clash, sparks fly, both fighters pushing at each other to give, but neither side can make a strike this time. That's the kind of thing that happens when neither side has the advantage.

COUNTERATTACK

When the defender gets more successes when defending against an attacker, the result is called a Counterattack. If more than one attacker attacks a defender, the defender has a chance of counterattacking each attacker.

If Attacker's Successes > Defender's Successes

The attacker wins, and scores a hit

If Attacker's Successes = Defender's Successes

This is a Tie

If Attacker's Successes < Defender's Successes

The defender wins, and scores a counterattack.

As mentioned above, if the attacker is using the Marksman skill, or the defender is defending against any attack by using the Evasion skill, then no Counterattack can occur. If the defender wins, the attacker simply does not take a hit:

If Attacker's Successes > Defender's Successes

The attacker wins and scores a hit.

If Attacker's Successes = or < Defender's Successes

The attacker fails and misses.

Even though a counterattack does damage to the attacker, a defending player may choose to simply not do damage back to the attacker, and take mercy on them. In this situation, the defender is not injured and the attacker takes no damage from the counterattack.

TAKING DAMAGE

Damage is easy to determine in Tenra Bansho. However, deciding what to do then with the damage once you take it is hard at first, and takes a little bit of practice to get used to.

The damage received is equal to the difference between the winner's successes and the loser's successes. After that, the damage modifier of the weapon used by the winner is added to that total. This means that the more you succeed on an attack or counterattack roll, the more damage you will do to the opponent. The amount of success usually adds more to damage than the damage rating of the weapon used; a skilled fighter could kill with a sword, a stick or a teacup.

Once the amount of damage is determined, the target of the damage decides how to distribute those damage points. Damage can be distributed in one of two ways: on Vitality or on Wound boxes. The target can spread the damage across these two areas in any way she wishes.

For example, if your character receives ten points of damage from an attack (For example, an attacker wins by 7 successes and is using a +3 damage katana), here are some examples of how you can decide to distribute damage:

- Reduce Vitality by 10 and don't fill in any Wound boxes

- Fill in 10 Wound boxes and don't reduce Vitality.
- Reduce Vitality by 4 points and fill in six Wound boxes
- Fill in two Wound boxes and reduce Vitality by 8

Damage Points Taken = The difference between the numbers of successes rolled between attacker and defender, plus the damage rating of the weapon.

COMBAT EXAMPLE

"SEKISHU, YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT, DO YOU?"

Autumn Rain, a fire blazing in her eyes, points at the man in ninja garb before her.

The man called Sekishu, his face covered below his cold, narrowing eyes, doesn't answer back. Instead, his hand slides to the hilt of the sword strapped to his back, inching it out of its scabbard.

That was the last time either would exchange words.

Autumn Rain, wielding a ninja sword (damage rating: +3) makes an attack against Sekishu. She uses Agility (8) and Melee Weapons (Advanced, Skill 3) to attack. She rolls 8 dice for her 8 Agility and tries to roll a 3 or under to match or stay below her Melee Weapons Skill of 3. Upon rolling the dice, they come up with a 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, and 6. Only the 4 and the 6 are above her Melee Weapons Skill of 3, so everything else counts as a success, for a total of six successes.

Sekishu is also wielding a ninja sword and uses it to defend. He rolls his Agility (9) and Melee Weapons (Advanced, Skill 3). Because he has 9 Agility, he rolls 9 dice instead of Autumn Rain's 8, though like her, he has to roll a 3 or under to achieve a success. The dice come up 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4, 5, and 6. This gives him four successes. This means that Autumn Rain's attack succeeds.

The difference between Autumn Rain's successes (6) and Sekishu's successes (4) is 2. That is the base damage that Sekishu receives. Autumn Rain's ninja sword deals three damage, which raises the damage total to 5. There are no

MAKING MULTIPLE ATTACKS IN THE SAME ROUND

Every good samurai or chambara movie has that scene: The lone hero faces off against 3-8 or more foes who end up encircling the hero. The classic *Zatoichi* movies and TV franchise were full of these great scenes. The hero draws, the enemies advance to attack, and in a few seconds they all go down in a flurry of steel. Or the hero makes a few quick strikes in the air, the enemies pause for a second, surprised, then cry out as they all fall at once like cut bamboo.

Looking at the rules as-is, though, with one attack per round, this seems impossible, right?

Wrong. There are two basic ways to go about performing one-on-many combat feats:

The not-so-smart way: You can spend Kiai points to gain additional actions. Therefore, on your turn you can spend four more Kiai points and make four more attacks in that round.

The awesome way: Simply take your character and put them in harm's way. Find a group of enemies and plant yourself right in front of them, or maneuver around so that they encircle you. When every one of those enemies attacks you, you are actually attacking them back with a counterattack. 6 enemies surrounding and attacking you means that you get to make 7 attacks that round: Your normal attack, plus the 6 potential counterattacks disguised as "defensive rolls."

Be careful, though. This is a great way to mow down weaker enemies, but being surrounded by strong enemies will make this a real dangerous challenge.

additional damage types done (magic, electricity, poison, etc), so the total damage to Sekishu remains at 5.

If Sekishu happened to get seven successes there instead of four, he would have beaten Autumn Rain. The margin of success, or difference between their numbers of successes, would have been 1. His ninja sword's damage rating of 3 would have been added to that, so Autumn Rain would have received 4 total damage.

Next, Sekishu will have to decide how to divide up those 5 points of damage received between his Vitality and Wound boxes.

EVERY DEFENSE IS A COUNTERATTACK!

Well, almost every defense anyway. For those of you familiar with other role-playing games, many set up a chain where an attacker rolls to attack and the defender rolls to defend. Then, the defender later becomes the attacker, and rolls an attack against their opponent, who rolls to defend.

In Tenra Bansho Zero, these rolls (for melee and unarmed attacks) are collapsed into a single roll: Both the attacker and the defender "attack", and the winner does damage to the loser. If the defender wins, she effectively parried the attack and came back with her own counterattack. Be careful of this, as a weak character stabbing or punching a strong enemy is effectively an invitation to get smacked down hard by the stronger enemy's counterattack!

However, characters using Evasion instead of a weapon skill to defend and characters using their weapon skills to defend against ranged attacks (deflecting arrows, grabbing knives mid-flight, and protecting vitals from bullets) do not make a counterattack.

INJURY AND VITALITY

Each character has a maximum Vitality score. When they take damage, the Vitality score lowers. Over time, the Vitality score returns to a full state.

Once a character has received damage, it's up to the player of that character (or the GM, if the character is an NPC) to decide how to split up or spread out the damage. As mentioned, she can choose to take all the points of damage received and use it to reduce Vitality by that amount. All of it could be taken in the form of filling in Wound boxes, a more lasting kind of injury. Or more commonly, a portion of the damage can be taken in the form of Vitality damage, and the rest of the total taken in Wounds.

Vitality is a more fleeting area. It represents the character's ability to stay conscious. Points of damage taken in Vitality represent superficial cuts, bruises and stabs, flesh wounds, fatigue, weariness, loss of maneuverability, that kind of thing. When Vitality goes to zero or less, the character is effectively out of the fight. She lost. She goes down for the count. The fight is over, and the opponent won. This doesn't necessarily mean death, in fact it rarely does: It usually means that the opponent gets bragging rights over the victim or that the antagonist can cross over the hero's fallen body to continue on to fulfill his goal now that the opposition has fallen.

Every point of damage taken in Vitality lowers the Vitality pool one point. It can go past zero to a negative number: If a character has given up on a fight after taking a huge amount of damage, she can spend it all on Vitality to be taken out of

the fight without dying. When the fight is over and the opponent has moved on, the loser wearily regains consciousness.

Vitality is short-term damage that quickly goes away. Under normal circumstances, a character can regain all of her Vitality back once the combat is over and the scene ends. Otherwise, it heals at a rate of about 1 point per minute in the game world (as opposed to minutes in the real world) when not fighting in combat.

A quick note: Soul acts very much like Vitality in combat situations, but the recovery rate is one hour per point of Soul. Taoist sorcerers who summon too many powerful shikigami spirits in battle will quickly find themselves face down in a ditch.

Optional Rule: If you are playing in a long term battle, and the GM decides to allow unconscious character to return to the fray (this should be extremely rare or under unusual circumstances, like a large war) every negative point of Vitality damage received represents a combat round, or a minute of game world time that that character remains unconscious before rising up to 1 Vitality and regaining consciousness.

WOUNDS AND THE EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

Wounds, unlike Vitality, represent long-term damage and a more serious level of injury. Wounds are deep cuts, painful stabs, broken bones, torn muscles, and other gritty physical wear-and-tear that takes a while to recover from.

In the Character Creation chapter, we looked into how to determine the character's Vitality score and Wound track. Most characters have several Light Wound boxes, about half that number in Heavy Wound boxes, a very few number of Critical Wound boxes (usually 1-2), and one Dead box.

Heavy Wounds have interesting effects on a character. When you take wounds from a category, there are usually associated die effects. If you have one wound in that category, you gain that effect.

You can also choose how to spread your Wound Boxes around. If you take 3 points of damage, and you decide to leave Vitality alone and take those 3 points as Wounds, then you could take 2 Light Wounds and one Heavy, or 3 Light Wounds, or perhaps 2 Critical Wounds and a Light Wound, or any other combination. You don't have to fill in all the Light Wound boxes before starting to fill in Heavy Wounds, Critical Wounds or even the Dead Box. You can fill them out in any order you desire!

It may take a little while to remember this in play, as it seems counter-intuitive. But the player has full control over which boxes in the Wounds area of their sheet are checked off. Each damage that becomes a Wound becomes a story element of that battle, an element which the player gets to narrate!

EFFECTS OF WOUNDS

Light Wounds: Nothing

Heavy Wounds: +1 die to all die rolls

Critical Wounds: +2 dice to all die rolls, but every Interaction Phase you lose 1 additional Vitality point

Dead Box: +3 dice to all die rolls

If you have wounds across more than one wound category, you gain the effects of only the most serious of the wounds.

So what does the above mean, then?

If you take 3 points in Light Wounds, nothing happens. You have received a nasty wound which will take a bit to heal.

If you take 3 points in Heavy Wounds, then you get the "benefit" of the Heavy Wound category: From that point on you get to add one extra die to every single roll that your character makes: Combat, Non-combat, everything. It doesn't matter if you have one Heavy Wound box checked, or all of your Heavy Wound boxes checked, you will only receive one single extra die for having a one or more Heavy Wounds.

If you take 1 point in Heavy Wounds, and 2 points in Critical Wounds, then the Heavy Wound effect (+1 die) is ignored and you focus only on the effect of the more serious wound, the Critical Wound. In this case, you get to roll 2 extra dice to every single roll that your character makes. However, your character will also take one point of Vitality damage every round during the Interaction Phase between combat rounds until you reach one point of Vitality: When you reach one point of Vitality, the effects of Vitality Drain stop.

A note on Critical Wounds: A critical wound will not by itself cause your Vitality to drop to zero. Once your Vitality is reduced to 1, it stays at 1. However, you can always choose to take the extra step to accept Vitality damage, push Vitality to zero and drop out of the fight. When the fight is over, your Vitality goes back to 1 and remains at that level until you heal all of your Critical Wounds.

THE DEAD BOX

The Dead Box is special. When the player checks the Dead Box, it means the following:

- The player gets to roll those three bonus dice on every roll from that point forward (regardless of other boxes filled in).
- The player is signaling to the GM, "My character is willing to die to win this fight, and I'm OK with that".

When a player received a number of damage points and decides to take that damage as Wounds, she must check one wound box for every point of damage spread to wounds. However, with the Dead Box, it can be checked to completely ignore the effects of damage from one attack.

This means that if your character takes a hit from a powerful foe which does 3 points of damage, 30 points of damage, or even 300 points of damage (which won't ever happen, but it's a good example), the player can wave away all of that damage, and not have to take any of it, by simply checking that Dead Box. The Dead Box makes all the damage go away, but in return the character is put in a dangerous state.

Once the Dead Box is checked, the character is at risk of dying. She will receive those three extra bonus dice to use on any action. However, you must keep track of your Vitality score. If your Vitality goes down to zero while the Dead Box remains checked, the character literally dies. Usually this means that she goes down and is out of the fight, and then afterward, when the fight is over, she can say a few words to her companions or enemies before passing on.

When the Dead Box is checked, as explained above, all other wound effects and bonuses are ignored. This means that if the player has a Critical Wound, then the player stops losing Vitality points every round if the Dead Box is checked.

The Dead Box is a useful tool in a dangerous fight, however you will want to make sure that you have enough Vitality points and enough open Wound boxes left in order to soak any additional incoming damage. Only activate the Dead Box if you're okay with the possibility of your character permanently dying.

DAMAGE EXAMPLE

Sekishu couldn't hide his surprise at the swift strike he received. Autumn Rain had improved her skill since they last crossed swords, and now is much faster than she once was.

"I see that you are indeed Oboro Enshu's greatest work, puppet. Prepare yourself, for I will make sure that we put your hidden skills to the ultimate test."

With that, Sekishu chokes back the blood welling up in his throat, and curls his lips in a perverse smile.

Sekishu takes 5 points of damage. Before this attack, he was uninjured. Since his Body attribute is 7, his Vitality and Wound gauge looks like this:

Vitality: 14

Light Wounds: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Heavy Wounds: ☐☐☐☐

Critical Wounds: ☐☐

Dead: ☐

After Autumn Rain's attack, Sekishu's character decides to spread the 5 damage between both Vitality and Wounds. Sekishu's player thinks it would be more dramatic to take a Heavy Wound. Not to mention he will receive that bonus die to future attacks if he takes any Heavy Wounds. He spreads the damage around between 2 Vitality, 2 Light Wounds and 1 Heavy Wound, and his gauges now look like this:

Vitality: 12

Light Wounds: ☒☒☐☐☐☐☐

Heavy Wounds: ☒☐☐☐

Critical Wounds: ☐☐

Dead: ☐

A bloody strike, but he can manage. Sekishu reaches for that bonus die, as he now has a Heavy Wound. He looks at his opponent's moves to try to find an opening for the next strike…

THE MORE WOUNDED YOU ARE, THE MORE POWERFUL YOU BECOME

Yes, that's the fundamental rule of combat in Tenra Bansho Zero. Think of all the samurai movies or anime you've seen, manga you've read, and video games you've played. The big enemy doesn't often go down in one hit: Instead, they become fiercer, stronger, more reckless as they get hit, until they finally go down like a ton of bricks. Sometimes, when they appear to take that fatal hit (checking off the Dead Box), they rise back up into the fight with a different appearance, perhaps on fire or surrounded by an energy halo, more powerful than ever, screaming "This is my Final Form!"

The same thing happens in Pulp and other Western cinema the heroic cop, superhero or archeologist gets beaten up, only to have the theme music play as they rise up and bring the pain down on the enemy.

Tenra Bansho Zero combat emulates the dramatic and cinematic ideals of combat (in fact, a lot of these conventions are used in Kabuki stage combat as well), and hand-waves the reality of shock, trauma, blood loss and other real combat factors.

WOUND DICE

One thing that may help your game is to use special brightly-colored dice for keeping track of wound damage. When a character takes wounds and gains dice bonuses, that player will take those 1, 2, or 3 extra dice from those bright red (or other color) special "Wound Dice" and keep those dice in front of them to remind themselves to use them. It is easy to forget about the extra dice when you're new to playing or running the game, and having a set different colored dice set aside for wounds sometimes helps.

ARMOUR AND TWO WOUND TRACKS

Yoroi armour riders who pilot their armour in combat have a few special rules to be aware of. When piloting an armour, they will use two sets of Vitality scores and two sets of Wound tracks.

When an armour rider takes damage, she can spread the damage between the armour's Vitality and wound tracks, as if the armour were a separate character. When the armour reaches 0 Vitality, it shuts down until combat is over. If the armour has a checked Dead Box then drops to zero Vitality, it is completely destroyed.

WHEN DO PLAYER CHARACTERS DIE?

In Tenra Bansho Zero, the player effectively decides when the character dies. If the player eggs on a series of brutal and insurmountable fights, she could simply choose to lose on purpose, running out of Vitality and passing out each time instead of dying. Of course, this means that they're taken out of the fight, perhaps demoralized, rebuked, or even taken captive. It also often means that the antagonist or their enemy gets to advance their plot with them out of the way, which will probably soon begin to affect the things that the PC cares for (Fates). Eventually, the PC will find themselves in a fight that they (or their player) wants to win, nay *needs* to win. That's when they'll start checking off the Dead Box to stay in the game, at least long enough to see the fight through.

When an NPC dies, they might have a few last words or a small speech as they pass on. Likewise, when a PC chooses to die, it's probably best to give that player some time to say a few things before the character hits that eternal slumber. To that end, while the character might "die" in a battle, they aren't totally dead until the player says so. At that point, the battle ends, and the scene hangs. Time comes to a standstill, and in that eternally lasting moment, the player has time for her PC to act out a dramatic death or have her character say a few last words before the scene ends.

If both the pilot and the armour have taken wounds, then only count the bonuses and penalties of the checked box which grants the highest bonus. For example, if the pilot herself has 1 Critical Wound, and the armour has 2 Heavy Wounds, then the armour rider gets the two bonus dice to all rolls that comes with having a single Critical Wound.

Finally, an armour rider can choose to spread damage to her own wound track when her armour takes damage. This is dangerous, but it can keep an armour in a fight longer. When doing this, all damage from that attack must be taken by the character as Wounds (spread between the armour and armour rider); if a rider chooses to take some of the damage, that damage cannot be spread to Vitality at all, whether to the character's Vitality or the armour's Vitality. It must all be taken as Wounds.

One thing to note for armour rider characters: Like kongohki, their armour is not a living thing. When the armour takes a Dead Box, it means that the armour is irrevocably damaged. One day it will eventually crack and break down. While characters can eventually heal their own Dead Box after combat, a Dead Box on an armour or kongohki cannot be recovered during a game session: They're stuck with it for the rest of the game!

If an armour breaks or powers down, the armour-rider can still leave the armour (effectively ejecting or crawling out of the armour). The rider can then flee or even take up arms against the enemy without the aid of the steel giant.

FINISHING BLOW

A character can finish off an enemy by declaring a "Finishing Blow". If the character is in range, and spends a major

action on a Finishing Blow to an enemy who has fallen (0 Vitality), that enemy is finished.

The opposite is not entirely true, though: The PCs cannot be finished off if they fall (unless they had their Dead Box checked).

Think about the action movies or anime you've seen: Why doesn't the villain simply finish off a fallen enemy? Because it's simply not interesting. The PC has a place and a time where they are fated to be finished off. Of course, the player may declare that *this* is the time and place by checking that Dead Box. In that case, the GM should respect the player's wishes and finish them off if they lose all of their Vitality and go down.

Until that time, though, the enemy will do things that villains usually do: Walk away, not realizing that the character still faintly clings to life. Or realize that the PC is still alive, and simply gloat while exiting the stage to push their evil agendas further. Or the characters could be taken captive. Or they could be publicly humiliated. There's a lot of options which the GM can employ, the default being that the enemy simply walks off, presuming the PC is dead:"Oh, that's all she had in her, eh? Humph, good riddance, I'm off to the castle/tavern/pleasure district."

Healing Damage in Combat

There are essentially four ways to heal damage taken during combat. The only thing to note is that, in the middle of a combat scene, the Dead Box cannot be healed; You have to wait until combat is over. If you are still alive by then, the Dead Box can be healed.

Every type wound has a number associated with it for healing purposes. Here are the wounds, and their associated rank:

WOUNDS AND RANKS

Wound	Rank
Light	1
Heavy	2
Critical	3
Dead	Cannot heal in combat

These ranks are used in determining how easy it is to heal a wound at that level. A warrior's player, familiar with how damage works, might be inclined to make sure that they take a Heavy Wound right off the bat (to gain that bonus die advantage). But looking at the chart above, in a critical situation where they need healing to continue fighting, Heavy Wounds are harder to heal than Light Wounds. There is always a trade-off.

OPTIONAL RULE:
THE DEAD RISE AGAIN

If the GM allows this special rule, then one character per game session can be temporarily brought back from the dead. If a character has checked off their Dead Box and let their Vitality fall to zero, they die (either right there, or stay down until the end of the battle, at which point they die). If it would seem appropriate, one single character per session can be temporarily brought back from the dead.

Make a First Aid roll to help the fallen character (one success is required). If that roll succeeds, then the dead character returns to the battle for a few minutes, perhaps for a final strike, or to block a blow for a companion. Their Vitality returns to 1. If the character drops to zero Vitality again, they go down for good and cannot be re-healed.

After the battle, if the "dead" character is still standing, that character will fall again permanently. Perhaps they have enough time to say a final word or two before they are gone forever.

In combat, though, it is generally hard to heal unless you have innate abilities that let you do so. It's much easier to heal after a battle scene, so take care when racking up wounds in combat: Sometimes it is better to take a fall in combat unless the battle means a lot to you.

FIRST AID

First Aid has two functions in combat scenes. If another character has passed out by dropping to 0 or less Vitality points, you may try to stabilize them and return them to the battle. Make a First Aid roll against the number associated with the highest wound taken (0, 1, 2 or 3). In a case where the hurt character has not taken any wounds, at least one success is required. If the healer succeeds in this roll, then the wounded character returns to 1 Vitality (no higher than 1, regardless of the number of successes made). That character has been stablized.

The other function of First Aid in combat is to heal characters who have taken a Critical Wound. Critically wounded characters will naturally "bleed out" a point of Vitality every round until they reach 1 Vitality if left unchecked. Making a successful First Aid roll against the Critical Wound's rank of 3 (three successes or more needed on a First Aid roll) stops the effect of the Vitality Drain.

BUDDHIST MAGIC

The Buddhist Magic spell Iyashi (Healing Prayer) can take away wounds from hurt characters. Essentially, the healer will spend five Soul, roll their Empathy: Buddhist Magic, and count the successes. Subtract the Wound rank of the highest Wound the hurt character has, and the remainder of the successes can be used to restore checked Wound boxes on a one for one basis. On top of that, all Vitality is restored to its maximum score.

This magic does not work in a combat scene on a character with the Dead Box checked; The nature of Healing Prayer cannot break the firm lines of fate to which the Dead player has resigned themselves.

See the Buddhist Magic section for details on the Iyashi spell.

ANNELIDS AND WORMCHARM

Rejuvenation and Immortality worms assist their character during the interaction phase. An annelidist does not need to take an action to use these worms to heal their own bodies, this happens automatically during the interaction phase. However, if they wish to use their Rejuvenation Worms to heal another character (a common task for annelidists), the annelidist must instead spend a full action to heal them. See the Annelid List for more information on the effects of these creatures.

SHIKI OR AYAKASHI REGENERATION ABILITY

Shikigami powers (including Shiki-given samurai powers) and ayakashi Regeneration powers are activated every Interaction phase in combat.

HEALING DAMAGE AFTER COMBAT

When a combat scene is over and the fallout of battle has been tallied, other forms of healing become available.

VITALITY AND SOUL REPLENISHMENT

Damage that was taken to Vitality rejuvenates quickly. One point of Vitality returns for every minute that the character is not in battle until their current Vitality matches their maximum Vitality. This usually means that by the time the next scene starts, the character is fully healed.

The exception is if the character has taken a Critical Wound. In this case, the character will need treatment soon, or they will pass out (losing one Vitality per minute, down to a minimum of 1: At one Vitality point, the effect of Vitality Drain ends). If losing consciousness is inevitable, they can be healed in a future scene (assuming the other characters or an NPC drag that character somewhere to be healed). If nothing else, the character can wake up suddenly in the care of a stranger with their Vitality replenished and no idea of how they got there. If this makes sense for the story, go with it.

Soul requires more time, replenishing at the rate of one point per hour. This means that if the next scene after combat happens right away, the characters will only have time to replenish maybe one point of Soul. If the next scene happens several hours or a full day later, then it is likely that all characters will have their Soul fully restored. If the combat happens at the end of an Act, then at the beginning of the next Act (after the Intermission) the character will be fully restored in Soul as well.

While Soul replenishes one point per hour of game world time, a full day's rest or relaxation (including sleep) will completely rejuvenate Soul. It might be interesting to act out a relaxation scene. This could include time spent with friends at a tavern or hot-springs resort, indulging in mindless fun, carousing, gambling, calligraphy, painting and so on.

RECOVERING FROM WOUNDS

Wounds will heal much more easily once a battle scene is over. The character can recuperate through resting or medicine. If the character gets the aid of a doctor, herbalist, acupuncturist or similar caregiver, the healer can make a First Aid roll. She must get a number of successes equal to or greater than the rank of the highest wound level of the hurt character (0, 1, 2 or 3). For every single success greater than the highest wound rank, one wound box can be removed from anywhere on the hurt character's Wound Track (wherever they wish to have it removed from: Light, Heavy, Critical, or even Dead). If there is no healer around, the character can roll their own Senses: First Aid to try to heal themselves.

Example: The hurt character has 5 Light Wounds and 1 Critical Wound. The target number to heal this character is 3, the rank of the highest wound (Critical). A healer rolls 5 successes on her Senses: First Aid roll, so the healer succeeds. The hurt character may remove two Wounds equal to the number of successes (5) minus the highest wound rank (3). In this case the result is 2, so the hurt character's player can clear 2 wound boxes from anywhere on her sheet. It might be a good idea for the player to remove that 1 Critical Wound box and 1 Light Wound box.

This can be attempted one per day in the game world, or once per act if more than one act occurs on the same day.

If the First Aid roll fails, then the character's condition does not change, although this will not cause it to get worse.

The Dead Box can be healed after combat using this method. The Dead Box's rank is equal to 1 (the same as a Light Wound). It's easy to heal from a mortal physical or spiritual wound, but only after the battle is over. The character will still most likely be shaken by the experience. Consider later adding a Fate (or changing an existing Fate) that somehow deals with that battle.

Healing Formula Summary:

First Aid: Roll the dice and count successes.

Target difficulty number: the Rank of the highest wound taken (1, 2, or 3 for Light, Heavy and Critical, respectively, and 1 for Dead)

Success: The hurt character can clear a number of wound boxes equal to the number of successes rolled over the highest wound's rank.

Failure: The hurt character's status does not change.

YOROI ARMOURS, KONGOHKI AND HEALING

Yoroi armours and kongohki are creatures of magic and steel, not flesh and blood. They cannot be healed with First Aid or Buddhist Magic. They can only be healed by onmyoji who are skilled with repairing these technological wonders. Roll the healer's (or mechanic's) Knowledge: Onmyojutsu against the rank of the highest wound taken. Every additional success past the wound's rank equals the number of wound boxes that the character can clear from the sheet. In short, it works just like human healing but with Onmyojutsu instead of First Aid.

One thing to note, however, is that a Dead Box can never be healed in one game session. Once the machine takes enough damage to be hurt in such a way, its days are numbered. While other wounds can be healed, the Dead Box will not go away for the rest of that scenario. If, later, in a future game of Tenra Bansho (not the same scenario, but a future one with the same characters) the same kongohki or armour returns, then it can return with a healed Dead Box: The armour or kongohki was completely retrofitted, broken down and re-crafted by skilled machinist-sorcerers or Priesthood agents.

There are a class of rare armours called "living armours", made of both steel and flesh. Living armours are healed externally like other steel-based armours. However, if the living armour is implanted with Rejuvenation Worms, then follow the annelidist rules for healing wounds. This class of living armour can be healed by and heal themselves with annelids.

SPECIAL COMBAT RULES

The following is a list of special rules for combat. Some of them are special maneuvers that any player can use, while others are unique abilities only open to characters that take a specific archetype or ability.

AIUCHI ATTACK

Aiuchi means "simultaneous strike". It is a very dangerous maneuver, but in those rare circumstances the incredible risk could be worth the reward. The defender drops her guard and takes on the full weight of an incoming attack, then counters with a deadly and unblockable attack. Both characters will roll for damage as if their opponent had zero successes.

Only the defending character can declare an aiuchi, and it must be declared before the dice are rolled. The other character gets to make their attack first, against a difficulty of zero. All successes, plus the weapon's damage, hit the aiuchi character.

If the aiuchi character is still standing and conscious, then the aiuchi character can return the attack: She rolls to attack, and the opposing player will take an amount of damage equal to all of the successes the aiuchi player rolled plus the weapon's damage rating. This is a brutal maneuver and should be used sparingly because of the damage it inflicts upon the initiator.

While the aiuchi attack is a classic sword maneuver, missile or flying weapons (shuriken, arrows, guns) can be used to make aiuchi attacks as well.

Sneak Attack

Characters who use their Stealth skill, or shikigami or ayakashi with the Invisibility ability, have a chance of making a devastating surprise attack. To initiate a Sneak Attack, the attacker must be hidden, disguised or invisible. In most cases the target will make a Notice roll against the attacker's Stealth roll to see if they can spot the attacker or not. If the attacker is not spotted (or is simply magically invisible), they can make a sneak attack.

The attacker rolls to attack and the defender rolls to defend as normal. If the defender wins, then the target is safe and does not get attacked (or they parried the attack at the last second). However, they cannot make a counter-attack on a surprise attack. If the attacker wins, then the attacker does damage as if the defender had zero successes to defend. In other words, the defender takes damage equal to the total number of successes the attacker rolled, plus the weapon's damage. This can be a deadly attack strategy for stealthy characters and gunlance-wielding snipers.

SNEAK ATTACK: AUTUMN RAIN VS ASHIGARU

Autumn Rain slows her breathing. Although she was crafted as a kugutsu, a beautiful creature to stand out in society, she is doing everything in her training to remain hidden in the tall grass. Her target, the lone ashigaru foot-soldier pursuing her, is rustling noisily through the grass towards her. He runs past her, almost stepping on her prone form. Autumn Rain sees his exposed, unguarded robe covering his back. She leaps out of the grass to make her strike!

Autumn Rain's player made a successful Stealth roll against the ashigaru's Notice roll, so she is set up to perform a Sneak Attack. Describing Autumn Rain as leaping out of the grass, knee forward, at the same time brandishing her ninja sword, the player rolls Autumn Rain's Agility: Melee Weapons and gets 6 successes. The ashigaru's player (the GM) rolls his Agility: Melee Weapons and gets only 2 successes. Not only does Autumn Rain win, she won as if the ashigaru had zero successes. With the 3 damage for the Ninja Sword, that makes a total of 9 damage to the ashigaru.

The ashigaru falls silently backwards into the tall grass, his face contorted into a ghastly mask of shock.

Samurai Form

The warriors who have living shiki bound to their flesh are called samurai. Samurai form is the name of the state when the samurai activates the shiki and changes physically: Muscles grow and enhance, mass increases, chitin-like armor and spikes appear on their bodies. It is a spectacle to behold.

This is the process to engage the samurai form:

1) To start the samurai form transformation, the samurai must expend Soul. The exact amount depends on the power level of the bound shiki spirit.

2) The samurai then immediately gains use of her samurai abilities (attribute bonuses, special powers, etc).

3) From that point on, the samurai form can be sustained for a number of rounds equal to the samurai's Spirit attribute score. Starting at the beginning of the next round, start counting the rounds samurai form is active during the interaction phase.

4) A samurai has no limit (other than Soul reserves) to the number of times a day the samurai can attain samurai form.

During combat it takes one action for the samurai transformation to be completed. The metamorphosis occurs once that

action is used, and during that combat round all subsequent rolls that round (like defending) use the modified samurai levels.

Since the transformation requires one action, most samurai will simply not make an attack action until the next round. However, a samurai may still attempt to attack that round by spending an extra Kiai point to take a second action. In a pinch, when faced with an incoming attack before the samurai has transformed, a samurai can spend 2 Kiai as an "interrupt" action, spend 1 more Kiai to take an action (3 total), and start the samurai transformation in order to use the modified samurai attribute levels to block the attack. See the Karma section, Kiai abilities for more information about interrupt actions.

Note that when the samurai form is activated, from that instant onward the samurai can use the enhanced ability scores for defense/counterattack rolls. However, the process of transformation itself is not instantaneous, and the samurai cannot normally make an attack until the next round. However, the samurai's player can spend Kiai points as mentioned above to take additional actions that round, and then make attacks with those actions using the adjusted samurai attributes, or enhanced defense rolls by interrupting early in the round and transforming then.

YOROI STARTUP

There is no roll required for a yoroi armour pilot to start up an armour. However, it does require a full action for the pilot to perform the initial startup. Additional actions require further spending of Kiai.

SOULGEM WEAPONS

When an attacker scores a hit with a soulgem weapon, they can then choose to increase the damage by squeezing the soulgem weapons' trigger. The soulgem weapon can then fire any number of soulgems the user wishes in that single attack up to that weapon's listed Rate of Fire.

For every soulgem the attacker expends, one point of additional damage is done to the target as the blade tears through its target like an electric knife carves through a block of tofu.

The attacker can declare the number of soulgems she is using after the attack succeeds; she does not have to declare the soulgem expenditure beforehand.

INTERFACE SKILL

When piloting a yoroi armour (either a hand-crafted meikyo armour, or a mass-produced kimenkyo armour), the pilot substitutes her Interface skill for all general skill rolls. This includes melee attacks, marksman attacks, evasion, notice and the like.

BUTTERFLY DREAM

Kugutsu have the ability to manipulate the physical illusion which covers their body to create hypnotic worlds of dream. It is a kind of "brain hacking" or forced psychotherapy which can be performed on any single character. Once per combat, a kugutsu character can attempt to engage a Butterfly Dream against any single opponent as a major action.

If a kugutsu successfully brings a target into the Dream, she instantly knows all of the target character's motivations (If the target has any Fates, reveal at least one, if not all of them). The kugutsu has instantly gotten a sense of who that person is and what their goals are.

From there, the kugutsu can pursue the target and engage in illusory combat, try talking to the target as kind of psychotherapy, or break it off and return to combat.

Kongohki

Kongohki have the Overdrive ability, which lets their fearsome steel bodies move and act at incredible speeds for a short period of time. When Overdrive is used before an action and the kongohki makes a roll based on Body, Agility or Senses, they can count the number of dice that came up successes, roll that number of dice again, then add those successes to the total.

Kongohki can activate this ability instantly before they take an action. They can use Overdrive for a number of times per game session equal to their Spirit score plus their Body score. Each Overdrive activation will boost one single action. Keep track of how many times this ability is used in a session. If the kongohki increases its Body or Spirit attributes in the course of the session, they receive additional Overdrive actions. Overdrive activation is instantaneous and can be performed at any time during the kongohki's turn.

For example: A kongohki goes into Overdrive, and makes an Agility: Melee Weapons roll. The result of the roll is 6 successes. The player can pick up 6 more dice and roll those, adding them to the total. If the player rolls 4 more successes, then the total is 10 successes for that action.

Ranged Weapons

For ranged, flying or projectile weapons like bullets (fired from soulgem or gunpowder weapons), kunai, shuriken, or knives, there are various rules for their use in combat.

1) They cannot be counter-attacked, only parried with weapon skills or dodged with the Evasion skill.

2) Knives, arrows, shuriken and bullets can be parried or dodged with the melee weapons, unarmed combat or Evasion skill. Spiritual attacks, flame, energy balls, explosions/mortars/missiles, and lasers can only be dodged with the Evasion skill.

3) A character can make a number of different attacks equal to the weapon's Rate of Fire. However, the attacker only rolls one time for multiple attacks.

4) There is a damage bonus for using a flying weapon with a rate of fire to make multiple attacks against the same defender. See the chart for details.

Attacks Against Multiple Targets with Ranged Weapons

An attacker using ranged weapons can make attacks against multiple targets as a single action as long as these two conditions are met:

1) All of the targets are within range

2) The weapon used has a Rate of Fire equal to or higher than the number of targets selected

The attacker makes one attack roll, and each defender rolls to defend separately.

If the attacker fires or throws a weapon more than once against the same target, then the attacker gets a damage bonus. The damage bonus is equal to +1 for each shot spent against an opponent.

Multiple Attacks Against a Single Opponent with Ranged Weapons

In the case where multiple shots are taken against the same enemy, the character simply adds a higher damage rating to the single defender if the attack succeeds. This happens often, as ninja are classically fond of throwing many shuriken or kunai at an enemy at one time.

Every additional shot spent against a target grants a damage bonus of +1, for a maximum damage bonus of +2 per target.

DAMAGE BONUS FOR RANGED WEAPONS									
Rate of Fire	**Sample Weapon**	**Number of Targets Aimed at**							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Single Shot	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Bow, Soulgem Rifle	+1	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Kunai, Knives, Repeater	+2	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
4	Soulgem Pistol	+2	+1	0	0	-	-	-	-
5	Shuriken, Heavy Repeater	+2	+1	0	0	0	-	-	-
8	Dreadnaught Repeater	+2	+2	+1	+1	0	0	0	0

Follow the chart for easy reference. If your character uses weapons which require the Marksman skill, it might be helpful to reference the numbers above. If it seems too complicated, the GM can declare these rules optional and just use the default damage ratings for ranged weapons.

RANGED WEAPONS: AUTUMN RAIN AND THE SHURIKEN

Autumn Rain is crouched on the other end of the Red River Bridge facing two ashigaru soldiers who have their spears pointed at her. She opens her hands, revealing four shuriken which she sends speeding quickly towards their targets.

Shuriken have a maximum Rate of Fire of 5, but Autumn Rain's player doesn't want to waste them. She can get the exact same damage bonus (+1) throwing against two targets with 4 shuriken as she can with 5, so she uses the "Rate of Fire: 4" column to determine the bonus. If she were throwing all the shuriken against one target she might use the maximum Rate of Fire of 5 shuriken for a +2 damage bonus.

Autumn Rain's player rolls 8 dice, and gets 5 successes. Not bad.

The GM rolls the ashigaru soldiers' Evasion skills, and gets a total of 1 success for one soldier and 2 successes for the second soldier.

The shuriken base damage is +1. The damage bonus for using 4 shuriken against 2 opponents is +1 for each opponent. Finally, the attack and defense roll difference was 4 for one soldier and 3 of the other. The total damage is 6 damage to one soldier, and 5 damage to the other soldier.

OTHER DAMAGE

There are other types of damage besides weapons, such as fire or falling from great heights. When calculating other kinds of damage, use the following formula:

Find the damage rating.

Resist the damage with the appropriate roll.

Every success rolled subtracts one from the damage rating, down to a damage of 0.

Here are some examples of types of damage, their rating, and what to use to resist

Type	Damage	Resist With
Falling from a cliff	height (in meters)	Movement
Poison/Fire/Acid/Cold	damage rating	Willpower
Explosives	damage rating	Evasion

The damage rating is set for each of the damage types either by the GM, or by the power it comes from. For example, an ayakashi might have a poison with a damage rating of 10, or a shiki might explode with a damage rating of 15. If there is no set rating for the damage, the GM will decide the damage rating.

Things like poison, fire, cold and acid will continue to do damage every round during the interaction phase. Poisons have a time rating, which is the number of rounds the character is affected by it. Fire, Cold and Acid lasts until the character's situation

changes (she puts herself out, she gets out of the acid pit, or she takes shelter from the cold).

Continual damage can be resisted every time it is dealt to the character.

EXAMPLE: AUTUMN RAIN AND THE POISON

Autumn Rain is hit with a poison needle fired by a hidden assassin. After taking the slight damage from the needle, the GM determines that the poison has a damage rating of 5 and lasts for 5 rounds of continuing damage.

Every interaction phase, Autumn Rain will make a resistance roll using Spirit: Willpower against a target number of 5 to try to reduce that damage. Failure means that she will take damage that round. Autumn Rain better find and finish off that assassin before she gets hit with another needle.

ARTS OF WAR

Weapon masters and some trained warriors have access to the abilities called the War Arts. There are many styles to choose from, each style having its own progression level of unique abilities, attacks and maneuvers. See the Art of War section for more details on these abilities.

The arts of war are a unique set of skills. Like the Shinto abilities, the character's skill level at an art is simply just a marker which shows the character's rank and knowledge of that art. The war art itself is almost never rolled as if it were a skill. It simply shows the player of that character what their character's level is in that particular style and which abilities within that school that they have access to. When using the war arts to perform a special maneuver, the character will make attack rolls as they normally do and not "Art of War" rolls. In most cases, the weapon master uses their Melee Weapons, Unarmed Combat or Marksman combat rolls as normal.

A character can combine multiple techniques into a single attack, defense or counter-attack, as long as all of the techniques are from the same school. In some rare cases, a character might be skilled in more than one war art. In these cases, a weapon master can use multiple techniques from one art in one attack, and multiple techniques from a second art in a second attack. However, you cannot mix techniques from two different schools in a single attack or defense: The arts require a distinct mindset, focus, and movements which are impossible to stack at the same time with a different art's mindset.

For example, a character who is supremely skilled (5) in both Crescent Moon Blade Tactics and True Illusion Style could use the True Illusion style's "Light and Shadow" technique in conjunction with the True Illusion style's "Three Year Kill" technique, since both techniques come from the same school. However, she could not use the True Illusion's "Light and Shadow" technique in conjunction with the Crescent Moon Blade Tactics style's "Seal of the Blade" maneuver in the same attack because they come from different schools.

STRATEGY

A character with the Strategy skill can at any time make a roll of Station: Strategy to build up an advantage for their force. This can only be done once per Act. This represents expert plan creation, barking out orders clearly, setting up strategies to win skirmishes and the like. The strategist should describe, when awarding advantages to their allies, how their actions or strategies led to this advantage.

All of the successes rolled in the Station: Strategy roll become banked bonus dice. Later, at any time during the Act, a strategist can award some or all of these dice to their allies (usually for attack or evasion

rolls), or even use these dice themselves. For every banked die spent, the character chosen by the strategist can roll one extra bonus die. This can be done as many times as the strategist wishes until they run out of banked dice. Also, there is no limit to the number of dice that can be given in this manner: 1, 5, 10 or more for one roll is fine.

All dice that remain banked at the end of the Act are immediately removed from play. The strategist may attempt to roll for another advantage sometime in the next act.

In a future Tenra Bansho supplement, there will be rules around using the Strategy skill to direct mass combat battles and full-scale wars.

KIAI AND THE UNBEATABLE FOE

Most adventure scenarios will put the players against strong enemies with high natural dice pools and high levels of skill.

As you've seen in the rules, combat comes down to a roll-off of dice between you and the enemy. There are tricks you can use in combat: things like filling in the Dead Box, declaring aiuchi, making sneak-attacks, or using Arts of War. But in general, many "end game bosses" are too strong. You can roll dice against them all day, but you'll only win if you're really, really lucky.

That's the way it's supposed to be! Strong enemies simply can't be beat using normal means. That's where Kiai comes in. Kiai lets players perform extreme feats of skill. A character could easily raise their skill level one or two levels with Kiai for a strike, then buy 5 or 20 extra dice to roll. Or break a tie against a foe by using Kiai to buy one or more instant successes. This is the only way players will be able to defeat strong enemies or "boss" opponents.

You can gain Kiai from role-playing your character well and entertaining the other players. The more you get into character and play out that character's Fates, the more Aiki chits you will receive from your friends. This leads to having a pile of Kiai points to spend, the very Kiai you need to do the tricks to take down a powerful enemy. Yes, in the end, boss enemies can only be defeated in Tenra Bansho Zero *by role-playing well*.

KIAI/AIKI TRICKS

There are a number of tricks that you can use in combat by expending Kiai or Aiki chits. Here are some of their combat uses. Please see the Karma chapter for a more detailed explanation.

ATTACKS/COUNTERATTACKS

By spending Kiai, you can boost your Weapon or Evasion skill up a rank or two (up to a maximum rank of 4) for one roll, or add more dice to a combat roll. If you don't succeed at the combat roll, you can spend Kiai to gain some automatic successes. These are some techniques commonly used in combat.

PROTECT/TAKE THE BLOW

Spending one Kiai point lets you take an attack that was meant for another character (even if you are out of range). You cannot counterattack when you protect. See the Karma chapter for more information on the Protect maneuver.

ADDITIONAL ACTION

After your action, you can spend another Kiai point to make an additional major action. If the next character acts afterwards, and you want to make an additional action before the end of the round and your turn has passed, you will need to buy an Interrupt to go before other characters.

INTERRUPT

You can take your action before your turn officially comes, or after you have performed your major action, by spending 2 Kiai points. You can take additional interrupt actions by spending 2 Kiai for the interrupt, and one more Kiai for the additional action. This is a good way to assume samurai form in a hurry before you would normally be allowed to go in order to defend with the samurai attribute bonuses.

See the Karma section for more detailed explanations of these Kiai-based actions.

COMBAT BALANCE AND NARRATION

As you read through the rules and begin to play, you'll soon learn that there's really no major detriment for taking Heavy Wounds or filling in that Dead Box (until the character passes out, that is). It might seem strange to have a system where hitting an enemy for a large amount of damage can make that enemy stronger, giving them more dice to fight back in exchange for taking some wounds.

The combat rules in Tenra Bansho do not reflect reality. They instead aim to reflect the "fictionalized reality" of what you've come to see in theatrical plays (or kabuki plays if you've had the experience), manga, anime, video games and the like.

The important thing in combat isn't how long a character can go before dying, but how the characters act out the performance in those combat scenes. What cool lines are thrown out? Dramatic posturing? Cool wire-fu maneuvers? To that end, the character doesn't die until the player checks that Dead Box and signals that she's okay with dying.

That means if the character falls off an orbital platform, burns through the atmosphere, and falls several kilometers to land in a rocky crater, if the player doesn't want the character to die there, and leaves that box unchecked, she doesn't die. It might make for some strained narration to figure out how they lived, but it just wasn't that character's time to die.

When a character takes damage, it's up to the players and GM to decide what that damage means. Here are some examples to get you started:

Vitality Damage: Tears in clothes, thin cut lines, narrow misses, running out of breath. This is the kind of wound or cut where, if you saw it in a manga or comic, in a few panels the artists will simply stop drawing it and move on.

Light Wound: Flesh wounds, some blood or bruising.

Heavy Wound: A bone snaps, or blood doesn't easily stop flowing.

Critical Wound: Being hit hard somewhere painful or dangerous.

Dead: Being run through.

Also, it might be good for the GM and players to talk beforehand about the level of "splatter/gore" in the game. The default is a little blood, like a cinematic movie or anime. Many players will be squeamish with narrations of bloody rampages of spilled organs and bloody decapitations. There's no need to gross out the players, try to keep the action focus on the characters, not on the trails of blood spatter.



ZEROSHIKI
THE ZERO SYSTEM
MAKE USE OF THESE RULES
AND YOU WILL ENTER A NEW WORLD

WHAT IS THE ZERO SYSTEM?

Up until now, the basic game rules have focused on creating a character, doing things in character, being rewarded for role-playing, and battle. The Zero System is the collection of rules that tries to establish a fun, fast-paced play session. These are the rules that make playing the game feel more like a story out of a stage or kabuki play, anime, manga, or novel. The breakdown of the game into distinct acts, scenes and intermissions, and understanding the flow of the game is an important part of the play process.

There are also other rules that all players need to know. Learning them is just as important to the success of a session as learning how to make combat rolls or learning how to gain or spend Aiki chits. Things like game preparation, scheduling, organization, character creation and approval, game flow and finally clean-up after a session are important to a successful and fun session.

In this chapter we're going to explain these Zero System rules in detail. While this section is going to be very important for a GM, all players are encouraged to read this section to see how to take part in a successful game.

Game Preparation

The game of Tenra Bansho Zero, from the beginning to end of a single story, usually happens in the space of one single multi-hour session. To begin a session, you need the following things:

- A place to play
- Free time
- Friends

Those three basic things are all that is essentially needed to play the game.

Concept: The Session

While many RPGs are structured so that the story runs on and on over the space of many sessions, Tenra Bansho was meant to be a *fast* role-playing game. The entire game, from character generation, to adventure, to conclusion, usually happens in the space of one session. A Tenra Bansho "campaign" happens from start to finish in one session lasting a few hours, usually 5-6.

This can easily be done if you plan to meet and play with your friends on a single weekend day. In Japan, people meet with friends far more on the weekends than on weekdays. However, in the West, we often make plans to meet with friends on weeknights as well as on weekends.

Therefore, while the intent behind the design of Tenra Bansho Zero was for all the players to meet on one day of the weekend and together share an epic story over the course of 5-6 hours, many of us in the West are more flexible with our time. You could break this up over say two or three weeknights of 3-4 hours each (meeting with your friends two or three Tuesdays in a row, for example). As long as you are able to keep the momentum going, you can probably break those 5-6 hours up over two or more sessions. Just don't put too much time in between sessions, as players will quickly forget what happened in previous sessions.

A Place to Play the Game

Tenra is what is called a tabletop role-playing game. You can try playing online with friends over the internet, but the game was really meant to be played face to face with friends in a single room.

NIFTY CULTURE POINT

In Japan, houses are often small and private spaces, so gamers often want to play in more public places when they meet up to play role-playing or other games. Friends meet up to hang out far more often somewhere in town than at someone's house. In Japan, there are community centers where you can grab some table space for a few hundred yen (a few dollars) a day, or cafes where spaces can be borrowed or rented.

The quintessential Japanese role-playing experience, though, is to play RPGs in a Karaoke club. Karaoke clubs are relatively inexpensive, where each room is spacious and almost soundproof from other rooms. Instead of singing songs, though, gamers will bust out their role-playing books, order some drinks and snacks from the Karaoke club menu, and play for hours. Luckily, in the West we don't have to go to such great lengths to find a play space. We don't have as many reservations against hosting events in our houses, so most role-playing happens at someone's house or apartment. Coffee houses or even local game stores are also available when the players want to meet in a public area.

All you really need is a table and enough seats for four to six people to sit comfortably around it. In Japan, you'd want to use at least a "six tatami-mat room", but since most of us don't live in Japan, the basic play area in someone's home will be the dining table or living room coffee table. The shape of the table doesn't matter, nor whether you sit in chairs or on the floor around a coffee table, as long as everyone is comfortable.

You will want to pick a relatively quiet place, or at least a place where you can raise your voices without disturbing others. A coffee shop or library might seem like a good place to play, but when something cool happens in a game, the players tend to get noisy. Wherever you play, make sure it's a spot where a little noise isn't going to disturb people around you.

FREE TIME

Tenra Bansho Zero can usually be played in one single four to six hour session. This assumes that there are 3-5 players (including the Game Master). This is easy to organize on a weekend, but if you wish to play on a weekday, you might find it best to divide the game into two or more 3-hour sessions. You will also want to keep in mind that it usually takes about 20-30 minutes for everyone to get into the game after showing up, as well as another 20-30 minutes after the last scene of the session happens to do after-game discussion with your friends.

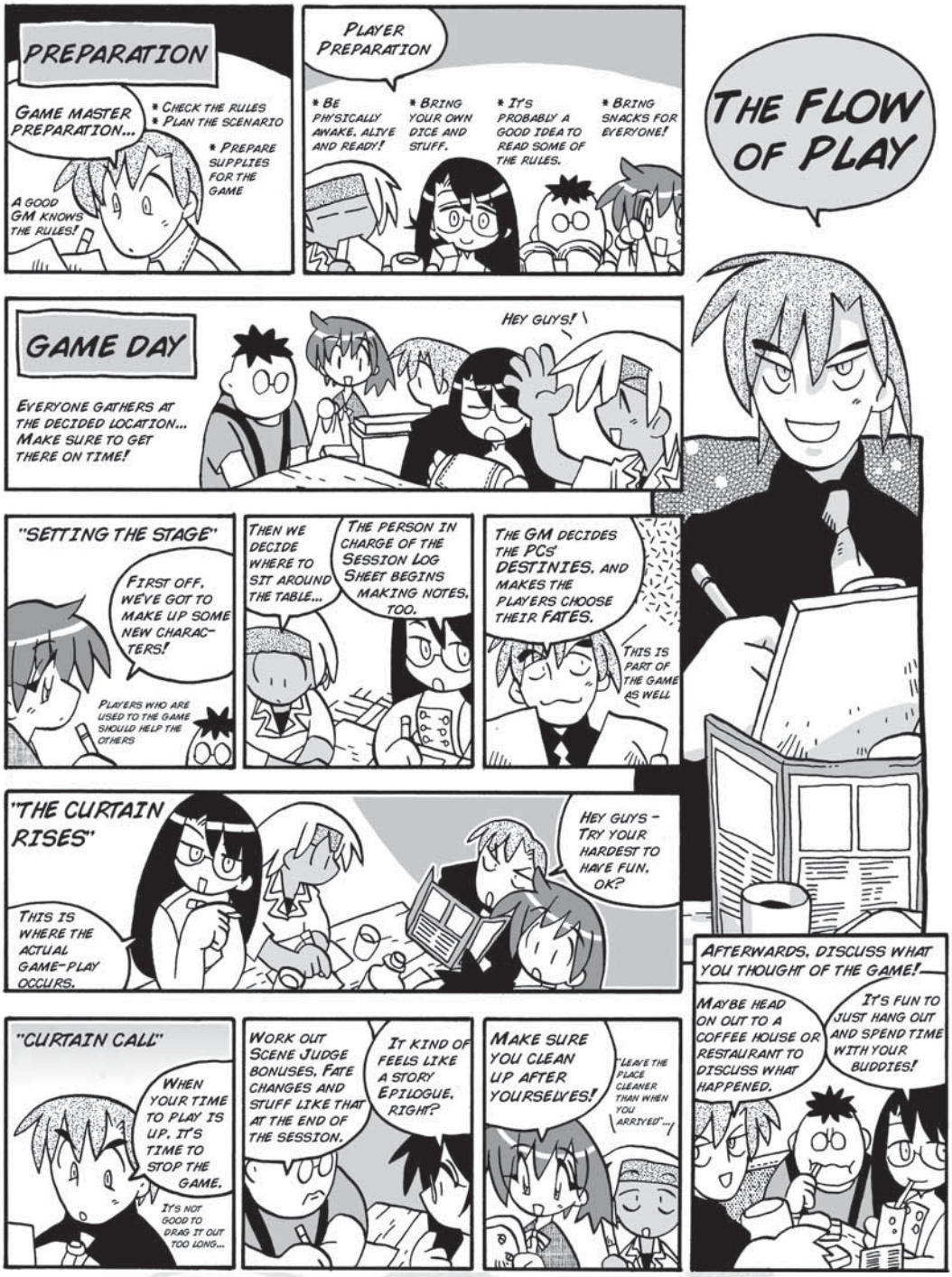
Time to play can be adjusted if the GM organizes the event over email: Over email the GM can describe the game she has in mind, and together with the players work out roughly what kind of story and what kind of characters they wish to make. You can save an hour or so by doing this kind of preparation in advance before the session begins.

This also assumes that you will have friendly chatter, but will be pretty focused on the game and the story you are telling while you're playing the game. If you find yourselves taking longer intermissions to chit-chat, that will add an hour or two to the game time.

With a Game Master and four players, you might find that four hours is a little too tight, and that five or six hours makes for a more natural, fun story without cutting out too many interesting parts. In fact, many kabuki plays, like long-scale western theatrical productions (Shakespeare), last six or more hours when you include intermissions. This kind of session is best held over a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. However, if you play on the weekdays you might have to split the session up into two or more 3-4 hour sessions.

You probably don't want to be spending any more than seven or eight total hours on one game of Tenra. More than six hours in one play session can be really tiring, especially if everyone is really role-playing and acting aggressively. The players will probably want to wrap up the story in six hours or less, so that they can plan other events for the weekend.

In four to six hours a story will be told. The game will start and come to a close. The ending will be dramatic, especially as the characters deal with their Fates. But at the end of that session, the story is over, and it is time to move on. Your next game of Tenra might focus on an entirely different situation, with all-new characters. Or, you may bring some or all of the characters back together again to tell a new story with them. However, each session, from beginning to end, is a complete story. Unlike some other games, the same story with the same characters does not get dragged out for days, weeks, or even years.


PREPARATION
Game Master Preparation...
* Check the rules
* Plan the scenario
* Prepare supplies for the game
A good GM knows the rules!
Player Preparation
* Be physically awake, alive and ready!
* Bring your own dice and stuff.
* It's probably a good idea to read some of the rules.
* Bring snacks for everyone!
THE FLOW OF PLAY
GAME DAY
Everyone gathers at the decided location... Make sure to get there on time!
Hey guys!
"SETTING THE STAGE"
First off, we've got to make up some new characters!
Players who are used to the game should help the others
Then we decide where to sit around the table...
The person in charge of the Session Log Sheet begins making notes, too.
The GM decides the PCs' DESTINIES, and makes the players choose their FATES.
This is part of the game as well
"THE CURTAIN RISES"
This is where the actual game-play occurs.
Hey guys - Try your hardest to have fun, ok?
Afterwards, discuss what you thought of the game!
Maybe head on out to a coffee house or restaurant to discuss what happened.
It's fun to just hang out and spend time with your buddies!
"CURTAIN CALL"
When your time to play is up, it's time to stop the game.
It's not good to drag it out too long...
Work out Scene Judge bonuses, Fate changes and stuff like that at the end of the session.
It kind of feels like a story Epilogue, right?
Make sure you clean up after yourselves!
"Leave the place cleaner than when you arrived"...

FRIENDS

You can play a game of Tenra Bansho Zero with one Game Master (GM) and two or more players. The best stories tend to come out in games where there is one GM and 3-4 players. It's very likely that games with 6 or more players will not take off: You have to spend an incredible amount more time on the story to include all of the characters, and that estimate of "4-6 hours" of play will start to expand exponentially and look more like "10-12 hours" in order to include all of the characters in a meaningful way. The game looks more like an Epic than a Story. Normally, that wouldn't be a problem, but in an RPG like Tenra that means that a character will be onstage for a while, and after that there may be a long downtime before they can take the stage again. This will increase the play time, and may be boring for players who are fired up and want to act out the role of their character but have to wait longer for scenes focused on them.

There are other options with larger groups, though. If you have six friends who want to play, you could run a game for three of them one day, and the other three at another time. Or, if your players are up for the challenge, you could run a game with 6 players but only 4 player-characters (PCs): The other 2 players will assist the GM in playing the roles of the other characters (NPCs, both minor and major NPCs) that the PCs interact with.

Finally, it's important to note that *everyone* is responsible for making the game a success. The GM is the one who plans the session, sets the story spinning, and plays the role of many of the NPCs that appear in the game. The players are there to be entertained, and to entertain each other: They should be willing to act out their roles and have a hand in helping shape the story. If all of the players show up to be entertained as if they were passively watching television, lack enthusiasm, or don't help entertain the other players and GM, then the game will flop. It will fail as if it were a theatrical play where the actors are not interested in performing that day. Bring your Game Face to the table.

THE GAME SCENARIO

When the game comes together, at least the GM has to have an idea of what they want to have happen. The GM usually writes down a "scenario", or story outline, of the events which will happen in the game, the characters that will appear, and perhaps the stats of major villains and other major NPCs.

Some GMs, especially beginning GMs, want to script out many events in a way where they expect to have the players move their characters in a line from Act to Act, Scene to Scene, following the GM's carefully-made story. Other GMs come up with just a basic concept of what they want to have happen, maybe writing a single line or two for their entire scenario, and ad-lib or improvise everything from the beginning of the game to the end.

Probably the best way to prepare (until you get used to the game and how your friends play the game) is to be in the middle of those two extremes, perhaps writing down some ideas for the character's Zero Acts, some NPC names and roles, plan out a few encounters (and jot down some villain stats), and in the end have a general idea of how they imagine the flow of the game to take place from act to act, scene to scene. That way, if the players take the horns and steer the game in exciting and interesting ways, the GM can ditch his notes and make up new ones on the fly (which is very hard if the GM structures the scenario too much). At the same time, they have already prepared some interesting NPCs

(including their names, personalities and cool character lines) and solid events ready to fire off at any time.

Items Used in the Game

While the basics of the game require simply a place, players and time, in truth some other supplies are also required to play the game. For example, it's hard to write up characters if nobody brings any writing utensils. Here are the items required to play the game, as well as who is responsible for bringing them.

WRITING MATERIALS (EVERYONE)

In the game, the players write up their characters, keep track of Wounds and Health, and erase old Fates while writing in new Fates. To that end, all players will need pencils and erasers. It's probably a good idea to have some spare pieces of paper laying around so that the players can take notes (writing down the names of major NPCs or place names so they don't forget, for example). The Game Master will also probably want some paper or a notebook to write down things as his scenario plans change. The GM may have to make up new characters, places, events or update villain stats on the fly.

DICE (EVERYONE)

When deciding if a character succeeds at a task or not, that character's player rolls normal six-sided dice to determine success or failure. A six-sided die is sometimes called a "d6" for short.

Each player should bring about 10 dice with them to the game session. If one of the players or the GM forgets their dice, you can pool the dice together and use them as needed. In this case, 20-30 dice per group is a good number. You can bring more if you want, especially if you tend to play more powerful characters. Regular old dice can be bought in almost any pharmacy or grocery store. You can buy pretty sets of dice online or at your local gaming store, or dig them out of popular board games.

RULEBOOK (EVERYONE, OR AT LEAST ONE)

You need at least one copy of the rules to play the game. However, it's always a good idea for the GM and players to have their own copies of the rules so that any player can reference the rules at any point without having to take it from someone else.

Having only one copy of the rules during character generation make it take longer for the game to start, since each player will need to jot down their character stats from the pre-made characters or flip through the Archetypes section to make character choices. At least two or more is recommended.

AIKI CHITS (GM)

The GM should bring something to use as Aiki Chits, or else have another player bring some. You can use anything as Aiki chits, like coins, colored glass beads, or strips of paper. Poker chips, especially colorful clay 11.5g or 14g chips (or even the cheap plastic poker chips you can buy anywhere) make excellent Aiki chits (you can call them "Aiki coins" in play). You will want to bring either a lot of chips in one color (100), or else smaller amounts in two colors: one coin representing 1 Aiki coin, another color representing 5 or 10 Aiki coins. Clay poker chips are very inexpensive these days, can be purchased at almost any thrift store, and can be used for other games as well.

Edible tokens like chocolates or cookies are generally not good for Aiki chits. It's very hard to resist the temptation to consume all of your delicious power.

The GM and players may also wish to have a plastic cup available to dump a lot of Aiki chits or coins into. This will be the pool that the GM or players use to give to the other players, as opposed to the Aiki coins they have received (which they can place on their character sheet or in front of them).

CHARACTER SHEETS (GM)

The GM should have enough copies of the character sheet or other reference sheets (like the Emotion Matrix) ready for the players. They can be photocopied from this book, or downloaded online and printed out from the official English Tenra Bansho Zero website (www.tenra-rpg.com). Bring enough sheets for all the players in case they forget. If there is a cost associated with printing or copying the sheets, all of the players should help pitch in evenly to mitigate that cost.



Paper Aiki chits

SNACKS AND DRINKS (THE PLAYERS)

The players should all bring maybe a drink or a snack or two, especially if you are playing at someone's house. Bring something that the other players will enjoy as well. You might want to avoid snacks that have too many empty calories or stuff like really greasy potato chips which can stain books and sheets. Be sure to clean up the play area when you are done with the game.

The GM should feel free to reward any players who bring quintissential Japanese snacks like Pocky or Ramune to a Tenra game session. Particularly "Men's Pocky".

GAME DAY PREPARATION

Usually the person who owns a copy of the game, or else the Game Master, is the person who will contact their friends and make arrangements to play a game of Tenra Bansho Zero. Luckily, due to technologies like email and text messaging, planning for

CONCEPT: Game Preparation

"The Zero System". You might be wondering why such specific "common knowledge" things like "bring snacks", "where to sit", "help clean up" etc are written here under the game preparation section. The thing is, these "rules" are just as important (and possibly even more important) than the actual game rules.

When you run an RPG, there are a lot of unspoken assumptions about how they're supposed to play out. Normally, this is fine, but if they're unspoken, it's a little harder to learn them if you're new to role-playing and a lot easier to forget if you aren't. This section will cover those basic assumptions.

If you're familiar with tabletop role-playing games, go ahead and give this section a quick read anyway. There might be something new that you would have otherwise missed.

a game session is extremely uncomplicated in this day and age. Just contact some friends, set a tentative date, place and time, and get confirmations as to who can come and who can't.

Everyone should try to be on time. You can plan for everyone to come a little early (or set the meetup to happen at 11:00AM but plan on the game beginning promptly at 11:30) so that everyone can catch up and make small talk. However, please try to be on time: If you're late to the game, it will mean less time for everyone to have fun.

If someone gets sick or has to cancel, please let everyone else know as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made. In some cases, one missing player means that the other players can still meet and complete a Tenra Bansho story. However, folks can always choose to reschedule to another weekend or weekday. Just don't leave everyone waiting for you to show up if you aren't going to be there.

The Actual Game Session

Tenra Bansho is normally played out in its entirety in one session (or sometimes split over 2-3 shorter sessions). This includes the three high-level stages of the game: Setting the Stage, the Production, and the Curtain Call.

The rest of this section is written with the GM in mind, but everyone is encouraged to read this section and understand how the flow of the game works.

The Role of the Game Master

Every session of Tenra Bansho Zero has a Game Master. The term might sound high and mighty, but it's a basic role. The GM is the one who scripts out an adventure or scenario and is usually the one who gets everyone together to play

The GM is the person who creates the world. They describe the scenery and setting. They provide challenges to the characters. They make things happen, and ask the players "What do you do?" then describes how the world reacts to whatever the PCs do. The GM also acts as the referee for the rules parts of the game. The GM also takes on the roles of many of the background non-player characters (NPCs).

This seems like the GM is responsible for a lot of things. That's because she is, but it's a very fun and interesting role to take on. We suggest that all players give a shot at being the GM at some time. Some role-playing groups have one person who regularly assumes the role of the GM. Shake it up by calling for the other players to run the game next time. The game only lasts one session, so there's no harm in giving it a shot!

Here is a summary of the GM's responsibilities:

1) Starting the Session

2) Storytelling

3) Rules Judgments

4) Role-Playing

5) Combat Scene Handling

6) Drawing the Session to a Close

Starting the Session

Once everyone is together and ready to play, the GM is the one who calls a start to the session. The GM could simply say, "OK everyone, let's get started!" Or, if the GM is feeling a little more poetic, we suggest that the GM call a start to the session with the following set phrase:

"*Toki Wa Sengoku*: It is an age of warring countries. The world is stained by hundreds of years of continuous war, with no end to the in sight. This is but one tale of the land of Tenra…"

From that point, move on to the first act, called the Zero Act, and begin the first character's scene.

STORYTELLING

The GM is responsible for the pacing and flow of the session. They react to the actions of the players, adjusting and creating the story as the players perform their roles.

The GM should take what she knows from watching movies, anime, and TV dramas to help maintain tension, to create good scenes, and to keep the plot moving like a roller-coaster ride. Setting scenes, closing scenes, skipping over boring scenes and extending interesting scenes are all techniques which the GM can employ. The goal here is to create events that will keep the players engaged, that will present dramatic moments or challenges for their characters, and to react to the events and actions proposed by the characters.

However, one huge place where Tenra Bansho and other RPGs differ from scripted plays, movies and anime, is the way the story is made: In anime, theatrical plays and movies, the story is already predetermined from beginning to end. The players read their parts, and act out their roles in an entertaining fashion, but they have no control over how the story develops or ends. Instead, the writer is the person who controls where the characters go, what they do and what happens next.

In Tenra Bansho, the GM only has about half or less of the story "written" (usually just the "setup" portions, and a few notes for what will likely happen later). The GM might have ideas for events that may take place, and may guess at how the players might react, but the story is not written in stone. The players are the ones who define the story and for most of the game the GM must simply react to the players, putting forth challenges, monitoring scenes and pacing, until it is time to draw the story to a conclusion.

The most important thing to remember about creating the story is this cardinal rule: "Make sure the players are having fun." It is important for the GM to engage the players and make their characters shine. The GM should not be writing a story from beginning to end, forcing the players to dance through it without being able to change events or what happens, much like puppets on a string. If the players have no input into what happens over the course of a session, and the GM controls every aspect of the game (perhaps by creating powerful NPC characters who tell the PCs what to do, save them in combat or challenges, etc), then there's really no reason for the players to be there.

RULES JUDGMENTS

Another important role of the GM is to make fair rules judgments. When rolling to succeed at tasks, the GM is the one who has the final say on which attributes and skills are appropriate. At times where it looks like the character could use either of two attributes or skills, let them use the higher ranked one. Make sure the players are having fun, as always, but make sure that the rules apply fairly in all situations.

It's also up to the GM as to when to ignore or change the rules. For example, if a character's Zero Act involves a fight which they are destined to lose (like when role-playing out the last fight before a downtrodden warrior destined to become a kijin or samurai), then there's no reason to engage in lengthy combat rolls. Simply declare that the player will lose, but describe the fight dramatically with the player. Other times, the PCs might be following clues in some sort of investigation (the whereabouts of the assassin, the location


GAME PACING AND SCENES
DECIDE WHICH PCs ARE IN THE SCENE
It's pretty easy. Just decide whether the character would be in the scene or not.
A
B
For example, the scene starts off in this room here.
Characters A and B are in the room. C and D are outside in the garden. So the ones that are in this scene at first are just characters A and B.
CHOOSING THE SCENE JUDGE
If you play with the optional Scene Judge rules, the player with the most "Aiki Chits" becomes the next scene Judge.
It doesn't matter if you are in the scene or not. Eh?
The Judge gets 3 Aiki Chits and takes control of the Session Log Sheet.
When the Scene Judge sees the other players doing a great job of Role-Playing, she gives them an Aiki Chit!
"LIGHTS... CAMERA... AND... ACTION!"
This is where the scene really shines. Get in there and be active!!
Ooh, that was pretty good! Here, take an Aiki Chit.
Aieeeee!!!
A PC who wants to appear in a Scene can spend one point of KIAI and make an entrance at any time.
Here I come...!
A GM can also drag a PC into a scene by giving that player an Aiki Chit.
A PC can also leave a scene when they choose.
THE END OF THE SCENE
A Scene can end in the following ways...
* Through the passage of time
So, the next day...
* When the location moves to a different place
"Meanwhile, out behind the temple gardens..."
* And finally, when the Scene Judge runs out of Aiki Chits.
You repeat the above processes over and over for each Scene.
(Back to) Decide which PCs are in the Scene...

of the kidnapped princess, etc). At times when it's simply uninteresting or silly to make the players fail (especially if the game cannot proceed unless the player succeeds), then simply have them succeed. Ignoring, bending or breaking the rules with a mind towards the story is left up to the discretion of the GM. The GM can always talk with or seek the advice from the players if she can't decide how to judge a rule.

Finally, when the GM makes a judgment based on the rules, treat it like a referee call at a sports game; the GM's authority on the matter of rules interpretations and the like is *final*. You can talk to the GM about a decision, but don't derail the game by arguing rules semantics. Also, like a referee call, if later on in the game a player or the GM realizes that they were forgetting a rule, or did something wrong, then that correction stands from that point on. Don't go back and "rewrite" or "replay" what happened earlier in the game because an incorrect rules call was made; what's done is done, just be mindful of the correct rules going forward.

THE GM MAKES A MISTAKE

A group of friends are playing Tenra Bansho for the first time. They get to right near the end of the scenario, the Last Act. Suddenly, one of the players realizes that they had been doing combat incorrectly this whole time.

GM: Uh oh. I just realized that in our previous two combats, we've been forgetting to add the weapon's damage to our attacks. We have just been using the difference between the winner and the loser as damage.

Player: Oh man! That means that I would have finished off the renegade shikigami in two hits instead of three. Before my third hit, the shikigami hit me for 12 damage points which I took mostly as Wounds. If we knew that rule, I wouldn't have taken that damage.

GM: Sorry, yeah that was my bad for forgetting that. We won't reverse that damage you took, but we know the right way to do things going forward. I'll make sure to keep an eye on that next time.

ROLE-PLAYING

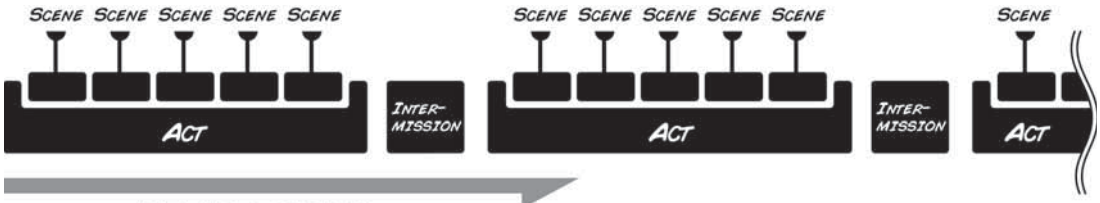
The GM will also play the roles of many major NPCs or inconsequential NPCs. The GM is a player himself, but instead of one character he plays the roles of several characters. The GM should create motives and possibly even "NPC Fates" for major NPCs, and remember them when playing that character's role. All of the characters that appear in the game, except for the player characters, are officially owned by the GM, but the GM should encourage players who do not have their PC in a particular scene to pick up the role of a new or established NPC. Remember to tell the player all the applicable motives and Fates. It's a great way for them to have something to do, it's a fast free Aiki chit for bringing them into the scene, and it gives them more opportunities to entertain the other players (and, incidentally, potentially be awarded more Aiki chits).

COMBAT

In almost every game of Tenra Bansho there is combat. In the grand tradition of most dramatic period dramas, theatrical plays and the like, most sessions do have at least one or two combat scenes. It is the GM's responsibility to make combat fast-paced and thrilling. There are a few components of making combat scenes exciting which the GM is responsible for. These components are also applicable to elements outside of combat as well:

1) Teaching the Rules

The GM will need to explain the combat rules the first few times battle scenes occur. Things like "counterattacks", "damage calculation" and "sneak attacks" take a few



The Flow of Play

tries to learn. Make sure to fill the players in as you go along, and explain combat actions as they happen.

2) Checking the Power Levels of PCs

Player characters in Tenra Bansho are special. They are almost superheroes. Make sure to treat them as characters that can change the destinies of entire nations and give them appropriate challenges and battles. Before going into battle make sure you know the characters' skill and attribute levels in general, or you may overpower or underpower the enemies by accident.

3) Making the Enemies Intriguing and Powerful

Pick enemies that will push the buttons of the characters. Connect them to a PC's back-story and give the player characters reasons to want to defeat these enemies. Also, make sure to give them appropriately high skills and attributes, so that some teamwork or Kiai spending is required to defeat the "boss enemies".

4) Turning up the Heat

Don't linger on battles against waves of countless "zako" enemies (weak enemies to be mowed down, also known in RPGs as "mooks") unless you're demonstrating the combat rules. Make the fights climactic and meaningful against enemies that matter to the PCs. Make sure not to stop role-playing or saying cool lines once the swords come out. If the characters are rolling over an important enemy who you accidentally didn't make powerful enough, adjust their abilities on the fly to compensate, but be careful not to go overboard in the other direction. Put effort into describing the combat scenes, using scenery as detail. Turn up the heat, and bring the players to the edges of their seats.

CALLING THE SESSION TO A CLOSE

The GM's last responsibility is to call the session to a close. When the story is over, and the players finish the last act, perform one last intermission, and possibly discuss possible epilogues, the GM should call the session to a close: "That brings us to the close of this session". After that, the players can all discuss the game, what they thought was cool or interesting, and perhaps start planning for a future session.

If it looks like you're running out of time and the last act has not started yet, end the game a few minutes early at the next intermission. This will give the GM some time to plan out the events of the next session, and maybe discuss things that may happen in the second half of the story.

SETTING THE STAGE: GAME PREPARATION

Setting the Stage, the period before the actual game play occurs, happens in four sections.

First, the GM must decide on a situation or problem. Before the GM can start planning out the adventure, the GM needs to have an idea of what the adventure is going to be about, where it is going to take place, and what it is going to involve. See the scenario creation section of this chapter for more details on this step.

Next is scenario creation. Once the GM comes up with an idea of a situation, it's time to start writing down notes to start to develop it into a scenario. These two steps are usually performed before the day the game happens.

After that comes character creation. This is where characters will be made to go through the scenario and play out that situation. Major background NPCs may also be created at this time if they weren't created by the GM in advance when planning the scenario.

Finally, the preparation for the actual game session has to be done. You have to find a place to play and make sure the players are ready to play.

TALK ABOUT THE SCENARIO

The GM should describe the scenario in general detail to the players, so they have an idea of what to expect. This will help them come up with character concepts compatible with the GM's scenario idea. Here are some examples:

- "In this scenario, you're going to be exploring the ocean ruins of the old capital city of Jinrai. There's going to be a lot of action in the ocean and in port towns. Any character concept is fine. Just make sure that if you choose an armour or kongohki that it's capable of going underwater."
- "In this scenario there's going to be a war between two provinces, and you want to make sure your side wins. Buddhist monks might not fit into this scenario well. Also, at least one of the players should be a samurai, as that's going to be important later."
- "The scenario will take place entirely within the capital city, so make sure your characters are comfortable in a city environment. Most of them will have lived in the city most or all of their lives."
- "This scenario is all about a fallen ninja clan trying to raise itself up and take revenge on the people that tried to wipe it out. You should all be ninja, shinobi, or other characters that regularly interact with shinobi. In fact, everyone should take at least one of the ninja-themed archetypes."
- This scenario is set on a far away continent outside of the reach of the Priesthood. Imagine *The Road Warrior*, but with katana and kimen-armour motorcycles. It's mostly a desert wasteland of scarce resources. There's going to be a tribe of oni which will be important to the scenario, so at least one or more of the characters should be an oni or sympathetic to the oni people."

TALK ABOUT THE SETTING

For new players, it's important for the GM to give a little background of the world of Tenra, and the particular corner of the setting where the game scenario will be set. Don't go into too much detail about the setting before the game starts, or players will be overwhelmed. Just give enough relevant information to help the players understand what the world is like. Make sure they understand that the world is essentially feudal era Japan with 1600s-era buildings of wood, peasants gathering rice, etc, but with high-technology magical weapons (the default world is not filled with futuristic skyscrapers, metal buildings and the like). Letting the players flip through the colorful introductory section of the book should give them enough background to jump into a game. There is

also a summary of the world of Tenra in the appendix which the players could read to understand the basics of the setting.

If the setting of your scenario is different than the standard Tenra setting, or there are unique features of the world which will be relevant to the game (deep magical forests, under the ocean, on a far away hidden continent, in space on the Bridge of Heaven, on top of a mythical mountain, etc), make sure to describe that to the players as well.

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

A player may ask, "Does my character know that heartgems are the actual living heart of oni people?" Well, that's entirely up to the player. It's totally fine for the characters to know things that normal people in the world may not. What they do with that information is the interesting thing. If it turns out to be more interesting for the player to pretend that their character doesn't know something about the world that the player knows, then that's fine too. Just don't let it hamstring or derail the game, and everything will be fine.

Sometimes a GM will need to have the characters know something about the world in order for the game to progress: The role of the Demon Mask Faction, how a soul mirror works, etc. Keep explanations brief and to the point. There's no use explaining the intricacies of the struggle between the Northern and Southern Courts of the Priesthood if they aren't going to appear anywhere in the game. However, if a first-time player chooses an armour-rider, it would be good for the GM to explain the basics of armour, meikyo soul mirrors, and the fact that most pilots are children.

Finally, let the players take responsibility for filling out the world as well. Nothing about the setting is set in stone, although the GM usually has final approval just to make sure that things don't get too out of hand. If one of the characters has a question about the way the world works, then as long as it doesn't contradict the setting material in the book or in the scenario in a way that would cause a huge disruption, it might be good from time to time to let the players invent the specifics of the setting, especially as it relates to their character. If a player asks, "How many other samurai are in this city?", the GM could let the player of the samurai character decide that.

Character Creation

The next step is for the players to make characters together. For players who have never played Tenra Bansho Zero before, the best thing to do is to choose one of the sample characters listed in the back of the book. There are dozens of pre-made and ready-to-play characters there that need only a player-supplied personality to be brought to life. Sample characters are even recommended for experienced Tenra players as well, if you want to jump straight into playing the game.

Sometimes the GM will prepare characters for the scenario, or simply choose a few of the sample characters that fit the best within the scenario, and ask the players to use those. The players can also work together to choose character types that will work well with each other.

Character creation from scratch by assembling archetypes and crafting weapons can be a fun activity for experienced players. In those situations, the GM should give a few guidelines for the kinds of characters that work best within the scenario, and leave the rest to the players to come up with together. The GM may recommend or require certain archetypes to be taken for the scenario to run smoothly.

ONE CHARACTER TYPE, MANY CHARACTERS

The classic role-playing game standard of character creation is to make characters of various different roles or classes, and have them work together in a scenario. This is often the case of many Tenra scenarios as well. For example,a cyberized Buddhist monk, a samurai, a shinobi kugutsu and a Priesthood armour-rider could join together and fight an evil overlord. However, having most or all characters come from the same background (all armour-riders, all shinobi, three onmyoji and one samurai, etc) can make for very tight, interesting scenarios as well.

Three players can choose to take the same sample character, with the exact same abilities, and each play the character in a completely different way. For example, the GM decides to make a scenario about onmyoji demon-hunters who have to clean a haunted city. He requests that three of the players use the onmyoji sample character and one of the players use the Buddhist priest sample character. The players decide amongst themselves who chooses which, and this is what they come up with:

Player A's onmyoji is a cloistered young adult, gifted with power and not a lot of experience, who is confused by the world around him.

Player B's onmyoji is a world-weary female in her mid-20s, lusty but strong of heart. She is quick to anger, and seems to have friends and enemies in the shadows everywhere.

Player C's onmyoji is an elder sorcerer. He is more interested in calligraphy and poetry these days than the principles of magic. But he holds the others of his order as if they were younger siblings to be looked after and educated.

All of the above have the exact same attributes and the exact same skills, but through role-playing they can become quite different and exciting characters.

PRE-MADE CHARACTERS

If the player has a copy of the Tenra Bansho rulebook, then he could simply make a character at home and bring it to the game session. This is a possibility which saves some time, however the character will be made "in a vacuum", without the direct input of the GM or the other players. This can be avoided by discussing the characters or scenario by email before the day of the game session.

The important thing to be careful about when allowing pre-made characters are the character's Fates. These will dictate the character's starting goals. The GM should make sure that they can actually happen or be used within the confines of the scenario, and that they are not too unique or specific: This could result in a character that won't be able to interact well with the scenario, the story, or the other characters.

It might be worthwhile for the player creating a premade character to write *potential* Fates on the character sheet in pencil, and to not assign them ranks yet. For example, a character made up of 5 archetypes could have 5 potential starting Fates. When the players sit down to play and the GM approves the character and describes the scenario, the player can then choose the two starting Fates from the potential Fates and rank them.

APPROVING THE CHARACTERS

The GM has final approval of the characters. The GM should look over each character and decide if it will work for that session or not, and if not, make suggestions for ways that the character would better fit with the scenario or the other characters.



* Anatman is Sanskrit for the Buddhist Doctrine of "The Absence of a Permanent and Unchanging Self." The Japanese word is Sho Gyoh Mu Joh

In general, most characters will be fine. However, there are two patterns that can emerge when selecting characters (particularly pre-made characters) that players and GMs should be aware of.

CHARACTERS WHICH DON'T FIT WITHIN THE SCENARIO

A skilled GM will take the input from the players, look at the characters, and adjust the scenario to make those characters stand out. Other very skilled GMs will simply have the barest of game notes for the scenario, and create the scenario on the fly based on the characters and how they interact with each other. However, most of the time a GM will prepare at least an outline of a scenario, and have certain ideas about where it takes place, the people involved, and so on. If a character has Fates which put them too far outside of that scenario, they won't be able to do much, or won't really care about what happens.

For example, a player may create an oni character, with Fates that focus on oni-centric ideals. However, the GM's scenario really doesn't focus on the oni at all. Perhaps a few minor details could be changed (an oni NPC introduced here or there), but even so the game will not be oni-centric. The GM should simply say, "Well, there really aren't going to be too many oni in this scenario." The GM may still allow the player to make an oni character, but request that the player changes the Fates to ones that will work better with the scenario or the other players. Otherwise, those oni-centric Fates will be wasted; the GM won't have opportunities to bring those issues up in the game, so the player won't have solid opportunities to role-play them.

If you leave these characters unchanged, the scenario could fall apart. A character has no tie into the story, has no motivation to interact with it, and the player has no opportunity to role-play those Fates.

CHARACTERS WHOSE FATES FOCUS TOO MUCH ON THEMSELVES

As soon as the game begins, the players should be creating new Fates for themselves and the other players that describe the relationships between their characters, so there's no need to be worried too much about self-centered characters at the start. However, it's important to note that Tenra Bansho Zero is a game where the stories focus on all of the characters, not just one. If a player chooses Fates that focus only on their own Destiny or future, and don't tie themselves to other characters or NPCs, then that could result in a character that is separated from the other characters. Those characters tend to wander off, to explore, to find their own story. Meanwhile, the other players and GM are left with a constant struggle to keep the story moving forward because they are all on the same page, interacting with NPCs and each other, while the lone PC is off on their own, ignoring the story and the other characters.

This is usually remedied by the players being aware of this kind of potential hazard. At the intermission at the end of the Zero Act, the players should quickly create Fates that involve the other PCs or major story NPCs in order to keep themselves tied to the story.

CREATING NPCS

The GM should create some NPCs for the scenario as well. With experience, the GM can make up solid adversaries that aren't too weak or too powerful on the fly, but starting GMs can make some competent NPC enemies by simply taking one of the

sample characters and adding +3 to all of the attributes, and +1 level to some of their skills. There are tricks in the Scenario chapter of this book which may help fine-tune NPCs for a scenario as well.

Sitting at the Table

In the West, we don't have small Japanese-style *kotatsu* tables to sit around. You'll want to make sure that everyone can hear everyone else. If you have a rectangular table, rather than having the GM sit at the end of the table, it's probably better for the GM to sit at the middle of the table in order to clearly hear and see all of the players. The actual order of seating of the players around the GM is not important. You are free to give the comfortable chair to the person who brings the best snacks to share with the group.

Clever GMs can make good use of how the players sit around the table. There are also sorts of "hidden techniques" that you may discover through play. For example, you may encourage strong inter-character Fates or Destinies to the characters of players who are sitting next to each other. In fact, the GM might encourage a seating order where the GM encourages people with stronger inter-character Fates/Destinies or relationships (good *or* bad) to sit next to each other. The kind of subtle behaviors that occur through the use of organized seating can really fuel the drama of a game session!

The Session Log Sheet

If you wish to use the Session Log Sheet, either make a copy of the one found at the back of the book, or print one of the copies that are online on the Tenra Bansho Zero website. This sheet is used for tracking the general flow of the session. The GM will hand it to a player for record-keeping (if you are using the optional Scene Judge rules for handing out Aiki chits, the scene judge will hold on to this sheet). Write in the character names, player names, and all of the characters' starting Fates.

Throughout the game, as the Fates and Destinies of the characters change, the player with the log sheet will update the Session Log Sheet with that information.

The Session Log Sheet is used not only for tracking Fates, but for also reminding the other players about the Fates that your character has. That way they can bring those Fates up through role-play or take note when you role-play a focus on one of your own Fates.

Players can use notecards instead of the session log sheet to copy down their fates, then place that notecard in the center of the table when their character is in that scene.

Character Introductions

Starting from the GM and going clockwise, the players will all give a brief character self-introduction "in-character" (as if they themselves were that character, talking about themselves). At that time, they'll describe their characters in brief detail: Name, sex, age, a few small details about what they look like and what sort of role/job they do. This should be less than a minute or so per character. Remember, the players will be role-playing the description of their characters as if they were the characters themselves: "My name is X. I'm a young samurai of some renown…" and so forth.

First Fate Roll

Before the first scene begins, have all the players make their first Fate roll. This is a good opportunity for GMs to teach the players how dice rolls function in the game. Have them roll their Empathy ability in dice against their highest-ranked Fate (which will have a rating of Advanced/3), and all successes will form their first small

pool of Kiai points which can be used in the Zero Act. Mark down the starting Kiai on the character sheet. All characters will start with at least three Kiai points.

ADDITIONAL FATES

Each character starts out with two Fates, usually determined by their archetypes. However, the player can remove one of these Fates and replace it with a Fate of their choosing, as long as it ties them directly to one of the other characters at the table.

The GM may also request that the characters start the game with a third Fate before play begins, one that specifically describes their relationship with one of the other characters. One suggestion is to have every player write in a Fate which describes their feelings towards the character owned by the player sitting to their immediate left. That way, all the characters are tied together and no one is left out. If the GM does not request this third Fate, then the players should be ready to create an additional Fate with one of the other characters at the table when the first intermission comes.

The GM will also soon assign each character a Destiny in the Zero Act.

CHOOSING FATES

Most characters will start the game in Act One with four Fates: Two will be already written on the character sheet (or picked from the archetypes when creating a character from scratch), a Destiny (which is a kind of Fate) will be given to the character by the GM either before the game starts or at some point during the Zero Act, and likely one optional relationship-based Fate connected to one of the other player characters created in the intermission after the Zero Act. More Fates are gained during later intermission phases of the game.

THE EMOTION MATRIX

The Emotion Matrix is a great way to determine new character Fates. There is more detail about the use and purpose of the matrix later in the Emotion Matrix rules section, but it is simply a chart that can be used for determining what your character initially thinks about another character when they first meet. It can be used before the Zero Act to prime all the player characters' relationships with each other, or it can be used in the game when one PC interacts with another PC for the first time. It is also used on major NPCs.

For the character's first relationship-base Fate, the player can simply write the result of the Emotion Matrix as a Fate, or perhaps reword it to be a little more fitting. An Emotion Matrix result of "Blood Relative" could result in Fates like "Emotion: I love X as a brother" or "Goal: Protect my brother X at all costs". Additional Fates (for example, Fates purchased during the intermission phase by spending Aiki chits) can be created in this way as well.

One suggestion is to write down the results of all your Emotion Matrix rolls somewhere on your character sheet, perhaps in the Notes section, or in the margins. Later, once you decide to take a Fate towards that character, you can use those notes to help guide your decision.

Not all rolls on the Emotion Matrix will turn into Fates, not even with all the other PCs! You can still care about other characters without writing it up as a Fate. Just because your character has a strong initial reaction about another character, it doesn't mean that this reaction is required to lead to a Fate.

CREATING FATES FROM SCRATCH

Another way for a player to create new Fates for their own or other characters is to utilize what just happened in the game.

Sometimes in play, a player will find a new direction, goal or purpose for their character, or perhaps meet new characters and create new relationships. The player can then create new Fates that fit well within the shared story.

Remember to pick Fates which keep you engaged in the story and engaged with the other characters. If your character becomes too unbalanced with Fates based on personal goals that don't require the aid of the other characters, then your reasons for working together could fall apart. Sometimes this creates interesting character drama between your character and the others. However, a lot of the time it simply means that the GM and the other characters are engaging in an interesting drama, while you are off in your own little world doing not much at all. Split off too far from the goals of the scenario and the relationships with the other characters, and it will be hard to rejoin the game.

PICKING EASY-TO-USE FATES

Some players like the challenge of role-playing the character's subtle or difficult Fates. However, all characters should have at least a few easy-to-use Fates. The most simple and easy to use Fate is a favorable Emotion Fate taken against another player's character: "Emotion: Camaraderie with X", "Emotion: Childhood friend of X", etc. These are easy to role-play and make use of in a game. Even if a character has complex motivations, they should have some easy-to-understand characteristics and emotions in the form of easy-to-use Fates. When you want to create a new Fate, but are unsure of what to take, go with creating a favorable emotional Fate towards one of the other PCs.

STAGE PLAY: THE PRODUCTION

Game setup is complete. Now it's time to actually play the game. The stage is set, and it is time to raise the curtain. We will take on the roles of various characters, and through them tell a fantastic story set in the land of Tenra.

In this section we will describe the system of Acts, Scenes and intermissions which make up the game. First, let's look at these elements in brief, before exploring them in detail.

ACT

The Act represents a period of time within the game, just like the acts of a stage play. The act takes place over a period of time set by the GM. In the acts, the players will role-play their characters' actions. They will talk, fight, get into conflicts, and go on various adventures. The GM should clearly separate the action in one act from another, and label them "Act One", "Act Two" and so on. They can be separated from each other by time (each act representing a day, a week or a month), or by theme (one act could be held entirely within one city, another act could focus on the action within a castle, etc.). In one session of Tenra Bansho Zero, expect to play through 3-4 acts.

In Tenra Bansho Zero, there is also a special starting act called the Zero Act. This is the first act of the game, which introduces each character (one quick scene per character) and establishes the character's role in and connection to the scenario. This is the act where the players receive character Destinies from the GM. The Zero Act is incredibly important, and as such it has a chapter devoted to the organization and play of Zero Act scenes.

SCENE

An act is divided into smaller chunks called Scenes. Or one could say that a string of scenes makes up one act. Think of them as scenes in a play, movie or anime: The characters are set, the location and time are set, and in each scene we see the characters take action. When the characters change location, time passes, or the GM introduces action that happens in a different place or between different characters, the scene will change.

Each scene usually lasts just a few minutes of real time, and most involve drama or role-play between some of the characters in the game.

INTERMISSION

The space between one act and another act is called an intermission. This is a brief period of rest where the players see how their characters change over time. Kiai is spent, Karma is recorded, Fates increase and change, and characters grow and develop during the intermission phases. While intermissions generally happen only in the space between acts, the GM can introduce an intermission in between scenes of an act as well, especially if one act has a large number of scenes. In general, one intermission should occur every hour or so, and should be a brief break that lasts about 10 minutes.

In general, most people have an attention span of about one hour. Intermissions serve to help people relax and keep the game focused. Make good use of intermissions to keep the players recharged and the game lively.

Now let's look at these three elements in greater detail.

ACTS

The GM decides when the next act begins. Each act is made up of a string of scenes. Normally, play progresses in the following manner:

1: Start of an act

2: Begin a scene

3: Decide which players are in the scene

4: Optional: Choose a scene judge

5: Role-play through a scene

6: End the scene

7: Return to 2 for the next scene, or proceed to 8 if the act is at an end.

8: The act ends

9: Intermission

10: The next act begins

There's really nothing special to starting an act. The GM simply announces that the first (second, third, last, etc) act is beginning, and immediately transitions into creating the first scene.

There is no set number of scenes in an act. Some acts may have just a few (2-4), other acts may have several (5 or more). It all depends on what is happening in that act. The GM will usually have a general idea of the number of scenes in an act, but the GM is free to create new scenes as the plot develops or changes.

The GM will decide when to end the act. In many scenarios, each act will have a goal of some kind which the players attempt to achieve. When that string of scenes and that goal is complete, it is time to end one act and move to the intermission phase.

In general, an act should last about one hour of real time. If it goes on too long, it would probably be best to break it up with intermissions. Usually 4-5 scenes will play out in an hour, if the players are concentrating. If you plan to have

more than 6 scenes in one act, consider interjecting intermissions in order to keep the players refreshed.

When the act ends, the next intermission begins. After the last act, the GM should provide an epilogue to summarize what happens to the characters after the scenario ends.

Scenes

The scenes are where all of the real action of Tenra Bansho occurs. It is where the players role-play the actions of their characters. Think of scenes in terms of stage plays or movies: A point of time, at one place, where a few of the characters do things. When that scene comes to a close, the action moves on to the next scene. When planning out a scenario, the GM should record the scenes by number: "Scene One", "Scene Two", and so on.

PICKING CHARACTERS TO APPEAR IN THE SCENE

While some scenes will feature all of the characters together, many of the scenes should feature just a few of them, perhaps two. The scene will focus on those characters. When their scene ends, it will be the other characters' turns. It's important to give everyone a chance to role-play their characters, so keep careful track of who appears in which scenes.

The GM might have ideas for scenes written down ("OK, next we're outside the castle, and the samurai is talking to the NPC princess. Go!"), or she might decide the next scene based on game factors, like making sure that a character who did not appear in the last scene appears in the next scene. Another common practice is to have a scene that features a character whose player has the fewest Aiki chits, giving them more chances to role-play. There are a lot of factors to weigh when picking the characters for the new scene.

The GM might call for an open scene, allowing any player who wishes to appear be allowed in. Or she might declare a set scene where only 1-2 characters are allowed (usually for purposes of focus or advancing the plot). In scenes where the GM wishes to have other NPCs present, she may request volunteers from the other players whose characters are not participating in those scenes to take on those roles. This is a great opportunity for players to step up and take the role of interesting background characters, as well as be rewarded with Aiki chits for doing so.

ACTING PLAYERS AND SCENE PLAYERS

Everyone sitting around the table is a player, although we commonly make a distinction between the players and the GM. The players that are currently in the scene, taking on the role of their own player characters, are called "acting players".

If the GM is focusing on the story, plot or drama of one single PC for that scene (a few acting players, but one of them with clearly a major role in the scene) than that acting player is sometimes referred to as the "scene player". They're the "star" of that scene. The rules don't change for that PC, but the GM will give their character's story more of a focus on that scene.

INTRODUCING THE SCENE

The GM will introduce the location and the time of the scene, as well as a brief rundown of the situation, to give the players an idea of what is going on. This is the place where you might also introduce some NPCs to the scene. The GM determines which players will be the acting players for that scene. The GM may also decide which of

the acting players is the scene player, the player whose PC will be the focus of that scene.

Scenes With Fewer Acting Players

One thing to be aware of, for experienced role-players and GMs of other role-playing games; most games don't set scenes in such a strict fashion as in Tenra Bansho Zero. It might take a little bit of time to get used to this structure. In most games there is a natural tendency to create all of the scenes so that all of the characters appear and interact at the same time. This is great at times, but creating a lot of focused scenes where only two PCs are involved allows the players more opportunity for in-character role-playing.

The default method in Tenra Bansho Zero is to have scenes with only some of the characters in them, usually two or three. There can be one PC in a scene (maybe bring a few other players come into the scene to take on the role of NPCs), and of course you can have scenes with all the players in them. However, remember that when opening a scene as a GM, you need to pick the PCs, location and time. Make sure you go through that exercise each time you open a scene to limit the number of players within the scene.

You'll see that relationships between characters are formed quickly and change drastically when the GM sets the scenes for a limited number of PCs. In general, if a GM realizes that the last few scenes have involved all of the PCs, it would be good to force a scene between just two of the characters, even if it lasts for just a minute or two. Make up an excuse for those characters to be away from the others, and see what direction the players take their characters.

CHOOSE A SCENE JUDGE

If you are playing the game with the optional scene judge rules (see the Karma rules section for more details), before the scene begins the GM or players determine the next scene judge here.

Examples:

GM: "In this next scene, we see the outside of the mountain temple at dawn. Some students are practicing meditations in the courtyard. Autumn Rain is here, as well as Genta the Claw. The master of the temple, an elderly, kind-looking woman, notices you and gestures for you to come speak with her. Autumn Rain, we'll have you be the scene player and take the lead here."

GM: "You're all in a tavern. It's night, and the place is noisy due to the nearby mine workers spending their salaries for good food, drink and conversation. Let's have Genta the Claw and Spring Reflection discuss their plans for the next season. Jason, since you're not in this scene, I'd like you to play the role of the barkeep. Also, Elizabeth, you're going to be a townie who doesn't like strangers, and will try to pick a fight with Genta."

GM: "Dusk falls in the Floating Palace. A while back, Empress Genshi Daigo invited Spring Reflection to discuss what should be done about the recent assassination attempt from the Southern Court, so let's do that scene. I'll be the Empress. Jason, you'll be her over-protective advisor. The Empress speaks…"

GM: "This Act is drawing to a close. Any of you want to have one last scene before moving on to the intermission? If so, let me know in brief what you want to do or who you want to interact with, and we'll make that scene happen now. Anyone? Alright Jennifer, you want a scene with Autumn Rain and Spring Reflection at an outdoor hot springs at night, discussing the previous battle? Sounds good, let's do it!"

ACTION!

The action begins. The acting players role-play their characters' actions and words, and the scene progresses from there.

While there are many kinds of scenes that can possibly happen in a game of Tenra Bansho, most scenes that the GM starts will follow one of these two basic patterns: scenes where the characters have to take action to overcome some kind of event or challenge, and scene where the characters meet with or talk to an NPC, and react to the information gained from the NPC. While these are effectively both called "scenes", the kinds of things that would happen in each of these scenes, or the kinds of role-playing that will happen, are quite different.

EVENT SCENES

In event scenes, the GM takes the initiative to set up in advance some kind of challenge for one or more of the PCs to overcome. The longhouse catches fire. The merchant leaps at you with a fierce expression, katana drawn. The Bright Lotus monk is singing a song that is clearly insulting your regent. The path to the town is blocked by three members of the ninja clan who have been hunting you, and they look ready for action. The person in the gambling house sitting across from you looks very much like the kugutsu you were paid to find.

The players must act. In these situations, if the players don't start describing their actions right away, the GM should ask, "OK, what do you do?" There is usually a lead-up to the event of the scene, but the scene usually focuses on whatever even the GM planned (or came up with on the fly). When that event is overcome, the scene will usually wrap up and end.

REACTION SCENES

Reaction scenes are where a GM presents an open choice to the players. This often takes place in a scene with another NPC. The NPC will present new information to the characters, and the players decide how their characters react. The lord tells the PCs to find a priceless kugutsu, but leave it up to the characters as to how they go about finding her. The monk tells the characters that a monk in another temple is performing evil acts, and leaves the means and methods of punishment up to the character.

Depending on those reactions, the game may proceed down a different path than expected. It's also expected that the GM is open to any choice the player comes up with as well, and won't simply force the player to choose one single option anyway.

Reaction scenes can be excellent ways to show off the personalities of the characters when they make their choices. However, sometimes a player will have a hard time choosing what they want their character to do. In those situations the GM could give them a prod towards action by giving them a binary choice: Something like, "If you want to do X, you might want to do *this*. If you would rather do Y, you might want to say *that*."

For example, the characters fight their way through an evil merchant's fortress, and beat him into submission. The GM sets up a reaction scene where the merchant pleads for the characters to let him go, perhaps even pleading that he will change his wicked ways. "The decision is totally up to you," the GM says, "You can do whatever you want at this point." If the players seem to stall, or aren't sure what they should do next, the GM can offer suggestions like, "If you want to bring him to bloody justice, you are well within your right to do so. Your lord will permit any action here. If you think that

he might be capable of changing his ways if you let him go, and you want to look the other way if he promises to behave, that's fine too." The important thing to remember for the GM is not to make any "correct answers". If the GM sets up a truly open reaction scene, she should be prepared for the players to make unexpected decisions. If it makes sense within the story, make sure not to instinctively say "no" simply because the GM didn't make any plans for that contingency.

In the above scene, we can see that the GM has presented a situation for the players to engage in. The GM here (unlike normal scenes) didn't set who would appear in the scene, simply leaving it open for now.

SETTING UP A SCENE

GM: New scene. Nightfall washes over the path like a thick blanket. The moon, as bright as it has been in weeks, illuminates the forest path in front of you. The forest night is as quiet as death, and not even the forest insects dare make a sound, for fear of attracting the attention of the eerie silence.

This is where the characters find themselves. Let's see them enter the scene.

Player A: So I don't see anyone else nearby?

GM: It doesn't appear that there are others here. And yet, the thick, cloying smell of blood hits your nostrils. It feels like the air itself in this forest wishes to do evil upon you. It doesn't feel like you're being watched… it feels like something is marking you for death.

Player B: Ugh, I've got a bad feeling about this. I yell out quickly, then listen for movement or try to sense any attackers. Kind of like echolocation. Actually, I'm just trying to get any danger to present itself now rather than later.

GM: OK. Use one of your combat abilities like Unarmed Combat, Melee Weapons, Marksman or Evasion, and roll using your Spirit attribute…

As the players step forward and describe their characters actions, they are taking part in the scene without specifically being called on to participate in the scene. The GM should set up situations to pull in the players and the players should try hard to jump in and start doing things in-character. The more dangerous the scene seems, the faster the players will tend to jump in and start acting.

A GM should also open up the framing of the scene from time to time, and turn it over to the players. If the next scene is not set in stone, the GM might ask the players if anyone has an idea for a situation in the next scene. If a player's suggestion sounds exciting, then go with it. If the player's suggestion sounds out-of-place with the scenario or strange, either offer a compromise or simply say no and move along to a new scene.

ENTERING A SCENE

A GM lays down a scene and declares the participating characters in the scene, or simply leaves it open for any player to join. If a character is not explicitly in a scene, they can still join. The player can spend a point of Kiai to allow their character to enter the scene.

Spending a Kiai point is a good way to force your character into a scene where they might normally not be there. Your character happened to be nearby, or happened to overhear the other characters talking, that sort of thing. However, if having your character enter the scene later was something that works for the GM, he may waive the 1 point Kiai fee and allow your character to enter at no cost.

CALLING A PC OR PLAYER INTO A SCENE

Sometimes a GM wants to suddenly bring another player character into the scene after that scene has already begun. By giving that

character's player one Aiki chit, he can have that player jump into that scene. When the GM does this, that player does not spend a Kiai point to enter the scene, because they were pulled in by the GM.

Calling a player into a scene does not always mean having them bring in their character. For example, sometimes the GM will want the players (whose characters are currently not in the scene) to take on the roles of important background NPCs. The GM can offer an Aiki chit to the player if they come into the scene and play the role of an NPC during another character's scene.

The player can resist if they really don't want to be in that scene, in which case they do not receive the Aiki chit.

This example scene just sort of began from nothing. There were no set players or characters, just the GM beginning a scene through role-playing, and offering an Aiki chit to a player to join. If the GM doesn't care who is in the scene, she might simply hold up an Aiki chit, encouraging any player to jump into character into the scene (and thus receive the chit).

THE GM PULLS IN ANOTHER PLAYER

It's best to bring in players using at least a little acting or role-play. Here's an example:

GM (Role-playing a Regent): "Anyone? I say, is anyone here?"

GM: …is what the regent says as he calls to you from his chamber.

(the GM passes an Aiki chit to a player, gives that player a knowing nod indicating that she's putting that player on the spot to take action)

Player: "My lord, I am here!" I say, presenting myself before him.

GM: "Oh!" says the regent, gladly surprised at your sudden entrance…

One thing to note is to not start off scenes this way too often. Sometimes they provide an explosive rush of cool role-playing. Doing it too often, though, and rewarding players who join into "player-less" scenes all the time, could encourage the players not to step forward when the GM is creating the scene, creating a situation where the players will only step forward when they will be rewarded with an Aiki chit. Keep that in mind, and strike a balance between crafted scenes with set players, and open scenes with rewards for player who jump in.

LEAVING A SCENE

A player can leave a scene with the GM's permission any time they wish, in any way they want to.

WHEN NPCS LEAVE A SCENE

NPCs are for the most part totally controlled by the GM, so they will leave the scene when the GM says so (even if another player is temporarily taking on the role of that NPC for a scene). Sometimes the GM will have a combat scene where they wish to have a major NPC run away before they are killed (as they plan to have them face the player characters again, perhaps as a "final boss" for the scenario); this kind of thing happens in plays and movies all the time.

In a combat situation, a player can spend two Kiai to make an "interruption action" (see the Karma rules for details), perhaps to jump at the NPC and defeat them before they can run away. In that kind of situation, where the GM has definite plans for that NPC in a future scene, simply tell the player that the NPC runs away before they could react, and the player does not lose the Kiai spent. Just let the players know that the NPC will get away this time but will return later, and the players should be okay with that.

ENDING THE SCENE

The GM can call for the scene to end at any time. From that point, the GM can either introduce the next scene or call for an intermission phase if appropriate.

The GM should call an end to the scene after one of the following conditions:

- The time changes

The scene was played out, and the next events will naturally occur at a different time.

- The location changes

The characters end their interactions in one place, and the action moves to another place. "Meanwhile, back at the castle…" is an appropriate way to end one scene and begin another.

- The scene is played out

When the players have nothing more to say or do, or nothing further to react to, it is time to close the scene.

In order to move the story along, it is important to make sure that play doesn't linger on unimportant things. If the players are in the middle of an exciting role-play moment, then the GM should let that conversation or role-play conclude and then end the scene there. If the scene goes on too long, or the GM doesn't cut the scene when the action winds down, it will take longer to get to the more interesting scenes of the game.

As a GM, you will soon spot times when the players will come to a gradual standstill, unsure of what steps their characters should take next. That's when you should cut the scene so that it doesn't linger, and then jump forward a bit to the next scene, perhaps a few minutes or hours in the future, in a different place.

It's important for the GM to keep the action moving forward. But the GM will also have to balance this with not pushing too hard or too fast. If the GM keeps cutting forward any time there's no "Extreme Action", that may lead to scenes that feel disjointed, with no opportunities for the players to role-play the nuances and subtleties of their characters. The GM should try to find that balance.

- Combat ends

If the scene featured a combat, the scene will usually end right after combat concludes. In the next scene, we will see all of the characters at their full Vitality points again.

INTERMISSIONS

Intermission phases are just as the name implies: they are a period of rest between acts. While the GM may want to break up an exceptionally long act with an intermission, the GM should always put an intermission phase between two acts, even if the acts run quickly.

The intermission is a period where the players think about the changes that their characters went through in the previous act, and prepare their characters for challenges in the next act. It only needs to last for a few minutes. It is also an opportunity for the players to go to the bathroom or eat a snack.

The GM is the one who calls for the intermission. The GM decides when the intermission begins, and when it ends.

INTERMISSION EVENTS

The following are the things that happen during each intermission.

PREVIEW OF THE NEXT ACT

The GM provides a preview of the events of the next act. This is similar to the preview or the "On the Next Episode of…"

segments which we see at the end of an episode of an anime or TV drama. Some previews will be very matter-of-fact ("You will go to the castle and stand off against the evil Regent's army"). Some previews will be more poetic. Some GMs will have a few pre-written sentences to use as their preview, while other GMs may wing it as events in the story change the events of the next act.

The preview is important, as the players will use it as a jumping-off point to think about their characters and what they wish to accomplish in the next act. This will lead to some players increasing the abilities or skills of their characters, or more often, changing or increasing appropriate Fates that they think will be addressed in the next act. The GM shouldn't give everything

ACTS AND INTERMISSIONS

As explained before, the intermission offers a period of rest for the players. As the span of concentration for humans is about one hour, breaking up the game into roughly hour-long acts and inserting intermissions will let the players recover and refocus on the game.

However, think of the events of a game of Tenra Bansho Zero as a story. A story has chapters: That's what the acts are. Each chapter contains multiple scenes where the action and drama occurs. Chapters exist in a book to prevent the reader from feeling the need to power from one end of a novel to the other. They offer periods of rest and reflection, so that the reader can think about the events that just occurred. The same thing happens in many stage plays and kabuki theater as well. Breaking up the story cleanly with acts and intermissions will push the story forward and keep it focused.

The GM can insert intermissions wherever they are needed, but the GM is encouraged not to use intermissions too often (more than once an hour, for example). The players play their characters through the acts, and the intermission is where we see the characters change; creating too many intermissions and not long enough acts means that the characters do fewer things in play, and thus hardly change at all during the intermission.

A POETIC PREVIEW

(GM reads the following intermission she prepared the day before, which consists of seemingly random lines of dialogue and poetic descriptions using different intonations)

(in a soft voice) "My father… the Regent doesn't care whether I live or die!"

(in a calm narrator's voice) The great gears of Fate slowly grind forward, crushing everything that gets between them.

Four assemble in the mountain village of Haruyama. The shadow that forms behind them, at a glance, looks like the outline of a serpent.

Blades will cross at the mountain pass. War seems imminent.

(in a rough, noble voice) "Those who won't stand with us against the tide, they will be crushed underneath it."

(back to the narrator voice) An attack at the mountain threatens to unravel everything. Not even the great kami know who will emerge victorious.

Tenra Bansho Zero, Act Three: Renka and the Assassins

A STRAIGHTFORWARD PREVIEW

GM: Okay guys, the next Act… Let's see… We're going to start off in that Haruyama town where we ended the last Act. We're going to spend most of the Act in this town. There is going to be some investigation, we'll see what happens to Renka the kugutsu, and finally the boss fight against the samurai warlord Garoku. Get ready for Act Three, "Renka and the Assassins".

away, but like a good anime or drama preview, she should describe in vague details a few possible key events that are likely to occur.

The preview should also have a certain amount of impact. "Three years have passed since the last act..." How's that for the beginning of a dramatic preview? While most scenarios will feature events that happen in roughly the same time period and location, having huge changes in time or location will certainly create a memorable tale. Make sure that if you go that route that the changes make sense to the players. They could step on a boat at the end of one act and start the next act in a foreign land several months later. How this is handled is up to the GM. And the GM, as always, is expected to balance "impact" with "utter craziness" when it comes to previews and following acts.

INCREASE KARMA

All of the Kiai spent in the previous act becomes Karma at this time. Record the new Karma total on the character sheet. Unspent Kiai remains in the Kiai pool, which can be used later.

If the character wishes to replenish their pool of soulgems, it is done at this time. New mechanica, annelids, and new skills can also be taken, or old skills increased at this time. Anything that requires the expense of Kiai to attain is taken here, and the Kiai spent immediately becomes Karma. The character cannot gain new skills or equipment that require more Kiai than the character has in stock: Sometimes a player must wait for the next act, and accumulate more Kiai, in order to gain more powerful equipment and skills.

THE ANATMAN/"DOCTRINE OF NO-SELF" PHASE

"The Doctrine of No-Self" is a Buddhist doctrine that says "All things are impermanent and change from moment to moment, never staying the same". This phase is probably the most important in the intermission for the characters; it is where the characters' Fates change.

The players will have an opportunity to create new Fates, to raise up the rank of existing Fates, to sublimate or erase Fates, and to rewrite Fates. Please see the Karma rules for a breakdown of how this process works.

One important thing to note is that at the end of this phase, if a character has more than 108 Karma points, then he immediately becomes an Asura (demon or "lost soul") and is removed from play. This No-Self phase is where the player attempts to lower Karma to prevent that from happening.

MAKE FATE ROLLS AND GAIN KIAI

This is where the players exchange all of their accumulated Aiki chits for Fate rolls. For each Fate roll in the intermission, the player takes their character's Empathy attribute score in dice, and rolls against their highest-ranked Fate. One Fate roll is made for each Aiki chit owned: If the player has twelve Aiki chits, then she makes twelve Fate rolls, building up a nice pile of Kiai to use later. Each success grants a Kiai point which can be added under the Kiai point total. Role-playing well in the previous act will give a player more Kiai points to spend in the next act.

GM AND PLAYERS DISCUSS THE GAME

The GM and players should discuss in brief what just happened in the last act. If a player has certain ideas that he thinks

might be cool for his character, he can tell the GM here and discuss the possibilities of making that happen in the story. If the players have suggestions for the GM, or the GM has suggestions for the players, those would be discussed here as well. In general, this is where the GM and players talk about what they think of the scenario so far, and what they are imagining will happen in the next act.

TAKE A BREAK

Take a breather. Clear your mind, grab a snack or drink, stand up and stretch your legs, hit the bathroom. Check those phone messages, talk with your friends about some cool anime or movie you've seen recently, and let off some steam. A ten minute break should bring all the players back on track and keep them focused through the next act.

THE GAME PLAYS OUT

The group goes through acts, scenes, more scenes, intermissions, and so on. The game moves in that fashion until the scenario draws to a close. We'll take a look next at what happens towards the end of the game.

CURTAIN CALL AND EPILOGUE

After everyone has enjoyed their tale in a game of Tenra Bansho Zero, it's time to bring the session to a close. Here's what happens after the last act has concluded.

SCENE JUDGE BONUS

If you are playing with the optional scene judge rules, check the Session Log Sheet to see how many times each player has been a scene judge. Each player is awarded with a number of bonus Aiki chits equal to the number of times they acted as a scene judge. If one of the players declared a Moment of Truth, they do not receive this bonus (see the Moment of Truth rules for an explanation).

THE FINAL INTERMISSION

It's probably better to call it an Epilogue, as the game has reached its conclusion. However, one final intermission phase begins when the last act ends. We will see how the characters have changed in the last act, as well as see if any have become lost as Asura.

IMPROVING YOUR CHARACTER

If the character has enough Kiai points, the player can spend them to increase the level of attributes and skills or gain new skills. Remember that this spent Kiai will immediately become Karma. You can spend Kiai and bring your character to a total higher than 108. However, make sure that by changing and sublimating your Fates during the No-Self Phase you can lower your Karma back down again. See the Karma section for the details on changing Fates.

Players do not need to improve their character if they don't want to. It's common for a player to play a new character in a new adventure rather than playing a previous character again: That character's story is *done*. If a player wishes to play this character again later, though, now is a good opportunity to improve that character's attributes and skills if they want to.

SUBLIMATE DESTINIES AND MAKE FINAL FATE ADJUSTMENTS

After the character spends Kiai improving their characters, the last "Doctrine of No-Self" phase begins. The players should sublimate (erase) their Destiny if it has been achieved. As per normal Fate rules (see the Karma rules chapter for details), this will lower the character's Karma. The players probably won't need to create new Fates or raise the level of existing Fates, but they are welcome to do so if they really

want to. It might be a good way to show how their character will live out the rest of their life after the session is concluded.

If the character has more than 108 Karma at the end of the last No-Self phase, their character is lost forever. That character becomes an Asura, or simply dies. See the Karma rules for more details on Asura.

EPILOGUE

The GM should spend the last few moments talking about the results of the characters' actions and discuss in brief what happens to the characters after the curtain closes. Perhaps each player could describe a quick one-minute "scene" in the life of their character, days or even years after the events of the scenario. This is the kind of scene we might see as the credits roll on the last episode of an anime, movie or TV drama.

CLEANING UP

The table is a mess, so help clean it up. Throw garbage away, and do your part to leave the play-space cleaner than when you started. This is, in fact, a rule of the game which must be followed by all of the players.

AFTER-GAME DISCUSSION

Many games of Tenra Bansho happen on a weekend day, or are broken up over a series of a few weeknights. After the curtain falls and the players clean up, don't just split. Instead, take a few minutes to discuss the game with your friends. Talk about what they liked, what they thought could use improvement, and just reflect on the fun moments of the scenario. Make plans for when to play next, and who will act as the GM. Feel free to move to another location for the after-game discussion if you want. Unfortunately, there are no good Japanese-style taverns (*izakaya*) outside of Japan, but a family restaurant, fast-food joint or other place to eat and talk would work fine.

The after-game discussion is an important part of the game, so don't forget to do it. There are many players who consider the after-play discussion of the game events an integral part of the game, so if possible schedule some time for this discussion.

That concludes the play of a session of Tenra Bansho Zero. Hopefully, everyone has had fun, and is interested in playing again.

IN THE BEGINNING
THE STAGE IS SET
THE CHARACTERS TAKE FORM
GOALS BECOME KNOWN
EMOTIONS TAKE SHAPE

ZERO ACT AND THE EMOTION MATRIX

THE RULES WHICH BRING CHARACTERS TO LIFE

In this section, we will explore some of the rules central to the beginning and the end of the game. The Zero Act, Destinies, Emotion Matrix and Moment of Truth.

ZERO ACT

The first act of the game is not Act One, but the Zero Act. In it, each PC has their own scene where they are introduced. We discover a little bit about the character, and the GM gives the PC's player a Destiny.

DESTINIES

Destinies (capitalized) are a special kind of Fate: They are a Fate that the GM assigns to the player. It represents the PC's role or goal in the scenario. The rules for handling Destinies are otherwise the same as Fates.

EMOTION MATRIX

The Emotion Matrix is a six-by-six grid of 36 dramatic emotions. It is used to determine what your character initially thinks about major NPCs and other PCs. The Emotion Matrix is used primarily in the Zero Act and initial scenes of the first act.

MOMENT OF TRUTH

Towards the end of the scenario, a player can call for a Moment of Truth: This optional rule (with GM permission) is a last-ditch effort that allows the other players to give them their Aiki chits. The player uses the last of this Aiki for Fate rolls, and amasses a large amount of Kiai which they can then use.

Let's take a look at each in detail:

THE ZERO ACT

The very first act in the game is a special act called the Zero Act. It sets the mood, image and feel for the rest of the game, and it is where the characters are given their Destinies. If the Zero Act goes well, it is very likely that the rest of the game will proceed smoothly as well. For this reason, the first act is a very important set of scenes.

SCENES IN THE ZERO ACT

Scenes in the Zero Act are created and happen very similar to other scenes in the game. The only difference is that usually each scene will focus on only one single player character.

The Zero Act is essentially a way to introduce the player characters which will appear throughout the rest of the adventure, as well as give them an opportunity for their players to get used to role-playing their actions and personalities. What happens in the Zero Act comes down to equal parts of character introduction, scenario introduction and player warm-up. The scenes of this first act push these goals.

WHICH CHARACTERS TAKE PART IN THE SCENE?

It doesn't matter which PCs are introduced in their own scenes first. The GM might choose to start by giving a character a particular Destiny which best demonstrates the point of the game. Or the GM might have an idea for a scene with a lot of impact for a particular character, and decide to start out with that scene first. Go with whatever method works best. If the GM isn't sure, she should begin with the player on her left. Or perhaps begin with the player who is the most veteran role-player, or the most veteran Tenra player.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE IN THE ZERO ACT

Unlike the other scenes in other acts, the Zero Act scenes focus on each character, each scene highlighting and introducing one character. For the sake of the story, the GM might have two player characters in one scene (one with a minor role in another character's focused scene). More commonly, the GM will have the character interact with other NPCs (the PC's lord, friends, family, peers, etc), whose roles can be given to the players not in that scene. In any case, unlike other scenes, the players cannot spend Kiai points to appear in a scene: The GM is the sole person who determines who appears in a Zero Act scene.

AIKI CHITS AND THE FIRST SCENE JUDGE

If you are playing with the optional scene judge rules, then the scene judge will be the person sitting to the right of the player whose character is the focus of the scene. Explain the role of the scene judge to that player. After that, the next scene judge will become the player whose scene just ended.

If you are playing by the normal audience rules, this is where the GM describes the importance of handing out Aiki chits to the players, as well as finding the balance between giving too few and giving too many. Each of the players should pick up and ready a few Aiki chits to give to the scene player.

WHAT HAPPENS IN A ZERO ACT SCENE?

The GM will hand the Destinies to the characters, one Destiny per character per scene.

The scene should introduce the major NPCs of the scenario to the characters. These NPCs will affect the outcome of the story. If there is a noble lord who gives a

PC a secret mission, it should happen in the first act. If there is an evil general who is planning to destroy the nation, one of the PCs should meet him in this first act. If there is a good opportunity or story reason for the PCs to meet, this will happen in the first act as well.

This is where all the major Emotion Matrix rolls happen. There should absolutely be at least one matrix roll per character per scene, either against a major background NPC or against one of the other player characters. This places the player's character in the events which will unfold through the rest of the game. The character will encounter one of the other major characters in the story (NPC or PC), in an almost fated encounter. The GM then hands the player their Destiny.

COMBAT IN THE ZERO ACT

Combat can slow down or derail the scene in a Zero Act, so it's best not to have combat at all. If having a scene with fighting in it is important to the story, simply narrate the victory (or, more commonly, the defeat) of the PC and move on with the story.

If you want to quickly demonstrate how combat works, or all the players are experienced players of Tenra Bansho, then the GM could set up a single-roll Sneak Attack, or perhaps roll through one round (at most) of combat. More often than not, though, it will be better to simply talk through what happens in the combat instead of rolling, let the GM make any final decisions, and introduce real combat sometime in Acts One or Two.

MAKING EMOTION MATRIX ROLLS

At least one Emotion Matrix roll is made per scene of the Zero Act. Just like regular Emotion Matrix rolls, the player has the opportunity to spend Kiai to change the result (using any Kiai gained with that

PLAYING IN THE PAST

An interesting technique that is often used in the Zero Act is to show what happened to the character in the past. It could be a few weeks or even several years, but an event in the past should be a pivotal point in the life of that character, involve another PC or major NPC, and show us what drives that character.

A common example is for the excellent "Loss of your Most Important Thing" Fate which comes with the archetype "Hard Luck". This could be an object (a sword, an heirloom) or more commonly it is a person. The first scene could show how the character had that thing: An idyllic lifestyle living with this person, a covetous samurai who demonstrates his most prized sword, a king ruling over his kingdom. The scene could also show us how that thing was lost, which will absolutely shed some light upon that character's motivation. Bandits attack and kidnap or slay a loved one, a lord demands the samurai give him an heirloom katana, a king is exiled or forced from his kingdom.

Other times, we see what made that character who they are now, in much the same way as a flashback scene in a superhero movie or comic: the fight lost to a major NPC, which convinces an otherwise common warrior to become a gem-studded samurai; the conditions which cause the annelidist to implant his most dangerous bug inside of his head to serve under an NPC lord, the grueling training of a lunatic kugutsu-maker which leads to the kugutsu running away from her home and soon meeting another PC.

Playing a pivotal character scene from the past is an excellent way to start the story in the present, but make sure that each scene includes a major NPC or PC who will appear later in the game, and at least one Emotion Matrix roll.

single Fate Roll made during game set-up), and the GM and other players have the ability to influence the player with Aiki chits. You should talk through this process, to make sure that you either go with an emotion that will favor the events of the scenario: favorable results for major "good" NPCs, unfavorable results for major "bad" NPCs and so forth.

Don't forget that it might make for a great tale to have an unfavorable reaction towards a "good" NPC or PC, and a favorable reaction towards an "evil" NPC. Just talk it out when the Emotion Matrix roll is made and decided. If a player chooses an unfavorable reaction towards another PC and from that point on never tries to role-play a reconciliation, that will be problematic for the scenario and the other players. This often leads to one single player taking their character off in another direction, creating a "tale for myself" instead of working with the other players. Talk about it as a group so that the player understands that they should aim to overcome that initial unfavorable reaction, and *quickly*.

PASSING OUT THE DESTINIES

In most cases, the GM will pass a Destiny to the player, either writing it in advance on paper and physically passing it to the player, or simply telling the player to write the Destiny on their character sheet at the end of that character's scene. However, if an opportunity presents itself in the middle of the scene, the GM should be free to hand out the Destiny in the middle of the scene as appropriate.

Also, don't change the pre-crafted Destinies due to events in the Zero Act scenes. For example, a GM sets up a scene where a PC samurai will meet a princess. If they interact favorably (driven by the Emotion Matrix roll) the GM could hand out the Destiny "Goal: Protect the Princess: 2" to the player as they are talking to each other in character. However, if they do not interact favorably (the player chooses an unfavorable reaction to the NPC) the GM should simply pass the Destiny to the character at the end of the scene anyway. The character might not be getting along with the princess now, but it is his Destiny to protect her; over time, this will hopefully drive the samurai's player to change how he feels towards the princess in the game. This makes for a great story.

ENDING THE SCENE

The GM calls for the end of the scene, and hands out a Destiny to the character spotlighted in that scene (if he hasn't given the player a Destiny already).

ENDING THE ZERO ACT

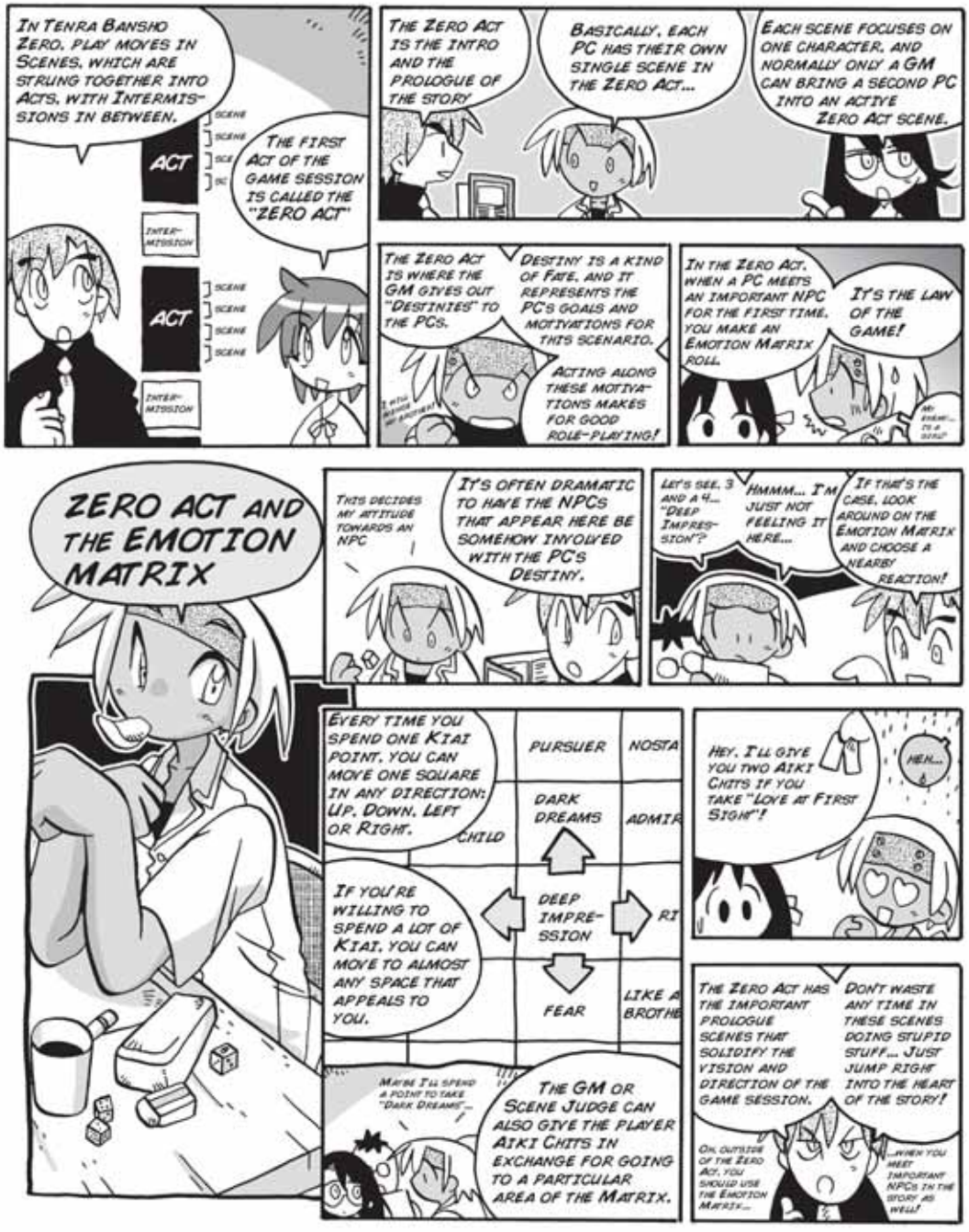
When all of the characters have one introductory scene, it's time to call the Zero Act closed and move on to the first intermission.

THE ZERO ACT INTERMISSION

The first intermission phase in the game, the Zero Act intermission, is very similar to most regular intermissions. There are some slight differences to how the Zero Act intermission works from other intermissions. Review the rules for intermissions, then take note of the following examples and exceptions for this first intermission.

THE PREVIEW

The first preview is very important, more so than any other preview in the game. It's the prologue. In console video game terms, this is the "opening movie" where we get a picture of the world and the opening credits roll. Something explosive should be


In Tenra Bansho Zero, play moves in Scenes, which are strung together into Acts, with Intermissions in between.
ACT
SCENE
SCENE
SCE
SC
INTER-MISSION
ACT
SCENE
SCENE
SCENE
SCENE
INTER-MISSION
The first Act of the game session is called the "Zero Act"
The Zero Act is the intro and the prologue of the story
Basically, each PC has their own single scene in the Zero Act...
Each scene focuses on one character, and normally only a GM can bring a second PC into an active Zero Act scene.
The Zero Act is where the GM gives out "Destinies" to the PCs.
Destiny is a kind of Fate, and it represents the PC's goals and motivations for this scenario.
Acting along these motivations makes for good role-playing!
In the Zero Act, when a PC meets an important NPC for the first time, you make an Emotion Matrix roll.
It's the law of the game!
Zero Act and the Emotion Matrix
This decides my attitude towards an NPC
It's often dramatic to have the NPCs that appear here be somehow involved with the PC's Destiny.
Let's see, 3 and a 4... "Deep Impression"?
Hmmm... I'm just not feeling it here...
If that's the case, look around on the Emotion Matrix and choose a nearby reaction!
Every time you spend one Kiai point, you can move one square in any direction: Up, Down, Left or Right.
PURSUER
NOSTA
DARK DREAMS
ADMIR
CHILD
DEEP IMPRESSION
RI
FEAR
LIKE A BROTHE
If you're willing to spend a lot of Kiai, you can move to almost any space that appeals to you.
Maybe I'll spend a point to take "Dark Dreams"...
The GM or Scene Judge can also give the player Aiki Chits in exchange for going to a particular area of the Matrix.
Hey, I'll give you two Aiki Chits if you take "Love at First Sight"!
HEH...
The Zero Act has the important prologue scenes that solidify the vision and direction of the game session.
Don't waste any time in these scenes doing stupid stuff... Just jump right into the heart of the story!
Oh, outside of the Zero Act, you should use the Emotion Matrix...
...when you meet important NPCs in the story as well!

happening, driving up the players' interest or involvement in what is about to come in Act One and the rest of the game.

DOCTRINE OF NO-SELF PHASE

Use this first intermission to create new Fates or raise the level of existing Fates (or the Destiny). At this point, if there is any player that has not created at least one Fate in relation to another character (especially another PC), have them do so now. If the GM determines that the game will basically start with all of the characters knowing each other, the players could make their inter-character Emotion Matrix rolls at this time and create a Fate or two based on the results.

The intricacies of how Fates work can be confusing to new players. So simply tell the players to raise most or all of their Fates up by one level or dot (and only one, not two or more), and not to think too hard about it. Tell them that raising the Fates they want to focus on for now will be important later in the game, and leave it at that. Also, there is no need to balance the Fate cost with the character's Karma level (see Karma Rules for more details), because at this point even if a character raises all of their Fates by one level or dot, they will still not come close to that limit: There's no need to bother calculating it until the next intermission. Make sure that all players raise at least one single Fate or Destiny up by one level.

You will not sublimate or change Fates in the first intermission; your Karma will not be reduced at this time.

FATE ROLLS AND KIAI

Aiki chits can carry over from one act to the next. However, it's important to have the players spend all of their current Aiki chits on Fate rolls and convert them into Kiai. Explain that unless they do this, their character won't have the power to accomplish the kinds of wondrous feats that you can do by using Kiai. Kiai is power, so try to accumulate as much as possible, even if you don't end up using it.

GAME DISCUSSION

This is a great opportunity to answer the player questions about the rules or the game in general, or discuss some things that happened in the Zero Act. Don't dally too long on game discussion, though. The point is to play the game, not to *talk about playing the game*.

TAKE A BREAK

At this point, everyone should be ready to move on to Act One. Feel free to skip the first break and move right into the next act. However, if you've spent 40 or more minutes in the Zero Act, maybe a 5 to 10 minute break first would be best to get people ready for action.

THE PURPOSE OF DESTINIES

Destiny is a rule which creates the story-based motivation for player characters. As human beings, we strive for meaning in our actions. In much the same way, we want our characters to have a purpose to passionately work towards. A purpose makes the character's actions make sense.

Destinies are a call to action. If a player is struggling to find a way to role-play his character, the Destiny provides a simple, clean outlet. An inexperienced role-player, or a veteran role-player who gets temporarily overwhelmed, can rely on Destinies to drive their character through the scenario. If all else fails, focusing on the Destiny will help the game go smoothly. For that reason, Destinies focused on scenario goals or Destinies that focus on a major NPC in the scenario often work best.

DESTINIES

The GM will later assign the characters a special kind of Fate called a "Destiny", either before play begins or in the first act.

Destinies are Fates that deal directly with the scenario, and are usually the character's goal for that scenario. Another way of describing Destinies are "Scenario Fates" which the GM specially creates for the characters, as opposed to all the other Fates, which players create themselves. The GM will usually hand the Destiny out at some point during the Zero Act, but he might also hand it out before the game begins.

The Destiny is something that must happen in the session. It is usually a goal or mission that is directly tied to the scenario that the GM created. It could also be a strong motivation with no goal, as long as the character has plenty of opportunity to express that motivation. You could think of a Destiny as a personal victory condition for that character for the game. Work towards it or fulfill it, and your character will usually be considered to have a "good ending".

The Destiny will always involve the scenario in some way. If the GM plans on having a super-powerful samurai NPC named Blazing Sky in the game, then he might create a Destiny called "Emotion: Loyalty to Blazing Sky" in a game where Blazing Sky gives the PC orders, or "Mission: Find Blazing Sky" in a game where the object is to find out what happened to this legendary figure. Of course, if Blazing Sky is an antagonist from the start of the scenario, a Destiny like "Mission: Destroy Blazing Sky" might be expected. The GM would give this Destiny to the character whose story is closely related to Blazing Sky, possibly a samurai character.

GETTING INTO CHARACTER

The Emotion Matrix is an important part of the game. It is basically a syringe which injects drama into the game right from the get-go. It tells the players what their characters feel towards other characters upon their first meeting. As such, it requires a bit of explanation to really understand its function, especially since most tabletop RPGs do not have these kinds of rules.

It can take a while to "get into character", and decide as a player how your character feels about the other characters. The Emotion Matrix helps get right down to business. It basically is a way of setting how your character feels about another character at first sight. Using the results as cues, even without the game master forcing a story along, the players can create drama simply by interacting with each other in scenes. In the end, Tenra Bansho is a character drama game, with the trappings of katana, ninjas and badass mecha.

The important thing to remember about the Emotion Matrix is that these emotions are simply a "flash of emotion" or first impression in their character's eyes. It is the first thing that their character thought when she first met (or started in a scene with) another PC or major NPC. It is not a straightjacket forcing them to adhere to a relationship for the course of a game.

Some people might be uncomfortable with the idea that they don't have full control over how their character feels. In this case, it's important to remember that this is just that first "jolt" of emotion that a character experienced. If they're not feeling it, the player can simply change their attitude towards the other quickly, brushing off that first emotion as a fluke ("It looks like I misjudged her. I felt a killing intent from her when our eyes met, but she must have mistook me for someone else. I wonder who…"). However, it can be fun to roll with that emotion for a while, to see how it plays out over the course of the game.

Each character will have a unique Destiny throughout the scenario. Here are some examples:

- Mission: Protect the princess
- Emotion: Loyalty to the Ten Thousand Knives Clan
- Mission: Defeat General Fujiwara
- Emotion: Hatred of Kogarashi the Axe
- Mission: Help Master Gen attain freedom
- Mission: Save the city of Sun's Edge
- Mission: Prove to yourself that your skill is greater than (name of another PC)

And so on. The possibilities are limitless, even within a single scenario.

RAISING DESTINIES

Destinies, like Fates, can be raised during intermissions. The player raises Destinies exactly like Fates. They should not be erased or sublimated. With the GM's permission, the player can rewrite a Destiny as the game progresses if there is a good reason to. For example, a character learns that Blazing Sky is the enemy working behind the scenes. The player gets permission during the next intermission to change the character's Fate from "Emotion: Loyalty to Blazing Sky" to "Emotion: Hatred of Blazing Sky" or "Mission: Confront Blazing Sky".

DESTINY TECHNIQUES

In a game where there are new players and experienced players, a good GM technique is to have the Destiny of the new player's character support one of the veteran players. It could be tied to one of the other characters at the table, in a supportive way: "Protect Character X", "Loyalty to Character X's Clan", and so on. Or it could be a very similar goal to the more experienced player's character, giving the two characters good reason to travel and work together, and perhaps become strong allies and companions.

THE EMOTION MATRIX

The Emotion Matrix determines how a player's character feels about other characters—both major NPCs and other player characters—when they first meet.

Whenever a player character first meets another player character, an Emotion Matrix roll is usually made. Whenever a player character first meets an important NPC within the scenario, an Emotion Matrix roll is also made. The GM calls for the Emotion Matrix, and the players roll. The GM will roll for the NPCs. The

EMOTION MATRIX

	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Unsettled Mind	Aquaintance	Desire	Pursuer	Nostalgia	Annihilation
20	Loyalty	They Hate You	Like Your Child	Dark Dreams	Admiration	Hmmm…
30	Hatred	I Am Salvation	A Warning!	Deep Impression	Rival	Companionship
40	Purity/Innocence	Killing Intent	Love at First Sight	Fear	Like a Brother/ Sister	Unstable Emotions
50	Soulmate	Master	Shock	Goodwill	Chains of Fate	Strange Interest
60	Déjà Vu	Chaos	Worthy Rival	Thirst For Your Blood	Blood Relative	A Dark Flame

Emotion Matrix tells the players what their character feels towards that other person the first time they meet.

Players should only be making Emotion Matrix rolls at maximum once per scene. Eventually, by the first or second act, there will be no new important NPCs encountered: Most of these Emotion Matrix rolls occur during the first quarter or third of the game.

The player rolls "D66" (two dice, one representing "tens" and the other "ones") then checks the result against the Emotion Matrix chart in the back of the book. This determines the starting point for their character's feelings towards the NPC or other PC.

From there, adjustments can be made. If a player is not satisfied with the result, they can spend Kiai points to shift up, down, left or right one space on the matrix. Every Kiai point spent allows one shift on the matrix to a new result of the player's choice. For example, spending three points of Kiai will allow a player to move the result up two boxes, then left one box to their desired result. Mark Kiai used in this way as spent Kiai, because it will later become Karma.

The GM also has the ability to make adjustments to the player's roll. The GM can offer the player Aiki chits to move to a different place on the matrix. Perhaps the GM wishes for the player to choose a more challenging result for their character, or perhaps the GM wishes the player to choose one of the favorable results for their character that works better for the GM's concept for the scenario. The GM can suggest a new result for the character, and offer that player a number of Aiki chits equal to the distance in spaces from the original result to the GM's desired result. If the new result is down one box and to the left one box of where the player rolled on the matrix, the GM can "bribe" the player with two Aiki chits to take that new result. The other players may get involved and offer their own Aiki chits (not Kiai) to move along the matrix as well. If the player accepts the GM's or other players' suggestions, she receives those Aiki chits immediately.

There is a bit of interplay that can happen between the player and GM when it comes to the Emotion Matrix. A GM might come out and offer two Aiki chits immediately if the player makes a particular choice. Or a player might spend a Kiai point or two to shift around on the matrix. Sometimes, the player will shift to a new position, and the GM will offer 1-2 Aiki chits if the player shifts from the new position to yet another position. And then from there, from a position far away from the starting point, the player could spend more Kiai to shift further. While this interplay can be fun, try to keep it simple; try to aim at something close to the initial Emotion Matrix result, rather than wandering all over the matrix on every single Emotion Matrix roll.

In the end, the player has the final say in which result they want for their character. If they would rather spend Kiai to pick a matrix result which they prefer and ignore the GM's Aiki chit offer, that is fine. The GM shouldn't force the player to take a result that they are not interested in role-playing.

Once the player decides on a result, they begin treating the other NPC (or PC) in a manner in which the Emotion Matrix describes. Quickly, or over time, the reaction can change, but the result of the Emotion Matrix dictates their character's first initial impression of other major characters in the game.

D66

When rolling on the Emotion Matrix, you should pick two dice of different colors. Announce which color (usually the darker) will represent the "tens place", and which color die (usually the lighter) will represent the "ones place". Roll both at once and look up the results.

SCENE JUDGE AND AUDIENCE

If you are playing with the optional scene judge rules, a scene judge can also offer Aiki chits from his pool of three chits to encourage the player to move along the Emotion Matrix. If you are using the basic audience rules, the other players at the table can encourage the player making the Emotion Matrix roll by offering their own Aiki chits.

EMOTION MATRIX ROLL TIMING

Sometimes it is important to establish how the PC feels about a major NPC as they are about to interact in a scene. In those situations, the player should roll as soon as they meet the NPC in-scene. However, this might disrupt the flow of the game.

If the GM wishes, he may simply tell the player at the beginning of the scene that they will soon meet a major NPC ("You are about to meet your domain's Regent.") and make the player roll on the Emotion Matrix before the scene begins, so that when the meeting occurs they can role-play the scene without the interruption of the dice. Other times, it might make sense to role-play the scene first, and then roll the dice when the scene ends (as long as the NPC will appear in the game again) to determine how the player character really feels about the NPC they just met, and how they will approach the NPC the next time they meet.

As noted earlier, not every NPC requires an Emotion Matrix roll. Most of the time, the first few scenes of the Zero Act and maybe the first act will have Emotion Matrix rolls between the PCs and maybe one to three NPCs, after which they tend to stablize unless a major NPC is introduced later in the game.

Also, making too many Emotion Matrix rolls in scenes can really disrupt the flow of the game. If there is one new major NPC introduced to several PCs at once, consider only make Emotion Matrix rolls for one or two of the PCs only (perhaps the PCs who would naturally have a stronger story tie to that character).

THE EMOTION MATRIX AND NPCS

When meeting major NPCs for the first time in the game (nobles, mentors, family members and the like), it is a good idea to have the player roll against the NPC on the Emotion Matrix. This gives some inspiration for the relationship between

THE EMOTION MATRIX IS NOT A STRAIGHTJACKET

For experienced players of other role-playing games, the concept of Tenra Bansho Zero's Emotion Matrix is very unusual. "But I control what my character thinks and feels!" is a common reaction. However, just remember that the Emotion Matrix simply dictates that "initial spark" that happens when two major characters meet. It does not mean that for the rest of the game the character will not be able to change their relationship with the other character. In fact, many times the nature of the relationship (especially between PCs) changes quickly. Do not think that Emotion Matrix results are permanent. They change all the time.

Many character relationships in popular media begin with mistrust or unease, but soon (potentially through undergoing trials together) lead to friendship and camaraderie. This is the spark that the Emotion Matrix provides.

those two characters. It also offers an opportunity to be steered by the GM into an interesting relationship with that major character, allowing the players to build up a few extra Aiki chits.

Emotion Matrix Roll vs NPC

GM: Before you stands a young vassal warrior. He looks at you with anger-filled eyes as he unloosens his katana. His words are cold. "I've finally found you. I've waited so very long for this moment".

Player: Uh, who is this guy?

GM: Well, roll on the matrix and let's find out.

Player: OK. The red die will be the tens, the white will be the ones. 20 and 5, so 25 total.

GM: "Admiration?" Well, that might work if you knew what drove his conviction. Let me see… How about I give you two Aiki chits to move up one and over one to "Pursuer"?

Player: Pursuer? That's pretty straightforward. OK, that works for me, I couldn't think of anything there I wanted more (takes the two chits). "So, you're the one who's been following me through town. Well, we're here in this abandoned section of town, just as you wanted. What do you want from me, then?"

Player 2: Oh, that was pretty good. I give him one Aiki chit.

GM: The youth lifts his sword over his head. "Kudoh Gensai, I hereby claim my revenge for what you did to my father. Die!"

Player: (looks to the GM) Um, that's not me…?

GM: Yep, sure isn't.

Player: "Hold your steel, boy. You have me confused with someone else…"

GM: "Excuses won't save you now, demon samurai!" he screams. Fight time!

Player: Oooooh. I'll make sure to just beat him into unconsciousness and settle this misunderstanding over drinks afterwards.

Only the very few major NPCs—the ones which the scenario focuses on—should be rolled against in this manner. You shouldn't roll on the Emotion Matrix for "bit part" merchants, courtesans and the like. Many times a character won't make an Emotion Matrix roll against an NPC at all during a scenario. Other times, in scenarios where there is a lot of room for social interaction with major NPCs, a character might roll against one or two NPCs over the course of a scenario.

THE EMOTION MATRIX AND PCS

Emotion matrix rolls amongst PCs are far more common. This creates a lot of inter-character drama that develops and changes over the course of the story.

A popular option in Tenra Bansho games is to have the players all make their Emotion Matrix rolls against each other after the Zero Act, in the intermission before the first act begins. This is great for games where the characters are assumed to have known each other directly or have heard of each other before the game begins. If characters are actually meeting for the first time in the first act (or in the Zero Act, an uncommon but possible occurance between a pair of characters), feel free to roll then instead.

This method helps both get past the initial Emotion Matrix rolls quickly to jump into the game, as well as provides an opportunity for the players to write new Fates regarding their relationships with the other PCs before the first act begins.

In a game with 2-3 players and one GM, it is best to have each character roll against every other character. In games with 4 or more players, it might be better to move the game along quickly by suggesting that the players pick just one other character to roll against. When two players are

rolling against each other, they should talk it through so that they both get complementary or interesting results.

Another easy solution is to have each character roll against the characters sitting directly to their left and right. Or perhaps the GM can assign pairs or sets of people to roll against: In a scenario, a GM might be planning for three PCs to be traveling companions, and one PC to be an outsider who joins them at the beginning of the scenario. In that case, the GM might have the three PCs in the group roll against each other on the Emotion Matrix, and then everyone roll against the outsider (and vice versa) when they first meet. There are a lot of ways to use the Emotion Matrix in a game, depending on the scenario. Feel free to experiment!

Emotion Matrix Roll vs NPC Version 2

GM: Suddenly your attention is drawn back towards the town's main path. A young girl wearing the robes of a miko shrine maiden is running towards you. "Help me, please help!"

Player: I look at her. Do I sense a trap?

GM: Go ahead and roll on the Emotion Matrix.

Player: OK. The red die is the tens place. 40 and 3, so 43.

GM: "Love at first sight". Well, that works for me.

Player: Hmmm. Interesting! … Hmmm. Actually, I think that my character wouldn't be one to fall in love so easily. How about I spend one Kiai to shift up one space to "33: A Warning!". All I see is a loyal dog of that bastard Priesthood running towards me, so I'm on the edge for an attack of some kind.

GM: Hmmm. That's probably not going to work too well here, because she's being attacked by something worse than some Priesthood spy. Do you think a favorable matrix result would work? I'll give you three Aiki chits to move down two and over one from that result for a result of "54: Goodwill"?

Player: I'd rather stick with my choice of "A Warning", since my character hates the Priesthood. I'll still come to her aid, because I do help people in need, but I'm not gonna trust her.

GM: OK, that works for me. Just don't stab her or anything. And be prepared for your relationship to change with her later.

Player: OK! (spends one Kiai)

When another player is rolling against your own character, you can spend your own Aiki coins to change their results with their permission, just as they can spend Kiai to change their own results. If two other players are rolling against each other's characters and you are not involved, you can still offer your own Aiki chits and make suggestions to the players involved.

EMOTION MATRIX AND FATES

The Emotion Matrix is a great way to determine new character Fates. The matrix is simply a chart that can be used for determining what your character initially thinks about another character when they first meet. It can be used before the first act begins to prime all the player characters' relationships with each other, or it can be used in the game when one PC interacts with another PC for the first time.

For the character's first relationship-based Fate, the player can simply write the result of the Emotion Matrix as a Fate, or perhaps reword it to be a little more fitting. An Emotion Matrix result of "Blood Relative" could result in Fates like "Emotion: I love X as if he were my brother" or "Goal: Protect my brother X at all costs". Additional Fates (for example, Fates purchased during the intermission phase by spending Aiki chits) can be created in this way as well.

One suggestion is to write down the results of all your Emotion Matrix rolls somewhere on your character sheet, perhaps in the notes section of the sheet, or in the margins. Later, once you decide to take a Fate towards that character, you can use those notes to help guide your decision. Remember, not every Emotion Matrix roll has to result in a new Fate: Many do not.

THE EMOTION MATRIX AND THE POWER OF THE DICE

Why use the Emotion Matrix at all? It would seem easier to just let the players choose an emotion they prefer for their characters from the matrix rather than rolling.

While that is true, the Emotion Matrix injects a spark of chaos that can charge a game, or take the players in new unexpected directions. This small spark of chaos is a key feature of this game!

Rolling on the chart opens up new possibilities for thinking about your character, even more so than simply picking from the chart (as you'd be choosing something that you would expect for your character, something "normal"). Being able to choose "love at first sight" from the Emotion Matrix is a very different experience from landing on the "love at first sight" space based on a roll of the dice. When you roll the dice and hit that first square, it provokes a reaction in the player. "This is what the chart says. Does this work for my character?" The player's mind will naturally try to make it work, to make that result fit. This is the kind of spark which can ignite a very interesting role-playing experience.

Or perhaps the player rolls the idea around in her head for a few seconds: "Hmmmm, any way I look at it, I simply can't see that kind of relationship", she says, and proceeds to spend Kiai to move to another nearby space on the Emotion Matrix. That's okay. The goal of the chart isn't to force you to role-play a random emotion. The goal of the chart is to put a spark in the player's mind generated from the chaos of a roll of the dice. Whether the player sticks with that option or chooses another (or is bribed by the GM to choose another space), the player's mind has already begun exploring that possibility. Even if the player chooses another result for their character, that player has thought about their character in a new way.

The Emotion Matrix can result in forcing emotions that are impossible for the players to ignore, which will in turn drive their role-playing. This will lead to more Aiki chit rewards, but more importantly it ultimately leads to a more interesting story. As players, we are all well aware that the heroic players will very likely overcome the evil lord by the end of the scenario: But what's really interesting is what happens on the way to that destination. The Emotion Matrix sets the characters in motion on

EXAMPLE 3: Emotion Matrix Roll Between PCs

Player 1: So this is the first meeting between my samurai and your armour-rider.

Player 2: Go ahead and roll first.

PL 1: This blue die is the tens place. 60 and 4, so 64: "Thirst for Your Blood"… is this armour rider out to get killed, perhaps?

PL 2: No killing, I promise! How about I spend one of my own Kiai to move you over to 65: "Blood Relative"? Heck I'll even call you "big brother"!

PL 1: How about you don't call me "big brother", and I spend one more of my own Kiai to move over to 66: "Dark Flame"?

PL 2: Hmmm, looks like you want to start us off as enemies one way or another. Sure, I'll go with that. Initial mistrust can lead to awesome relationships.

an emotional collision course. Used well, it can help run an interesting and fun character-focused scenario.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

There are a few times in one's life where the next few moments, the next choice, is the dividing line between life and death, or between achieving your life's goals and failing to attain anything. This moment is an optional rule called the "Moment of Truth" in the game. When a player calls for a Moment of Truth, time comes to a standstill, the player amasses as many resources as possible, and their character takes one final action that will determine their Fate forever.

Only one player can call for a Moment of Truth (also known as "MoT") in a single game. If the other players agree, then it happens. The other players role-play how their characters support the MoT character, either by physically helping them, or by offering encouragement or moral support. The other players then hand their own Aiki chits, as many as they want (or simply all of them) to the player who declared a MoT. Only Aiki chits can be given, not Kiai points.

If you are playing with the optional Scene judge rules, then the MoT player is given an extra number of Aiki chits equal to the number of scenes in which they were a scene judge. If you are playing by the normal Audience rules, the player receives no extra Aiki chits.

Time stops. The player will take this large mass of Aiki chits and make one final Fate roll and convert all of the successes gained into a pool of usable Kiai points. Action resumes, and the player spends this pool of Kiai as they see fit. Once the scene ends (usually the last scene, or one of the last scenes, in the game), all of the remaining Kiai that the character has will disappear. Take note of this rule exception. Normally a character can carry their unspent Kiai from one scene to the next, but if the player declares a Moment of Truth, all unspent Kiai that player has at the end of the scene simply vanishes. The spent Kiai will eventually become Karma. The unspent Kiai will vanish without becoming Karma.

ROLEPLAYING THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

The player is role-playing out a critical moment. The player finishes talking and declares a Moment of Truth. That player role-plays out the actions he wishes to take, and the other players role-play their characters in assisting him. The other players give him their Aiki chits, and the roll is made. Sometimes this default method can cause a long pause in play because of all of the Fate rolls made (sometimes up to 20 or more rolls are made to generate the MoT Kiai pile), and role-playing momentum is lost. Sometimes the GM will have to have the players repeat the last few lines of role-play in order to pick up where they left off.

Another option for the Moment of Truth is for the player to declare the MoT at some point in the scene before the majority of the role-playing occurs. The player senses that this next conflict is going to be the final one of the game, and the results could go either way. The player could simply declare a Moment of Truth before the role-playing in the scene actually occurs. Aiki chits are given, a number of Fate rolls are made, a stockpile of Kiai is amassed… and *then* the player role-plays their encounter with the major NPC or "last boss". This method ensures that there's no break in action between the role-playing, die-rolling, and results. The GM should decide which is more appropriate.

CONVERTING KIAI BACK TO AIKI CHITS

By the end of the game, many players will have some Aiki chits in their hands. However, most of their power will have already been converted to Kiai, which is sitting there unspent on their character sheets. This method lets players convert their unspent Kiai back into Aiki chits, which they can then give to the player who declared the Moment of Truth.

During a MoT, a player can convert any amount of their unspent Kiai back into Aiki chits at a rate of 3 Kiai points for 1 Aiki chit. These Aiki chits are then given to the player who declared a MoT. The player chooses how much of their character's unspent Kiai they wish to convert to Aiki chits and give to the MoT player. Finally, this converted Kiai is not "spent", it is shared; Kiai converted back into Aiki chits for the Moment of Truth does not become Karma.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Many games will put the PCs head to head against a nearly unbeatable foe. The Moment of Truth mechanic allows one character to focus the group's energy into a carefully made final attack (or series of attacks), at great risk to that character. It is an exciting conclusion to an action-packed session.

However, not all games require a Moment of Truth. It's up to the players if they want to use the MoT mechanic. Some foes can be beaten by a team of players who carefully manage their Kiai pools or combat options and skills without declaring a MoT.

A Moment of Truth is dangerous. It may be possible for a single character to amass a huge pool of power in the form of Kiai, and still not have enough to defeat an opponent. Or, more often, they have more than enough raw power to defeat an opponent, but in the process of spending all of that Kiai they will raise their Karma far beyond their limits. They will win that battle against the major NPC enemy, but in turn they will permanently lose their character as it becomes an Asura. This is something to be careful of when declaring a Moment of Truth.

THE CHARACTERS HAVE BEEN DRAWN TO LIFE
THEY CAN INTERACT, FIGHT, AND DIE
THE TIME HAS COME
TO GIVE THEM A REASON TO LIVE

SCENARIO CREATION

Scenarios are the foundation of the Tenra Bansho Zero game, and require the most thought for the game to succeed. Each scenario represents the adventure in which the characters engage. A scenario might begin with nothing more than a few loose notes, or it could be an extensive scene-by-scene breakdown of every planned event, complete with elaborate descriptions and prepared segments of NPC dialogue.

Between one session and the next, the game master creates the scenario. Creating a scenario might seem like a daunting task, but in the end there's only a few things needed to create a good "Tenra Bansho-esque" adventure:

1) A problem

2) Dramatic situations

3) Fast pacing

Let's look at the above elements in detail, then talk about some tips and tricks you can use to run an exciting scenario.

PRESENTING A PROBLEM: DESTINIES AND THE ZERO ACT

Each player, or the group as a whole, has a problem that they must resolve. Instead of "problem", one could call it a "situation that needs to be addressed".

In the first act, the Zero Act, the GM hands each player a special Fate called a Destiny. That Destiny is, in essence, the problem that the player character is presented with. It represents a situation that must be addressed or resolved, or a problem to be overcome. Destinies are things that PCs have to think about, wrestle with, and eventually put to rest.

Of course, there is no one correct solution to the situation the Destiny addresses. Each player will look at a problem in a different way and try to resolve it in their own way through various means. It's important for the GM to remember that the Destiny is a question that the PC must answer, a question that has no single solution. "Goal: Defeat the Enemy" could mean so much more than just a combat beatdown.

In the Zero Act, the GM gives the players their Destinies. Each scene in the Zero Act focuses on that player's purpose in the adventure, and often clearly shows off the problem or situation which needs to be addressed. It also tells us a little about what that character is like, who they are, how they act, and what might be in store for them.

This is why the Zero Act is so important; it creates the image of the game to come in the mind of each player, and demonstrates each player character's place within the game. If the GM does a good job of crafting the scenes of the Zero Act, the players will know what to do through the rest of the game.

Choosing the Destinies

Destinies are the elements that set each character into their role in the game. It's a purpose or problem that the player has to effectively role-play in order to move the scenario forward. As mentioned above, there is no one correct answer for each Destiny. However, at first the Destiny should reflect or hint at an ideal goal to the situation ("Goal: Destroy the Falling Leaves Clan", "Hatred: Magobei the Snake", "Goal: Come to terms with your new powers", etc). Without that suggestion, it won't give the players a good starting direction for role-playing. Over the course of the game, the Destiny might change. The goal will shift slightly or a lot; hatreds might turn to friendships, and vice-versa. However, it is a good idea to imagine the player characters as toys: wind them up and point them in a direction. Over the course of the game, as scenes are role-played, the direction of each individual character may start to change but they need some sort of direction at first in order to get into the game as quickly as possible.

Make the Destinies usable by the players. A good Destiny will feature PCs or NPCs which appear often in the game or a goal which will have implications in many of the scenes. A bad Destiny will feature NPCs that don't appear that often in the game or goals which the PCs really can't do anything about. Whatever is written on the Destiny that the GM gives to the player, make sure it is something that can come up in the adventure often.

Don't turn a Destiny into a straightjacket, though. The Destiny should guide the player's role-playing. Like Fates, Destinies can change over the course of the game. The Destiny shouldn't be something used against the player or to force them to role-play in one defined way from the start of the game to the end. However, this isn't so much a concern in writing the Destiny. Simply make sure that the players understand that while they should step up to address the situation the Destiny presents, it should not be used to artificially force the player to make role-playing decisions they don't like.

Let's look at a sample Destiny: Say that there will be an NPC princess who will journey with the players for most of the adventure, and one of the PCs will act like her knight or bodyguard. What would be a good way to turn that relationship into a starting Destiny? The GM wants to write the Destiny up in a way so that it clear to the player that the PC should want to protect the princess (in the beginning of the game, at any rate). However, something like "Romance: You are in love with the princess" is probably a little weak. It will most likely lock the player into one single kind of role-play towards that character and make it very hard to change the nature of the relationship between the two. It also leaves no room for player interpretation; it's a straightjacket of role-play that the player can't get out of.

Let's make the situation more interesting. How about if the princess reminds the PC of his or her younger (or older) sister, a sister who died years ago? A Destiny of "Misfortune: Loss of your sister" would sound good at first. However, this too is a little difficult. There's nothing actually pointing this at that princess character. It also means that the player will have to role-play their PC in some kind of relationship (once the emotional baggage is dealt with) that will be a familial relationship; it would be hard to turn this into a romance or a hatred. While not as much of a straightjacket as the first example, this Destiny represents a lot of excess stuff that has nothing to do with the princess.

In this situation, something like "Emotion: Deep feelings towards the princess" might work well. The feelings are undefined, so they are left up to the player to define where the feelings come from. This gives the player a direction and the ability to openly interpret what the emotions are and how they will change over time. This is a good emotionally-ripe Destiny. Of course, something simple like "Goal: Protect the princess" or "Goal: Return the princess to her kingdom" are also solid beginning Destinies because they push the characters together and also give the player leeway on how they will role-play in relation to that character. However, you can probably guess that "Feelings towards the princess" will most likely lead to a game that focuses on the emotions between those players rather than the character's simple mission.

Just one last thing to note when assigning Destinies to players: You want to give Destinies which will allow the players the chance to role-play their characters in new ways. But make sure to get a sense of what your players want. If you know from experience that one of your players hates role-playing romance, then give the Destinies (and roles) with romantic possibilities to other players.

DESTINIES AND ARCHETYPES

Each sample character has some ready-made Fates. All of the archetypes include one sample Fate as well. Make sure you look over the characters before assigning Destinies to the PCs. This will make sure that you don't accidentally give a PC a Destiny which totally conflicts with the Fates they already have. For the samurai who wants to know "What is true strength?" (based on their pre-written Fate), or a kongohki who has sealed memories (another archetype-determined Fate), a Destiny which focuses on defeating the bad guy may be better than one that focuses on emotional elements. However, some players might be up for that additional challenge!

RECOMMENDED ARCHETYPES AND DESTINIES

As a GM, you may want to make a list of recommended archetypes for the game, then pair the Destinies up with them. If you plan out a scenario for two ninja characters, a samurai, and an armour-rider (rather than having a free-for-all where the players choose any character type they want), it might be good to pair up each Destiny with an archetype that is compatible. For example, if there is an enemy to be defeated in a combat-heavy scenario, it might make more sense to tie "Goal: Defeat the Evil Overlord" to an archetype that excels in fighting like a samurai or armour-rider. This is just a recommendation for getting things off the ground quickly: Ultimate authority in which PC gets which Destiny is left to the GM.

Being Careful With Scenarios and Destinies

Most Tenra Bansho Zero stories have elements of tragedy in them. While the endings may be "happy", more often than not—just like the kabuki theater they are based upon—the events or the character backgrounds often have tragic elements behind them.

While it is important to remember that, it's also important to remember that TBZ is a game, and games are supposed to be fun. To that end, be very careful of the comfort level of your players. Don't force Destinies or plot lines upon them that are only there to push their buttons or evoke bad feelings in the players. Your role as a GM is to set up the foundation of an interesting story and let the players play it out. Your role is not to push them into an uncomfortable place just to create something artsy.

If a player becomes uncomfortable or isn't happy with one of the tragic elements (or even the direction of the story), she should immediately feel obliged to tell the GM right then and there. That way, the GM can help "re-play" the scene, or "do-over" the last few lines of dialogue in order to lighten or change the tone.

Again, because the original authors of the game say it as clear as the summer sky: Tenra Bansho is a game, a form of entertainment between you and your friends. It should never be used to hurt the players of the game.

Dramatic Situations

Hopefully by now, you understand that setting up Destinies is an important part of creating a scenario. The Destiny is the direct link which ties the character into the game during the Zero Act. When used well, they'll help kick-start the players into role-playing and bring the characters alive.

Example

Let's look at the Destiny mentioned above, "Emotion: Deep feelings towards the princess", and a quick Zero Act introduction.

GM: It was a hot day then, long ago. That day, your sister's last quick, oh-so-quick breath escaped her lips in your arms. The same sister who followed you everywhere you went: "Kennosuke! Brother Kennosuke!" She would always be the first to greet you when you returned home: "Hey Kennosuke! Guess what I did today! Guess!" That energetic spirit is gone forever.

(to the player of Kennosuke's character) "Kennosuke! Kennosuke, are you listening to me?"

The GM gives the player of Kennosuke a few seconds to respond. If he responds at all, the GM gives him an Aiki chit for quick-thinking and jumping in.

GM (continues): "Geez, why is your head always in the clouds? Whenever I, Chisa, address you, you never respond in kind," Princess Chisa pouts, while honoring you with polite speech.

The GM gives another opportunity for the player to jump in, perhaps rewarding him with an Aiki chit for quick-thinking and role-play. By this time, the player should be engaged. If the player is stymied or doesn't seem to reply quickly, don't stop and don't point attention to it. Simply move along in the conversation. Even if it's one-sided at the beginning, give a few pauses to let the player jump in. The player will jump in soon enough.

GM: "Anyway, guess what I did today, brother Kennosuke! Guess!"

At this point, it's probably a good time to call for an Emotion Matrix roll to see what Kennosuke thinks about Princess Chisa. The GM in this case should try to steer the results towards a favorable relationship (offering Aiki chits as per the Emotion Matrix rules, as needed), and steering away from neutral or unfavorable/ hateful relationships. The GM then reveals that this is Princess Chisa, entrusted to Kennosuke's

care as bodyguard, and since she was young she's thought of him as almost a real older brother, even addressing him as "brother" in private.

GM: "I visited my father! He was inspecting the latest yoroi armour our family received for service to the regent. He said, 'Chisa, it looks like the lines of battle are shifting and war is upon us again.' Can you believe it? Now I'm of age to ride an armour myself, so I bet he's going to take me along on his next war campaign! Isn't that great? I bet I'll even get to fight alongside you! You better watch out. I just might overcome more enemies than you!"

GM (continues): With that, Chisa holds her hand to her mouth and smiles at you. For a brief moment, it reminds you of someone's smile, a smile from long ago…

The GM hands Kennosuke's player the Destiny, "Emotion: Deep feelings towards the princess". The scene wraps up quickly after that.

While most Zero Act scenes will have more back-and-forth dialogue with the player and role-play, the above is basically an abbreviated and boiled-down view into what a fast Zero Act scene looks like. The GM had two things that she wanted to make clear in this scene, and was able to hit on both of them:

- *That Princess Chisa looks or feels like your younger (deceased) sister.*
- *That there is a war happening now.*

The interesting point is that the GM was able to convey both of these points clearly without actually coming right out and directly saying either one.

CREATING A STRONG SCENARIO

There are two elements to track when creating a good scenario for Tenra Bansho Zero: Overall story and character story.

Even if the players pick pre-generated characters and do not create their characters from scratch, they'll quickly start to identify with them. They'll think about the Fates and the character issues that the PC will have to face.

Before the game begins, you'll create the overall story (either completely, or in an simple outline format) of the struggle that the PCs have to overcome together.

The important thing is to tie these two together. Having a strong, exciting background where the PCs just drift through it like ghosts without addressing or resolving their personal issues may leave the players bored: They have an interesting character in their hands, but they're suppressing it in order to jump through the hoops of the scenario. Likewise, focusing totally on character issues at the expense of coming up with an overall threat or story to throw at the players will turn the game into a slow-paced "soap opera" style game. that lingers on without resolving. Neither of these extreme outcome is very interesting.

Make sure to balance both; keep the character issues in mind as you run the game, and have concerns related to the PC Fates appear regularly. Don't simply treat the player characters as puppets used to tell your pre-written story. That will bore the players, as it will be transparent to them that their actions and choices don't matter. Balancing both the overall story and the characters' stories is the foundation of a strong Tenra Bansho Zero scenario.

USING TIME

To create an interesting TBZ scenario, the GM should really use the elements of situation and time in changing from one act to the next act.

For example, in a scenario that follows a war between two domains, the character's domain could win a great battle against the enemy domain in the first act, be completely destroyed in the second act, and in the third act, the characters could join forces with a neighboring domain to fight once again against the enemy domain. Each act might be separated by several months of time in the process. This could create an exciting story with a real sense of a large scale.

Another example might be to have two or more years pass between the first and second acts, and three years between the second and third acts. Focusing on change of the situation (one minute your country is victorious, the next you are running for your lives as refugees) between acts will really keep the story interesting. In the end, that's all that matters: Getting a positive reaction from the players, and together telling an interesting drama or epic.

CLIMAX AND FINALE

A climax is a dramatic end to each act, while a finale is the final climax of the game.

Every act should end in a climax. This is usually a fierce combat, but it could also be a powerful dramatic moment as well (the PCs convincing a lord to change his ways; a duel through combat, magic or skill; grand social conflicts resolved through role-play). It's also a good idea to keep the finale of the scenario within its own act. That way, the GM has plenty of leeway to change the time and situation to make it that much more dramatic. That pre-climax act intermission is always welcome, too, in order to ensure that the characters pool enough Kiai to (hopefully) overcome any final challenge.

CHARACTER DEATH

Character death happens in TBZ, and it is entirely up to the player to manage when their character dies. If a character dies in the finale or a climax, there is no problem at all; it should be easy for the GM to keep that death dramatic and appropriate for the game. However, if a character dies during any other scene, that's a problem. If a player starts to check the Dead Box, or leaves it checked and jumps into a potentially fatal challenge outside of a climax or finale, it's a good idea for the GM to just straight-up warn that player, "We're not currently in a climax or finale, so you might want to wait on that until the next climax."

Once a character dies, the next step is up to the GM. If it's the finale, there's no problem at all, since the story is at a close anyway. If it happens during a climax (usually near the end of the game), the GM can keep the player involved through the rest of the game by:

- Making that player a permanent Scene Judge (handing out Aiki chits to the other players)
- Handing that player a new character at the beginning of the next act, a secondary character who appeared earlier in the game.
- Having the player quickly create a new character during the next Intermission, perhaps keeping the same Destiny as the previous character, or a variation of that Destiny.
- Handing the player the role of a villain, and letting the player role-play the villain (as a character, as well as controlling them in combat).

- Having the player play several major NPC roles for the rest of the game, as a kind of "assistant GM."

BENDING THE TENRA SETTING

This book is filled with information on the world of Tenra, from oni customs to onmyoji summoning constraints. As you go through the book, you will likely find some inspiration here and there, elements that you will want to pull into your scenario. Go for it.

In the process, you may have some ideas that directly contradict the setting material. Samurai that can give birth, zombies, onmyoji that can summon spirits in areas with no residual Sha energy, time travel, a warrior coming back to life because of her intense hatred, and so on. Go ahead and bend or break the setting to create your own Tenra setting. Perhaps these "impossibilities" were that way because no one ever succeeded. In your own game, legends can be born from doing the impossible.

When bending or changing the setting, just make sure to do it in subtle ways that the players can accept. Don't feel constrained to never break any "setting rule", and likewise don't break every rule as the players won't know what is happening to the Tenra setting they're familiar with. Sprinkle some impossibilities into your game from time to time to keep things interesting.

CHOICES AND CONTRADICTIONS

A game isn't written in stone. As a GM, one thing that you have to try to remember when planning or running a scenario is that there should be no single correct answers to any encounter in the game.

Say, for example, you introduce a princess to the characters at some point. You can pretty reliably assume that the players will try to help her, perhaps by having her travel with them. However, the players might move in another direction that you don't expect (Not that they're being jerks, but just that, for the game and their characters, other options seem more realistic). Maybe they decide to help the princess by asking relatives to let her stay with them incognito. Or maybe they're all mercenaries, so they give the princess a few gold coins to help her out and continue onwards, not realizing that she was an integral part of events to unfold. As a GM, you will have to be prepared for the players to go in unexpected directions.

Beyond that, you will actually want to try to set up contradictory choices, complications for the players to deal with, making sure that they know there is no correct answer, and that the scenario will continue along its own unique path no matter what the players end up deciding to do.

These kinds of contradictory choices and dilemmas really help make a scenario interesting, exciting, and complicated, even without throwing in combats and cyborg ninjas. Choices that pit emotion against reason make for very Tenra-like games.

Say, for example, the PCs are fighting on the front lines of a war in their own domain. The superior enemy troops are advancing, and they have two options: Meeting the enemy in the fields outside of the city will save the inhabitants of the city who have

not yet fled, but the PCs armies will be at such a disadvantage that they may be annihilated, and the PCs themselves will likely die. Steering the enemy to come fight them in the city means that the PCs will have the home advantage, and the battle will be on a much more even ground, but the city will likely be utterly destroyed, and certainly any innocents left in the city will be cut down in the battle as collateral damage.

Which option will the players decide? Neither option is "correct." The GM will need to be prepared with the players choosing either option, or come up with their own alternative. The GM could paint a vivid picture of the possibly good and undoubtedly bad effects of choosing one path or the other. This may help the players choose the option that is right for them, or it might stymie them further as they try to choose between the lesser of two evils.

A third option is for the players to do nothing, wait it out, and leave it to fate. (Perhaps they cannot decide which is better.) That, too, is a valid option. Let the next scenes play out from that point on, the GM deciding what happens due to the players not making a solid decision. In many cases, the outcome will be worse, but the PCs may be able to engage again if the situation changes.

Making the choice between two difficult options, and then role-playing the characters living with the results, is a strong element in Tenra Bansho Zero scenarios. Try to include at least one or two good hard choices in your game.

For Example:
Player: "The attacks, the spies, all of those freakish monstrosities… This is it. This castle holds the answers to all of those riddles," I say as I point at the dark castle on the rock. I sling my katana over my shoulder and start walking towards it.

Another Player: Hah, excellent. Have an Aiki chit (tosses the chit to the player)

GM: Okay, this brings this scene to a close. Next scene, we'll start with you. You've infiltrated the castle, and have reached the tatami-lined throne room of the lord of the castle…

Player: Woah, wait a minute there, I figured that we could first maybe get some more details about the castle before…

GM: (ignoring) Above you, the lord of the castle begins to speak…

You can see in this example that care is needed when jumping ahead in time and focus using scenes. Careful jumps can keep the game focused on interesting scenes and great role-playing moments. But jump too far or change the pace too quickly, and the game will quickly become disjointed, random, and start to fly apart.

Scenes

Tenra is a game of acts, each act containing a series of events. Those events are played out in scenes. Scenes tell us what sorts of actions the characters will take, and what kinds of things will happen in response to those actions. The GM's job when setting up and looking at scenes is to determine what would make for a good following scene. It takes some strategy and thought to keep the action strong and exciting, advancing the game to the interesting parts, without jumping too far ahead.

For example, the characters decide that they must enter into enemy territory, sneak into the enemy army camp and find information on their next plans. In many games, the next scene would involve the PCs discussing a strategy to infiltrate the enemy camp, doing some investigation to determine the best way to sneak in. A

Tenra Bansho Zero-esque scene would be simply bypassing all that and starting with the players already in the middle of sneaking through the enemy camp.

This is a great way to get right to the important actions. Just make sure you consider well the best next scene, and not jumping too far ahead of the players' expectations.

NPCs

Non player characters, or NPCs, are game elements which exist to provide opposition or support to the player characters, or role-play opportunities for the player. Remember this when creating NPCs.

NPC Roles

When you look into non-player characters that appear in the game, there are very few overall roles they play in the story. Most fall into one of four categories: Sponsor, Innocent, Exposition and Enemy.

Sponsor

These are powerful NPCs of rank, ability, or meaning. They are the life of the game, the characters that the PCs are loyal to and serve unquestioningly. They give orders to the PCs (expressed as suggestions, requests, demands, or even flat-out orders), and often help start off or guide a scenario.

When creating a major sponsor-style NPC, be it a noble lord or a sweet mother, it's important to guide the Emotion Matrix rolls with these NPCs towards favorable results. Over time, the PC may become disloyal or view a sponsor as an enemy, but if they don't start off with a favorable reaction (or at least a reaction that would make the PC willing to follow a request), then that will often mean that the game can't start. Take care on Emotion Matrix rolls.

Innocent

These characters are the ones the PCs want to protect. Be careful when choosing emotions from the Emotion Matrix when it comes to Innocents. Start off wrong, and it may be hard for the player to care about or protect an NPC you brought in to play an innocent role.

Exposition

These are the background characters who exist to provide information to the PCs or simply add flavor to the scenes. Most of the time they are not important enough to the scenario to use the Emotion Matrix with them. However, if you create what you feel to be an important exposition-based NPC important to the scenario, then feel free to use the matrix more freely with these exposition-based NPCs.

Enemy

These are the people who want to stop the PCs from accomplishing their goals, through force or subterfuge.

When bringing in major NPCs, try to think about what motivates them. That will help you determine what their next actions would be, how they speak, and how they would react to player characters. Don't forget to role-play them with passion, adopting different types of speech or mannerisms to really give the players a striking image of the character.

NPC Actions

When an NPC performs an unopposed action which a PC would normally roll against a set difficulty, the GM can simply determine success or failure based on the events in the scene. There is no need for the GM to roll dice for simple NPC skill and ability checks that are not against other player characters. When one NPC takes an action upon another NPC, the GM should also determine the results

without rolling dice. However, when other PCs become involved and conflict with the NPCs, follow the rules normally. Make skill or ability rolls as you would for a player character.

A GM can have NPCs suddenly enter or leave the scene without spending Kiai points to do so, as they don't follow the same rules for entering scenes as the PCs. This does not count for enemy NPCs in boss fights: The GM should not have the NPC suddenly disappear or fly away unharmed in the middle of the final combat of the session.

NPC Stats and Abilities

When determining non-player character abilities, skills and attributes (often referred to as "statting out NPCs", as you are assigning their statistics), decide them freely. There is no need to create them as if they were player characters, using archetypes, assigning attributes from a set pool, and so on.

However, there are some guidelines for making NPCs, either when crafting the scenario or on-the-fly.

DETAILED NPCs

Detailed NPCs are the major non-player characters you determine will play a major role in the game. Certainly, boss-level enemies will be created beforehand as detailed NPCs, but you might stat out critical sponsor NPCs as well. There is certainly no need to have every NPC encountered by the players written up in such a detailed format.

- Decide Attributes and Rank. Write down all seven attributes. Normal humans have an attribute range of 2-3. Exceptional people have a range of 3-5. Heroes, paragons and others will have higher attributes, including 10 or more. Major enemies may have attributes ranked up to 20! Write down the attributes and their rank.
- Decide Skills and Rank. Write down the skills the NPC has, and a skill level you think is appropriate for them: Unskilled/1, Skilled/2, Advanced/3, Mastery/4, Special/5.
- Determine Special Abilities. Arts of War, onmyojutsu shiki, oni powers, mechanica, etc. Familiarize yourself with them, or copy down their descriptions and mechanical effects in your scenario notes.
- Choose equipment and weapons.
- Choose some Fates to use as character motivation when role-playing them.
- Determine Vitality and Soul ratings normally.
- Detailed NPCs will not have wound gauges (Light, Heavy, Critical). Instead, look at the NPC's Body stat, double that rating, and add that number to the Vitality pool. This gives the NPC the equivalent of wound boxes in power, but in a format that doesn't need to be tracked as closely.
- Add a Dead box. Most detailed NPCs have the Dead box, which works in the same way for NPCs as it does for PCs (allowing them to eliminate all damage from one incoming attack and roll three extra dice for all further rolls). This ensures that, if there is a fight, that the boss can stand up to more than one single lucky (or powerful) blow.

MODIFYING ENEMY NPCS

After you have the framework of the detailed NPC, you will want to make some adjustments for major NPC enemies and boss characters in order to have battles happen smoothly, particularly boss battles against powerful villains. Without taking

other factors into consideration, you may have villains that are knocked over quickly without a sweat, or accidentally so powerful that the players cannot make a dent in them even when spending tons of Kiai. It's best to set the enemy's abilities rather than changing them on the fly, unless you totally underestimated or overestimated their effectiveness. Here are some guidelines for adjusting major enemy NPCs, final bosses and the like:

- If the enemy is not a final boss, but is sort of a mid-boss character, or strong henchman who is in the fight with the final boss, consider simply using one of the PC sample characters. Raise its primary combat skill by one rank and most of the attribute scores by 2-3 points. This creates a quite balanced enemy to use against two or three PCs.
- If the boss battle pits all of the PCs against one single NPC villain, then multiply the number of player characters by 5 and add that number to the villain's Vitality pool.
- If the boss battle pits all of the PCs against two NPC villains, multiply the number of player characters by 2 and add that number to each villain's Vitality pool.
- If one of the player characters has an Art of War, add 10 points to the villain's Vitality pool.
- If there is a PC with healing abilities (like Buddhist monks, annelidists or ayakashi), either add a second Dead box to the NPC (This just grants a second chance to "erase all damage"; it won't grant them a doubled "+6" Dead Box bonus), or double the NPC's original unmodified Vitality pool.
- Most NPCs will not have skill in Evasion, simply relying on other skills to parry attacks. Only very agile enemies like ninja and samurai will have Evasion as a skill. It is best to keep their skill at a ranking of 2 or 3 for these fearsome opponents (if they have the skill at all), perhaps 4 for master ninja. Never give an NPC an Evasion skill rating of 5.
- If one of the PCs has an attack which can only be defended against using the Evasion skill and can not parried with a weapon (annelidist electrical blasts, monk spirit attacks, shiki fire attacks, etc), make sure the enemy has an Evasion skill of at least 2. Otherwise, it will be a very short battle.
- The final boss's main combat skill should be as high as the skill level of the PC most skilled at combat (usually 4, on very rare occasions 5).
- The final boss's main attribute used in combat should be higher than the highest modified physical attribute between all of the PCs, usually by 3 or more points.

If the samurai PC can achieve an Agility rating of 12 when in samurai mode (compared to its normal value of 9), and this is the highest physical attribute in the group, then consider statting the final boss's primary combat attribute at 15.

- Be careful with NPC combat skills rated 5: Most PCs will have to burn at least 9-12 points of Kiai each strike to even slightly damage NPCs with a combat skill ranked at 5 if they have a large attribute pool used in combat. If you absolutely want to have a combat rating of 5, then you will likely want to lower the NPC's attribute ratings a few points for such a character, as almost all of their dice will roll successes.
- Come to a balance between attribute level and skill level as compared to the PCs. If the final boss NPC has a skill ranking of 5 and a high combat attribute as per the guidelines above, consider lowering the combat attribute by a few points, or raise the attribute a few points more but reduce the combat skill down to 4.

Keep an eye on the player characters' Kiai and Aiki chit pool. If there are lots of unspent points and chits, the above guidelines will likely work fine. If for some reason the PCs have run low on Kiai and have little left, going up against a final boss with a combat skill of 4 or 5 and a high attribute pool means that none of the players will be able to amass the power to hit the enemy at all. Consider lowering the boss's combat attribute a few points if the player characters' total Kiai pool looks low.

You can try to telegraph the enemy's power a few scenes or acts in advance in order to help the players make a choice between skipping character improvement or saving up Kiai for the final battles. You can also set goals throughout the scenario, complications where if the PCs achieve various difficult side-goals, the final boss becomes slightly less powerful.

In the end, though, the goal is to create a detailed enemy NPC who will provide a threat to the characters in combat: A threat that is not so unchallenging that the PCs will bowl it over in the first round of combat, but not a threat that is so powerful that there is no statistical way for the PCs to ever win against it (except for every single character sacrificing themsleves with the Aiuchi technique), even when amassing Kiai and calling for a Moment of Truth. It may take one or two sessions to find that balance.

SIMPLE NPCs

Simple NPCs will provide simple adversity for the player characters. It is recommended that sponsor, innocent, and information NPCs be made in this fashion when you are making an NPC on the fly. You won't need to stat them out until a PC actually tries to do something against them. Simple NPCs only have attribute and skill levels, nothing else.

Instead of the normal seven attributes, simply use three attributes: Physical (instead of Body, Agility and Senses), Non-Physical (instead of Knowledge, Spirit and Empathy), and Station. Normal humans have an attribute range of 2-3. Exceptional people have a range of 3-5. Heroes, paragons and others will have higher attributes, including 10 or more. Pick an attribute range for Physical, Non-physical and Station attributes based on what you imagine they would be: A legendary samurai in the service of your lord might be 15-6-8 (Physical, Non-physical, Station). A shrine maiden might be 3-7-9. Feel free to boost the attribute a few points if you want to give the PC a challenge, but make sure that if the attribute is much higher than the PC's own attribute, that they get the sense that they are outclassed.

Next, only write down the skill which is being contested with a PC. Base the skill level on the level that you think the person might have, considering that NPC's background (Unskilled=1, Skilled=2, Advanced Skill=3, Mastery=4). A shrine maiden would have a Shinto rank of 2; a legendary warrior would clearly have a 4 or possibly even a 5 in Melee Weapons; a young ninja might have an Evasion skill of 2.

If a simple NPC gets into a combat encounter with a player character, you will likely want to quickly take a minute to turn them into a detailed NPC. You will definitely want to stat out major enemies and antagonists as detailed NPCs rather than simple ones. However, if a PC is determined to get in a fight with a simple NPC, simply do the following:

- Double the Physical attribute: That is the number of Vitality points the simple NPC has. Simple NPCs do not have Light, Medium or Heavy Wound Gauges.

- Equip the simple NPC with a weapon
- Take another look at the Physical attribute level and make adjustments up or down.

"This samurai is a legend, so I would bet he's skilled with an Art of War. Instead of picking out which Art and tracking the Art's special abilities, I'll instead bump up his Physical attribute by 4 points to reflect his skill with combat."

Or "This shrine girl might be physically fit and have good senses, but she's not skilled with fighting. I'll lower her Physical attribute to 2 points."

- Add a Dead box. If you are statting out a mass of individual small-beans enemy types as a small combat challenge ("zako", in Japanese), you may want to skip giving them a Dead box in order to keep combat fast and exciting. If there are more than 4 enemies on the battlefield, most of them should not have a Dead box. Save the Dead box for the major boss NPCs.

NPCs and Fates

As a GM, you will likely want to assign Fates to major NPCs, especially major NPCs who support the PCs, and the main enemies (and certainly the "boss enemy" if there is one). You can put them at whatever rank you see fit. NPC Fates are not rolled and have no mechanical weight, but they provide motivation to make their personalities and goals more understandable and perhaps realistic.

Asura

One final thing to consider when making Tenra scenarios is the role of Asura in your game. Most enemies will be villainous, evil, and corrupt; however, they will still be human in body and rotten soul. Few will be as obsessed and crazy as true Asura. Asura enemies, including NPC Asura and PCs who turn Asura, are extremely formidable opponents to be used sparingly.

WHEN PCS BECOME ASURA

During an intermission, at the end of the No-Self phase, if a PCs Karma score is still above 108, that character becomes an Asura forever, an NPC controlled by the GM.

By managing Fates and their Kiai/Karma balance throughout the game, the player is never forced to become an Asura. In fact, it's better to say that the only way for a PC to become an Asura is for the player to make the conscious choice to become one. It does not happen by accident.

Once a PC becomes an Asura, the GM and player should discuss how and why it happens. At that time (either in a special scene right there, or in a scene to happen early in the next act), the GM will set up an Asura scene for the player. The focus of the scene will be the events or emotions that drive the character to become an Asura. Role-play out the mental transformation from a normal human into an evil, twisted, and obsessed shell of a human. This will be the last performance for that character before it is turned over to the GM to play in further scenes.

ASURA AS ENEMIES

Asura can be introduced as extremely powerful foes. They are enemies under the control of the GM who can make use of Kiai in the same manner that PCs can.

Asura start out with three times their Spirit score in Kiai, and cannot receive more. If you allow a player to continue playing their character as an Asura, then they will receive a number of Kiai equal to the number of Aiki chits the player currently has, times the Spirit attribute rating of the character.

The Campaign Game

A "campaign" in tabletop RPG-speak is a series of adventures strung together one after another, where the players use the same characters in each adventure scenario until they die or move on somehow. This is very much a standard way to play most tabletop role-playing games. The PCs gain experience and ability throughout their adventures, and as the campaign of interlinking adventures continues, the heroes complete larger and larger goals.

Campaign play is not the default mode of play for Tenra Bansho Zero. Normally, at the end of each scenario, the game moves focus to another set of characters, another location, and another story. Sometimes, a few of the PCs from the previous return to the next game, but usually not all of them at once. While campaign play is not the default mode of play for this game, by keeping a few things in mind you can certainly enjoy TBZ as a campaign game.

The Tenra-Style Long Campaign

One scenario of Tenra Bansho Zero, from beginning to end, lasts about 4-8 hours of play. Usually, this occurs over one single session of play, but can stretch to 2-3 sessions depending on the length of your game sessions. (Playing all day on a weekend grants more time than a few hours on a weekday evening, so adjustments have to be made to accommodate session length). Within that period of time, the characters come alive, their roles are played out, and by the end of the session they have usually changed in significant ways. An entire "campaign arc" of drama, action, and change emerges over the course of a single session of play.

This element of character change is important to remember if you decide to run TBZ as a campaign game. More than other tabletop RPGs, the character you begin the session with is often quite different than the one remaining at the end of the scenario. If you keep this in mind, plus the fact that character change is inevitable in the game, you can play TBZ as a series of linked scenarios using the same (or mostly the same) characters.

When it comes to campaign play, there are some kinds of settings which are ripe for this kind of linked-scenario game.

SENKI-MONO: THE WAR CHRONICLE

Some wars are so great that they leave scars that echo in history. The war chronicle campaign details the events of a war through the eyes of key characters in a chosen kingdom. This campaign is similar to the kinds of campaigns we see in computer or console RPGs, or tactical/simulation RPGs. They are the focus of tales like the Chinese *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* or strategic tales of the ambition of the Japanese warlord Oda Nobunaga.

Other tales focus on the people driven to rebel against unscrupulous rulers, or perhaps the leaders of a kingdom who have to quash a chaotic rebellion. Classic tales like *Houshin Engi* (*Fengshen Yanyi* in Chinese) or the *Nanso Satomi Hakkenden* aka *The Tale of the Eight Dogs* are virtue-filled tales of families and companions on both sides of a revolution within a great dynasty.

To make these kinds of stories into campaigns, remember to make them big. And while the scope of the war is huge, the PCs will most likely be completing small

but valuable goals in the corners, rather than taking center stage in the front lines of battles against armies of 10,000 warriors.

This kind of campaign takes a bit of planning. The GM has to plan the successive events of the following scenarios, all the while taking into consideration the changes that are happening in the world around them and bringing those changes into setting material into the next scenario: How will taking over a soulgem mine, or defeating a legendary enemy samurai, or taking a capital city change the events in the scenarios ahead? It's a bit more work than a single session game, but the campaign can become that much more exciting and epic because of the effort put into it.

When planning out a war chronicle style of game, you should determine how many sessions of play the game will last. In other words, break up this large campaign into a set of interconnected scenarios. Setting the number of sessions or scenarios (4 is a good round number for this kind of campaign.) is a good idea, because it gives the players an idea of the scope of the campaign and allows them to plan ahead. It's easier for them to make decisions like when their characters die or if they become Asura if they have an idea of the length of the overall campaign.

DESTINIES IN THE WAR CHRONICLE

When planning Destinies for characters of a war chronicle, it's probably best to aim for Destinies that the character can carry from one scenario to the next, goal-based Destinies which are both exaggerated and grandiose:

Goal: Create an ideal kingdom

Goal: Bring peace to the land

RENZOKU-MONO: SERIALIZED STORIES

Another style of campaign that works great is where a group of character companions stick to one location and perform "missions", or where the companions travel from place to place. The Japanese classic TV series *Mito Komon*, as well as the more popular (outside Japan) TV/movie series *Zatoichi* are great examples of a traveling tale. The TV series *Baian the Assassin* is a serialized story about an assassin acupuncturist and his close friend as they take up jobs in old Edo and smite evil; even though they don't often leave Tokyo for travel, they find trouble in all sorts of places with all sorts of new people in their adventures and dustups within the old capital.

In a serialized story, there's no set number of sessions. While there is usually a core stable of player characters, some characters can change from session to session. However, there is no solid connection or progression of an overall plot like in the war chronicle. Instead, the companions often do the same kinds of missions or scenarios, just with different NPCs and backgrounds.

This can be a strength, though. The serialized campaign style is perfect for gaming clubs or social gaming groups where you expect to have some members not able to attend every session. Some of the player characters will form a stable, and if the player attends, their character can be in that session. If someone cannot attend, there is no loss as their character is simply not used for that scenario. And finally, if a new member wants to join in for a session, there's no problem in introducing a new character to the bunch.

DESTINIES IN SERIALIZED STORIES

Destinies in traveling tales-style campaigns (serialized stories where the same characters travel from place to place) will be pretty much the same as individual sessions of Tenra Bansho Zero: Each scenario will have the same crew of player characters, but will feature all new adventures, NPCs, goals, and enemies.

SCENARIO ADVICE

Up until now, we've broken down the acts of creating scenarios and campaigns for Tenra Bansho Zero. In this last section of this chapter, we're going to look at some advice, mostly for the game master, that may help you when running TBZ for your first few sessions. Some of the advice may seem contradictory, but everything is a little lesson you can choose to use or ignore as you build your own style of GMing. There is more GM-centric advice in the Advice section of this book, and some of the important bits here are restated and emphasized. You don't have to use every piece of advice, but some of it may make your games exciting and memorable.

THE GREAT TENRA CONTRADICTION

As you are reading this book, you've probably noticed the heavy influence of Zero Acts, scenes, acts and intermissions in planning a scenario. Creating a scenario for Tenra Bansho is an exercise in contradiction. The game requires players to make choices and steer the direction of the game, yet the game needs to have at least that initial framework in order for the GM to plan what happens next.

If you create a scenario from the Zero Act scenes and carefully outline each scene in detail from beginning to end, planning out the game rigidly, then the players will be doing nothing more than playing the role of puppets. You might as well tell them their lines to say on top of that.

If you don't start with any preparation and let the players run the game completely, you'll have a meandering mess with no punctuated breaks, dramatic flow, or likely even a fulfilling ending.

You'll want to try to balance these two extremes when you plan out your games. Creating ideas for strong Zero Act scenes, then a light outline of what you would imagine happening from there (as well as a few NPCs with stats and some ideas for cool things that you want to have happen), is probably the best way to go. If you are new to creating scenarios, then you might want to write your scenario outline in more detail, but be willing and ready to eject, dismiss, and throw away entire scenes or sections from your plan if it doesn't fit with the players' choices.

AD-LIBBING

Once you get used to the feel of the game, you can begin stepping away more and more from pre-written scenario notes, and create the game as it happens. After you get a feel for the balance mentioned above in crafting a completely planned-out scenario, then you can start to ad-lib your scenarios with little preparation.

Ad-libbing is not simply "running a game without preparing anything." Instead, you come up with some ideas, do a little preparation, and focus on the situation at the table. You can try to determine where the players will head next, and plan in your head for the next reaction, event or scene. It is still recommended that if you

decide to ad-lib a scenario, you should still design good Zero Act scenes and plan the Destinies out in advance.

However, once you give the Destinies to the players, you will see them try to reach those goals themselves, driving the adventure forward without you having to pull it along. The skill of the GM can be seen in watching what the players do, anticipating their next moves, coming up with challenges and events to react to those moves, and keeping this back-and-forth action continuing smoothly and naturally throughout the session. It will take some practice.

DON'T SWEAT THE SCENARIO DETAILS

Often, you'll create a scenario and think of possible ways for the players to progress through the story. The players will surprise you. They always will. Perhaps they want to make friends with the villain, or go to the next (undefined town) to do something you hadn't planned for. You will almost always find yourself changing the scenario as it happens. About half the material you think of may go unused, while another half of the scenario will be written on the fly from creating new paths when reacting to the players' actions.

This quick thinking and reacting to the players' actions is part of the surprise and fun of being a GM! Make sure that you don't force the characters down the roads you paved in your story. You should be worried if you have gotten to near the end of the session and you have not changed any of your session plans. This is usually (but not always) a sign that you are likely forcing the players back on track to walk through your prepared thought-out story, rather than finding their own paths.

Finally, don't get upset or mad if the player characters do something unexpected! It's your responsibility to react to the players and let them create the adventure. It may take some practice, but weaving a story as the players create events is part of the challenge and excitement of being the GM.

LIMITING CHARACTER CHOICES IS OKAY

It's tempting to keep the game open as much as possible, allowing the players to step in from the beginning and make up characters from scratch. Letting players make their own characters is fine, but it can put some stress on the GM up front. If there's some time (as in, a few days or a week) in between the time where the players make their characters and the GM creates the scenario, then allowing players to make their own characters is a great way to get the GM's brain thinking of a good scenario for them.

However, if the GM has a scenario planned ahead of time, it's probably best to tighten the reins on character creation by forcing the players to create specific types of characters, if not outright providing premade characters from the start. Some of the more focused stories can come from the GM planning out the scenario situation in advance, and putting limits on player characters. "Okay, this scenario calls for one ninja, a samurai, a kugutsu, and either a kijin or kongohki", or "This is going to be an oni-focused scenario, so at least three of you need to have oni archetypes of some kind" are both acceptable ways of setting up character creation.

One thing to keep in mind is that if you limit character choices, that you should still allow the players freedom in their actions. In other words, if you insist that there is a samurai character, but the samurai's player is making decisions and playing in

ways that you didn't expect, then as the GM, you should try to go with the flow. Don't try too hard to force them into the decisions that you expected them to make. Just something to be mindful of.

WHEN IN DOUBT, START WITH THE SITUATION

Coming up with a scenario idea from scratch can be hard work. Sometimes you'll want to get feedback from peers on the internet or use friends as a sounding board for your ideas.

The best place to start is with some kind of situation. From here, you can come up with the details of the situation like NPCs, "sides" of the conflict, events which may occur, and things like that. For example, a simple situation is "Our domain is under attack." That implies that there's at least two sides of this battle, "our domain" and "the other guys". It also implies some NPCs are involved, like the lord of the domain, the enemy lord or shogun, and a few allies and enemies. Throw in some minor goals, and you're just about ready.

AFTER THE SITUATION, THROW IN SOME MEMORABLE SCENES

While you're probably not going to create the scenario from the ground up and plan out every Act and Scene in minute detail (which wouldn't allow much wiggle room for the characters), it's important for the GM to at least plan out a few memorable scenes that she wishes to see happen in the game. For example:

- "Four samurai attack the players inside the multi-tiered pagoda, and there's at least one swordfight on the roof."
- "The enemy onmyoji summons a terrible shikigami which immediately begins to rampage through the town. The PCs have to choose between stopping the shikigami and chasing down the onmyoji, or coming up with a clever way to do both"
- "The oni chieftain gathers the PCs around a campfire. While he talks in hushed tones about the past, he shares a conversation through telepathy with the other oni, telling them that the tribe is going to revolt against the humans."
- "The ninja PC meets the enemy ninja boss in the woods, where the boss reveals that he is the PC's brother."
- "A yari-wielding armour falls out of the sky and lands in front of the PCs."
- "The prince of the domain invites the PCs for tea. They have to try to get the information they need from him all while being polite and formal."
- "There's a battle over the hovering Priesthood capital of Genshikyo, where the combatants are riding on the backs of ferocious shikigami spirits."

Having little ideas like this planned out makes them likely to happen and will certainly spice up the game a little. If the scenario moves away from your planned events in new directions, try to come up with another cool scene to replace the one that you planned out (or make it happen, but in another location or in a slightly different way.)

REMEMBER THE HARD CHOICES

Like the above, when planning out memorable scenes, remember to include a few hard choices as well. Planning out the events surrounding the hard choices in advance (You can always change the details on the fly as the scenario changes through the players' actions.) will help you remember to include those choices, even if you don't use them all.

- You can chase the nefarious ninja clan members as they assault the castle, which may give the ninja leaders a chance to escape—Or you can leave the castle to its fate and instead go to the undefended ninja clan's village and attempt to kill the unguarded leaders, effectively destroying the clan.
- This scoundrel has lied to you at least three times. You can help free him from the corrupt local police who have captured him for stealing and plan to execute him (a punishment far more severe than the crime warrants)—Or you can leave him to his fate and stay out of the way of the regent-backed police force: After all, he did lie to you and steal from you earlier.
- You can accept the prince's offer of marriage and risk your new status and honor when you try to leave the fortress to help your friends (but at least you will be able to requisition the equipment and troops that your friends need to bring down the evil wandering monk) - Or you can snub the prince to continue journeying with your companions, but you won't be able to ask for the resources that you need to defeat the evil monk, meaning that it is very likely some or all of you will die.
- You can bring the orphan with you, putting her at risk to the assassins that want to kill you - Or you can leave her in the ruins of her home with a little money, hoping that she'll be able to fend for herself (but be free from potential harm's way aimed at the PCs).

SPLIT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS UP

In many classic role-playing games, the characters travel almost everywhere together. In Tenra Bansho Zero, there's a bit of emphasis on inter-character drama and relationships: The PCs usually will have character Fates pointed at each other. The best way to push this hard is for the GM to make sure to force a few scenes where there are only two player characters (or one player character and a major NPC) in the scene.

If the GM feels like the PCs haven't done enough inter-character talking, a great thing to do is to call for a scene. Declare that only 2 (or 3) PCs are in it to start, set the location and time, and give them a brief rundown of what's going on and what they should do. This is great for characters who have Fates with each other. Even though these scenes won't last too long (usually a minute or two), they are a great way to allow the players to develop their characters a little more. It's also a great opportunity for the players to get some Aiki chits through role-playing in character. Finally, it's also a great way to exercise the "Spend one Kiai point to enter the scene" rule; eventually, you're going to have a scene between two PCs, and a third player will want to have their PC enter that scene to either take part in the discussion, or else simply be present to listen to what the other characters are discussing.

For example: Given the characters Princess Rin and Kenzaburo the Edge (where one of these characters has a Fate with the other):

- "Okay, next scene. You guys were traveling to the next town. In this scene, you've stopped at a roadside tea house. Rin and Kenzaburo are drinking tea and eating while the others are elsewhere."
- "Everyone is exploring the haunted town at night. Let's see… let's have Rin and Kenzaburo off by themselves at the town's well. Rin, you just watched Kenzaburo the Edge kill four presumably bad people without remorse. Let's see you tell him what you thought of his actions. Go!"

- "You're about to fight your brother, Rin; you know he's behind all this and you're about to confront him. As you try to get yourself calm and prepared for this task, Kenzaburo finds you. He's got a few things to say before you go. What do you say, Kenzaburo?"

Putting a question to one of the players, or giving them a starting place to role-play, is a great way to kick off these kinds of split-party scenes. It gets the role-playing started, so that it doesn't stall as the players hem and haw at something to talk about.

Look around the table: If you see players who have managed to play through an act for a long time, but don't have that many Aiki chits in front of them, then it's a good idea to get them into their own scenes by themselves so that they have a chance to share the spotlight in front of the others.

LET THE PLAYERS PLAY THE ROLES OF NPCS

The GM traditionally plays the roles of all the non-player characters that come into the scenes. However, not every player character will be in every scene. This usually means that the players are sitting out a scene or two (or acting as scene judges and passing Aiki chits) while the other players role-play with each other and the GM.

One thing the GM can do is turn over the control of major or minor NPCs in the scene to players whose characters are not in the scene. Be it a small role like the master of an inn, a guardsman, a performer, or a passing child; or even a large role like the lord of the domain, an enemy samurai, another PC's lover or friend, or even the scenario's main antagonist; giving these roles to the players gives them an opportunity to play someone different than their own character. It also adds a little randomness or chaos to the game that would not have been there if the GM took on all the NPC roles. The GM can harness that chaos to advance the story.

Minor roles are great to hand out to the players, because the things they say and do will offer background for the scene and give it more color. Major roles are great to hand out for the reason of the randomness/controlled chaos as described above: Since the player doesn't know specifically what the GM had in mind for that character, the player might say something cool or different as an NPC that sets off a spark in the GM's imagination or catches her off guard, leading to a new direction for the scene, the character relationship, or even the scenario. This happens quite a lot in actual play.

If the GM has something specific that she needs to have an NPC say or do, she can of course step in, momentarily take control of the NPC from the player, do or say what is needed, and then either keep the role for the rest of the scene or else turn the role back over to the player character. Sometimes the GM will want to have a particular NPC do or say a very specific thing at a specific time (like offer a clue, give valuable information, or say something that will change their relationship to a PC). In those cases, it's totally fine for the GM to take back control of the character and continue forward.

Remember to award an Aiki chit to players who take on minor or major NPC roles for a scene. Even though their own PC did not enter the scene, the player did, and thus they should be given an Aiki chit in accordance with the rules for being brought into a scene, as well as further Aiki chits if they entertain the other players as per the normal Aiki rules usually associated to role-playing their own character.

FAILURE SHOULDN'T BREAK THE GAME

There are many times in a game where a GM may call for a Senses: Notice roll to spot a clue or a Spirit: Persuasion roll to convince someone to do something for you. One thing to be very aware of is that you don't create a task where a PC's failure stops the game cold.

If there is a clue that needs to be found, simply have the characters in the scene make a Senses: Notice roll, and the PC with the most successes finds it. If there is an NPC who needs to be convinced to do a task essential to the scenario, simply have the PC roll for it, where success or failure comes down to "Does this NPC willingly help you, or does he grudgingly help you then quickly alert your enemies?", and not "Does he help you or not?"

There are many ways for the GM to describe a task that will keep the story moving even if the character fails.

- You are in the hut of the Ashen Ninja. You need three successes on a Senses: Notice roll to find the Ultimate Arts scroll (the object the PCs need to continue the scenario) before the ninjas return. If you fail, they'll spot you and attack.
- The swordsmith crosses his arms and refuses to bind your shiki prayer strip into the blade of his masterwork sword (the object the PCs need to continue the scenario). You need two successes on a Spirit: Persuasion roll to convince him to do it. Otherwise, he will refuse, and you'll have to do a hard task for him first.
- The regent is adamant in his position to continue the war (the condition needed to end the scenario), despite the fact that you dispatched the assassin who was aiming for his life. You'll need to roll Station: Art of Rule to convince him to negotiate peace and call off the war. It will be a contested roll against the Regent, who has a Station of 15 and an Art of Rule skill ranked at Master (4), so get ready to spend that Kiai. If you succeed, he'll realize the folly of the war and immediately call for negotiations with his enemy. If you fail, he'll call for negotiations in an attempt to personally assassinate the enemy regent when they meet (presumably the PCs will be there to try to stop him from doing so).

As a GM, your main task is to make sure the game proceeds smoothly, and part of that is ensuring that no single die roll can stop a game dead. The best way around those situations is to, in the cases where the PCs need to complete a task in order to move the scenario forward, make success a given, and simply change failure to include a future complication for the PCs at some point.

CREATIVE TASK ROLLS

Once you're familiar with the basic rules of Tenra Bansho Zero (and maybe have played a scenario or two), as a GM, you are free to play with the rules - even bending them or inventing new rules - to come up with unique tasks with creative success and failure conditions.

- You are in the hut of the Ashen Ninja. You're looking for the Ultimate Arts scroll. Everyone in the hut roll Senses: Notice. The one with the highest score finds the scroll. Anyone with two successes is unaffected. If you have less than two successes, you get hit with a trap for 5 damage, minus the successes from your Senses: Notice roll.
- The swordsmith crosses his arms and refuses to bind your shiki prayer strip to the blade of his masterwork sword. You can certainly convince him to do it, because it's for the good of the domain and all. Roll your Spirit: Persuasion or Station: Persuasion against his Spirit:

Willpower. You're trying to convince him to put all his effort into this task. For every success you get over him, add +1 to the damage of the sword (starting from 0) up to a total of +6. If the blacksmith wins, he crafts the sword anyway but without putting his heart into it, and the shiki spirit curses the sword: Its damage will be -2, meaning that you have to get at least three successes over the enemy in combat rolls to do any damage at all with it.

- The regent listens to your plea for peace with open ears, especially since you dispatched the assassin who was aiming at his life. He'll quickly arrange a meeting with the opposing regent and negotiate peace. Roll your Station: Art of Rule against his to see how much pressure you can put upon him to do so right away. If you succeed, he'll meet the neighboring regent without delay. If you fail, every success the regent had above your total represents 1,000 soldiers and townspeople who died in the war while the regent made the arrangements. Out of those thousands of deaths, there will be some who will have heard of what transpired today, and hold you directly responsible for the loss of their loved ones…

Be careful with these more advanced examples, though. They actually don't relate to any rules in the book. Even though they kind of make sense, they're the result of some improvisational GM creativity. This is great, but it also means that the rules in the book that the players are familiar with don't apply as written. Make sure to state rules changes clearly, indicating the results of success and failure beforehand in those cases. See the "bending rules" explanation below for more examples of coming up with GM rulings on the fly.

In most cases, you don't need to creatively bend the rules. Simply sticking to normal tasks (as per the rules) will create scenarios that are exciting and varied. These alternative GM-created tasks are best suited to situations where one roll (with creative success and failure results) would prevent a string of linked "success/fail" skill tasks in a row which might be otherwise boring.

MAKE FAILURE EXCITING

The player characters are competent, heroic people who are better than most common people at most activities. However, failure happens, and when it does, be prepared to describe the results.

An easy way to describe failure is with a "whiff".

- "He evaded, so your sword swing missed."
- "You can't convince the monk to let you into the cloister."
- "You failed at healing the samurai's wounds."
- "You tried to forge a security pass, but don't succeed."

The above failures are all fine: Sometimes a failure is just a failure. However, don't get stuck in the trap of thinking that all failures represent some failing of the character's ability or skill. Through describing the failure, you can create failure events that take into consideration the character's skill, but in the end the task failed because of some event outside of the character that the character can't control. For example, to re-describe the above four failures in a way that doesn't involve simple "whiffing":

- "Your sword strikes true, impaling his throat on its sharp tip… or wait? What is this? For any other man, he'd be skewered at the end of your sword as you just saw in your mind's eye. But because of his superior training, he threw himself

backwards out of harm's way just as your blade pierced the air where he stood just a moment ago."

- "You seem to get through to the monk, expressing your urgency. He seems to hesitate for a moment, and that's when the head abbot appears behind him from the courtyard and clears his throat. Feeling the abbot's glare on the back of his neck, he slowly turns back to you, a tear of sweat rolling down his cheek, and firmly tells you that no one is allowed in the cloister."
- "These wounds… that bizarre annelid has some kind of rending mandible you've never seen before. You've never seen wounds like this, and your traditional healing skills haven't prepared you for treating this kind of wound. You do what you can, but you fear it's not enough."
- "You successfully forged your pass the day before and are now in line at the Gate of Lions, awaiting inspection. As your hand moves over the folded paper in your pocket, you happen to glance over your shoulder at the family in front of you: Their pass seems to have a different format than yours. You glance back nonchalantly and happen to see the pass of a merchant behind you, which confirmed your nagging suspicion. Damn, they must have recently changed the format for the security passes in this district. If you walk to the gate holding this forged piece of paper, you'll be arrested for sure."

The characters still fail, but the failures can be more interesting, lead to more detail, and allow the characters to fail for reasons outside of their character, rather than "their skill wasn't good enough". Still, a "real failure"/"whiff" every now and then can also keep the characters grounded in reality: They don't have to be Awesome, All The Time.

LET THE PLAYERS DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENS

Describing the events of success or failure when the dice hit the table is great fun, and adds a lot of flavor to the game. In many tabletop role-playing games, the GM is encouraged to interpret the results of the character's successes and failures. It is often exciting to instead let the players describe their successes or failures from time to time, especially during combat. The players have a good grasp of their character, and what they would like to see happen when they succeed or fail at a task.

So turn the description of the success or failure over to the player:

- "You hit him with your sword. Tell me what happens."
- "You succeed in your Station: Etiquette roll against the princess. What do you say to her that causes her to clamp up?"
- "He hits you with his sword for 12 damage. Where does he hit you, and what do you do?"
- "You fail to see the ninjas lying in ambush for you in the forest. This is something you normally would have noticed, but not this time. Why were you distracted?"

The last question to the player is, as an example, a little more "out there" than the others. Still, consider it the "advanced form" of letting players describe their success or failure, even if it's a little esoteric.

PLAYERS SHOULD MAKE STUFF UP ON THE FLY

Encourage your players to help bring the world to life by adding little details to the world, usually through their characters. Don't have them rely upon you all the time to bring the setting details to life. Remember, there is no single "World of Tenra"; the only Tenra that exists is the one that you and your friends create together.

The GM will certainly have elements that will be brought into the scenario to set the backdrop of the game. However, the parts that don't relate directly to the scenario should be introduced by the players.

Here's an example of relying on the GM for background information:

PLAYER: Princess Rin comes from a capital city near the ocean. What's the name of a capital city near the ocean in this domain?

GM: Hmmm… How about "Ocean's Hollow"?

PLAYER: Okay. Also, she has some kind of weapon. In the culture of Tenra, is it okay for princesses to walk around with daggers openly? Also, who would have given her a dagger? Some kind of vassal lord?

GM: (thinking) Sure. In this domain, which is rather infamous for its warlike tendencies, even princesses and ladies carry weapons openly. If someone gave you a dagger… Hmmm, let me look in the vassals section of the rulebook for an appropriate type of person to have given you that dagger…

Here's an example of the player taking control of the setting:

PLAYER: Princess Rin comes from Sea Edge.

GM: Sea Edge?

PLAYER: Yeah. It's a lesser capital city of the domain which sits on the ocean. It's the launching station for the ship fleets of the domain. Oh, and I figure that Rin is the daughter of some vassal warlord who earned his status through naval combat.

GM: Sounds fine (writes down a few notes). What's the father's name?

PLAYER: …hmmm…

GM: Oh, that's okay, it's not important now. Let me know if you think of something later.

PLAYER: Also, Rin carries a wicked shortsword around.

GM: What's it look like?

PLAYER: It's in a red lacquered sheath, and has gold and ivory etchings on the handle. It's a prized weapon that her father handed down to her, and was given to her father by the shogun of the domain.

GM: Hmmm… The shogun? That's pretty impressive. Like, almost "too impressive". Not sure if knowing the shogun would really work here, that seems a little too much…

PLAYER: Well, she doesn't know the shogun personally or anything like that, she can't call on him for aid or whatever. I was just thinking that maybe there might be some high lords of the domain that recognize the quality and origins of this ancestral gift. I figure it's a tool that shows off her high Station attribute.

GM: Oh, that totally works then.

The GM jots down some notes.

Both examples are excellent examples of using setting in play, and creating it as the game progresses. You don't have to turn over the reins to the players to create all of the setting, but the GM should not have to be the single player who controls the setting: The players can and should step up and be creative.

If the player takes this creative invention a little too far and it starts to interfere with the scenario, the GM should absolutely feel free to reel things back in, ask for clarification, or suggest alternatives. In most cases, though, such narration is just a way for the player to add some cool descriptive spice to the game. Sometimes, those descriptions can even help the GM push the scenario forward or give her new ideas for things to bring into the game.

FISHING FOR IDEAS

"Fishing", aka "Prompting", is the nickname for a technique used by GMs that's similar to what's called "reflection" in psychological circles. It refers to the GM "fishing for ideas" from the players. It's a great technique that a GM can use to get a player to come up with a cool background, description, or reasoning that the GM

can then incorporate into the game. It's excellent for less structured games, but if a GM is running a very structured game, she should be prepared, as it could change the plot or events of the scenario around (usually only temporarily, or to provide color, but sometimes more.)

Basically, the technique is this: The GM sets up an event, an item, a person, or a scene, and then tells the player to finish describing it, usually using very open-ended questions:

- "As you walk through the graveyard, you come to a dead stop. The marker on this gravestone has your full attention. Whose name is written on the gravestone?"
- "The swordmaster hands you his katana for inspection. There's something odd about this katana, though. What do you find strange about it?"
- "As you walk through the crowd, you come upon an old monk playing the shamisen in front of a small crowd of onlookers. But wait… there's something familiar about this monk, or that instrument, or the music that he's playing. Something that's right on the tip of your tongue, something that bothers you. What is it?"
- "You get to the inn before nightfall, and soak in the hot springs around the back. You close your eyes as you take in the sounds and smells of the winter forest. As you're relaxing, you hear footsteps approach the outdoor bath. You can tell who it is without even having to open your eyes. Who is it?"
- "Before the lord leaves the room, he says something under his breath that catches your attention. What does he say?"

You should not overuse this technique: About once per player per session should be more than enough, and even then, it might be too much. While it can inject some great creativity into a scenario and give the GM material to work with to reincorporate into the game, it puts a lot of stress on the players to come up with something creative on the fly. If the player is able to react and come back with a good reply, they might even be given an Aiki chit. One thing to be wary of: Fishing can derail the game a little if the player comes back with a totally unexpected or intriguing response. It can in turn stymie the GM, who might have difficulty reincorporating the player's description and continuing on with the scene properly. It can make the scenario too chaotic, and overusing fishing as a technique will make your scenario start looking more like a series of psychological experiment questions for the players than an adventure scenario.

Fishing is a great technique, but we recommend that you start using it slowly and get used to it over time, and don't overuse it.

BENDING THE RULES FOR THE SAKE OF THE SCENARIO

The setting of Tenra is huge, and there are no limits to the potential things that can happen in the game. If the GM understands the rules and knows their purposes, then she should have no problem changing them as needed to create exciting scenarios.

For example:

- The GM crafts a shikigami that will serve as a suitable "boss fight" for the player characters. An evil onmyoji will summon it and it will attack the PCs. However, when she does the math, she realizes that the shiki is too powerful: It would cost too much Soul to cast, and there's no way that the onmyoji would have the skill alone according to the rules to summon this monstrous creature.

Solution: Do it anyway. Feel free to keep the players in the dark as to the power level, or simply describe the onmyoji as having "tapped into forbidden power" or some other way that he was able to summon such a creature.

- The GM creates a scenario where one of the goals is to capture a special interface helm in order to hijack a conscious enemy kongohki. There are no rules as written which give miko agents, puppeteers or armour riders the ability to use an interface helm to hijack a conscious (that is, not just a shell) enemy kongohki.

Solution: The GM creates the rules. She says that this is a special interface helm, and tells the players that when they wear it they can make a Spirit: Interface roll against the kongohki's Spirit: Willpower. Every success the player gets means a die penalty to that enemy kongohki in combat.

- The GM writes down the stats for the game's single "final boss" ahead of time, a powerful samurai. As the battle begins and the samurai takes damage, the GM realizes suddenly that the final boss samurai is in no way powerful enough to cause much of a threat to the PCs, and will certainly die in two rounds without putting up a struggle.

Solution: The GM could have other enemies appear ("ninjas attack as well!"), or simply boost the abilities of the samurai a little: Add 20 Vitality points. Add a second Dead Box. Boost his melee weapons skill from 4 to 5. Have him suddenly unleash an annelid electrical strike or produce mechanica arms and weapons from underneath his kimono.

While it's totally acceptable to make changes to the rules on the fly, make sure to be aware of the consequences, especially when changing the difficulties of enemies on the fly. If you are too quick to lower an enemy's skills or attributes if the enemy looks too tough, then the players will never gamble their Kiai points or put their characters at risk for death. If you decide to raise an enemy's skills or attributes if an enemy looks too weak, then the players might not have the Kiai or resources left to put up any resistance whatsoever.

With the combat power of enemies and boss characters, it's always best to try to set the attributes and skills ahead of time and stick with them. You'll get used to how to balance an enemy after a scenario or two. However, mistakes can happen, so as a GM, you should feel free to make adjustments on the fly using your common sense.

GET OUT AND PLAY

Hopefully you're ready at this point to give the game a shot. Remember that there's no such thing as a perfect session. Your GM skills, and the role-play skills of your players, will develop in time through practice. If you have a cold session that doesn't run smoothly, try running again later. Over time, you'll become comfortable with playing the game.

So stop reading this book now, and start organizing your first session!

CHARACTER RULEBOOK

A PERSONA, A VOICE
A REPRESENTATION OF ALL THAT IS IN TENRA
A FORCE OF CHANGE, A PARAGON, A WHIRLWIND
THESE ARE THE CHARACTERS WE MAKE



YOROI

ARMOUR

Yoroi armours are the products of generations of Priesthood-backed technological innovation. They are the terrors of the battlefield, and even one is enough to make an army of men flee. Meikyo armours are carefully crafted works of art of high quality, while kimen armours are mass-produced of lesser quality. Subtle differences arise between meikyo and kimenkyo versions, so take care to learn those differences.

KARMA AND THE MEIKYO MIRROR

Any Karma gained by a pilot while interfaced with a meikyo soul mirror is absorbed by the meikyo. That total gets added immediately to the meikyo's Karma pool: When the rider spends Kiai while interfaced, it immediately becomes Karma.

A side-effect of the spiritual nature of the meikyo soul mirror is that, the more Karma builds up inside a meikyo, the more powerful it becomes. At certain levels of meikyo buildup, a bonus in dice is added to every single roll using the armour's body, agility, or senses while piloting the armour. The deeper the Karma level of a meikyo mirror, the stronger its reactions become. They become more powerful the closer they are to the edge of breaking and turning into an Asura. Eventually, meikyo-driven armours will seem to react quickly and powerfully at the slightest exertion of will.

MEIKYO BONUS	
Karma	Additional Dice
0-20	+0
21-40	+1
41-60	+2
61-80	+3
81-100	+4
101-108	+5
109+	+6

The only way to reduce a meikyo's Karma without Buddhist intervention is for the rider to accept the meikyo's Karma as her own, then try to reduce her Karma by changing or erasing Fates if necessary. See the Karma rules section for more details on how to do this. There is also a Buddhist magic spell called Mitama-Gaeshi which can be used to reduce the Karma of a meikyo mirror. See the Buddhist Magic rule section for details on this spell.

When determining the starting Karma for an armour-rider, the split is simple. 10 points of that total Karma belong to the rider herself, and all of the rest belong to the armour's meikyo.

Kimen Armour

Kimen armours are mass-produced, but they too rely on onmyojutsu magic and high technology to function just like their meikyo counterparts. However, they operate on lesser kimen calculating devices instead of meikyo soul mirrors.

This means that kimen armour and kimen kongohki do not benefit from the Karma bonus that their meikyo counterparts receive. This fact accounts for the high difference in quality and operational functionality. Meikyo devices crafted by the Shinto Priesthood are always superior because their devices run on more natural, human urges that reside in the human soul.

However, there is merit in not having a meikyo: There is no accumulation of Karma in a kimenkyo; all Karma gained while in a kimen armour goes to the pilot. This means that the pilot will never be cut off from the armour, and that the armour will never trap the pilot inside.

Since there is no chance of rejection from the soul mirror during Karma buildup, it is common to see more teenagers and adults piloting kimen armours. When their armour eventually rejects them due to their maturity and worldliness, many children go on to become kimen armour pilots.

Armour and Kongohki Repair

Yoroi armour repair happens in a way that is very similar to how the skill first aid helps people recover from wounds. However, instead of finding a medic to roll Senses: First Aid on their body, the pilot needs to find an onmyoji to perform a Knowledge: Onmyojutsu roll to repair the wounds taken by the armour.

Armour-Specific Rules

Entering and Exiting Armour

A pilot must possess the Interface skill. The combined Karma of the rider and the armour's meikyo mirror must be less than 108. If these conditions are not met, then the armour's meikyo will not be accessible, even with an interface helm. The pilot will be locked out, and the armour will reject any further attempt for them to interface.

It takes a pilot one major action to enter or exit an armour in combat. As per the rules of spending Kiai in combat, an armour-rider can spend a point of Kiai to perform more actions the same round they enter an armour.

Outside of combat, an armour can be entered or exited as they see fit. Most pilots will leave their armour outside of a village or in a designated stable when traveling in one of the great cities. The armour is locked using a code or key held only by the pilot. Only higher-ranked Priesthood agents have the skill or ability to hijack a pilotless armour, so armour pilots never worry about someone stealing or messing with their ride.

PILOTING ARMOUR

When piloting armour, the armour's stats for Body, Agility and Senses are used. The pilot uses her Interface skill for every single physical-based roll while piloting the armour: Attacking, shooting, spotting, climbing, evading, and so on. Remember to add the meikyo bonus to all rolls in an armour.

If the pilot is skilled in an Art of War, they can use their skills while piloting their armour. However, since those arts are steeped in physical training, they must use the appropriate skill (Melee Weapons, Marksman, Unarmed Combat, etc) instead of Interface when performing maneuvers with Art of War. The meikyo bonus still applies while piloting the armour.

If the combined Karma total of the pilot and armour meikyo goes over 108 while piloting the armour, the pilot's soul becomes trapped inside the meikyo and cannot wake up or escape, forever.

ARMOUR CREATION RULES

These are the rules for creating new yoroi armours. For beginning players, we highly recommend simply using the armour loadout for the archetype you choose. However, these rules will permit you to go further, either customizing your choice or creating one from scratch.

ATTRIBUTES FOR ARMOUR

All armour have the following three attributes, which represent the physical frame of their bodies:

BODY: This represents the pure physical power and stability of the frame. Just like human characters, body also represents the Vitality and Wound levels for an armour.

AGILITY: Agility represents the pure speed and reflexes that the frame is capable of. In combat, a frame can move 20 times its Agility score in meters every round. Outside of combat, a frame can move up to 10 times its Agility score in kilometers each hour.

SENSES: Senses are a representation of the strength of the sensors and sense-amplification equipment that the frame contains. Armour can effectively see up to a range of 100 times its Senses score in meters. They also have an innate ability called Lifepulse, which is a kind of sonar that detects all living things human-sized and larger within its normal field of vision. It quickly allows the unit to detect the approximate size and number of people moving nearby (including kugutsu and shikigami spirits). The range of the Lifepulse is equal to a radius of Senses times 10 meters.

Yoroi armours have no soul of their own, so they only have the above three attributes. The armour rider provides the rest of the non-physical attributes (Spirit, Station etc) when they are connected.

CHOOSE A FRAME

The first step in the creation of an armour is choosing a frame. There are four basic frame types for armour. Each frame has a point total called an attribute pool. This attribute pool is a pool of points which you can later spread amongst the unit's three physical attributes: Body, Agility and Senses. For now, just write the pool point total down, because choices made later on during the creation of the armour can raise or lower this pool.

Every armour type has a required Station score to equip or operate. During character creation, the pilot must have the required Station. In a game session, the pilot may come across equipment of a higher Station level: that equipment may be used for a limited time, but they will have to let the equipment go unless they raise their Station to the required level. This could represent anything from the armour requiring a key given only to clan or vassal members of a higher status, or the character's lord demanding (or simply taking) the armour in order for it to be used by another child of a trusted lord of sufficient Station.

Armour has two Station ratings: one for traditional meikyo armours, and one for mass-produced kimenkyo-based kimen armours. Meikyo armours are rare gifts used only by trusted family lines. Kimen armours, however, can be used by almost anyone with enough military rank and expertise.

While the kimen armour does not grant a meikyo bonus to die rolls, they don't require nearly the same amount of Station to operate.

ARMOUR

Attribute Pool: 16 points
Meikyo Station: 8
Kimen Station: 4

This is the basic armour type. This type is very customizable.

SUIT ARMOUR

Attribute Pool: 12 points
Meikyo Station: 6
Kimen Station: 2

Long ago, experiments with a pilot-able kongohki called "suit armour" produced limited results, so the projects were scrapped.

However, once kimen technology began to produce armours, experiments began again on a kind of small highly-maneuverable armour. Unlike basic armour where the pilot rests entirely in the chest cavity of the armour, suit armour is little more than a very responsive suit of metal armor worn by the pilot.

Stronger nations have begun to requisition large quantities of suit armours. Once a child is permanently rejected from a meikyo armour, she can be put on the battlefield again with limited training thanks to the qualities of the kimen suit armour.

The only limitation is that suit armours cannot use normal armour weapons or equipment. They can only be configured with kongohki or humanoid weapons, equipment and mechanica. See the kongohki creation rules for more details on kongohki equipment (much of it is the same as armour equipment, with some deviations).

LIVING ARMOUR

Attribute Pool: 14 points
Meikyo Station: 7
Kimen Station: 3

Unlike other armours which are mostly made of steel and scarlet, the living armour is made with a significant quantity of living tissue, usually harvested from animals. While this produces armour that are easier to repair, the armour often looks quite unsettling compared to its all-metal counterparts.

Since the outer frame of these armours is mostly flesh, annelids can be implanted and used in them.

GREAT ARMOUR

Attribute Pool: 26 points
Meikyo Station: 13
Kimen Station: N/A

Great armours are legendary meikyo armours crafted for the use of multiple riders. There are few on Tenra because of the amount of resources and risk required to make them, but each colossus could easily take on an army single-handedly.

Great armours require at least two meikyo soul mirrors (and pilots). Some armours have both meikyo and kimenkyo mirrors. Often, the meikyo will control the armour's movement, while the kimenkyo control weapons. However, there are no all-kimen great armours. The kimen technology simply lacks the ability to link mirrors or control a creature of such size.

A great armour can take a number of actions each round equal to the number of pilots controlling it. Each pilot gets a turn and uses her own skills when making attacks or maneuvering. Karma gained spent while piloting the armour goes directly to the mirror of the pilot who spent it.

DECIDE APPEARANCE

The second step in creating an armour is choosing its appearance. Their frames come in a variety of shapes and forms, and things like the number of arms, legs, or the shape of their head can be customized. The attribute pool will be adjusted depending on the configuration chosen.

After that, the number of arms and legs will decide the number of equipment slots that the yoroi starts with. Each piece of specialized armour equipment has occupies a number of slots.

The appearance tables and armour gear appear later in this section.

What does my armour or kongohki look like?

You can choose head and helmet type from a quick list, but beyond that your armour or kongohki's appearance is entirely up to you.

Each meikyo armour is crafted individually by someone who is both an engineer and an artist, so each one will look different. Size, shape, style, color, affects, all those details are up to you. Feel free to use pictures in the book or other anime and manga as inspirations for your design.

Kimen armours and kongohki tend to be more blocky and steampunk-ish, but even then there are no universal models. One kingdom may rely on armours of a uniform appearance. Another kingdom may have several model types for different purposes. Again, the appearance of their own particular armour is up to the character.

Some things to get you started:

Color: A basic quality. What color is it? Is it a uniform color (white) or a combination of colors (white with red trim).

Size: Armours and kongohki tend to have the same approximate height. However, some might have longer legs, wider arms, smaller torso and the like.

Shape and Style: One humanoid armour may look like a thin, naked, metallic person while another looks like a bulky hulk with defensive plates of armor covering it. Some will be sleek and fast like a runner, others will be bulky and powerful like a rugby player. This is a good place to define if the armour or kongohki has any animal-like or inhuman qualities to its shape or style.

Affects: The little touches: house *mon* symbols, cosmetic touches, additional equipment like pouches or packs, banners or symbol marks.

Weapons: "Twin Blades" for one armour may look like sword-like spikes which extend from the forearm. For another, it may look like a permanently extended chainsaw blade. Another might have retractable tined blades like a fork or trident, and yet another might have a high-speed rotating drill assembly permanently attached to the outside of its left hand. Decide what your weapons look like, and how they appear when they fire.

Calculate Starting Karma

After crafting the armour and adding equipment, that equipment must be paid for. Additional weapons, meikyo mirrors and mechanica can be purchased as well. All of these items have a cost in Karma which must be paid during character creation.

Each armour has one soul mirror (meikyo or kimenkyo) and heart engine at no additional cost, but more can be bought for at the prices listed below.

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT COST	
Equipment	**Karma Cost**
Meikyo mirror	25
Kimenkyo mirror	10
Heart engine	25
Armour equipment	5
Kongohki equipment	5
Mechanica	5*
Basic weapon	5
Unique armour weapon	10**
Customized weapon	varies
5 Additional soulgems	1
Shikidan ammo	3
Annelids	normal cost times 2
* Mechanica which require a combat scanner or mechanica arm/leg cost 10 Karma.	
** Unique weapons cost 10 Karma, and the rider must pay a 1 point attribute penalty. See the Unique Weapons section of the Weapon List for details.	

ANNELIDS

Armours of the "living armour" type can have annelids implanted within their living flesh. Please see the Annelid section for the description and cost of available annelids. A living armour pilot should either have the wormcharm skill, or travel regularly with someone who does.

Like all annelids, the worms implanted in living armors require food to function. Annelids implanted into these large living armours require double the food that they normally do when implanted in humans. For this reason, living armour riders have to take great care. There are stories of armour riders being digested in part or in full by their armour when they could not find enough food to sustain the annelids in its flesh.

MECHANICA

Armour can have mechanica devices added to their frames. In most cases, one equipment slot is required for each additional mechanica added.

In cases where a mechanica combat scanner, arm or leg is required, additional work is required to graft the necessary interface to the native armour frame, doubling the Karma cost of that equipment. For example, a cyclone Gatling repeater mechanica does not require a mechanica arm because it is an arm replacement, so it can be equipped for 5 Karma and a penalty of 2 attribute points. Ikari blossom drills and vajra claws require a mechanica arm, so each of those mechanica will cost 10 Karma.

In the above cases, the armour doesn't actually receive a new mechanica limb, but rather simply the ability to use limb-specific mechanica.

The attribute cost for mechanica can vary for armours. Since suit armours are approximately the same size as humans, mechanica which have an attribute penalty are calculated normally. However, mechanica being installed in normal armour have to be retooled and repurposed for the larger armour frames, doubling the attribute penalties.

This attribute penalty does not come out of the armour's attribute pool, but from the rider's attribute pool. A GM may allow an

alternative; multiply the attribute penalty total by 10 and add that amount to the character's starting Karma.

WEAPONS

Suit-armours use normal-sized human weapons. However, they can use customized or original weapons as per the weapon creation rules in the Weapon List.

Armour can use any weapon in the Weapon List (usually large firearms). For heavy damage armour-sized melee weapons, add +4 to the damage rating of any listed melee weapon. However, the weapon will still cost 5 Karma.

Custom weapons are often created for armour (for higher ammo capacity, rate of fire, and so on). They will cost 1 attribute point (for the rider, not the armour), and at least 10 Karma. See the weapon creation rules in the weapon list section for more details on how to increase the damage, ammo capacity and rate of fire for customized weapons.

CALCULATE STARTING KARMA

At this point, the armour is almost ready for play. Calculate the Karma total and add to the pilot's Karma total. This number cannot exceed 108. If it does, return to the creation process and adjust equipment until the total cost is less than or equal to 108.

Remember that in play, all meikyo-based frames receive a die bonus to all rolls involving physical attributes in accordance with the meikyo bonus table.

FINISHING FRAME CREATION: DISTRIBUTE ATTRIBUTE POOL

Once appearance and all additional equipment have been decided, it is time to split up the attribute pool across the three physical attributes: Body, Agility and Senses. Each attribute must start with at least three points in it. After appearance adjustments have been added, attributes can be lower than three. If an attribute drops to 0, the armour cannot function.

CALCULATE VITALITY AND WOUNDS

Armour have a Vitality score and Wound tracks, although Vitality is calculated slightly differently than normal human characters. Vitality is equal to two times the frame's Body score. The Wound track is calculated in exactly the same way as it is for humans.

Armours have no Soul. Armour characters do not adjust Vitality or the Health track as their meikyo bonus increases.

ADDING ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT IN-GAME

Once the game has started, yoroi armour equipment can be added or exchanged.

If adding new equipment, calculate the amount of Karma required. The player must spend an amount of Kiai equal to that amount to take the new part, after which that Kiai becomes Karma.

If exchanging old equipment, calculate the difference in equipment Karma costs. If the new equipment costs additional Karma, then that difference must be spent with Kiai.

Kimen armours can go through an entire frame adjustment given the proper preparation and time; mass-produced armour are able to interchange their parts far more easily than their meikyo counterparts, so they can change the number of arms and legs during the Intermission phase if they have access to a factory. Raise or lower attributes for the new appearance as needed. If an attribute drops to zero, the frame can no longer function.

These changes generally only happen during an Intermission phase.

In the case of mechanica, new mechanica with an attribute cost is purchased in the same way as kijin in a game session; multiply the attribute cost by 10 and pay that cost in Kiai (which immediately becomes Karma). Remember that mechanica added to suit-armour doesn't cost any additional Karma, but regular-sized armours cost double the normal amount. Mechanica without a listed attribute cost require 10 Kiai for implantation.

Armour Gear

Each piece of equipment comes in three different sets: head, upper torso/arms, and lower torso/legs. The number of slots available for equipment depends on the number of slots available for the head, torso and legs chosen. Next to each piece of equipment in parentheses is listed the number of open slots that equipment requires.

Head Type

There are two types of heads for these steel creatures: a human-looking face or a skull. Neither has a mechanical effect, but they are the two standard types of head for humanoid-form armour.

HUMANOID
The frame is built with a face that it unmistakably human-like. It can be a scary visage or a peaceful expression, or anything in between. This is the most common head type for armour.

SKULL
For a scarier effect on the battlefield, some armour crafters have been experimenting with skull designs.

Helmet Type

Armour almost always come equipped with a headdress or helmet of some kind, just like the noble warriors of myth and legend. Neither type has a mechanical/rules effect, they are simply the two most common styles.

KABUTO
The kabuto is the classic samurai helmet worn in battle: curved, usually featuring the clan or domain's crest prominently on it.

PLUME HELMET
This helmet features a line of elaborate bird feathers in spikes above the helmet which trail behind the armour.

Head Equipment

All armour heads have two open equipment slots. The following is a list of equipment native to yoroi armour frames.

BATTLEFIELD MASTERY (1)
This vision extends the range of sight to Senses times 200 in meters. It also gives a graphical display of visible allies, enemies, formations, and ratios of success for various battle engagements. This grants a bonus of +2 dice for all Strategy or Art of Rule rolls.

DARK VISION (1)
Night looks like day with this vision enhancement. The user receives a bonus of +2 dice to all Senses checks at night or in a dark environment.

EYES OF DISTANT DEATH (1)
This vision increases the steadiness of zoomed vision while projecting a HUD and probability tables for distance attacks. All ranged attacks based on the Marksman ability are granted +2 dice.

LIFEPULSE EXTEND (1)
This increases the range of the Lifepulse ability to Senses times 100 meters.

MOTION DETECTOR (1)
This is a limited-range passive detection unit which tracks all movement within a 10 meter radius. It makes the armour harder to target for sneak attacks from behind, granting the pilot a bonus of 3 dice to use against sneak attack maneuvers.

SHA SENSORS (1)
This allows pilots with the Onmyojutsu skill to see the very fabric of the gossamer-like Sha power around it. Using this ability, the pilot makes a Senses: Onmyojutsu roll against 1/10 of the creation point cost of a target shiki. If successful, the user can determine all of the shiki's abilities and power levels of those abilities.

MECHANICA (1)
Mechanica based on the head region can be added to the armour head. Each mechanica requires one equipment slot.

UPPER TORSO AND ARMS
While most armours are built with a basic human shape to facilitate the interface between pilot and armour, some are built with more sets of arms for various tasks.

No matter how many sets of arms an armour has, they all have an upper torso. An upper torso has 4 equipment slots available and each pair of arms grants 2 additional equipment slots.

UPPER TORSO AND ARM ADJUSTMENTS

Arms	Body	Agility	Senses	Total Equipment Slots
2	+1	+1	0	6
4	-1	+2	-1	8
6 or more	-2	+4	-3	4+ number of arms

BACK PERSONNEL TRANSPORT (4)
This is a specialized personnel carrier for armour use. It can carry up to six passengers, and it has a special chamber for carrying a general or other important battlefield leader. The personnel carrier also comes with a great cannon, heavy repeater or scatter gun at no additional Karma cost.

BRILLIANT FLOWER OF DESTRUCTION (0)
This explosive device is installed in armour when there are fears of the soul mirror or armour from falling into enemy hands when the armour is destroyed. The pilot can activate this device while inside the armour or from a safe distance away. A charge is rigged inside of the heart engine, which gives additional energy to the bomb. The armour erupts in a massive explosion, completely obliterating the armour and soul mirror within it. Every person within a 15 meter radius takes 30 points of explosive damage.

HEAVEN'S FIRE (2)
These are special gunpowder rocket boosters which allow the armour to leap up to 20 meters at once. The boosters may be fired up to 3 times per scene. If the unit is also equipped with thruster wings or rotor blades, Heaven's Fire may be used to double its speed for a round instead.

ROTOR BLADES (2)
This is a detachable and extendable set of propellers that allow limited flight. The armour can travel in the air at a speed of Agility times 20 kilometers per hour. In combat, the unit can travel Agility times 300 meters per round. The propeller blades allow the armour to hover and stop in midair as well.

STORAGE COMPARTMENT (2)

This is a special armored compartment. It is a hollowed compartment which can fit 4 cubic meters of material. This can be only taken once.

THRUSTER WING (2)

This set of turbines and wings allows the frame to fly at high speeds. The armour can fly at a speed of Agility times 30 kilometers per hour. In combat, the unit can travel at a speed equal to the armour's Agility times 500 meters per round.

MECHANICA (1)

Mechanica based on the arm and torso region can be added to the armour body. Each mechanica requires one equipment slot.

ARM AND UPPER TORSO WEAPONS

There are specialized weapons for armour. See the weapons section for details and equipment slot costs.

LOWER TORSO AND LEGS

Like arms, most armour are crafted with two legs in order to ease the interface between human soul and machine. However, more or fewer legs can be equipped for various effects.

NO LEGS

Lower Torso: 2 Slots Legs: 0 Slots

This could represent a snake-body, or a chariot, wheeled, or tank-style lower body. An armour possessing no legs has a better grounded body, but it is less maneuverable.

TWO LEGS

Lower Torso: 2 Slots Legs: 2 Slots

This is the most common armour style. Because of its human shape, riders have the easiest time adapting to this kind of armour.

FOUR LEGS

Lower Torso: 4 Slots Legs: 4 Slots

While the top half of the body might look human, the bottom half has four legs like a horse or other quadruped. The movement speed of the armour is doubled.

SIX OR MORE LEGS

Lower Torso: 2 Slots Legs: # of Legs

This option allows 6-legged or 8-legged armour, with an appearance of a centipede or other insect. Each leg adds an additional leg equipment slot. Riders find it harder to initially adapt to a multi-leg form, which instills an initial penalty to Senses.

LOWER TORSO AND LEG ADJUSTMENTS

Legs	Body	Agility	Senses
0	+1	-1	0
2	+1	+1	+1
4	+2	+1	0
6+	+1	+2	-1

There is a limited amount of special equipment for armour legs. Unlike the head and torso based equipment, the leg-based special equipment completely replaces the leg units and leaves no free leg slots. They also do not cost any Karma: The normal 5 Karma for additional equipment is dropped, as they are complete replacements of normal legs.

GALE SPEED ROLLERS

These are extendable wheels that are attached to the backs of the legs. The gale speed rollers triple movement speeds on the ground when deployed (deployment is instantaneous and requires no actions in combat). They also grant Evasion skill rolls 2 bonus dice. These may be equipped on only the 2-legged and 4-legged units, and the rollers only work on flat surfaces like fields, plains and roads.

HEAVEN ROLLER LEGS

Instead of legs, the unit has huge wheels or treads that roll over any surface. Movement is multiplied by 4 and Evasion skill rolls get a +1 die bonus. Heaven roller legs can be used with any number of legs.

HOVER REPLACEMENT

Usable only on units with 4 or more legs, this replacement converts the legs into hover-jets. The unit can travel over land or water. Movement speed is doubled, and Evasion skill rolls are each granted 1 bonus die.

LEGS OF THE WATER DRAGON

This modification converts the legs into fins. It allows the armour to swim underwater. This conversion is usable on 0 and 2-leg models, and grants 2 bonus dice to all physical action rolls made underwater.

PERSONNEL TRANSPORT

This leg modification converts the armour into a specialized personnel carrier with nearly unlimited storage. It can carry up to ten passengers. The personnel carrier also comes with one great cannon, heavy repeater or scatter gun at no additional Karma cost.

MECHANICA (1)

Mechanica based on the lower torso and legs can be added to the armour body. Each mechanica requires one equipment slot.

LEG AND LOWER TORSO WEAPONS

There are specialized weapons for armour. See the weapons section for details and equipment slot costs.

ARMOUR DAMAGE

Type	Damage
Unarmed armour	+5
Rolling/Crushing*	+Body Attribute

*Rolling/Crushing attacks are only for armour with no legs. However, their unarmed attack damage is set at +4.

Unarmed attacks are made with the Body: Interface or Body: Unarmed Combat skill.

Armed attacks are made with a melee weapon and the Agility: Interface or Agility: Melee Weapons skill.

Most armour specialty weapons already have a +4 damage adjustment added to them, including all the weapons listed in the armour rider templates and armour weapon list. When in doubt, if an armour wields an "armour-sized" weapon, take the normal damage for a human-sized weapon and add +4.

ARMOUR CREATION EXAMPLE

Yoko is an armour rider and miko shrine-girl for the Shinto Priesthood. Coming from a long and established family line, she has been chosen to pilot one of the yoroi armours given to her lord.

Before the game begins, Nathan, Yoko's player, decides to craft a new armour rather than using the one that comes with the Armour Rider template.

Nathan decides to create a meikyo suit-armour, which grants 12 points to the attribute pool. He decides that he wants to make a relatively humanoid-looking suit armour based on a design he saw recently in a cool anime. He chooses a frame which has two arms and two legs. This will grant a bonus of +2 to Body, +2 to Agility and +1 to Senses.

Nathan then chooses a humanoid face and a kabuto helmet, but declares that Yoko's hair flows freely out of the back of the armour's kabuto helmet.

The armour has two head slots. Nathan likes the idea of that bonus to projectile weapons, so he chooses Eyes of Distant Death. Dark Vision sounds useful as well, so those are added.

There are 6 open upper body/arm slots to work with. The thought of leaping high sounds cool, so Nathan adds Heaven's Fire. There are 4 slots

remaining, but instead of taking another piece of equipment or more rocket thrusters, he decides to stop here for now.

Next, Nathan decides to add Twin Blades to each of the armour's legs. This will not increase the number of attacks, but it looks cool, and protects against the possibility of one of the blades breaking or being destroyed by a special attack. This fills the open leg slots. On the lower torso, he decides to take a projectile weapon. Looking over the general weapon list, he settles on a standard human-sized soulgem rifle.

Next, Nathan adds up the total cost of this armour to see how he stands. The first meikyo soul mirror and heart engine which power the armour do not cost anything. He has 6 pieces of equipment (Eyes of Distant Death, Dark Vision, Heaven's Fire, two Twin Blades, and the soulgem rifle), which comes to a subtotal of 30 Karma. Nathan wants 25 extra soulgems for the rifle, so that will cost an extra 5 Karma. The final Karma total is 35.

Finally, it's time to spread the attribute pool around. Suit armours get 12 points, and because of the human frame there are an extra 5 points (+2 Body, +2 Agility, +1 Senses) for a total of 17. He decides that for this mecha concept, he wants an armour that is light, fast, and very competent with ranged weapons. He decides on a final spread of Body 4, Agility 7 and Senses 5. The armour's meikyo starts off with 35 Karma, and requires a station of 6 to pilot.

Sample Yoroi Armours

The following is a list of sample yoroi armours with their Karma already calculated. Beginning players should simply use the armour listed in their archetype template, but the armour presented here are a good starting point for creating your own armour. Feel free to change the name as you see fit.

Prowling Lion

Shikami			
Type:	Armour		
Frame:	2 Arms, 2 Legs		
Head:	Humanoid kabuto		
Required Station:	8		
Karma Cost:	35		
Attribute Penalty:	1		
Attributes			
Body:	7	Agility:	7
Senses:	7	Vitality:	14

WEAPON	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Yoroi Gemblade	+9	6	—	12
Roaring Dragon Mortar	+9	4	1km	6
Explosive Spiker	+7(+9)	1	—	9

EQUIPMENT

Gale Speed Rollers, 50 Soulgems

NOTES

This is a traditional armour type, made to look vaguely human. It excels in close combat on the battlefield. The Yoroi Gemblade is a customized gemblade large katana, which costs 15 Karma total.

Steel Demon Mark II

Tekki: Nishiki			
Type:	Kimen Armour		
Frame:	2 Arms, 2 Legs		
Head:	Humanoid kabuto		
Required Station:	5		
Karma Cost:	20		
Attribute Penalty:	0		
Attributes			
Body:	5	Agility:	8
Senses:	8	Vitality:	10

WEAPONS	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Yoroi Greatsword	+9	—	—	—
Heavy Repeater	+3	5	50m	30
Great Cannon	+10	1	120m	1

EQUIPMENT

Gale Speed Rollers, Eyes of Distant Death

NOTES

A modern kimen-style armour, standardized and deployed in many kingdoms under the influence of the Northern Court of the Priesthood. Clunkier than its meikyo counterparts, it still demands attention on the battlefield. It does not gain a Karma adjustment.

FLOWER OF THUNDER

Raika			
Type:	Suit Armour		
Frame:	2 Arms, 2 Legs		
Head:	Humanoid kabuto		
Required Station:	6		
Karma Cost:	35		
Attribute Penalty:	0		
Attributes			
Body:	4	Agility:	7
Senses:	6	Vitality:	8

WEAPONS	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Soulgem Rifle	+5	2	100m	8
Twin Blades	+2	2	-	4

EQUIPMENT

Dark Vision, Eyes of Distant Death, Heaven's Fire, 25 Soulgems

NOTES

A meikyo suit-armour crafted for reconnaissance and light combat. It is a model especially adept at ranged fire, and used in many of the southern kingdoms.

WHITE RIVER

Hakuryu			
Type:	Living Armour		
Frame:	2 Arms, 2 Legs		
Head:	Humanoid		
Required Station:	7		
Karma Cost:	55		
Attribute Penalty:	0		
Attributes			
Body:	7 (8)	Agility:	7 (6)
Senses:	5	Vitality:	14

WEAPONS	Damage	RoF	Range	Ammo
White Heat Palm	+4+(X/2)	—	—	—
Yoroi Swortsword	+6	—	—	—

EQUIPMENT

Dark Vision; Annelid: Rejuvenation Worms (2); Annelid: Blood Hulker (1)

NOTES

White River is a living armour from the domain of Utsuro in the Iron Ridge. Because this living armour moves much more quietly and is more flexible than most armours, it is very useful for night and close-range encounters. Unlike many armours, it does not make an appearance on the battlefield as a symbol of might and power. Instead it is sent to work from the shadows.

CRIMSON SPIDER

Benigumo			
Type:	Armour		
Frame:	4 Arms, Multiple Legs		
Head:	Beast-like		
Required Station:	8		
Karma Cost:	30		
Attribute Penalty:	1		
Attributes			
Body:	4	Agility:	6
Senses:	8	Vitality:	8

WEAPONS	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Armour Piercing Rifle	+11	1	400m	8
Heavy Repeater	+3	5	50m	30
Double Shikidan Howler Cannon	12	1	2km	2

EQUIPMENT

Hover Replacement, Eyes of Distant Death, 15 Soulgems

NOTES

The kingdom of Ryuko is always engaged in battles over the border with its neighbor Kikoku. Crimson Spider is deployed in areas where there are trenches that stop or stymie other armour and ground forces. Its multiple legs simply walk over obstacles that stop other units, making it a particularly effective armour in these circumstances. Kikoku has no armours of its own, so Crimson Spider can turn the tide of battle when deployed.

Due to its effectiveness, Ryuko and other neighboring lands are experimenting with kimen armours of the same spider-like shape.

SKYFANG

Kuuga			
Type:	Kimen Armour		
Frame:	4 Arms, 2 Legs		
Head:	Humanoid, double-horned		
Required Station:	5		
Karma Cost:	35		
Attribute Penalty:	1		
Attributes:			
Body:	4	Agility:	7
Senses:	8	Vitality:	8

WEAPONS	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Longspear	+8	—	—	—
Long Cursed Lancer	+9	1	400m	10
Heavy Repeater	+3	5	50m	30

EQUIPMENT

Eyes of Distant Death, Heaven's Fire, Lifepulse Extend, Thruster Wing, 10 Soulgems

NOTES

Skyfang is a flying armour, committed to reconnaissance and aerial fighting over the skies of Ouga in the Dragonscale Territories. Few flying armours exist, so Skyfang is particularly effective. Other flying armour like Skyfang are also commonly called Godspears, and their sky battles are terrible to behold.

They say that the first flying armour was developed from the plans of a regent named Kodou Sunami. The details are lost to history, but he assuredly had support from the Shinto Priesthood in its development and manufacture.

EARTH KING

Riku-Oh			
Type:	Kimen Armour		
Frame:	2 Arms, No Legs		
Head:	Humanoid, single-horned		
Required Station:	4		
Karma Cost:	10		
Attribute Penalty:	0		
Attributes:			
Body:	9	Agility:	4
Senses:	5	Vitality:	18

WEAPONS	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Wheel Crush	+9	—	—	—
Great Cannon	+10	1	120m	1

EQUIPMENT

Heaven Roller Legs, Storage Compartment

NOTES

Earth King is the most popular model of kimen armour in the domain of Inao. They are capable of a wide range of tactics when there are several in a group, from combat maneuvers to the transportation of necessities to outposts or battlefields.

Because of their mobility and speed, they are very useful for maintaining supply lines and supporting other armour units, or bringing samurai, kijin or kongohki quickly to deployment areas.

MOUNTAINSONG

Kasen			
Type:	Kimen Armour		
Frame:	4 Arms, No Legs		
Head:	Humanoid, plumed helmet		
Required Station:	2		
Karma Cost:	30		
Attribute Penalty:	2		
Attributes			
Body:	2	Agility:	7
Senses:	6	Vitality:	14

WEAPONS	Dmg	RoF	Rng	Ammo
Burning Scourge	+5 (+10)*	—	5m	—
*(+10 damage is due to the Combat Arm bonus)				

EQUIPMENT

Battlefield Mastery (1.2km), Sha Sensors, Combat Arms (Otsu-Class), Kairen Fingers, Mechanica Torso (Otsu Class)

NOTES

A legendary Taoist sorcerer named Nasu Ittou brought an intact yoroi armour from Ujima and reverse-engineered it. From its design, he was able to manufacture a line of kimen armour specializing in supporting onmyoji summoner-riders. These models can be seen in the southern and eastern continents of Tenra.

Nasu Ittou is currently being pursued by the Southern Court for his actions, and because he still possesses the meikyo mirror from the armour he captured.

ARMOUR WEAPONS

Armour can use additional weapons from the general Weapon List section of the rules. The weapons in this chart are available only for armour. Each weapon costs 5 additional Karma.

Weapon Name	Location	Slots	Dmg	RoF	Rng	Ammo
Explosive Spiker	Arm/Leg	1	+7 (9)	1	—	9
Twin Blades	Arm/Leg	1	+6	3	—	9
Vajra Claws	Arm	0	+5	2	—	4
Vajra Claws	Leg	0	+6	2	—	4
White Heat Palm	Arm	0	+4+(X/2)	—	—	—
White Heat Leg	Leg	0	+5+(X/2)	—	—	—
Cursed Lancer	UTLTLeg	1	+7	1	400m	6
Repeating Cursed Lancer	UT/LT	1	+6	10	150m	30
Peerless Cursed Lancer	UT/LT	2	+8	12	250m	20
Fury of the Kami	UT	3	+15	1	4km	6
Roaring Dragon Mortar	UTLTLeg	1	+9	4	1km	6
Shikidan Howler Cannon	UTLTLeg	1	12	1	2km	1
Twin Shikidan Cannon	UT/LT	2	12	1	2km	2
Raiden Mortar	UT/Leg	1	+10	1	4km	1
Location: UT=Upper Torso; LT=Lower Torso						

UNARMED AND MELEE WEAPON NOTES

Explosive Spiker

This fires a spear-like projectile with incredible force, extending from the arm or leg during strikes or kicks for devastating damage. It contains a number of gunpowder charges; the damage in parentheses indicates the adjusted damage when one of the gunpowder charges is expended. The explosive spiker is used with the Unarmed Combat skill.

Twin Blades
Single blades which extend from the frame's forearm. They can be used with Unarmed Combat or Melee Combat skills. They are called "twin" because both sides of the blade are sharpened.

Vajra Claws
Ultra-sharp steel claws that are attached to (or spring from) the fingertips. They are used with the Unarmed Combat skill.

White Heat Palm/Leg
A soulgem-implanted gauntlet which glows white-hot when activated. Expending points of Soul causes the soulgems to heat the hand or leg, causing additional damage for each single attack the more Soul ("X", where "X" is "as much Soul as you wish to spend") is consumed. The kongohki version, being more condensed, is generally more effective than the armour version.

RANGED WEAPON NOTES

Cursed Lancer
This is a massive rifle or cannon which fires soulgem-propelled large steel bullets at an incredible speed.

Repeating Cursed Lancer
This cannon has multiple barrels capable of a greater rate of fire, but at a shorter range.

Peerless Cursed Lancer
The latest in soulgem mass-driver technology, this fires bullets at even higher speeds than previously attained, resulting in more damage and a longer range.

Fury of the Kami
The Fury of the Kami is a massive cannon, indisputably the most powerful armour-carried weapon available. It unleashes pure hell on any single target on the battlefield when fired. It has an extremely long range, but requires quite a bit of time to reload.

Roaring Dragon Mortar
This is a high velocity mortar which fires a soulgem-steel crafted shell, exploding on impact. Everyone within 4 meters of the impact is affected, although they have an opportunity to evade the attack.

Shikidan Howler Cannon
The Shikidan cannon fires pinpoint-targeted guided shells with unerring accuracy at an incredible range. Simply pick the target, and the target will take the exact amount of damage (this damage can be reduced by making an Agility: Evasion roll. Each success lowers the damage taken by one). It fires expensive shikidan shells. Each shell contains a shiki spirit which guides the projectile to its target. The shiki spirit yells out an unnerving scream as it sends the payload to its intended target.

Raiden Mortar
This is a long range, high-power version of the Shikidan Howler Cannon. It is a high-prep single-shot weapon, and its shells explode in a fireball when they hit their targets. Everyone within a 5 meter radius (4 meter for the kongohki model) must make an Evasion roll or take damage. It can only be used once per scene.

OTHER WEAPONS

See the Weapon List for more weapon possibilities for armour and kongohki.

For armour, simply add +4 damage to the rating of any listed weapon and leave all other stats as-is for a simple armour weapon costing 5 Karma. Armour weapons can be customized as per the customization rules in the Weapons List.

SUIT ARMOUR NOTE

Suit armours are roughly human-sized, so they can only choose kongohki weapons and equipment. They can't use normal armour weapons. They also do not get the +4 damage bonus to other weapons that the other armour types receive.



ONMYOJUTSU RULES

In the world of Tenra, magic is synonymous with summoning. Taoist sorcerers called onmyoji don't fly or throw bolts of fire at their enemies. Instead, they summon creatures called "shiki" or "shikigami" to do these things for them. This section covers the background and technique of onmyojutsu, as well as provides a number of sample shiki for summoning.

RULES FOR CREATING SHIKIGAMI

Onmyojutsu is the art and science of controlling the invisible universal force known as sha. Between practitioners of Taoist sorcery, there is a word called "shiki". This word shiki generally refers to three things: The power of sha put into a state of control by some kind of practitioner, devices that use the force of sha to empower and control human muscles and mechanica, and finally the proto-lifeforms summoned from magical seals, often written on prayer strips.

However, the onmyojutsu summoners generally focus only on the latter kind of shiki. The greatest power of an Taoist sorcerer is to summon and control protolife, drawing them from the sha by use of prayer strips and force of will. Between sorcerers, these protolife creatures are usually called shikigami. The people of the world of Tenra, however, refer to these creatures as shiki, and know them as demons, monsters and evil spirits which sorcerers bind and control.

The Taoist sorcerers who use the power of onmyojutsu to summon and bind these shiki are called onmyoji or summoners.

CREATING SHIKI

Even for onmyoji, the path of using shiki is a path which leads to vast unexplored territory; it is not an exact science and it is clouded in much mystery. The laws and rules behind the study of summoning are consistent, but individual onmyoji know that the nature of sha grants greater weight to skill, intuition and sense than consistent patterns.

Even within the same practiced, measured recorded laws of summoning shiki, the variance of possible results is wide, and the exact same shiki is almost never produced twice. Because of the wide possibilities that abound when drawing upon sha to summon shikigami, onmyoji commonly view summoning as more of an art than a science.

CREATION POINTS

The amount of creation points available to use to summon a shiki depend on the onmyoji's *Onmyojutsu* skill and *Knowledge* attribute. These creation points will determine the abilities and powers of the shiki.

SHIKI CREATION POINT CHART	
Skill Level	Creation Points
Skilled (2)	Knowledge
Advanced (3)	Knowledge x 2
Master (4)	Knowledge x 3
Supreme (5)	Knowledge x 4

SHIKI CREATION PROCEDURE

Shiki are created in the following manner:

1) Write out a summoning seal

2) Soul points are consumed

3) The prayer seal gathers sha energy

4) The shiki takes form

5) The shiki begins to act on its own

DRAWING THE SUMMONING SEAL

The onmyoji writes the abilities and powers of the shiki in what is known as a summoning seal or summoning glyph. A summoning seal is a written combination of pictures and words of the summoning language, used to craft and tune the paper or object that it is written on. To the passerby, it appears to be squiggles and ordered marks, but to the onmyoji it will appear to be the quick blueprint of a shikigami to be summoned. This summoning seal doesn't always have to be written on a piece of paper. Any place that is possible to write on can have a prayer seal written on it, although it can increase the difficulty of the summoning. In a pinch, one can write on water, or even in the air.

More often than not, writing a summoning seal is done on a strip of paper, often called a prayer strip, using a brush and black ink. Writing a seal usually requires a minute of time (or one full action when in the middle of combat).

PRAYER STRIPS

Prayer strips, also commonly known as "summoning strips", or "shiki paper", are specialized rectangular strips of paper used for shiki summoning and creating magical charms. The creation of these strips, and the making of the paper itself, is done by sorcerer apprentices. It is often the first job learned by a young onmyoji apprentice in the path of study.

In the game, onmyoji characters can spend one Kiai point to pick up 10 prayer strips during intermissions.

BRUSH

For shiki-summoning seals, it doesn't matter if you use the tip of your finger to write with. However, as expected, most onmyoji have a fondness for a fine brush.

Lately, some onmyoji have been spotted crafting shiki on kimenkyo and abacus. Old-style onmoyji look upon this uncouth newer generation with unreserved scorn and refer to them as "Shiki-slingers".

INK

There are many ingredients to use for drawing shiki summoning seals. The most commonly-used ones are charcoal ink or pigmented water. In rare cases, even blood is used, as some onmyoji maintain the theory that sha tends to concentrate in blood.

Often, onmyoji choose an original kind, style or color of ink that becomes their trademark, though there are no rule-based effects for using different liquids for drawing seals.

SOUL CONSUMPTION

There is no die roll required to summon a shiki. However, in the summoning process a certain amount of the onmyoji's Soul points will be consumed. The sorcerer first uses her will to awaken the summoning seal. After that, the seal will automatically begin to gather sha energy and form into a shiki.

The amount of Soul consumed depends on the complexity of the shiki seal. The more shiki creation points used to create the shiki, the more Soul is consumed to awaken it. The amount of Soul consumed is equal to half the creation point cost of the shiki, rounded up.

At this time, if the amount of Soul consumed exceeds the sorcerer's Soul reserves, taking it to zero or less, the sorcerer passes out. The shiki will still form, but it won't be able to take orders or act. In most cases, it will simply wander away and disappear. In the case of more dangerous shiki, it may attack people around itself—including the sorcerer—before disappearing.

In any case, it is at this point where Soul points are consumed, and the Soul score of the onmyoji is reduced by the appropriate amount.

THE SEAL ACCUMULATES SHA ENERGY

The summoning seal, having consumed Soul from the sorcerer, pulls the surrounding sha into itself and starts to form the body of the shiki. A crackle similar to electricity or distant thunder can be heard, and the seal gives off a glow like electricity.

The time required then for the formation of the shiki depends upon the amount of latent sha energy in the area that the seal can draw upon. However, for the purposes of the game rules, most shiki require about one minute to form. In a combat situation, the shiki forms in the interaction phase that takes place at the beginning of the combat round. In normal cases, the sorcerer draws the prayer seal in the first round. At the beginning of the second round the shiki takes form, and by the action phase of that second round the shiki can move, act and attack.

THE SHIKI TAKES FORM

Once the seal has enough sha, the shiki takes form and awakens. Often, the shiki lets out a scream not dissimilar to a scream of animal's birth cry. For this proto-life creature, taking form is literally the birth of the shiki.

The formation of the shiki looks like a ghostlike substance which gradually and slowly takes form and becomes more and more substantial.

As mentioned above, in a combat situation this formation and awakening takes place at the beginning of the round after the seal was drawn and Soul spent.

THE SHIKI BEGINS TO ACT ON ITS OWN

From this point, the shiki fully awakens, and begins to act in accordance with the orders of the onmyoji.

The shiki acts on the intent and desires of its master. A shiki does not accidentally or intentionally find loopholes in wording to twist a master's commands into something undesirable. A shiki will always do as the summoner commands in accordance with her desires and intentions to the best of its abilities.

BASIC SHIKIGAMI ABILITIES

A shiki has a number of basic abilities. The abilities will vary depending on the amount of points spend in the shiki's creation, the form that the onmyoji chooses for it, and the powers that the onmyoji grants it.

SHIKI ABILITY SCORES

The ability scores that the shiki starts out with and the number it uses for its skills is decided based on the total amount of points used to create the shiki. The more points used to create the shiki, no matter what its purpose or special abilities, the more powerful the shiki will be.

The ability score number isused for all shiki actions normally resolved using Body, Agility and Senses attributes. However, a shiki cannot use Knowledge, Spirit, Empathy or Station attributes or rolls.

As for skills, a shiki uses its set skill number as the value for all basic skill rolls. A shiki cannot use specialist skills (Forgery, Ninjutsu, and the like). Finally, a shiki has no will or personality of its own; attempts at communication, or mental or spiritual attacks will not affect a shiki.

SHIKI ABILITY SCORE TABLE

CREATION PTS	ATTR	SKILL	VIT
1-6	1	1	1
7-12	2	1	2
13-18	3	2	3
19-24	4	2	4
25-30	5	3	5
31-36	6	3	6
37-42	7	4	7
For every additional 6 points spent above 42, add +1 to both Attributes and Vitality			

SHIKI LIFESPAN

After a shiki is summoned, it can act for a number of minutes (or rounds in combat) equal to its summoner's Spirit score. If the shiki is defeated in combat, the appointed lifespan time has passed, or the summoner tells it to, the shiki will either disappear into nothingness or return to its seal to be enveloped. In both cases, the shiki is gone from the scene. If the shiki is in combat, it will disappear in the round's interaction phase.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The form, shape, and other characteristics of the shiki are entirely determined by the summoning onmyoji. She determines what the shiki looks like, and that's how it appears. However, no matter what its appearance is, it will not gain extra abilities or powerful attacks just because the summoner described it as having them. An onmyoji can describe her shiki as having great wings, but it cannot fly unless the summoner specifically pays for that ability.

Onmyoji who summon shiki with the shapechange ability can change the appearance of the shikigami again and again after it takes form.

A SHIKI ALWAYS OBEYS

A shikigami always obeys the commands of its master. No matter what abilities or form the shiki takes, it always retains the ability to hear and understand the desires of the onmyoji that summoned it. As stated earlier, it always acts on the will and intent of the summoner, and never uses creative interpretation or willful misinterpretation when it comes to orders.

In combat, it costs no actions for the summoner to give orders (even new orders) to shiki that have the Sense Link ability. For other shiki without Sense Link, it requires a half action (see the combat

section for more details on "half actions") for the summoner to issue an order to the shiki.

DESTRUCTION OF A SHIKIGAMI

If the shiki is attacked and takes enough damage to equal or exceed its Vitality score, then it does not pass out: It is destroyed. Even if the prayer strip or summoning seal still remains intact, it cannot be reused, and the destroyed shiki does not return unless it is summoned again.

SHIKIGAMI ABILITY CHARTS

There are two methods for creating a shiki: random and crafted. Crafted shiki tend to have the exact abilities that the onmyoji summoner wants it to have. However there is less freedom in the expenditure of points, and these shiki can be a little weaker. Randomly created shiki tend to be more powerful than crafted shiki, but if the summoner wants a particular ability set in a shiki, it may be harder to build.

For example: A summoner wants to create a shiki whose only task is to carry the onmyoji and her comrade to the top of a cliff face. It would be too much of a gamble to try to create a random shiki hoping that it gets infused with the one power the sorcerer needs. However, in a fight against a powerful enemy, it might be worth taking the gamble to create a shiki at random to be able to get abilities more powerful than its creation cost would normally allow.

RANDOM CREATION

The onmyoji must roll for the abilities of the shiki on the shikigami ability chart in this chapter. Two dice are rolled to determine the gained ability, then one more die is rolled to determine the power of that ability. This determines the ability, the power level of the ability, and the shiki creation point cost for that ability level. The shiki gets that ability and the point cost must be paid.

In the random creation method, if at least one creation point remains unspent, the summoner's player can roll on the chart again to get more abilities. If there is one ability point left, and the player rolls and gets an ability that normally costs 15 points, that ability can still be taken; it's okay to go over the mark once in the random creation method. Eventually, though, the creation points will be reduced to zero or less, and at that point no further abilities can be purchased.

If the same ability is rolled twice, then the two power levels are added to each other for a more powerful ability.

Example: A player rolls and gets "combat ability" at a power level of 2 and a cost of 6 creation points. Later, "combat ability" is the result of another roll, this time at level 4 at a cost of 12 creation points. The player adds them together for a final "combat ability" of level 6, for a total of 18 creation points.

MAKING SHIKIGAMI WITH FEWER CREATION POINTS

An onmyoji can summon a shiki with a creation point cost determined by the summoner's Knowledge attribute score and Onmyojutsu skill. As mentioned above, during a random creation summoning, more points can be spent on abilities if the last Shiki Ability Chart roll goes over this point cost. However, an onmyoji can also choose to create a weaker shiki made with fewer creation points, stopping the creation process any time she wants to.

During random creation, the chart must be rolled on at least once. The onmyoji can choose to roll again or stop anytime. Once the summoner decides that the shiki is ready and wishes to summon it, the final point cost is calculated. This determines the attribute, skill and Vitality scores of

the shiki. It also determines the final Soul point cost to summon the shiki (half of the shiki creation points used, rounded up).

GOING OVER THE SHIKI POINT COST

In the random creation method, there is that chance that the final roll on the chart will exceed the point cost that the summoner is usually limited to. This is fine and represents the accidental summoning of a shiki that was more powerful than intended. At this point, though, the chart cannot be rolled upon further, as the shiki creation points have been exceeded. The shiki creation process ends and the shiki will be summoned.

When the player over-allocates points in this way to a shiki, there are two extra rules to consider:

- The final point cost of all the abilities bought becomes the final shiki creation point total. This is used to determine the shiki's attribute score, skill score and Vitality points.
- The Soul point cost is determined by the summoner's original intended creation point cost. If the onmyoji did not specify how many points she was intending to use, then her Soul score drops to 1.

EXAMPLE: An Onmyoji Summons a Shiki
A sorcerer has a Knowledge of 7 and an Onmyojutsu skill of 4. According to the shiki creation point chart, a summoner with an Onmyoujutsu skill of 4 has three times her Knowledge score, so the character has 21 shiki creation points. The player rolls a few times on the shiki ability table to create the shiki. Eventually, the shiki has 19 points spent and 2 points left. The summoner makes one more roll and gets the crazy-powerful Combat Ability at level 10, at a cost of 30 shiki creation points. The limit was supposed to be 21, but this shiki was "overcharged" to 49 points because of luck on the random creation.

For purposes of determining this shiki's attribute scores, skills and Vitality, the summoner uses the total shiki point cost of 49 (which results in an attribute score of 9, skill score of 4, and Vitality score of 9). However, to determine the shiki's Soul cost for this one-time summon, the original shiki point limit of 21 is used instead. Halving this and rounding up, the caster gets to summon this very powerful shiki - just once - for the rather low Soul point cost of 11 Soul.

CRAFTING SHIKI

The second method of creating a shiki is called "Crafting". The onmyoji carefully decides which abilities she wants the summoned shiki to have. This is especially useful when using shiki like a "utility belt" to accomplish specific tasks or help in specific ways. The summoner chooses which abilities from the Shiki Ability Chart she wants the shiki to have, and from there decides the exact power level that she wants the ability to be set at.

The only drawback in the crafting method is that the shiki tends to be weaker than one summoned using the random method. This is because a player using the crafting method cannot over-allocate shiki creation points. The shiki creation point total determined by Knowledge and Onmyojutsu level becomes a hard limit which cannot be crossed. You can always use fewer points to craft a shiki than the summoner's shiki creation point total, but you cannot use more.

More importantly, when totaling up the shiki's point cost, the shiki's skill level is lowered one step on the shiki Ability Score Table. In other words, if 28 points are used to craft the shiki, this normally means that all skills are ranked 3. However, moving one step down brings the skill rating to 2. If 34 points are used to craft the shiki, this normally means that all skills are ranked 3; and moving one step down means the skill

rating is still 3. See the shiki Crafting vs Skill Level table for the appropriate skill level when using the crafting method.

SHIKI CRAFTING AND SKILL LEVEL

CREATION POINTS	SKILL RATING
1-6	1
7-12	1
13-18	1
19-24	2
25-30	2
31-36	3
37-42+	3

TALISMAN CREATION

A talisman refers to a shiki bound to an inanimate object: Any user (not just an onmyoji) can use it to summon and control the shiki bound within it.

To create a talisman, or a shiki to be bound into an object or even a samurai, the shiki must have the Possession ability. The best method for creating a talisman is the shiki crafting method.

If you use the random method and happen to roll and hit the Possession ability, it means that this shiki may be bound into a talisman or samurai if the summoner wishes to do so.

RUNAWAY SHIKIGAMI

The first result of the Shiki Ability Chart used during the random shiki creation method (if double 1s are rolled) is "Runaway". If this result is rolled, the shiki becomes frenzied and pulls itself from the onmyoji's control. At this point, the shiki almost always turns on its master at the point where it takes form. One of two things happens from that point: If the shiki is a "Runaway" (if the player rolls double 1s on the shiki Ability Chart), then the shiki comes to life, sustaining itself on area sha for sustenance.

A similar effect can also occur if the shiki is a "Chimera" (double 4s on the shiki Ability Chart). In this case, the shiki comes out twisted, malformed, full of pain and rage, and looking for something to destroy. A chimera is a malformed half-creature half-spirit that wanders the land in the shadow. For the moment, it begins to act on its own as soon as it is summoned. Many chimera run away to terrorize faraway settlements, while others stalk their summoners, waiting for an attempt to strike.

Since this shiki had the power to create itself and pull itself from the sha without the summoner's aid, the summoner loses no Soul points when a runaway shiki or chimera is created But the GM, not the player, immediately takes control of this shiki.

Normally, the runaway shiki or chimera immediately attacks the nearest living creatures. Most commonly, this includes the onmyoji which summoned it. Sometimes the runaway shiki or chimera chooses another target. Shiki almost always stay and fight, but in rare cases, a chimera will run away. If the chimera runs away, it will usually return again later to consume the flesh of the summoner who brought it to life, wreak havoc in nearby communities, or pursue strange or unknowable goals until it crosses paths again with its summoner. Sometimes it returns inexplicably far more powerful than when it was summoned.

Once the player of the summoner gets a "Runaway Shiki" or "Chimera" result, stop rolling: The shiki is immediately and obviously out of the summoner's control and fully forms itself at that moment. No further abilities are added to the chimera. If the shiki has become a chimera, please

look at the ayakashi section for more details on their nature. Use the attributes for that Chimera and add all of the abilities which the summoner gave the shiki up until the point it became a Chimera.

RUNAWAYS AND CHIMERA

A Runaway shiki is a shiki spirit which the summoner loses control over. The only abilities it has are the ones that the summoner's player rolled for it before the 1-1 was rolled.

A Chimera is a monstrous entity accidentally summoned forth from the sha. It has all the abilities of a standard Chimera in addition to the abilities which the summoner's player gave it before the 4-4 was rolled.

Chimera Statistics			
BOD 6	AGI 8	SEN 7	KNO 4
SPI 5	EMP 2	STA 4	
Vit: 10	Soul: 18		
All non-specialist skills ranked at 3			
Additional Ayakashi Abilities:			
Regeneration: 5, Living Weapons: +6 Damage, Flight: 10, Incorporeal			

Note: When a Chimera is accidentally summoned, it retains all the abilities and skills you rolled for the shiki summoning as well as the ones above.

FUN CULTURAL FACT

Why does a roll of 4-4 mean the onmyoji loses control of the shiki? Four, in Japanese is pronounced "shi". "Shi" is also the word for "death". Four is a very, very unlucky number in Japanese culture.

THE SHIKI TAKES FORM

To bring a shikigami out of the ether into a physical form and make it come alive, the Soul energy of the summoner is consumed. The Soul cost of a shiki is equal to one half of the shiki points used to create it, rounded up.

The process of summoning a shiki, from the start of writing out the prayer strip to the shiki being fully formed, usually takes one full minute.

In a combat situation, it takes one full action in a round to write out the shiki, and the shiki comes to life at the beginning of the second round during the interaction phase. In the second round's interaction phase, the summoner can order the shiki to act ("Fight my enemies!"), and the shiki will start acting during that second round's full action phase.

IN THE CASE OF TALISMANS

If the shikigami is tied to a talisman or other vessel (like a samurai), the shiki's pattern is already written and defined. All that needs to be done is to use it to bring it to life. It comes to life at the end of the user's full action phase at the end of the round.

The shiki cannot actually take actions or counterattack in that first round, but it can defend itself. If the user is a samurai who is has begun the process of samuraization, or summoning the power of this shiki within it for combat prowess, the samurai will get to defend that round by using the higher defense bonus that the shiki grants her.

The advantages of using talismans or vessel-bound shiki, aside from the fact that anyone (not just an onmyoji) is able to use them, is the defense ability it can use on the first round and the fact that the shiki may act normally in the second round.

SHIKI-SLINGING

When bringing shiki to life the summoner can work as fast as they can, but they will always require time to harness the surrounding sha energy and bind it to

the prayer strip or summoning seal. The amount of time required to draw upon the sha is random, but most summoners can pull together sha within about a minute under pressure.

As written in the rules above, it usually requires a full round to summon a shiki under normal circumstances. However, a full round can be a very long time in a desperate situation.

The summoner can reduce the amount of time required to summon a shiki through a process called "Shiki-slinging", also called "Spell slinging" or "quick-draw". By drawing faster and furiously on the surrounding sha, and saying incantations as fast as their mouth can sound out the words, they can cut the time required to summon a shiki. When shiki-slinging, the summoner finds the shiki point cost of the shiki they wish to summon and divides that point cost by 5 (rounding up). That number becomes the shiki-slinger's difficulty. The slinger has to make a roll of Agility and Onmyojutsu to successfully summon the shiki.

If the summoner's roll succeeds, the shiki is quickly formed. The shiki's summoner can command it in the first round to take action, and the shiki will take that action at the end of the first round after all other participants have acted. A summoner can use shiki-slinging to summon multiple shikigami at the same time. For multiple shiki, the total point costs of all the shiki are combined, and they are summoned in order from the one with the lowest ability scores to the highest ability scores.

The dangers of shiki-slinging are found when the summoner fails the Agility: Summoning roll. It means that somewhere in the process, the summoner made a mistake: A brush stroke was left out, a word mumbled, the prayer strip or writing surface was disturbed, or the sha energy surged in too fast. *Every failed summoning roll produces a runaway shikigami.* This runaway shiki will always aim for the life of the caster, stopping at nothing to kill or devour her.

In cases where multiple shiki are summoned at once, count up the number of successes. If the number of successes beats the weaker shiki's difficulty, then those weaker shiki are summoned, and only the ones whose difficulties weren't beaten become runaways.

Since shiki-slinging requires the caster to write and draw the shiki and magic sigils, this method cannot be used by a samurai to speed up the samurai transformation process.

EXAMPLE: The Terrible Mistake of Chihaya
Chihaya the onmyoji makes an attempt at quick-draw summoning. The total shiki cost for the battle-heavy shiki she wishes to summon is 17 and the Soul cost is 9 points. Since the shiki point cost is 17, her shiki-slinging difficulty is 4.

Chihaya's Onmyojutsu skill is 3, and her Agility is 5. She rolls five dice for her Agility, and they turn up 1, 3, 4, 4, and 5. The difficulty was 4, but her total number of successes is 2 (only the 1 and the 3 were equal to or under her summoning skill of 3). She fails.

"The shiki births into existence in front of Chihaya. It lets out a blood-curdling cry, and turns towards its summoner."

TYPE OF SUMMONING	ROUND 1 ACTION	END OF ROUND 1	ROUND 2 ACTION	END OF ROUND 2
NORMAL	Summon		Shiki Forms	Shiki Acts
TALISMAN	Shiki Forms		Shiki Acts	
SHIKI-SLINGING	Shiki Forms	Shiki Acts	Shiki Acts	

Sense Sharing

All of the things that the shikigami senses can be shared with its summoner. That is because the summoner has the ability to create a connection between herself and

her summoned shiki. When the shiki is summoned, the onmyoji decides whether or not to forge this connection to the shiki.

This connection is called "Shared Sense" (or "Sense Sharing"/"Sense Bonding"). With shared senses, there is no distance limit between the summoner and her shiki. Nothing can "jam" or interfere with this connection. The shikis' sense-link cannot be "tapped into" or intercepted by a third party or another onmyoji summoner. A shiki with bonded senses makes for an excellent reconnaissance creature or even a spy if the shiki is humanoid.

There is a drawback to shared senses: The summoner feels pain when the shiki is injured. As a result, when the shiki is killed or destroyed, the summoner will take damage as well. When a sense-bonded shiki is destroyed, the amount of damage a summoner takes is equal to half the amount of Soul that was spent to summon the shiki, rounded up.

It's up to the onmyoji whether or not to allow sense-sharing with summoned shiki. There are benefits and drawbacks to each choice. However, once the shiki is summoned, you can't change your mind.

SPENDING KIAI THROUGH SHIKI

An onmyoji who summons shiki with shared senses can spend spend their own Kiai through their summoned shiki. She can add bonus dice to shiki rolls, raise shiki skill levels temporarily, etc for the shiki's actions. The only thing that the onmyoji cannot do is use Kiai to permanently raise or level up the shiki's attributes or skill levels.

CRAFTING TALISMANS

When a shiki spirit is summoned and bound to an inanimate object, that object is called a talisman (or *jufu*). Usually the object will be in the form of an amulet or charm. This is also the principle behind how samurai are created; a shiki is bound to the inanimate soulgems and frame, which happen to exist within a living human.

Since talisman-based shiki do not require time to have their sigils written on them, and since they can be summoned again and again, the creation and use of talismans is becoming quite popular in certain circles.

There are a few rules that apply to shiki that are to be used for talismans. They must have the Possession ability in order to bind (possess) an object. Only one shiki can be stored in each object.

THE CREATION OF SAMURAI

The samurai are those people who have surrendered their physical bodies to become a vessel for binding a shiki spirit. The shiki possesses their body and at the command of the user, it erupts into action. The possessed samurai is like the rider of a wild bull; the shiki obeys the samurai's will and acts exactly as the samurai wishes, but the relationship always teeters at the brink of the limits of control.

The process begins with the samuraization surgery. This is where the warrior trades a large amount of money (and some would say their souls) in return for the surgery to implant the shiki. This allows the user to activate and dismiss the shiki without requiring an onmyoji to be there each time to manually cast the shiki into their body.

At the time of surgery, the samurai has an onmyoji summon and bind a shiki into their body. The onmyoji summons a shiki normally as per the summoning rules. The only difference is that the shiki possession ability is required in order to bind the shiki to the samurai (at least one point of possession). Since the samurai's body is a single container, only one single shiki spirit can ever be bound to it.

Skill, Attribute and Vitality ratings for the shiki (based on creation point total) do not apply to shiki once implanted into a samurai. They no longer have meaning. Samurai power and attribute increases are based upon the special shiki abilities like Combat Ability and Regeneration.

THE PRICE OF A SAMURAI

The power gained by a samurai is enormous, but the consequences of such a transformation are weighty as well.

The first is that the samurai is no longer regarded as human. In the world of Tenra, the only proof of humanity is the ability to bear children. After the surgery is complete, they lose that ability. There is not one recorded instance of a samurai, male or female, siring or bearing a child. Their vessel is no longer human, but at the same time, it is not exactly a shiki either. Adopting the power of a samurai means removing yourself from the human race.

The second consequence sits with the onmyoji who performs the surgery. A huge amount of money is paid for well-documented yet extremely dangerous and experimental surgery. In the process of that surgery, there are few onmyoji who bind the shiki to the samurai in exactly the manner the samurai wishes. The onmyoji often creates a secret backdoor command to control the shiki when they implant it in the samurai. Sometimes this is for self-defense, as there are cautionary tales of onmyoji killed by their samurai creations once the surgery was completed and paid for. At other times, the onmyoji has more sinister goals in mind when creating these secret keywords.

CONTROLLING THE SAMURAI

Samurai are living shiki spirits which are activated mentally by the will of the samurai they inhabit. However, onmyoji also often create a secret keyword to activate or deactivate a samurai, known only between the onmyoji and samurai. If this keyword is known by another, they could use it to activate, deactivate, or perhaps even control the samurai.

Onmyoji use these keywords so that they are not attacked by their own creations. Samurai can also use these keywords to activate or deactivate their shiki if they feel they are losing control of their bodies. Some samurai simply request that no keywords are created, as they loathe the possibility of another person being able to control them… However, whether the onmyoji actually omits a keyword—or creates one anyway and simply doesn't tell the samurai—is up to the individual summoner.

SAMURAIZATION SURGERY

A character can choose to take on the samuraization surgery in the game. The GM's approval is required, as this could affect the story significantly. Samuraization surgery, including recovery time, requires three months to half a year to complete. For that reason, the surgery will probably be taken on during an intermission, where such a length of time can pass freely (if the story permits it).

To undergo the surgery, the potential samurai must find an onmyoji capable and willing to perform the surgery. She must bring the onmyoji the soulgems that will eventually be implanted in her body. She

must also bring a mountain of money (or sponsorship from a lord); expect to pay 4-5 ryo (gold) for each shiki creation point used. The onmyoji then summons a shiki with the abilities the samurai requests and binds it to the soulgems in the host's body. The onmyoji can choose any shiki ability she wishes, but the shiki must have at least one point of Possession ability in order to bind itself to the samurai's body.

When a samurai undertakes the surgery her Karma increases dramatically. When the Soul cost for the shiki's activation is determined (one half of the shiki creation points, rounded up, as normal for shiki summoning), multiply that Soul cost by 4 to determine the total Karma cost for having that shiki bound to the samurai's body. Most samurai will want to implant more soulgems into their body in order to lower the Soul cost to activate the shiki. Every five soulgems implanted into the body reduces the summoning cost by 1 Soul point, but it raises Karma by five points. See the samurai rules for more details on soul and Karma cost for samurai shiki.

To get the most out of samuraization surgery, it would probably be best for the samurai to have a lot of high-ranked Fates ready to be sublimated or burned away (see the Karma rules for more details). That way, Karma can be lowered significantly to counteract the incoming large Karma gain from the samuraization surgery. If a character spends too much Karma during the intermission without a way to reduce it, there's a chance that she will become a lost soul, an Asura. Alternatively, she may simply die on the operating table.

REUSING A TALISMAN

When a shiki spirit is summoned from a talisman, it operates for a set amount of time then returns to its container. This is also the case if the shiki is "killed": It dissipates, returning to the talisman that contained it. However, there are a few conditions which will destroy a talisman shiki permanently, making it impossible for the shiki to return to its talisman:

- The shiki has the Explode ability and uses it.
- The shiki has the Transmutation ability and uses it.
- The shiki has the Shiki Destroyer ability and uses it.

USING MULTIPLE TALISMANS

As long as a user has the requisite amount of Soul points to expend upon each summoning, any number of shiki can be summoned and controlled. In a combat situation, each summoning requires a full action, usually meaning that only one shiki can be summoned via a talisman each round. Lastly (though rarely a concern, given the high amount of Soul cost per summoning), if the shiki have the Shared Senses ability, only a number of shiki equal to or less than the summoner's Knowledge attribute score can be summoned and controlled at one time.

USING SOULGEMS

Summoning shiki from talismans places a burden on the summoner: They have to expend Soul in order to bring them forth. Binding soulgems to the talisman (or the body of the samurai) helps reduce that burden to a manageable amount.

Every five soulgems embedded in a talisman reduces the Soul cost for the summoning by one point. Using soulgems in this manner can bring a casting cost down to a minimum of 1 Soul.

The soulgems glow with a red light when Soul is consumed, and the shiki comes forth from there.

In the case of samurai, soulgems are bound to their bodies before the shiki is summoned and bound to them. While this reduces the amount of Soul points required to activate the shiki, it increases the overall Karma cost. The Karma gained during this surgery is quite high. First, the samurai gains Karma equal to 4 times the shiki's base Soul activation cost. On top of that, every five soulgems implanted (to reduce the overall base Soul activation cost) require an additional 5 points of Karma. This is also the case for normal shiki talismans.

It should be noted that the notion of simply "adding more soulgems to a samurai" is perhaps said too lightly: Since the samuraization surgery must be done without anesthetic, the pain required to implant each and every soulgem is immense and possibly unbearable. This unimaginable pain is why the failure rate of the surgery is so high, with fatalities even amongst the strongest of patients.

STARTING THE GAME WITH A TALISMAN

Any character with the Onmyojutsu skill can either choose a shiki bound to a talisman before the start of a game, or simply purchase one later in the game during an intermission. For every shiki talisman chosen, add 10 Karma to the character's starting Karma total. If a shiki is found, earned or received in-game, there is no additional Karma cost.

PERMANENT SUMMONING

Sha is the power that brings the shiki out of nothingness and gives it form. It is the energy which keeps it alive and moving. When sha no longer is available to the shiki, it destabilizes and disappears. This condition is a fundamental hurdle in the summoning of shiki spirits. Onmyoji sorcerers can expend greater amounts of Soul in order to bind the sha energy and keep the shiki manifested for longer periods of time, but in the end it will run out of sustaining energy and dissipate.

However, with the use of a heartgem (also known as a heart engine), a summoned shiki is given an unending supply of sha energy to feed from. It takes permanent form, and will not disappear unless it is destroyed. The heartgem is also the source of the great amounts of energy constantly consumed by the yoroi armours and kongohki.

When a heartgem is used to bring a shiki into being, the Soul energy of the summoner is still expended to manipulate the sha required to give the shiki form. However, the shiki is then bound to the heartgem, which continues to fuel the shiki indefinitely. For this reason, shiki spirits that are given permanent form must have the Possession ability. Finally, talisman-based shiki cannot be given permanent form, as they are already physically and spiritually bound to their talisman.

THE SIDE EFFECTS OF PERMANENCE

Creating a permanent shiki isn't as carefree a process as simply binding it to a heartgem. There are some very special and even dangerous considerations to remember.

First, the shiki cannot be unsummoned like a normal shiki. Normally, an onmyoji can dismiss a shiki once it has performed its task (before it runs out of sha). However, a heartgem-bound shiki will not disappear. The only way to permanently get rid of it is to kill the shiki.

Second, there is a huge risk of a shiki rampaging. Since heartgems are the actual hearts of the oni people, sometimes a

fragment of their soul remains attached to the heartgem. When such a heartgem is used in a binding, the onmyoji unwittingly provides this soul (usually an Asura) with a new body to inhabit.

In rules terms, when binding a shiki permanently to a heartgem, roll D66: On a roll of doubles (11, 22, 33, 44, 55 or 66), the result will be the same as if an 11 was rolled on the shiki power chart; the shiki immediately becomes a rampaging spirit and viciously attacks any living creature in the area beginning with the summoner.

If this occurs, there is a chance that the shiki can still be controlled. Whenever he decides it is appropriate, the GM may allow a chance for the onmyoji to recapture the rampaging spirit. A Spirit: Willpower roll is made, and the difficulty number (the number of successes required) is the shiki's attribute value plus three.

If the roll succeeds, the onmyoji captures the will of the shiki, and the shiki operates as usual from that point on. However, at times of particularly high stress or violence, the shiki (at the GM's discretion) may become aware again and resist the onmyoji. Another battle of wills is required to maintain control over the shiki. This should not happen any more than once per session, if at all.

MAKING USE OF A KIMENKYO

The lesser, mass-produced form of a meikyo soul mirror, the kimenkyo, has found recent use in some circles of onmyoji. Coupling a kimenkyo mechanical mirror with an abacus, shiki patterns and properties can be calculated and stored within the databanks of the kimenkyo mirror. Making use of a kimenkyo allows a skilled summoner to conjure shiki in a new way, one where they can control which abilities a shiki is given when formed.

However, the kimenkyo summoning method is a hybrid of both the benefits and drawbacks of a random shiki summoning and a shiki crafting.

A summoner can choose which abilities the shiki has. Unfortunately, she cannot choose the power level of the ability. Instead, the player must roll a 1d6 on the shiki Ability table to determine both the rank of the ability and the amount of creation points required for that ability. If she is unsatisfied with the result, she can try rolling again for the ability level, adding its value (and creation point cost) to the first value rolled.

Unlike the crafting method, there is no reduction of the shiki's skill for using the kimenkyo when summoning: The normal shiki ability table (and skill rating) is used when determining attribute and skill ratings.

The player cannot go over their creation point limit as is possible in normal summoning. If the creation point limit is hit, simply stop there: The last ability added (the one which broke the creation point limit) is ignored and removed from the summoned shiki. Finally, the Possession ability cannot be chosen when using a kimenkyo. The shiki born from the computations of a kimenkyo, for unknown reasons, always lack the ability to bind to other objects and creatures. Therefore, a kimenkyo cannot be used to craft shiki for use in samuraization surgery or be bound to talismans.

Kimenkyo come with unusual limitations, but they allow summoners familiar with the ways of kimenkyo technology to fine-tune the shiki they summon. Certainly elder onmyoji turn up their noses to the use

of this newfangled technology to practice this centuries-old art, but some newer onmyoji are keen on using new technologies and new ways of thinking with this very traditional practice.

Using a Meikyo

There are so very few onmyoji who use meikyo soul mirrors for summoning that it is almost not worth mentioning. However, some gifted onmyoji who directly serve the Shinto Priesthood are presented with soul mirrors which they can employ in the use of their onmyojutsu. Using a meikyo mirror and interface helm allows the summoner far more control over the experience of shiki-summoning. It is like the difference between programming a script with a keyboard versus creating a virtual computer landscape using only your mind.

When using a meikyo soul mirror, an onmyoji can summon shiki in exactly the same way as with a kimenkyo mechanical mirror. However, when calculating the maximum points allowed for shiki creation based on Knowledge and the Onmyojutsu skill, the onmyoji can add the meikyo mirror's Karma adjustment bonus to her Knowledge score when calculating available shiki creation points.

MULTIPLE SUMMONERS

Although it is a rare occurrence, onmyoji are known to work together on large projects like building yoroi armours and kongohki. When onmyoji work together, use the normal rules for summoning shiki or creating samurai. For the creation point total, simply pool all of the summoners' creation points together. However, the actual activation and command (or ownership) of the shiki will always reside with one single person.

Shiki Ability List

The following is the list of the basic abilities which shiki can have. After the name of each ability is the ability's cost in creation points ("CP") per level of ability.

ADDITIONAL DAMAGE

2 CP per level

Every level of the Additional Damage ability grants a +1 bonus to the shiki's damage for melee attacks. This ability also sets the base damage for the Ranged Attack ability if the shiki has that ability.

For shiki implanted into samurai, every level of Additional Damage gives the samurai +1 damage to all melee weapons and thrown weapons while in samurai form.

If a shiki with the Additional Damage ability is bound to a talisman weapon, the Additional Damage ability becomes the new base damage for that weapon; you replace the original damage rating, you do not add them together.

Note: The base damage for attacks by shiki which do not have this ability is +1 (claws, bite, etc).

COMBAT ABILITY

3 CP per level

Combat Ability allows the summoner to boost the Attribute Rating of the shiki and make it more powerful. Every additional point in Combat Ability taken adds an additional point to the shiki's Attribute Rating (which is originally determined by the number of CP used to create the shiki). Vitality also increases one point for every point of Combat Ability taken.

In the case of shiki used in samurai, every level of Combat Ability increases the samurai's Body, Agility and Senses score by one point each while in samurai mode; a Combat Ability at level 4 would grant +4 to Body, Agility and Senses. However, do not adjust Vitality or Wounds; these do not change, even though the Body score increases.

EXPLODE

1 CP per level

With this ability, the shiki itself explodes violently. The shiki dies, and everything around it takes damage.

The damage of this attack is equal to the level of the Explode ability. The range is equal to a radius of [power level ÷ 2] meters.

This ability is not usually crafted into samurai. At least, not of the samurai's own volition…

FLIGHT

1 CP per level

This ability allows the shiki to fly. A shiki can fly at a base speed equal to its level of Flight x 200 meters per minute. A shiki can carry an amount of weight equal to 10 times its level of flight in kilograms before slowing down. A shiki does not add its own weight, but in the case of a samurai, the samurai's normal body weight counts towards that total.

Please see the additional chart for restrictions on the Flight ability.

FLIGHT ABILITY CHART	
Weight	**Speed (per minute)**
FL x 10kg	FL x 200m
FL x 20kg	FL x 100m
FL x 30kg	FL x 50m
More weight: cannot fly; can only slow-fall	
FL = Flight Ability Level	

GASEOUS FORM

3 CP

The shiki has the ability to turn into a gaseous form (vapor, ether, mist, ectoplasm, or other gaseous substance). In this state, it may be seen but it cannot be attacked. Likewise, it cannot attack others while in this state. In a gaseous state the shiki can pass through cracks in buildings. When it reforms, it requires enough empty room for its full body to reform; it cannot reform in small spaces or inside another living thing.

Shiki with the Gaseous Form ability cannot dissipate or reform parts of its body, but rather the whole body at once. Because of its ties to its host, shiki for samurai creation cannot take this ability.

PHANTASM

3 CP per level

This ability only works when there is a Sense Link between the onmyoji and the shiki. The shiki must also have the Possession ability of at least one rank.

Phantasm allows the shiki to target a humanoid and force them to see an illusion. The illusion is controlled by the onmyoji, and allows the onmyoji to manipulate all of the target's five senses. The illusion can be used to do simple things like make the onmyoji "disappear" to the target, or take on the appearance of a friend or companion. It can also be used to subject the target to horrible hallucinations; while no injury can be done to the target, the onmyoji can cause them to feel some pain, nausea and the like.

While the shiki must have the requisite Possession ability to gain the Phantasm ability, the shiki does not actually have to possess the target as per the Possession rules.

To see through the illusion, the target must make a Spirit:Willpower roll. The target needs a number of successes equal

to or greater than the level of the shiki's Phantasm ability. While the target will almost always roll Spirit:Willpower to see through the illusion, the GM may decide that, depending on the type of illusion, another attribute may be suitable for the Willpower roll (like Station, Knowledge, or Body).

POISON

3 CP per level

This ability allows the shiki to create an amount of special poison within itself which affects any creature that it hits in combat.

The strength of the poison is equal to the level of the poison ability. The poison lasts for as long as the shiki is active or alive. When the shiki is killed or unsummoned, the poison dissipates.

During every interaction phase in combat, the damaged character makes a Spirit:Willpower check. The difficulty rating is equal to the level of the poison. Every success the character gets reduces the damage of the poison damage taken that round by one point.

See the combat rules for more information on poison.

POSSESSION

3 CP per level

This ability allows shiki to bind themselves to objects and living things.

With a greater level of the Possession ability, the shiki can take control of the object it binds. If bound to a person (or other living creature), the shiki can take control of the person as if the shiki was wearing that person's skin. The target makes a Spirit:Willpower roll against a difficulty number equal to the shiki's level of the Possession ability. If the target succeeds, he stays in control and the shiki is expelled from his body. If the target fails, then the shiki moves them as if it was one with the person's body. This lasts until the shiki puts the target in danger (allowing for another attempt to resist), or until the shiki dissipates or willingly leaves the target.

Shiki that are used to create samurai must have at least one point in this ability in order to be bound to the samurai's body. Shiki that are permanently bound to heartgems require this ability as well.

A shiki can only possess a single object at a given time, and one object can only be possessed by one shiki at a time.

For this reason, samurai cannot be possessed by other shiki, and the shiki bound to a samurai cannot possess other objects or people. Likewise, shiki that are bound to talismans or heartgems (permanent shiki) cannot later bind to other objects.

A shiki with the Possession ability cannot actually possess those shiki bound to objects and people, but they can still affect them in a way. A shiki with Possession can interfere with bound shiki by reducing their abilities in the following way, called "draining":

- The attacking shiki with the Possession ability touches a defending shiki (or samurai). Sometimes this means making a successful attack against the defender in combat (but no actual damage is dealt).
- The attacking shiki forces the defender to make a Willpower roll with a target number equal to the level of the attacker's Possession ability. For talisman or heartgem-bound shiki, the defending shiki makes an Attribute Rank/Skill Rank roll to defend.

- If the defender fails, the defending shiki's abilities are all reduced by a number equal to the level of the Possesion ability of the attacking shiki.
- If the defending shiki's abilities reach 0, then they can no longer be used or they simply do not work correctly (attacks always miss, etc). This situation lasts until one of the two shikigami dissipates. If the attacker dissipates or is killed first, then the defending shiki's abilities immediately return to normal.
- This "drain effect" lasts even if the shiki does other things like attack other characters. However, it cannot attempt to drain or possess a second character without letting go of the first.
- In the case of a samurai, the samurai use their own Spirit:Willpower to defend against Possession. In cases where the samurai's shiki has been drained and all shiki abilities have been reduced to 0, the samurai can still try to regain control in future rounds by taking an action to attempt another Spirit:Willpower roll against the Possession score of the attacking shikigami.

PROLONG SUMMONING

3 CP per level

Normal shiki stay active for a period equal to the onmyoji's Spirit attribute in minutes (or combat rounds) before they lose physical substance and dissipate. With the Prolong Summoning ability, the shiki will remain active for a number of minutes (or combat rounds) equal to the onmyoji's Spirit attribute multiplied by [the level of Prolong Summoning +1].

Ex: An onmyoji with a Spirit of 5 summons a shiki with the Prolong Summoning ability at level 3. This shiki will remain alive and active for 20 minutes (5*[3+1]).

RANGED ATTACK

2 CP per level

The Ranged Attack ability requires the Additional Damage ability to be useful.

Shiki with the Ranged Attack ability have some sort of long-range attack that they can launch at enemies: Fire, psychic energy, light beams, needles, demonic howl, etc. It can make attacks using its general Attribute Rating, using Skill Rating (as a character would use the Marksman skill) for the skill of the attack.

The range and rate of fire for this ability are as follows:

Ranged Attack Ability Chart		
Level	**Range**	**RoF**
1	5m	1
2	10m	1
3	10m	2
4	15m	2
5	15m	3
For every level above 5, the range increases by 5m on even numbers and RoF increases by one on odd numbers		

The damage for attacks made with Ranged Attack is set by the level of the Additional Damage ablity. The level of Additional Damage taken becomes the base damage for the Ranged Attack ability.

REGENERATION

3 CP per level

This ability allows the shiki to heal one point of Vitality per level of Regeneration every minute. In combat, this healing happens at the beginning of every combat round during the interaction phase.

When a shiki with this ability is bound to a samurai, the samurai gains the Regeneration ability when in samurai form.

SENSE LINK
no cost

When a shiki is summoned, the onmyoji summoner decides whether or not a Sense Link is created between the summoner and the shiki. If it is not created, then a shiki will move of its own volition under the summoner's order, obeying all commands as normal.

If a Sense Link is created, the summoner can actually see, hear and feel exactly as the shiki does. A summoner can only have a number of sense-linked shiki under her control up to or equal to her Knowledge attribute score at the same time. Also, if the shiki is destroyed (killed, not simply unsummoned), the onmyoji takes damage equal to half of the Soul cost to summon the shiki, rounded up. This damage can be spread amongst Vitality and Wounds like any other kind of damage.

SHAPECHANGE
5 CP

This ability also requires the shiki ability Sense Link.

This ability allows an onmyoji to change the appearance of the shiki into any physical form desired, as long as the new form is of roughly equal size as the shiki's original form. The form must be based on something that the onmyoji has seen before. This transformation requires one minute to complete.

The shiki can be made to look like a specific person, but it will not be able to speak.

SHIKI DESTROYER
5 CP per level

This is the ability to unmake and destroy other shikigami. When this shiki comes into contact with another shiki (touch, bite, etc), make a combat roll. The targeted shiki rolls as if making an attack, using its general Attribute Rating number with a skill number equal to the higher of the shiki's Skill Rating or Combat Ability. It must get a number of successes equal to or greater than the Shiki Destroyer level of the attacking shiki. If the target succeeds, there is no effect. If the target fails, it is permanently destroyed. Even permanent shiki are destroyed, their heartgem consumed by the attacking shiki.

When shiki with the Shiki Destroyer ability successfully destroys a shiki, it dies as well. Shiki bound to a talisman which use or are successfully hit with this ability are destroyed and do not return to the talisman.

Shiki for use in samurai cannot take this ability. Samurai-bound shiki "destroyed" in this manner are not permanently destroyed: Since they are coupled to the samurai's flesh and will, they are pulled back into the samurai's body before they are annihilated. The samurai will have to spend the full Soul cost and an action to perform the samurai transformation again.

SOULFIND
1 CP per level

With this ability, a shiki can detect all lifeforms around it. It can detect living creatures like humans, oni, ayakashi and other shiki that are rabbit-sized or larger within a 10 meter radius per level of the ability taken. This ability will not detect creatures with nonexistent or weak souls like kongohki and yoroi armours. However, if an armour contains a pilot, it will be able to detect the living pilot inside the armour.

TRANSMUTATION
6 CP per level

When a shiki is summoned with this ability, the summoner chooses and sets a physical substance (water, trees, rock, etc). When the shiki eventually activates

this ability, it transforms itself and every nonliving thing within a number of cubic meters equal to its power level into that substance. The shiki effectively dies during the transformation.

Shiki imbued with the Transmutation ability for water or stone can be very useful in a battle or siege situations, as well as for construction projects.

If this shiki is bound to a talisman, the shiki will not return to the talisman once it activates Transmutation. This ability cannot be taken by shiki that are implanted into samurai.

As much as some onmyoji have tried to research the ability to do so, the Transmutation ability cannot turn objects into precious metals like gold, silver, soulgems and scarlet steel. It also cannot transform objects into living things beyond simple plants and trees.

SHIKI LIST

An onmyoji can summon or craft just about any kind of shiki they desire. The following is a quick list of ready-to-go shiki for ease of reference. A character with the Onmyojutsu skill can begin the game with one or more of these shiki bound to a talisman object of their choice. For every shiki talisman the character owns, they gain 10 Karma.

SUMMONING SHIKIGAMI

The following shiki are prepared for on-the-fly summoning (a Agility: Onmyojustu roll is still required when shiki-slinging). Their appearance and style is decided by the onmyoji. Make sure the onmyoji has a high enough Onmyojutsu skill and Knowledge attribute score to summon the shiki: It must be higher than the creation point cost for the shiki.

COMBAT SHIKI: RANGED	
Creation Points:	22
Soul Cost:	11
Ranged Attack:	3 (10 meters, RoF 2)
Combat Ability:	3
Additional Damage:	+3
Flight:	1
Attribute Rating:	7
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	7
Sense Link:	No

COMBAT SHIKI: MELEE	
Creation Points:	21
Soul Cost:	11
Combat Ability:	5
Additional Damage:	+3
Attribute Rating:	9
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	9
Sense Link:	Yes

COMBAT SHIKI: WEAK	
Creation Points:	14
Soul Cost:	7
Combat Ability:	2
Additional Damage:	+2
Poison:	1
Attribute Rating:	5
Skill Rating:	1
Vitality:	5
Sense Link:	Yes

FARSIGHT SHIKI	
Creation Points:	12
Soul Cost:	6
Flight:	7 (1400m/minute)
Soulfind:	2 (30m radius)
Prolong Summoning:	1 (Kno x2 minutes)
Attribute Rating:	2
Skill Rating:	1
Vitality:	2
Sense Link:	Yes

STRATEGY SHIKI	
Creation Points:	19
Soul Cost:	10
Transmutation:	3 (3m3 of material)
Flight:	1 (200m/minute)
Attribute Rating:	4
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	4
Sense Link:	No

INFILTRATOR SHIKI	
Creation Points:	23
Soul Cost:	12
Poison:	3
Prolong Summoning:	3 (Spirit x 4 min)
Shapechange:	Yes
Attribute Rating:	4
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	4
Sense Link:	Yes

NIGHTMARE SHIKI	
Creation Points:	27
Soul Cost:	14
Flight:	1 (200m/minute)
Gaseous Form:	Yes
Phantasm:	6
Possession:	1
Prolong Summoning:	1 (Kno x2 minutes)
Attribute Rating:	5
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	5
Sense Link:	Yes

Talisman Shikigami

The following shiki are prepared for binding into objects as talismans. They all have the Possession ability required to do so. They can also be summoned and controlled normally if an onmyoji wishes. As with the summoning shiki above, the onmyoji decides the appearance and style of the shiki.

COMBAT SHIKI	
Creation Points:	19
Soul Cost:	10
Combat Ability:	2
Additional Damage:	+5
Possession:	1
Attribute Rating:	6
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	6
Sense Link:	Yes

BOMBER SHIKI	
Creation Points:	8
Soul Cost:	4
Explode:	5 (3m radius, 5 dmg)
Possession:	1
Attribute Rating:	2
Skill Rating:	1
Vitality:	4
Sense Link:	No

KAMIKAZE SHIKI	
Creation Points:	20
Soul Cost:	10
Soulfind:	4 (40m radius)
Prolong Summoning:	2 (Spirit x 3 minutes)
Flight:	1 (200m/minute)
Explode:	6 (3m radius, 6 dmg)
Possession:	1
Attribute Rating:	4
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	4
Base Damage:	+1
Sense Link:	Yes

ASSASSIN SHIKI	
Creation Points:	20
Soul Cost:	10
Combat Ability:	1
Poison:	2
Additional Damage:	2
Gaseous Form:	Yes
Flight:	1 (200m/minute)
Possession:	1
Attribute Rating:	5
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	5
Sense Link:	Yes

RECONNAISANCE SHIKI	
Creation Points:	16
Soul Cost:	8
Gaseous Form:	Yes
Soulfind:	6 (60m radius)
Flight:	1 (200m/minute)
Prolong Summoning:	1 (Spirit x 2 min)
Possession:	1
Attribute Rating:	3
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	3
Sense Link:	Yes

ESPIONAGE SHIKI	
Creation Points:	17
Soul Cost:	9
Prolong Summoning:	3 (Spirit x 4 minutes)
Possession:	1
Shapechange:	Yes
Attribute Rating:	3
Skill Rating:	1
Vitality:	3
Sense Link:	Yes

SAMURAI/SHIKI-KILLER SHIKI	
Creation Points:	20
Soul Cost:	10
Shiki Destroyer:	3
Flight:	2 (400m/minute)
Possession:	1
Attribute Rating:	4
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	4
Sense Link:	Yes

SHIKI WEAPON	
Creation Points:	20
Soul Cost:	10
Additional Damage:	+6
Possession:	1
Shapechange	
Attribute Rating:	4
Skill Rating:	2
Vitality:	4
Weapon Damage:	+6
Sense Link:	Yes
Notes: When this shiki is activated, it remains inside of its talisman weapon (usually a sword). While it is active, it grants a +6 damage rating to those who use it in battle. On top of that, the sword itself will make one attack each round using its own attribute/skill ratings.	

Shiki Power Chart

Roll	Ability	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	The shiki becomes a Runaway						
12	Prolong Summoning	1/3	2/6	3/9	4/12	5/15	6/18
13	Regeneration	1/3	2/6	3/9	4/12	5/15	6/18
14	Ranged Attack	1/2	2/4	3/6	4/8	5/10	6/12
15	Transmutation	1/6	2/12	3/18	4/24	5/30	6/36
16	Combat Ability	1/3	2/6	3/9	4/12	5/15	6/18
21	Possession	1/3	2/6	3/9	4/12	5/15	6/18
22	Roll again, and double the ability and cost rolled						
23	Poison	1/3	2/6	3/9	4/12	5/15	6/18
24	Flying	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	5/5	6/6
25	Possession	1/3	3/9	3/9	5/15	5/15	10/30
26	Shapechange	-/5	-/5	-/5	-/5	-/5	-/5
31	Prolong Summoning	1/3	3/9	3/9	5/15	5/15	10/30
32	Phantasm	1/3	2/6	3/9	4/12	5/15	6/18
33	Roll once more and stop						
34	Poison	1/3	3/9	3/9	5/15	5/15	10/30
35	Regeneration	1/3	3/9	3/9	5/15	5/15	10/30
36	Ranged Attack	1/2	3/6	5/10	5/10	10/20	15/30
41	Shiki Destroyer	1/5	2/10	3/15	4/20	5/25	6/30
42	Additional Damage	1/2	2/4	3/6	4/8	5/10	6/12
43	Soulfind	1/1	3/3	5/5	5/5	10/10	15/15
44	The shiki becomes a Chimera						
45	Gaseous Form	-/3	-/3	-/3	-/3	-/3	-/3
46	Phantasm	1/3	1/3	3/9	3/9	10/30	10/30
51	Explode	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	5/5	6/6
52	Flying	1/1	3/3	5/5	5/5	10/10	15/15
53	Shapechange	-/5	-/5	-/5	-/5	-/5	-/5
54	Transmutation	1/6	3/18	3/18	5/30	5/30	10/60
55	Roll again, and halve the ability and cost rolled						
56	Explode	1/1	1/1	3/3	3/3	10/10	15/15
61	Combat Ability	1/3	1/3	3/9	3/9	10/30	10/30
62	Shiki Destroyer	1/5	3/15	3/15	5/25	5/25	10/50
63	Gaseous Form	-/3	-/3	-/3	-/3	-/3	-/3
64	Additional Damage	1/2	3/6	5/10	5/10	10/20	15/30
65	Soulfind	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	5/5	6/6
66	Roll three more times and stop						

USING THE CHART

1) How to use the Shiki Power Chart

- Determine the maximum number of shiki creation points you can use.
- Roll d66: Choose one die for the tens place, one die for the ones place in advance. This determines the power or effect.
- Roll 1d6: This determines the power level for the power you just rolled.
- Add the creation points to the total. If you've gone over your total, stop here (you receive the ability you just rolled, though).
- If you roll the same ability twice, simply add the totals of the rolls together.

A roll of 3/9 and later 5/15 becomes 8/24 for that ability.

- If the chart tells you to roll more (66:"Roll three more times, then stop"), and you exceed your point total, continue to roll anyway as the chart describes. You can continue to go over the total in this way, accidentally creating powerful (and dangerous) shiki.
- If you have points remaining, roll again. You can stop any time.
- For Chimera and Runaway Shiki, stop rolling and refer to the rules on Runaways/Chimera.

2) The number before the slash is the power level, the number after the slash is the creation point cost.

NOTES

You can only roll Gaseous Form or Shapechange once. If you roll this ability a second time or more, roll the dice again.





SAMURAI ABILITY

Some of the archetypes have "Samurai Shiki" listed in their equipment sections. These are no mere warriors; these characters have special abilities, as they have gone through the mystical and painful Samuraization surgery.

CREATING A NEW SAMURAI SHIKI

For experienced Tenra players who want to try experimenting with the samurai's shiki abilities, they can use the Onmyoji Shiki creation rules to come up with different shiki to possess their bodies. Please keep in mind that all samurai-enabling shiki must have the "Possession" ability (at least at a score of 1) so that they can inhabit the body of the samurai. You can find more on shiki creation in the onmyojutsu rules section.

When the samurai meets with a sorcerer to start the samurai surgery process, the samurai brings several soulgems to be implanted into their bodies. The soulgems are where the shiki actually resides. A samurai can choose to implant many soulgems into his body; the more soulgems implanted now, the easier it will be to activate the samurai abilities later (the Soul cost will go down as more soulgems are implanted). However, there's

a trade-off: Adding more soulgems means that the body will accumulate Karma. Add too many soulgems, and the Karma cost for the surgery will become too much for the samurai to bear. Most samurai will have 10 to 20 soulgems implanted: That tends to strike a good balance between Karma cost now, and Soul cost later.

The number of points used to build the possessor-shiki and the amount of gems imbedded in one's body determines how much Soul is consumed when the samurai character activates his power.

Soul Points Consumed During Transformation = (Shiki build points ÷ 2, rounded up) - (The number of imbedded gems in increments of 5 /5)

Of course, there is also a Karma cost associated with becoming a samurai. This cost is four times the number of Soul consumed during samurai transformation (as calculated above), plus the number of soulgems implanted in the samurai's body. Remember to recalculate the amount of Karma needed on the samurai archetype if you choose to create a new shiki for your samurai character.

Additional Karma Cost = (samurai activation cost in Soul x 4) + Number of implanted gems.

Blue Hawk's Samurai Surgery

Blue Hawk is a warrior with enough money and soulgems to purchase the samurai surgery. He works with a trusted onmyoji, whom he gives the specifications of the shiki he wishes implanted. The onmyoji summons this shiki.

It turns out that the shiki is quite powerful. The onmyoji uses 24 shiki creation points to craft the samurai's shiki. Blue Hawk is prepared to take on this powerful shiki, and has 10 points worth of soulgems implanted in his body. The samurai surgery takes days, but Blue Hawk emerges, miraculously alive and even in good spirits.

The amount of soul that Blue Hawk will have to spend every time he transforms is 10: 24 shiki creation points divided by two is 12; 10 gems implanted divided by 5 is 2. 12 minus 2 equals 10.

The cost for Blue Hawk to undergo this surgery is 50: 4 times the Soul cost of 10 equals 40, plus 10 soulgems equals a total of 50 Karma.

Shiki Enhancement

Shiki cannot be "enhanced" over time like characters can. You cannot spend Kiai to raise levels of shiki abilities. Instead, to improve a samurai shiki in play, a character will have to have a large pool of Kiai and a lot of time. The samurai's existing shiki will be removed and destroyed, and a new

The Number of Soulgems is an Abstract Idea

The equations above say things like "number of soulgems", usually calculating them in numbers divisible by 5 (10, 15, 20, etc). This doesn't mean that a samurai with "10 soulgems" actually has only 10 soulgems implanted in his body (2 in his legs, 4 in his torso, 2 in his arms, etc). No, his body will actually have dozens, or hundreds, of small soulgems implanted all over his body, many of them visible through the skin. This number simply indicates the idea of how many soulgems a samurai character has implanted.

A samurai with "5 soulgems" might have barely noticeable tattoos, and perhaps the gleam of a soulgem at the base of his neck. A samurai with "30 soulgems" would probably have an obscene number of large soulgems bulging from underneath his kimono in all places, with even perhaps a few fist-sized soulgems clearly visible on his skin. People will tend to be more afraid of the more visibly altered samurai.

shiki (with the new ability scores that the player desires) will be summoned and implanted into the samurai, forcing the samurai to go through another round of excruciatingly painful and long samurai surgery. In most cases this is a foolhardy task; in other cases, it is an action which smells of attaining personal excellence, or else reeks of desperation.

To pay for the shiki implantation, the samurai's player must spend Kiai equal to the Karma cost of the implantation during an intermission phase. This spent Kiai immediately becomes Karma. The player can then manipulate his character's Fates in order to lower his total Karma to a more manageable level.

SAMURAI LOADOUTS

The various samurai templates in the book already come equipped with samurai-shiki. Here are a few sample samurai loadouts for use in the creation of samurai characters. You can swap out the archetype loadout for one of the loadouts below with the GM's permission, or you can attempt to craft your own samurai shiki as per the onmyojutsu rules.

You can tailor the Soul cost of the samurai loadout of your choice to get the most out of your pool of Soul points: Every 5 soulgems added to the samurai increases Karma by 5, but lowers soul Soul consumption during activation by 1 point. Every 5 soulgems removed from the loadout decreases Karma by 5, but increases Soul consumption for the samurai activation by 1 point. For beginning players, we suggest just sticking to the samurai abilities attached to the chosen samurai archetype, or at most simply replacing that loadout in full with one of the ones here.

STANDARD SAMURAI	
Karma Cost:	35
Soulgems Implanted:	15
Soul Cost:	5
Combat Ability:	3 (Add to Body, Agility and Senses when in samurai mode)
Regeneration:	1 (Regain 1 point of vitality each interaction phase when in samurai mode)
Soulfind:	1 (Sense all life within 10 meters)
Possession:	1 (Required for samurai shiki)
Samurai mode lasts for a number of rounds equal to Spirit.	

This template cost 16 shiki creation points. The original Soul cost was 8, and Karma cost was 32. By adding 15 soulgems, the Soul cost drops to 5, the Karma cost before factoring in soulgems is 20, for a total of 35 including soulgems.

ENHANCED SAMURAI	
Karma Cost:	50
Soulgems Implanted:	10
Soul Cost:	10
Combat Ability:	5 (Add to Body, Agility and Senses when in samurai mode)
Regeneration:	2 (Regain 2 points of vitality each interaction phase when in samurai mode)
Possession:	1 (Required for samurai shiki)
Samurai mode lasts for a number of rounds equal to Spirit.	

This template cost 24 shiki creation points. The original Soul cost was 12, and Karma was 48. By adding 10 soulgems, the cost drops to 10, the Karma cost before factoring in soulgems is 40, for a total of 50 including soulgems.

NIMBLE DESTROYER	
Karma Cost:	60
Soulgems Implanted:	20
Soul Cost:	10
Additional Damage:	5 (Add 5 to the damage of all melee, unarmed and hand-based marksman attacks)
Combat Ability:	3 (Add to Body, Agility and Senses when in samurai mode)
Regeneration:	2 (Regain 2 point of vitality each interaction phase when in samurai mode)
Possession:	1 (Required for samurai shiki)
Samurai mode lasts for a number of rounds equal to Spirit.	

This template cost 28 shiki creation points. The original Soul cost was 14, and Karma was 56. By adding 20 soulgems, the cost drops to 10, the Karma cost before factoring in soulgems is 40, for a total of 60 including soulgems.

WINGS OF CHITIN	
Karma Cost:	43
Soulgems Implanted:	15
Soul Cost:	7
Combat Ability:	3 (Add to Body, Agility and Senses when in samurai mode)
Flight:	5 (can fly up to 100m/minute when not carrying any additional weight)
Regeneration:	1 (Regain 1 point of vitality each interaction phase when in samurai mode)
Possession:	1 (Required for samurai shiki)
Samurai mode lasts for a number of rounds equal to Spirit.	

This template cost 20 shiki creation points. The original Soul cost was 10, and the Karma cost was 40. By adding 15 soulgems, the cost drops to 7, This is added to the Karma cost before factoring in soulgems (28), for a total of 43 including soulgems.





BUDDHIST MAGIC

Not all believers of Buddhism in Tenra practice what is known as *Hou-jutsu*, or Buddhist Magic. In fact, there are relatively few Buddhist monks who actually have the ability to wield these esoteric powers. For those who can use Buddhist magic, the following powers are available to all monks, regardless of order or specific beliefs.

All of the powers consume Soul in their use. More powerful effects require the expenditure of more Soul. All of the spells require the monk to be able to see (or hear/feel if the monk is blind or hard of sight) the target of the spell.

HEALING PRAYER

Iyashi

Effect: Heal Wounds and Vitality on oneself or another.

Soul Cost: 5

Through a voiced or silent chant, a Buddhist monk can heal the wounds of himself or those around him.

The monk makes a skill check based on Empathy and Buddhist Magic. Count the successes gained from the roll, then subtract the number of the highest wound taken. If there are any successes remaining, one wound box on any track can be healed for each remaining success. The recipient of the Healing Prayer chooses which wounds they wish to heal. If the successes rolled by the monk total to less than the number of highest wound of the character, then no wounds on the wound track can be healed this time.

If the difference between the monk's successes and the highest wound score is zero or greater, the Healing Prayer will fully restore the Vitality of the target.

Wound	Penalty
Light	1
Heavy	2
Critical	3
Dead Box	—

Healing Prayer is effective on any living creature regardless of race (oni, ayakashi and even kugutsu can be healed), but it is not effective on yoroi armours or kongohki. It also does not work on any creature that has the Dead Box filled in on their wound track; the fate of such people has already been written, and the monk cannot interfere until their Dead Box is healed by other means (like First Aid or after-battle rest).

Example: Covered Palm heals Crimson Wind
Crimson Wind is battling a determined foe, guarding the female monk Covered Palm and the others in his group from harm. Crimson Wind has only 2 Vitality left and has taken 3 Light Wounds, 2 Heavy Wounds and 1 Critical Wound. Covered Palm closes her eyes, and gestures to Crimson Wind while reciting a sutra. She rolls Empathy: Buddhist Magic and gets a total of…

- *…1 success. With one or two successes, the spell effectively fails since Crimson Wind's highest ranked wound, a Critical Wound, requires 3 or more successes to heal.*
- *…3 successes. This is the same score as Crimson Wind's highest ranked wound. Unfortunately, that is not enough to actually heal any of his wounds. However, Crimson Wind's Vitality is completely healed, keeping him in the battle for a little while longer.*
- *…6 successes. This is three higher than Crimson Wind's highest ranked wound. This means that Crimson Wind's Vitality is fully healed, and he can also remove any three wounds from any track that he wishes. He decides to heal the Critical Wound, one Heavy Wound and one Light Wound. He could have healed both Heavy Wounds, but he wants to keep the +1 dice bonus it grants… at least until the end of this combat.*

SPIRIT BURST

Kidan

Effect: Build up spiritual energy in your hands, then release it as an attack

Soul Cost: Depends on rank of Buddhist Magic

By concentrating ki energies through her center, then channeling it out through the body in an explosive burst in the shape of a ball (usually through the palm or fist), the monk can make a ranged attack on an enemy.

The Spirit Burst attack is made with a Senses: Buddhist Magic roll. Since this attack is insubstantial, the defender cannot parry this attack with a weapon. Only Evasion can be used to defend against a Spirit Burst attack.

For range, rate of fire and damage of the attack, please consult the chart below. Replace "X" with the Spirit attribute score of the monk using Spirit Burst.

Spirit Burst Attack Chart

Rank	Dmg	RoF	Range	Soul
Skilled (2)	X / 4	1	Xm	1
Advanced (3)	X / 2	X / 2	5+Xm	3
Master (4)	X	X	10+Xm	5
Supreme (5)	X * 2	X * 2	15+Xm	7
(all fractions rounded up)				

A monk can use any level of Spirit Burst equal to or below his rank in Buddhist Magic.

Spirit Burst can be fired a number of times equal to the Rate of Fire during a combat action, but each additional attack made costs that attack's full Soul cost. For every additional attack made in this way, add +1 damage to all spirit burst attacks made that round.

SOULGEM CREATION

Oujuu Sakusei

Effect: Create soulgems

Soul Cost: None (requires a 3-hour ceremony)

When scarlet steel is mined, it can be turned into a spiritual energy storage element called a soulgem only through the Buddhist soulgem creation ceremony. It takes about 3 hours of both chanting and silent prayer to create a single usable soulgem bead. Time and diligence (in addition to the rounded scarlet steel pieces) are the only things needed for the ceremony, and the strength of the monk's Buddhist Magic skill does not help in reducing that time.

SUMMON SPIRIT

Tama-Gaeshi

Effect: Summon the soul of the deceased back to this world

Soul Cost: Equal to the target's Spirit attribute score

This special chant brings the soul of the recently deceased into the presence of the monk, where it can be questioned or talked to. The difficulty of the Spirit: Buddhist Magic roll is the Spirit attribute score of the target that they had when they were last alive.

On normal human souls, this spell only works if the person has been dead for less than 50 days. After that, the soul is unreachable, presumably having been reincarnated (what actually happens is a matter of great debate amongst various Buddhist sects). However, if the soul is that of an Asura, or lost soul, it remains attached to the physical world and can be summoned at any time.

The attitude and information gathered from the spirit depends upon the number of successes that the monk gets from the Spirit: Buddhist Magic roll.

Summon Spirit Effects		
Successes	**Attitude**	**Effect**
0 or Less	Enraged	Must attempt a Subdue spell to calm the spirit
1	Combative	May attack depending on who the spirit is: The spirit is restless
2	Uncooperative	Spirit only says one or two sentences
3	Cooperative	Spirit will engage in a basic conversation
4	Friendly	Spirit will engage in pleasant, casual conversation

SUBDUE SPIRIT

Shaku-Buku

Effect: Help or force a troubled or lost spirit from this plane into the Afterlife

Soul Cost: None

Subdue Spirit, also known as Spiritual Combat, is a method available only to practitioners of Buddhist Magic. Through the use of this magic they can fight spirits, wearing down their resolve and forcing them into the Afterlife.

A monk who can wield magic can see supernatural creatures like ghosts and spirits without any effort. When they are encountered, it is naturally a monk's duty to mourn and pray for them, helping send their souls to the Afterlife. While most souls can be sent with no effort, there are some souls who have completely lost track of who and what they were, and prowl the world in eternal torment. They don't know that they are dead (or don't care), and they cannot release their strong feelings (of love, hate or other strong emotions) which tie them to the world. No matter what their

reason for remaining, these drifting souls seek to return to the earth, to have a body of flesh again.

Some of these souls are the spirits of people summoned through the Summoned Spirit ceremony which became enraged. Regardless, these lingering souls have to be beaten down and dragged into the Afterlife for the good of both the living and the dead.

The Subdue Spirit ceremony works almost exactly like normal physical combat. The monk uses Body: Buddhist Magic to attack the spirit. The spirit fights back with Spirit: Willpower (or Spirit: Buddhist Magic if the soul was a monk). Just like in combat, each Subdue Spirit attack takes an Action and results in a Counterattack. Unlike normal combat, damage taken from spiritual combat does not go to Wounds: it is spread between Vitality and Soul instead. The side which took damage chooses how to spread the damage out. Soul for the spirit is calculated normally, and Vitality for a spirit is based on the Body attribute score it had when it was alive.

If the monk wins, the soul is sent to the Afterlife, where it will be at peace. If the monk loses (either Soul or Vitality reaches 0) then the monk loses consciousness, and the spirit possesses the monk's body. The GM should take control of the monk character for some time.

When the monk regains consciousness, she can attempt to engage in spiritual combat again to attempt to subdue the spirit that controls his body. However, since now the monk has no physical body to control (as he was pushed out of his own body), both the monk and the tormented soul engage in a Subdue Spirit battle with Spirit: Willpower or Spirit: Buddhist Magic. If the Monk loses, he can try to regain his form with another spiritual combat in the next scene. If the monk's friends happen to take notice, they might realize that there's something wrong with the monk, and enlist the aid of other monks to help.

Finally, Subdue Spirit does not work on living souls; it only affects the dead.

MEIKYO SEAL

Tama-Fuuji

Effect: Seal a summoned soul inside a meikyo soul mirror

Soul Cost: The target's Spirit attribute score

The Spirit Seal ceremony is regarded by many monks a blasphemy, as it ties souls to the physical world instead of trying to help them move on. Ironically, though, only Buddhist monks have the ability to bind souls to meikyo soul mirrors in order to create kongohki.

After a soul is summoned through the Summon Spirit ceremony, the monk can attempt to bind the soul to a prepared meikyo. The monk makes an opposed roll of Empathy: Buddhist Magic versus the target soul's Spirit: Willpower.

If the roll succeeds, the soul's memories are suppressed and effectively wiped clean. The soul's personality and emotions are subdued. All of the soul's Fates are erased, and Karma is lowered accordingly. After that, the soul is affixed with a new Fate, "Sealed Memories", at a ranking of 4.

If the Meikyo Seal spell fails, the spirit becomes enraged and attacks the monk. A Subdue Spirit spell must be cast to force the soul into the Afterlife permanently.

MEIKYO CLEANSING

Mitama-Gaeshi

Effect: Reduces meikyo Karma, sends meikyo-bound souls to the Afterlife

Soul Cost: Depends on the monk

The Meikyo Cleansing spell allows the monk to reduce the Karma lingering on meikyo soul mirrors. This is not instantaneous; it takes time and Soul to continue the prayer.

Every 10 minutes, 10 points of Karma can be removed from the meikyo of an armour or other unused meikyo. If the target is a kongohki or has a Spirit attribute score, then every 10 minutes the kongohki's Spirit attribute, in Karma, is removed from the meikyo.

For every 10 minutes of chanting, the monk needs to spend 1 point of Soul.

Kongohki or other bound souls can resist the cleansing chant. The monk makes an opposed roll of Empathy: Buddhist Magic against the kongohki's Spirit: Willpower. If the monk wins, every additional success reduces the "10 minutes" for 10 points of Karma reduction down by one minute per success. If the bound soul wins, every additional success raises the "10 minutes" for 10 points of Karma reduction up one minute per success.

In the case of yoroi armours, Meikyo Cleansing is one way to reduce the built-up Karma collecting on the meikyo soul mirror. In the case of kongohki, this works as well but with an added effect: If Karma is lowered to zero points with the Meikyo Cleansing spell, the kongohki's soul is freed and sent to the Afterlife.

In the case of kimenkyo mechanica mirrors, kimen armours do not retain Karma so the spell would not work. However, kimen kongohki can have their Karma reduced or souls sent to the Afterlife through the Meikyo Cleansing spell.

Example: Shining Mountain prays for the soul of a receptive kongohki with 100 Karma. The kongohki's Spirit score is 6. When Shining Mountain begins chanting, she can remove 6 Karma from the kongohki for every 10 minutes of chanting. She wants to lower the kongohki's Karma by 42 points (she picks 42 because it's a multiple of 6, the kongohki's Spirit score). This will take 70 minutes total, and cost the monk 7 Soul points.

Example: If the kongohki in the above example resists (for example, an Asura kongohki with 120 Karma, chained to a stone wall), Shining Mountain makes an Empathy: Buddhist Magic roll vs the kongohki's Spirit: Willpower in an attempt to remove all *of the kongohki's Karma, as the Asura won't stop raging until it is set free. That means it will take 20 Soul points, and 200 minutes, to perform the chant. Shining Mountain wins, so she is able to continue to reduce the kongohki's Karma. She wins by 4 successes, which means she can reduce the chanting by 40 minutes and 4 Soul points, down to a total of 16 Soul and 160 minutes. Hopefully the monk's friends will be able to keep this Asura restrained for that long.*

EXORCISM

Akuryou-Taisan

Effect: Dispels a possessing ayakashi or spirit

Soul Cost: Depends on the ayakashi, shiki or samurai

This spell is used against ayakashi or shiki who have taken control of a human using their Possession ability. It attempts to free the human from the spirit, forcing it away from its host.

The monk begins a chant towards a possessed person or samurai. There is no roll involved; the possessor simply compares its Spirit attribute score (the Spirit of the shiki, ayakashi or samurai) with its Possession skill (in dots: 2, 3, 4 or 5). The higher of these two numbers is the total number of minutes, or rounds, that the monk must chant sutras in order to complete the Exorcism spell.

At the beginning of every round, the monk must spend 3 points of Soul to continue the chant. Once the number of rounds

chanting equals the higher of the target's Spirit or Possession, the shiki or ayakashi is forcibly pulled out of its host. The shiki or ayakashi vanish right after the Exorcism is complete. In the case of samurai or other talisman shiki, the shiki is dismissed and returns to its container; the samurai's power is immediately deactivated.

If the target runs away, there is no need to keep up the chant. Exorcism does not actually damage the spirit or ayakashi.

However, in the case of samurai, if the monk continues the Exorcism chant even after the shiki has been cast back into the soulgems on the samurai's body, the samurai cannot reactivate the samurai shiki again until the monk is silenced.

BINDING PRAYER OF ACALA

Fudou Bakujuu

Effect: Binds an opponent in place

Soul Cost: The opponent's Spirit attribute score

By repeating the Mantra of the Immovable Wisdom King Acala ("Nohmaku Sanmanda Bazaradan Kanman": "Homage to the all-pervading Buddha-nature"), the monk can keep an opponent held in place.

The monk makes an opposed roll with her Spirit: Buddhist Magic against the opponent's Spirit: Willpower. If the monk loses, nothing happens.

If the monk wins, the enemy finds himself unable to take aggressive actions. In combat, this means that he cannot move or take Actions or Half-Actions. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the monk's and opponent's successes rolled.

The monk has to continue chanting for the effect to last, effectively spending his full action each round continuing the chant. However, he can spend Kiai to take other actions while continuing the chant.

The opponent can still parry, evade incoming attacks or make other related defensive moves. The opponent may also spend Kiai to take Actions by making Interrupt Actions.

108 FACTIONS OF THE LORDS OF LIGHT

The phrase "108 Factions of the Lords of Light" is an expression which refers to the numerous Buddhist martial sects devoted to the practice of martial arts. Learned through their order, their master and their peers, many Buddhist monks of Tenra use their martial prowess for peace and justice.

While the Ebon Mountain monks are the most famous for their training in the martial arts, a monk from any order can learn any of the martial arts with skill and practice.

In terms of rules, they function exactly as other War Arts. Please see the Art of War section for more details on their use.

FIST OF ACALA THE IMMOVABLE LORD OF LIGHT

Fudoh Myoh-oh Ken

Skill: Unarmed Combat

This martial art, known commonly as "Fist of Acala", is known for its skillful counterattacks. It is said that the founder of the Ebon Mountain order received training in this martial art from Acala himself while in ascetic practice in the mountains. This art contains ultimate techniques that are taught from a master to a single student.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Fist of Earth
The monk can use his Spirit attribute instead of Body when using Unarmed Combat to attack or defend.

Unarmed Combat damage increases to +2.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
The Unmoving Fist
This allows for a split-second but extremely risky counterattack, reading the enemy's movements before their attack lands. The side which ends up losing the attack (the one with fewer successes) is treated as if they had 0 successes for that attack. This results in a devastating amount of damage to the attacker (or defender, if his split-second counterattack is not performed precisely). This technique can only be used when the monk is being attacked (as a defense), not when attacking.

Also, the damage for all of the monk's Unarmed Combat attacks increases to +4.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Fist of the Lord of Light
The monk can use The Unmoving Fist for attacks as well as defense.

The damage for all of the monk's Unarmed Combat attacks increases to +10.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
Fist of Acala
For one round, a monk can take his Spirit attribute score and add that many dice to any Body, Agility or Senses roll made that round. This technique costs a number of Soul equal to the Spirit attribute score of the monk. The monk can spend less Soul if they wish for a reduced effect.

The Hands of Merciful Kannon the Thousand-Armed

Senju Kannon Ken
Skill: Unarmed Combat

This school of martial arts replaces the fist with an open, cutting hand. Because of the flowing movements of the monk, and the speed and ferocity of the open-handed slicing attacks, it is said that the practitioner appears to have a thousand arms in battle.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Palm of Wind
The monk can use his Empathy attribute instead of Body when using Unarmed Combat to attack or defend.

Unarmed Combat damage increases to +2.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
Thousand Hands
This technique is a devastating feint used in combat to distract an enemy and open them to greater amounts of damage. It can only be used when the monk is attacking, not defending. If the practitioner's attack succeeds, then the difference between the attacker and defender's successes is multiplied by 2, after which other weapon or martial arts damage is applied normally.

Also, the damage for all of the monk's Unarmed Combat attacks increases to +4.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Palm of Kannon
The monk can use Thousand Hands for defense as well as attacks. The damage for all of the monk's Unarmed Combat attacks increases to +10.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
Thousand Unsettled Hands of War
For one round, a monk can take his Empathy attribute score and add that many dice to any Body, Agility or Senses roll made that round. This technique costs a number of Soul equal to the Empathy attribute score of the monk. The monk can spend less Soul if they wish for a reduced effect.

Celestial Form Kung Fu

Seishaku Kei-i Ken
Skill: Unarmed Combat

It is said that this martial art formed from observances made from the illuminated stars of the night sky. This martial art is made up of seven styles, of which each practitioner masters before continuing to the next level. It is said that the movements of the styles of this art reflect the movement of celestial objects and constellations in the sky. The practitioners of this art are called Revered Star Saints within the order.

The art takes time to "charge up" in combat to its higher level maneuvers. However, a skilled practitioner can spend points of Kiai to gain interrupt actions and additional actions, and through that charge up to higher techniques of Celestial Form Kung Fu in the course of one or two combat rounds.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
The North Star
It takes one action to prepare this art, but afterwards all actions with Unarmed Combat do +2 damage for the rest of the combat.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
The Feral Wolf
First, the practitioner must have engaged the North Star ability in this combat scene. After that, an additional action is required to prepare The Feral Wolf, but afterwards all actions with Unarmed Combat do +6 damage for the rest of combat.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
The Heavenly Gate
This art is only available in combat once the practitioner has engaged the Feral Wolf in the same combat scene. An additional action is required to prepare The Heavenly Gate, but afterwards all actions with Unarmed Combat do +15 damage for the rest of combat.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
The Broken Army
This ultimate art is only available in combat once the practitioner has engaged The Heavenly Gate in this combat scene. An additional full action is required to prepare The Broken Army, but afterwards all actions with Unarmed Combat do +40 damage for the rest of the combat.





KIJIN AND MECHANICA RULES

KIJIN TRANSFORMATION

Kijin Transformation refers the process of surgically grafting mechanica on to one's body or replacing certain body parts with mechanica.

KIJIN TRANSFORMATION DURING CHARACTER CREATION

In order for a character to become a kijin (i.e., to be equipped with mechanica), the player must select a kijin archetype during character creation.

The cost of kijin conversion during character creation is reflected in a penalty to the character's available points used to assign to attributes like Body or Spirit. Kijin archetypes include a pre-determined selection of mechanica, but these can be changed with the GM's permission. You must obtain the GM's permission and fully explain what changes you wish to make.

KIJIN TRANSFORMATION DURING THE GAME

In order to become a kijin during the game, the player must pay 10 times the Attribute penalty cost of that mechanica in Kiai points. This is always done during an Intermission, and it should be the first thing dealt with during an Intermission event. Thus, the required Kiai must be spent immediately and Karma added as usual before moving to the "Doctrine of No-Self" phase of the Intermission.

If the GM feels that kijin conversion is implausible for the current circumstances (e.g., the PCs are on an isolated island where there is no one who can do the necessary surgery), she may disallow it. Situations like these where the players declare, "Actually, I was already a kijin," or "My previously-hidden mechanica have appeared" might work well in a story but are left to the GM's discretion.

Note: Certain Mechanica implants require a Heart Engine for power. To use these, you must take a machine torso (see below) with a heart engine installed during character creation.

Mechanica weapons which use gunpowder or soulgems are always considered to be fully loaded. Unless otherwise noted, mechanica that list "ammunition" use soulgems for ammo.

Mechanica Descriptions

Mechanica, also known as "Karakuri"—the old Japanese term for clockwork machinery—were originally used only for replacing the body parts of fallen soldiers with machine parts. However, recently they have been used by those with perfectly healthy bodies who wish to transcend mere human strength by replacing their flesh with superior mechanical parts and weapons.

Mechanica Sensors

Replaced Part: Right eyeball or surrounding area

Attribute Penalty: See text below

This mechanica augments (or replaces) the kijin's eye, enhancing vision with a high precision visual heads-up display known as a "Heaven's Eye". This gives the character a bonus to her Notice skill. There are four types of mechanica sensors, each varying in available mechanica slots and notice bonuses. Various other functions can be added to the mechanica sensors. These functions do not add any additional attribute penalties (see below for details).

The rotating visor eyes are different than the other eye classes. It represents a visor, helmet or plate with several types of eyes which rotate into use as needed.

Class	Notice Bonus	Attribute Penalty	Available Mechanica Slots
Class Kou	+8	3	3
Class Otsu	+5	2	2
Class Hei	+3	1	1
Rotating Visor	+4	3	6

Mechanica Sensor Slots

The following additional functions can be installed in the mechanica sensors. The maximum number of functions is limited according to the type of mechanica sensor (see above).

1. Darksight

You can see in darkness. Add 2 dice to all Sense rolls while in darkness.

2. Eyes of Distant Death

Your senses are enhanced, allowing you to see farther than naturally possible for humans. Add 2 dice to all Marksman rolls.

3. Sha Sensor

You can sense the strength of sha energies around you. When you see a shiki (a summoned shiki or samurai) you can determine what shiki abilities it has, as well as the power level of those abilities by making a successful Senses: Onmyojutsu

roll. The difficulty level for the roll is equal to 1/10th of the shiki's total creation points, rounded up.

4. Flash Burst
You can emit a quick burst of light from your eyes. Those who see the light are temporarily blinded. This takes a half-action to use. Once you have declared the use of flash burst, your next attack is automatically considered a surprise attack. This function consumes 4 Soul per use.

5. Protective Vision
You eyes are completely protected against blinding light. You are immune to light attacks which affect the eyes, including flash burst.

6. Soulfinder (Requires Heart Engine)
You can detect the presence of living creatures equal to or greater than human size within a radius equal to 10 x Senses in meters.

7. Eye-needles
Tiny needles (usually poisoned) can be projected from your mechanica sensors. An attack with these needles is always considered a surprise attack. Use the Marksman skill when attacking.

Damage: +1
RoF: 1
Range: 3m
Ammo: 1

Poisoned Needles: Upon a successful attack, the opponent must make a successful Willpower skill check (difficulty level 2) or be paralyzed for 2 rounds. If the character has access to other poisons, another poison can be substituted for the default poison. Purchasing a poisoned needle costs 10 Kiai. Poisoned needles can be purchased during an intermission.

8. Floating Eye
Your mechanica sensors can detach from its socket and fly around to observe distant objects and events. This floating eye provides auditory and visual information. When detached, it remains connected to you by a thin metal wire with a maximum range of 5 meters.

9. Enhanced Auditory
This function greatly amplifies the sound around you, enabling you to hear sounds otherwise impossible to pick up. You can apply your Mechanica sensors Notice skill bonus to hearing as well as sight.

10. Surround Vision
Your peripheral vision is extended, allowing you to see 360 degrees around you for a maximum range of 20 meters. Add 2 dice when defending against surprise attacks.

OTHER HEAD-BASED MECHANICA

Lightning Bolt Eyes
Replaced Part: Both eyes or surrounding area

Attribute Penalty: 2 (Requires Heart Engine)

This mechanica converts Sha energy into electricity, allowing you to project a bolt of powerful lightning from your eyes. Because this is an incorporeal energy attack, it may only be defended against by use of the Evasion skill. Use the Marksman skill when attacking.

Damage: +5
RoF: 1
Range: 100m
Ammo: Unlimited

Mechanica Kabuto
Replaced Part: Head

Attribute Penalty: 5 (Requires Heart Engine)

The character's entire head is replaced with mechanica with built-in sensors.

This mechanica can release waves of sha energy, nullifying the effects of the darksight, farsight, Sha sensor, and lifeforce sensors. Furthermore, detection powers provided by shiki are useless in tracking a user with a mechanica kabuto, all within a 100 meters radius.

Brain Enhancement

Replaced Part: Head (attachment)

Attribute Penalty: 2

This tiny mechanica is attached directly to the brain. By releasing a special solution into the brain, the user's maximum Soul pool is permanently increased by 15 points.

Interface Helm Implant

Replaced Part: Forehead

Attribute Penalty: 3

A yoroi interface helmet is implanted directly onto your skull, connected directly to your brain. This provides a +2 bonus on all Interface rolls when connected to a Meikyo or Kimenkyo mirror.

Renju Voice

Replaced Part: Lower jaw

Attribute Penalty: 3

Two disks which can spin at a high velocity are implanted onto the character's lower jaw. Two faces of ancient Kamiyo script are imprinted on each disk. The spinning disks strengthen Sha energy fields around the character, improving her ability with certain language-related magical skills. When they spin they release a high-pitched wailing, ranging from a shrill screech to a low cry.

Add 2 dice when making skill checks with Onmyojutsu, Buddhist Magic, and Ninjutsu.

Supreme Nervous System

Replaced Part: Nervous System

Attribute Penalty: 2

Your entire nervous system has been laced by thin fibers of scarlet steel, greatly enhancing the character's reflexes and reaction speed.

This provides you with a +5 bonus to initiative in combat scenes.

Mechanica Arms

Replaced Part: One or both arms

Attribute Penalty: See text

The character's arm or arms are replaced with machine arms powered by yoroi drive shafts. This provides you with a damage bonus to Unarmed Combat, Melee Weapons, and Marksman (for thrown weapons only) skills. There are three types of Mechanica Arms, each varying in available mechanica slots, attribute penalties, and damage bonuses. Various other functions can be added to the Mechanica Arms. These functions do not add any additional attribute penalties (see below for details).

If both arms are replaced with Mechanica Arms, treat each as a separate weapon. You do not add damage together for both arms, even if you have the same weapon function installed on each.

Class	Dmg Bonus	Attribute Penalty	Available Mechanica Slots
Class Kou	+8	4	4
Class Otsu	+5	2	2
Class Hei	+3	1	1

Combat Arm Mechanica Slots

The following additional functions can be installed in Mechanica Arms. The maximum number of functions is limited according to the type of Mechanica Arms (see above).

1. Projectile Fist

Using the explosive power of gunpowder, your metal fist can be launched from your arm. Use the Marksman skill instead of Unarmed Combat when firing your fist. The fist is attached to your arm by a 5-meter long metal cord. It returns back to your arm automatically after an attack.

Damage: +4
RoF: 1
Range: 5m
Ammo: 1

2. Burning Scourge

A metal whip capable of generating intense heat, can be released from your forearm. Use the Melee Weapons skill when attacking. It takes a half-action to release the scourge from your arm.

Damage: +5 Range: 5m

3. Explosive Spiker

A small spear, claw or blade is attached to the underside of your forearm. Although not a true ranged weapon, a small gunpowder explosion thrusts the spear into your opponent upon impact. Use the Unarmed Combat skill when attacking. The bonus in the parentheses is for when gunpowder is used.

Damage: +3 (+5)
RoF: 1
Ammo: 3

4. Vajra Claws

Five razor-sharp soulgem-powered claws extend from your fingertips. They can be retracted into your hand when not in use. Extending them takes a half-action. Use the Unarmed Combat skill when attacking.

Damage: +3
RoF: 3
Ammo: 6

5. Ikari Blossom Drill

A spear or drill attached to your forearm can spin around, boring into your enemy upon impact. This is powered by gunpowder and uses the Unarmed Combat skill. The bonus in the parentheses is for when gunpowder is used.

Damage: +2 (+4)
RoF: 1
Ammo: 6

6. White Heat Palm (Requires Heart Engine)

This horrible weapon, also known as the Incinerator Palm, uses the character's own inner power to heat this metal palm to a white-hot state, incinerating her enemies upon impact. Use the Unarmed Combat skill to attack. Using this function expends one point of Soul for every bonus point of damage you wish it to do. It takes a half-action (at which time Soul is consumed) to gather enough power before the attack action. After the attack action, the incinerator palm's damage returns to 0 again, requiring an additional soul charge for further damage bonuses.

Damage: Soul points expended

7. Five-barrel Gatling
Your fingertips are actually gun-barrels powered by gunpowder. Use the Marksman skill when attacking. This costs 2 mechanica slots.

Damage: +3
RoF: 5
Range: 20m
Ammo: 30

8. Grudge Blade
A long retractable blade is installed in your forearm. It takes a half-action to fully extend the blade. Use the Melee Weapons skill when attacking.

Damage: +5

9. Omega Snake Blades
Sharp, long blades extend from your fingers and wrists and spin around, creating a whirlwind of blades that pierce and slice through the enemy. They have a Rate of Fire as if they were a projectile weapon (though the kijin uses the Unarmed Combat skill to fight with them)

Damage: +4
RoF: 4

10. Extra Arm Slot
You take a -2 penalty to your combat arm damage bonus but gain an extra slot for mechanica. This does not expend a slot in itself.

11. Arm Storage Compartment
You have a small storage compartment in your arm, in which food or a small weapon can be stored.

12. Steel War Fan
A round fan or shield-like object extends from your arm. When defending using the Unarmed Combat skill you can add an amount of dice equal to your combat arm damage bonus. However, you cannot make a counter attack when defending in this manner; this mechanica is used only for defense.

13. Kairen Fingers
Your fingers are multi-jointed, allowing you to perform the intricate hand movements required in casting magical spells and summonings with far less effort. Add +3 to all Onmyojutsu, Buddhist Magic, and Ninjutsu skill rolls. The fingers are delicate, however, and will be temporarily disabled if the character uses Unarmed Combat with that hand to make an attack. They can be used again after the next intermission.

14. Shoulder Spikes
Long sharp horns protrude from your upper arms or shoulders. Use the Unarmed Combat skill when attacking.

Damage: +8

15. Lizard Bomb Arm
Just like a lizard can detach its tail in danger, you can detach one of your Mechanica Arms. This arm is loaded with gunpowder and an explosive device. Once dropped or thrown (then activated), it does 20 points of damage to all within a 10-meter radius.

16. Extendable Arm
The joints of your Combat Arm are extendable, allowing you to make melee and unarmed attacks up to 5 meters away with them. This has no effect on ranged attacks.

Other Arm Mechanica

Demonic Lightning Cannon
Replaced Part: One full arm
Attribute Penalty: 2
This weapon replaces the hand and forearm. It gathers and transforms Sha energy into electricity, sending a powerful

bolt of lightning from the barrel. Only the Evade skill can be used when defending against this attack.

Damage: +8
RoF:1
Range: 300m
Ammo: Unlimited

Cyclone Gatling Repeater

Replaced Part: One full arm

Attribute Penalty: 2

Your entire arm is replaced with a large cylindrical gunpowder Gatling gun. The gun's barrel spins around, releasing a barrage of ammunition at its targets and obliterating the enemy. This uses the Marksman skill.

Damage: +2
RoF :10
Range: 20m
Ammo: 150

Kaminari Fist Thunderburst

Replaced Part: One arm (forearm and fist)

Attribute Penalty: 3

Required Station: 5

This consists of a powerful metal fist with a specialized heart engine embedded within. If the heart engine is activated, it sends out powerful energy which significantly increases the strength of an unarmed strike. However, using this attack also damages the user. When this ability is used, the Kaminari Fist is destroyed and the character takes 1 point of damage. The fist can be repaired during an intermission for another 30 points of Karma. This damage must be distributed to Critical Wounds.

The fist normally does +5 damage, but it increases to +20 when the heart engine is activated and the fist destroyed.

Damage: +5 (+20)

Crab Claws

Replaced Part: One full arm

Attribute Penalty: 5 (Requires Heart Engine)

This weapon, replacing the character's entire arm, gets its name from its resemblance to a crab claw. In addition to being used as a melee weapon it can also create and explode an enormous ball of Sha energy. This energy ball affects everything in its 100 meter-wide blast radius (extending forward from the claw), friend or foe. Because the energy takes time to regenerate, this ability can used only once every Act.

	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Claw (Melee)	+7	5	10	—
Sha Cannon (Marksman)	+9	1	100m blast	1

Mechanica Torso

Replaced Part: Torso

Attribute Penalty: See Text

Your entire torso, all the way down to your bones to organs, are replaced with mechanica. This provides you with a permanent bonus to your Vitality as your flesh is replaced with cold steel armor plates. There are three types of mechanica torsos, each varying in available mechanica slots and Vitality bonuses. Various other functions can be added to the mechanica torso. These functions (with the exception of Heart Engine, Kimenkyo, and Howler Cannon) do not add any additional attribute penalties (see below for details).

Class	Vitality Bonus	Attribute Penalty	Available Slots
Class Kou	+20	4	4
Class Otsu	+10	2	2
Class Hei	+5	1	1

Machine Torso Mechanica Slots

The following additional functions can be installed in the Machine Torso. The maximum amount is limited according to the type of machine torso (see above).

1. Heart Engine
Additional Attribute Penalty: 2

A Heart Engine is installed in your mechanical body, providing a power source to a variety of mechanica. This can only be installed at character creation.

2. Kimenkyo
Additional Attribute Penalty: 2

With a kimenkyo mirror installed in your body to help amplify and control fine motor movement, you can use your Interface skill rank to perform any general skill (but not other specialized skills). This can only be installed at character creation.

3. Rib Cage Spider
When grappling an opponent, 8 spiny blades can be extended from your chest, impaling your victim. Use the Unarmed Combat skill when attacking.

Damage: +2
RoF: 6
Ammo: 6

4. Dragon Cannon
A lesser version of the immense yoroi armour soulgem mortar is installed on the shoulder or chest. This large weapon takes up 2 mechanica slots. Use the Marksman skill when attacking.

Damage: +9
RoF: 1
Range: 1 km
Ammo: 6

5. Supreme Howler Mortar Cannon (Requires Heart Engine)
Additional Attribute Penalty: 1

This is a long-range yoroi mortar which can be installed on the shoulder or in the chest. Use the Marksman skill when attacking. It does 12 points of damage to anything in its blast radius This can be reduced with an Evasion roll.

Damage: 12
RoF:1
Range: 2 km
Ammo: 1

The ammo is replenished every intermission.

6. Inner Eye (Requires Heart Engine)
This device allows you to manipulate the inner energies of your Heart Engine. You can siphon your Soul to refuel your Vitality score at a 1:1 ratio.

7. Torso Storage Compartment
You have a small storage compartment in your torso in which food or a small weapon can be stored.

8. Extra Torso Slot
You take a -4 to your machine torso Vitality bonus but gain an extra slot for mechanica. This does not expend a slot in itself. Your Vitality bonus cannot be reduced below zero.

9. Extra Arm Attachment
You can attach another arm to your torso. Add attribute costs of the extra limbs as normal.

10. Reinforced Lungs
You can hold your breath and swim underwater for a number of hours equal to your Spirit attribute. During strenuous activity such as underwater combat, you can only hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to your Spirit score.

11. Flight Booster
Using a burst of power from a soulgem, you can fly for 2 rounds. The maximum range in one round equals your Agility attribute score x 40 meters.

12. Glorious Death Bomb
This is the kijin version of the kongohki/armour ability "Brilliant Flower of Destruction". By shattering your heart engine that powers your torso, you release an explosive blast. Everything within a 15-meter radius takes 30 straight points of damage. This also damages yourself, and your Dead Box is checked when this is used.

13. Smoke Screen
A thick cloud of smoke can be released from your torso. If used indoors, enough smoke is created to fill an entire room. All within the room are unable to see. If used outdoors, the cloud dissipates after one round.

This function can only be used once per scene.

14. Flame Caster
A flamethrower is installed within the chest. Use the Marksman skill when attacking.

Damage: +10
RoF : 1
Range: 5 m
Ammo: 3

Other Torso-Based Mechanica

Zero-type Reflective Armor
Replaced Part: Skin

Attribute Penalty: 3

Your skin is replaced with a smooth mirror-like material resembling the underbelly of a snake. This special reflective material will protect against all energy attacks such as electricity or fire, and magical energy attacks like Buddhist magic. All damage taken from such attacks (after Evasion rolls are made, as appropriate) is reduced by half.

Type 3 Chameleon Flesh Dragon Scale
Replaced Part: Skin

Attribute Penalty: 1 (Requires Heart Engine)

Your flesh is replaced with a hard metallic armor. The character can use the energy from the heart engine to activate the dragon scale's camouflage function. When activated, an aura of energy surrounds the character, allowing her to blend in to her surroundings.

Add 5 dice to all Stealth rolls.

Mechanica Legs

Replaced Part: Both Legs

Attribute Penalty: See Text

Your legs are replaced with steel mechanica legs. The superior muscle control and strength provide you with a die bonus to your Movement skill. There are three types of mechanica, each varying in available mechanica slots and Movement die bonuses. Various other functions can be added to the Mechanica Legs. These functions do not add any additional attribute penalties (see below for details).

Class	Movement Bonus	Attribute Penalty	Available Mechanica Slots
Class Kou	+8	4	4
Class Otsu	+5	2	2
Class Hei	+3	1	1

Mechanica Leg Mechanica Slots

The following additional functions can be installed in mechanica legs. The maximum amount is limited according to the type of legs (see above).

1. Roller Type
The bottoms of your metal feet are fitted with wheels, allowing you to move at great speeds. You can use them as a combat action to move up to your Agility score x 40 meters for 1 round, and can add 2 dice to all Evasion skill checks.

2. Aquatic Fins
Your legs are fitted with retractable fins to aid underwater movement. Add +2 dice to all physical action rolls made underwater.

3. Booster Module
By releasing a small gunpowder explosion from your feet or legs, you can fly (basically an extended jump) for a limited period of time. Your maximum range in one round equals your Agility attribute score x 40 meters, and up to 20 meters in height. This device also adds 2 dice to Evasion skill checks, and can be used as a weapon, like a gun. Use the Marksman skill when making an attack. The bonus in the parentheses is for when the gunpowder burst is used.

Damage (kicking): +2 (+4)
RoF: 1
Ammo: 3

4. Leg Incinerators (Requires Heart Engine)
The leg version of the White Heat Palm. Using your inner power you can heat your feet and legs to a white-hot state, incinerating your enemies. Use the Unarmed Combat skill to attack. Using this function expends 1 Soul point, plus one more Soul for every extra point of damage bonus you wish to receive for your next attack. It takes a half-action (at which time Soul is consumed) to gather enough power before the attack action. After the attack is complete, the damage bonus resets to zero, requiring more Soul to be expended for further damage bonuses.

Damage: Soul points expended.

5. Shock Absorbers
This mechanica was developed to lessen the damage caused to kijin soldiers dropped down onto their enemies from aerial yoroi troop carrier ships. These shock absorbers reduce all falling damage by half.

6. Leg Storage Compartment
You have a small storage compartment in one of your legs in which food or a small weapon can be stored.

7. Lizard Bomb Leg
Just like a lizard can detach its tail in danger, you can detach one of your Mechanica Legs. The leg is loaded with gunpowder and an explosive device, and once dropped or thrown (then activated) it does 20 points of damage to all within a 10-meter radius.

8. Dragon Claws
Huge menacing claws are built into your feet. In addition to being a weapon, it can also be used as an aid in climbing, allowing you to stand upright on a horizontal surface such as a wall. Use the Unarmed Combat skill when attacking.

Damage: +5

9. Supreme Howler Mortar Cannon (Requires Heart Engine)
Additional Attribute Penalty: 1

This immense long-range yoroi mortar is installed on the bottom of the foot. Use the Marksman skill when attacking. It does 12 points of damage to anything in a 4-meter blast radius. This can be reduced with an Evasion roll.

Damage: 12
RoF:1
Range: 2 km
Ammo: 1

The ammo can be replenished every intermission.

Other Notable Mechanica

"Explosive Corpse" Skull Bomb

Replaced Part: Installed within skull

Attribute Penalty: 3

Using the latest in advanced surgical techniques, a hole is cut into the skull and a small gunpowder bomb is installed. The bomb can be set to detonate under certain predetermined conditions, as decided by the Player or GM. Upon detonation, the character's Dead Box becomes checked. The player can also choose to die instantly.

Weapon Interface

Replaced Part: Varies

Attribute Penalty: See Text

A mechanica weapon is connected directly to your nervous system, allowing you to manipulate it as easily as one of your own limbs. You must choose one already-installed mechanica weapon when Weapon Interface is installed. It provides you with the following damage bonuses (depending on the type) to the appropriate weapon.

Class	Damage Bonus	Attribute Penalty
Class Kou	+4	2
Class Otsu	+2	1

Weapon Attachment

Replaced Part: Varies

Attribute Penalty: -

This mechanica allows for any weapon from the Weapon List to be attached to a mechanica sensor, mechanica torso or mechanica legs. The Karma cost must be paid for that weapon, after which it can be grafted on to the torso, visor or leg.

Twin Dragon Arms

Replaced Part: Both Full Arms

Attribute Penalty: -4

Requires Mechanica Torso

This is a combination of heavy repeating gunpowder rifle and dragon blade, which both use an advanced style mechanica configuration and are attached to part of the character's arms. This mechanica does not fully replace both arms (you can still use other mechanica arms, and these attachments do not take up any arm mechanica slots), but the large ammunition chamber for the dragon repeater takes up one mechanica slot in your machine torso. The dragon blades use gunpowder in much the same way as soulgem blades do; they can expend up to 8 gunpowder rounds for up to +8 extra damage.

Weapon	Dmg	RoF	Range	Ammo
Dragon Blade	+3	8	—	100
Dragon Heavy Repeater	+3	8	20m	80

Homeopathic Bullet Skin

Replaced Part: Skin

Attribute Penalty: See Text

All of your skin is replaced with a special material imbedded with mechanica readers and gunpowder chambers. When the character is hit by any kind of weapon, the internal gunpowder chamber explodes outwards, canceling the force and shock of the incoming attack. However, some of the damage from the counter-explosion will affect the user.

When this mechanica is activated, all points of damage for a single attack, up to a certain amount (depending on the skin) is completely nullified. In return, all the Wounds of a certain level must be filled in.

Example: A character with Class Otsu Homeopathic Bullet Skin gets hit for 22 damage: The HBS allows that incoming damage to be reduced to 2. However, she must then fill in all of her Heavy Wound boxes as the skin's counter-explosion damages surrounding skin and tissue.

This is a one-time-use mechanica: It can only be repurchased with Karma during Intermissions.

Class	Damage Reduction	Wound Level	Attribute Penalty
Class Kou	30	Light	4
Class Otsu	20	Heavy	2
Class Hei	10	Critical	1

Mechanica Loadouts

Picking a set of mechanica can be difficult for players just starting to play the game. Here are a few collections of mechanica loadouts to help get you started quickly. Feel free to pick one or combine a few loadouts to create your kijin or mechanica-enhanced characters.

Young Soldier

Focus: Basic mechanica for combat

Class Hei Mechanica Arm, Vajra Claws

Attribute Cost: 1

Ghastly Veteran

Focus: Melee weapon mechanica

Class Otsu Mechanica Arm, Grudge Blade, Omega Snake Blades, Class Otsu Weapon Interface (Grudge Blade)

Attribute Cost: 3

Man-Gohki

Focus: Melee combat mastery

Class Hei Mechanica Sensors, Flash Burst, Class Otsu Mechanica Arms, Vajra Claws, White Heat Palm, Class Hei Mechanica Torso, Heart Engine, Class Hei Mechanica Legs, Roller Type Feet, Class Otsu Weapon Interface (Vajra Claws)

Attribute Cost: 8

Renegade Marksman

Focus: Light projectile attacks

Class Hei Mechanica Sensor, Eyes of Distant Death, Weapon Attachment (Repeater)

Attribute Cost: 1

Karma Cost: 3

Crimson Targeter

Focus: Heavy ranged weapons

Class Otsu Mechanica Sensor, Darksight, Eyes of Distant Death, Class Otsu Mechanica Arms, Five-Barrel Gatling, Class Otsu Weapon Interface (Gatling)

Attribute Cost: 5

Brutal Fist

Focus: Martial arts enhancement

Class Kou Mechanica Arms, Vajra Claws, Extendable Arm, Steel War Fan, Burning Scourge

Attribute Cost: 4

Cloak of Misery

Focus: Infiltration and deception

Class Kou Mechanica Torso, Heart Engine Flight Booster, Smokescreen, Type 3 Chameleon Flesh Dragon Scales, Torso Storage Compartment

Attribute Cost: 6

Asura Hunter

Focus: Monstrous kijin makeover

Class Otsu Mechanica Sensors, Floating Eye, Eyes of Distant Death, Class Hei Mechanica Torso, Glorious Death Bomb, Twin Dragon Arms, Class Kou Weapon Interface (Twin Dragon Arms)

Attribute Cost: 9

Silver Sage

Focus: Magical enhancements for monk, onmyoji and ninja characters

Class Hei Mechanica Arm, Kairen Fingers, Brain Enhancement, Renju Voice

Attribute Cost: 6



KONGOHKI



Kongohki are the products of Priesthood-backed technological innovation. While armour have been around for a long time, the kongohki is a recent development. Kongohki were originally created originally to be pilotless, more maneuverable armour. In the end, the kongohki and armour are crafted in much the same fashion and as such the rules for using them are largely the same. Subtle differences arise between meikyo and kimenkyo versions, so take care to learn those differences.

KARMA AND THE MEIKYO MIRROR

Like armour, kongohki built upon Priesthood technology also receive a "Meikyo Bonus". However, there is no "rider" in a kongohki: The users are themselves sealed inside a soul mirror. Unlike the armour, there is just one Karma pool, the Karma pool is not split between meikyo and rider. This means that their Karma can briefly go above 108 like any other character. And like any other character, if the kongohki's player does not reduce the Karma below 108 by the end of the next intermission, the kongohki becomes an Asura.

One can quickly see why kongohki are so feared. By the time they become a lost soul, they are nearly unstoppable.

Meikyo Bonus	
Karma	**Additional Dice**
0-20	+0
21-40	+1
41-60	+2
61-80	+3
81-100	+4
101-108	+5
109+	+6

Kimen Kongohki

Kimen kongohki are mass-produced, but they too rely on onmyojutsu magic and high technology to function, just like their meikyo counterparts. However, they operate on lesser kimen calculating devices instead of meikyo soul-capturing devices.

This means that kimen kongohki do not benefit from the Karma bonus that their meikyo counterparts receive. This fact accounts for the high difference in quality and operational functionality. Meikyo devices crafted by the Shinto Priesthood are always superior because their devices can more naturally channel the urges that reside in the human soul.

Kimen kongohki aren't as powerful as their meikyo counterparts, but they are easier to capture and erase when they go renegade. They also start with less Karma than their meikyo counterparts. They still contain a lost soul, but it is bound to a mass-produced mechanical mirror instead of a much rarer soul mirror.

Of course, the kimen models are much easier to come by than their fabulously expensive meikyo counterparts. They can also use the Overdrive ability, which makes them fearsome on the battlefield.

Kongohki Repair

Kongohki repair happens in a way that is very similar to how the skill first aid helps people recover from wounds. However, instead of finding a medic to roll Senses: First Aid on their body, the kongohki needs to find an onmyoji to perform a Knowledge: Onmyojutsu roll to repair the wounds taken.

Kongohki-Specific Rules

Kongohki Overdrive

All kongohki have an ability called Overdrive. Restraints are released and the kongohki's engine speeds up, increasing the speed and strength by incredible amounts. Over time, this ability takes a toll on the kongohki's body, but it is this temporary boost of blinding speed and force that turns the machine from a peerless soldier into the most terrifying force on the battlefield, a demonic killing machine.

Overdrive can be activated in one game session as many times as their Body plus Spirit attribute scores, and each Overdrive attempt lasts for one single action. If the kongohki's Body or Spirit score rises over the course of a session (by spending 10 Kiai to raise the attribute), the kongohki will get additional Overdrive attempts.

During an Overdrive, when performing physical actions with Body, Agility or Senses, every die that comes up as a success is rolled one more time. The second round of successes is added to the total of the first roll. However, dice that come up as successes a second time are not rerolled.

The Overdrive can be engaged instantly, no action is required.

Both meikyo and kimenkyo models can use the Overdrive ability.

KONGOHKI MEMORIES

All kongohki are cursed. The soul contained deep within that hard metal meikyo or kimenkyo soul mirror used to belong to a person who died under intense stress, pain, misery or anger. The soul was an Asura, a lost soul, and could not move on to the afterlife upon the death of their body. Through certain rituals, the soul was tied back into a soul mirror, its memories wiped clean, given a rudimentary personality, and bound to an indestructible steel frame.

To that end, all kongohki characters start the game with one Fate (though more can soon be taken): Suppressed Memories. Those memories were sealed away, but like all seals, cracks can appear at times.

Every time the player of the kongohki receives a number of Aiki chits greater than the kongohki's Empathy attribute score, a flashback scene is triggered. This is often a minor flash of insight, a look through the eyes of the person they used to be, a single buried memory. The GM decides what it is that the kongohki sees.

Every time the player takes another Aiki chit after that, another flashback is triggered.

The only way to stop this from happening is to convert Aiki chits to Kiai points (see the Karma rules for details), usually during an intermission phase.

Eventually, the character can get rid of (sublimate) this Fate, with the GM's permission. What does this mean? Perhaps the character recalls the memories of his past and comes to terms with what happened. Maybe the character is so horrified by what he was that he turns his back on his past, and leads a new life. Or maybe the kongohki gained such a strong new personality and new connections that he was successful at erasing those old memories for good.

Kongohki who become Asura, reaching 109 or more Karma, are overwhelmed by past memories and emotion. In most cases they revert to the personality of the person they were when they died; hurt, confused, and knowing only rage, they destroy every living thing near them.

KONGOHKI AND SPECIALIST SKILLS

Kongohki are robotic human beings, and by combining various archetypes the player can grant their kongohki various specialist skills. A kongohki can use most specialist skills without a problem (representing skills the person had before they died and had their soul trapped in a mirror). Some explanation is required for these three skills in particular, though:

Shinto: A kongohki with the Shinto skill rank is obviously going to be connected to the Priesthood, probably as an agent. Think of what purpose the Priesthood has to employ such a kongohki. If the player can come up with some interesting questions or ideas as to why, then it should be fine to allow her to play a kongohki with the Shinto skill and rank.

Resonance: Inside each kongohki lies the beating heart engine of an oni. Therefore, Dii (the oni powers based on the heart) can be used. Of course, this means that the spirit that inhabits the meikyo soul mirror which gives life to the kongohki belonged to an oni. If that sounds interesting, then let it happen. This will probably result in a tragic character, though…

Interface: A kongohki is a whitewashed soul trapped in a meikyo, a soul mirror. Therefore, it is possible for a kongohki to have the Interface skill and control other meikyo-based weapons or communicate over the Reflection Network.

The soul of such a kongohki was obviously a yoroi armour-rider or Shinto Priesthood agent of some kind who died with a great amount of Karma, most certainly having turned into an Asura.

It might be the case, however disturbing, that the same mirror that the dead armour-rider's soul was trapped in as an Asura, was simply lifted, whitewashed, and dumped into the body of a kongohki for further service. If this sounds like an interesting (albeit dark) story to engage in, then having a kongohki with the Interface ability can be allowed.

Please note that in all these cases, you should work with the Game Master. The GM's approval is required for the above combinations, but more than that a simple chat about the possible story ideas might get the GM excited to present interesting story elements in play. If you surprise your GM with a crazy-combination character, it might be hard for her to think clearly of entertaining ways to bring those elements into the game unless you sit down to talk about it in advance.

Puppeteers and Kongohki Servants

Shinto agents trained in the use of the interface helm have the ability to control specialized kimen kongohki servants from afar. Such agents are referred to as Puppeteers. By putting on the interface helm and connecting to their chosen servant, or "pet", they can control the body of the kongohki as if they actually inhabited their body. While the puppeteer possesses the kongohki body, they go into a trance. They cannot move their own bodies; they cannot take actions or even defend themselves, so most puppeteers try to hide themselves before they interface.

When creating a kongohki servant, follow the normal kongohki creation rules for kimen kongohki. Kongohki servants also follow the standard rules for Overdrive. However, kongohki servants are not affected by flashbacks or sealed memories like player-character kongohki. The Karma cost of the kongohki archetype they choose from is doubled, then added to the starting equipment cost of the player character. The PC requires an additional 10 points of Karma for equipment: The soul mirror and connection-less interface helm cost 10 points together.

Since this cost is often high, most PCs will choose to take an additional attribute penalty: every additional attribute penalty taken (in effect lowering the amount of attribute points the puppeteer can allocate to their attribute scores during character creation) reduces the Karma cost of owning a kongohki servant by 10 points, down to a minimum of 0.

Example: The default puppeteer archetype has an equipment cost of 90, and it is built on the default kimen kongohki archetype which has a Karma cost of 40: (40 x 2) + 10 = 90. The puppeteer template offsets the high Karma cost by reducing the character's attributes by 5 points, lowering the Karma cost by 50 points down to 40.

Puppeteers can try to hijack both meikyo and kimenkyo mirrors for a brief period of time, but they can only completely control kimen kongohki.

Kongohki Creation Rules

These are the rules for creating new kongohki. For beginning players, we highly recommend simply using the kongohki loadout for the archetype you choose.

However, these rules will permit you to go further, either customizing your choice or creating one from scratch.

If you are familiar with the armour creation rules, the rules for kongohki are nearly exactly the same.

ATTRIBUTES FOR KONGOHKI

All kongohki have the following three attributes, which represent the physical frame of their bodies:

BODY: This represents the pure physical power and stability of the frame. Just like human characters, body also represents the Vitality and Wound levels for a kongohki.

AGILITY: Agility represents the pure speed and reflexes that the frame is capable of. In combat, a kongohki can move 20 times its Agility score in meters every round. Outside of combat, a kongohki can move up to 10 times its Agility score in kilometers each hour.

SENSES: Senses are a representation of the strength of the sensors and sense-amplification equipment that the frame contains. Kongohki can effectively see up to a range of 100 times its Senses score in meters. They also have an innate ability called Lifepulse, which is a kind of sonar that detects all warm living things human-sized and larger within its normal field of vision. It quickly allows the unit to detect the approximate size and number of people moving nearby (including kugutsu and shikigami spirits). The range of the Lifepulse is equal to a radius of Senses times 10 meters.

Kongohki have a soul, albeit one shackled to a mirror, so while they have the above three attributes, they have the other attributes as well. However, for the process of kongohki creation, we will put aside attributes like Spirit and Empathy, and simply focus on their frame and physical properties.

CHOOSE A FRAME

The first step in the creation of a kongohki is choosing a frame. There are two basic frame types for kongohki. Each frame has a point total called an attribute pool. This attribute pool is a pool of points which you can later spread amongst the unit's three physical attributes: Body, Agility and Senses. For now, just write the pool point total down, because choices made later on during the creation of the armour can raise or lower this pool.

Kongohki, like armour, are given an attribute pool. However, there are no Station requirements for being a kongohki (yet most kongohki have some Station in order to carry weapons).

Since kongohki are characters, they have their initial attribute totals reduced by the attribute pool. In the case of normal kongohki (with a base attribute pool of 18), this means that the character will only have 22 points to spread amongst their other four attributes. However, based on choices made during kongohki creation, the kongohki can gain more attribute points (by choosing 2 arms, 2 legs) or lose attribute points (by equipping mechanica or customized weapons like the ZAKT-8 sword).

Aside from the meikyo bonus, there is no functional difference between normal and kimen kongohki. They both start with the Overdrive ability.

BASIC KONGOHKI

Attribute Pool: 18 points

This is the basic kongohki model, which comes in a variety of shapes and sizes.

HEAVY ASSAULT UNIT KONGOHKI

Attribute Pool: 23 points

The heavy assault units are kongohki which contain multiple soul mirrors, each bound with their own Asura soul. The benefit is their expertise and power. For each soul mirror contained in the kongohki, they can take one action per round in combat. The downside is that they tend to accumulate Karma rather quickly and can be hard to stop once they rampage.

A heavy assault unit can be made up of both meikyo and kimenkyo soul mirrors, but there must be at least one meikyo; there are no all-kimen heavy assault units because the kimen technology will not support it.

Decide Appearance

The second step in creating a kongohki is choosing its appearance. Their frames come in a variety of shapes and forms, and things like the number of arms, legs, or the shape of their head can be customized. The attribute pool will be adjusted depending on the configuration chosen.

After that, the number of arms and legs will decide the number of equipment slots that the kongohki starts with. Each piece of specialized kongohki equipment occupies a number of slots.

The appearance tables and kongohki gear appear later in this section.

Calculate Starting Karma

After crafting the kongohki and adding equipment, that equipment must be paid for. Additional weapons, meikyo mirrors and mechanica can be purchased as well. All of these items have a cost in Karma which must be paid during character creation.

Each kongohki has one mirror (meikyo or kimenkyo) and heart engine at no additional cost, but more can be bought at the prices listed.

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT COST	
Equipment	**Cost (in Karma)**
Meikyo mirror	25
Kimenkyo mirror	10
Heart engine	25
Kongohki equipment	5
Mechanica	5*
Basic Weapon	5
Customized Weapon	varies
5 Additional soulgems	1
Shikidan ammo	3
* Mechanica which require a combat scanner or mechanica arm/leg cost 10 Karma.	

MECHANICA

Kongohki can have mechanica devices added to their frames. In most cases, one equipment slot is required for each additional mechanica added.

In cases where a mechanica combat scanner, arm or leg is required, additional work is required to graft the necessary interface to the native kongohki frame, doubling the Karma cost of that equipment. For example, a cyclone Gatling repeater mechanica does not require a mechanica arm because it is an arm replacement, so it can be equipped for 5 Karma and a penalty of 2 attribute points. Ikari blossom drills and vajra claws require a mechanica arm, so each of those mechanica will cost 10 Karma.

In the above cases, the kongohki doesn't actually receive a new mechanica limb, but rather simply the ability to use limb-specific mechanica.

Since kongohki are approximately the same size as humans, mechanica which have an attribute penalty are calculated normally. A GM may allow an alternative; multiply

the attribute penalty total by 10 and add that amount to the character's starting Karma.

WEAPONS

Kongohki use normal-sized human weapons. However, they can use customized or original weapons as per the weapon creation rules in the Weapon List.

CALCULATE STARTING KARMA

At this point, the kongohki is almost ready for play. Calculate the Karma total. This number cannot exceed 108. If it does, return to the creation process and adjust equipment until the total cost is less than or equal to 108.

Remember that in play, all meikyo-based frames receive a die bonus to all rolls involving physical attributes in accordance with the meikyo bonus table.

FINISHING FRAME CREATION: DISTRIBUTE ATTRIBUTE POOL

Once appearance and all additional equipment have been decided, it's time to split up the attribute pool across the three physical attributes: Body, Agility and Senses. Each attribute must start with at least three points in it. After appearance adjustments have been added, attributes can be lower than three. If an attribute drops to 0, the kongohki cannot function.

CALCULATE VITALITY AND WOUNDS

Kongohki have a Vitality score and Wound tracks, although Vitality is calculated slightly differently than normal human characters. Vitality is equal to two times the kongohki's Body score. The Wound track is calculated in exactly the same way as it is for humans.

Kongohki calculate Soul in the same manner as human characters.

Kongohki characters do not adjust Vitality or the Health track as their Karma adjustment increases.

ADDING ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT IN-GAME

Once the game has started, kongohki equipment can be added or exchanged.

When adding new equipment, calculate the amount of Karma required. The player must spend an amount of Kiai equal to that amount to take the new part, after which that Kiai becomes Karma.

If exchanging old equipment, calculate the difference in equipment Karma costs. If the new equipment costs additional Karma, then that difference must be spent with Kiai.

Kimen kongohki can go through an entire frame adjustment given the proper preparation and time; mass-produced armour and kongohki are able to interchange their parts far more easily than their meikyo counterparts, so they can change the number of arms and legs during the Intermission phase if they have access to a factory. Raise or lower attributes for the new appearance as needed. If an attribute drops to zero, the frame can no longer function.

These changes generally only happen during an Intermission phase.

In the case of mechanica, new mechanica with an attribute cost is purchased in the same way as kijin in a game session; multiply the attribute cost by 10 and pay that cost in Kiai (which immediately becomes Karma). Mechanica without a listed attribute cost require 10 Kiai for implantation.

Kongohki Gear

Each piece of equipment comes in three different sets: head, upper torso/arms, and lower torso/legs. The number of slots available for equipment depends on the number of slots available for the head, torso and legs chosen. Next to each piece of equipment in parentheses is listed the number of open slots that equipment requires.

Head Type

There are two types of heads for these steel creatures: a human-looking face or a skull. Neither has a mechanical effect, but they are the two standard types of head for humanoid-form kongohki.

HUMANOID

The frame is built with a face that it unmistakably human-like. It can be a scary visage or a peaceful expression, or anything in between. This is the most common head type for kongohki.

SKULL

For a scarier effect on the battlefield, some armour crafters have been experimenting with skull designs.

BEAST

Non-humanoid shaped kongohki are rare, but when they exist they are usually given a beast-like head which matches their frame.

Head Equipment

All kongohki heads have two open equipment slots. The following is a list of equipment native to kongohki frames.

BATTLEFIELD MASTERY (1)

This vision extends the range of sight to Senses times 200 in meters. It also gives a graphical display of visible allies, enemies, formations, and ratios of success for various battle engagements. This grants a bonus of 2 dice for all Strategy or Art of Rule rolls.

DARK VISION (1)

Night looks like day with this vision enhancement. The user receives a bonus of 2 dice to all Senses checks at night or in a dark environment.

EYES OF DISTANT DEATH (1)

This vision increases the steadiness of zoomed vision while projecting a HUD and probability tables for distance attacks. All ranged attacks based on the Marksman skill are granted +2 dice.

LIFEPULSE EXTEND (1)

This increases the range of the Lifepulse ability to Senses times 100 meters.

MOTION DETECTOR (1)

This is a limited-range passive detection unit which tracks all movement within a 10 meter radius. It makes the kongohki harder to target for sneak attacks from behind, granting the pilot a bonus of 3 dice to use against sneak attack maneuvers.

SHA SENSORS (1)

This allows kongohki with the Onmyojutsu skill to see the very fabric of the gossamer-like sha power around it. Using this ability, the pilot or kongohki makes a Senses: Onmyojutsu roll against 1/10 of the creation point cost of a target shiki. If successful, the user can determine all of the shiki's abilities and power levels of those abilities.

MECHANICA (1)

Mechanica based on the head region can be added to the kongohki head. Each mechanica requires one equipment slot.

UPPER TORSO AND ARMS

Kongohki souls have an easier time integrating with mechanical bodies with one set of arms, but for function or aesthetic reasons some are given more.

No matter how many sets of arms a kongohki has, they all have an upper torso. An upper torso has 4 equipment slots available and each pair of arms grants 2 additional equipment slots.

UPPER TORSO AND ARM ADJUSTMENTS

Arms	Body	Agility	Senses	Total Equip. Slots
2	+1	+1	0	6
4	-1	+2	-1	8
6 or more	-2	+4	-3	4+ number of arms

BRILLIANT FLOWER OF DESTRUCTION (0)

This explosive device is installed in kongohki when there are fears of the soul mirror or kongohki falling into enemy hands when it is destroyed, or to give the kongohki a suicide attack option. A charge is rigged inside of the heart engine, which gives additional energy to the bomb. The kongohki erupts in a massive explosion, completely obliterating it and the soul mirror within it. Every person within a 15 meter radius takes 30 points of explosive damage. The kongohki is completely destroyed.

HEAVEN'S FIRE (2)

These are special gunpowder rocket boosters which allow the kongohki to leap up to 20 meters at once. The boosters may be fired up to 3 times per scene. If the unit is also equipped with thruster wings or rotor blades, Heaven's Fire may be used to double its speed for a round instead.

ROTOR BLADES (2)

This is a detachable and extendable set of propellers that allow limited flight. The kongohki can travel in the air at a speed of Agility times 20 kilometers per hour. In combat, the unit can travel Agility times 300 meters per round. The propeller blades allow the kongohki to hover and stop in midair as well.

THRUSTER WING (2)

This set of turbines and wings allows the frame to fly at high speeds. The kongohki can fly at a speed of Agility times 30 kilometers per hour. In combat, the unit can travel at a speed equal to the frame's Agility times 500 meters per round.

MECHANICA (1)

Mechanica based on the arm and torso region can be added to the kongohki body. Each mechanica requires one equipment slot.

ARM AND UPPER TORSO WEAPONS

There are specialized weapons for kongohki. See the weapons section for details and equipment slot costs.

LOWER TORSO AND LEGS

Like arms, most kongohki are crafted with two legs in order to ease the transition of the soul into a metal frame. More or fewer legs can be equipped for various effects.

NO LEGS

Lower Torso: 2 Slots, Legs: 0 Slots

This could represent a snake-body, or a chariot, wheeled, or tank-style lower body. A kongohki possessing no legs has a better grounded body, but it is less maneuverable. This is extremely rare for kongohki.

TWO LEGS

Lower Torso: 2 Slots, Legs: 2 Slots

This is the most common kongohki style. Kongohki easily adapt to these frames.

FOUR LEGS

Lower Torso: 4 Slots, Legs: 4 Slots

While the top half of the body might look human, the bottom half has four legs like a horse or other quadruped. The movement speed of the kongohki is doubled.

SIX OR MORE LEGS

Lower Torso: 2 Slots, Legs: Number of Legs

This option allows 6-legged or 8-legged kongohki with an appearance of a centipede or other insect. Each leg adds an additional leg equipment slot.

LOWER TORSO AND LEG ADJUSTMENTS

Legs	Body	Agility	Senses
0	+1	-1	0
2	+1	+1	+1
4	+2	+1	0
6+	+1	+2	-1

There is a limited amount of special equipment for kongohki legs. Unlike the head and torso based equipment, the leg-based special equipment completely replaces the leg units and leaves no free leg slots. They also do not cost any Karma: The normal 5 Karma for additional equipment is dropped, as they are complete replacements of normal legs.

GALE SPEED ROLLERS

These are extendable wheels that are attached to the backs of the legs. The gale speed rollers triple movement speeds on the ground when deployed (deployment is instantaneous and requires no actions in combat). They also grant Evasion skill rolls 2 bonus dice. These may be equipped on only the 2-legged and 4-legged units, and the rollers only work on flat surfaces like fields, plains and roads.

HEAVEN ROLLER LEGS

Instead of legs, the unit has huge wheels or treads that roll over any surface. Movement is multiplied by 4 and Evasion skill rolls get a +1 die bonus. Heaven roller legs can be used with any number of legs.

HOVER REPLACEMENT

Usable only on units with 4 or more legs, this replacement converts the legs into hover-jets. The unit can travel over land or water. Movement speed is doubled, and Evasion skill rolls are each granted 1 bonus die.

LEGS OF THE WATER DRAGON

This modification converts the legs into fins. It allows the kongohki to swim underwater. This conversion is usable on 0 and 2-leg models, and grants 2 bonus dice to all physical action rolls made underwater.

MECHANICA (1)

Mechanica based on the lower torso and legs can be added to the kongohki body. Each mechanica requires one equipment slot.

LEG AND LOWER TORSO WEAPONS

There are specialized weapons for kongohki. See the weapons section for details and equipment slot costs.

KONGOHKI DAMAGE

Type	Damage
Unarmed kongohki	+1
Rolling/Crushing*	+Body Attribute *2

*Rolling/Crushing attacks are only for kongohki with no legs. Since they usually are not as large as armour, their damage rating for rolling over an enemy is reduced.

Unarmed attacks are made with the Body: Unarmed Combat skill. Armed attacks are made with a melee weapon and the Agility: Melee Weapons skill.

KONGOHKI CREATION EXAMPLE

Oharu is an agent of the Shinto Priesthood. She is what is known as a Puppeteer, a specialized meikyo-user who controls armour and kongohki from afar. Like most puppeteers, she has a "pet" kongohki which she controls in battle, but which otherwise functions on its own. Ami, Oharu's player, decides to build a new kongohki for her pet.

She starts out with a kongohki frame and picks a normal kongohki. This grants 18 points to the attribute pool. She decides she wants to make a humanoid-looking kongohki to serve as her bodyguard. She chooses a frame with two arms and two legs. This will grant a bonus of +2 to Body, +2 to Agility and +1 to Senses.

The kongohki has two head slots. However, Ami decides to pick Dark Vision for the head slot, at a cost of 5 Karma. There are 6 open upper body/arm slots to work with. She decides to take vajra claws on the arms for an additional 5 Karma. She decides to leave the kongohki's legs alone as well. She is basically creating a simple guardian type. She gives it a Heavy Repeater for a weapon at an additional 5 Karma.

This part gets a little difficult for the puppeteer: The puppeteer needs to pick up a kimen kongohki archetype, and take on that amount of additional Karma. Ami references the basic kimen kongohki archetype from the book as-is, which has a default Karma cost of 40, and an equipment cost (here, the kongohki abilities, equipment and weapons) of 20. Since she is using less equipment for this modified kongohki, the equipment cost is only 15, which lowers that kongohki template's Karma cost total from 40 to 35.

10 additional points have to be added to the equipment total, which represents the combined cost of the specialized puppeteer connection-less interface helm and meikyo soul mirror. Multiplying the kongohki's Karma cost of 35 by 2 and adding the 10 additional points, that makes 80 total points's worth of equipment.

The puppeteer then finally adds the cost of the kongohki template's Karma cost and gear to her own puppeteer template's equipment cost (as the kongohki is a piece of equipment). The cost is less, down from 90 points (the default equipment cost of the puppeteer archetype) to 80 points of equipment cost. The puppeteer archetype Karma cost is set at 50. Ami can either lower the Karma cost of the puppeteer archetype template from the default of 50 down to 40, or she can lower the attribute cost from 5 points to 4. She decides on the latter.

The final puppeteer archetype cost is 50 Karma and 4 Attribute points, the attribute points are taken from the puppeteer herself. After adjusting the attribute pool, the kimen kongohki has a final Body score of 8, an Agility of 8 and a Senses of 7.

KONGOHKI WEAPONS

Kongohki can use additional weapons from the general weapon list section of the rules. The weapons in this chart are available only for kongohki. Each weapon costs 5 additional Karma.

Weapon	Loc	Slot	Dmg	RoF	Rng	Ammo
Explosive Spiker	Arm/Leg	1	+3 (5)	1	-	3
Twin Blades	Arm/Leg	1	+2	2	-	4
Vajra Claws	Arm	0	+1	2	-	4
Vajra Claws	Leg	0	+2	2	-	4
White Heat Palm	Arm	0	+X		-	-
White Heat Leg	Leg	0	+1+X		-	-
Shikidan Howler Cannon	UT	1	6	1	2km	1
Raiden Mortar	UT	1	+7	1	4km	1
Location: UT=Upper Torso; LT=Lower Torso						

Unarmed and Melee Weapon Notes

Explosive Spiker: This fires a spear-like projectile with incredible force, extending from the arm or leg during strikes or kicks for devastating damage. It contains a number of gunpowder charges; the damage in parentheses indicates the adjusted damage when one of the gunpowder charges is expended. The explosive spiker is used with the Unarmed Combat skill.

Twin Blades: Single blades which extend from the frame's forearm. They can be used with Unarmed Combat or Melee Combat skills. They are called "twin" because both sides of the blade are sharpened.

Vajra Claw: Ultra-sharp steel claws that are attached to (or spring from) the fingertips. They are used with the Unarmed Combat skill.

White Heat Palm/Leg: A soulgem-implanted gauntlet which glows white-hot when activated. Expending points of Soul causes the soulgems to heat the hand or leg, causing additional damage for each single attack the more Soul ("X", where "X" is "as much Soul as you wish to spend") is consumed. The kongohki version, being more condensed, is generally more effective than the armour version.

Ranged Weapon Notes

Shikidan Howler Cannon: The Shikidan cannon fires pinpoint-targeted guided shells with unerring accuracy at an incredible range. Simply pick the target, and the target will take the exact amount of damage (this damage can be reduced by making an Agility: Evasion roll. Each success lowers the damage taken by one). It fires expensive shikidan shells. Each shell contains a shiki spirit which guides the projectile to its target. The shiki spirit yells out an unnerving scream as it sends the bullet to its intended target.

Raiden Mortar: This is a long range, high-power version of the Roaring Dragon Mortar for armour. It takes a long time to prepare the weapon for firing, and thus it can only be used once per scene. Its shells explode in a fireball when they hit their targets. Everyone within a 4 meter radius must make an evasion roll or take damage.

Other Weapons

See the Weapon List for more weapon possibilities for kongohki.





NINJUTSU RULES

CHOOSING A SCHOOL

Not all ninjas across the huge land of Tenra are gifted with the same abilities. There are numerous clans, both clans that are known and ones that are still shrouded in shadow. Each clan teaches its members one (or in rare cases, more than one) school of ninjutsu. A ninja character who knows ninjutsu doesn't necessarily belong to a particular ninja clan, but she has somehow learned a single school of ninjutsu.

Each instance of the Ninjutsu skill represents the knowledge of one particular school's techniques. As the character's skill or rank in Ninjutsu rises, the higher level techniques of that school will become available to her. It is rare that a ninja will learn a second school of ninjutsu, but it is not unheard of. In those cases, the ninja must take the Ninjutsu skill again from scratch, and over time raise that skill to learn the techniques available to members of that school.

Example: A ninja who has a skill rank of Ninjutsu of 4 in the School of the Shore style of ninjutsu ends up training under a master-in-hiding of the True School of Shadow. The character will need to label her current Ninjutsu skill as the one which represents the School of the Shore to separate it from the new skill. Then, when she spends the Kiai to take this new skill at its beginning rank, she adds

a line to her character sheet, writes "Ninjutsu: True School of Shadow", and gives it a rank of 2. She now has two Ninjutsu skills, each skill representing the techniques that are available to her from one particular school.

Each school has a number of techniques which are aligned in a set unique to that particular style. Each school also has a number of skills which are associated with that school, known as paths.

USING THE NINJA ARTS

When using ninjutsu, spend the required amount of Soul. Next, make a roll using Agility: Ninjutsu, attempting to get equal to or more than the art's Difficulty rating. If you get an equal or higher number of successes, then the art succeeds. If you do not succeed, the Soul points are still expended, but you can try again next round (or spend another Kiai to try again immediately).

In most cases, the art will last for a number of rounds equal to the ninja's Spirit.

There are a number of limitations to ninja techniques:

- Any art which you can cast on yourself, you cannot cast it on yourself multiple times (in order to gain extra effect or the like). Only one art with lasting effects on yourself can be active at once. If a new one is activated, it replaces the old one.
- Arts cannot be stopped or turned off until they expire naturally.
- A ninja art you can perform on yourself cannot be put on others.
- You cannot make use of ninjutsu abilities while riding in a yoroi armour.

Extra Successes

In some cases, especially with the lesser arts, the ninja practitioner will get far more successes than was needed to use a particular ninja technique. In this case, those extra successes over the Difficulty cost of the technique can be "banked" to be used as bonus dice for actions related to that art.

For example:

- *A ninja uses Possessed by the Inner Wolf and gets 5 extra successes. Those five dice could be rolled in a single future attack or split into 2 and 3 dice to defend against two enemy attacks.*
- *A ninja using Exploding Thunder Ball gets 5 extra successes, and gives them to a samurai friend to use on her next attack roll, happening the same round as the explosion. That friend attacks an enemy who was significantly distracted by the fire, so he doesn't notice that the samurai has just stepped in behind him…*
- *A ninja using the Ninja Duplication Technique creates 3 duplicates and gets 3 extra successes. The duplicates surround an enemy to attack. The player could give three dice to one of the duplicates to attack, or perhaps to her rifleman friend who has been hiding in the bushes in ambush, waiting for an opening such as this to attack!*
- *If the technique happens instantly and does not last (explosions, etc), then the bonus dice have to be used or given that round. If they are given, then the recipient must use them that round as well.*
- *If there is confusion about what is applicable, talk to the GM about it.*

Once the effect of the ninjutsu art has expired, any of those banked bonus dice will expire as well.

The Dark Arts

The dark arts are also known as the shinobi Seals of Power, a kind of soulgem surgery which implants soulgems inside the ninja's body. It is a technique that was created to assist greater shinobi in performing their ninjutsu abilities at a lesser Soul cost. For every point of dark arts the shinobi has, it costs one less Soul point to perform that ninjutsu. However, the minimum Soul cost for any of the arts will always be1. One doesn't require the shinobi dark arts surgery to perform ninjutsu. However, it is far less Soul for shinobi to use those arts than regular ninjas.

When a shinobi character is created, she can choose the strength of her dark arts. Each point of dark arts costs 5 Karma during the character creation phase. This means that a dark arts strength of 2 costs 10 Karma and a rating of 5 costs 25 Karma. The strength of the dark arts is equal to the number of Soul points that are reduced when a ninjutsu technique is used, down to a minimum of 1 Soul per technique.

A single character cannot have both the shinobi dark arts surgery and the samuraization surgery.

The Ninja Paths

Paths are a special kind of training provided by ninjutsu. Each school of ninjutsu has two paths which allow the user to use their Ninjutsu skill rating instead of the listed skill.

Example: A ninja of the School of Dream is trained from birth extensively in the arts of fighting (path of darkness) and seduction (path of the kunoichi). Therefore, a ninja who has a rank of 4 in Ninjutsu for the School of Dream style can use a skill rating of 4 for Melee Weapons and Pillow Arts at no cost.

The Paths and Their Related Skills

Path of the Flying Willow: Movement

Path of Broken Steel: Unarmed Combat

Path of the Split Arrow: Marksman

Path of Darkness: Melee Weapons

Path of Denial: Evasion

Path of the Transcriber: Forgery

Path of the Kunoichi: Pillow Arts

Path of the Cherry Blossom: Criminal Arts

Path of the Bird of Prey: Pursuit

Path of the Cunning Sparrow: Stealth

Path of the Falling Leaf: Notice

Path of the Contemplated Death: Willpower

Special Paths

Path of Broken Earth

Each round, you can move at twice your speed. Every first attack upon a new enemy (who you have not attacked before in this combat scene) grants 2 additional dice during that first attack. If you encounter the same enemy again in a future combat scene, you will get 2 additional dice for your first attack against them in that combat.

Path of the Smoke Bomb

You can equip smoke bombs. If you use a smoke bomb, you can escape from any scene in a puff of smoke.

Ninjutsu List

The following ninja arts are listed in the following manner:

Ninjutsu Name—Japanese Name

Equipment used, Soul cost, Difficulty to use (in successes)

The partner technique to this one, if it has a partner. Many powers have paired techniques, a "Lesser" and "Greater" form.

The equipment refers to ninja equipment required to perform that maneuver. In most cases the ninja does not have to worry about equipment (unless they purposefully discard it, have it forcibly removed, or the player decides that she "ran out"). However, even if lost, all ninja equipment is replenished during every intermission phase.

Soul cost is mitigated by dark arts. Difficulty must be met or exceeded using an Agility: Ninjutsu roll. Unless stated otherwise, the effects will last for a number of rounds equal to the ninja's Spirit.

Possessed by the Inner Wolf—Hyouku no-Jutsu
Medicine, Soul 5, Difficulty 2

Lesser Art of Possessed by the Inner Demon

Using a pill which is a concoction of plant extracts, rare dangerous herbs, and a few quick words of magic, you create a special medicine that can grant the user (usually the caster) a temporary boost of 2 dice to Body, Agility and Senses. This medicine combination cannot be saved for later. It must be used immediately.

Possessed by the Inner Demon—Hyouki-no-Jutsu
Medicine, Soul 8, Difficulty 3

Greater Art of Possessed by the Inner Wolf

A more vicious, dangerous form of its partner medicine, it creates a highly addictive medicine which can grant the user a temporary boost of 4 dice to Body, Agility and Senses.

Iron Fist—Tekken-no-Jutsu
Ointment, Soul 4, Difficulty 1

Lesser Art of Wind of Menace

This technique involves applying a salve to one's arms, then quickly tracing glyphs down those arms. This increases reflexes and strength in those limbs by an incredible amount. This art grants a damage bonus of +3 to damage on attacks using melee weapons, unarmed combat, or ranged weapons which rely on the user's strength, such as shuriken or bows.

Wind of Menace—Ibuki-no-Jutsu
Ointment, Soul 6, Difficulty 3

Greater Art of Iron Fist

This technique is the same as Iron Fist, but it provides a +5 damage modifier instead.

Ball of Thunder—Raihou-no-Jutsu
Medicine, Soul 3, Difficulty 1

Lesser Art of Exploding Thunder Ball

After pouring special herbs and powders into the palm of one's hand, sealing it into a round shape, and quickly putting a magical curse on it, this object is thrown towards an enemy. It explodes in a small fireball with a radius of 2 meters, causing 3 points of explosive damage to everyone in that range. The effect quickly wears off in a flash, and only highly flammable objects (such as oil) will catch on fire. Explosive damage can be avoided with Evasion.

Exploding Thunder Ball—Bakuraihou no-Jutsu
Medicine, Soul 5, Difficulty 2

Greater Art of Ball of Thunder

This hellish explosion has a diameter of 4 meters and causes 8 points of explosive damage. It also shakes buildings and sets fire to everything. Furthermore, everyone in the blast radius takes 3 points of ongoing fire damage. Explosive damage can be avoided with Evasion. Fire damage can be reduced with a successful Willpower roll. The remaining damage carries over to

the next round, where it continues to do damage until the Willpower roll equals to or exceeds the remaining damage.

Shadowflight—Hiei-no-Jutsu
Cloak, Soul 5, Difficulty 2

Lesser Art of Blackhawk's Shadow

This technique explains how some ninja clans are able to pass messages from one messenger to another so quickly. To use this technique, the ninja wraps her cloak or coat around herself while reciting a mantra, then explodes into motion. This art will allow the ninja to fly, glide, or make a successive series of jumps up to 84km/h. The ninja cannot carry more than 10kg or the speed is reduced by half. This technique lasts a number of rounds (or minutes, if not in combat) up to the ninja's Spirit.

Blackhawk's Shadow—Hiten-Tobikage-no-Jutsu
Cloak, Soul 10, Difficulty 4

Greater Art of Shadowflight

This art is the same as Shadowflight, but it allows the ninja to travel at speeds up to 132km/h while carrying an extra 40kg (or carry another human). This effect lasts for a number of rounds (or minutes, if not in combat) up to the ninja's Spirit times 3.

Shadow Form—Ongyou-no-Jutsu
Liquid medicine, Soul 5, Difficulty 2

Lesser Art of Four-fold Shadow Form

After drinking a special potion and reciting a secret chant, the ninja carefully concentrates on the image of another person. After this spell is enacted, the ninja's face and body will take on that appearance. This effect lasts for a number of rounds (or minutes, outside of combat) equal to the ninja's Spirit.

Four-fold Shadow Form—Shii-Ongyou-no-Jutsu
Liquid Medicine, Soul 6, Difficulty 3

Greater Art of Shadow Form

This is the greater version of Shadow Form. It lasts for an entire scene. This technique can be maintained by making the Difficulty roll and expending the Soul cost at the beginning of each scene after the initial use.

Ninja Duplication Technique—Kawarimi-no-Jutsu
Paper Doll, Soul 2, Difficulty 1

Lesser version of Shadowless Replication Technique

The ninja performs a quick chant, throws the paper doll to the ground, and draws a glyph in the air with her "cutting fingers" (index and middle together), reciting the kuji-kiri. There's a small sound as the paper forms into the very likeness of the ninja caster. These duplicates look like and move like the ninja, but they cannot speak.

Each duplicate has all attributes at a score of 1, all skills at a rank of 1, 1 point of Vitality, and no Wound track. If the duplicates are injured or destroyed, they simply disappear (either completely, or leaving the paper doll behind, depending on the ninja's preference).

This technique lasts for a number of rounds equal to the caster's Spirit times 2 (or that number of minutes outside of combat). The duplicates can only have the form of the ninja in her current garb; They cannot be made to look differently. Furthermore, they do not share their senses with the ninja.

A ninja can use this ability to create more than one duplicate at a time, each duplicate costing the usual 2 Soul. Once you decide how many duplicates to create, apply the dark arts reduction to that number. For

example, a shinobi with a dark arts rating of 4 wanting to create 5 lesser duplicates would pay 6 Soul. Five lesser duplicates cost 10 Soul combined, which is reduced by 4 (down to 6) due to the ninja's dark arts rating. The ninja can create a number of duplicates at the same time equal to her Senses score. The summoning Difficulty does not increase.

A single duplicate is effective in distracting an opponent outside of combat. Inside or outside of combat, each duplicate created grants an extra bonus die each round which the ninja can use in a roll against an enemy, representing the confusion that the duplicates can help sow. These round-generated extra bonus dice cannot be "banked" for future rounds, and must be spent in that round.

Shadowless Replication Technique—Muei-Bunshin-no-Jutsu
Paper Doll, Soul 7, Difficulty 3

Greater version of Ninja Duplication Technique

This technique is similar to the Ninja Duplication Technique. However, each duplicate created with the greater art has Body, Agility and Senses attributes with a rating of 5, skills at a rating of 2, and 5 points of Vitality each, but no wound track. The duplicates have the skill rating of 2 in the skills which the casting ninja has at 2 or higher. The duplicates do not have, and cannot use, Knowledge, Spirit, Empathy, or Station attributes.

These greater duplicates share a link with the ninja: If the duplicate is destroyed, the ninja takes 4 points of damage. The duplicates can also share their senses with their ninja caster, relaying sights and sounds back to the ninja's senses. The ninja can control them, giving them orders, having them carry back items, etc. The ninja can also speak through them remotely.

Classic Ninja Duplication Technique Tricks

A technique often used in ninja movies and anime is that when someone strikes a ninja, they think they hit the ninja, but in a puff of smoke the ninja disappears, revealing that the attacker simply hit a log with a cloak over it and a paper doll nailed to it. The ninja leaps out of the darkness behind the attacker to strike…

There's many ways to recreate that technique in the Tenra Bansho game system. The easiest way is simply to describe it as the result of an enemy's attack roll where you (the ninja) beat the attacker. Instead of describing it as, "I block his blade and strike back!", you could say, "He fell for the oldest trick in the ninja book. The cloak he strikes at falls to the ground, and I slash at him from the trees behind him". That's pretty simple.

Alternatively, a ninja could summon a single duplicate at the beginning of a battle, and cast the technique, but don't actually command it. The ninja rolls her ninjutsu score and tries to get a lot of extra successes, which she banks for that combat. On her first attack, she rolls all those extra dice to attack or counter-attack, and if she succeeds she could narrate the attack along the lines of the explanation above.

If multiple duplicates are distracting an enemy and the enemy is attempting to discern which duplicate is the real ninja, they might try to determine which ninjas are shiki, and not real humans by rolling their Empathy: Notice or Spirit: Notice vs the ninja's Agility: Ninjutsu or Spirit: Ninjutsu (whichever is higher). However, whether the real ninja is spotted or not, if the enemy wants to discern again, she will have to make another roll, as most duplicates will be acting like the ninja: Rolling, tumbling, leaping, and moving in patterns to distract and confuse the enemy.

Just like the lesser version of this technique, the ninja can create multiple duplicates, using the same rules (each duplicate costing 7 Soul). Therefore, a ninja with a dark arts rating of 4 who wants to create 3 greater duplicates must spend 17 total Soul points. The summoning Difficulty does not increase.

The duplicates remain active for a number of rounds equal to the ninja's Spirit times 2 (or that number of minutes outside of combat). The ninja can create a number of simultaneous duplicates up to her Senses score.

Aside from being more reliable than the lesser duplicates, when used together in combat, each summoned greater duplicate grants 2 dice to the ninja caster each round, which the ninja can use to her advantage any way she wishes. These extra dice cannot be banked for later. They must be spent each round.

Smoke and Mist—Enmu-no-Jutsu
Nothing, Soul 6, Difficulty 3

Lesser version of Phantom Mist Delusion

Using a chant and a few quick gestures, the target is swept away in an illusory mist. The ninja describes the nature of the illusion which assaults the target's senses. Every round that this mist is in place, the target needs to make a Spirit: Willpower roll vs a Difficulty of 2 to break the effects of this technique. It can be attempted every round. This technique does not work on shikigami, activated samurai or kugutsu. If the target is affected by the art this round, they can only defend themselves with the Evasion skill.

This art can be cast on multiple opponents at the same time. The Difficulty does not increase, but you must add up the Soul cost times the number of targets before subtracting your dark arts modifier. A shinobi with a dark arts rating of 4 attempting to cast this art on three targets at once must spend 14 Soul. The effects last for a number of rounds equal to the ninja's Spirit attribute.

If the ninja gained bonus successes when using this art, she can trade in each success to raise the Willpower roll's Difficulty by 1 for each die spent, for one round. For example: A ninja who rolled 6 successes when using this art (and gaining 3 bankable bonus dice) could, instead of using them to attack the enemy, instead spend them to raise the Difficulty of the Willpower roll to 4 (+2) for one round, then 3 (+1) the next if the target is still affected.

Phantom Mist Delusion—Genmu-Soushin-no-Jutsu
Nothing, Soul 9, Difficulty 3

Greater version of Smoke and Mist

This is the greater version of the above art. The effects are much the same, but the target must make a Spirit: Willpower roll against a base Difficulty of 3 to act each round.

Shadow Stitch Technique—Kagenui-no-Jutsu
Kunai/Shuriken, Soul 6, Difficulty 3

Greater technique

The ninja whispers a quick curse over a shuriken or kunai and throws it at an enemy's shadow. If the technique works, the blade sinks into the shadow and the target finds herself unable to move freely. She can still attack and defend, but cannot move from her position. When the target attempts to act, she must make a Spirit: Willpower check against a Difficulty of 4 in order to free herself from the effects of this art. If the target fails, she can make another attempt the next round.

The ninja can use this technique more than once to seal more people in place. Add the number of targets together, multiply the Soul cost by that amount, then lastly apply dark arts Soul reduction ratings.

Similar to the Smoke and Mist technique, the ninja can trade in bonus dice gained when the art was triggered to temporarily raise the Difficulty of the Willpower roll.

Mind's Eye—Shingan-no-Jutsu
Eyes of an animal, Soul 2, Difficulty 1

Lesser version of The Thousand Eyes

The ninja conducts a brief chant and swallows the prepared eyeball of an animal (any kind) to unlock her mind's eye. This allows the ninja to sense all life forms, human or otherwise, within a 10 meter radius.

The Thousand Eyes—Senrigan-no-Jutsu
Eyes of an animal, Soul 4, Difficulty 2

Greater version of Mind's Eye

This technique is the greater version of Mind's Eye and allows the ninja to detect all life within a 50 meter radius.

Venom Eater—Dokugo-no-Jutsu
Poisonous toad venom, Soul 6, Difficulty 3

Lesser version of Annelid Body

By consuming the poison of the great Japanese common toad while reciting a ninja mantra, the ninja can create a poison with a strength of 3 within her body. If she cuts herself and applies it to a weapon before an attack or seduces someone and kisses them, the poison takes effect. Also, if the ninja happens to drink another poison while this technique is active, the poison's effect is reduced by 3. See the poison rules in the combat section for more details.

Annelid Body
Poisonous toad venom, Soul 9, Difficulty 4

Greater version of Venom Eater

This is the greater version of Venom Eater, but the strength of the poison is 8, and the poison resistance also becomes 8.

Steel-Cutting Hair—Kamikirimaru no-Jutsu
Hair, Soul 6, Difficulty 4

Greater technique

By reciting a curse, the ninja's hair acts as if it were a sharp blade, cutting anything it touches. Use unarmed combat to attack with the Steel-Cutting Hair. Its damage rating is equal to the ninja's Senses minus 1.

NINPOU TECHNIQUES

Ninpou (*Ultimate Ninja Arts*) represent the ultimate powers of the ninjutsu arts, the highest techniques of a school of ninjutsu. They require a skill rank of Supreme (5) to learn. Some techniques listed here are not associated with any of the major schools of ninjutsu. Rather, they are known techniques that have emerged from smaller or hidden schools.

Ninpou: Explosion-in-Hiding—Mijin-Gakure
Gunpowder, Soul 8, Difficulty 4

This technique allows the ninja to create a special explosive trap as a defensive action. The ninja can declare this ninpou when she is attacked. Regardless of the attacker's number of successes, if the ninja successfully performs the technique (reaches 4 successes on a ninjutsu roll), this ninpou takes effect.

With this technique, the ninja creates a single duplicate of herself in much the same way as other duplication/bunshin techniques. At the same time, the ninja escapes from combat and hides nearby,

undetected. The duplicate takes the attack in place of the ninja. However, when the duplicate is destroyed, everything within an 8-meter radius of the duplicate takes 16 points of explosive damage. The ninja takes 8 explosive damage as well. This damage can be reduced with successes gained from evasion rolls. See the combat section for more details on explosive damage.

The duplicate has 3 Vitality points, physical attributes with a rating of 3, and all skills at a rating of 2. Only one duplicate can be created per attack.

Ninpou: Insect in the Grass—Chuusou
Nothing, Soul 20, Difficulty 5

This clairvoyance technique allows the ninja to move in a split-second to dodge all damage from one single attack. This technique can be used after damage has been rolled and calculated.

Ninpou: Flying Squirrel of Destruction—Musasabi
Gunpowder, Soul 8, Difficulty 4

To use this technique, the ninja leaps several dozen meters into the air and slams her body into the target. The ninja performs an unarmed combat attack against a target with a damage modifier of +10. After the target is hit, an explosion occurs, hitting everyone, friend or foe, in a 4 meter radius, causing 8 points of explosion damage to everyone (except the ninja) in that range.

Even if the target is missed by the aerial body-slam, the explosion will still occur, affecting the target.

Because of the amount of gunpowder and physical stress required to perform this art, it can only be initiated once per session.

Ninpou: Rod of Lightning—Jiraishin
A special metal helmet, Soul 8, Difficulty 5

Reciting an incantation, the ninja summons a lightning strike centered on herself. This bolt of lightning causes damage to everyone, friend or foe, within a 6 meter radius of the ninja. The ninja makes a single attack roll using Senses: Marksman. The targets can only defend with Evasion. The damage of this attack is +15. Since the ninja is wearing a special magically-treated helmet, the ninja is not affected by this attack. This bolt of lightning can, in fact, strike indoors or underground, usually blowing a hole in the ceiling while doing so.

This attack takes such coordination and preparation that the ninja can only perform it once per session.

Ninpou: Heaven's Dark Death—Kokushiten
Candle, Soul 6, Difficulty 4

This ninpou allows a ninja to completely remove all of the target's senses, leaving them in total darkness. The ninja makes use of a candle and some powder while reciting a dark mantra. All attacks on that target during the duration of this ninpou are treated as sneak attacks. The ninja may affect a number of targets with this ninpou equal to her Senses at no additional cost. Every round, the targets affected by this technique can roll their Spirit: Willpower against a Difficulty number equal to the ninja's Spirit to try to break through this dark curse. Otherwise, the effect lasts as long as the ninja's Spirit in rounds.

Ninpou: Crimson Spiders—Benigumo
Hair, Soul 6, Difficulty 4

This ninpou allows the ninja to wrap a target in webs filled with bloodsucking spiders. Every round, the target affected by this technique can try to escape the web by beating the ninja on a Spirit: Willpower

roll against a Difficulty target equal to the ninja's Spirit. If the target fails, he can try again at the beginning of the next round.

For the first round, and each round where the target fails, the target loses 4 Vitality. The ninja gains these 4 Vitality points, up to the ninja's maximum. Unless the victim breaks through the web, the web lasts, like most ninja arts, for a number of rounds equal to the ninja's Spirit. Most targets will not last that long, though.

Ninpou: Toad of Jiraiya—Jiraiya
Frog, Soul 10, Difficulty 5

Jiraiya was the name of the lead character in an old Kabuki play. He was a wandering sorcerer who could summon and control frogs. Along with Tsunade, who could control slugs, he battled the evil Orochimaru, who had dominion over snakes.

This technique allows the ninja to summon and control a gigantic frog. The frog has Body, Agility, and Senses attributes of 15, and 30 points of Vitality. It can use all basic skills at a rating of 5. The frog has no Wound Boxes and cannot take actions requiring the use of non-physical attributes like Knowledge, Spirit, Empathy and Station.

Ninpou: Vinefall—Izuna-Otoshi
Nothing, Soul 7, Difficulty 5

The ninja grapples the target (no attack roll required), and leaps up several dozen meters into the air, carrying the target in tow. While in the air, the ninja hurls the target into the ground at a breakneck speed for massive damage. The ninja rolls unarmed combat and adds 15 to the result for damage. The target can resist this damage by rolling Agility: Movement and subtracting successes from the final damage total.

This technique takes a huge toll on the ninja, so it can only be performed once per session.

Ninpou: Rain of Blood—Chisame
Blood, Soul 12, Difficulty 6

The ninja slashes into her own body and showers one target with her blood. This blood becomes a deadly poison with a power of 8. This attack cannot be defended against by normal means. In addition to spending the required Soul, the ninja also takes 5 damage that must be spent on the wound track, first as heavy wounds, then critical wounds if heavy wounds are all filled. After critical wounds, the damage can be spread to other wounds, then finally Vitality. Alternatively, all wounds can be bypassed if the ninja checks the Dead Box.

The rain of blood always hits its intended target; there is no need to roll to attack. This ninpou can only be performed once per session; there's only so much blood one can spray from one's body.

Ninpou: Spider of Darkness—Yamigumo
Shadow, Soul 10, Difficulty 6

This ninpou causes a huge spiked tentacle to reach out from the shadows and spear the ninja's target. This is treated as a weapon with +20 damage and a 20-meter range. Make the attack with Senses: Ninjutsu. This attack counts as a sneak-attack.

This ninpou must be used once for each attack made with it. Each time, the tentacle lashes out once and disappears immediately back into the darkness.

Ninpou: Shattered Illusion—Hagen
Nothing, Soul 0, Difficulty 5

This is the ultimate ability to defend oneself from enemy ninjutsu arts.

School Name	School of Dream	School of Shadow	School of Stone	
Japanese School Name	***Oboro-Ryu***	***Kage-Ryu***	***Gan-Ryu***	
Ninjutsu Rank				
Skilled (2)	Smoke and Mist	Shadowflight	Iron Fist	
	Path of Darkness	Path of the Flying Willow	Path of Denial	
	Path of the Kunoichi	Path of the Bird of Prey	Path of the Cunning Sparrow	
Advanced (3)	Phantom Mist Delusion	Blackhawk's Shadow	Wind of Menace	
	Iron Fist	Smoke and Mist	Shadow Form	
	Venom Eater	Shadow Form	Smoke and Mist	
Mastery (4)	Ball of Thunder	Mind's Eye	Possessed by the Inner Wolf	
	Possessed by the Inner Demon	Possessed by the Inner Demon	Exploding Thunder Ball	
	Annelid Body	Four-fold Shadow Form	Phantom Mist Delusion	
Special (5)	Ninpou: Rain of Blood	Ninpou: Heaven's Dark Death	Ninpou: Insect in the Grass	

A ninja uses this single-use ninpou to counteract all ninjutsu abilities used against her. She casts the Shattered Illusion ninpou on her own body. If the ninja makes an Agility: Ninjutsu or Spirit: Ninjutsu roll (whichever is higher) against a Difficulty of 5, the ninpou seals against her body forever. The casting ninja loses her ability to use ninjutsu techniques from that point on. However, she will become completely protected and invulnerable against all enemy ninjutsu techniques forever. It is therefore a high trade-off to learn and use this ultimate defense art, but for some the benefit outweighs the terrible penalty.

Crafting New Ninjutsu Arts and Ninja Schools

It's a secret that ninja are little more than highly focused onmyoji sorcerers with limited and directed powers. Using their talents, shinobi can create new powers in accordance with the onmyoji rules. You can also attempt to create new powers or recreate existing powers by hand using the existing ones as a base, mapping them out and getting the GM's permission to take them.

When creating ninjutsu arts, you will usually create one powerful art, called a "higher art", and a version of that art which costs less Soul and operates with a reduced effect called a "lower art". Most of the listed ninjutsu powers are in pairs, with a higher and lower version of the art. Arts that do not come in pairs are considered a "higher art". Finally, at the special skill rank (skill rank of 5 in Ninjutsu), each ninjutsu style grants a superior ability known as a *Ninpou*. These arts could be called the "Final Art" of that style.

When creating a new ninja school, use the following schema for determining which arts are chosen:

Skilled Rank

2 paths

1 lesser technique

	Ghost Clan	True School of Shadow	School of the Shore	School of Dust
	Rei-Ryu	*Shin Kage-Ryu*	*Migawari-Ryu*	*Jin-Ryu*
	Ninja Duplication Technique	Mind's Eye	Possessed by the Inner Wolf	Shadow Form
	Path of Broken Steel	Path of the Cherry Blossom	Path of the Split Arrow	Path of Darkness
	Path of Broken Earth	Path of the Smoke Bomb	Path of the Falling Leaf	Path of the Transcriber
	Shadowless Replication Technique	The Thousand Eyes	Possessed by the Inner Demon	Four-fold Shadow Form
	Venom Eater	Venom Eater	Shadowflight	Ninja Duplication Technique
	Iron Fist	Shadowflight	Ninja Duplication Technique	Ball of Thunder
	Possessed by the Inner Wolf	Ball of Thunder	Mind's Eye	Iron Fist
	Annelid Body	Wind of Menace	Shadow Stitch Technique	The Thousand Eyes
	Wind of Menace	Blackhawk's Shadow	Shadowless Replication Technique	Exploding Thunder Ball
	Ninpou: Rod of Lightning	Ninpou: Crimson Spiders	Ninpou: Explosion-in-Hiding	Ninpou: Flying Squirrel of Destruction

Advanced Rank
2 lesser techniques

1 greater technique

Master Rank
1 lesser technique

2 greater techniques

Special Rank
1 ninpou art

You will see in the ninjutsu list that all powers come in sets of 2. For one category of power (like medicine, movement, etc) there is a lower and higher art. When you choose one lower art for the skilled rank, it is common to take that art's paired higher art at the advanced ninjutsu rank. If you take one of lower arts at the advanced rank, it is common to take its paired higher art at the master rank.

Ninjutsu Schools and Arts

The above table lists several of the well-known ninjutsu schools in Tenra and the arts they are known to practice. Note that there are hundreds of styles of ninjutsu in Tenra, so expect unusual technique combinations in the field.

Ninjutsu-using characters should feel free to choose any of the schools below for their art, or possibly create their own art with the GM's permission.





KUGUTSU AND THE BUTTERFLY DREAM

All kugutsu have the innate magical ability to create an illusory phantom dream-world, and draw people into it. This ability is called "The Butterfly Dream". There is no skill associated with this ability. Instead it is based on the kugutsu's Performance or Pillow Arts skills.

BUTTERFLY DREAM RULES

If the target is sleeping, a kugutsu can pull him into the Butterfly Dream without any resistance.

If the target is awake, the kugutsu can lead him into a hypnotic trance to bring him into the Dream, using either the kugutsu's Empathy attribute with the Performance skill or Pillow Arts skill depending on how the kugutsu is using the ability. The kugutsu might sing or play a haunting melody on an instrument, or seductively hypnotize the opponent with her words. The target resists with a roll of Spirit: Willpower. If he succeeds, then he resists the kugutsu's call. Otherwise, the target is drawn into the realm of the Butterfly Dream.

The created dream-world itself lies outside of normal human space and time. The events that happen within the Butterfly Dream appear to happen instantly or within a few seconds to outside observers. The kugutsu's player describes what the dream looks like. Often, the kugutsu will create a domain that reflects her own personality and draw others into this domain to talk to them.

When the dream begins, play out its events as if it were a new scene. The kugutsu and the target of the dream are the only ones who will participate in this scene. No one else, not even another kugutsu, can force their way inside. Only the object who is dragged into the dream and the kugutsu who creates the dream can enter this special place.

Sometimes other characters can also appear within this dream-realm. However, it is up to the kugutsu and the GM whether they are really the actual characters themselves or dream-figments that just look like those characters, created by the kugutsu. Usually within the Butterfly Dream, the GM will play the roles of other characters that appear within the dream-world.

If one of the player's characters is the target of the Butterfly Dream (from another player's kugutsu, or an NPC kugutsu), choose one of that character's Fates. The dream that occurs will have something to do with that Fate, or the events or elements of that Fate will serve as the backdrop of the Butterfly Dream. The GM or kugutsu player will decide (or agree together) on the details of the Fate which appear in the dream. From that point, the scene is acted out normally, including the awarding of Aiki chits.

What Happens in the Dream?

This is entirely up to the kugutsu's player. The kugutsu can talk to the (usually bewildered) target and find out more about them. They could see scenes from their life in order to understand what drives that character. They could ask the target some information, pulling it out of them with a contested Empathy: Performance or Pillow Arts versus the target's Spirit: Willpower roll. The kugutsu could simply spend a few minutes tormenting the target.

Most of the time, the Butterfly Dream is used as a method of psychoanalysis on a subject: You can't control the subject in the real world, you can't dominate him or kill him. But you can talk to him, find out what his goals are, and perhaps later use that knowledge against that character in the real world.

When the scene ends, the target will return to normal. In most cases (unless the kugutsu made a dramatic, lasting impression) the target simply forgets the events that took place in the Butterfly Dream. Or they might exhibit some instinctual reactions against the kugutsu character (like a vague sense of fear, horror, empathy, or love, depending on what happened in the dream), which could influence further reactions with that character.

The results of the Butterfly Dream are very vague in terms of rule effects, but that is because there are so many things that

could happen in a dream that could have an effect that it's impossible to take them all into consideration. There are no real mechanical rules effects to rolls or actions taken during a Butterfly Dream scene. However, the GM is encouraged to help the kugutsu character learn something more about the target. Or perhaps the kugutsu can change the target's personality in some way permanently. Consider the story and resolve this accordingly.

WHEN TO USE THE BUTTERFLY DREAM

The Butterfly Dream is a powerful tool. The kugutsu's player shouldn't be activating it against every NPC they bump into on the street. In most games, the Butterfly Dream will only be used once, usually against a major NPC (perhaps a villain). In some games, it may be appropriate to show off this incredible ability in the story twice. However, if the kugutsu is using the Butterfly Dream three or more times a session, the GM should step in and suggest an alternative. This unique ability is like a superior katana of great power; it only needs to appear once or twice in a game session. More than that, and the mystery and excitement of the kugutsu's ability to use the Butterfly Dream quickly wears off for the other players. Exercise restraint.



ANNELID RULES

Through great care (or on rare occasions, entirely by accident) a human can ingest and care for annelids, the unusual native worms and parasites of Tenra. Also known as *mushi*, annelids will serve their host as long as the host provides what the annelids require.

IMPLANTING ANNELIDS

Annelidist characters have their annelid loadouts already prepared on their character sheets or archetype listings. With the GM's permission, they can exchange their existing annelids for others or simply add in more annelids.

Annelids can only be implanted in creatures of flesh, including oni, ayakashi and even kugutsu. Annelids can also be implanted into kijin or other mechanica-users, as long as there is still usable human flesh remaining.

Each annelid has a cost, and many annelids can be taken more than once. During character creation, the cost refers to the amount of Karma that is added to the character for each new parasite.

In play, characters who gain the Wormcharm skill can implant annelids into their bodies. This happens at the beginning of the intermission phase of play. When new annelids are implanted during an intermission, the annelid's cost refers to the amount of Kiai points that must be spent during the time of implantation. Spent Kiai immediately becomes Karma, so be careful not to implant too many at once.

The activation of annelids is immediate unless otherwise stated. It does not require any actions to ready them or prepare them for battle when attacked; they react instantly.

Annelid List

Each listing appears as the following:

NAME (The name of the annelid)

Cost: The cost (in Kiai or Karma) for implantation per level of effect. This is also called the rating of the annelid. For example, spending 9 Kiai on a talonfang bug (with a cost of "3 per level") results in a level 3 rated talonfang bug.

Effect: The effects of keeping the annelid.

Location: The part of the body where the annelid resides.

Notes: The text which explains the annelid strain, and how it functions.

Food: If the annelid has a nutrition requirement, it is listed here. Many strains simply borrow a little nourishment from their hosts.

BLACKWING

Cost: 10 per annelid

Effect: Flight

Location: Back

The blackwing annelid is a curious insect with a wide, flat body two meters long. The actual annelid spends most of its time encapsulated in a small chrysalis, which attaches to the host's back. The blackwing is fond of the sap of a particular tree in the forests in which it normally resides, which is released in certain seasons. The annelidist will normally gather an amount of this sap and spread it on the chrysalis when they want the blackwing to emerge.

The blackwing annelid bursts out from the chrysalis, attaching to the host's back and spreading out like wings. The host can manipulate the annelid and use it to fly. The host cannot carry heavy objects, and the flight is generally very slow; the blackwing only allows the host to fly at their normal land movement speed. The blackwing normally has a very short lifespan: One single day. The host can keep it alive longer, but only briefly. In game terms, the blackwing can be used once per act. Once the Act is over, the blackwing dies.

Food: Fresh fruit or vegetables

BLOOD HULKER

Cost: 10 per level of effect

Effect: The Body attribute of the host is increased, but Agility is decreased

Location: Muscular system

Blood hulkers are parasites which resemble muscle tissue. They cooperate closely with the existing muscles and take nourishment from the blood stream. When activated, they simply act as the surrounding muscle tissue acts, copying the muscles' behavior but with far more force.

When activated, the host's Body attribute score increases by the rating of the blood hulkers, but in exchange, Agility is reduced by that same amount.

Food: None

CHITINSHELLS

Cost: 2 per level of effect

Effect: Vitality is added to the host

Location: Everywhere

Chitinshells crawl inside the body, creating a nest of chitin webbing throughout the host's body. Each level of chitinshell adds a point of Vitality to the host.

A lesser-known side effect of the implantation of chitinshells is the webbing which chitinshells produce inside the host's body. These strings are said to be strong enough to hold two grown men without breaking. It can be launched towards the host's enemy like a whip or spider's webbing, tripping or binding them. The webbing has a damage of +2 and a range of a number of meters equal to the rating of the chitinshells.

Finally, since this webbing attaches itself to ki-collecting areas of the body, the host can control it as if it were a prehensile appendage, making it extend out of his body with such control that he could sew with the individual chitinshell web strands. To that end, he can use the webbing weapon for whip-like attacks or grabs using Body: Wormcharm as if he was using the War Art "The Art of Ki Manipulation" at the same level as his Wormcharm skill.

Food: Fresh fruit and vegetables every day. Another option is taking a secret drug called "kabusu" once a week. If either of these cannot be done and the host goes a full month without either, the chitin in the host's body softens as the worms weaken, and the host dies.

CORPSE PUPPETEER

Cost: 30 per puppeteer

Effect: Control dead bodies

Location: Cerebellum

The corpse puppeteer is a white spider about 10cm long. It slips into the ear of a dead human or animal and works its way to the brain. From there, as it feeds on the brain it can exert a kind of control over the body, making it move as it if were alive.

With training, an annelidist can learn to control the corpse puppeteer, and thus the corpse it is feeding on, with remarkable accuracy. An annelidist can control a body of any kind, and make it act as if it had all of its attributes set at 5, all of its normal skills set at 2, and a Vitality score of 5.

Food: Once a week, the host must consume the brain of one human-sized animal, or 2-3 small animals.

CRIMSON POISONER

Cost: 2 per level of effect

Effect: Create poisons

Location: Brain stem

The crimson poisoner attaches itself to the host's brain stem, after which it begins to create a pocket of fluid reserve, converting bodily fluids into a deadly poison. This poison can be used in conjunction with the attacks of any of the other annelids or in unarmed physical attacks (emitted through sweat glands in the hands or legs). If the attack lands, the poison affects the opponent. The damage of the poison is equal to the rank of the crimson poisoner and lasts for a number of rounds equal to its damage.

As with most poisons, it can be resisted or its damage reduced with the Willpower skill during the Interaction phase between combat rounds.

Food: Earthworms found under rocks or in wet soil.

DEMON-OF-BATTLE

Cost: 80

Effect: Incredible combat prowess granted to host

Location: Cerebrum

The demon-of-battle annelid remains the most powerful and the most horrifying example of what annelids can do to the human body.

When the demon-of-battle senses imminent danger, it immediately launches two antennae outward through the skull of the host, in order to control and convert surrounding gossamer-like Sha energy into physical power. Using the sha, the demon-of-battle overwrites the host's genetic code immediately, turning him from a human into a half-human/half annelid construct. This process is so intense that some annelidists are completely subdued by the will of the annelid, their personality and identity swatted aside for the needs and desires of the demon-of-battle.

Every time this transformation takes place, the annelidist must make a Spirit: Wormcharm roll against a difficulty of 3 or a Spirit: Willpower roll against a difficulty of 4. If the host succeeds, then he can harness the demon-of-battle's abilities and unleash hell upon his enemies.

If the host fails the roll, then the annelid continues to rage until it senses no more enemies. The host is no longer in control of the annelid, and everything the worm does while in control comes back to the host in horrific flashbacks afterward. Often, after all enemies are dispatched, friends must calm the host down to keep it from hurting other people in the vicinity.

While the demon-of-battle is active, it grants the following bonuses to the host:

Body is increased by +4

Agility is increased by +4

Senses is increased by +6

The host gains 20 Rejuvenation Points (see the rejuvenation worms for details)

Vitality increases by +10

The host also gains the following natural weapons:

Name	Dmg	RoF	Range
Electrostatic Cannon	+6	1	18m
Clawed Hands	+8	—	—
Clawed Feet	+6	—	—
Acid Spit	+4	—	5m

The electrostatic cannon is an incorporeal attack, and can only be dodged with the Evasion skill.

Acid spit is launched with Body: Wormcharm and can only be dodged with Evasion. It continues to do 4 damage to the opponent (who resists with Willpower, as per the combat rules on acid) until they take a round to rinse off or wipe away the acid.

Food: It eats normal food, but requires the host to eat an amount of food that two people would eat daily.

DIGGER WASPS

Cost: 3 per level of effect

Effect: A swarm of wasps makes attacks against enemies.

Location: Any large area of skin on the body, usually the back. It cannot normally be hidden.

Digger wasps build a nest under the flesh of their host. This area of the body swells and distends as more wasps make their home in it.

The host commands the wasps through bodily secreted pheromones and the wasps obey without question. Their most common use is for attacks against distant enemies.

The host makes a ranged attack using Senses: Wormcharm. The digger wasps do damage equal to the rating of the digger wasp, divided by two. They also inject a deadly poison into their enemies. The poison takes effect during the next Interaction phase in combat and lasts one round. The poison has a damage rating equal to the level of digger wasps, divided by two. With digger wasps, the host effectively gets two attempts to damage an opponent; a ranged attack followed by the poison.

The wasps have a range of 10 meters and a rate of fire equal to the rating of the wasps.

Food: None

DISSOLVER

Cost: 2 per level of effect

Effect: Spit acid at enemies

Location: Stomach

The host uses a special mix of herbs to strengthen his stomach, then implants the dissolver annelid. The dissolver then

increases the acidity of the stomach acid until it can dissolve even metal and stone. The host can use the dissolver to spit a stream of acid at enemies, or to destroy objects.

In combat, the host makes a Body: Wormcharm roll. Because of the liquid nature of the attack, the opponent can only resist with the Evasion skill. It has a range of 5 meters, and a damage rating equal to the rank of the dissolver.

On top of that, normal combat rules for acid still apply: Every round, the victim must make a Spirit: Willpower roll against the rank of the dissolver or take the difference in damage every Interaction phase of combat. This effect lasts until the opponent takes an action to rinse away or rub off the acid.

Food: A special blend of nine herbs is mixed by the annelidist beforehand. This mixture must be taken with food once per day, or else the dissolver's acid will eat through the host's stomach. If the herbs are not available, the host must not eat food of any kind in order to keep the acidity bearable until the herbs are found.

EYE STALKER

Cost: 10 per level of effect

Effect: The Senses attribute is increased

Location: Head, hands, fingertips, etc

The eye stalker strain has the appearance of an eye attached to a muscle tipped with a talon. When placed on the host, they burrow into the location in which they were placed and attach themselves to the host's nervous system.

This has two major effects: For every eye stalker attached to the host, their Senses attribute is raised by one point. On top of that, the host can detach the eye stalker whenever they want and place it in a location. The eye will "record" all that it sees in that area. When it is retrieved and reattached to the nervous system, the host can access all of the eye stalker's memories, seeing what it saw.

To use the benefits of the eye stalker, the host has to have implanted them for at least a week in order to become used to the shift in perception. The effects are wildly unpredictable if used right after implantation.

Food: None

HUNDRED-FACED WORM

Cost: 15

Effect: Change the face of the host

Location: Face

This annelid is a flat, wide insect which can blend into its environment. If an annelidist attaches it to the face of another person (presumably dead, asleep, or perhaps a willing participant). it will adopt the shape and features of that person's face perfectly. It can then be removed and worn by the host like a mask, covering one's identity or assuming the personality of another.

When coupled with the mynah bug, this annelid makes for an extremely effective spying tool.

Food: None

IMMORTALITY STRAIN

Cost: 50

Effect: Immortality

Location: Unknown

Through limitless regeneration ability, the immortality strain effectively grants its host immortality.

Implanting the immortality strain is a nigh-impossible task, which is why most users who have the strain either were experimented upon, or were tasked with accepting the annelid in the service of a lord. Very few master-level annelidists are

risky enough to willingly go through the process of implanting the immortality strain.

In rules terms, those given the immortality strain must make a Spirit: Willpower roll against a difficulty of 20. If they can overcome these impossible odds, the immortality strain adapts to its new host with little problem. If the potential host fails, then death is almost instantaneous. In rare cases, the host survives and the strain adapts to the host, but with many problems. Disfigurement and insanity of some kind are always a result. In the rarest cases of failure, the potential host emerges fine, apparently unaffected by the ordeal. However, master annelidists intimate with the immortality strain never discuss those rarest of cases, and stay well clear of those people for some reason.

A player can only realistically attempt the implantation of the immortality strain in their character if they are sitting on a pile of Kiai points. That character may increase his Willpower skill, spend a ton of Kiai on bonus dice, and then buy up successes with Kiai if they don't quite reach 20. However, when doing this do not forget the initial implantation cost of 50 for the strain, as well as the fact that the implantation cost, plus all Kiai spent in the attempt, immediately becomes Karma.

Hosts with the immortality strain heal wounds incredibly fast. During the Interaction phase between combat rounds, the annelids restore blood, bone and flesh back to normal. See the following chart for the speed of recovery of all wounds in a wound track:

Wound Track	Rounds/Minutes to Heal
Light	3-Body
Heavy	5-Body
Critical	10-Body
Dead Box	15-Body

If the number in the chart above comes to zero or less, then all the wounds in that track heal instantly.

Example: Omon has a Body of 8 and the immortality strain. In one round of combat, she takes 7 Light wounds, 3 Heavy wounds and one Critical wound. During the next Interaction phase (before the next combat round), all of the wounds in the Light and Heavy rows disappear completely. Omon is left with just one Critical wound, which will heal completely in the next Interaction phase.

A host with the immortality strain can only be killed normally if their head is cut off after they have fallen in battle. They can also be trapped and burned to death, or cut with a rare and legendary annelid-killing poison then killed normally.

Food: None

ITAMI STRAIN

Cost: 15

Effect: Raises host's Vitality score

Location: Nervous system

The itami strain is a swarm of miniscule insects which ride along the host's nervous system, sealing away pain response when provoked. Since the sensation of pain in the host is almost completely lost, their Vitality score is raised. Normally Vitality is calculated by adding Body plus Spirit. However, with the itami strain, Vitality is calculated by adding double the Body score plus Spirit. In other words, simply add the host's Body score again to the Vitality total.

Food: None

MINDGLOWER

Cost: 3 per level of effect

Effect: Increases the Soul of the host. Also provides light.

Location: Fingertips

The mindglower strain of annelid looks like miniscule jellyfish floating through the air. They attach themselves to the host's fingers,

right near the fingernail, and burrow into the muscle. They can be released for a short amount of time, allowing them to gently float around an area at the host's command, providing a visible bluish light that can be seen by at night or in dark places.

They can also be used to boost Soul in the host; they can provide a jolt of white pain through the fingers of the host, providing focus and alertness. Soul increases by 1 point per level of mindglower. This added Soul lasts one day, after which it can be regained again.

Food: They require one cup of clear water every day. They also need to be released once per day for at least a few minutes.

MOUTH CREEPER

Cost: 15

Effect: An annelid which defends the host in battle

Location: Digestive tract

This creature with the appearance of a giant centipede lurks just below the host's mouth area. When used by the host it lashes out of the host's mouth, biting its enemies and injecting paralytic poison into them.

The host makes attacks with the mouth creeper using Body: Wormcharm. It can also be used in defense, making counterattacks as normal. It has a damage rating of +1.

If the mouth creeper damages a target, it does damage as normal, but the target must also make a Spirit: Willpower roll and gain 2 or more successes. If the target fails this roll, he is paralyzed and cannot defend himself, move, or do anything other than speak. The next time the victim takes any kind of damage, he can attempt another Spirit: Willpower check. If the victim succeeds, then the poison immediately wears off until the next mouth creeper bite.

Food: 200 grams of animal meat per mouth creeper each day

MYNAH BUG

Cost: 10

Effect: Can perfectly duplicate any sound heard

Location: Throat

Any noise that the host hears, the mynah bug can perfectly duplicate it. This effect can also be used to mimic the speech of someone whose voice has been heard. Normally, this happens flawlessly. However, if trying to fool a suspicious opponent, the opponent need to gain three successes on a Senses: Notice roll to determine that something isn't quite right.

Food: It simply eats a fraction of the food the host consumes. However, the host should be careful, as the mynah bug is delicate. Very hot or very spicy foods can kill it.

REJUVENATION WORMS

Cost: 5 per level of effect

Effect: Grants a pool which heals Wounds taken in combat. Can be used on others.

Location: Everywhere

When rejuvenation worms are implanted, they quickly swim through the host's body, mending the broken flesh and bone of the host when damage is taken. They use their own bodies to heal the host, sacrificing themselves in the process. The host gains 5 rejuvenation points for every level of rejuvenation worm implanted. Each rejuvenation point can heal one wound of any type, except for the Dead Box.

In combat, healing occurs during the Interaction phases between each combat round. The rejuvenation worms can also be used to heal others, but the annelidist must spend a Full Action to do so.

Rejuvenation worms are a slow-return resource; spent rejuvenation points only return at a rate of one point per day.

Food: The host must eat rotting meat at least once per week. Every day after a week in which rotting meat is not consumed, one rejuvenation point is lost.

SPINAL MITES

Cost: 5 per level of effect

Effect: The Agility attribute is increased

Location: Nervous system

Spinal mites attach themselves to the nervous system and greatly accelerate neurotransmission speed. This in turn increases the quickness and response time of the host's body.

To activate the spinal mites, the host must inhale a dose of powdered poppy nectar (using a half-action in combat). This causes the spinal mites to excrete a neurotoxin which speeds up reflexes; the Agility attribute is raised by the rating of the spinal mites. This effect lasts for a number of rounds or minutes equal to the host's Body attribute score, after which they go dormant.

The neurotoxin released by the spinal mites causes damage to the host after use. As soon as the mites go dormant, the toxin takes hold of the body, and the host is poisoned for a number of rounds or minutes equal to the level of spinal mites (as per the combat rules on poisons). The damage of the neurotoxin is also equal to the level of the spinal mites. During this time of poisoning, the spinal mites cannot be activated (although they can be activated again once the body recovers). Incidentally, if the host is poisoned while the spinal mite neurotoxin is running through his system, the strength and damage of the spinal mite neurotoxin is added to any new outside poison.

Food: None

TALONFANG BUGS

Cost: 3 per level of effect

Effect: Claws or cutting tools erupt from the host's body

Location: Limbs

Talonfangs can sense danger. When the host is attacked, they lash out and harden, granting biological claws, knives or other cutting edges to the host's body.

Attacks are made using Body: Wormcharm. They do an amount of damage equal to their level of effect; the more powerful the bug, the more damage it can do.

Talonfang bugs have other special qualities for use in combat, depending on the skill level of Wormcharm in the user:

Wormcharm 2: The host can make counterattacks in battle using Body: Wormcharm.

Wormcharm 3: When the host attacks a new opponent for the first time ever, the unexpected nature of the attack is treated as a sneak attack.

Wormcharm 4: The talonfang can fire one volley of needles or spikes at enemies if the host makes an attack with Senses: Wormcharm. The damage remains the same. Range equals Body in meters, Rate of Fire equals the level of talonfang bug implanted, and the ammo is 1. The needles regenerate at the end of the scene.

Wormcharm 5: The damage rating of the talonfang bug is doubled.

Food: Human or animal blood, about 400ml per week.





ONI RESONANCE

Resonance, known as Tae Rayi to the native oni people, is an extraordinary and unique power. Since it requires a heart gem to sense and manipulate this power, only the oni or half-oni can understand Tae Rayi enough to take the Resonance skill. Normal humans can never learn it, unless they later find out that they were actually born a half-oni.

Tae Rayi exists as a combination of two categories of abilities called Heaven (*Alu*) and Earth (*Dii*).

ALU

Empathy: Resonance

Alu is the almost telepathic spiritual ability of the oni people. If the target is an oni or a half-oni, both parties can communicate through telepathy, called "Heart-Speak" or "Heart-Speech". This can be done with very little effort. However, if the target is not an oni, thoughts can be sent to the target, but the target's thoughts and responses cannot be read. Heart-Speech usually has a range of sight, but there are tales of oni paragons communicating over great distances.

In the old times, oni used to speak to each other almost always using only their Heart-Speech, but in recent years the oni have begun to tire even when using the Heart-Speech among their own people.

If an oni decides to cut off or file off her horn (usually in order to live among humans or to disassociate with the oni), Alu powers can no longer be used.

Alu utilizes the following powers, depending on the level of Resonance.

Skilled (2): Soul Cost 1
The oni can participate in heart-speech. The effects will last for a scene.

Advanced (3): Soul Cost 2
The oni can participate in heart speech with animals other than oni, including humans, animals and even plants. When used with humans, thoughts can only be sent, not received. The effects will last for a scene.

Master (4): Soul Cost 3
The oni can read the thoughts of animals other than oni, including humans, and also plants. If the target denies the connection, a contested action must be resolved against the target's Spirit: Willpower. If this power is used with the Advanced (3) level Alu skill, a sort of two-way pseudo-heart-speech can be achieved with humans. The effects will last for a scene.

Supreme (5): Soul Cost 5
The oni can directly attack a target's mind.

The oni engages the Target in a contested action against the target's Spirit: Willpower. If the oni succeeds, the difference by which he succeeded can be inflicted on the target's vitality as damage. If the oni fails, there is no effect.

Dii

Body: Resonance
Dii is a connection with the land, and manifests in a kind of telekinesis. It allows the user to move objects by borrowing the power of the gossamer-like force known as Sha. Sha is a force spread throughout the land of Tenra like wispy, always-moving sheets of invisible raw power.

When Dii is used to inflict damage directly, a contested action against the target's Spirit: Willpower is necessary. The difference in the success values are applied as damage. When this damage is from a collision with a quickly moving object, it is treated as per the rules for ranged weapons and can be evaded or parried. The oni using this ability to damage an opponent must spend Soul according to the table below.

Dii utilizes the following powers, depending on the level of resonance. Each power lasts for one minute (one round), but the oni can spend the ability's Soul cost again to keep the power active for each extra minute. The GM may add more damage to a successful resonance attack with a heavier object, depending on the situation.

Skilled (2): Soul Cost 1
The oni can move an object of a few kilograms (less than 10kg: daggers, katanas, bag of soulgems).

Advanced (3): Soul Cost 2
The oni can move an object of a few tens of kilograms, about the weight of one average sized person (less than 100kg: normal person, small food stand, sack of rice).

Master (4): Soul Cost 5
The oni can move an object of a few hundred kilograms in weight (kongohki, filled palanquin, small crowd of people, small armour).

Supreme (5): Soul Cost 7
The oni can move an object of a few thousand kilograms in weight (small temple, most armour, large crowd of people).

At the highest level of resonance, the oni can manipulate the very sha around her to mysterious effect. Through manipulating Dii, she can consume the energy of sha-crafted life forms like summoned shiki and chimera.

This powerful oni can unravel a shiki by succeeding on an action with a difficulty equal to the shiki's Possession ability level. Additionally, the oni can absorb this sha from a shiki, and temporarily add the success value of the attack to her own Body, Agility, and Senses. This lasts for a number of minutes (or rounds) equal to the oni's Spirit attribute score.

Note: When using this ability against a samurai, a contested roll is made against the samurai's Spirit: Willpower, or Spirit and the shiki's Possession level as skill, whichever score is higher. Failure means that the shiki is effectively consumed by the oni. It will take one scene for the samurai's soulgems to recover and recraft the embedded shiki; the samurai will recover by the beginning of the next scene. This ability can only be used against a samurai when they are in samurai mode.

Special Tae Rayi

There are special oni resonance abilities that fall out of the purview of Alu and Dii alone. They are powers only heard of in legend. Few oni have the innate mastery of Tae Rayi required to use them.

Only full-blooded oni, not half-oni, have access to these abilities. They can only be taken at the time of character creation. Each of the abilities costs an additional 5 Karma to take upon character creation. The oni may or may not realize that they have the ability to use the power until their time comes.

With GM's permission, an oni character could take one of these powers during an intermission phase. The oni could have unlocked reserves of hidden potential, or realized that she had this ability all along.

MIGHU: THE CALM

Make a contested roll using Empathy: Resonance against an injured character's highest wound rating.

Soul Cost: 5

One can finely manipulate sha to bind and seal wounds, promote healing, cure ailments and bind flesh. This roll is made against a difficulty equal to the highest rated wound on the taget (See Healing in the Combat rules: Light Wound =1, Heavy Wound =2, Critical Wound=3). If this roll succeeds, every additional success over the difficulty level allows the injured player to heal an additional wound box.

The Dead box cannot be healed with this ability.

TSE-YI: THE CLOAK

A Spirit: Willpower roll; count successes

Soul Cost: 10

This special oni ability allows the user to create a zone impenetrable to the sha, dispersing it entirely from the immediate area.

Count the number of successes rolled. An invisible zone is created around the oni, with a radius equal to the successes rolled in meters. No shiki or samurai can enter this zone. Those already within the zone are forcibly pushed outside the zone. Tse-Yi complexly negates all damage taken from Buddhist magic and Resonance powers to characters within the protected area.

This zone lasts for a number of rounds equal to the oni's Spirit attribute score.

EJAH: THE BLINDING GALE

A Body: Resonance roll; count successes

Soul Cost: 20

Using Ejah, an oni can pull sha energy within herself, and resonate it to amplify their physical abilities beyond their normal limits. It is an ability cited in old legends.

The number of successes gained is the number of rounds that the power lasts. For that duration, the oni can reroll all success dice on physical actions once, exactly like the kongohki Overdrive ability. Just like the Overdrive ability, any additional successes count towards the total, but are not rerolled again.

This power pushes the body past its limits, and strains the oni in unimaginable ways. When Ejah has finished, the oni takes physical damage equal to [(15-Body) x (Number of successes when Ejah was rolled)]. Most oni simply pass out from the strain.

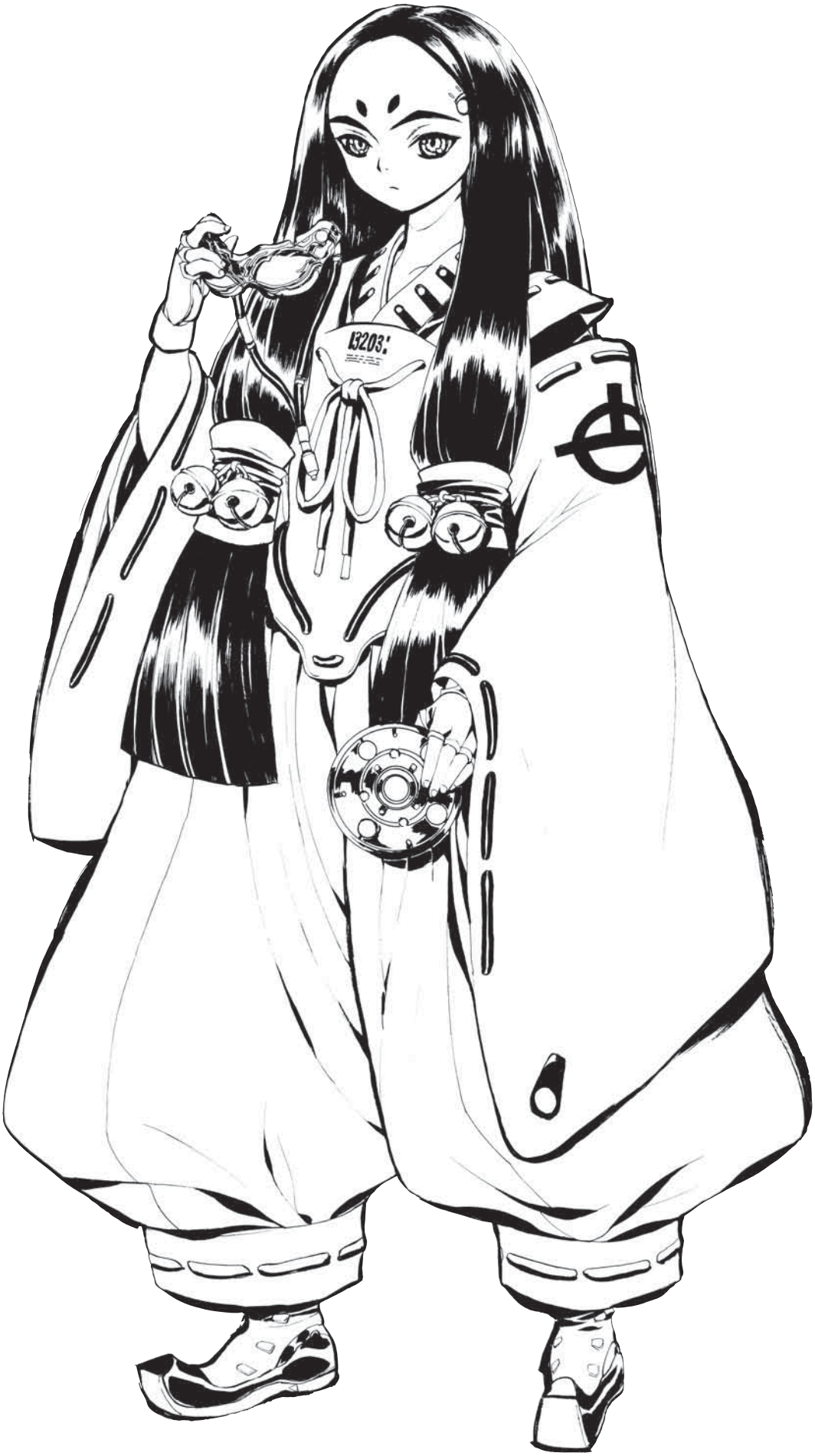
KU-YAU: CLAWS OF LIGHT

Soul Cost: 5

Some oni can manipulate the sha, folding it in on itself until it becomes sharp and luminous like a blade or animal claws. This ability allows the oni to make an attack using this bright sword or set of claws, using Agility: Resonance for the attack. The damage rating of this weapon equals the oni's Spirit score.

Since the sha weapon does not actually have a physical form, the opponent cannot use Unarmed Combat or Melee Combat skills to parry this attack. Only Evasion can be used.

It costs the oni 5 additional Soul per round to maintain Ku-Yau.





SHINTO RULES

For agents of the Shinto Priesthood, the skill level of Shinto is actually the character's *rank* within the organization. The higher the skill is, the higher the character's rank within the Priesthood (Taira, Kakari, Ka, Bu) and the more severe the character's duties are.

When performing Shinto rituals, a player can spend Kiai for the effect of temporarily raising the Shinto skill level for that roll with the GM's permission. However, this is a one-time boost to the character's affinity with the area kami; it does not represent an increase in that character's rank within the organization.

SHINTO RITUALS

Agents have the power to bring about a variety of miraculous effects by praying to the kami. The GM is free to describe these ceremonies, the miracles, and their results as he or she sees fit.

Taira-ranked agents such as *miko* (shrine maidens) and *gyoshi* (traveling priests) are allowed to perform only a small portion of the existing rituals, and these are listed below. All Shinto rituals require the agent to merge with a meikyo soul mirror.

SUMMON RAIN

Activation Difficulty: Special

This ceremony allows the agent to influence the weather. The agent must construct an altar in front of a local shrine and offer up prayers to the kami. This ritual can only be conducted once per day, and it takes between one to three hours after a successful ritual for the weather to be affected. The result of the ceremony is determined by the number of successes on a Station: Shinto roll. The GM either rolls 1d6 and consults the Weather Chart below or chooses the result to decide the current weather conditions, and each success on the Shinto roll allows the player to shift the weather one space on the Weather Chart in the desired direction. For example, if the Summon Rain ritual is performed on a Fair day with a result of two successes on the Shinto roll, the performing agent may choose Light Rain, Cloudy, Fair, or Clear Blue Sky as the new weather condition. While a sacrificial killing is not a requirement for this ceremony, some find that spilling blood aids the ritual's chances of success. It is for this reason, according to an agent named Eise, that sacrifice is a part of this ritual in some regions.

Weather Chart	
Die Result	**Weather**
0	Torrential Downpour
1	Heavy Rain
2	Rain
3	Light Rain
4	Cloudy
5	Fair
6	Clear Blue Sky

For current weather conditions, either roll a die on the chart above, or have the GM decide.

WORSHIP

Activation Difficulty: Special

The most important ritual to a gyoshi or miko is the act of worship. By connecting a meikyo to a shrine's holy relic or altar, and then downloading their spirit into the meikyo, an agent can commune with the kami and receive divine aid. They can also try to communicate with or calm a kami.

Shrines are a common sight throughout Tenra, and when the Priesthood discovers a settlement without a shrine, agents are quickly dispatched to establish one. The larger the village or town, the more expansive the shrine usually is.

When worshiping at an established or natural shrine, the agent makes a Station: Shinto roll. The number of successes gained can be "banked" for later use. When the agent chooses, she can make use of those successes herself or grant them to others. Each banked success counts as one success for a die roll of the agent's choosing, and can even be applied after the dice have been rolled. Worship can only be used once per Act.

OMOIKANE

Activation Difficulty: 5

Through the use of this technique, an Agent can gain access to and receive guidance from Omoikane, the wisest of the eight million kami. The agents can, with Omoikane's aid, eavesdrop on scenes in which they are not taking part. By succeeding at a difficulty 5 Shinto roll, the agent can elect to view the scene and hear the conversations.

FORBIDDEN ARTS: ARA-MITAMA

Activation Difficulty: 5

Some uses of Shinto, such as calling upon the aid of cursed kami of a class called Ara-Mitama or "spirits of the wild" are forbidden by the Priesthood. The Ara-

Mitama provide the effect of the forbidden arts. Most of these taboo arts involve ayakashi (strange faerie or demonic spirits) or curses and may not be used without the express permission of an agent's superiors. Being granted boons from the mysterious Ara-Mitama puts the natural order of the universe into a state of imbalance, therefore the Priesthood expressly disallows it.

When attempting to use a forbidden art to ask a favor of a Ara-Mitama, a PC must succeed at a Station: Shinto roll versus a fixed difficulty of 5. A particularly daunting task might require a higher difficulty roll, up to 10 or even more. Other requests, at the discretion of the GM, might be so appropriate to the scenario or story that she can grant the request without a die roll. The number of times a PC may use these arts at their level is limited by her Shinto skill level. The forbidden arts can only be used a number of times per session, as written per each rank. They can only be used more if the agent gains a higher level of Shinto in the middle of an adventure scenario. The number of times an agent can use the powers granted by the spirits of the wild are listed as follows:

Kami Aid Limit	
Skill Level	**Number of uses**
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	Unlimited

The aid chart above applies to all forbidden arts, including Ara-Mitama, Mishaguchi, Amatsumikaboshi and Arahabaki.

Getting help from the kami is a major affair. One has total affinity with the nature spirits native to Tenra, and the agent can communicate with them openly and truly understand them. They can talk to them, and make their request to the kami. If the kami agrees, the aid is granted with no strings attached; no genie-in-the-bottle style "I will grant you your wish as you said, not as you intended". Rather, the kami fully understands the intention and follows through on the request earnestly. Often, communicating with the kami can have profound effects on the agent's psyche or personality when her consciousness returns to the physical plane.

Here are some example boons which can be requested of the Ara-Mitama. In effect, there is no limit to what can be asked upon the Ara-Mitama, as they are the great spirits of the world:

- Protect this village from harm from the upcoming war
- Summon a Great Wolf or a noble Sea Dragon to aid in a battle
- Travel to the heavens to hold court with the kami
- Bring yourself and your companions to another continent quickly
- Destroy a village
- Protect a city from an earthquake (difficulty 10)
- Travel in time to Jinrai, before the Fall (difficulty 15)
- Bring a companion back to life (difficulty 15)

FORBIDDEN ARTS: MISHAGUCHI

Activation Difficulty: 6

Mishaguchi (Misha-Guchi) is a major example of the kami residing in ancient trees and giant boulders. Mishaguchi can bring a bountiful harvest when pleased, or cause a terrible blight when ignored.

The user of this art is able to summon a small but powerful tornado centering on herself. The tornado lasts for a number of rounds equal to the user's Station.

The tornado acts as a barrier 5 meters in diameter. No objects or creatures may enter or leave the area surrounded by the tornado.

FORBIDDEN ARTS: AMATSUMIKABOSHI

Activation Difficulty: 9

The wicked god Amatsumikaboshi (Amatsu-Mikaboshi) is considered both the strongest and most evil of the kami, with enough power to bring down the stars. By using this forbidden technique an agent can wipe an urban area of up to one square kilometer completely off the map, destroying it utterly. However, this request deals no damage to PCs, and it does no damage to NPCs of the GM's choosing.

This power may only be used once per session, no matter the agent's skill level.

FORBIDDEN ARTS: ARAHABAKI

Activation Difficulty: 12

Originally the patron kami of an ancient tribe, Arahabaki (Ara-Habaki) has been incorporated into the Priesthood's pantheon.

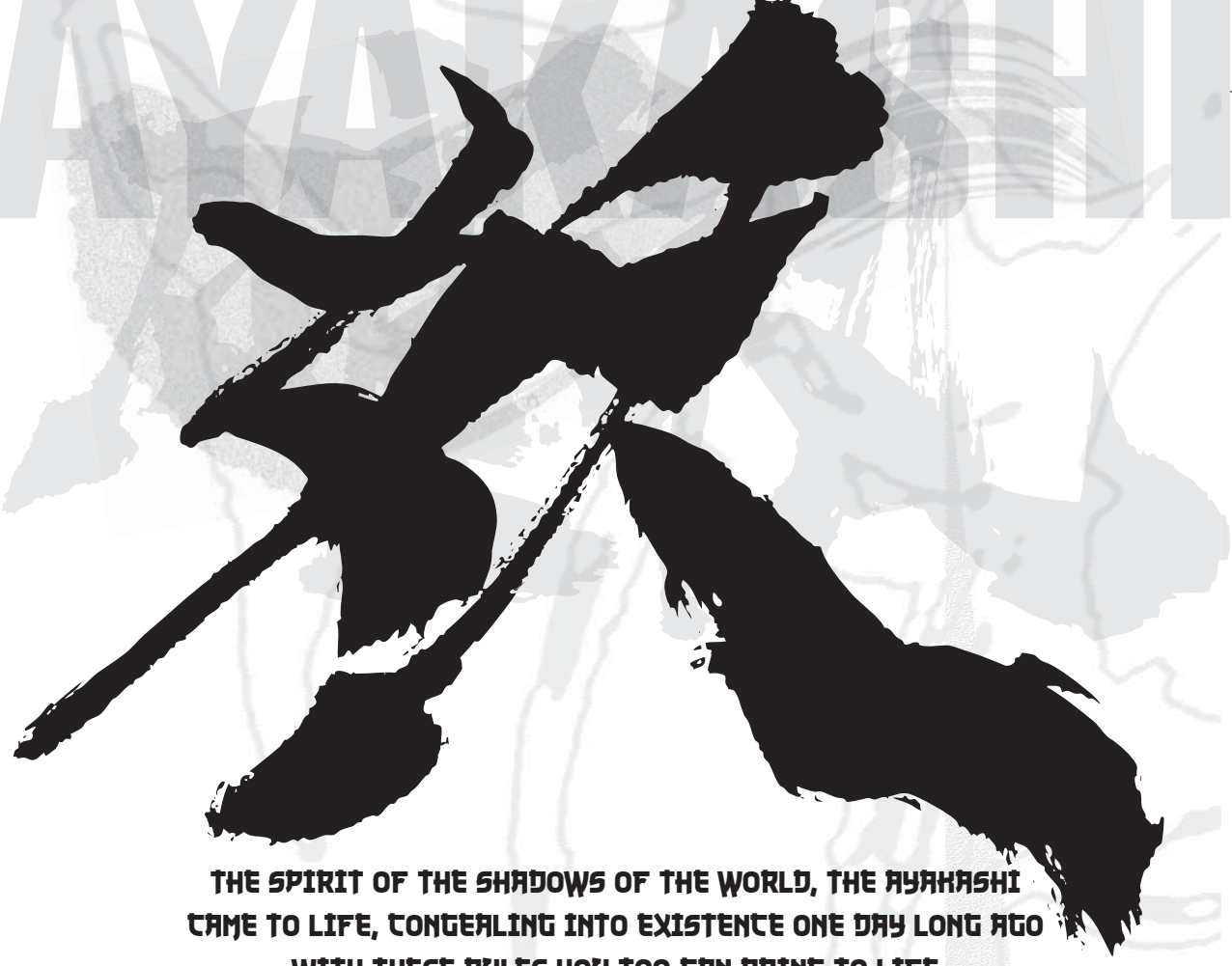
Through the use of this technique the user can call down lighting on one target within visual range. Released from the heavens above Tenra by the great god Arahabaki himself, this lightning never misses.

The damage caused by the lightning is based on the Agent's Spirit attribute and Shinto skill. See the chart below for details.

This technique may only be used outdoors, and can only be used once per session.

Arahabaki Damage Chart	
Shinto Level	**Damage**
2	Spirit x10
3	Spirit x20
4	Spirit x30
5	Spirit x100





THE SPIRIT OF THE SHADOWS OF THE WORLD, THE AYAKASHI CAME TO LIFE, CONGEALING INTO EXISTENCE ONE DAY LONG AGO
WITH THESE RULES YOU TOO CAN BRING TO LIFE
THE HIDDEN SPIRITS OF TENRA

THE AYAKASHI

CREATING AYAKASHI

The rules presented here are for creating ayakashi characters, both player characters and non-player characters.

Unfortunately, the rules are incomplete, for the ayakashi will never truly understand humans, nor will humans come to fully understand the ayakashi. However, these rules will attempt to make sense of their existence, and base them on the same elements used to create people in the game. In the end, the true nature of the ayakashi, or the true nature of a single spirit, can only be discovered in play.

The steps for creating an ayakashi NPC are as follows:

1) Choose a species
2) Create an ayakashi concept
3) Assign points to attributes
4) Pick yohjutsu powers
5) Choose skills
6) Pick special weaknesses (taboos, vulnerabilities, goals)

Rules for creating ayakashi or half-ayakashi characters appear at the end of this chapter.

Choose a Species

In general, there are four species of ayakashi. Ayakashi non-player characters are built using "character generation points", quite unlike normal character generation for player characters (for player character ayakashi and half-ayakashi, see the end of this section). The species that is chosen determines how many character generation points the GM should use to create the character. While that would be a hard number for player character ayakashi, the GM is encouraged to use the point limits as guidelines that can be bent for effect.

When picking abilities, you do not have to spend all the character generation points.

Ayakashi are not Wandering Monsters!

There might be a temptation to craft a bunch of various ayakashi, and have them step in as low-level minions or "zako" (small fry) monsters for the PCs to slay as they journey from place to place, like a game of Final Fantasy. Some ayakashi are of course hostile towards humans, but they shouldn't be popping up all over in every act to be simply used as sword fodder or to set up a fight because the GM couldn't think of a better way to pace the game.

Ayakashi that appear in the game should be rare, definitely few and far between. Most humans will never encounter an ayakashi (if they're lucky), but PCs are special. However, ayakashi are almost alien. Most are hard or impossible to find or communicate with. When using them, make sure to have a reason for them to be present. They might be the true antagonists in a scenario, but if you're using them for random combat encounters as the PCs travel from town to town or throwing them in for no real reason that relates to the story, then you're probably better off using human bandits instead. Move the story along without engaging in too many random monster fights.

Henge: The Different, The Transformed

Character Generation Points: 600

The Henge are living things that were changed into something else. They still retain some semblance of their animal or human form, but they are now far more than such simple creatures. They often take the form of animals or half-animals, though larger than normal and possessing great intelligence, wisdom and spiritual energy.

Tsukumo-gami: The Artifacts

Character Generation Points: 550

The Tsukumo-gami were nonliving things that changed into something else. Perhaps it was a handheld object. Perhaps it was a large object or even a place. However, over the long years it slowly came to be possessed by a living spirit and became… something else. Perhaps the spirit was once a human spirit, pulled from nature and given a shape and form that it did not desire. Or perhaps the spirit is a collection of deep feelings of other humans or ayakashi, which congealed and settled over time into a living entity.

Yokai: The Monstrous

Character Generation Points: 650

The yokai take shape from the power of pure human hatred, or from a lost soul. They are living curses of the land, born to hate humans (which most eat or kill). They are the monsters in the dark that people think of when they hear "ayakashi". Unlike most of the other ayakashi, though, the reason that they exist, as well as their monstrous goals, are often easily understood or discovered. The yokai are knowable…and they are to be feared.

Ara-mitama: The Deep Spirits, The Gods of the Wild
Character Generation Points: 800

It's probably more correct to say that the ara-mitama are gods and not ayakashi. They are great, vague entities that the very spirit of the earth created and brought to life. Some ara-mitama seem to be the physical embodiment of the Shinto kami. Others seem to be spirits born of sin or evil and are a curse which the very earth expelled into physical form.

Create an Ayakashi Concept

Before continuing onwards with creation, you should think of at least a few things about the ayakashi being created. You don't have to come up with every last detail before moving on, but some thought should go into some basic questions to get you started on creating a unique spirit.

Henge
- What kind of animal is it based on?
- How old is it?
- What is special about its appearance?
- Why did it transform into a spirit?

Tsukumo-gami
- What is the object that it is based on?
- How long ago was it created?
- What is special about its appearance?
- Why did it transform into a spirit?

Yokai
- Why did it form?
- What is it trying to do?
- What is special about its appearance?

Ara-mitama
- What is it?
- Does it have a goal?
- What does it do?

Assign Points to Attributes

Like other characters, ayakashi also make use of the seven attributes. However, most are quite different or alien from normal human beings, so there can be a lot of variance in their attributes. Some have scores above 10 or as low as 0. A score of 0 indicates that the attribute has no meaning for this creature.

For example, monsters that have no concept or understanding of the human heart would have no Empathy score. A spiritual creature with no physical form would have no Body attribute.

When assigning points to attributes, for every ten character generation points spent you may raise one attribute one point. A Body score of 5 would cost 50 points.

Next, write down sub-attributes for the ayakashi. These are based on the attributes, and work exactly the same as for creating player characters.

Vitality = Body + Spirit

Soul = Knowledge + Spirit x 2

Wound Gauge:

Light Wounds = Body

Heavy Wounds = Body / 2

Critical Wounds = Body / 4

Dead Box = 1

Pick Yohjutsu Powers

In the world of Tenra, people use the character "Yoh" (which symbolizes fey, weird, strange, or monstrous) to write the word "ayakashi." Yohjutsu ("Art or Way of the Ayakashi") is then the strange and monstrous powers and arts that the ayakashi-born wield.

The yohjutsu powers that ayakashi have are not special in their eyes. For an ayakashi, using a yohjutsu power feels as natural to them as using our hands do to us humans. It is a natural tool for that creature.

Like skills, yohjutsu powers are scored in rank levels or "dots" (Skilled/Advanced/Master/Supreme). The higher the score in that power, the more generation points it costs. Please see the following chart for yohjutsu power costs:

2 dots/basic	5 points
3 dots/advanced	15 points
4 dots/master	35 points
5 dots/supreme	75 points

While a "supreme" ability score is rare, some sacred or godlike ayakashi have at least one ability which is ranked at that special score of 5 dots. They are truly fearsome creatures.

For every yohjutsu power taken, write it down as if it were a separate skill. For example, an ayakashi character might have the "skills" Healing 2, Invisibility 4 and Natural Weapon 3. Keep track of each power separately. The number represents the ability rank or strength of that particular yohjutsu power.

Ayakashi characters do not often use their yohjutsu powers like skills. Instead, their level simply represent the potency of their power. They normally use another skill when making use of their power (like Willpower for Fear, or Marksman for Projectile Weapons).

A special note: Skills that affect the mind like Mindreading, Fear, and Illusion, as well as abilities like Invisibility, work on all characters. This includes kongohki and armours.

The following is a list of known ayakashi abilities.

DOMINATION

This ability allows an ayakashi, usually through unnatural charm and charisma or else hypnotism or sub-vocalization techniques, to charm and command people.

To use this ability successfully, the spirit must win in a contest of Willpower versus Willpower against its intended target.

The amount that the ayakashi succeeds by in the above roll becomes the "damage" caused by the charm. Record this number. When the conditions for the charm commands change—or if the character attempts to resist—the target can try to resist by making another Willpower roll (in combat, this roll is made during the interaction phase). The target difficulty will be equal to the "damage" caused by

Limiting Ayakashi Abilities

As a GM, you may be preparing a fight against a mysterious and evil ayakashi. Perhaps you want to give it a powerful Projectile Weapon ability. Perhaps it breathes fire. You give it a 5 in that ability, because you want the high damage and rate of fire. However, this introduces a few complications. "A range of a kilometer away? For fire breath? It doesn't make sense. 30 meters makes far more sense." Feel free to exercise your power as a GM and lower things like range, damage, or other parts of the ability to coincide with your concept of the ayakashi and its abilities.

However, keep the ability score rated at the highest ranking ability used. For example, Projectile Weapons 5 gives a damage of +20, a Rate of Fire of 12, and a Range of 1km. If it makes more sense, you could keep the damage at +20, lower the Rate of Fire to 9 or 6, and the range to 100 or 30m (or another arbitrary number). However, since we are still using that damage of +20, we will still have to buy the ability Projectile Weapons 5 for this ayakashi.

the ayakashi in the original domination roll. If the target succeeds, she can resist the domination.

It takes one action in a combat round to activate this ability.

Domination Level and Effect

2: The target cannot attack or stand in the way of the ayakashi.

3: The target cannot go against the ayakashi's wishes.

4: The target will turn against the enemies of the ayakashi.

5: The target gives complete loyalty to the ayakashi and follows all commands it gives.

DRAINING WEAPONS

This ability covers ayakashi natural weapons that do damage, which continue to do damage over time, such as poison, acid, or corruption.

By default, this attack has a damage rating, a range, and a number of rounds that the effects last. The number of the ability is the number used for the skill roll when using the weapon (usually with Senses or Body).

When draining damage is received, the damage will take effect every interaction phase. When the ayakashi attacks, the final damage rating that it does is recorded. The victim can then try to resist future damage. That damage rating becomes the difficulty number to resist damage. Make a Spirit: Willpower roll each interaction phase: Each success reduces the amount of damage received during that phase. This roll has to be made each interaction phase for a number of phases equal to the draining weapon's score. See chart below:

Draining Weapons Effect by Level

2: Damage +5, Range 5 meters, Lasts 3 rounds

3: Damage +10, Range 10 meters, Lasts 6 rounds

4: Damage +15, Range 15 meters, Lasts 9 rounds

5: Damage +30, Range 30 meters, Lasts 15 rounds

If a second Draining Weapon attack is made after the first (given that both hit and damage the intended target), ignore the continuous damage of the first attack, and use the damage rating for the second attack from that point on. If, later, before the second attack's damage is resisted by willpower, yet another attack connects and does damage, again simply ignore the draining damage from the second attack and start over with the damage of the third attack. Do not "stack" damages over multiple successful attacks. Every Draining Weapon attack effect is replaced by any subsequent Draining Weapon attack effects.

Domination as a Deterrent

Sometimes it's fun to have a boss NPC show up and gloat at the player characters from time to time. Be careful of thinking that Domination is a good barrier to block the advances of the player characters. Players are resourceful, and if you're not careful, the first time the ayakashi appears might be the last if the players have enough Aiki chits to quickly bypass Domination and take out the ayakashi mid-gloat.

Be aware of this fact: No single ayakashi power is impenetrable.

FEAR

Some ayakashi exude an aura of fear so potent and oppressive that living things cannot move once they feel this primal fear.

When using Fear, a spirit engages in a Spirit: Willpower contest with an opponent. If the spirit wins, the target feels the effect of the fear.

When making that contest, write down the number of successes that the ayakashi made over the opponent's Willpower (the "damage" of the attack). In the interaction phase, the character can make Willpower checks using the "damage" as a difficulty number. If the character fails, they remain stuck at that fear level (see chart below). If they succeed, they can break free of the effects of fear.

It requires one action for the ayakashi to engage this ability.

Fear Level

2: You cannot move, but you may still act.

3: You cannot move, nor can you take any actions.

4: Like 3, but you also cannot perform a counter-attack or take any half-actions. You are petrified with fear. At this level, a number of creatures up to or equal to the number of the ayakashi's Spirit within its sight range are affected by this ability. The ayakashi rolls once, and all characters roll to resist separately.

5: As above, but the effects can spread to cover an entire city and affect all of its inhabitants.

FLYING

The ayakashi possesses the power of flight, and can freely fly through the air.

The amount of weight the ayakashi can carry and the speed which it can travel is decided by the level of this ability. If the ayakashi tries to carry more or is weight down by more than it can carry, its speed is reduced by half. For aerial maneuvers, the ayakashi uses the Movement skill.

Flying Level and Effect

2: 1.6km (one mile)/minute, can carry up to 60kg

3: 2000m/minute, can carry up to 100kg

4: 4000m/minute, can carry up to 200kg

5: 10,000m/minute (one half the speed of sound), no limit to carrying capacity

HALLUCINATION

This is the ayakashi power to create and control illusions in others.

The ayakashi makes a contested Spirit: Willpower roll against the opponent. The spirit must win for the hallucination to take effect.

Record the number that the ayakashi succeeded by (for future resistance attempts), then determine how long that the hallucination lasts naturally, based on the Hallucination ability and Empathy of the ayakashi (see below).

During that period, the ayakashi controls what the characters see and experience. It won't be too long before the ayakashi tries to have something surreal or dangerous happen to the characters. Each time that happens, the victims may make another attempt to become free of the illusion with another Willpower roll. The difficulty number is equal to the number that the ayakashi succeeded by originally.

It costs one action to engage the hallucination ability.

Hallucination Level and Effect

2: Empathy score in hours

3: Empathy score in days

4: Empathy score in years

5: Forever

HEALING

This ability measures the superior healing ability that some ayakashi possess. It could be because their bodies naturally heal faster, or that the damage simply disappears at a mental command. Healing occurs during the interaction phase. The numbers below represent the amount of vitality points regained automatically each round.

Healing Level and Effect

2: 3 points

3: 5 points

4: 10 points

5: 30 points

INCORPOREAL

Some ayakashi have the ability to turn incorporeal and pass through solid objects such as walls, floors, rocks, or other creatures. At the cost of 3 Soul, an ayakashi can use this ability for one round (or one minute of game-time when not in combat).

It costs one action to activate this ability.

This ability has no ranks. It costs 15 points to purchase.

INVISIBILITY

Ayakashi using this ability can become invisible. When an ayakashi uses this ability, all of their actions are considered sneak attacks for the purposes of combat. The level of the ability determines when the ability stops working. This also works against mechanica and other life-detecting abilities.

It takes one action to activate this ability.

Invisibility Level and Effect

2: Reverts to visible after moving, half-actions, actions

3: Reverts to visible after half-actions and actions, but can still move

4: Reverts to visible after taking an action

5: The ayakashi can remain invisible indefinitely

MINDREADING

Some ayakashi possess the mysterious ability to read the minds of people.

To use this ability, the ayakashi must succeed in an opposed roll against the target's Willpower using the ayakashi's Spirit: Willpower, or Empathy: Willpower. If the ayakashi succeeds, the results are equal to the ability level (see below).

It costs one action to perform this ability in combat.

Mindreading Level and Effect

2: The victim's surface thoughts (only a few seconds' worth) are read.

3: The ayakashi can read thoughts that the victim is trying to keep hidden.

4: The victim's entire memory is an open book which the ayakashi can freely access.

5: Same as above, but the victim has no idea the ayakashi is reading her thoughts.

Remember that abilities like Mindreading, Fear, Illusion and the like work on all characters. This includes kongohki and armours.

MULTIPLE FORMS

With this skill, the ayakashi has the classic ninja-like power of creating look-alike copies of itself which can move and act as it does. The number of copies it creates depends on the level of the multiple forms ability taken.

Creating copies costs one Soul for each copy created. The copies can use all abilities of the original spirit, except for any abilities that require using Soul (like creating copies of the copy). Also, if the copy takes even one single point of damage, it disappears.

Copies are good for reconnaissance, but are classically used in battle to distract and overwhelm an enemy. If a character wants to try to detect which copy is the real ayakashi, they can make a Notice roll versus the ayakashi's Stealth skill. Success means that they have spotted the real ayakashi (unless the ayakashi tries to create more copies, or uses stealth to try to obfuscate its form with its copies).

It takes one action in combat to perform this ability.

Multiple Form Level and Effect

2: One copy can be created.

3: Three copies can be created.

4: 5 copies can be created.

5: Up to 10 copies can be created, or instead one perfect copy of the ayakashi (including a Vitality/Wound track, and use of Soul abilities).

NATURAL WEAPON

Natural weapons are things like claws, talons and fangs, things that the ayakashi were usually born with. Each level of natural weapon gives a damage bonus. In case of tsukumo-gami, this means that their physical form is a weapon (like a demonic sword) or contains weapon-like components like sharp edges.

The ability level of the natural weapons ability determines the damage rating for attacks. Natural weapons can be used with the Unarmed Combat or Melee Weapons skills (whichever is highest).

If the weapon is retractable and hidden, like the claws or fangs of human-like ayakashi, then it takes a half-action to unveil the weapon.

Natural Weapon Level and Effect

2: Damage +5

3: Damage +10

4: Damage +15

5: Damage + Body x 2

POSSESSION

Some ayakashi have the ability to enter and take control of the form of living or non-living things. This ability is Possession.

When using possession, the ayakashi must make a contested Spirit: Willpower roll against the target's Spirit: Willpower. If the ayakashi succeeds, it takes control of the target's body.

When the ayakashi controls the target, it can use any of the target's skills, attributes or abilities as it sees fit once. However, if it takes further actions, the target is still aware and can attempt to resist this action. Make another opposing Willpower roll to see if the victim can stop the ayakashi from completing the action. If the ayakashi fails, the possession is broken.

The spirit is able to possess samurai and kugutsu. It takes one action to possess another.

Possession is a special ability and as such it doesn't have "ranks". It costs 35 generation points to take this ability.

PROJECTILE ATTACK

Projectile attacks are things like electricity bolts, breath of chilling ice, spine needles and the like. Decide the type of attack this entails for the ayakashi.

Senses: Marksman is used for attacks. The level of the ability determines the damage, rate of fire and range.

Projectile Attack Level and Effect

2: Damage +5, RoF 3, Range 5 meters

3: Damage +10, RoF 6, Range 30 meters

4: Damage +15, RoF 9, Range 100 meters

5: Damage +20, RoF 12, Range 1km

Be Careful With Possession!

Possession, if not used carefully, can really sour a game. Just be aware that some players don't want to lose complete control of their character under conditions where there is no chance they can resist.

Example: Possess a samurai with an ayakashi with an extremely high Spirit and Willpower score so high that normal PCs have no chance to resist, then make the samurai set fire to an orphanage. Not cool.

RESISTANCE

Resistance can be anything from iron-like hair or fur, natural armor plating, skin like stone or steel, or other physical defenses. Resistance simply adds a number of points to the spirit's Vitality score.

Resistance Level and Effect

2: +5 Vitality

3: +15 Vitality

4: +20 Vitality

5: Vitality is doubled

SHAPECHANGE

With this ability, an ayakashi can mimic the form of anything it has seen once. If someone suspects that a person or object might be a shape-changer in disguise, they can try to pierce the spirit's disguise with a Senses: Notice versus Senses: Stealth roll.

It takes one action in combat to perform this ability.

Shapechange Level and Effect

2: Reverts to true form after a half-action (including speaking) or full action

3: Reverts to true form after an action

4: Reverts to true form after another yohjutsu ability is used

5: This ability can remain active indefinitely

SUPERSPEED

Also referred to as "The fleetness of the Kami", some ayakashi have the ability to move and act faster than the eye can see.

There are no "levels" of superspeed, but there are two versions. The regular version is like the kongohki Overdrive ability. When superspeed is active the ayakashi makes Body, Agility and Senses based rolls with the following change: Every die that comes up as a "success" can be rolled a second time to attempt to get more successes (but not a third). This represents the blinding speed at which it can move and act.

It takes a half-action to start this ability. However, the ayakashi can use this ability for a number of actions equal to its Spirit plus Body attribute ratings per session. The regular version costs 50 generation points.

The advanced version doubles the number of times it can use this ability per session. In addition the second round of successes can be rolled a third time (but not a fourth time). The advanced version costs a total of 150 generation points.

UNDYING

Stab them, burn them, crush or break them; some ayakashi simply refuse to die until they are utterly destroyed. This ability heals wounds and injuries taken in battle. During the interaction phase, consult the ability level to determine which wounds automatically heal:

Undying Level and Effect

2: All light wounds heal

3: All light and heavy wounds heal

4: All light, heavy and critical wounds heal

5: As above, and the ayakashi gets a second Dead Box. Both must be checked for the ayakashi to die permanently.

Choose Skills

Most ayakashi have abilities, skills, and knowledge similar to that of humans.

When choosing skills, consult the following chart to calculate the number of character generation points needed to take the skill at the level written.

Basic:	2 Dots	5 points
Advanced:	3 Dots	15 points
Master:	4 Dots	35 points
Supreme:	5 Dots	75 points

Pick Special Weaknesses

Ayakashi are almost alien creatures which possess supernatural abilities and often unknowable desires. But down to a one, they all have unusual or special weaknesses. Many weaknesses (especially taboos) are the reason behind the unexplainable actions of the ayakashi.

Weaknesses are in a way very similar to character Fates. They often drive the creature or become a reason behind their actions and motivations.

Weaknesses points insert some individuality into the ayakashi and make it truly unique from other ayakashi and creatures. Try to be creative when coming up with new taboos, weaknesses and goals.

All ayakashi have at least one vulnerability. Some have multiple weaknesses.

When taking a weakness, the number of points next to it indicates the number of character generation points received in compensation which can be used to gain more yohjutsu abilities, skill points or attribute points.

Basic: 2 Dots 5 points
Advanced: 3 Dots 15 points
Master: 4 Dots 35 points
Supreme: 5 Dots 75 points

Choose Taboos

Taboos are things that that ayakashi cannot do. It could be something from an everyday (to humans) action, to something reckless or strange.

If by force, accident, or coercion the ayakashi performs that action, then they receive the damage listed. This does not necessarily represent physical damage. Rather, it represents the fact that the ayakashi has become weaker by going against its true nature.

If an ayakashi has the Undying ability, the damage received from breaking taboos does not heal by using that ability. This damage must heal naturally like any other character.

Basic: 2 Dots 10 Vitality
Advanced: 3 Dots 6 Wound Track
Master: 4 Dots 10 Wound Track
Supreme: 5 Dots Dead

Assign Vulnerabilities

Vulnerabilities are things that the ayakashi hates or finds difficult to heal. Any damage that comes specifically from the source of the ayakashi's vulnerability will do more damage than normal.

Resistance will not block damage from Vulnerabilities. Healing will not heal damage caused by Vulnerabilities. They must heal naturally.

Dots	Damage Received
2 Dots/Basic	x2
3 Dots/Advanced	x3
4 Dots/Master	x4
5 Dots/Supreme	Dead Box or else x4

Decide Goals

Goals are the reasons that the ayakashi exist. Ayakashi always push towards their goals, be they knowable or mysterious. In cases of higher ranked goals, these goals are central to the core of the ayakashi's being.

The level of the goal indicates the ayakashi's drive towards completing that goal. Some goals it will perform when it can. For other goals, the ayakashi will not stop or rest until they are fulfilled.

Basic (2 Dots): The ayakashi is passive towards this goal.

Advanced (3 Dots): The ayakashi has an interest in this goal.

Master (4 Dots): The ayakashi actively carries out these goals.

Supreme (5 Dots): If the ayakashi acts against this goal, the ayakashi is destroyed.

Player Character Ayakashi

When creating a player character using the ayakashi or half-ayakashi archetypes, there are several points to be careful of. The rest of the rules in this section apply only to creating ayakashi or half-ayakashi player characters.

First, when assigning attributes, you should use the normal character generation method, although the range for ayakashi PC attributes (1-10) applies to ayakashi PCs as well.

When choosing ayakashi abilities, the character generation point cost becomes the Karma cost to take those abilities. You should plan to take only one ability, or at most a few. You can balance this out by taking weaknesses to gain character generation points. Basically, balance abilities taken against weaknesses taken, and any remaining balance becomes is added to the character's starting Karma.

When creating a half-ayakashi character, you can only choose one weakness That weakness's score must be the same as the highest yohjutsu ability taken (in dots). The full ayakashi template has no limit to the number of special weaknesses one can choose, but the first weakness chosen must be at the same rank as the highest-ranked yohjutsu ability chosen. You should always talk with the GM about the weak points you choose. This is so that the GM can take them into consideration for the scenario and give advice. The weakness might be too staggeringly oppressive, or it could be too light to matter in the game. The GM will help with balancing weak points or just give you a thumbs up after a quick once-over of the abilities and weak points chosen.

In the game, yohjutsu ability advancement (raising the ability one level) can be done as if it were a regular skill. However if you choose a new yohjutsu ability, you can only take it during an Intermission (as if it were a specialty skill).

Weaknesses can also increase in the game. Make sure that if a yohjutsu ability increases a level in the game, that at least one weakness is at the same level. If the highest weakness is lower in rank than the highest yohjutsu ability, immediately raise that one weakness to the same level. Matching the highest weakness to the highest yohjutsu ability cancels out that single ability's Karma cost.

That's all. Abilities and weaknesses aside, make sure you are careful to emphasize that sense of "human-like, and yet different" into the character when role-playing. Ayakashi are rare creatures; make the other players feel this!

Monster Hunting?

If the scenario revolves around hunting down a particular ayakashi, part of the scenario might involve collecting plot points before the final standoff. They could gather herbs to halve the damage of its poison attacks or learn a sutra to gain a bonus against (or nullify) the effects of its fear, possession or hallucination abilities. Learning its vulnerability will help as well.

Just note that ayakashi with multiple abilities rated at 4 or 5 are truly terrifying creatures that will often require a lot of teamwork and planning to overcome.

If an ayakashi has a taboo that might help in damaging or defeating it, it might be an exciting challenge to try to discover that taboo and force or trick the ayakashi into it if possible.



THE ART OF WAR

THE POWER I LONG FOR
THE STRENGTH I DEMAND
WITH THESE TECHNIQUES
MY NAME WILL BECOME LEGEND

WHAT ARE THE "WAR ARTS"?

The Arts of War are special schools of warrior training. They provide a series of tools to overcome, succeed, and kill on the battlefield. In Tenra, all of the various arts of war were born not from the isolated idyllic dojo, but from the battlefield.

These arts are known by various names—such as Kenpo, Kenjutsu, or Kung fu—each one with their own "tools" (in other words, weapons), practice and philosophy. Although their methods may differ, they have the same basic purpose: They provide the warrior the most efficient methods to kill or defeat their enemies. But within Tenra's war arts there exists no special etiquette or complicated forms to memorize. Those are exercises born in periods of peace, techniques to attempt to carry the purity of the style even while it stagnates from lack of real-world use. In Tenra, war is constant. Techniques are tested and refined on real battlefields. Power is everything.

After experiencing hundreds of battles, those that are especially gifted at defeating their enemies are said to begin feeling a special "something" in the midst of combat. Those who have felt that "something" indeed struggle to discover and define its essence. They do so even at the expense of finding a lasting inner peace. Only the strong can rise from the tattered wasteland that this mental struggle leaves behind. That is the way of the arts of war.

PRACTITIONER OF THE WAR ARTS: THE ESSENTIAL WARRIOR

There are those for whom the art of war is their lifeblood. For these individuals, the skills for killing and winning which they have mastered are their food and drink, their very livelihood in all meanings of the word. They fight to live, and live to fight. It is in the nature of the warrior to make their strength known to the world.

Toki wa sengoku de aru: This is a time of warring states. Most warriors serve a master. Vassal lords of every domain all wish to employ strong minions, for their very lives depend on maintaining a strong army. For this reason, every soldier under their service is instructed in the arts of war. Those who serve their vassal lord teaching the a particular art of war are called War Masters. Most lords employ at least one war master. This serves as both a display of martial power, and prevents other lords from employing that same strong war master.

However, not every warrior serves a lord. Many live as ronin wanderers, roaming the world of Tenra. The story of Karasuma Shiro—said to be founder of the Dragon and Tiger Style—is one of the most well-known. Throughout his life he fought over 400 battles and lost not one. The story goes that one day, finally tiring of battle, he climbed a mountain and took the name Koan Hajime. There, living the life of an ascetic he wrote the Hyoh-jyoh-sho (The Analects of War). He is said to remain there in his mountain hut even to this day.

THE ROYAL TOURNAMENT

For those mercenaries who aim for fame and glory, the battlefield is an opportunity to show off their skills. Of course, on the battlefield, danger lurks in every shadow.

First of all, there is the obvious danger of dying in battle. Even the strongest adepts of war are still human. No matter how much fame and glory one has received, it means nothing in death. Another danger is the possibility of defeat. Once a war adept is defeated on the battlefield, any skill he has shown on the battlefield becomes meaningless to his peers. Any rewards or payment the warrior receives depends exclusively on their victories. The same can be said of the vassal lord who employs him. No matter how numerous or how powerful warriors may be, the lord still risks losing them in battle.

It is for this reason that the Royal Tournaments were created. The most famous of these is the Hisabuki Royal Tournament. Great warriors such Kiba Kenyuki (a disciple of the Southern Seas Style) and Ujigen Kanemasa (who would later become the samurai general of the land of Kasen) who once took part in the Tournament have made themselves known across the land. But perhaps more than those famed warriors, it was the one known as "The Devil-faced Boy" (Kimen Youji) who made the event so popular. The Devil-faced Boy gained his name from the horrible mask he wore to battle. Using his own unique fighting style, he defeated famed warriors such as Kiba and Ujigen one after the other. Then after receiving his reward, he simply disappeared, never to be heard from again.

The regents of Hisabuki put great importance in the arts of war, and spent much of their resources training and raising warriors for generations. However, not long after Devil-faced Boy's victory, the land descended into civil war over the regent's chair, eventually resulting in the assassination of the regent's entire family by a former war master.

Such brutal tales are simply part of the harsh reality of Tenra.

ART OF WAR RULES

"Art of War" is a skill type which weapon masters and martial warriors use to enhance their combat abilities. Those who have this skill can perform various specialized offensive and defensive maneuvers.

In some cases, the Art of War rules conflict with the normal rules. The Art of War rules always trump any conflicting normal rules.

THE ART OF WAR SKILL AND FIGHTING STYLES

The Art of War skill is treated as a separate skill for each style. If a character has more than one style available to him (from selecting multiple archetypes), record it on the character sheet as separate skills. (Example: Art of War: Crescent Moon Style.)

For each rank the character has in this skill, she gains a new technique. Attribute checks and the corresponding skill vary according to the individual techniques. There is almost no instance that a character will need to make an actual "Art of War" skill check. Instead, it is a placeholder which shows the warrior's rank at that art. When a character uses a technique, make a check based on the attribute and skill listed in the individual technique descriptions (in most cases, an attack combat roll) to determine success.

Combining Techniques

Characters gain all the techniques of their style available to their rank. For example, a character with a rank of Master (4) can use the technique associated with that rank in addition to all the techniques available below it (2, 3, etc). The character can use all techniques available to them from the same style at the same time, even in the same roll. However, some techniques have restrictions when used with other techniques. A character can always choose to use a technique by itself.

As noted above, a character can take more than one Art of War style. However, techniques from two different styles cannot be combined or used at the same time; they are so different, requiring different (sometimes even completely opposing) ways of thinking, training, and muscle memory, that it is impossible to combine them at the same time. Any check made can only use one skill and one attribute. Therefore, attack techniques and defense techniques cannot be combined into one roll and must be rolled separately. Finally, if you end up in a situation where there appear to be multiple damage modifiers for some technique or combination and you are not sure which to use, use the higher modifier.

Techniques

Southern Seas One-Blade Style

Kai-Nan-Ittou-Ryu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

This school, which rose to become the main sword-style of Nanbo Province, was founded by Urabe Ganku, the samurai general of Kijikura. Urabe developed this style though actual combat, in which he focused completely on the attack, paying no concern to defense. Those who follow the Southern Seas One-Blade Style teach that one must abandon all distracting thoughts, as well as regret, in order to master the style.

The essence of the Southern Seas One-Blade Style is found in the strength of its swordsmanship; it contains no forms of defense whatsoever.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): One Sword
Only those who have gained an exceptional mastery of the sword from rigorous training are given their first teaching. This teaching is known as "One Sword" and those who have mastered it can use Body (instead of Agility) when using the Melee Weapons skill in combat, both for attack and defense.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Self-Sacrificing Strike
You discard everything save for your blade when you strike. However, this is not an easy task. Only those with strength of mind, who can focus solely on defeating their enemy, can master this. Self-Sacrificing Strike allows an attacker to force an Aiuchi attack on a defender. You must use Body when rolling to hit with this style. This technique is only used when a sword master makes an attack, not to defend.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): No-Body No-Mind
Even the will to defeat your enemy is abandoned. Only the blade which focuses on the attack remains, ripping through the enemy even if the wielder has fallen. At the "No-Body No-Mind" stage, nothing remains in the mind other than the attack. It may be more accurate to refer to this style as a stage of enlightenment rather than a sword-style.

Once you have reached this rank, your Aiuchi attack will still remain effective even if you have been knocked unconscious by taking damage from an enemy while using Self-sacrificing Strike. Your attack hits even as you fall.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Indomitable Sacrifice Strike
It is said that Urabe Ganku could strike with his sword with such speed that even if his opponent drew first to strike, Urabe could cut the opponent in half even before being hit. Reaching the stage of No-Mind and mastering not only strength in swordsmanship but speed as well, he could not be stopped.

At this final stage of the Southern Seas One-Blade Style, you can always damage your opponent first when using Self-sacrificing Strike. If you strike down your opponent as a result, they lose their opportunity to attack and fall unconscious or die before they can hit you.

CLARITY OF HEAVEN STYLE

Ten-Shin-Gan-Ryu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

The founder of this style was Tenma Yoshimitsu, a Bright Lotus Buddhist priest. Wishing to defeat his opponents without killing them, he meditated on a way to fell his opponents. The answer, which led him to develop this style, was to simply deprive the opponent of their ability to fight.

If one cannot use their hands, they cannot hold a sword. If one cannot use their legs, they cannot advance to attack. However, in actual combat, striking the limbs of one's opponent is exceedingly difficult and requires extremely precise skill with the sword. Accurate swordsmanship is the essence of this style.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Night-Blade
It is said that those who master Clarity of the Heavens can even use their sword accurately in the darkness of night. You can use Senses instead of Agility when rolling to hit in combat, both in attack and defense.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Four Limb Strike
You aim for all four of your enemy's limbs, preventing him from using them. Any damage from this attack is automatically taken as Wounds, and the attacker can choose where to assign the damage (except for the Dead Box). You must use Senses when rolling to hit, and this maneuver can only used for attacks.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Critical Chakra Pierce
Some opponents maintain the will to fight even after they have lost the use of their arms and legs. With this technique you strike your enemy's vital areas, quickly defeating them without causing pain. This is the same as Four Limb strike, but you can also choose to assign damage to Vitality as well as Wounds. You must use Senses when rolling to hit, and this maneuver can only used for attacks.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Sundering Blade

It is said that the founder of this style, Tenma Yoshimitsu, was once attacked by hundreds of assassins. He defeated them by destroying their weapons, leaving them otherwise unharmed. Whenever you damage an opponent, you can choose to distribute the damage to his weapon instead.

When using this technique, you can choose to damage or destroy any weapon in the opponent's possession on a successful attack roll, not just the weapon he is using to defend. You must use Senses when rolling to hit, and this maneuver can only used for attacks.

TRUE ILLUSION STYLE

Shin-Ei-Ryu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

Founded by the onmyoji Kuga Tousai, this Art of War uses illusion and deception. Kuga is said to have been the most beautiful man in three domains, but hidden beneath that beauty lurked a deadly assassin, greatly feared by his enemies.

When one is normally confronted by an enemy, both are able to see the other's eyes and blade. However, victims of the True Illusion Style are struck down in an instant, even before they are even aware what has happened.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Feint Strike

Those who master this technique learn how to confuse their opponent with their sword. As a result they can use Knowledge when rolling to hit in combat, both in attack and defense.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Light and Shadow

You confuse your opponent with sword play, providing you with an opening to attack. Knowledge must be used when rolling to hit with this technique, and it is only used in attacks, not defense or counter-attacks. Once this technique is declared in combat, whoever succeeds in the attack doubles the difference of the number of successes rolled before adding any modifiers to damage.

For example: A difference of 5 successes when using a +3 damage weapon means a total damage of 13: 5 successes times 2, then add 3 for the weapon damage. Remember that this applies to whoever wins the attack, meaning that you risk taking the extra damage yourself if you lose.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Light and Shadow Reversal

Whether one strikes or is struck by an opponent, a certain amount of unnecessary movement occurs. Those who are not careful provoke an opportunity to be struck. Those who have mastered this technique can perform the difficult task of analyzing their opponent's attack while simultaneously making a feint attack with their sword.

The result is that the Light and Shadow maneuver can be used in both defense (counter-attacks) as well as attacks.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): The Three Year Kill

It is said that wounds would sometimes seem to suddenly appear on the enemies of founder Kuge Tousai in battle. They would fall without even realizing they were hit. The most beautiful technique of the Shin-Ei school is one that confuses Death itself.

With this technique you can choose to delay damage dealt to your opponent for up to 3 years. When you complete your attack, write down the damage the attack will deal

and defer that full damage to a later time; the opponent takes no damage right now. You may choose to deal all of that damage instantly, at once, at any time during the following three-year period. You must use Knowledge when rolling to hit with this technique, and it is only used in attacks.

EMPTY MIND STYLE

Gashin-Kikuu-Ryu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

Masters of this style use an *iai* (ee-EYE) quick-draw technique, confronting their enemies with their blade sheathed. Waiting until the last possible moment, they strike and return their blade to its scabbard with blinding speed. For those of the Empty Mind Style, their power comes from the speed of their sword.

The strength of this technique lies in the attacker not allowing the opponent to see their weapon. The enemy is left open, if for only but a moment, with no time to react. The warrior focuses all his energy on finding that perfect opening to strike his opponent, only then moving in for the kill. Finding that perfect moment to strike requires great spiritual discipline. This can be said to be the essence of this style.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Quick Draw Technique

Using an "iai" quick-draw technique, you confront your enemy with sword in sheath, drawing and striking in an instant. Once the attack is finished, you return the sword to its sheath with equal speed. You can use Spirit when rolling to hit in combat, both in attack and defense.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Mist

Waiting for the perfect opening to strike, you move in for the kill. Moving at such speed that your strike appears nothing more than a blurry mist, you perform multiple strikes against your opponent. Mist can only be used when defending, and Spirit must be used when rolling to hit. Once this technique is declared in combat, whoever succeeds in the attack can reduce the loser's number of successes to zero. In other words, all of the winner's successes are applied to damage and the loser's successes are ignored. Remember that this applies to whoever wins the attack, meaning that you risk taking the above extra damage if you lose.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Floating Cloud

The essence of Mist is to wait for an opportunity, an opening with which to make a skilled strike. The Floating Cloud technique focuses on using aggressive speed to overwhelm the opponent and create that very opportunity.

With the Floating Cloud technique, a warrior can use the Mist ability for attacks as well as defensive actions.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
Tiger's Claw

Those who have sufficiently developed their mental capacities in battle, can use their own will or *kenge* (sword-spirit) as a weapon.

By releasing your mental energy, you can make a ranged attack using your melee weapon as a focus. Use Spirit: Melee Weapons when rolling to hit. The damage rating of this attack is equal to the character's Spirit plus the damage modifier of the melee weapon being used. Regardless of the weapon used, it can only target one opponent and has a range equal to your Spirit in meters. Because the sword-spirit has no substance, your opponent may only use the Evasion skill in defense; she cannot parry.

DRAGON AND TIGER UNDER ONE SKY STYLE

Ryuuko-Itten-Ryu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

Two blades are stronger than one. The Dragon and Tiger Under One Sky Style is more than just a dual blade fighting style. Anyone can learn to fight with a weapon in each hand. However, the master of this style fights not just with one blade in each hand, but uses the blades in unison as if they were one.

The origins of this style are a mystery.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Twin Tigers
This is the simplest of all dual blade techniques. Designate one blade as your primary and the other as secondary, and make only one attack roll for both weapons as a normal part of your style. Both weapons strike simultaneously in each attack or counterattack action, providing a +1 bonus to the damage modifier of your primary weapon. The second weapon does not receive its own attack action, rather it only provides the +1 bonus damage modifier to the primary weapon instead of its normal damage bonus.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
Twin Dragons
You manipulate both weapons with equal precision and ease, creating advantages when attacking.

During attack actions (not in defense or counter-attacks), when the number of successes in an attack equals that of your opponent, the result is still a tie; however, you still damage the opponent with the secondary weapon. The opponent will take damage equal to the damage modifier of the secondary weapon.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Dragon and Tiger
This technique represents the peak of two-weapon fighting. Instead of adding a +1 bonus to the damage of the primary weapon in an attack using two weapons (as per Twin Tigers), the damage modifier is equal to the sum of the first weapon's damage modifier plus the second weapon's damage modifier. This maneuver is only used in attacks, not defenses or counter-attacks.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
Dragon Strike, Tiger Storm
Your blades become extensions of your arms. You attack flows in perfect unity, providing both offense and defense at the same time. With Dragon Strike Tiger Storm you can attack with both weapons simultaneously. If you attack two separate opponents, treat this as two separate attacks. If you attack one opponent with both weapons, roll to hit twice, and add the total number of successes between the two rolls to both of the two attacks.

As this attack requires an intense amount of concentration and an explosive release of ki energy, using Dragon Strike Tiger Storm expends 15 Soul. In addition, the weapons used are both broken in the process, rendering them both useless.

CRESCENT MOON BLADE TACTICS

Tohoh : Kogetsu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

Those who master this style are said to completely unravel the nature of the various fighting styles as they are performed. They can read the intentions of their enemy and know how they plan to use their sword. It is almost as if a voice speaks to the practitioner of this style, revealing the enemy's intentions and attacks.

Not much is known of the founder of the Crescent Moon Blade Tactics style. However, the first master's proverb, "Knowledge is All" has been passed down to all disciples who have learned this art.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Enlightenment
The ability to almost "hear" the enemy's thoughts is the first technique to be taught among followers of this style. You can use Empathy instead of Agility when rolling to hit in combat, in both attack and defense.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Seal of the Fist
By reading your enemy's movement, you can learn what he will do next in combat. As a result, if this technique is used your opponent cannot defend with the Unarmed Combat skill against this attack. You must use Empathy when rolling to hit.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Seal of the Blade
You can read not only your enemy's movements but her mind as well, allowing you to know her intentions in combat. As a result, your opponent cannot defend with the Melee Weapons skill against this technique. You must use Empathy when rolling to hit. This technique can be combined together with Seal of the Fist.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Seal of Destiny
You can read your enemy's intentions and movements as if your minds and bodies were one. Your opponent cannot use the Evasion skill against this technique. You must use Empathy when rolling to hit. This technique can be combined with all of the other techniques of the Crescent Moon Blade Tactics style for each hit, creating truly deadly potentially undefendable attacks.

Notes on Crescent Moon Tactics:
Skills like Ninjutsu and the armour rider's Interface skill are often used in place of Evasion, Melee Weapons, or Unarmed Combat. In those cases, the Seal means that those skills cannot be used to defend against the attack. However, an annelidist who uses worms (through the wormcharm skill) to defend, or an oni using resonance powers to defend are unaffected by the seals.

Also, note that acquiring the Seal of Destiny technique, which allows the practitioner to use all other seal techniques at the same time, effectively means that the weapon master has an unblockable, undefendable attack where the defender cannot roll any successes. However, those techniques are for attacks only. The practitioner is still vulnerable when being attacked.

MIGAWARI-STYLE SCHOOL OF MARKSMANSHIP

Migawari-Ryu Shageki-Jutsu

Skill Used: Marksman

Developed by elite forces within the Migawari ninja clan, followers of this style learn to propel ranged weapons at amazing speeds and with incredible technique. It is a martial art both respected and feared by those who know of it. This style is most effective with the throwing knife (kunai) or shuriken, but any hand-held ranged weapon can be used.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Quick Shot
Through rigorous discipline and training you reach the first stage of this style. Your hands are a blur, and your ranged attacks move faster than the eye can see. You can use Agility instead of Senses when rolling to hit with the Marksman skill.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
Two-Hand Shot
Attacking with both hands at once, you fire a rapid barrage of shots at incredible speed. You can increase the rate of fire of any handheld throwing weapon by up to an amount equal to your Agility. However, this number cannot exceed your available ammunition.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Soul-Splitter
With a precise shot, those trained in this style can even hit incoming arrows, shuriken, and other hand-fired weapons. You can defend against ranged attacks using the Marksman skill when using this technique. However, you cannot counterattack with this technique.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
Flowing Shield Shot
Flowing Shield Shot is the act of performing a quick-strike iai attack with a throwing knife, in an attempt to deflect the attack or hit the attacker before he can complete his attack. It is a legendary technique acquired only by a few masters. You can block blades and unarmed strikes with your knives. You can defend against Melee, Unarmed Combat, and all Ranged attacks using the Marksman skill when using this technique. In addition, you can also make counterattacks as if you were using a melee weapon.

THE ART OF KI MANIPULATION

Souki-Jutsu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons, Unarmed Combat

This uncommon technique uses the flow of one's inner ki power as a deadly weapon. One doesn't actually use their own ki to strike out at an enemy from a distance. Instead, they use their ki through physical contact to attack their opponent's center of energy. The result of this manipulation is that one's attacks become more powerful, not only traumatizing the flesh but the spirit as well.

It is rumored that after the Supreme Rank there is a last technique called "The Ultimate Rite of Ki" which has been lost to time. No one who has heard of this technique knows for certain what it does.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Fourth Rite of Ki
After performing a successful hit (attack or counter-attack) on an enemy with a normal unarmed or melee weapon attack, you can increase the damage result. The damage to your enemy increases one point for every 4 Soul points expended. There is no limit to the amount of damage that can be done with this or successive techniques.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
Third Rite of Ki
As Skill Level 2, but the rite's Soul costs are reduced to 3 points per 1 point of damage increased.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Second Rite of Ki
As Skill Level 2, but the rite's Soul costs are reduced to 2 points per 1 point of damage increased.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
First Rite of Ki
As Skill Level 2, but the rite's Soul costs are reduced to 1 point per 1 point of damage increased.

FIST OF THE CELESTIAL KONGOHKI

Kongoh Rakan Ken

Skills Used: Melee Weapons, Unarmed Combat

Although kongohki were designed in the image of humans, these machines have almost nothing in common with their flesh-and-blood counterparts except for

their basic shape. This is not a weakness, though, for the physical abilities of the kongohki far exceed that of human beings.

The Celestial Kongohki style takes advantage of the unique physical and mechanical features of the kongohki. Only kongohki can learn this style.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Mechanica Wings
With this technique, the kongohki learns to spin its arms and hands, creating a whirlwind like effect which lifts them into the air. You can fly at 10 times your Agility in meters each round. This technique lasts for as many rounds as your Body attribute score. You cannot attack while performing this maneuver.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
Mechanica Joints
With this technique, the kongohki gains the ability to swivel its joints in any direction. It can make attacks in completely unexpected ways that humans would never normally anticipate. To activate this technique, declare its use before making an attack roll. The first attack against a single enemy which employs this technique is treated as a surprise attack. After this technique is used, this technique will not work against that enemy for the duration of that battle.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Improved Overdrive
Perhaps the greatest weapon of the kongohki is its ability to move at speeds far greater than any human is capable of. With the Improved Overdrive technique, the kongohki transcends even its own capabilities. It is a dangerous maneuver that can strain the mechanical shell of the kongohki, but can overwhelm and shatter an opponent.

In a normal Overdrive, the kongohki's player picks up the dice that came up as successes, and rolls them again for a chance of even more successes, then stops rolling. With Improved Overdrive, the kongohki's player rerolls the Overdrive's successes for a total of three rolls in all: the first attack roll, the success-dice reroll, and the second success-dice reroll. Every time the kongohki activates Improved Overdrive, it will take a number of points of damage equal to 15 - Body attribute, with an absolute minimum of one damage point taken.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
A Glorious Death
By shattering the heart engine that powers your robotic frame, an explosive blast is released which destroys your enemies. When this technique is used, all characters (friend or foe) within a 50 meter radius take an amount of explosive damage equal to the kongohki's Body times 5. Explosive damage can only be reduced with an Evasion roll.

When this technique is activated, the kongohki's Dead Box immediately fills, even before the explosive damage is taken. The kongohki's player can choose to have the kongohki die at this point, a natural result of erupting in a huge fireball.

RESONANT BLADE STYLE
Zedai-ryu

Skill Used: Resonance

In the oni reservation of Kikoku, there is an elite group of soldiers known as the Makuu Order, also known within the oni lands as the Zedaishu. Blending their natural psychic ability with that of the sword, the Makuu Order developed this unique and indomitable style. Only oni and Half-oni can learn this style, as it requires the use of the innate oni resonance powers to activate.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Howling Light Technique
By gathering and harnessing the land's magical Sha energies around your body, you can create a sword of living light called

a "Sha-blade". The damage modifier of this Sha-blade equals your Spirit attribute score. You can use Spirit: Melee Weapons when rolling to strike or defend with this blade as well.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Shield of Brilliant Light

You can make a counter-attack against thrown and projectile weapons, deflecting them with a sha-possessed gesture or a turn of the sha-blade. You must use Spirit when rolling to hit, and regardless of whether you succeed, you must spend 2 Soul points to activate this maneuver. This technique can also be used to defend against incorporeal weapons that normally must be dodged with the Evasion skill.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Wall of Radiant Light

When using this technique, you can defend all incoming attacks of all types using your Spirit. Even if you fail your roll, you still have an opportunity to reduce the damage against you. Even if you fail to block the incoming attack, you reduce the damage of the attack by the number of successes you rolled when you attempted to defend yourself. However, you cannot counter-attack with this maneuver, and whether you succeed or not, you must spend 3 Soul to activate this technique.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Wheel of Inner Radiance

By manipulating the natural sha energies from within, you can transcend your normal physical limitations and manipulate fate itself. If you make a successful Body: Resonance check and spend 20 Soul, you can shape sha energy into the fearsome technique called "Wheel of Inner Radiance." Count up the number of successes in the Body: Resonance check. This is the number of rounds (or minutes outside of combat) the Wheel of Inner Radiance lasts.

While this technique is active, when you make a die roll, take every single die that did not come up a success and reroll them once to try to get more successes. You can only roll failed dice once per skill roll. This bonus does not actually apply to the Body: Resonance roll to activate this technique. Essentially, for a number of rounds you can defy fate, getting a second chance to turn all failure dice into success dice.

The Esoteric Arts of War

Whereas the arts listed previously are occasionally encountered in the field, the following arts are far rarer. No more or less powerful than the other Arts of War, they represent lost schools, rare skills, and fighting arts that are rarely encountered.

New players and game masters of the Tenra Bansho game should use only the above martial arts to get into play easily without having to compare the ins and outs of each art. However, for more experienced players, feel free to experiment with the Arts of War listed in this section.

ANCIENT STYLE LIGHTNING STRIKE

Kouryu : Senshou

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

Sometimes an Art of War becomes seemingly lost in the annals of history, only to resurface again in time. But it is of course not the techniques themselves, but the users of the techniques who revive the style. The Lightning Strike Style is one such style.

The techniques of this style are based on quick thrusts of the blade. The essence of the style is speed, and like its name, the master of this style seems to move like sudden flashes of lightning. Because only those few who are gifted with unique physical and mental abilities can even

attempt to learn this style, only a small minority have mastered it. Once they are gone, the style may disappear yet again.

The names of the original founder and the ones responsible for reviving the style, have once again disappeared into the mists of time.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Rapid Strike

Those who have mastered the technique of performing two strikes in a single instant earn the right to call themselves swordsmen of Ancient Style of Lightning Strike.

You can strike twice in a single action. You make only a single roll to hit, but add a +1 bonus to the damage. This +1 damage bonus represents the second strike.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Lotus Strike

There are some who ridicule this style. Ignorant, they say while it may be fast, it is not capable of inflicting lethal wounds. However, the true nature of this style lies not only in the speed, but the deadliness of the strike as well.

The Lotus Strike can only be used in an attack, not defense. If the character uses this technique in an attack, whoever succeeds in the attack first doubles the difference of the number of successes rolled, and then adds any modifiers like weapon damage to the total damage roll. Remember that this applies to whoever wins the attack, meaning that you risk taking the extra damage if you lose.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Reverse Strike

Unfortunately, strikes in this style have their limits. In order to strike rapidly, the technique relies on finding openings in the opponent's defense.

With the Reverse Strike technique, you move in accordance with your opponent's movements, waiting for an opening to strike.

Masters of this technique can use the Lotus Strike in defense as well as attack.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Focused Flurry of Strikes

This technique represents the pinnacle of the Ancient Lightning Strike Style. To your enemies, your flurry of strikes appear as one single strike, when in fact you are attacking with a near infinite amount of strikes, pierces and slashes faster than the eye can see.

When using this technique, you triple the damage modifier of your weapon.

TYPHOON RIDER STYLE

Nohwake

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

In this age of gun-powder and advanced yoroi technology, horsemanship and mounted combat is quickly become a dying art.

However, paying no heed to the times, there are those who fight with their sworn horse companions on the battlefield. These are the horse riders among horse riders. Leaving their lives in the hands of their trusted mount, they charge into battle, balancing on the edge of life and death. This is the style of those fearless warriors and lords, and their horse companions, whom uphold and maintain the ways of old.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Sworn Companion

Those who master this technique have sworn their loyalty to fight to the death with their horse companion.

When riding your horse companion, you can use Station when rolling to hit and defend in combat. You also gain a +3 bonus to damage when attacking from your horse.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
War Horse
Masters of the War Horse technique are known for their speed and ferocity on the battlefield.

When riding your horse companion, your speed is equal to your [Agility + Station] x 10 meters per round. In addition, your damage bonus for Sworn Companion increases to +5.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Champion of Horses
Those who have reached this stage gain a mystical bond with their horse companion, their Spirits and bodies becoming one. Charging into battle in a frenzy resembling the legendary Asura, they invoke fear and awe in the spirits of their enemies, and are objects of envy and jealously even among their allies.

When riding into battle with your horse companion, your damage bonus for Sworn Companion increases to +10.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
Servant of Hell
Your horse companion can go into a crazed rampage that would surely cause the death of lesser riders. All around you, a whirlwind of blood and gore forms which evokes fear even in your allies.

When riding your horse companion, you and your horse can leap up to your Station x 10 in meters. In addition, your weapon damage bonus for Sworn Companion increases to +20.

SEIZAN MOUNTAIN SPEAR TECHNIQUE

Seizan Sohjutsu

Skill Used: Melee Weapons

Although the sword is by far the most valued weapon in most samurai families, the spear—being comparatively easy to learn—has become the weapon of choice for low-ranking soldiers. This style was developed gradually but unintentionally as older soldiers passed on their techniques to newer soldiers, eventually giving birth to a variety of techniques. These techniques were then gathered together by the 5th generation priest at Fuenji Temple on Mount Seizan. Systemized by the priest, the style came to be called as Seizan Spear Style after the mountain. The style was originally used as meditative training for young monks, but has since been taught to commoners as well (after, of course, a small donation is given).

This is a martial art of spears, pikes, yari, naginata, no-dachi, and other weapons of great length. Other weapons are too small for the performance of this art.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Long Reach
By taking advantage of the long reach the spear provides, your enemies cannot move in closer to you.

You can only use this technique in defense. Add a +2 to all dice rolls. However, you cannot make counterattacks using this technique.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
Piercing Strike
Taking advantage of the smallest openings in your enemy's defenses, you can make strikes that one wielding a blade would be unable to reach.

When the number of successes in an attack equals that of your opponent (a tie), the attack is canceled, yet you still damage the opponent. The damage the opponent takes is equal to the damage modifier of the spear.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Penetrating Strike
Further increasing the destructive power of your weapon, you can deliver accurate and lethal strikes.

If your opponent takes damage when you make an attack using this style, they must distribute the damage to their Critical Wounds boxes first. When Critical Wounds are all filled, the opponent is free to distribute damage as they wish.

If fighting against an NPC opponent with no Critical Wounds boxes, then the opponent begins to bleed out, losing one Vitality point every round until they are defeated or flee.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5):
Destructive Bolt
By gathering ki energy into the tip of the spear, you can release a bolt of destructive energy through it. This is the most esoteric technique of this style, developed in Fuenji Temple by learned martial monks. Because it takes such extraordinary powers of concentration, masters of the technique are few and far between.

You can release a bolt of energy from your spear. Use Agility: Melee Weapons when rolling to hit. Damage is equal to the character's Agility plus the damage modifier of the melee weapon being used. The range of this attack is equal to the wielder's Agility times 2 in meters. Because the bolt has no real physical substance, your opponent can only use the Evasion skill in defense.

EMPTY FIST

Kuuken

Skill Used: Unarmed Combat

Although this style is often referred to as a form of Kung Fu, this is not entirely accurate. This style is fundamentally a soft unarmed style in which the practitioner uses the momentum of their enemy's attack against them, at times even attacking them with their own weapon.

Legend has it that this style was founded by a Buddhist Priest. Hands broken, abandoned in the wilderness, he developed these techniques during his long journey back to civilization.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2):
Adaptive Fighting
Adaptive Fighting is the first technique a practitioner of Empty Fist must learn. By watching your opponent's eyes, where he plants or moves his legs, and even the twitching in his muscles, you learn to determine what his next move will be.

With this technique, you can choose to use Empathy when rolling to hit or defend.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3):
Reverse Attack
With this technique you strike using not your own weapon, but your enemy's.

When attacked by your opponent, you use his weapon against him, striking with deadly force. If you hit using this technique in combat, you can choose to use the weapon damage modifier of your opponent's weapon rather than your own.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4):
Deadly Momentum
When one makes an attack, momentum is gathered, as it is with any action. With this technique, you use your opponent's momentum against him to attack.

You can only use this technique when defending. If a character uses this technique in an attack, whoever succeeds does damage equal to the total number of all of the loser's successes plus any other modifiers. Remember that this applies to whoever wins the attack, meaning that you risk taking the above effects if you lose.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Emptiness

Those who have reached the pinnacle of the Empty Fist are said to exist on the border between life and death, living in union with the cosmos. To those ignorant of the style, the practitioner appears meek and defenseless.

Use this technique at the start of a round and select one opponent. During that round, that person must attack you with his next action. However, you lose your normal action this round.

BESTIAL COMPANION

Inugai

Skill Used: Unarmed Combat

These techniques were developed by the Shadow School of ninjutsu for training their ninja dogs, which were then applied to other animals. By communicating directly through the spirits of the beasts, their canine or feline servants obey their every whim.

Trained by their masters, these bestial servants attack with claw and fang with a power that rivals the most skilled of warriors, and follow complex orders that seem impossible for a mere beast—even if separated from their masters. One legend has it that a master of this style kept a pack of 100 wolves and was able to communicate with them without the need for words. Their loyalty was so strong that even after he died, the pack continued to protect his family for 100 years.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Eye of the Beast

With this technique the spirits of the master and beast become one, enabling the beast to understand their master's will. You can communicate and give orders to your beast without the need for words. The beast will perform those actions to the best of its abilities.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Fangs of the Beast

You can control your beast as if it was part of your body. With deadly force rivaling even the greatest weapons, the claws and fangs of this animal leave your enemies in shreds.

The beast is treated as a ranged weapon. The actual attack action is made using Senses: Unarmed Combat. The weapon's (animal's) damage is equal to your Spirit with a Rate of Fire of 1 and a Range equal to your Senses times 2 in meters. This attack can only be defended against with the Evasion skill. However, you must remain near your companion (within visual range) for it to continue to obey your orders when using this technique.

Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Bestial Chains

Your beast's jaws lock onto your enemy like iron clamps, making it almost impossible to escape.

When using this technique make a Senses: Unarmed Combat check against your opponent's Willpower. If you succeed, he cannot take actions or half-actions. The opponent can still take free actions, allowing him make a Willpower check each turn during the interaction phase. If he succeeds he can break free of the beast's hold. The beast will continue to obey your commands until released. Even your death will not convince the beast to release its powerful grip.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Storm of the Beast
Your beast's senses become so sharp that nothing can get past it, and it protects its master with unparalleled fury and dedication.

You can use Senses: Unarmed Combat to defend against Melee, Ranged and Unarmed Combat attacks. You can also make counterattacks, in which case your damage modifier is equal to your Spirit score.

BLACK WING GUN STYLE

Kuroba Yauchi

Skill Used: Marksman

With the use of gunpowder based weapons becoming more prevalent, various fighting styles that use these gunpowder weapons are also being developed. One of these styles is the Black Wing Gun Style, in which practitioners master the art of shooting with one weapon in each hand.

The name comes from its founder Ujima Kojo, who—wearing a black breast-plate—charged into battle with pistols strapped all over his body. It is also said that his only companion was a white dove which was never far from his side.

Skilled Rank (Skill Level 2): Double Shot
With a gun in each hand, you make a simultaneous attack with both weapons.

Designate one gun as your primary and the other as secondary, and make a single attack roll. If you hit, both weapons strike simultaneously, providing a +1 bonus to the damage modifier of your primary weapon. The +1 bonus represents the additional damage provided by the second weapon.

If the ranges for your weapons differ, use the shorter range.

Advanced Rank (Skill Level 3): Falling Star Shot
Although you wield two guns, one in each hand, you attack in unison as if they were one. When using Double Shot you add the damage modifiers of your secondary weapon as well as the primary weapon to the damage of each attack. The effect of Double Shot is cancelled when Falling Star Shot is used.

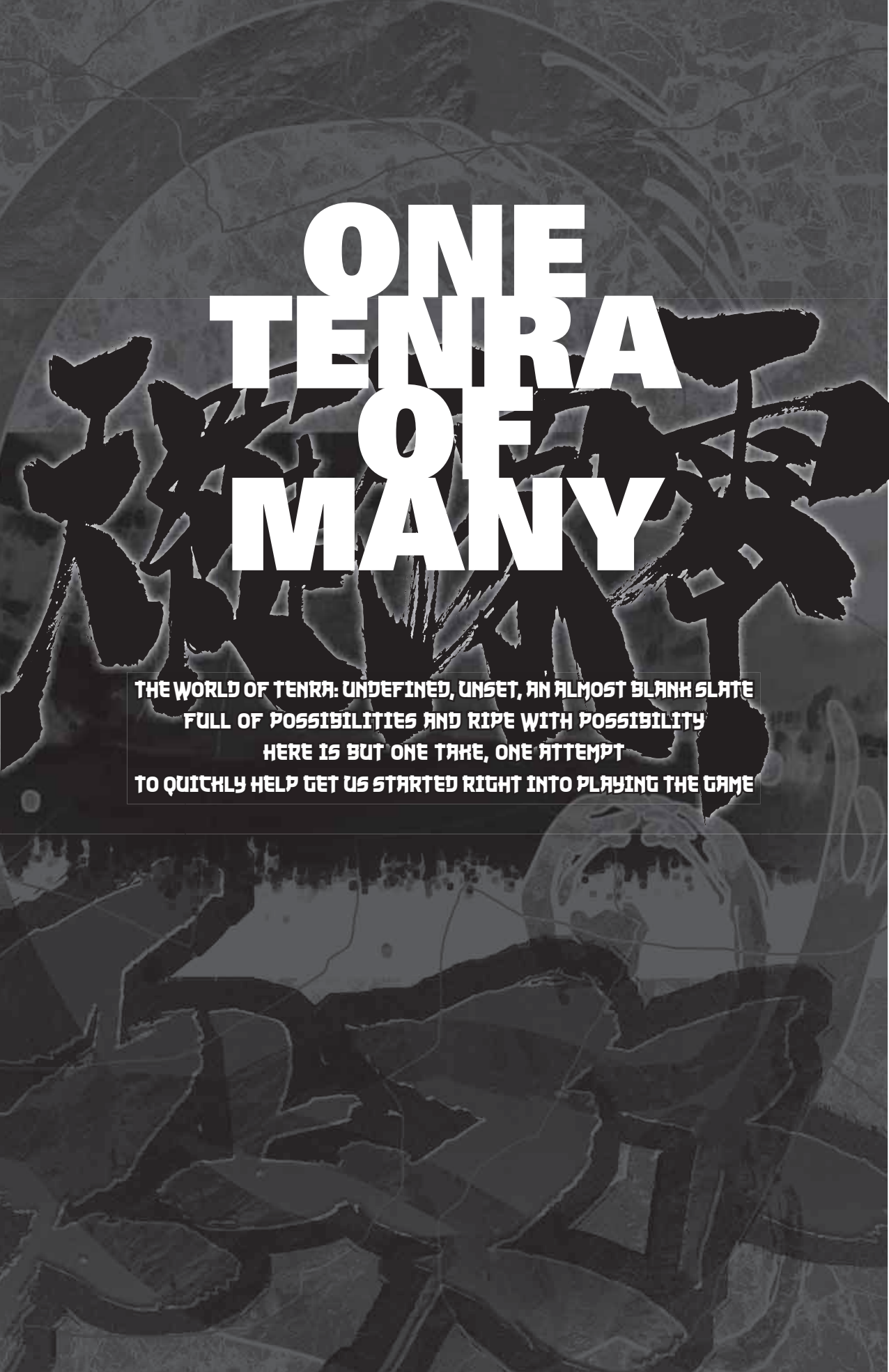
Master Rank (Skill Level 4): Cross Shot
At this stage you learn to shoot effectively at close quarters that would normally be thought of as impossible for a ranged combatant.

If you wield a weapon in each hand, you can block your opponent's unarmed and melee attacks with one gun while shooting with the other. In other words, you can defend against Melee Weapons and Unarmed Combat attacks, and make counterattacks, all using your Marksman skill.

You cannot use Cross Shot and Double Shot/Falling Star Shot together.

Supreme Rank (Skill Level 5): Lightning Shot
Masters of this style learn to use their dual weapons as if they were an extension of their body. They think and even see through their weapons, their left and right hands an extended part of the user's senses.

This technique allows you to defend and counterattack against incoming ranged attacks using your Marksman skill.


ONE
TENRA
OF
MANY
THE WORLD OF TENRA: UNDEFINED, UNSET, AN ALMOST BLANK SLATE
FULL OF POSSIBILITIES AND RIPE WITH POSSIBILITY
HERE IS BUT ONE TAKE, ONE ATTEMPT
TO QUICKLY HELP GET US STARTED RIGHT INTO PLAYING THE GAME

ONE TENRA: AGAINST THE TIDE

PLAYSET INTRODUCTION

As mentioned elsewhere in Tenra Bansho Zero, the real setting behind Tenra is painted in broad brush strokes, with almost no details given to countries, people, or history. The point is for you, the player, to make Tenra your own: come up with your own domain, your own conflicts, and drop your players right in the middle. Or work together with your players to quickly design the framework of a region, or a domain, or even just one town that the game will take place in.

However, not everyone grew up in Japan watching samurai dramas, movies and history segments on Japanese TV. Some of us need a helping hand, here a is small well-defined setting consisting of notable places, people and conflicts to help get us started. That's what this chapter is for: It is a defined game setting to be read by the game master and players. It is a "playset" to be used as a framework to tell stories of Tenra. From there, the GM can decide where to set her game, which parts to use, which locations and people may appear, and then fill in the blanks with her own creative content.

None of this setting below represents "the one and true official Tenra setting" or canon material: Use it all, use parts of it, or just pick and choose what you like and ignore the rest. If there's something that doesn't appeal to you, change it. If none of it appeals to you, ditch it all and create a setting and characters of your own.

If you're ready to make your own setting, or your own Tenra, then do so. Make your own Tenra come to life.

CONCEPT: SUGGESTIONS

At the end of every small section are a number of highlighted suggestions for the reader or potential GM. As you read the material, try to find ways to possibly use the elements in your own game. These suggestions are meant to help you get started. Think about them or ignore them as you see fit.

BACKGROUND

In the east of the mountainous province of Ryurin-shu there lies a forest old beyond reckoning. The oni name it *Naira-do* or "Eldest" in their tongue and declare that it was ancient long before the coming of Humans to Tenra. While the majority of Yashima has been claimed and settled by mankind, Naira-do represents one of the last great wild hold outs of the Central Continent. So it may have remained for ages more, if not for a chance discovery: A peasant recently uncovered a massive soulgem mine deep in the forest where the earth had split from the destruction caused by the fall of the Phantom Star.

Buren, the legendary Warlord of the realm of Hakusen, needs as many soulgems as he can acquire to supply his mighty army as he prepares to make war on the Priesthood itself. Already the forces of the Dragon of Hakusen have begun to mobilize…

While Naira-do is technically an unclaimed land, it officially lies within the domain of Torigoe, to the east of Hakusen. The regent of Torigoe is but seventeen years of age and newly come into his regency. The forest and its denizens are beyond his control, yet he too needs the resources the mine can provide and he cannot afford to appear weak before the eyes of his many enemies. Now, he must stand, untried, and untested against one of the greatest warlords that Tenra has ever known.

Will he stand alone?

- Set a story in Torigoe, where the forces of Hakusen are encroaching on their land.
- Set a story in Hakusen, in the service of Lord Buren or one of his vassals.
- Set a story in the places between the two provinces, where the war is changing the physical and social landscape.
- Set a story in the mysterious forest of Naira-do.

The Domain of Torigoe

Torigoe was once considered the gem of the domains of Ryurin-shu. Blessed with great mineral resources, magnificent waterfalls, vast fertile fields and abundant forests, Torigoe was a kingdom to be envied. The powerful Kitan family have ruled Torigoe unchallenged for over twenty generations and many believed that the scions of that powerful house would rule uncontested for as many more.

What changes a year can bring.

Torigoe lies at the northern edge of the domains shattered by the fall of Mount Jinrai and the Phantom Star. More than half of its arable land was lost to tsunami, flooding and earthquakes. As the terrain shifted, the entire holy mountain Ihara slid into the ocean, pulling nearly a fourth of Torigoe with it. Now Torigoe lies nearly in ruins. The once powerful Kitan family was all but destroyed during the devastation. The bulk of the family's trusted advisors were cut down by the former regent's bodyguard as he fled, a kongohki named Golden Tiger who, rumor has it, regained his memories as he watched the destruction of the land about him. The last Kitan is the former regent's scholarly nephew Kagetora, a young man who has dutifully, if reluctantly, taken up the burden of regency.

Kagetora's first year as Regent was spent trying to repair his broken domain with what few resources he could muster. Yet now word has recently spread of a rich soulgem mine within the forbidden forest of Naira-do, a land that lies within Torigoe yet has always stood apart. To the west the Dragon of Hakusen is stirring, for the whispers of riches to be had have reached Buren as well and he eyes Torigoe's weakly defended border with interest. Kagetora looks down from the walls of his mountainous palace to his ruined capitol below where his loyal subjects ceaselessly strive to rebuild their beloved homeland with worn-out tools and knows what he must do.

- What happened to Golden Tiger? Perhaps he is still rampaging around the wilderness of Torigoe or Naira-do. If the characters chance to meet him, will they find Golden Tiger a ruthless villain, a loyal servant, a misunderstood soul, or even a fall-guy for some strange conspiracy?

- Some or all of the characters could be in the direct service of Kagetora. It might be interesting to play out his first few weeks as acting regent.
- One of the characters could even be Kitan Kagetora, using his nascent leadership skills to enhance the domain while protecting it from attack.

A PATCHWORK LAND

Torigoe's once scenic landscape was rent asunder mainly by the fall of the Phantom Star, though the water displacement caused by Mount Jinrai's collapse was surely catastrophic to the many farming villages that lined its southern coast. Many fields took months of dredging to clear the salt out. Some villages seemed all but lost until Kagetora employed several armours to assist with removing and replacing the spoiled topsoil, an unorthodox use of a usually military asset that set a few of his vassal lords against him, but gained him a great deal of support amidst the peasantry. Torigoe's heavily forested mountain range which dominates the bulk of the realm once had a fair number of easily accessible passes running through it, many of which lead to a popular pilgrimage location, the holy mountain Ihara, which dominated the southwestern border adjacent to the sea.

At one time or another, members of all three branches of Buddhism as well as the Priesthood had blessed Ihara for a variety of reasons. Ihara was once a picturesque mount with an eternally snow-clad peak and miracles supposedly happened on its wide slopes. Many of the natives of Torigoe believe that even as Ihara was destroyed, it passed the last of its blessings onto their poor land. One of these "blessings" caused by the collapse of Ihara into the ocean was the destruction of the high mountain passes. When Buren's forces march from the west, they will find no easy roads left into Torigoe. Ihara's fall also opened many previously unknown veins of scarlet steel, as well as a few modest soulgem deposits. Ihara's final great blessing is known to few, though Kagetora and a few of his trusted advisors are well aware of it; a number of rare and never-before-seen annelids emerged from the rich soil that the holy mount's fall exposed. The exceptional annelids have drawn an unusual number of annelidists to the area and a powerful new nest has quietly opened in the mountains with the young regent's blessing.

Many of Torigoe's legendary waterfalls remain, though the great River Hatsue changed her course far enough to create several brand new ones along the southern ranges of the land. The once-great trading town Shirata had to be abandoned after the river completely deserted it. Dark creatures are said to have since inhabited the forsaken township…

ARMOUR INTO TRACTORS

Kagetora's decision to use armours to dredge salt from the ruined fields of Torigoe was more than merely unorthodox; it was unprecedented in Tenra's history. The peasants of Torigoe were originally uncertain about their young new daimyo regent, but they have since embraced him with enthusiasm. Indeed, Kagetora is the most popular Kitan with the common folk in ten generations. His newly acquired vassal lords, however, were not equally thrilled. Their sons and daughters pilot the armours of Torigoe - the perceived dishonor of shoveling mud is thus theirs. Those with the strongest feelings on the matter can barely suppress their tongues in public, and they now carry a grudge against the unorthodox regent.

- A character might come from one of the villages struck by famine after the fall of Jinrai, now fiercely loyal to the Kitan family for aiding their village after the disaster.
- What is Ihara like? What mystical properties do people attribute to it? What would a pilgrimage to Ihara entail?
- The local annelidist nests will want to investigate, capture and cultivate the new strains of annelids. An entire story might revolve around acquiring some and the dangers in doing so.
- Mines of soulgem and scarlet steel certainly mean a cold war between domains, or even within a domain. The discovery, capture, and development of a mining town, as well as the risks of keeping it hidden from other domain regents, backstabbing local provincial lords, yakuza clans and mysterious onmyoji might be an interesting tale.
- Perhaps the Bright Lotus Buddhist sect have abandoned the region. Why would that be?
- A secret Phoenix sect training center might exist near Ihara. Who would be trained there, and what for? Would the local lords or regent know of the existence of such a place?

Notable Places

Tengaishi—The capital of Torigoe was formerly well regarded as an architectural marvel, a perfect blending of form, function and aesthetic beauty. The Grand River Hatsue flowed through the western quarter, bringing wealth and trade. The craftsmen of Tengaishi were especially famous for their beautiful glasswork and intricately skilled engraving. Quiet parks and small streams were prevalent throughout the city. No longer. The destruction caused by the fall of Mount Jinrai and the Phantom Star nearly broke Tengaishi in two. The partial rerouting of Hatsue River caused the western half of the city to be flooded, and the loss of so many of the surrounding fields forced many to leave the area for fear of starvation. Tengaishi's populace is now less than half of what it once was, and many buildings still lie abandoned. Trade has been painfully slow in returning, but Kagetora's efforts over the last year have recently resulted in traveling merchants visiting the city once again. The engravers of Torigoe have found that their talents are in high demand for the creation of mass-produced kimenkyo mirrors. Indeed, with the technological secrets that the Northern Court has let slip, a few of the amazingly skilled engraving masters have supposedly been able to produce mirrors almost the equal of meikyo in quality.

- Keeping one of these master kimenkyo crafters safe from Priesthood assassins might be at the heart of a story.
- The Northern Court may favor Torigoe with additional technology, blueprints and skills. A mission for a few Northern Court priests and miko might be to deliver sensitive technology to Kagetora's retainers, avoiding Southern Court machinations.
- The Southern Court may try to buy provincial leaders with amazing meikyo technologies (armour and kongohki). Getting them to the right leaders while keeping their objectives hidden might make for an interesting story.

The Ashen Palace—Known as the House of Glorious Mists until recently, the Ashen Palace has been the home of the regents of Torigoe for many generations. Designed by the onmyoji Aburai over a thousand years ago, the Ashen Palace sits on a low mountain peak overlooking Tengaishi, which sits below it to the east. Sheer cliffs

protect its southern and western sides, while the beginnings of the untouched southern edges of Naira-do lie immediately to the north. The onmyoji designed the castle to seem as if it was floating on the fogs that perpetually blanket the southern shores of Torigoe, hence its original name. Fog still regularly rolls down the halls of the Ashen Palace at both dawn and twilight, giving it an otherworldly air. It was Kagetora himself that renamed the palace, to honor the many people of Torigoe that died during and after the destruction. The once tranquil edifice now rings with the raised voices of Torigoe's many vassal lords who openly vie for concessions of power from their inexperienced new regent.

- The Ashen Palace may actually sit on the ruins of an ancient onmyoji summoning site. Once every few generations, the sha gathers into a concentrated pool right underneath the site of the palace. A cult of secretive onmyoji wish to utilize this to perform a grand summoning of a creature so powerful it will allow them to take control of the fragile domain. Will the characters find and stop them? Or will they themselves be sorcerers in the cult?

Hisano's Gate—The site of many historic battles that shaped the domains of the Ryurin region, Hisano's Gate is a naturally formed mountain pass that allows access to the realms north and west of Torigoe. Hisano's Gate is a long zigzagging valley with slopes that range from steep to sheer which stretches for many miles. The new capital of the Northern Court of the Priesthood is a four day march north of Hisano's Gate, and the forest of Naira-do partially borders it, stretching off to its southwest. A large force once garrisoned Torigoe's end of the pass, but Kagetora has been forced to reduce it to a remnant of its former strength.

- This is still a grand checkpoint at the Torigoe end of the pass, and the characters will require travel passes to bypass the checkpoint. Because of the nature of the valley, they will certainly be spotted if they try to go around the pass.

The Copper Monkey—One of the most famous (or infamous depending on your point of view) drinking joints in all of Tenra, the Copper Monkey rests in one of the nameless mountain villages that line the way to Hisano's Gate. A seemingly ramshackle affair of numerous creaking stories, including an inn, a brothel, and a gambling den run by the Mako Yakuza clan, if your money is good, the Copper Monkey caters to all comers. The Copper Monkey is most famous, though, for its ground floor bar staff and the establishment's proprietor, the renowned onmyoji Last Call. The bar is staffed almost entirely by Last Call's shiki, which he changes with great regularity—but the bulk of the patrons come to gaze at the Monkey's Kugutsu bartender Ten Thousand Winters—a phenomenally beautiful girl with hair resembling sheets of shimmering ice and a dazzling smile for all but the most lecherous drunkards. Where Last Call's loyalty lies (beyond his bar) is anyone's guess. Many of the



patrons who stay at the Copper Monkey have come to take in the Sunaro Springs, a series of natural hot springs renowned throughout Yashima for their medicinal properties. While the destruction caused by the fall of the Phantom Star slowed business in the area for a time, commerce has been on the upswing as of late. Folk of all descriptions (and allegiances) regularly come to discreetly enjoy the soothing waters in an area where few questions are asked, which makes it a perfect area for all sorts of clandestine meetings.

- The group might be regular patrons of the Copper Monkey. When Buren sends his army through the region, they'll certainly tear through this area, leveling everything. Can a few well-meaning drunkards, gamblers, performers and other low-lives turn the tide of an invasion?
- The Mako clan may know the whereabouts of a new kugutsu, one of the infamous War Brides, those kugutsu so valuable and sought after that lords go to war over the chance to possess them. The characters might be members of the yakuza, sent to find her. What motives will each member have to find her, and will success for one member's goals mean failure for another's? What if there is a spy amongst them?

Thousand Bridges—The calm resolve of the peasants of Torigoe to make the best of their changing fortunes is easy to see in this strange little town. Originally a quiet fishing community sitting along the Hatsue River a few hours northwards from the capital, Thousand Bridges was shattered along with the rest of the countryside. The land originally about the village was particularly unstable though and the village literally fell to pieces, resulting in large portions being swept away or permanently drowned by the raging Hatsue as the terrain settled into a new form. A Thousand Bridges now consists of a series of fifty or more earthen and stone outcroppings of various sizes, some of which hold a building, many of which merely serve as the anchor for another small bridge, hence its new name. From a distance, the town resembles nothing so much as the top of a needle-filled pincushion. Though still a fishing village, Thousand Bridges has also begun dabbling in mining as small deposits of scarlet steel have been found within a fair number of their newly formed mesas. The resulting prosperity, as well as its location, has made Thousand Bridges a popular way station village for those traveling through the broken landscape of Torigoe, which includes everything from ronin, to foreign agents, to traveling Ebon Mountain and Bright Lotus monks.

- Deep under A Thousand Bridges lies a group of peaceful oni exiles who have moved into the area under the cover of night. It is only a matter of time before they are found. Depending on the characters' actions, it could be the difference between a peaceful coexistence or a heart gem goldrush.
- Throusand Bridges may eventually turn into a strategic travel point. A lot of rumors and truths might find their way here. If some of the characters come from this town, how will they deal with this massive influx of travelers and social change?

Ihara's Fall—A newly founded village sitting along a plateau overlooking the former site of Ihara, this town is in fact the home of a majestic new nest of mushi-tsukai who have come to study the strange new annelids emerging from the ruins of the holy mountain. The people of Torigoe felt all but abandoned by the Priesthood after the widespread destruction caused to their land and the annelidists' willingness to help them when few others would has

recently gained the worm-users far more respect and trust than they normally enjoy in most domains. For their part, the members of the new nest are uniformly exceedingly grateful to the young new regent and are always swift to send their most skilled members in answer to requests for aid from Kagetora.

- A rampaging annelidist threatens Ihara's Fall. How will this change how the people view the local annelidists and their nest?

Shirata—Once a center for trade throughout Ryurin and the first stop for merchants traveling from the province of Ki to the east, Shirata sat along the banks of the Hatsue River near the base of the mountain pass that leads to Hisano's Gate. After the Phantom Star caused the Hatsue to shift her course and destroyed large portions of the town, Shirata was abandoned. The peasants of Torigoe believe that the ghosts of the dead or the spirits of the surrounding mountains have claimed Shirata and now all shun the place. In a sense, they're right. A ninja clan loyal to the Kitan family seized the remains of the town and made it their own after the destruction of their original mountain base. The 100 Falling Shadows Sect has protected the Kitan clan since its foundation. Their actions and timely warnings have saved Torigoe from destruction countless times, yet change may be on the wind. The sect is sworn to the Kitan family, not the regents of Torigoe, a fact that the ruling family used to its advantage many times down the long years, but one that the Vassal houses of Torigoe are unaware of. There is but one Kitan left and should he fall, the 100 Falling Shadows Sect is free to either become mercenary or seek a new master. Such a situation brings thoughts that ninja are often unaccustomed to and Norio, the master of the sect, has had his hands full keeping the younger trainees in line.

- The 100 Falling Shadows is falling apart from within. Will the characters be able to keep the clan together, or will they be more interested in the natural split into sub-sects? Perhaps the characters work towards different goals.
- The ninja have not received orders in some time. It soon becomes clear that another ninja clan, under the guidance of a vassal lord, is intercepting all messages, or killing the messengers. Who could be behind this, and what does this mean for the future of the clan?

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following characters might make notable appearances in the game. Alternatively, the GM could create a story by having the character actually play some or all of the characters below (drafting up their abilities as normal, as the player sees fit). Don't feel constricted in your use of these characters. They are simply anchors in the world. Kill them off as you need. Portray them however you want, or give their roles to players to use as their own characters.

KITAN KAGETORA—THE REGENT OF TORIGOE

If the weight of your entire world should suddenly fall on your shoulders, how well would you bear it? Just over a year ago, Kagetora was a carefree second son looking forward to a long life of scholarship and simple pleasures. Now, he is the last of his noble house, beset on all sides by deadly enemies and uncertain allies. His domain was passed to him in shambles. When representatives of the Priesthood finally showed up after the Two Month Night, during which Kagetora had buried the bodies of his family and countless numbers of his people, and tried to prevent the bulk of his living subjects from joining them due to starvation, they offered no immediate

assistance but demanded his fealty. While he was considering his response, a second delegation arrived, also declaring that it belonged to the Priesthood and likewise demanding his fealty; however, they at least brought food, medical supplies and a sample kimenkyo mirror. The choice was a simple one, though Kagetora's loyalty to the Northern Court is definitely founded more on necessity than desire. Undeniably, that theme is visibly running through the young Regent's life. The war that is clearly looming with Hakusen and the Forest Realm of Naira-do is not of his choosing. Indeed, he secretly admires Buren's uncompromising stance against the Priesthood and would rather not break the vows that his ancestors made to the Forest Lord. Still, his people need the wealth the soulgem mine represents and he will do whatever he must to acquire it.

Kagetora is a brilliant young man, though far more inclined towards scholarship and diplomacy than fighting. Correspondingly, he has managed to stay ahead of his political enemies even as he garners useful, if unorthodox, allies. He is well aware of what an asset a hive of annelid-users can be and so allowed them to stay in his realm. He has already carefully employed the 100 Falling Shadows Sect to eliminate one or two of his more over-zealous detractors, though he strongly monitors his own actions for fear of becoming a tyrant. He hasn't appointed a Minister of the Right as of yet because there is no one that he trusts enough to relinquish control of Torigoe's military to. He purposefully allows an agent of the Southern Priesthood to attend his court, telling him that he has no choice but to suffer the presence of the Northern representative as they are so close to his domain, even as he quietly complains to the Northern Court representative how little he can do about the Southern Court's minder without bringing their wrath down on him. He graciously allows the Mako Yakuza to operate in the open because he doesn't wish to spare the resources that it would take to deal with them in any other fashion. He regularly sets various tasks for his vassal lords in order to keep them occupied even as he searches for ways to secure their loyalty or undermine them.

He could definitely use some help though.

Kagetora is seventeen years old, though his near perpetual tiredness makes him appear older than his years. He frequently dresses in kimonos with alternating patterns of blue and gray. On the rare occasions on which he gets to discuss something academic, his eyes light up and his cares briefly flow away, revealing the once enthusiastic scholar that still lurks beneath the weary regent. Kagetora doesn't regularly carry any weapon bigger than a wakizashi. His samurai bodyguard, Half-Smile, is ever present when he is in public.

- Kagetora is young and intelligent, but underneath it all he is still an adolescent. Who knows how much longer he will be able to stand the immense pressure of ruling a domain on the edge of disaster?

NEKODA SHIGA—MINISTER OF THE LEFT

Nekoda Shiga is a greatly respected retainer, an eloquent statesman, and a skilled swordsman. With Kagetora's intellect and Shiga's renowned organizational skills, Torigoe has been pulled back from the edge of destruction. Shiga has a big problem though—he has grown to greatly respect the young man he was ordered to kill. Shiga is one of the last surviving members of the former regent's inner circle, and choosing one of the men that his uncle had greatly favored seemed logical to Kagetora. What Kagetora is unaware of though, is that the Nekoda Clan has long sought the regency

of Torigoe. The head of the Nekoda family, Unryu, convinced that his clan's long thwarted destiny has at last arrived, has ordered his eldest son Shiga to eliminate the last of the Kitan as soon as Kagetora's usefulness came to an end, a state of affairs which Shiga has been able to successfully argue to his Father has not occurred…yet.

- Shiga's heart wars with his duty, which fights with his intellect, and Torigoe's future may well rest on the outcome of his inner struggle.

KAKARI-RANK SHIBUKI AKEMI—NORTHERN COURT AGENT

Akemi was the senior member of the delegation that first brought aide to Torigoe and as a result of her successfully convincing Kagetora to join the Northern Court, she was appointed as the Priesthood representative to the domain. In part because of the devastation caused to Torigoe, she felt that the post was an honorable one where she would truly be useful, but her joy has been greatly muted by her counterpart from the Southern Court, Sogo. While Akemi's original intention was to travel the countryside helping the beleaguered peasants of Torigoe, she presently feels such an imposing need to keep an eye on what Sogo is up to that she is unwilling to leave the Ashen Palace if he is not elsewhere as well. Akemi is a beautiful and earnest young woman in her early twenties. The mask she chooses to wear resembles a thin veil and barely hides her lovely features.

- Akemi may be interested in having Sogo dealt with—then again, the charming rogue might be getting to her, in which case they would both need some cunning friends to help them out.

KAKARI-RANK IROHARA SOGO—SOUTHERN COURT AGENT

Sogo's mission in Torigoe is a relatively simple one; without appearing to do so, whenever possible, he is to encourage Kagetora to attack Buren. Since that appears to be the young regent's plan already, Sogo is pretty much free to do whatever he pleases. This has resulted in two different, but equally dangerous, dilemmas. As he watched Akemi's attempts to spy on his own activities with amusement, he found that he likes watching her far more than he should. He now owes a dangerous amount of gambling debt money to the Mako Yakuza, one of the few groups who couldn't care less whether or not he's a member of the Priesthood. In love with the wrong woman and indebted to the wrong thugs, the Southern Court may be in need of a new agent soon. Sogo is a well-built man in his early thirties who perpetually covers his face with a metallic (with touches of white) grinning demon mask.

- Sogo needs help in several areas of his life. His connections can certainly make him a useful, if dangerous, ally.
- Sogo might travel in disguise amongst the common people of the capital. His nature probably changes when the mask comes off, in a way in which no one would ever guess at his true identity.

NORIO—SHINOBI MASTER OF THE 100 FALLING SHADOWS SECT

One of the great paradoxes of the way of the ninja is that a ninja can have no honor, yet honor is everything to a ninja clan. Kagetora is the last of Kitan, the line to which the 100 Falling Shadows are sworn, and Norio will honor that allegiance, even if it means that all his clan will fall to the Dragon of Hakusen's army. Already, he

has had to harshly punish a few promising students who suggested that if they were simply to look away and allow Kagetora to die, they would be free to do as they pleased. He knows he is getting soft as he only broke two limbs a-piece on those who dared to speak so, but it comforts him greatly to reflect that he instantly killed the few that suggested they should assassinate Kagetora themselves—after all, no knife should ever contemplate murdering its wielder. As to what he and his sect will do if Kagetora dies, he truly doesn't know. He probably won't bide his time idly until that fateful day arrives, if ever. Norio regularly emerges from the shadows of the Ashen Palace to discuss matters of import with Kagetora before returning from whence he came. Norio is a shinobi—he looks like whatever he needs to.

- Norio is a practical, unassuming man. Who can tell what he has in mind? Will he protect Kagetora in the last battle or will he act as the venomous viper that strikes him down?

LIYA-YI—KIKOKU AMBASSADOR

When Torigoe's need was greatest, one of the few neighboring domains to offer any vital aid was the oni land of Kikoku, which lies to the immediate east. Several shipments of foodstuffs and grain were offered freely to help the people of his beleaguered land, but what Kagetora found most indispensable was the thoughtful advice offered by the oni woman who brought the goods. The young Kitan formally requested that she be posted to his land as an ambassador, a move that surprised many of the new regent's observers. The folk of Kikoku acceded to his appeal and Liya-Yi quietly joined his court. A slight oni woman who typically wears earthen toned kimonos, the representative from the domain ruled by the oni has proven herself on numerous occasions to be a sharp witted ally—a sharp contrast to the bestial image that many try to force upon the oni. Indeed, she uses the typical prejudices against oni to her advantage so that she is often underestimated by all but Kagetora, who knows better.

- The ambassador from Kikoku is interested in keeping Torigoe stable to serve as a buffer between her country and the fiercely martial realm of Hakusen. Any agents acting for her, such as one or more player characters, would always take on missions with that goal in the back of their minds.
- What if Liya-Yi finds that she has fallen in love with the young regent?

KASHIRA EMERALD—LEADER OF IHARA'S FALL ANNELIDIST NEST

Emerald was chosen as the new nest's leader from among her peers, as she was judged both a meticulous researcher and the best able to talk with those outside their ranks without unduly disturbing them: She bears few visible *mushi*. Emerald is presently being very careful about keeping a tight reign on the younger members of the nest—only the older well-traveled members who have suffered the standard prejudice all annelidists face elsewhere are aware of just how good of a deal they've gotten in Torigoe: A choice location in which to study fascinating new annelids, peasants who try their best to be civil and a young regent who admires scholarship? Heaven! While it is the usual position of annelidists to tend to the wounded and leave fighting to others, the Ihara's Fall Nest is firmly committed to standing with Kagetora on the battlefield should he have need of them. Emerald appears to be in her forties, though her face has an ageless quality to it (lent by her annelids) that makes telling her exact age difficult. She

is plain spoken and tends to favor simple loose robes, the better to hide the potential squirming of skin underneath.

- Emerald will do anything to maintain the balance that they have with Kagetora and the other lords of Torigoe, even resorting to brash action and cunning far outside of the nest to make sure the order is kept.

KAE THE KUGUTSU-MAKER

In the foothills to the northwest of the Ashen Palace, there is a modest house that sits on the outskirts of the far southern border of Naira-do. There, in a valley squarely placed between the otherworldly forest and the earthly Torigoe lies the house of the famed Kae the kugutsu-maker. He has labored on his latest work for nine long years and is almost ready to present her to the world. Some believe he will buy peace for Torigoe with her, others say his newest work will surely plunge all into war. Kae refuses to answer what his intentions are.

- One or more of the characters may be interested in finding or acquiring Kae's latest creation. Alternatively, one of them may be the Kugutsu-maker's latest work.

BRAZEN KITE—THE TIRELESS MERCHANT

Travel the roads of the domains of Ryurin-shu long enough and you will eventually come upon an extraordinary sight: A wandering trader so thickly swaddled in robes that his shape is nearly indiscernible, carrying a pack so enormous that it greatly resembles a small hillock. Within that mammoth pack lie wonders undreamt of: mechanica toys, fresh fruits, good seed, candies, the finest rice wine and much more… but no weapons, no weapons of any kind, for the pack belongs to the kongohki Brazen Kite who once was lost, but found himself again and swore to never again deal in death. Now Brazen Kite is a friend to all he meets along the road, a jolly merchant with the tinny yet warm voice of an old man, who regularly carries interesting news from afar along with his many excellent goods. He takes no sides in the many conflicts across the province, though he generally favors peasants with better deals, knowing they truly have little to offer right now.

- What's the story behind Brazen Kite? What better way to find out than to play him as a character, at a time before he adopted his common name and traveler's backpack.

THE GREAT RYOUSHU HOUSES OF TORIGOE

While there are over a dozen lesser vassal lords that report to Kagetora, the three most significant houses/fiefs belong to the Nekoda, the Omoro and the Ishikawa. The Nekoda easily hold the most power, but seem content to wait till the time is ripe to make a move on the regency. Their fief, Spring Lake, lies to the east, near the border of Kikoku, and was mostly undamaged by the recent calamities, which has greatly enhanced their position. The lord of the Nekoda, Unryu, feels that Kagetora's forcing of his son, Nekoda Riku, to dig mud in an armour like a groveling peasant is an unforgivable insult. He constantly searches for a way to topple the young regent—The fact that Riku had a grand time doing it (and adores Kagetora) is irrelevant. Finally, Omoro Ikuo, a well-regarded general and head of a powerful military family, regards Kagetora as a bold thinker. While he is not yet entirely convinced that the young regent is the right man to lead Torigoe, he has chosen to remain silent for the moment. The general watches his new lord with carefully judging eyes, hoping to discern some sign of the last Kitan's fate and what it will mean for the Omoro. It is anyone's guess as to how the minor family of Ishikawa change the balance of power in the internal strife.

- The Nekoda are famous for their well-trained armour riders. What do the Omoro specialize in? The Ishikawa? How might this affect the balance of power?

MAKO YAKUZA

The Mako Yakuza control the majority of the crime throughout the province of Ryurin-shu and their influence is felt in many of the other provinces of Yashima. While the Mako existed long before the fall of the Phantom Star and Mount Jinrai, their power has increased significantly with the splitting of the Priesthood. They can now move illegal Northern Court technologies into areas controlled by the Southern Court at great profit, which has increased their fortune significantly.

After the civil unrest caused by the Fall, the Mako Yakuza acted as a sort of ad hoc police in many of the areas hit worse by the destruction, which gained them a great deal of respect with the peasantry. They proved to be so good at catching thieves (the ones not affiliated with them at any rate) within Torigoe that Kagetora asked to meet with some of their representatives. The Mako, expecting to be harshly sanctioned for their temerity, were thus relieved and delighted when he rewarded them for their courage. The young regent granted them licenses to operate their gambling houses openly in Torigoe as well as several brothels, all of which send needed tax money into Kagetora's coffers. The Mako still act as the fire deparment and police in many places within the domain, including Tengaishi itself.

The Mako are swiftly coming to a crossroads. They have a good thing going in Torigoe and they know it, but few that fight within a war profit by it. To stand against the Dragon of Hakusen is suicide, yet Buren's complete intolerance for their kind is well known. Some Brothers believe that the time has come to leave Torigoe. Others speak of the potential gains to be found on the far side of the upcoming struggles, and a few have found, often to their own great surprise, that they've become so dedicated to their charges that they haven't the will to abandon their posts, even should their Elder Brothers order it.

- The Mako, like most yakuza, are always torn between their role as the supporters of the nameless and downtrodden (they do the jobs in cities, like putting out fires, that no one else will), and their criminal activities which hurt the people. "Gangsters with heart" makes for compelling drama.
- A decision on whether to support Kagetora, to leave Torigoe, or to remain and serve whomever remains, might very well tear apart the clan.
- Another yakuza group, the cold-hearted Ejimaya family, has recently been grabbing turf due to their lucrative gambling operations. A turf war is inevitable.

THE KINGDOM OF HAKUSEN

When Mount Jinrai fell from the heavens and the Phantom Star annihilated the entire northern half of the province of Sunai-shu, there was one man who rejoiced while countless others wept: the Warlord Buren, Master of the House of Thunder, the renowned Dragon of Hakusen. Not once in his long life had Buren ever kowtowed to the Priesthood or accepted the title of "Regent". As the period now known as the Two Month Night fell across his domain, the Dragon of Hakusen's long-in-place plans were swiftly set into motion. When the sun finally emerged from the dust and the two factions of the Priesthood declared their respective returns, Buren was ready. Even as the Northern

Priesthood announced the accession of the new empress Genshi Daigo, the Lord of Hakusen openly declared war on all the Priesthood.

Buren's ongoing defiance of the Priesthood was already a legend throughout Tenra and the faction that was soon to be known as the Northern Court decided to make an example of the insolent Lord of Hakusen in order to prove their power. They did not reckon on the Dragon of Hakusen's cunning, or the powerful ally he had cultivated in his newly appointed Minister of the Left, a woman known as Radiant Deception—an ex-Priestess who joined his cause. Little is widely known of what occurred in the terrible battle that followed save two indisputable facts: for the first time in the history of Tenra the kami turned against the Priesthood and the Warlord Buren's forces triumphed over those of the Northern Court.

Since that time, Hakusen has steadily built up its already formidable forces as it mobilizes for war. Now all of Tenra waits breathless for the Dragon's next move.

- A group of characters in the service of Hakusen might lead the charge into Torigoe, or they might do whatever they can to keep the domain free of bloodshed.

SCARLET STEEL & VEILED THUNDER

Hakusen lies within the province of Ryurin, a region known as the Dragonscale Territories due to the unique shape of its harsh mountain range. The mountains stretch all the way to the sea and much of Hakusen's southern border consists of towering cliff walls surrounded by jagged reefs, made more deadly still with the devastation caused by the fall of Mount Jinrai. Hakusen's location is especially galling to the Northern Court since their newly declared floating capitol Genshikyo hovers above the former Ryurin-shu domain Ouga, less than a three day's march to the north—the Dragon is too close by far for their comfort, yet they dare not show weakness by withdrawing elsewhere. Hakusen's treacherous mountain range holds large deposits of scarlet steel, which Buren has steadily exploited for many years, and vast mining operations with accompanying villages cover large portions of the realm's highlands. The people of Hakusen are hard and proud, like their lord, and whether they are peasants or soldiers, they have little tolerance for fools.

- The Northern Court might be playing up the idea that they cannot control Hakusen for some mysterious reason. Buren pushing away from them might bring his domain under their influence.

NOTABLE PLACES

The House of Thunder—Carved from a massive granite promontory that thrust far out into the ocean, the House of Thunder is Hakusen's mighty capital. Legend says that it took the strongest shiki of one hundred onmyoji a year and a day to shape the palace and integral surrounding city to the satisfaction of Hakusen's lord. Supposedly named for the sounds of the sea crashing into its razor-lined sea walls, many declare that it was in fact named for the clangor of arms that rings eternally about the palace's titanic staging grounds. As much a fortress as a seaport, the House of Thunder sprawls about and through the cliff of the promontory from which it was carved. Thousands of fishermen work the ocean about the port, with merchants regularly passing through under close scrutiny by Hakusen's soldiers. It is no great secret that Buren pays successful Moguri-ya, the daring rogues that wrest Priesthood salvage from Soratsuzumi Sea's depths, extremely well if they bring him useful technology. Many believe that the

House of Thunder only allows a glimpse of Hakusen's real might. It is widely rumored that one or more of the mountains surrounding the capital have been all but hollowed out to make room for forges and armour workshops.

- How does Buren keep his kimenkyo armour-smiths up to date with the latest technology, despite the fact that he has no ties to the Northern Court? There may be a story hidden in there.
- There is one fatal flaw to the architecture of the House of Thunder that, if discovered, could lead to the destruction of the domain's military stronghold. What could it be, and what would someone pay for that information?

Steel Valley—A magnificent city sprawling along the walls and forested base of a high-altitude gorge in the heart of the mountains of Hakusen, Steel Valley has become one of the centers of Buren's fiscal might, though it started out as a controlled experiment. Hakusen's borders were closed for many generations, as Buren's ancestors often refused to acknowledge travel passes. When Buren came to power, he felt that the isolated nature of his kingdom was doing more harm than good, so he created a place where outsiders could freely mingle with the people of Hakusen. Passes are not required to travel to Steel Valley. Indeed, bearing an Amafuda travel pass can get you deported in Hakusen, though a traveler that claims to be headed there at the border will have their name logged and sent on to ensure arrival. Steel Valley has become a raucous mining town filled with bustling miners, soldiers, kongohki, merchants, samurai, prostitutes, onmyoji, monks, farmers and many, many spies. It is a city that never rests. Buren deals generously with those who find and report new veins of scarlet steel or other valuable minerals, and constant expeditions into the surrounding mountain range are commonplace. Many that journey to Steel Valley do so to leave their past behind—it is a place of great secrets where few dare ask questions openly.



- Steel Valley is seeing a huge influx of refugees lately, from people escaping ravaged war-torn domains and seeking protection. Will these people be a source of strength, or will they hinder the Dragon's machinations?
- Steel Valley is a sprawling city with many sights, drawing in people looking to change their lives. Stability in chaos is what makes this city thrive. Will the regional lord of this most prosperous city stand up to Buren when the war drums are sounded?

The Arch—On the northern border of Hakusen stands a monument to Buren's many victories formed from the bones of dead enemies melded with the Scarlet Steel of armours that the Dragon and his armies have destroyed. The Arch spans nearly half a kilometer and with each year, it only grows larger as Hakusen's artisans continually expand it with newly acquired trophies. A sizable garrison, including a single great armour, stands watch over it at all times, as it is the single most commonly

used entry to the Kingdom of Hakusen. A small horde of highly skilled craftsmen live in the village that sits just below the arch in a mountain valley. While they are frequently employed to work on the Arch, many of them find the time to accept commissions for Scarlet Steel weapons of various kinds. Hisano's Gate is a hard two-day's travel over rough terrain East / Northeast from the Arch.

- The arch is a national monument to some, and a most horrible landmark of human suffering to others. In secret, the Phoenix sect wants it destroyed for reasons known only to them.
- The arch serves as more than a monument. It is a secret project concocted between Buren and his trusted onmyoji and geomancer vassals. It serves to protect the domain, and perhaps all of Tenra, from something worse than most people could imagine… something worth going to war for.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LORD BUREN—THE DRAGON OF HAKUSEN

Buren has dedicated his entire being to a single truth: For war to finally end on Tenra, the Priesthood must be utterly destroyed. Every single action that he takes is weighed against this one overriding and seemingly impossible goal; yet, incredibly, he is determined to win. Those that meet him begin to suspect, with no small amount of awe, that perhaps he can… To be in Buren's presence is a near overwhelming experience for most beings. So solid of spirit that all who come near him are soon pulled into his orbit, Buren passionately speaks of the harmony that lies on the far end of his great struggle, of the world that will rise and the glory that shall be Tenra's when the Priesthood is no more. Those that listen to him go forth to fight harder for this man that claims to seek peace than ever they would for a mere warmonger. Buren publicly supports the Bright Lotus sect and his coffers have built several Bright Lotus schools. Cynical observers are quick to point out that the Lord of Hakusen is doubtless well aware of the value of troops who will willingly sell their lives in this world for salvation in the next. Buren despises crime and absolutely loathes yakuza, seeing them as nothing more than parasites that feed off his soldiers' needs. He is thought to be somewhat sympathetic to the oni people…but his armours still need powering.

Buren knows that he needs massive resources to combat the Priesthood and he is always looking for any advantage that will assist him in his struggle. He has recently seized several islands that belonged to the former domains of Sunai-shu, though the great Itokawa Yozo of the domain of Suma has lately stymied his advance. A lesser man would probably be frustrated—the Dragon of Hakusen is delighted to have found an opponent worthy of matching wits and strategies against. Buren appears to be in his late 40s, with graying hair and piercing dark eyes. He frequently wears heavy armor adorned with the Hakusen mon (seal) cradled in the claws of an elaborate carved coiled dragon. When he speaks, his voice is always rich with meaning. He is widely considered to be the greatest tactical mind of his generation and has never been defeated on the battlefield.

- Playing as the Dragon of Hakusen might be an interesting roleplaying challenge, and might lead to a really cool story.
- Why is Buren so opposed to the Priesthood? There may be hidden reasons known only to him and his advisors. Those reasons might form the core of a longer story set in Hakusen.

RADIANT DECEPTION—MINISTER OF THE LEFT

Little is known of Hakusen's Minister of the Left other than that she is a beautiful woman who is widely rumoured to have once been a Bu-ranked member of the Priesthood. Radiant Deception is thought to have many agents both in Hakusen and abroad, including one or more ninja clans, as she always appears to be well informed of important events across Yashima and frequently beyond. Many whisper that she is Buren's lover, though they have never been seen to be intimate in public. She favors flowing kimonos of black and white silk, which contrast sharply with her golden eyes.

- Why did she leave the Priesthood? What does she actually want?
- One of the player characters could be one of Radiant Deception's secret agents. Or Radiant Deception herself, in charge of keeping the stability of the region.

DISTANT THUNDER—MINISTER OF THE RIGHT

The fierce samurai General Distant Thunder is both Buren's oldest companion and the weapon with which the Dragon smites his most fearsome foes. Hakusen's Minister of the Right is an implacable enemy capable of routing whole battalions of unaugmented soldiers by himself. He leaves subtle strategies to his beloved liege lord, preferring to act as the sledgehammer that he is. His presence in the highest echelon of Hakusen's government has helped assure many Samurai that they will be well treated by Buren's government and the armies of Hakusen boast thrice as many samurai as most other domains. Distant Thunder is a massive warrior, there are many that believe that he is always at least partially transformed, as his heavily tattooed form stands well over seven feet tall. In battle he wields a colossal, wickedly curved axe-like gemblade that he affectionately refers to as his "rabbit skinner". It is widely known fact that Distant Thunder has single-handedly destroyed five armours and one great armour, the Relentless Fist, with his mighty weapon. Distant Thunder disdains kijin, loathes kongohki, and firmly believes armour riders are almost blasphemous in their ignorance of what they do; to the Samurai Minister, war is religion. He keeps quiet about the latter belief around Buren though.

- Distant Thunder fears that Buren is beginning to favor armour and technology over samurai and warrior-vassals.
- Distant Thunder's gemblade is highly sought after by a sect of onmyoji sorcerers, to the point that they might openly kill him in order to attain it. What secrets does this curved weapon hold?

THE WEAPONSMITH-CARTOGRAPHER YORIMITSU

Steel Valley's most (in)famous resident is a man wanted for execution by the Southern Court of the Priesthood for the crime of *exceedingly* accurate map-making. Yorimitsu's blades have long been famous for their beautiful and intricate engravings, carvings that have recently been revealed as concealing elaborate codes that accurately depict the history or secrets of many of Tenra's domains. Yorimitsu has been producing weapons for over 40 years while traveling across Tenra from province to province, village to village. Many lords are now scrambling to find various Yorimitsu blade-maps in the hope that they will reveal weaknesses in their opponents' territories that they can exploit. Yorimitsu is now a wizened old smith with a razor sharp mind who frequently plays the dotard to catch others unaware.

- A character realizes that the blade given to her by her clan is actually a sought-after Yorimitsu blade. There are three sources now pursuing that character that will do anything to get their hands on it.
- Yorimitsu leaves on one more grand excursion to the new oni land of Kikoku for research. A character can play him, and the other characters might be traveling companions.

TAKARA AND THE FALLEN SUN

The Fallen Sun is the most famous of Hakusen's three known great armours, not because of its heroic exploits against monsters, but due to the identity of its main pilot: Buren's daughter Takara. The Dragon's daughter rapidly approaches the age at which her growing awareness of what she does will prevent her from piloting the Fallen Sun, but for now she still easily commands the potent war machine.

- Takara is on the verge of turning 16 and a potential love interest for a younger PC. Whether she will turn against her father or join him when she realizes what she has done in his name will shape the destiny of Hakusen (and perhaps all of Tenra!) forever.
- Takara is so gifted that she is able to both pilot and man the weapons of Fallen Sun by herself, though she has not revealed this secret to anyone yet.

SHINING RESOLVE

The highest-ranking monk in Hakusen, Shining Resolve is a Bright Lotus sect priest who runs the Open Tide, a Bright Lotus school funded by Buren that sits on the outskirts of the House of Thunder. Shining is well loved by the people of Hakusen and personally taught many of the present generation of the Dragon's warriors in classes at the Open Tide. That any man other than himself should have such a great influence over his soldiers doesn't seem to bother Buren… at least in public.

- Is Shining Resolve the honest priest he seems, a spy for the Phoenix sect, or even an agent for one of the Courts of the Priesthood?

THE GREAT RYOUSHU HOUSES OF HAKUSEN

The majority of Hakusen's fiefs are military encampments nestled amidst the mountainous terrain and their vassal lords are all warriors of one stripe or another, save one. The vassal house of Miyabe is lead by the great onmyoji lord named Withering Storm, a master armour-smith famed across Tenra. Withering Storm is privy to many of Lord Buren's innermost thoughts and among the most trusted of his retainers. After the Miyabe, the Kanamori are held in the highest esteem, not only in Hakusen, but also throughout the province of Yashima. The warriors of the Kanamori are second to none, each one striving to outdo the others in martial feats. Kanamori-no-Ryosuke, leader of the house, is widely known to be a soul of honor and—after the samurai Distant Thunder—he is Buren's most trusted general. The Ryogoku are a family of warriors who wear purely functional, almost entirely unadorned armor. Their house's colors are similarly plain, consisting only of a black field with three silver lines. Since the fashion in Tenra is for warrior houses to mark themselves with bright and distinct colors or patterns, their leader Ryogoko-no-Hachibei was once questioned why his house eschewed such. His answer, "We would rather be known by our deeds then our displays", is oft quoted and considered by many to be the perfect answer for a true warrior house.

- With three warrior-houses, conflicts of interest or honor might resolve themselves… messily.

NAIRA-DO

When humanity first came to Tenra, they found that the ancient places of the world had more than oni to defend them. Ayakashi and spirits of such numbers they were countless roamed the deep wilderness, and many of them did not look kindly upon the newcomers from the stars. Many terrible battles were fought against the Lords of the Trackless Forests and other, stranger beings. The tales of those days, along with their implicit lessons, are remembered now only in the oldest stories, the bulk of which have been passed down for many, many generations.

One of the stories still told within the domains of the province of Ryurin-shu states that as humans advanced across the continent of Yashima, the one place from which the ayakashi refused to budge was the sacred forest called Naira-do, or "Eldest" by the oni tribes. Representatives from the tengu clans of the mountains, a few of which have always been sympathetic to humanity, declared "One of Tenra's hearts dwelled within the forest". They would not explain what they meant; they only made it clear that humanity would regret it if the issue was forced. The generals of the day politely disregarded the tengu, who soon left the tents of the men shaking their metallic beaks in disgust.

Soon thereafter several large Human armies marched into Naira-do—they never came out again. Soon after children began to disappear en masse from villages throughout Yashima, their absence unexplained, plagues without cure rained down upon the land, and the majority of crops throughout the continent dried up in droughts or were destroyed by floods in a single season. Nature itself turned against the people of Yashima and for all the Priesthood's efforts, nothing could be done to stop it. Nothing that is, until a single brave monk (some tales state that he was the region's first onmyoji), whose name has long been lost to history, travelled without weapons into Naira-do…

And the attacks stopped.

It is unknown exactly what the monk did. Perhaps he offered himself freely to the forest. Perhaps he begged for forgiveness. Perhaps he struck a terrible bargain. Perhaps the monk had nothing to do with the troubles' ending.

Who can say?

Since that time, Naira-do has been declared sacred and inviolate by the Priesthood. The Regents in charge of controlling the land on which the massive mountainous forest rests have changed many times, but the prohibition against using the forest in any way has ever been clear and not one has ever breached the (presumed) ancient peace accords…

…Yet.

- Naira-do is filled with so many secrets, so many questions, that each place, each personae, can offer a dozen new questions and answer none. Feel free to use, manipulate, play or discard the elements of Naira-do as needed.

ONE FOREST, MANY HEARTS

Naira-do is not truly one, but many forest realms of wildly varied spirits that operate almost entirely outside of the understanding of Humanity. While some human refugees have become adept at following the rules of the forest, even the best err on occasion; a practice that can have all manner of "interesting" consequences. Naira-do is truly ancient and it shows; only the eastern continent Hidakami can boast trees as

massive or mountains as fierce. None but the extremely wise or the incredibly foolish travel the forest lightly.

NOTABLE PLACES

The Restless Temple—The wandering sanctuary of the Forest Lord, the Restless Temple is a marvel. Crafted by a small army of onmyoji with the blessings of many powerful ayakashi, the Restless Temple meanders over the mountains and trees of Naira-do in no particular pattern, though many of the more powerful spirits always seem to know where it can be found at any given time. The top of the Restless Temple appears to be an engraved wooden dome, while the underside is covered with hundreds of human-looking arms seemingly carved from lustrous marble. Glimpses of crystalline and gold veins shine forth as the arms seize the ground or branches to haul the temple onward over the varied terrain of Naira-do. A fair number of onmyoji and a variety of monks call the Restless Temple home.

The First/Last Tea House—At the base of the Mountain Itama, near the center of Naira-do, there is a picturesque valley of surpassing loveliness. At the center of the valley, perfectly placed at the end of an ancient well-traveled path, a magnificent tea house rests amidst a charming garden. The tea house appears to be traditional in every way, except for its massive scale. Even so, its entrances are low so that all visitors must stoop to enter. The tea ceremony is held to be sacred by both spirits and men. The First/Last Tea House is a place of absolute neutrality and it supernaturally reinforces peace. All grievances are set aside within and beings as wildly varied as oni and samurai, ayakashi and mushi-tsukai, kongohki and dragons, can sit together at the tea ceremony, discussing their grievances rationally for a time before (likely) going elsewhere to slaughter one another. The few humans that know of the First/Last Tea House use it as a meeting point in order to broker with the spirits of Naira-do.

The Place Where the Earth Touches the Sky—After the destruction wrought by the humans on their people, this isolated village is one of the largest collections of oni left on Tenra outside of the oni country Kikoku. When an oni comes of age here, they are expected to travel outside of Naira-do for a time, both to learn news for the village of what is going on in the outside world and to discover how blessed their lives actually are in comparison to what the bulk of their people face. What their youths have learned in the last few years has greatly divided the community on what they should do. One faction believes that they should send forth armed pilgrims in order to bring other oni safely to the forest, while another argues that they should all remain within the safety and secrecy of Naira-do, leaving the rest of their people to tend to their own affairs. If war truly comes to Naira-do, the decision may be made for them.

The Dancing Courts—A series of fiefdoms ruled over by notably human-seeming ayakashi, the Dancing Courts are scattered about throughout the whole of the forest. Each court has slightly different rules, some of them contradictory, which makes it difficult indeed for a human to know which rules of etiquette to follow. The Dancing Courts are as varied as their rulers on their positions regarding humanity. For example, the Court of Arai the Glorious is a pleasant place that offers comfort to a weary traveler in exchange for the martial tales of the outer world that Lord Arai favors. The Court of Ikiyo the Ill-wind, on the other hand, welcomes humans by day so they can be hunted and slain for sport the following night. Likewise, the appearance

and location of each Court varies with the nature of its ruler. Some resemble the forest around them; others are centered in grand palaces at the bottom of lakes, or carved into the snow along one of the mountain summits. The Dancing Courts hold a great deal of the power of Naira-do, but they are generally fractured and opposed to one another. The Courts regularly ask the Forest Lord to mediate disputes between them. It takes a large-scale invasion of humanity to get the various ayakashi lords to willingly work together without outside intervention.

Tambo—The only human settlement in all of Naira-do is the mobile village known as Tambo ("the rice field"), the ancient training village of the Sharpened Leaves Ninja clan. The Sharpened Leaves train by pitting themselves against the denizens of the forest, and though they are few in number due to extreme attrition they regularly endure, they are without doubt some of the stealthiest and deadliest ninja in all of Tenra. The fireside tales that speak of them hold that each of the Sharpened Leaves is as deadly as a Shinobi of a lesser clan and that their legendary Shinobi are like unto forces of nature, scattering whole armies before them with ease. The Sharpened Leaves are known to be a mercenary clan, though few know how to hire them. The small number of Regents willing to speak of such matters whisper that the long years spent in Naira-do have greatly affected the Sharpened Leaves and that they have ceased fighting for mere material wealth, but even the boldest Regent falls silent and will not speak when asked what it is that they will fight for…

Dramatis Personae

Forest Lord Yasuko—Keeper of the Promise

Yasuko was born in a small peasant village within the country of Kagari, far to the south of Naira-do. At the age of eight she was assailed by visions that drove her north until, close to a year later, the nearly feral girl collapsed under the boughs of the forest where she was found by agents of the Restless Temple and swiftly determined to be the reincarnation of the former Forest Lord. Yasuko has held the title of Forest Lord ever since. The Forest Lord does not rule Naira-do in any conventional sense, certainly not as Humans would understand. Rather, she is known by the powerful human-form ayakashi of the forest as the "Keeper of the Promise" and is directly responsible (in their eyes) for keeping the bulk of humanity out of Naira-do. To that end, every Forest Lord has traditionally employed a wide variety of agents both within and without the forest, Yasuko being no exception. They are also frequently called upon to mediate disputes between the various human-seeming ayakashi lords when quarrels arise, or to communicate with the more elusive Great Spirits.

However, no amount of planning or preparation can account for a cataclysm the magnitude of the falling of the Phantom Star, and Yasuko's visions have returned in earnest. In her dreams she sees an awe-inspiring dragon with scales of polished copper fighting a small but magnificent silver crane amidst flaming trees as Naira-do burns about them. The smoke always rises to obscure the battle, but it matters little to the Forest Lord, for she can clearly see that the fire the combatants started swiftly sets all of Tenra ablaze. Yasuko will not let that happen.

Yasuko is both a Buddhist monk/priestess and a powerful onmyoji, which is traditional for those bearing the title of Forest Lord. She appears to be in her thirties, though her face has an ageless cast to it which makes it difficult to be certain. Her eyes, though, are deep wellsprings of wisdom and sorrow in equal measure. The Restless Temple is her headquarters and she frequently plans her operations from there. Due to Yasuko's preferences, many of the actions her agents undertake on her behalf are quite subtle. They are frequently designed to redirect aggressors from Naira-do harmlessly, with assassination only being employed when all else has failed. Considering the magnitude of the oncoming crisis, though, the Forest Lord fears she is running out of time for restrained tactics.

GLASS RAIN WEEPING

Many ayakashi find humans to be endlessly entertaining creatures, and the spirit in human/henge form known as Glass Rain Weeping is one such being. Indeed, the way they scream and bleed bright red has never failed to produce wild joy in him. Their death throes invite hilarity and laughter of the first order. Glass Rain Weeping enjoys humanity and wishes to sample as wide a variety as he can. Therefore, the present restrictions on his existence and his inability to leave Naira-do for amusements elsewhere are unacceptable, leading him to dedicate quite a bit of time to undoing the work of the Forest Lord. Restraining himself and sparing a human long enough to lead it to a soulgem mine was exceedingly difficult, but Glass Rain Weeping prides himself on his long-range vision and the delights he'll have when the Promise is broken at long last.

ARUL-TAS—SPIRIT MAN

Not a name, so much as a designation of his place within the tribe of oni that dwell in The Place Where the Earth Touches the Sky, Arul-Tas is not the eldest within the village, but he is the oni that most clearly hears the voice of Dii-Go. Arul-Tas believes that his people must do something other than simply live in Naira-do hoping that the rest of the world will pass them by unnoticed. He is near desperate to find a way to reach out to Humans and be listened to, but he is uncertain of how to proceed and Dii-Go does not speak of such things.

- Arul-Tas has heard whispers of the warlord known as "The Dragon of Hakusen" and his quest to destroy the Priesthood. Perhaps if the oni were to support the Dragon in his great war, he would assist them in return? Arul-Tas would need brave couriers indeed to convey such a message, if he doesn't just go himself.

FALLING TREE

Which is greater: strength of will or strength of soul? This is the question the Bokusen monk called Falling Tree seeks to answer as he wanders the dangerous paths of Naira-do searching for individuals, spirit or otherwise, capable of responding to his satisfaction. It is of little consequence to the monk that many of the forests denizens consider *him* to be the strongest being within the domain, for he would argue that the very might that they perceive in him is merely martial and therefore fleeting. As ephemeral as Falling Tree deems his physical might to be, he can still easily rout an army if he's of a mind to do so.

- As one of the most admired disciples of the Bokusen way, many seek out Falling Tree, though few have the courage to walk after him into Naira-do.

SUMA

Suma is of the last remaining domains of the province of Sunai-shu. The famous Regent-General Itokawa Yoichi—commonly known as "Yozo"—leads the domain. An enormously rotund man, Yozo was born with a gland defect that has caused him great weight troubles his entire life. Since most physical activity was impossible for Yozo in his youth, he became a great student of military history and eventually, a gifted general. Yozo's most famous phrase, "I must plan well—My legs aren't strong enough to help this great body flee from a defeat!" is quoted throughout Tenra.

Yozo has recently been taking a great deal of pleasure in matching his wits and skill against the Dragon of Hakusen. The two Regents' forces have been fighting over the islands left between Sunai-shu and Ryurin-shu in the Soratsuzumi Sea. Buren, too, has been invigorated by the challenge and the two men are swiftly becoming "Battle Friends" as they send a continual stream of messages to one another, alternatively complementing and chiding the other's victories and mistakes. Yozo may well play a key supportive role in the events unfolding within Ryurin-shu if correctly approached. He will readily bolster Kagetora in order to help the young regent become a greater thorn in the Dragon's side, though he would certainly never lend enough aid to make Torigoe a threat to Suma.

- The nature of Itokawa-sama's aid has purposefully been left up to the GM's needs. It may be as simple as advice on how to defeat Buren or as meaningful as an army backed with armour.
- Suma itself is a vast domain as well, with as many secrets and notable characters as Torigoe, Hakusen or other domains.

APPENDIX



TENRA GLOSSARY

Acting player—The players who are taking part in a scene, role-playing their PC. Some acting players take on the roles of NPCs and join the action within a scene.

Agents—The Shinto Priesthood term for the priests and shrine maidens who serve the Priesthood. Agents are often given missions to gather knowledge and report back to the capital. Low-ranking agents move about Tenra performing duties as Shinto priests and maidens, while higher-ranking agents are given designations and code numbers and oversee a smaller part Tenra or the Priesthood internal bureaucracy. All priesthood agents are masked: Low ranking Priesthood agents wear masks that cover the area around their eyes, while higher ranking agents wear masks which cover their entire face.

Aiki chits—(AI-key) Aiki means "Meeting of Spirits". Aiki chits are coins, chips, tokens or paper given by the audience (the other players) or GM to the acting player when they say or do something cool in character, act upon their Fates, or entertain the others in a dramatic way. Essentially, it is a reward for good role-playing. Aiki later becomes Kiai.

Alu—"Heaven" in the oni language. This also refers to the telepathic powers of the the oni people, originating in their horns.

Amafuda pass—This is a travel pass that allows Shinto agents to travel from region to region, or domain to domain, without being stopped, without questions asked.

Annelid—The native worms and insects of Tenra. Long ago, people realized that they could on some occasions house these life-forms within their bodies in a symbiotic relationship: The user feeds the annelid what it needs to survive, and in return the annelids heal or protect the user. Users of annelids are called annelidists or mushi-tsukai.

Annelidist—Shunned practitioners of wormcharm, a science which allows the annelidist to host colonies of annelids within their bodies. The annelids respond to the annelidist's desires, protecting and serving the host in a symbiotic relationship. Another word for annelidist is worm-user or mushi-tsukai. They often serve as stationary or traveling doctors or medicine men, healing the sick. Most people are wary of annelidists, rejecting those who use their bodies as houses for grubs and parasites, eating raw meat or worse to feed the worms within them.

Armour—Also called "yoroi" or "yoroi armour", these are 3-meter tall mecha piloted by children free of karma and sin. The child sleeps in a comatose-like state within the armour frame, and using an interface helm they see through the eyes and sensors of the armour. Armours are rare and powerful, usually given as gifts by the Southern Court of the Priesthood in return for favors from lords and regents. When the child pilot matures and gains enough karma that they begin to understand the workings of the world, the armour rejects them, powering down and becoming unresponsive. Armour (British spelling) refers to the mecha of Tenra, while armor (American spelling) refers to actual lacquer armor worn by warriors in battle.

Asura—(ASH-ur-ah) When a person cannot let go of pursuing their goals, and amass too much karma, they become Asura. Asura are feared by all in Tenra, and thought of as monsters in human skin: They do not actually physically change form, but they become insane and evil. Not all evildoers are Asura, but all Asura do evil. If a PC becomes an Asura, they immediately become an NPC controlled by the GM.

Audience—This refers to all of the players at the table, including the GM. It mostly refers to their role when they are not taking part in the scenes, where they act as "the audience", watch the action and reward the acting players for their good role-playing.

Ayakashi—(a-ya-KA-she) The unknowable spirits and mysterious creatures that inhabit deep, faraway natural spots. Most are completely alien and incomprehensible in movement and motive, while others take on human or near-human form and interact with people. All are feared.

Bright Lotus sect—An order of biwa-playing monks, they travel from village to city across Tenra, teaching and entertaining people with song and scripture wherever they go. They believe nirvana can be attained by chanting simple sutras. Their peaceful form of Buddhism is quickly gaining popularity among the poor and downtrodden of Tenra. MYO-ren-shu in Japanese.

Buddhism—The official religion of Tenra, fully accepted and endorsed by the Shinto Priesthood, and spread mostly by the monks of the Phoenix order. It is a religion that believes that life is suffering, and that there are things one can do to escape the cycle of life, suffering, and rebirth.

Butterfly Dream—A Kugutsu special ability. This hypnotic power allows a Kugutsu to enter the dreams of the target and communicate with them. This ability is half psychotherapy, half psychic dominance.

Chimera—When a shiki rages out of control, it is called a chimera. It usually tries to attack the onmyoji who summoned it, but it can easily escape, going on a rampage across the country until it is stopped.

Crimson steel—The raw steel that soulgems are also formed from, this reddish steel is extremely hard and is used in the manufacture of armours, kongohki and exquisite soulgem weapons. In the West, it is known to be called "Orichalcum".

Dark Arts—A type of soulgem surgery where small soulgems are implanted underneath a ninja's skin, attaching to muscle and tendon. It is very painful and dangerous, but if successful the shinobi can perform ninjutsu techniques at a reduced Soul cost.

Destiny—A special Fate given by the GM to the PC in each PC's Zero Act scene. The destiny becomes the PC's goal for that scenario.

Dii—"Earth" in the oni language. This also refers to the telekinetic powers of the oni people, originating in their special hearts.

Dii-go—Dii-go is the God of the Earth, the beating heartbeat which all oni can hear, and which occasionally speaks to special oni.

Domain—Think of them as the nation-states of Tenra. Each is ruled by a regent. Most domains are at war with each other. Domains are also called kingdoms, countries or nations. Domains are further

divided into regions within the domain, ruled by lords who answer to the regent or daimyo of the domain.

Ebon Mountain order—This is a splinter sect of Buddhism, small in number. They reject the traditional methods of the Phoenix sect, and give up the monastic and sequestered lifestyle in favor of a life that directly involves traveling among people and helping them directly. They have few laws and traditions. Many of the Ebon Mountain practice martial arts in order to protect the people they meet. BOKU-sen-shu in Japanese.

Emotion matrix—When a PC meets another PC or major NPC, the player rolls on the Emotion Matrix to determine how their character initially feels towards that other character. It provides inspiration for the initial role-playing. Players and GM can adjust the results of the table to their liking through Aiki chits and Kiai points.

Fall of Jinrai—The one major event in Tenra's long history of importance: The Phantom Star, a satellite connected to the great capital city of Tenra in geosynchronous orbit by a kind of space elevator, crashes to the earth. Whole nations sink into the ocean, while others grow or change. In the subsequent months following the Fall of Jinrai, the political as well as geographic landscape of Tenra changes forever.

Fate—A Fate (with a capital F) is a PC's emotion, goal, taboo, or other thing that the character cares about. The players act up these qualities when they role-play their characters.

Fate roll—A dice roll using Empathy as the attribute and the highest Fate as the skill rating: Successes that result from the roll each become a Kiai point to add to the PC's Kiai pool. Each Fate roll costs one Aiki chit. Fate rolls are made during the intermission phase.

GM—Game Master. The person who is responsible for running the game, planning the scenario.

Hazure—(HAH-zoo-rey) Hazure are annelidists on the run, hunted down by the members of local annelidist nests for performing taboo arts, hosting too many annelids and going out of control, or breaking the strict rules of a nest.

Heart engine—Also called heartgems, they are the living hearts of the oni people encased in a metal frame. They act as a self-renewing battery of magical power, and are used to power armour and kongohki. Each heart engine is worth a fortune. They are the main reason regents and kings hunt the oni wherever they are found. SHIN-juu in Japanese.

Hidden 28th Chamber of the Merciful Phoenix Sect—I am sorry, I have never heard of this group. Are you sure you're feeling alright? You look a little pale.

Jinrai—Once the great political and cultural capital city (the name of the main city as well as the domain) of Tenra in the Sunai province, it was destroyed in the Fall of Jinrai when the Phantom Star crashed into it. New Jinrai was formed on the remaining land of the Sunai province.

Kami—The great gods and spirits that inhabit the natural world. Shinto is a religion which enshrines them and keeps the kami peaceful and nature in order.

Karma—Karma represents how much you care about, and are tied to, the material world. The more you push towards your goals, the higher your karma goes, and the more your suffering potentially increases. In the game, if your character's Karma

score goes above 108 and stays there, that character becomes an Asura and is immediately retired from play.

Kiai—(KEY-eye) Kiai is a representation of martial power and influence over the world. It is a pool of points that the players can use to get bonus dice to rolls, raise skill levels temporarily, or permanently improve their characters. Kiai becomes Karma when spent.

Kijin—(KEY-jean) Kijin comes from the words Machine and Man. They are people who trade in their flesh for steel "mechanica", becoming essentially cyborgs. This is a path to power that is not as dramatic or dangerous as becoming a samurai, but definitely gives an edge on the battlefield.

Kimen armour—A mass-produced armour built using kimenkyo technology. Meikyo-based armour are works of art: Kimen armour are clunky and mechanical in comparison. However, they are powerful and easy to manufacture. They are also easy to pilot, since the rider's Karma does not affect the operation of the armour. Many children eventually rejected by true meikyo armours later become kimen armour riders. They are produced by regents and lands loyal to the Northern Court of the Priesthood.

Kimenkyo—(KEY-men-kyoh) The gift of the Priesthood's Northern Court: They give the people of Tenra the means to create mass-produced meikyo and other technological marvels. This is a computing device much like a meikyo soul mirror, just not as impossibly refined as pure Shinto technology. It can be used with an interface device, usually an electronic abacus, to be used as a calculation engine or a kimen armour control unit.

Kongohki—(CONE-go-key) Literally "admantium-vajra-unbreakable machine", these robots have a metal frame which houses a meikyo soul mirror. Each kongohki meikyo houses the soul of a person who died with heavy karma, their soul wiped of all memories and placed inside a metal frame. They are extremely powerful on the battlefield and worth a small army, but they have one dangerous drawback: The soul inside the kongohki will one day remember who they were, and how they died.

Kugutsu—(KOO-goo-tsu) Comes from the word "puppet" or "mannequin" in Japanese, this refers to the ageless creatures (usually women) carved from sacred trees, given flesh and blood through magic, and taught in the ways of human culture and society. They are treated as rare and expensive collectors' items and majestic gifts despite having a will of their own.

Lu-Tirae—This is the name of the oni people in their own language (humans named them oni). Lu-Tirae means "caretaker" in their language.

Makuu Nindo—A great hero of the oni people. He was a Buddhist monk and oni who helped the oni carve out a domain for themselves in a series of massive battles against the Priesthood and surrounding opposition nations. He orchestrated the two-month night, an event where all Sha energy ceased to flow in the zones of battle, causing all magic and technology to fail.

Mechanica—These are the cyborg parts which kijin or kongohki graft to their bodies: Enhancements, weapons, movement abilities and the like. In Japanese they are called "karakuri".

Meikyo—(MAY-kyoh) A meikyo, or "clear mirror" (also commonly referred to as a soul mirror), is an exquisitely crafted high-technology disk of Priesthood origin. It is a spiritual communication device which adepts can connect to in order to pilot yoroi armours, control kongohki, or communicate with other members of the Priesthood over long distances. They can be found in the hands of shinto priests and shrine maidens, in shrines both large and small, and in the bodies of armour and kongohki.

Moment of Truth—When a player calls a Moment of Truth in one of the last few scenes, they collect Aiki chits from the other players and make Fate rolls to amass, then spend, a lot of Kiai in a last-ditch attempt to overcome a powerful enemy.

Mon—The "copper piece" of Tenra (some are made of silver, too), a few mon can get you a meal, clothes, or a roof over your head for the night. The shape and markings on mon change from province to province.

Mushi-tsukai—(MOO-shee ts'sky) Another word for annelidist.

Ninja—Warriors skilled in infiltration and assassination. They are trained from youth in the quasi-magical ninjutsu arts within their secretive clans, serving their lives as nothing more than an extension of the will of their clan: To live and die in the service of their clan.

Ninjutsu—The secret magical abilities of the ninja. They are forms of onmyoji magic distilled with time and practice into simple spells used to aid in infiltration.

Northern Court—After the Fall of Jinrai, the Northern Court of the Priesthood quickly emerged. Far more liberal and open than the Priesthood of the past, they present their empress unmasked, and freely give away the secrets of high technology and medicine to any leader who will accept it. They are in a state of cold war with the Southern Court.

NPC—Non-Player Character. These are background characters, including everything from village people to monsters to villains, which populate the world. The GM usually controls them.

Oni—The native people of Tenra, they live in small peaceful tribes and are being hunted to extinction by misguided humans who consider them monsters. They have horns (one or two) which makes them distinctive. They also have powers of the heart (telekineses) and mind (telepathy). Their tale is a tragic one, as merciless humans hunt them down either because of fear, or because of opportunism—the living hearts of oni, called heart engines, are rare and magical artifacts which can power large machines. Many oni stay in hiding, or on the move. Others fight back. Yet others cut off their horns to pass in human society.

Onmyoji—(own-MYOH-ji) Taoist sorcerers known for their knowledge of the world, their skill with divination and feng shui, and especially their summoning abilities. They summon creatures from the Sha, binding them into service for a brief period of time.

Overdrive—A kongohki special ability which boosts their physical skill rolls for a short period of time. This allows kongohki to roll the dice, count the successes, then roll that number of additional dice once more to add more successes to the total. Kongohki can do this a number of times in one scenario equal to the total of their Spirit and Body attributes.

PC—Player Character. Each player at the table has one character that they create and control. This character is called a PC, or player character.

Phoenix Sect—The main sect of Buddhism in Tenra. This traditional sect builds and maintains temples, keeps scriptures and history, and practices all the arts of classical Buddhism. They protect the people of Tenra and act as their spiritual guardians. HOH-oh-shu in Japanese.

Player—The people who come to take on the roles of characters in the world of Tenra. All players are responsible for their own fun.

Playset—A sample setting complete with locations, people (NPCs), and conflicts. The playset included with this book is called "Against the Tide". More will become available on the Tenra Bansho website.

Priesthood—The Shinto Priesthood is the organization which maintains the traditional ancestral religion of the people of Tenra. They provide help to the common people, offer blessings, spiritual cleansings, and officiate at local festivals and ceremonies. They also are secretive and powerful: The Priesthood controls all of the ancient powerful technologies of old, including the methods of creating meikyo, armour and kongohki. They also secretly plot to have regents fight other regents to keep the land in a state of constant war, for reasons unknown. Shinto priests and shrine maidens often wear masks of painted wood or metal, covering their faces in accordance with some unknown tradition. The common people generally trust the Shinto Priesthood, and don't believe the rumors of control and deception.

Reflection—The Reflection is a kind of "Soul Cyberspace" that Priesthood meikyo-users can enter. They connect to a meikyo they possess (or link to a meikyo in a local town or forest shrine), and can instantly communicate with their peers who also happen to be in the Reflection. They can also leave recorded messages for their peers.

Regent—Regents are the rulers of the domains, the nations of Tenra. They are also called kings, queens, lords, and daimyos.

Resonance—These are the almost psychic abilities of the oni people. By subconsciously manipulating the Sha energy around them, oni can move matter or communicate telepathically.

Ryo—The "gold piece" of Tenra, worth about 4000 mon (copper pieces). Think of each one in terms of worth as about 1000 US dollars, 1000 UK pounds, etc.

Samurai—A word reserved for a feared warrior who has undergone the dangerous soulgem surgery that binds a shiki spirit to their living flesh. Samurai can, on verbal or mental command, become monstrous: Growing in mass, muscle, and perhaps even chitinous skin, they become extremely powerful physically for a short period of time. Warriors who have not gone through this surgery but work for a lord (warriors that would traditionally be called "samurai" in real Japanese) are referred to as warriors, vassal warriors, or mono-no-fu.

Samurai Surgery—A terrifyingly painful and dangerous surgery performed by an onmyoji sorcerer on a willing warrior. The warrior has soulgems implanted throughout their flesh and sinews, and a shiki spirit bound to the soulgems. The

ones that actually survive this surgery are from that point onward called samurai. Also called samuraization surgery.

Scenario—The "adventure" in which the PCs take part. The GM plans out (usually in light detail) a scenario lasting 3-6 hours, which is played out over usually 1-3 play sessions.

Scene Judge—This refers to one person chosen at the beginning of the scene responsible for watching the acting players and rewarding them with Aiki chits for good role-playing, cool lines, and dramatic dialogue.

Scene Player—This is the player whose character (PC) is the focus of that scene. There can be any number of PCs in a scene, but the scene player is the PC which the scene revolves around, or for whom that scene has special meaning for the PC.

Sha—The gossamer-like invisible energy which covers the planet of Tenra. It can only been seen and manipulated by oni, onmyoji, and magical creatures like the ayakashi. Sha flows over the land and provides power to magic and magical artifacts.

Shiki—(SHE-key) Also called shiki spirit or shikigami, a shiki is a spirit (or creature or demon, depending on your point of view) which is summoned from the Sha by onmyoji. They take on whatever shape the onmyoji wishes, usually some variant of animal-like creatures. They disappear after a brief period of time back to the Sha unless kept suspended permanently.

Shiki-Slinger—This is a somewhat derogatory word that classical onmyoji use to refer to the new wave of young onmyoji who combine kimenkyo calculation devices and abacuses in their summoning arts, rather than the more traditional and artistic summoning forms of paper, brush and ink.

Shinobi—A shinobi is an elite ninja who has undergone the Dark Arts soulgem surgery. They can perform ninja techniques with less effort than ninja. Only the best of the best are selected to become shinobi.

Shinto—The ancestral religion of Tenra, a form of ancestor worship and animism which the people brought with them from the olden times. The people of Tenra may or may not be Buddhist, but all people believe in Shinto. Shinto ceremonies involve purification, weather divination, blessings for crops and health, and communication with the kami (gods) of the land.

Soul—The amount of magical or spiritual power a character can harness. Think of it as Magic Points (MP) from console games.

Soul Mirror—Another word for meikyo, the clear mirror-disk used by Priesthood agents and armour-riders.

Soulgem—A mysterious reddish metal native to Tenra, it is rare and hard to mine. When it is mined and refined, it acts as a kind of spiritual battery or focus. Refined soulgem is used to power weapons, samurai, shinobi, shiki, and embedded in armour and kongohki as power cells. Soulgem weapons (also called "gemblades" or "gemswords") are rare and powerful weapons of high prestige and value.

Soulgem Weapons—Usually in the form of katana and swords, soulgems are crushed through a trigger device in the handle (revolver-style or automatic-style). This causes them to explode, sending vibrations across the sword: This increases the cutting and rending power of the sword, as well as its mass as

it swings. This causes terrible wounds as the soulgem weapon tears through nearly whatever it strikes.

Southern Court—After the Fall of Jinrai, the Southern Court of the Priesthood emerged after some time, although they simply refer to themselves as "The Priesthood" (and view the Northern Court as heretics). They keep their historical control over the meikyo technology, and keep a closed society of secretive agents and operatives. They often bribe regents and lords with gifts of true, powerful meikyo technology in return for invading domains favorable to the Northern Court. They are in a state of cold war with the Northern Court.

Talisman—This is the name for when a shiki is summoned and then bound into an object. It can be later called upon to emerge under the control of the talisman's owner. Samurai are living talismans, a shiki bound to soulgems and living flesh.

Tenra—The name of the great land (the planet, the "earth", and the collection of continents) in which the game Tenra Bansho Zero is set.

Tenra Bansho—A play on the classic four-character idiom "Shin Ra Ban Sho", or "Everything in Heaven and Earth" ("The Universe"). The title of the game you are reading.

Vitality—The amount of damage a character can take before they pass out. It heals quickly. Think of it as Hit Points (HP) from console games.

Yakuza—The "outsiders", people with no family register or land. They run the gambling halls, lend money, handle all sorts of otherwise illegal business. However, they also perform the tasks that no one else in the city is willing or able to do, especially firefighting and other dangerous but needed tasks. Think of them as a proto-mafia, even though they aren't all evil. For example, blind masseuses technically fall into the yakuza group: They aren't bad, they just exist outside the normal tracks of society.

Yoroi—(yo-ROI) The Japanese word for "armour", the mecha of tenra.

ZAKT-8R Ultimate Edge—A modified yoroi armour shortsword with a high soulgem capacity and rate of fire, it allows a skilled fighter to go toe-to-toe on the battlefield with the powerful 3-meter-tall armours. ZAKT-8 for short.

Zero Act—The very first act of the game, where each player gets their very own scene. The Zero Act scenes introduce each of the characters, demonstrates what kind of people they are, their personalities and roles. It also tells them their purpose or goal for the scenario. During the Zero Act, the GM hands out Destinies to the PCs (usually planned out in advance).

MEDIA RESOURCES

Most of the movies, dramas and anime listed below are available at your local North American by-mail DVD rental/streaming provider. There are great resources to be mined for ideas, or to get a feeling for things like "What samurai looked like", "What traditional inns looked like", "How people greeted each other", "What people do in a city or small town". The more media you watch, the more ideas for even little dramatic touches will spill forth.

You don't need a degree in Japanese history to "get" the feudal-era-meets-magic world of Tenra Bansho. You just need to have seen a few samurai movies, watched an exciting anime or read a manga or two. That should give you enough material to inspire you (or steal) for running your own games. Steal plot bits, characters, locations and action scenes and use them as you see fit. The most important thing that Japanese "samurai era" media can provide is a sense of immersion: When you approach a dojo, you could imagine and even describe in detail the dojo from an anime or movie you watched, complete with sights and sounds. When you reach the forgotten shrine, you can remember the pictures of the shrine in a manga you particularly liked, enough to interact with it. If you are the GM, you could simple describe the tavern that the PCs enter from memories pieced together from a few cool samurai movies you watched.

Things to watch for when soaking up samurai movies/dramas/manga:

- Set pieces: Taverns, temples, festivals, hot springs, fortresses, etc. Take mental notes.
- Notable characters: Faces, facial expressions, mannerisms, posture/speech, cool lines, etc.
- Action scenes: Use bits of fight scene choreography as a player or GM to describe battles in an exciting way.
- Names of people and places: Repurpose, borrow, steal.
- Little cultural bits: What people eat, how they dress, what they do in the town or village, and so on.

MOVIES

There are almost too many movies to even try to single out a few. But here are some that exemplify the kind of action and drama that Tenra Bansho is about. Incidentally, some of the best samurai movies ever made have all come out within the past ten years. Do some exploring to find your own inspiration.

Zatoichi series—There's some 26+ full-length movies in the Zatoichi franchise of the blind wandering swordsman and masseuse played by Katsu Shintaro. Skip the first few B&W ones, move straight into the color ones. You can almost see the player controlling Zatoichi increasing his Fates and relationships to the characters who appear, later blowing fistfuls of bonus dice in sword fights, then erasing/changing Fates to buy off the Karma debt. They're all pretty awesome, but in particular check out Zatoichi the Outlaw, Festival of Fire, and Zatoichi: The Blind Swordsman (1989, his last movie).

Aragami—Two hours. Two samurai. One room. This movie was actually filmed in a week *on a dare*, but the result is a gripping, suspenseful and action-packed tale of an immortal looking for death and a warrior looking to atone for his sins. Also, the weapons are totally "Tenra" and kickass.

Onmyoji and Onmyoji 2—Great stories of the ancient Heian period (a great setting for magic and royalty-themed Tenra games). Watch Abe-no-Seimei summon shikigami, cast exorcisms, and even roll his Performance skill to literally dance into Heaven. Nomura Mansai (Abe-no-Seimei) is a classic Kabuki actor, which brings an interesting level to his performance. Great inspiration for onmyoji characters.

13 Assassins—A perfect example of a Tenra-style revenge story, against an enemy you simply can't help from wanting dead. Brutal, thoughtful, and thoroughly entertaining. An excellent cast of actors in excellent bugei (sword-acting) form, a must see!

The Hidden Blade—A great and heartwarming drama of a samurai in changing times. Includes: Honor, corruption, kindness, brotherhood, deception, treachery, justice.

Zatoichi (Beat Takeshi)—This recent Zatoichi movie directed by and starring "Beat" Takeshi Kitano basically takes a giant crap on the character of Zatoichi perfected by Katsu Shintaro (the character was memorable because of his flaws and failures, and Kitano's Zatoichi was a zero-flaw badass being badass with badassitude), but the story and supporting characters are undoubtedly brilliant. Another glimpse into the old Edo-era underworld, suitable for darker city, yakuza, underworld or thief-based Tenra games.

Ran—Akira Kurosawa's masterpiece might be too much of a stretch of a reference for the gaming table, but the scenes, costuming and battles should give you a glimpse into the warring states period of Japan.

Shinobi: Heart Under Blade—Two ninja clans in a war to the death. See what "Ninjutsu: 5/Special" level looks like in a live-action movie. Also, annelidists!

Azumi—Another ninja movie. Slow at times, but punctuated by great action scenes and story twists.

Versus (Ultimate Edition)—One of the greatest low-budget action movies, ever. Watch it for great ideas on maneuvers to use in sword fights and hand-to-hand battles.

RoboGeisha—Silly and weird, but it portrays the life of warriors trading in pieces of their humanity for more power. Also, BUTT KATANAS.

Other modern historical-themed movies for visual or story inspiration include The Twilight Samurai, The Sea is Watching, Sakuran (a courtesan's tale), Hana, the Lady Snowblood movies, Goyokin, Dora-Heita, When the Last Sword is Drawn, Samurai Fiction, After the Rain, and on and on.

DRAMAS

Baian the Assassin—One of the greatest examples of serial campaign stories: Doctor-by-day/assassin-by-night Fujieda Baian kills evildoers for money to keep his clinic going. Great tales of revenge and the underworld, lots of inspiration for Tenra games. Also, one of the early works that made Watanabe Ken and Abe Hiroshi household names in Japan. Buy the 4-disk set, you'll be glad you did.

Lone Wolf and Cub—A classic serial TV series, and great example of one-on-many fights.

Zatoichi—There is a TV drama version of Zatoichi: More classic blind swordsman tales in 1-hour bite-sized chunks. Almost all of them are excellent. Definitely check it out.

Hissatsu Shigotonin ("The Dedicated Assassins")—A group of various laborers, samurai and people-with-pasts work in the day, and at night smite evildoers, offering vengeance for those who cannot avenge themselves. Very limited availability in English, but it is a great troupe-based assassin story: Each episode the story is repetitive and telegraphed, but the iteration of the characters, the motivations and machinations of the evil-doers and the set pieces make it a perfect example of what an excellent "serial long campaign" of Tenra might look like. Search for it.

Historical Dramas: If you have access to Japanese series like Fuurinkazan, Mito Komon, Ryomaden, JIN, Ooku: Hana no Ran, or other historical period pieces, check them out. The more you watch, the more stuff you'll find to include in your games.

MANGA

Blade of the Immortal—Kinda drags on in places, but the characters, the weaponry and the personality changes that develop in the main characters flag this as a possible inspiration for Tenra games.

Shigurui/Death Frenzy—A dramatic and gruesome tale—perhaps a "Sociological Horror Story"—of what happens when warriors totally give themselves up in the pursuit of martial power and excellence. There's an anime, too, which excellently portrays the weirdness and discomfort of the manga, but kinda ends abruptly.

Ooku—A slower-paced tale of female shogun and male concubines. See what happens with persuasion, pillow arts, etiquette and art-of-rule become the main skills in a role playing game.

Fist of the North Star—Behind the blood and guts and muscles and martial arts is a story of brotherhood, desperation and karma.

ANIME

Ninja Scroll—If there was one anime that screamed Tenra Bansho (minus the messy and sorta too-far sexual assault scene), it's Ninja Scroll. You'll find yourself statting up the Devils of Kimon and their powers in your head (there's even an annelidist!), and can follow along where the characters make their Fate rolls.

Princess Mononoke—If you haven't watched this classic Studio Ghibli anime yet, then put this fucking book down and go watch it. Yes, now.

Samurai Champloo—The action, drama and especially the setting anachronisms totally belong in any Tenra game.

Basilisk: Koga Nimpucho—An anime based on the manga based on the book which also later inspired the movie "Shinobi: Heart Under Blade", the powers, weapons and stories behind the warring ninja factions make this a classic Tenra inspiration.

Twelve Kingdoms—One of the greatest anime ever made (scope, quality, story, voice acting and music), the world of the Twelve Kingdoms is certainly more Chinese themed than Japanese themed. However, a lot of the visuals and style,

the alienness of a fantasy asian-themed game, and the simple human tales underneath have a place in the halls of Tenra inspirations.

Seirei no Moribito/Guardians of the Sacred Spirit—If you want to run Tenra as a Korean-themed Fantasy game, this anime series ought to bring plenty of inspiration.

Vampire Princess Miyu (TV)—See the kind of dark tales that can develop when an ayakashi is the main character.

BOOKS

Too many to list. For real Japanese pulp tales of ninja, assassins, samurai, revenge and other awesome stuff, look for the author "Ikenami Shotaro". Baian the Assassin, Hissatsu Shigotonin, Basilisk Koga Nimpucho and other dramas came directly from his short stories.

GAMES

There is a lot of inspiration to be pulled from video games. Here are the notables:

PLAYSTATION 2

Kuon—Onmyoji action/horror game. While it has artifacts of survival horror games, the visual impact of the clothes, setting and buildings; the gripping story; the magical action all make this an excellent resource for Tenra Bansho games. Creepy and awesome.

Sengoku Basara series—In the US it's called "Devil Kings", but this is an awesome action game that combines historical Sengoku figures and battles with Tenra-style high action, magic and even technology. If a six-katana wielding biker-boy Date Masamune or hell-magic and shotgun-wielding Oda Nobunaga doesn't sell you on the game, you have no soul. The newer releases are set to come out on PS3 and Wii, skinned as Sengoku Basara and not reskinned as Devil Kings (yay).

Okami—It's like injecting 200ccs of Japanese Mythology directly into your eyeballs. It's also one of the greatest games on the platform. Will inspire characters, monsters, and scenery to use in your game.

Way of the Samurai 2—An open-ended game of revenge and justice. Lots of interesting characters and factions, the impact of the visuals will inspire turns and twists in your game.

Tenchu—The classic Ninja action game done up pretty on the PS2. It should inspire a few ninja-themed games. Stick around for Tesshu, the third and secret main character based on Baian the Assassin.

Tenchu Kurenai—Same as the above, but with a better story, less magic and more drama.

Onimusha series—High action, low drama, but good clean fun. The setting, weapons and monsters should inspire a few magical-themed Tenra games.

Shinobido: Imashime—From the makers of the original PS1 Tenchu, this game revolutionizes the story-focused ninja action game. Play this for a few hours and you'll have enough material for three ninja campaigns. This game was never released in North America, but it is available in Europe consoles.

Kamiwaza (import only)—It's like Shinobido (same makers, even) but with thievery instead of murder. A father returns to a life as a virtuous burglar to get money for his sick daughter's medicine. Shows how you can have an awesome game of action and drama without bloodshed.

Hissatsu Urakagyo (import only)—A story-focused game basically riffing off the Hissatsu Shigotonin (TV show) theme: 5 disparate assassins from all walks of life take down evil magistrates and samurai in old Edo. Crappy controls, excellent story.

PlayStation 3

Sengoku Basara (see PS2)

Way of the Samurai 3—Another addition of the multiple-storyline Way of the Samurai series. The story is so-so, but it's got a lot of good characters and scenery to use when describing towns in Tenra.

Valkyria Chronicles—Has nothing to do with Japan (save where it was designed), but the combination of character interaction and drama set in the background of an ongoing war might inspire a multiple-campaign Tenra game set in a multi-domain war.

Ryu ga Gotoku: Kenzan! (import only)—A game in the popular Yakuza series, reskinned as a feudal era drama set in old Kyoto. Great visuals, side-games and characters scream inspiration for tabletop games. Unfortunately, there appear to be no current plans to release this game in English yet.

Wii

Oboro Muramasa/Muramasa The Demon Blade—If there was one true Tenra Bansho Zero console RPG game for the setting alone, this is it. An utterly Japanese reskin of their own Japanese culture, it features furious sword action, reimagined mythical monsters and gods, intriguing characters, and compelling storylines. For the Japanophile, this game alone almost makes a Wii worth buying.

Okami (see PS2)

Sengoku Basara (see PS2)

Original XBox

Otogi series—A high-action onmoyji action game. Destructable scenery and cool costumes makes for one of most original games on the XBox.

Roleplaying Games

There are other good role-playing games out there that also focus on quasi-historical Japan.

Sengoku—If you want to learn more about the feudal era of Japan, or make your games of Tenra more "realistic", this is hands-down the best resource for that. There are other books about that historical period, but this is the best one focused for gaming.

Legend of the Five Rings—So it's a fakey Japan, and the language inconsistencies and orientalism might drive you up a wall, but the setting is exciting and the setup is prime for good, solid fun. The new fourth edition is excellent, containing incredible amounts of GM usage advice.

Blood and Honor—The original designer of Legend of the Five Rings comes back with a game focused on fighting, honor, romance and empire-building. Wick "gets it right" on many levels.

The Mountain Witch—Currently available only in PDF format, it tells the story of a group of samurai and ronin traveling up Mount Fuji to defeat the evil Mountain Witch. Very rules light and focused on the story, and features Fate-like elements. It's where the "fishing" technique came from.

Kagematsu—A small-press game about a lone ronin protecting a town of helpless women. It challenges gender roles and keeps a tight focus on the story.

Dust Devils—While this is a game set in the Old West, it's steeped in the same conventions as Edo-period samurai epics: fast action and deep, driving, personal flaws. You can reskin it as a gruff samurai tale with absolutely no changes to the rules.

Lone Wolf—A game that's half a boardgame and half a role-playing game, together you tell the story of a ronin in a corrupt town over the course of an evening.

The Blossoms Are Falling—A supplement and setting for the Burning Wheel role-playing game. Unlike other games set in the Edo or Sengoku periods, this one is set in the end of the Heian period. This is a time before samurai and ninja, when dynasties were forming, the political landscape turning from order to chaos, and the land changing from one based in magical to martial power. Rules-heavy but ultimately satisfying.

HELLAS: Worlds of Sun and Stone—If you like the idea of Tenra Bansho, of taking a real historical culture and "awesome-ing it up" by adding anachronistic magic and high-technology, check out this game. It is basically the "Tenra treatment" applied to ancient Greek history and mythology.

ADVICE

This section collects various pieces of advice for playing or running games of Tenra Bansho Zero. It is divided into advice focused on players and gamemasters. You don't need to read or memorize this all to play the game, but some of the advice might help your game run more smoothly. Some of the GM advice is reiterated from the Scenario Creation rules section.

ADVICE FOR PLAYERS

- Tenra culture is old Japanese culture. If you're not as familiar with Japanese historical movies and dramas as other players, feel free to turn to the players who are for advice:

"I want to show respect to the lord." (turns to Jason, another player) "Should I just bow really low? Anything else I should do?"

"I use my etiquette skill to perform the tea ceremony perfectly. Tonya, you mentioned that you know about tea ceremony, what sorts of things might I do here to show my skill?"

Also, if you're interested, look up samurai or other Japanese customs online or in books, make some notes and bring some customs to your next game. You don't have to turn a game of Tenra into four players trying to outdo each other with their knowledge of classical Japanese customs, but it might add a tiny bit of spice or Tenra-style alien-ness to a game without falling back on classic Orientalisms.

- If you want to differentiate your character, think of a particular way of speaking. Perhaps even adopt an accent: Speak like a country bumpkin of your own native language if you're from a small village, or adopt a city accent (Boston, New York, London, Zurich) for a haughty city-dweller. There's the equivalent of everything from a Brooklyn accent (Osaka-ben) to Welsh (Kyuushu's traditional speech) across historic and even modern Japan, and Tenra is no different. Players can speak in the mannerisms of various English-speaking people, you don't have to resort to "sounding like an anime character" or "a lowbrow comedian's take on a Japanese sarariman or wise ancient Chinese philosopher".
- Never forget to give Aiki chits. It's easy to lose track when you're captivated by a particularly interesting dialogue between two characters, but try to remember.
- If you aren't getting a lot of Aiki chits, try to step up your game: Talk more in character. Be more forceful, have your character take a strong stance on something in the game and really play that up. Interact with the other characters, even if you have to pay a Kiai to jump into an existing scene to do so. Target your Fates a lot. You can even emphasize your Fates with out of character talk, as it will show the other players, the "audience", which parts of your roles you are aiming for:

Player: "How dare you! Watch your tongue, or I'll have your life-blood on my blade, whelp!" I put my hand on my sword. After all, I've got that Fate that says "Emotion: Wary of the prince", so I'll be playing that up.

Player: Since I have a Fate that says "Taboo: Killing people", I'm going to bluster but not actually kill these guards. "I… I say! Stay right there, or I'll cut you! I've cut down a thousand men, one more will be a drop in the bucket!" However, my voice is cracking, my sword hand is rattling my katana against its scabbard. I have a feeling this isn't going to go well.

- In Japanese, there are various levels of speech: Plain form, polite form, honorific speech, warrior-speak, archaic noble speak. If you want to bring language into the game, feel free to indicate how you are speaking:

"I am trying to cover up my country accent by over-using honorific speech, and probably doing a terrible job of it as well based on the fact that I have no skill in etiquette."

(after speaking in character for a minute to an NPC courtesan) "By the way, I was saying that all in polite speech, not plain speech like I normally do. I want to help put her at ease."

"I spit, and curse at them in the most impolite form of speech I can possibly utter, 'You bastards can eat my steel.' "

- Help the GM and others by making it clear what your character is doing. Compare "I look around the body" or "Kirie glares at the samurai" versus "I'm looking around the body for clues as to how the soldier died, where he might have come from, stuff like that" or "Kirie glares at the samurai, trying to show him that she's not to be messed with. She's trying to throw him off his swagger, maybe calm down and open up a bit." When taking action, the latter examples gives the GM a lot more information to work with. Giving the GM an idea of what your intentions are as you perform your actions will help the GM understand and fulfill those intentions.
- We don't have teams of script writers preparing great dialogue for us. Role-playing is like improvisational theater with rules. One thing to take advantage of, though, is the fact that if you come up with a more clever way to say something right after you say it, or decide a second or two later to take a different approach, feel free to "do-over" the lines you just said if you realize that you wanted to take the conversation in a different direction. If the other players/GM agrees, then it's totally fine.

GM: The samurai glares at you angrily. "Sit your ass down", he says, and kicks the open chair out from the table for you to sit on.

Player: I kick the chair across the room, standing defiant. "Listen here you ogre, I don't take orders from anyone."

GM: He grunts a bit, a smile creeping over his lips, and…

Player: Ah, actually, I thought of something else I wanted to do instead, is that OK?

GM: Sure.

Player: OK, so instead of kicking the chair, Kirie plops comfortably into the chair acting cheerful and obedient. I want to put him at ease. "I assume that you're looking for me, then?" But here's the thing, as soon as he lifts his sake cup, I want to show him what I'm capable of: With blinding speed I want to slice through the bottom of his sake cup.

GM: Great! Make a Spirit: Persuasion roll to intimidate him, and we'll see how you do.

- "But my character wouldn't do that!" is a cop-out. Don't use it. You as a player control your character. If the game would proceed more smoothly for the other players if your character had a reason for traveling with the others, or not being suspicious of the suspicious NPC, then its up to you to take control of your character and supply that reason.

Going Left when everyone else Goes Right can increase the drama of a game, if done once or twice. But constantly doing contrary things that hamstring the pace

of the game, or add complication for no reason other than "It's what my character would do", means that you're playing the game wrong. Your character doesn't exist outside of you, so come up with a reason why your character would join the others in their expedition, or invite the strange ninja to sit at your table, or go off on adventure when the safest route would be to stay at home. Ask the GM or other players for advice if you need help coming up with reasons.

- Make a conscious effort not to only make your own character look cool, but do things to give other characters the spotlight and make them look cool as well.
- Don't be concerned too much about keeping track of money: There's no spending or equipment cost charts in this game. Exact costs for equipment and services, as well as the amount of money that the characters have, is all situational. Asking the GM "How much money do I have?" in this game is as relative as asking "What time of day is it?" Having a few *mon* (copper coins, minted by the local domain government) will keep you out of work for a day or two, and in a situation where you're in dire need of money or work for your next meal. Having a few hundred *mon* will keep you well off for a month or so, depending on your personal costs or vices. Having one or more *ryo* (gold coins in an ovoid shape, also individually called koban) means that you can buy pretty much anything you want that you encounter, indulge in wild extravagances for weeks (or one wild night), or that you're a noble and are want for nothing.

Having said that, though, here's a quick idea of costs: A single plain meal or tea on the road usually runs 1-3 mon, or several mon higher for more quality foods. A night at a sparse inn can run 5-10 mon and would likely include food. An evening's entertainment (theater, courtesan, music) might run 10-20 mon. Weapons range from 20-100 mon depending on quality. Healing from a physician usually runs 10 mon. Most basic clothing supplies cost 1-3 mon each. Travel via palanquin might cost 2-5 mon for short distances, 5-10 for longer. Hiring one or more ninja usually costs 1-10 ryo depending on the job. Buying a shop or restaurant might cost 10-20 ryo. Just remember that Tenra is vast, so a legendary inn might cost 1 ryo per night, or an ancient, forgotten castle on a cursed land might cost 1-2 ryo instead of several hundred or thousand ryo. In terms of literary weight, think of 1 ryo as about 1000 US dollars, 1000 UK pounds, etc.

For the most part, there's no need to keep track of every coin you have or spend. But the above may be helpful when talking in character about the prices of goods or services.

- Remember that rolling on the Emotion Matrix is for inspiration. When you land on an emotion go with it if you want to, but feel free to keep your eyes open for another emotion that you think is more fitting. If you initially land on an emotion that strikes you as difficult or complicated, it might be an interesting challenge, but don't be strong-armed into settling on it to prove your skills or anything like that.
- Don't be a dick. That's the Golden Rule of role-playing.
- There are no secrets from other players in Tenra Bansho. If your character has a secret that they are keeping from the other characters, the first thing to do is make sure the other players—the audience—knows the secret and understands its impact. That way the

struggle of keeping it a secret can come up more in play without confusing the other players. The other players will likely help aid in making the secret more interesting, making the reveal—if it comes—that much more entertaining for everyone.

- Throw one kunai or shuriken at an enemy? Don't make me laugh. You have "a lot" on your sheet for a reason. Throw a lot, all the time.

- In most role-playing games, you learn to speak as your character, in first person: "I lift the rock"; "I swing at the ninja"; "I try to seduce the lord." Feel free to sometimes use third person to refer to your character's actions: "Kirie holsters her sword and glares at the enemy"; "Red Lotus bows humbly at the lord's suggestion, and quietly takes his leave." "Kirie points at the tavernkeep and says, 'Old man! Rice. Soup. Fish. Now.'" It might give you a new perspective on the scene.

- Feel free to work with the other players out-of-character to think of potential cool things to bring into future scenes, or character intentions and explanations. You can do this during Intermissions, or perhaps quietly when your character is not participating in a scene:

"I'm thinking that my character is starting to fall in love with the princess, and is starting to become jealous of your relationship with her. Is that cool with you?"

"I'm totally going to kick your ass here in this tavern, but I'm not going for the kill. I just want to try to teach your samurai a lesson."

This will help explain what you as a player want to have happen, and clear it with the other players so that they're on the same page. If you don't make your intentions clear, in the first example the other player might think you've suddenly become a jerk for no reason. In the second example the other player might think that you're aiming to kill his character. Explaining what you're trying to do will help the other players maneuver their characters to help that happen. Or they might disagree, and come to a more interesting compromise. If you leave the other players in the dark as to your intentions, they might simply not understand or catch your in-character "subtle cues", and come to another conclusion entirely about what you want.

- We are mystified by some of the cultural or physical artifacts from Japan: Ninja. Jade. Katana. Geisha. Tea Ceremony. However, on one cultural artifact of Japan, suicide/seppuku/hara-kiri: It seems that some Japan-themed role-playing games will end with half the PCs committing seppuku (ritual disembowelment). Once or twice is fine if it fits in the story, but just note that while suicide does happen with alarming regularity in mythical stories and legends, there are other ways to die or deal with great shame: Self-proposed exile, shaving your head and becoming a monk, charging headfirst towards your enemy, volunteering for suicide missions, or even giving up the sword and your name and starting a new life elsewhere, all of these and more are acceptable alternatives to offing yourself. We only mention this because it seems that many Japanese-themed RPGs (not just Tenra) played in the West often end with a big messy seppuku party. Just be aware of other ways to end your character's tale.

- How to Win at Tenra Bansho:

1) Create a character with an average or high Empathy, and mid-range starting Karma.

2) Role-play well, getting into character as much as possible, entertaining the other players, and pushing your role-playing skills further than you may otherwise. Get those Aiki chits flowing.

3) Reward the other players when they push themselves with Aiki chits, telling them why when you do so ("That was awesome!"; "I like that line"; "That's an interesting take on that Fate you have there, nice job"). They will in turn reward you when you go the extra mile in your role-playing as well.

4) Set up the other players to do cool things. When role-playing, purposefully give the others their chance to shine. Doing so usually results in doing things in-character that score you even more Aiki chits.

Congratulations, you have started an unstoppable combination of power. You will gain bucketloads of Kiai with which to improve your character's abilities and skills. Truth be told, though, you'll likely be spending it all on dice bonuses and skill level increases in the boss fights. And either way, you'll be gaining tons of Karma anyway.

Advice for Game-Masters

- Tenra is… well… huge. The rules aren't that hard to understand, but the setting can be pretty overwhelming, even for anime geeks and Japanophiles. Don't try to explain all the minute details at first. If there's time before the first session, have the players read through the color section at the beginning of the book, that hopefully gives enough setting and background on the character types to jump right into a game. Don't bother explaining the nuances of Buddhism or ayakashi if neither is going to appear in your game. Ideally, folks who love the game will get their own copy of the book so they'll be able to read the setting info on their own (or you can loan out your copy to your friends before your first session). "Ancient Japan, with high tech and magic; but all of the technology is geared for warfare."

The rules are the same. See the "Running your first game of Tenra" section below. In short, don't explain how Karma works until at least the first Intermission. Don't bother with an explanation of combat rules or initiative until the first real fight breaks out. Don't dive into the Vitality/Wound rules until the first PC takes damage in a combat round. Don't explain skill rolls until the first time the character tries to do something in-game. Do make sure to explain how Aiki chits are given and used at the beginning of the game, so that the players can start rewarding each other right out of the gate.

Breaking the setting and rules into bite-sized pieces as you play the game makes the game a lot more digestible than explaining all the rules and setting nuances up-front.

- The Zero Act doesn't need skill rolls. If something dramatic is going to happen in the Zero Act, even a combat, simply describe the results of the action without going to dice in order to wrap it up and move on to the first act. For new players to the game, you may want to introduce the game system by having a player roll a single skill roll, but keep it short and quick.
- If one or more players seem to not be getting a lot of Aiki chits, remind them to step up their game. If they're normally shy players, then give them more

opportunities to interact with NPCs or other characters in scenes specifically designed to see how two characters interact. Bring them in as minor NPCs for other characters' scenes, giving them an Aiki chit as they do so. If someone is shy but comes out of their shell, that should be enough incentive to reward that person as much as the best roleplayer who brings the house down each scene. Reward the players based on their own relative role-playing skills, don't compare them to the rest of the group. In time, you'll see people come out of their shells as they become more familiar with the game.

In turn, if a scene ends and one of the main players in that scene didn't receive any Aiki chits, if the player aimed their roleplaying on one of their Fates or their Destiny, remind the players of that fact and give them an Aiki chit. This isn't a consolation prize, but rather it's a look back into the character's goals (Fates/Destiny) and how the player pushed those goals. A player can still push a character's motivations in a scene in a way where individual lines aren't that "cool" or "exciting", but overall led to a great conclusion.

GM: OK, we'll end that scene there. Blue Cloud was really pushing his "Revenge" Destiny as well as the "Love of the princess" in that last scene, did you guys catch that? Here, take an extra Aiki chit, you really made "Revenge" the focus of your character in that last scene.

- If you can't think of a scenario, do this (given a four-player game): Pick three of one character type and one of another. Three Buddhist monks and one oni samurai. Three onmyoji and one ayakashi. Three ninja/shinobi and one shinto shrine maiden. That should give you a framework of how to structure the beginning of the story. The three similar characters might be the same type, but they will likely be played very differently. And the fourth character is there to add some surprises, spice, or tension to the game. You should be able to come up with a beginning/background situation for your scenario quickly with the "three of one kind, one of another" rule.
- When preparing for a game, go through the names index and write down about 10 first male and 10 first female names, as well as 10 last names. You will likely need to introduce new NPCs on the spot, and having a few names to choose from will help you come up with good names on the fly.
- For the most part, try to avoid mystery. Dramatic plot twists that flip the audience and "Your friend was the evil mastermind all along!" are for Hollywood movies, not really for Kabuki plays or Tenra games. Usually at the beginning of the game, the players know who the evildoer is, and that doesn't change throughout the game. The PCs will change, their relationships will go stronger, change, or dissolve. There will be cool dialogue and memorable moments. But don't rely too much on the impact of a "gotcha!" to fuel the game. It might be interesting to have the leader of the Demon Mask Faction be your trusted lord's advisor, but don't make that plot twist the central plot point of the game; it's likely that the players will already figure out your plot twist, have already guessed the identity of the evil boss, and are just being nice and not ruining your scenario by stabbing them in the head in the first scene.

That's not to say not to run games where there's a mystery, or the identity of the boss is hidden. Just don't rely on some big shocking twist as the sole scenario element designed to entertain the players. You don't

write Hollywood suspense screenplays, so first and foremost give the players action and character drama.

- In many RPGs, when the action starts to slow down, it's time for a combat. You can do that in Tenra as you see fit (1 very powerful enemy or 2-3 evenly matched combatants, or 4-5 weaker opponents are a good change of pace). However, a more "Tenra-like" thing to do is to instead of throwing random enemies at the players, set up more opportunities for the characters to talk to each other. Instead of "Ninjas burst into the tea house, go!", think "OK, PC 1 and PC 3 haven't had much opportunity to talk. You are in a hot springs bath, and no one else is around. You break the uncomfortable silence with conversation, go!"

This leads to opportunities for the players to receive Aiki chits. It also gives the GM and the audience a chance to see the characters in a new light, perhaps in the process generating story fodder for the GM to work with in followup scenes.

- Make the players describe what their characters look like, how they dress, how they act. Have them be brief, we're not looking for long paragraphs of backstory or exposition: Just enough so that all the players at the table can almost close their eyes and imagine the character in action.
- Don't be afraid to break that "fourth wall", and drop the mystique of the GM being an all-knowing always prepared entity. If the players are all going in a direction that you haven't anticipated, and you can't get the game back on track, go ahead and tell them! "Hey guys, I don't have any material ready for that location. I can't even take the existing material and make it relevant to that area. Really sorry about that. Can we move everyone back towards the Sun Temple? If there was anything that you guys wanted to do before the temple, let me know and I'll work it into the story." Making amends is good, usually by adding things to the scenario that the players want to see (usually the reason they got off track was because they were pursuing some story element they thought was interesting). If you're new at GMing, don't be afraid to do this kind of thing! The alternative, blocking the players by manipulating the world against them to "funnel them on track", especially when you are new at being a GM, is usually not pretty: "Oh, you want to go to the Shrine instead? Uh, there is a garrison of samurai blocking your path. The tavern? Well… the tavern is closed, you can't go there either." Instead, just appeal to them as players and friends, and quickly continue on with the scenario.
- Split up the characters, a lot. This cannot be emphasized enough, especially for game masters who are used to running other games. In other games, we all tend to have all PCs in all scenes at all times. In Tenra Bansho, you want to get into the habit of only bringing in about half the player characters (changing the characters up after each scene) into most scenes, even if the characters are traveling or acting together. This gives some screen time for those players to talk to each other in character, and that role-playing helps them build up their Aiki chits. Also, it gives the other players not in the scene the desire to want to spend their hard earned Kiai points to be in what appears to be a particularly interesting scene.

It's hard to remember this at first, but try to force yourself to introduce a scene normally, and restrict it to only two or three of the PCs. Encourage the players in the scene to have their characters talk to each other about the events of the scenario, the other PCs, or their pasts, rewarding this with

Aiki chits. Tell the other players that they can have their characters enter the scene for one Kiai point, or else perhaps bring them in as background or even important NPCs. Even if all the characters are physically in the same general area (traveling along a road), you can start the scene between two PCs walking next to each other either ahead or behind the others. If they're all in a tavern, one of them might be away in the restroom or at separate small tables of a crowded inn. Splitting up the characters generates more Aiki chits and more drama.

- You control the results of every character success and failure. However, it is always fun to let the players describe their characters successes and failures: They will often surprise you with excellent narration, even at the detriment of their own character:

"You fail to see the ambush in the road ahead. What were you doing, instead of paying attention like you normally do?"

"You finish the enemy. Do you knock him out or kill him?"

"You don't convince the lord to help you. Why not, what happened?"

"20 shuriken. Kirie managed to dodge an assault of 20 shuriken in a matter of seconds. Wow. How did she pull off that feat?"

- It's a good idea to have the boss enemy appear in some capacity in at least one of the characters' Zero Act scenes. Show them up front the kind of person they are up against.
- Often you'll find that the situation behind a skill roll could be tackled by more than one attribute, or more than one skill: When intimidating an opponent a player might use Spirit, Empathy or Station, depending on the situation. It's up to you as the GM to decide based on the description which attribute and skill will be best for the roll. If you find yourself hard pressed to decide between two attributes or two skills for a particular situation, simply let the player use whichever attribute or skill is higher in number or rank. Assume that the character will roll with their strengths and make use of what they are good at in that situation anyway.
- See the player advice on first person vs third person. As a GM, you might want to mix it up as well, especially when going into details of a scene:

(points to Jason) "You are here, your sword is unsheathed and you're facing some sort of four-legged monster towering over you."

(points to Jason) "Kirie is here, her sword is unsheathed as she circles around some sort of four-legged monster which towers over her."

It won't help or hinder character immersion per se, it's just an interesting way to describe scenes and actions in a different way. If you find yourself using one style exclusively, try using the other a little.

- When in doubt, ask the players what they want their characters to do next. Roll with those decisions. Don't use it as a stalling technique: If you have to ask the players more than twice in the space of a minute or two, "What are you doing?", then you need to either have some action happen (move along with your plans), end the scene and begin the next one, or create an in-your-face obstacle (a chasm between the characters and their goal; a drunk warrior yelling at the weakest character; a ninja attack; the appearance of the enemy boss) for the players to deal with.
- "Fishing" is a technique where you ask players for significant input into the scenario via a loaded question about something that is happening in the scene:

"The swordsman glaring at you… there's something about him that only you notice, and it's deeply unsettling to your character. What is it?"

"As you are enjoying the festivities of the village harvest festival, you stop dead in your tracks. You recognize someone, someone who you would never expect to be here! Who is it, and what are they doing? Do they notice you?"

"At the end of the scroll, the lord has written a message meant only for your eyes. What does it say?"

"The guards on their katanas all have the same emblem on them. You recognize this emblem. What is it?"

"Why have you decided to leave your temple?"

"Kirie stands dead still at the edge of the battlefield, her mouth open in utter shock. What does she see?"

Fishing is a great way to have players inject cool ideas into the game. They will surprise you, and ultimately give you material to incorporate into the game later. Try to use it once or twice per session for some interesting results.

- If you need to start a scene (or even the start of the game: Zero Act scenes, or the first scenes of the first act) by jumping forward a bit in time, start the scene in a new place and simply ask the players how they themselves decided to be where you put them:

"Come up with a reason why you're all in this tavern on the edge of the city."

"This scene starts with Kirie and Red Lotus at the entrance to the grand Phoenix sect temple. Why did you decide to come here?"

Don't over-use this technique to jerk the characters from location to location with no explanation. But this is great for introductory scenes, or scenes in new acts where you advance the time significantly (a few weeks, a year, and so on). It's also great for moving the characters to a new location without waiting for the players to eventually move their characters to that particular location.

- Make important NPCs (including bosses) memorable. Think of what they wear, how they move, the way they talk (speed, intonation, language, etc).
- If you're still getting used to the game, try to come up with a scenario idea first and perhaps even prepare the player-characters beforehand, instead of having the players create characters first then trying to create the scenario from there.
- Remember that most of the time, evil Asura boss enemies weren't always just bloodthirsty manipulators or madmen: There was a time that they were human. They cared too much about something, and that led them to the path where they find themselves now. They are not redeemable, but they are interesting. Think about why they became that way, and you might find the players sympathizing with the enemy even as they are cutting them down.
- Don't make the players roll their characters' skills for things that must happen for the scenario to proceed: There is always the chance that, no matter how high the skill level, failure can occur. For example, if the characters must find a clue or lead to get to the next scene, then simply have the most appropriate player (highest Notice skill) find it, or have several players roll their Notice and give the clue to the character of the player who rolled the most successes in the group.
- Consider changing the reality of the situation based on character successes or failures. If a character succeeds at a skill with lots of extra successes, change the reality of what happened or what will happen based on the roll. If a character is trying to assassinate a greedy or evil lord, but first meets him and bowls the lord over with an excellent Etiquette roll and great roleplaying on behalf of the

player, the lord may take a liking to the character and might meet him later in private without the companionship of his guards. If the character fails utterly at what should be a simple roll, the failure doesn't have to be related to the actual skill of the player:

Failing a movement skill roll to jump over a creek could mean that the rains last night loosened the soil unexpectedly, and the ground on the other side sinks from under the character, pitching them into the water.

Failing a first aid skill roll on an NPC might represent the NPC being an alcoholic, a diabetic, or have another undiagnosed condition that would cause a routine operation to fail, or perhaps an unforseen complication caused by the wound.

Failing a knowledge roll might be more than simply, "You don't know". Perhaps the character is frustrated because he knows the history of every town and city in this kingdom, but for some reason he never heard of this little village he found himself in, and that alone is cause for suspicion…

- You may also want to consider "banking" successes from player rolls: If you call on a player to make a Knowledge: Melee Weapons roll to determine where a particular sword was made, and the player rolled 5 successes over your assigned difficulty number, then perhaps write down that number of successes, giving the player that many bonus dice on a future roll that was somehow related to that previous task (finding the maker of the sword, the first attack against an opponent wielding a sword by the same maker, etc). Banking is absolutely an optional rule to be used at the discretion of the GM, but it can give a mechanical reward to players who spend Kiai to gain bonus dice for non-combat rolls resulting in a large number of successes that would otherwise be discarded.
- If you're up for the challenge of running a more free-form game, the best way to go about it is to come up with solid Zero Act scenes that introduce the characters and give them motivations. With that foundation in place, it is easy to run a game that does not depend on a lot of pre-written notes: The players will drive the action from a good set of Zero Acts.
- If you want a PC to make a choice, have the choice presented in-character from an NPC or another PC. That not only gives the player a chance to make the decision, but they can do so in character, which is likely to result in more Aiki chits.

This:

GM: So, what do you want to do, John? Is Blue Cloud going to bring the princess with him on his journey? Or will he find a safe place for her to stay while you fight the enemy regent?

Versus This:

GM: The princess appears resolute. "I know that you think it is best for me to hide while you fight the regent. And I will admit—though only to you—that I am a liability to you in strength of arms. But I humbly request that you bring me with you anyway. I wish to be of assistance in your battle, however little of assistance that is. However, I will absolutely follow your wishes, either way." What do you say to the princess in return?

- If a player hasn't been in a scene for a while, make sure that the next scene includes them, or perhaps create a scene that offers incentive for the player to spend a Kiai point and jump in. In the Zero Act, where every PC has their own single scene to themselves, perhaps bring in another player to play a background NPC (giving them an Aiki chit in the process, as you are pulling them into the scene) so that no single player has to sit

out for 2-3 scenes in a row. Be aware of when players are and are not in scenes, and aim to bring in players at least once every three scenes (as their PC) or two scenes (as a background/minor NPC, if it works).

- Bring the players into the scenes as NPCs. If you're running the game right, not every scene will have every player character: Much of the time only 1-3 characters will be in a scene. For those players whose characters are not in a scene, bring them in as important of background NPC characters. Remember that if you pull a player to participates in a scene, even as an NPC, they get an Aiki chit. A great way to bring them in is by surprising the player into taking on a role:

"Kirie and O-shino are at the temple." (Pointing at Jennifer, a player not in the scene) "A young, shaved monk approaches them. What does the monk say to them, Jennifer? Let's find out. Go!" (Tosses an Aiki chit to Jennifer)

"Red Lotus is in the tavern. Anyone want to be the gruff tavern owner?" (Holding up an Aiki chit)

If the GM wants to take control of the scene again, she can politely step back in and take control of the NPC, thanking that player (for example, if the GM needs the tavern owner above to reveal some important bit of information after a bit of small talk is complete). The GM can also re-assume control of NPCs if the player playing that NPC wants to spend a point of Kiai and have their own character enter the scene.

- Improvise with the rules. If you come to a situation where the rules don't help you, explain to the other players what you think is a good way to decide the outcome, and do that.

"You decide to take the left fork in the road? Ok, I don't have any specific plans for what happens next, but I'll tell you what, I'll roll this die here: On a 1-3 there will be no problems, but on a 4-5 you get ambushed by ronin. On a 6, an ayakashi will come at you from the forest."

Feel free to make decisions without resorting to rolling dice as well in situations not spelled out by the rules.

- Many role-playing games encourage the use of a GM's screen so that the players cannot see what will happen next in the adventure, or what the results of your dice rolls are (so that you can cheat, saying you had fewer or more successes than you actually had in order to steer the scenario a certain way). You will not need a GM screen for Tenra Bansho Zero: Roll your dice in the open, in front of all the players. After all, the players can use Kiai if they want a better chance of success. You might have fun surprises in store for the players, though, so feel free to use a piece of paper to cover up your notes.
- A secret of the game: There are basically two types of scenes: Exposition and Combat. In the exposition scenes, all the players role-play their characters and advance the story, earning Aiki chits in the process. In the combat scenes, the player spend all that wonderful Kiai they built up from Aiki chits in the exposition scenes. Don't throw in combat before players have a chance to build up their Aiki (unless you are demonstrating the combat rules with 1-2 weak NPC characters as antagonists). The characters will spend Kiai on skill rolls in exposition scenes, but it's the combat scenes where the Kiai really flows, and the Karma starts to build.
- If you love the system but start to get tired of Japan-themed games, maybe reskin the game using another setting: Modern demonic conspiracy hunters; A Hyper-Occidental setting of a 100 Years' War

that never ends; High school kids in the student council who are at war against rival area schools.

- Come up with strong, compelling Zero Act scenes. Get player advice before the game starts if you need help ("For your samurai character, I was thinking of a scene before she gets her soulgem surgery, maybe at some point of great defeat. What do you think about that?"). No matter how much you plan the rest of the scenario, having really strong opening scenes for each character can really propel a game and get the players invested in what is happening.

INTRODUCING THE WORLD OF TENRA

While we'd love to see all players of the game pick up a copy of the Tenra Bansho Zero RPG book, we know that for many people this is not convenient. In many cases, one or two friends will have a copy of the game, and run the game for the rest of the players. Some people may be familiar with the setting and the rules, while others are not. This is totally expected. This section will hopefully help with the introduction of the setting to the other players.

A great way to get the players familiar in advance, if you are planning an upcoming game, is to have them look at the world section of the Tenra Bansho Zero website. This section will brief people in the basics of the setting, which can be filled in later through play. It is the whirlwind tour before play.

DESCRIBING THE SETTING TO THE PLAYERS

We suggest that you keep things as simple as possible. There's no reason to explain all of the elements of the game to the players, especially not elements that will not be seen in the game. If you are going to start a group of new players in a ninja and kugutsu-only game, there's probably not a lot of reason to explain the kongohki, annelidists or details of the Shinto Priesthood, unless they will become relevant to the adventure. Long-winded explanations can be trying, especially when people are ready to get into character and play.

Having said that, here are the basics of the setting that may help the players understand the world of Tenra, so that they can jump right into the game.

THE LONG HISTORY OF TENRA

It is said in legend that mankind came from the stars, and settled on the great land of Tenra. This happened thousands of years ago, under the watchful supervision of the Shinto Priesthood. People spread across the land, spreading their single culture throughout the continent.

Countries, kingdoms and domains formed. Lords, blessed to rule by the Shinto Priesthood, would spread their influence, and sometimes make war with their neighbors. The Priesthood ruled with absolute power from the shadows, granting lords boons in the form of high technology in return for tasks or favors. After a time, the Priesthood issued an edict declaring that war was off-limits, and things stayed relatively peaceful for generations.

In this period, Buddhism was founded, and flourished. Buddhism became the official religion of the land, and in a few generations most people became devout believers, or at least accepting of Buddhist teachings and tradition. Later, the main branch of Buddhism would be known as the Phoenix sect. Over time, other sects would splinter from the main sect because of ideological differences.

A TIME OF WAR

For some unknown reason, a few hundred years ago the Shinto Priesthood revoked their edict against warfare, allowing domain regents to settle differences through martial conflict. Overnight, the world erupted into chaos, with lords aggressively attacking their neighbors while at the same time defending themselves from similar invasions. A powder keg was lit, and the explosion has lasted in the form of a land of perpetual war, lasting hundreds of years. This is Tenra, today.

The Priesthood is well equipped with protective armies, as well as all of the technological weapons and secrets it has amassed over thousands of years. They rule the world from the shadows with absolute authority because of their advanced warfare and espionage technology, making them technological gods among men. The great Priesthood city of Jinrai is a technological marvel, with a "Bridge of Heaven" stretching into the sky. While they rule from the shadows, the Priesthood never send their armies to fight directly. Rather, they will do things like encourage one domain to attack another by sending them gifts of high tech armour and weapons, then do the same for the other side.

It is commonly assumed by those of political wisdom that the Priesthood feared that, in times of peace, the people of Tenra would see the Priesthood as a threatening entity, and perhaps one day unite against them to overthrow their absolute rule. However, the actions of the Priesthood also lead some to suspect that the true reason is deeper than that: That the Priesthood keeps the world at war to protect it, to somehow make it stronger. No one who knows the true motives of the Priesthood ever reveals their secrets, so their reasons remain shrouded in mystery.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is limited to the domain of war. On a battlefield you will see an armour, a hulking marvel of technology and advanced magic, or advanced medicine which allows the wounded to trade their missing limbs for mechanical arms (or weapons). However, the technological state of the rest of the world is that of the feudal era of Japan in the 1400s-1600s. There is no electricity or internet in homes, or steel doors that open with visual recognition; rather they live just as people did in late medieval Japan: Wooden longhouses, tatami mats, sliding doors, wood-heated baths, and kettle-steamed tea and rice.

When it comes to war, there have been no limits to the advances in technology. The Shinto Priesthood holds the secret of crafting mecha "armours" and robotic "kongohki", only presenting them as gifts to favored regents. Using the natural resources of Tenra, skilled artisans forge marvels like gemblades (swords that, when triggered, resonate with terrible killing force) and soulgem longrifles. Recently, the development of gunpowder has increased the evolution of personal weapons even further: Machine guns and explosive

hand-to-hand weapons are increasingly common, and ashigaru footsoldiers are trading in their rusty longspears for simple gunpowder rifles.

The Priesthood still owns the key to advanced technology, which is based on the meikyo or "soul mirror". Soul mirrors allow those who can use them to project their very spirit into an object, allowing them to communicate with others over long distances or to take control of a mechanical object. Only the Priesthood trains crafters who can produce intricate soul mirrors, destructive armours and kongohki, flying battleships and castles, and other wonders of magic and steel. It is the source of their control over the world, and they will not reveal their secrets.

Recently, a portion of the Priesthood (the Northern Court) has revealed some secrets of the meikyo crafting process. This has allowed common crafters in various domains to create technological marvels similar to the Priesthood. This new technology is not as intricate as Priesthood-crafted meikyo, and thus it has been given the moniker "kimenkyo", or "mechanica mirror". Soulless kimenkyo technology is effective and can be mass-produced faster than meikyo, but it is nowhere near as refined or powerful as its finely crafted meikyo counterparts. Kimen technology is synonymous with "knockoff", but these mass-produced blockier marvels can be repaired and refitted quickly.

Resources

Aside from the common resources of gold, copper and coal, there are unique resources to Tenra which have had a large effect on Tenran culture.

Scarlet Steel Soulgems

Scarlet is the name of the reddish strong steel that is excavated from rare mines. Properly refined, it can be forged into soulgems, the cornerstone of a lot of Tenran technology. Soulgems are small crystal-steel ball that holds a charge of spiritual energy much like a battery. It is used in everything from magic (from summoning demons to implantation into samurai and shinobi to enhance their natural abilities) to technology (it forms the energy conduits of armours and kongohki, and powers soulgem rifles as they propel shells to their targets). It is a very rare mineral, and new soulgem mines are huge sources of intrigue and warfare.

Heart Engines

Heart engines are the steel-wrapped generators of spiritual energy. Large technological marvels like armour, kimen armour and vehicles, and kongohki are powered by these generators. Onmyoji also make use of them when they want to permanently summon a shiki spirit, as the perpetual generator effect of the heart engine gives the spirit permanence.

What is not known to most of the people of Tenra is that the heart engines are very aptly named: The steel shell encases the actual living heart of an oni person. For the few merchants and lords who know this secret, the otherwise peaceful oni people are to be hunted for sport under the guise of "protecting the people", their very hearts cut out and gathered to sell at a phenomenal price to those who need to power their toys of war.

Sha

Sha is the name of the gossamer-like invisible force that blankets the land of Tenra. While the land produces a limitless

amount of this resource, only a few people can actually sense or harness this power. The oni people are at one with the power of sha. Onmyoji sorcerers harness the sha to summon shiki servants to aid them.

THE ONI

In the early days of the spread of humanity, the native people of Tenra who called themselves "the caretakers" were pushed away. Humans saw their primitive ways, and the horns on their heads, and named them "oni" after the demons of ancient myth. They spread rumors of oni who kidnap children, invade and destroy villages, or who eat people alive. None of these were true, but it didn't stop the people from fearing, then hating these oni.

The oni consider themselves the protectors of the land. Through their horns, they can communicate directly with the minds of their people and even hear the voice of Dii-Go, the god of the land. Through their hearts, they are able to feel and even move the gossamer-like sha force, which lets them sense and move physical objects with their minds. Their unique physiology connects them to the earth, and to each other.

Historically, the oni have been feared and persecuted when they come into contact with humans. Simply put, they are being driven to extinction. In times past, they simply viewed this inevitability as their fate: Now, the oni are fighting back against those who would destroy them.

RECENT EVENTS

While the world has been under the shroud of continent-wide feudal warfare for generations, there are three inter-related events which have shaken the world.

THE FALL OF THE PHANTOM STAR

The Fall of Jinrai

The bridge of heaven, which connected the mountain-city of Jinrai to the heavens, unexpectedly fell to the earth. The Phantom Star fell like a comet to Jinrai, annihilating that great city, the domain, and surrounding domains. The geography of the land changed, and now there is an ocean where the great city of the Shinto Priesthood once stood. Millions of lives were lost.

THE TWO COURTS

Everyone held their breath, thinking that the Shinto Priesthood was gone for good with the fall of Jinrai. A few weeks later, the Priesthood emerged again in the north, changed by the events: They revealed their unmasked empress to the world, and vowed to share their technology with the domains who fell under their influence. This was the start of kimen technology. However, a few months later another Priesthood emerged in the south, claiming to be the true Priesthood: And like the pre-Fall Priesthood, stayed as resolute and secretive as ever. Now is the time of the two courts of the Shinto Priesthood working against each other from the shadows: The more open Northern Court and the closed traditional-minded Southern Court.

HIHOKU, LAND OF THE ONI

An oni Buddhist monk named Makuu Nindo received an enlightened revelation. Mobilizing as many oni people as he could, he started an insurrection in the domain of Kikoku, which had a government which was absolutely hostile to the oni people. In the last battle of the campaign, Makuu's forces take over one of the Priesthood's two floating battleships. They also made

effective use of the Two Month Night, an event which followed the Fall of Jinrai where all sha simply ceased to flow. Armour and kongohki simply stopped moving, and samurai and shinobi were incapable of using their powers. Joined by legions who were favorable to his cause (including humans and half-oni), Makuu Nindo destroyed the opposition forces. He created a land in which the oni people could live peacefully. However, there is still work to do to ensure the peace lasts…

THE FUTURE

…is undefined.

Nothing in the background of Tenra is sacred. Anything is possible. The future is up to the actions of the characters, as their players reveal their tales through play.

222 THINGS TO DO IN TENRA

IN A MIYAKO OR OTHER GREAT CITY

Visit the grand shrine or temple of the city; be awestruck

Receive a summons to meet with the lord or regent

Investigate rumors of a secret onmyoji cult that controls the local vassal leaders

Protect the city from the invading army

Commission a grand piece of art from a well-known artist here at your lord's request

Join a local sword school or dojo; learn something new, become bruised daily

Spot the young female thief while she steals that guy's wallet

Encounter a well known warrior or bounty hunter; challenge him or her to a duel

Assist the yakuza as they attempt to put out a city-wide fire, demolishing buildings to stop the flames from spreading

Receive a request from your mentor; assassinate an evil merchant

Help an old lady get to the local doctor/acupuncturist's house

Duel with the city's renown shogi (Japanese chess) master

Meet the local crime boss; then meet the other local crime boss

Entertain yourself all night with alcohol and flesh in the local red light district

Watch a lord in disguise as an old man brandish his royal seal and pronounce judgment upon the wicked

Visit an old friend; find out that he's in trouble

Duel with an old onmyoji rival, using only magic

Rescue a little girl from nearly being trampled by a haughty vassal lord's horse

Catch a glimpse at night of a man carrying a long needle, crouching on the longhouse over there

Take calligraphy lessons from a master

Find the regent's stolen gold

Purchase a new kimono; there's not enough left of yours to patch up anymore

Have a unique weapon forged by a famed weaponsmith; earn her trust first

Make travel plans, including securing a legitimate or fake tegata (travel pass)

Listen to the old Bright Lotus sect monk sing sutras, teach and entertain folks at the market

Overhear an evil magistrate making plans with a merchant and samurai

Book passage on a boat to sail to another land

Buy medicine and bandages from a merchant with scaly, hard and yellowish skin on his arms

Be knocked over by a passing samurai; the samurai demands "medical treatment expenses" for running into her

Notice that the masked miko shrine maiden you saw earlier at the market has been following you for about an hour now

Get ambushed by a four-armed kongohki who bursts through a nearby wall and furiously attacks you (and only you)

Find the ayakashi which is murdering and terrorizing the people in the poor district's longhouses

Fall in love from afar with a noble; she or he turns out to be a kugutsu in hiding

See the regent from afar during a large festival; he rides at the top of a great moving shrine

Catch the act of a tightrope-walking girl near the marketplace

Purchase the services of a traveling biwa or shamisen player

Find the body of a corrupt official in an alley, his face a mask of shock and surprise

Ignore the smell of the fish market; or at least try to

Request funds from the magistrate in order to rebuild the temple

The samurai who suddenly attacked you at night realizes you aren't the person he's looking for; he apologizes and runs off

Stay indoors at the inn during the monsoon-like rainy season

Uncover a plot to kill the regent or other vassal lord

Witness the procession of a famous kugutsu-maker as she travels through the city with her two latest "creations"

Hear rumors that the Hyakki Swarm are operating in the city

Get called out to a fight with a well-meaning but very drunk swordsman

See a ryo (gold piece) for the first time

Help the poor district rebuild longhouses after an earthquake

Visit a rival onmyojutsu academy; have tea and words with the head onmyoji there

Bring a knife to a gunfight

Find a way to deal with the humans so they don't discover that you're actually an oni

Convince the regent to ally with the Northern Court of the Priesthood

Find the onmyoji who you believe will perform your samuraization surgery

Fall in love with a courtesan; it doesn't end well, but it ends

Go to the theater to watch some low-culture kabuki or noh entertainment

Become restless and wander away

In a Town or Village

Visit relatives not seen for years

Stay at the local hot spring resort for a night

Relax at the hot spring, and strike up a conversation with the wary traveler who seems interested in you

At the resort, eat a dinner of delicious local cuisine before getting the best rest you've had in months

Speak with the local Bright Lotus peasant converts

Fight off the bandits or local organized crime that are shaking down the farmers for scraps

Get in the middle of a turf war as two rival gangs fight over control of this meager village

It's a festival, one of the larger ones of the year; enjoy yourself

Use your contacts to meet the information broker who hides amongst the townspeople

Meet the mushi-tsukai who lives on the edge of town; he's the one who has the information you need

Fall in love with the earnest young rice farmer

Buy some vegetables from the local farmers selling their wares in the open market street in town

Search the ruins of the abandoned/destroyed village for signs of what happened

Buy a new cloth to replace the cloth bag with a hole in it

Make a new home amongst the people; settle down

Assist the townspeople, as they're in the middle of an outbreak of a disease

Listen to the traveling biwa player; remember home

Set yourself up as the ruler of the town after overthrowing the evil magistrate

Visit the half-forgotten village shrine, wash and clean it up

Contact your underground network of spies and assassins to send a message

Find out why the townspeople are so poor; silently vow to do something about it

Help the townspeople with their ayakashi problem

Realize that the whole village is an illusion

ON THE ROAD

Stop at a small roadside teahouse run by the old lady and her daughter

Offer a quick prayer to the jizo statues

Play shogi (Japanese chess) in your head with a fellow traveler, calling out the moves as you walk

Take a detour to visit the natural hot springs

Take a detour to visit the shrine at the top of the mountain

Chew on a grass stalk

Watch enemy troop movements in the valley from a clearing on the mountain

Smoke a pipe

Help an injured traveler

Defend a caravan against attacking bandits

Isn't that traveler over there in the tea house that onmyoji/mushi-tsukai/kijin who is wanted back at the city?

Buy new sandals

Notice that the ronin with the large straw hat has been following you for some time

Write a letter or poem

Fret about how to get past the next guarded checkpoint

Get searched and questioned at the guarded checkpoint while you pray they don't notice your tegata is a forgery

Set camp for the night

Examine the body of the man who was killed by some passing warrior

Investigate that strange noise coming from the woods

Take some time at the bamboo forest to practice combat with a companion

Eat one of the three riceballs you packed for the journey

Watch the traveling mushi-tsukai heal an injured person on the road; step in to help

Make room for the two men running past you, carrying a kago (one-man carriage) from the previous town to the next

Sense the ambush coming your way; the way they walk and cover their eyes gives them away

Find the arm of a kongohki or kijin near the side of the road

Step off to the side, stop, and kneel/lower your head as a procession of nobles in kago (one-man carriages) passes by

Catch a glimpse of one warrior fighting four others in a clearing

Catch the attention of a hairy, loud, kinda dirty, but well meaning Ebon Mountain monk (male or female) who walks with you for a time

Check that map again; that hidden soulgem mine is supposed to be right near here…

At a Temple

Study, meditate and train the spirit for a few days or weeks (not necessarily only for monks)

Ask about the lost scripture you've been tasked to find

Realize that monk over there obviously hasn't been a monk for very long

Help the venerable monk who is hard of hearing with temple repairs

Receive a secret mission or item from a fellow member of the Hidden 28th Chamber of the Merciful Phoenix Sect

Stumble in, requesting healing or shelter after a bloody battle

Inquire about local political affairs

Find out an innocent secret about the head abbot; he likes sake, drawing, singing, or games of skill

Confront the temple about their allegiance to a corrupt local lord

Investigate the murder of a local monk or abbot.

Be inspired by the grandness of the temple to compose a poem

Wake up with amnesia a month after a fearsome battle with a major enemy

Lower your head to the grand statue of the Buddha or bodhisattvas

Help firefighters put out the temple, as someone set it on fire

Assist with ringing the huge temple bell 108 times for the new year

Help find the gold bodhisattva statue that was recently stolen before the thieves melt it down

Request magical aid to help send the soul trapped in this meikyo or kimenkyo to the afterlife

Give all your money to the temple and prepare to live out the rest of your days here

At a Shrine

Participate in the huge harvest festival that is centered in the large shrine

Throw a few coins into the offering box, shake the rope-bell, clap twice, and say a small prayer to the kami of the shrine

Have a vision of the ancient spirit or kami that the shrine venerates

Clean off the cobwebs of this small, broken, dusty shrine

Identify the person who is hanging from the shrine's torii (bright red gateway)

Find a message at the shrine wrapped up with a few mon (copper pieces), requesting divine revenge upon a local evildoer

Wonder why this large shrine is completely abandoned, and recently at that

Hear the strange piping of the mysterious flute player wearing an old kimono

Run into an old flame offering thanks at the shrine, who you just noticed is quite pregnant

Drink purified sake with the shinto priest and hear the latest big news in town

Compete in physical sports during the "Festival of Health"

Interface with the shrine's meikyo soul mirror in private and relay your recent findings back to the Priesthood

Corner the ayakashi living on the grounds of the shrine, disguising itself as the shrine's kami

Request a blessing and a warding of evil spirits in an o-harai ceremony

AT A CASTLE OR PALACE

Compliment the lord on his fearsome trio of genuine meikyo armours

Meet the glassy-eyed kugutsu as the lord shows off his latest acquisitions

Be challenged by the chief military vassal to a test of skill with wooden swords

Be challenged by a senior elder retainer to a game of shogi, Japanese chess

Endure a tea ceremony; or alternately, show off your unusual but cultured tea ceremony form

Admire the calligraphy of the lord's youngest daughter or son

Humbly introduce yourself to the lord's oldest daughter, an armour-rider of great skill and renown

Overhear a hereditary vassal lord conspire with another against the chief vassal or regent

Petition the regent for care to be given to a particular heavily-taxed town or region

Talk the regent out of total war with a neighboring kingdom or oni tribe

Talk the regent into total war with a neighboring kingdom, ninja clan, cult or annelidist nest

Expose a traitor within the lord's family or closest advisors

Use magic to remove the curse placed on the infant son of the chief retainer

Reveal yourself to be a kugutsu, and seek amnesty from your maker's contract

Block the doors behind you; nobody's getting out of here alive

Be poisoned by an unscrupulous retainer, then set upon by Demon Mask Faction ninja

Perform (dance, music, calligraphy, painting) for the regent, as you were called upon to do

IN A TAVERN

Tip the shamisen/biwa player

Request a later massage from the local blind masseuse

Notice the cracks in the teacups or rice bowls

Admire the strange beauty of that one particular barhand

Exchange cautious glances with the four alert kijin at the table in the corner

Get in an arm-wrestling contest with a female samurai

Walk in as the previous barfight is just reaching its end

Wait for the Poison Toad Gang to show up and shake down the locals

Order some ozoni (miso soup with rice cakes) or ochazuke (soup with rice) to fight off the chill

Wait at the table you were instructed to; the master forger will contact you there shortly

Stare uncomfortably at the large kongohki standing rock-still for hours in the center of the tavern

Try to act casual as you scope out the target you were hired to kill

Wince as the master beats his barefoot adopted boy or girl for dropping a customer's dishes

In a War Camp

Boast loudly while drinking yourself into a stupor

Get in a fistfight with a fellow soldier who was belittling your skill or age

Talk shit about the enemy with your comrades

Assist the onmyoji at the war tent with planning the next stratagem

Convince the commander of the folly of a direct attack against superior firepower

Realize that there may be an enemy spy or saboteur among your ranks

Eat well and drink lots of cheap wine by the open fire the night before an attack

Polish your weapon, mechanica implants or armour

Feel the rumbling of the enemy's new great armour as it enters the battlefield

Notice the ranks of hundreds of young ashigaru soldiers, most of whom have never held a weapon before last week

Compose a poem about the triviality of life

In an Oni Village

Begin to humanize the oni people

Argue the future of the Lu-Tirae with the tribal elders

Watch children playing, remember your own hometown

Vow to protect the village

Be exiled by your tribe for being tainted by feelings regarded as "too human"

Be amazed that you never really stopped to look at the night sky (not for years, anyway)

Discover that the soulgem (gold, iron) mine that your lord wants to exploit is, of course, right near the village

Hunt these human-eating demons to the last with other opportunistic hunters; for some reason your lord demands you bring back their hearts

Receive a message from Dii-Go

Receive new Sha Laz tattoos for the services performed for the tribe

Catch a glimpse of Makuu Nindo, speaking with a small group of warrior men and women

Find an abandoned village, a cold fire pit and a broken oni Keila flute the only signs that oni were ever there

In a Ninja Village

Kill everyone

Avoid being killed by everyone

Steal the secret highest teachings of the clan

Avoid eating or drinking anything, or looking anyone in the eye

Forge a pact between the clan and your lord

Find out who killed everyone shortly before you arrived

In an Annelidist Nest

Try to hold back revulsion at the sight of the kashira (leader) as you offer her your most humble greetings

Request information about the new strain of annelid that has been killing area townspeople

Witness a "living armour" being crafted

Note your latest annelid-related findings in the nest journals

Inquire into… enhancements

Avoid touching anything, especially *that* over there

WHEN YOU HAVE LOTS OF MONEY

Sake, food, drinks for everyone, courtesans (female or male); lavish tips for every service

Buy an expensive new kimono

Visit the theater; meet with the performers backstage

Build or purchase an estate in the miyako

Fund a network of spies and informants

Upgrade your mechanica or weapons

Pay back the yakuza you owe with interest; they'll likely stop trying to kill you

Bribe officials to gain a permanent vassal position of decent status and income

Buy a gemblade; later discover that there is a dark history behind it

Laugh with your other rich friends at an extravagant party, and say "Yoh no naka wa kane ja!" ("Money makes the world go 'round!")

WHEN YOU HAVE NO MONEY

Sell your services as a mercenary or bodyguard

Travel as a musician/beggar

Teach arts or academics to the wealthy, noble

Renounce wealth and enter a monastery; later become bored and leave

Work odd jobs in a village or city

Be a thug, clerk or messenger for a crime syndicate

Work at the local watering hole, restaurant or resort; inadvertently fall in love with another servant there

If blind, become a masseuse

NAMES

Here is a sampling of names of people and places to help get your games started. You can draw upon other media for names as well. These are pulled from a combination of historical and literary sources, focusing on names of the Sengoku (Warring States) period, which the game emulates.

PLACE NAMES

For place names, feel free to use basic English adjective/noun combinations as well, as many Japanese place names are little more than simple descriptions of area landmarks and the like (Azuma Village = East Village; Tanigawa = River Valley; Takashima = High Island).

Towns and Cities

Fukuyama
Ashikura
Niida
Onejime
Sendai
Kanma
Tsuchigawa
Hirobashi
Ota
Sanbashi
Ashio
Kurino
Obora
Eno
Nakadani
Fuchina
Ariie
Koyamachi
Ebitani
Sakai
Azuma
Kamiura
Kiryu
Shikina
Oshu
Seto
Miyagahama
Mugikubo
Michidani
Iwade
Sasari
Oko
Tajiri
Mino
Narai
Mitake
Kanoya
Urata
Okawa
Jinda
Uesugi
Higae
Hazama
Ichibara
Arase
Kamimura
Shinden
Izumo
Washiya
Seki
Obonai
Hinata
Mori
Nakazato
Takada
Ochiai
Yanaizu
Tendo
Ariake
Uken
Lake's Wave
Small Rice
Temple City
Far Grass
Southern Ten
Broken Shell
Great Market
Bright Crevice

Long Field
Black Temple
Seven Gateways
One Stone
Deer Forest
Mountain Crest
Crying Valley
Black Field
Small Forest
Red Beach
Teawater
Sieve Mountain
Red Oni
River Pass
Valley of the Gods
Endless Snow
Nishi- (West)
Higashi- (East)
Kita- (North)
Minami- (South)

The above names can be used for castles, fortresses, gates and the like. The fortress overlooking the town of Tendo would be called Tendo Fortress, etc.

English maps of Japan online are a great source of classic location names, as well as traditional last names (which historically are derived from place names).

INN NAMES

Sometimes you just need a really good name for an inn, tavern or brothel. Feel free to use English names ("The Wild Sparrow", "The Lonely Moon Inn" etc), but here's a couple Japanese ones as well:

Kagiya (Kagiya's House/Inn)

Chidori (Plover, a bird that staggers around drunkenly when it walks)

Enokiya (Cedar House/Inn)

Tamaya (The Jewel)

Manshichi (The Full/Satisfying Lucky Seven)

Funaso (The Gilded Boat)

PEOPLE NAMES

In the world of Tenra, only lords, retainers and clan warriors, and other nobles have last names (some wealthy merchants take a last name as well, usually a variation of their store name). Heroes that do great deeds during battle are sometimes awarded last names by their lords, usually a portion of their own name.

Everyone with a last name is called by their last name, though they use their first name between very good friends and family.

All of the names in the Tenra Bansho rulebook follow the Japanese convention of writing the last name first, followed by the person's given name.

Everyone else, the majority of the people in the world of Tenra, go by their given name:

Omino

Or they go by a name and a descriptor, usually based on their profession:

Omino the Sandal-maker

Omino the Assassin

Lute-player Omino

Or, if they are making a name for themselves, they might go by (or be referred to by) a decorative nickname:

Purple Omino (because she wears purple clothing often)

Omino the Viper

Ten-blade Omino

Omino, the Battlefield Dancer

Blind Omino

Omino the Hawk

They might also eventually drop their name altogether for their nickname:

The Viper

Ten-blade

Hawk

Armours, kongohki and kugutsu are given poetic-sounding names. Buddhist monks also assume special monk names which are also rather poetic.

Red Lightning

Benevolent Chrysanthemum

Howling Moon

Spring Cloud

House-of-Stars

Agate Soul

See the random lists below for more ideas on monk, kongohki, yoroi and kugutsu names.

FEMALE NAMES

Nowadays, many Japanese female first names end in "-ko". This phenomenon of adding "-ko" to the end of female names really didn't start happening until the mid 20th century, before that it was mostly reserved for empresses or aristocrats (in case you were looking up Japanese female names from the Internet, movies, manga, anime and the like for your character). Much more common were the "O-(something)" names for that period. However, the setting of Tenra is full of cultural anachronisms, feel free to use any name as you see fit.

ROLL OR CHOOSE

The lists below can be looked at and chosen from as you see fit, or you can roll two dice to randomly pick a name.

COMMONERS

These are the names for common folk: A majority of Tenra characters and NPCs, those with no ties to vassals or nobility.

COMMONER LAST NAMES

Again, while most people in Tenra do not have last names unless they were descendants of nobles or vassals, in some areas wealthier families or families who were in good standing with nobles (or whom received a last name as a gift) received last names. Here are a few.

1-1 Kawaguchi
1-2 Sakanoshita
1-3 Fukada
1-4 Shouji
1-5 Nakaie
1-6 Agata
2-1 Sasagawa
2-2 Tanaka
2-3 Kishida
2-4 Iwata
2-5 Arai
2-6 Naganuma
3-1 Sawada
3-2 Imai
3-3 Maehara
3-4 Yonemura
3-5 Inamura
3-6 Yamauchi
4-1 Kagamiyama
4-2 Kitou
4-3 Kataragi
4-4 Kuryuzu
4-5 Kurumikawa
4-6 Mitarai
5-1 Sougiku
5-2 Ryuou
5-3 Marikodani
5-4 Kujiranami
5-5 Kurebayashi
5-6 Ipponyari
6-1 Tsukigata
6-2 Umekoji
6-3 Gionji
6-4 Teshigawara
6-4 Sanrigi
6-6 Mikuriya

COMMONER MALE NAMES

1-1 Soroku
1-2 Tatsuzo
1-3 Hanbei
1-4 Yosaku
1-5 Masagoro

1-6 Jinbei
2-1 Matabei
2-2 Hyouma
2-3 Juzo
2-4 Yosuke
2-5 Katsuzo
2-6 Tomekichi
3-1 Eikichi
3-2 Seigoro
3-3 Monjirou
3-4 Shichizo
3-5 Rokusuke
3-6 Minokichi
4-1 Heizaemon
4-2 Goichi
4-3 Chubei
4-4 Tadakichi
4-5 Matajiro
4-6 Souichi
5-1 Umekichi
5-2 Shikazou
5-3 Seikichi
5-4 Kansuke
5-5 Kobunta
5-6 Chokichi
6-1 Okinosuke
6-2 Kaheiji
6-3 Shouhachi
6-4 Bunshichi
6-5 Toragoro
6-6 Otokichi

COMMONER FEMALE NAMES

Note that for all the names below, this is the given name. Their name in public (even with friends) would commonly be prefixed with an "O-": Omino, Osaki, Oshino, Ofune and so on. Some may prefer to go without the "O" in front, but for the most part consider all the names below to be prefixable with "O-".

1-1 Gin
1-2 Rin
1-3 Hisa
1-4 Naka
1-5 Natsu
1-6 Ichi
2-1 Hana
2-2 Nobu
2-3 Haru
2-4 Mon
2-5 Mino
2-6 Toki
3-1 Tama
3-2 Tsuru
3-3 Yuki
3-4 Sato
3-5 Kiku
3-6 Fuku
4-1 Kinu
4-2 Kayo
4-3 Saki
4-4 Mitsu
4-5 Shizu
4-6 Shima
5-1 Shino
5-2 Sumi
5-3 Sono
5-4 Chizu
5-5 Chika
5-6 Chie
6-1 Fune
6-2 Mayu
6-3 Masa
6-4 Ume
6-5 Tami
6-6 Rui

WARRIOR FAMILIES

These are names for characters that come from a buke, or warrior family (noble, vassal, etc) family.

WARRIOR FAMILY LAST NAMES

1,2-1 Satake
1,2-2 Souma
1,2-3 Nikaido
1,2-4 Ashina
1,2-5 Honjo
1,2-6 Nagao
3,4-1 Yura
3,4-2 Kuki

3,4-3 Hatano
3,4-4 Bessho
3,4-5 Amago
3,4-6 Ukita
5,6-1 Aki
5,6-2 Ryuzouji
5,6-3 Akizuki
5,6-4 Kyougoku
5,6-5 Shirakawa
5,6-6 Kumabe

WARRIOR FAMILY MALE NAMES

1,2-1 Sadamune
1,2-2 Hisanori
1,2-3 Takatsune
1,2-4 Yoshimasa
1,2-5 Nobutoki
1,2-6 Mitsunobu
3,4-1 Harutsugu
3,4-2 Masamori
3,4-3 Tadataka
3,4-4 Naokatsu
3,4-5 Kaneyori
3,4-6 Munekiyo
5,6-1 Shigetsuna
5,6-2 Yoshizumi
5,6-3 Naritoshi
5,6-4 Yukihira
5,6-5 Motokage
5,6-6 Nagaharu

WARRIOR FAMILY FEMALE NAMES

1,2-1 Aya
1,2-2 Matsu
1,2-3 Kame
1,2-4 Toku
1,2-5 Tsuru
1,2-6 Hideko
3,4-1 Kiku
3,4-2 Tatsuko
3,4-3 Hatsu
3,4-4 Hiroko
3,4-5 Fuji
3,4-6 Mari
5,6-1 Teruko
5,6-2 Oto
5,6-3 Fuku
5,6-4 Yoshino
5,6-5 Tsune
5,6-6 Takeno

ARISTOCRATIC NAMES

Sometimes a kizoku - a high noble or aristocrat - will be introduced in the game. They have the oldest names. Some families with strong ties to the Shinto priesthood might have these names.

ARISTOCRATIC LAST NAMES

1,2,3-1 Tachibana
1,2,3-2 Kujou
1,2,3-3 Sanjou
1,2,3-4 Nijou
1,2,3-5 Saionji
1,2,3-6 Fujiwara
4,5,6-1 Kiyohara
4,5,6-2 Konoe
4,5,6-3 Daitokuji
4,5,6-4 Kuga
4,5,6-5 Hanayamain
4,5,6-6 Takatsukasa

ARISTOCRATIC MALE NAMES

1,2-1,2 Saneyuki
1,2-3,4 Kimiie
1,2-5,6 Kanefusa
3,4-1,2 Iezane
3,4-3,4 Tadaie
3,4-5,6 Tsunemichi
5,6-1,2 Naotada
5,6-3,4 Kiyomaro
5,6-5 Shigetsune
5,6-6 Tadamichi

ARISTOCRATIC FEMALE NAMES

1,2-1,2 Shigeko
1,2-3,4 Seiko
1,2-5,6 Yasuko
3,4-1,2 Hiroko
3,4-3,4 Tamako
3,4-5,6 Yoshiko
5,6-1,2 Kiyoko

5,6-3,4 Tamiko
5,6-5 Mitsuko
5,6-6 Nobuko

ONI NAMES

Oni are named after words in their own language, usually made up of two short syllables. Y's, I's and L's are common, as well as combinations and letters that are not common to Japanese. Of course disguised oni and hornless Nusa oni would adopt common human/Japanese names so as not to arouse suspicion. Noteworthy oni will have nicknames just as humans on Tenra might: "Ta-bakh the swift-blade", "Lu-Myn the Harpist", and so on. Choose or roll below:

1,2-1 Keyu
1,2-2 Mi-Hal
1,2-3 Wo-Yau
1,2-4 Mah-Lu
1,2-5 Ta-bakh
1,2-6 Laz-Fol
3,4-1 Ba-Yau
3,4-2 Yil-Din
3,4-3 Dimh-Yn
3,4-4 Din-Yi
3,4-5 Ti-Shea
3,4-6 Lii-Yil
5,6-1 Jalh-Yu
5,6-2 Ykh-Ka
5,6-3 Balh-Syr
5,6-4 Lu-Myn
5,6-5 Tabh
5,6-6 Eja

KUGUTSU NAMES

Kugutsu are named by their makers (although some makers allow their kugutsu to name themselves). Kugutsu names tend to be simplistic and flowery, usually based on objects in nature or colors. Many are prefixed by adjectives (Moonlight becomes Gentle Moonlight, Tranquil Moonlight, etc). While these names are flowery, they do not automatically cause a stranger to think that they were a kugutsu: Instead, when introduced the stranger would assume that she has peculiarly poetic parents, or perhaps are of noble ancestry. A kugutsu does not have to take a "normal" name to disguise herself if she is on the run, but particularly savvy or worldly kugutsu may do that.

1,2-1 Brilliant Flower
1,2-2 Agate
1,2-3 Emerald
1,2-4 Spring Rain
1,2-5 Sparrow
1,2-6 Moonlight
3,4-1 Lotus
3,4-2 Iris
3,4-3 Graceful Sunset
3,4-4 Poem
3,4-5 Tranquility
3,4-6 Snow
5,6-1 Calm Breeze
5,6-2 Green Wave
5,6-3 Morning Fog
5,6-4 Summer Light
5,6-5 Chrysanthemum
5,6-6 Azure Pond

BUDDHIST PRIEST NAMES

When monks are ordained in the more traditional orders like the Phoenix sect, they are given names by their elders. These names may have deep significance for the monk, or sometimes they were simply a fanciful image the elder had in a dream. In all cases, they are descriptive and flowery much like kugutsu names are, perhaps even more so.

Roll or choose two names on the chart below and put them together to determine a Buddhist monk name. When combining them, make one of the words into an

adjective describing the other word (Spring plus Heaven = Heavenly Spring, Heaven's Spring, Spring-of-Heaven; choose one).

1-1 Dawn
1-2 Morning
1-3 Winter
1-4 Dusk
1-5 Night
1-6 Midnight
2-1 Ebon
2-2 Heaven
2-3 Illusion
2-4 Power
2-5 Ancestor
2-6 Light
3-1 Ebony
3-2 Azure
3-3 Vermillion
3-4 Emerald
3-5 Cerulean
3-6 Crimson
4-1 Valley
4-2 Storm
4-3 Mountain
4-4 Lake
4-5 Sky
4-6 Cloud
5-1 Granite
5-2 Shelter
5-3 Temple
5-4 Refuge
5-5 Hall
5-6 Robe
6-1 Sutra
6-2 Mantra
6-3 Kongoh/Vajra
6-4 Scroll
6-5 Mandala
6-6 Lotus

Yoroi and Kongohki Names

Yoroi and kongohki are given names by their creators, and as such they are often (like so many other names) artistic, natural, flowery. Feel free to use the Buddhist monk chart above, and mix in some of the words below (perhaps choose or roll once from Buddhist names, once from Yoroi/Kongohki names). Choosing a name for the yoroi before designing it may provide inspiration for its appearance and form.

1-1 Demon
1-2 King
1-3 Fang
1-4 Kami/God
1-5 Titan
1-6 Sentinel
2-1 Mantis
2-2 Viper
2-3 Elephant
2-4 Spider
2-5 Ox
2-6 Tiger
3-1 Aeon
3-2 Spiral
3-3 Break
3-4 Eternity
3-5 Earth
3-6 Star
4-1 Dragon
4-2 Stone
4-3 Savage
4-4 Ultimate
4-5 Steel
4-6 Cosmos
5-1 Ruin
5-2 Naraku/Hell
5-3 Fate
5-4 Circle
5-5 Glyph
5-6 Fire
6-1 Poison
6-2 Ghost
6-3 Soul
6-4 Mist
6-5 Pillar
6-6 Chalice

ARCHETYPES

This section provides lists of archetypes for use in the secondary method of creating characters. You can combine most archetypes together to get an interesting, dynamic character; the rest will develop through role-play. Here are some pointers to get you started:

Aim for Specialized Skills

If there's a particular kind of character you want to play, or a specialist skill that you want to take (Ninjutsu, Onmyojutsu, Arts of War, Shinto, etc.), aim for the archetypes which have those skills first. You can always buy up common skills later by using attribute points.

Don't Go Overboard

For archetype-based characters, 2-4 archetypes is usually all you need.

Think About Starting Karma

108 is the upper limit for starting Karma, but you'll probably want to start out with less than that. A good point to consider is that characters with a low starting Karma (60 or less) will be less powerful at the beginning of the game, but towards the end of the game they will be able to use far more Kiai without having to worry about taking their Karma total over 108. Characters with a high starting Karma of 90 or higher will be more powerful at the beginning of the game in terms of skills, combat prowess, etc, but towards the end of the game they won't be able to spend even a little Kiai without considering the careful manipulation of Kiai and Fates so that at the end of the next intermission, their total Karma won't be over 108.

When in Doubt

If you think your character just needs a little more *something* to be more interesting, aim for the Hard Luck archetype. This will provide your character with a little bit of backstory; they have lost something important to them. You can decide from there throughout the game if your character becomes a tragic hero trapped in her past, or a hero who overcomes her past and eventually changes her fate. Nothing adds drama like a sprinkle of "tragic past".

Archetype Data

(1) **Name**—The name of the archetype. Some archetypes are "species archetypes", signified by a "species" by the name (ayakashi, oni and kugutsu archetypes). You cannot take more than one species archetype for your character.

(2) **Karma Cost**—The cost in Karma of the archetype. After adding all your archetype Karma costs together, your total Karma at character creation cannot exceed 108.

(3) **Skills**—The starting skills and skill levels for the archetype.

(4) **Attribute Penalty**—Any attribute penalties for choosing the archetype, commonly archetypes which use mechanica. Subtract this number from your total number of attribute points to assign at character creation (usually 40). "0" means that there is no penalty.

(5) **Primary Attribute**—6 points or more should be assigned to this Primary Attribute during character creation to utilize this character effectively. If more than one attribute is listed, you should try to put 6 or more points in each. Some archetypes have no primary attribute.

(6) **Station Requirement**—Some archetypes require a minimum amount of Station that must be taken in order to use the set equipment for the character. This section lists the minimum amount of Station required to take this archetype. Some characters have no Station requirements, so there will be no listing for that archetype.

(7) **Equipment**—A list of the charater's starting equipment with this archetype. Any soulgems listed here are in addition to any fully loaded soulgem weapon they may be equipped with.

(8) **Equip Cost**—The Karma cost for the equipment and special abilities the character must pay. This is already factored into the Karma cost of the archetype. This number is listed in case you wish to remove or redesign the starting equipment for this character, which may lower the archetype's overall cost.

(9) **Weapons**—The character's starting weapons. Marksman, gunpowder weapons, and soulgem weapons all begin fully loaded with a full clip of ammunition.

Weapons are followed by the attributes of the weapon: Damage, RoF (rate of fire), Range and Ammo.

(10) **Special Abilities**—Any special abilities for your archetype.

(11) **Archetype Fate**—The Fate which comes with this archetype. Use this for role-playing suggestions. As you create a character, write down all of the Fates for the archetypes you choose. In the end, a character begins with only two Fates from her archetypes, so if you choose three or more archetypes, narrow the Fates you wish to keep down to two.

(12) **Description**—The archetype's basic description, including appearance notes. This may provide some good starting role-playing suggestions.

(13) **Notes**—Any special notes or comments on the archetype.

A NOTE ON REVERSE-ENGINEERING

If you attempt to deconstruct some of the archetypes into their component base scores in regards to equipment, Karma cost and the like you will notice that a few don't completely add up as expected. For issues of game balance and ease of combination, you may find that taking a listed archetype as-is is sometimes cheaper in Karma cost than constructing such an archetype from scratch. Don't sweat the finer details of the underlying game math, just pick archetypes you like and play!

ARCHETYPE LIST

GENERAL ARCHETYPES

Hard Luck

You lost someone or something very important to you. The loss is still very real, and you cannot seem to forget or detach yourself from your memories; these memories of the past haunt you all the time.

Karma Cost: 5

Skills: Pursuit/Hunt (3), First Aid (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Empathy

Equipment: Memento Item

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Broken sword: Damage +1

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Misfortune: Death of your most precious thing

Description: This archetype represents those who live bearing some great loss. The reason and object of that loss depends on what archetype you combine this one with.

Notes: You are of course free to choose who or what was lost during character creation or during play.

Doctor/Healer

As a doctor, you have made it your mission in life to help the everyman and the downtrodden. You do your best to save as many people as you can.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: First Aid (3), Notice (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Knowledge

Equipment: Medicine Box (a special item, it provides one extra die to all First Aid checks)

Equip Cost: 5

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: Protect the weak

Description: In Tenra, the healing arts are not prevalent. Healers are still rare and often respected and sought after in times of need.

Notes: The Northern Court of the Priesthood has made their advanced technology public, including external medicine. The number of people aspiring to be doctors has been increasing lately, but it is still not prevalent among the general public.

Kabukimono/Punk

You always wish to stand out, and cannot bear being ignored.

Karma Cost: 15

Skills: Pillow Arts (3), Perform (2)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 5

Equipment: Flashy clothes, soulgem blade (damage +5, soulgem blade, large, oddly-shaped), 10 additional soulgems

Equip Cost: 12

Weapons:

Scarlet-Steel Gemblade: Damage +5, RoF 3, Ammo 12

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Must be the center of attention

Description: "Kabukimono" (gaudy/flashy person) always wear flashy, colorful, odd fashions. The "punks" of Tenra.

Notes: Most kabukimono have no masters, and live freely as drifters and gypsies.

Traveling Performer

You have lived a life of solitude, surviving by your craft alone, but all you really wish for is a family or a place to belong.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Perform (3), Notice (2), Information (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Empathy

Equipment: Instrument, Costume

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Longing for a family

Description: Traveling far and wide throughout Tenra, living off your craft, you fill the dual roles of information bearer and entertainer. In Tenra you are

one of the nameless, the orphaned and forgotten, one with no family name or connections.

Thief

You grew up in the gutter of humanity. There is only one kind of person who you have no tolerance for; those who look down upon those less fortunate or of lower station than themselves.

Karma Cost: 25

Skills: Movement (3), Stealth (3), Forgery (2), Criminal Arts (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Agility

Equipment: Thief tools

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Throwing knife: Damage +2, RoF 3, Range 10m, Ammo: A Lot

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of hypocrisy

Description: You grew up a thief. In the underworld one must look out for self as there is no one to look out for you. You live on your own terms and answer to no one.

Playboy/Harlot/Concubine

You cannot stand to be alone. You feel uneasy unless you are constantly in the company of others, and you are in constant fear of losing that company.

Karma Cost: 15

Skills: Pillow Arts (3), Information (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Empathy

Equipment: Silk kimono, make-up kit

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Fear of loneliness

Description: You are a traveling harlot, concubine, courtesan or perhaps just a playboy, traveling from city to city.

Vassal Servant

Whether you were defeated in mortal combat, or due to the death of your lord, for some reason you didn't die when you should have. Ever since, you wish nothing but to one day find eternal peace.

Karma Cost: 5

Skills: Etiquette (3), First Aid (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Station

Station Requirement: 3

Equipment: Vassal uniform, formal attire

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Katana: Damage +3

Short sword: Damage +2

Special Abilities: Fated to die. You are already dead. Your Dead Box is already filled, because it is your fate to die. Add 3 extra dice to all rolls. As long as your Fate remains listed as "Seeking Death" you cannot die unless knocked unconscious.

Fate: Other: Seeking Death

Description: Vassals are those whose loyalty to their regents or vassal lords is so strong that not even death could break their bond. Every royal house has such a servant.

Notes: Where and when will you die? Nothing else occupies your mind. You seek nothing other than to die in peace. However, you also have the ability to escape or change that seemingly unbreakable fate. Feel free to sublimate this Fate at any time and uncheck the Dead Box when you find something worth living for.

Wanderer

You live a free life, going wherever the wind takes you. There are a variety of possibilities as to why you live such a life. It could simply be that it suits your personality, or maybe you were forced into it. The exact reason is up to you.

Karma Cost: 20

Skills: Information (3), Notice (3), First Aid (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Empathy

Equipment: walking stick, traveling clothes

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: To be truly free

Description: Wanderers are nomads who travel Tenra. Their reasons vary; some are fugitives, while others are pilgrims or simply drifters. You live a carefree life of abandon, with nothing and no one to tie you down.

Court Servant

You would do anything for the country you serve. Even if the lord you serve changes, your loyalty will not waver for the domain.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Etiquette (3), Art of Rule (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Station

Station Requirement: 4

Equipment: 25 additional soulgems

Equip Cost: 5

Weapons:

Great gemblade katana: Damage +5, RoF 2, Ammo 6

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Loyalty to your domain

Description: Court Servants are military officers and/or government officials who serve their domain in an administrative capacity. It is people like you that keep the country running smoothly.

Aristocrat/Princess

You are a patriot, forever loyal to your domain. Everything you do is for your domain.

Karma Cost: 20

Skills: Etiquette (3), Art of Rule (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: fancy clothes, gold jewelry (worth 10 ryo)

Equip Cost: 5

Weapons:

Soulgem Short Sword: Damage +2, RoF 2, Ammo 4

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Loyalty to domain

Description: You live for your regent or vassal lord. You see the world through the eyes of a leader of the realm, and see everything as an object to be controlled or a person to be ruled over.

WAR ARCHETYPES

Swordmaster

Due to an accident in the past, you have vowed never to kill again.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Melee Weapons (4)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attribute: Agility

Station Requirement: 4

Equipment: Masterwork sword "Beast-slayer" (masterwork soulgem greatsword), 15 additional soulgems

Equip Cost: 10

Weapons:

Beast-slayer: Damage +7, RoF 5, Ammo 8

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Taboo: Killing

Description: You are a young gifted swordmaster, and the sword you carry has been passed down in your family for generations.

Notes: In choosing this archetype, it doesn't mean that you will absolutely never fight (or even kill). It's just that at some point, you have vowed to never kill again. Will that vow stand when provoked?

Paragon

Your quest to find true strength brought you to seek out the secret teachings of the Ki Manipulation Style. But even after being initiated into the style, you still have not found your answer.

Karma Cost: 20

Skills: Art of War: Ki Manipulation (4)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Agility, Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 3

Equipment: Secret Martial Manuscripts

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Katana: Damage +3

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: To Know What Is True Strength

Description: You are a disciple of art of Ki Manipulation, one of the many arts of war in Tenra. Among those who follow the path of the weapon master, your name is well-known.

Notes: Player is free to choose from another art of war instead of Ki Manipulation.

Mercenary

Now a low ranking soldier, you hope to one day become a famous general.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Melee Weapons (3), Marksman (3), Information (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Body, Agility

Equipment: None

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Ambition

Description: In war, there are many soldiers-for-hire like yourself. For you, and those like you, the battlefield is your life.

Notes: Because your equipment depends on your fighting style, no data is given here. Choose your weapons from the weapon rules section.

Soulgem Rifleman

You take great pride in you skill with the rifle and constantly work to further hone your skills with your chosen weapon. Ultimate skill with the rifle is a treasure you are constantly chasing after.

Karma Cost: 15

Skills: Marksman (3), Notice (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Senses, Station

Station Requirement: 4

Equipment: 25 additional soulgems

Equip Cost: 10

Weapons:

Soulgem Rifle: Damage +5, RoF 2, range 100m, Ammo 8

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: Attain ultimate skill

Description: In the modern battlefield, gunpowder weapons have begun to replace the older soulgem ones. While other warriors have been swayed by the mass destruction these weapon enable and blast everything in sight, you patiently wait, killing your enemy with a single precise shot.

Gunlancer

You both fear and hate disloyalty, regardless of whether you are the victim of perpetrator. This could be due to some event in your past, or simply your professional honor.

Karma Cost: 56

Skills: Marksman (4), Notice (3), Pursuit/Hunt (2), Stealth (2)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attributes: Agility, Senses

Station Requirement: 6

Equipment: Gunlance, 10 additional soulgems

Equip Cost: 12

Weapons:

Gunlance

Ranged: Damage +10, RoF 1, range 400m, Ammo 8

Melee: Explosive Spiker: Damage +4 (+6), RoF 1, Ammo 1 (+6 damage happens when 1 soulgem is spent to activate explosive spiker)

Special Abilities: none

Fate: Taboo: Disloyalty

Description: You are an elite soldier, skilled in both sharpshooting and tracking.

Lordless Soldier

Your army was defeated in war and your homeland was shattered. Before the war, you had complete faith in your army's power. But that faith was shaken when your so-called powerful army was annihilated.

Karma Cost: 13

Skills: Melee Weapons (3), Marksman (2), Stealth (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 4

Equipment: Broken breastplate (memento)

Equip Cost: 3

Weapons:

Rifle: Damage +5, RoF 1, Range 50m, Ammo 3

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Suspicious of Power

Description: Defeated in battle, you are the only surviving soldier of your homeland (region or country). You don't even remember what the war was for anymore. Will you search for another lord to employ you as a soldier? Or perhaps you have other plans…

Assassin

You understand very well that killing people is wrong. And yet, you can't escape the fate that you've stumbled into. Giving up on your lifestyle and turning your back on your master is out of the question. Plus, there's that special reason that you need the money…

You are asked to kill, and thus you kill. But it is leaving an empty space within you which grows with every assassination.

Karma Cost: 20

Skills: Melee Weapons (3), Information (3)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attribute: Spirit

Station Requirement: 5

Equipment: Fey blade katana: "Nameless"

Equip Cost: 10

Weapons:

Nameless: Damage +7 (Fey, wicked-looking)

Special Abilities: none

Fate: Emotion: Emptiness

Description: You only know how to live as an assassin. However, recently you have begun to hate that piece inside of you that only knows the ways of killing.

Notes: Your named Katana is known as a "fey blade", a magical, wicked and rumored cursed weapon. The nature of the origin and curse behind the weapon are up to the player.

Dragoon

You charge into battle together with your horse companion. Your companion is more than a friend to you, and without him you could not fight.

Karma Cost: 40

Skills: Melee Weapons (3), Marksman (3), Art of War: Typhoon Rider Style (3)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attributes: Agility, Senses, Station

Station Requirement: 5

Equipment: A favorite horse companion, "Howling Dragon" (custom soulgem rifle), 15 additional soulgems

Equip Cost: 17

Weapons:

Howling Dragon: Damage +7, RoF 4, range 100m, Ammo 10

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Love of Riding (name of mount)

Description: Heavy cavalry was once the flower of the battlefield in Tenra, but combat has gone through great changes recently. Guns have largely replaced spears, and warlords now make use of machines in the battlefield. This is a new age for the elite cavalry once known as the "Dragoon". Once feared above all, they are now often seen as holding on to archaic methods.

Notes: Choose a name and description for your horse. You may also choose an alternate Art of War. Maneuvers using the horse are made using the rider's Movement skill. The horse has no stats of its own here; it is an extension of the warrior. It makes no unique attacks, and presumably it will die with its rider.

Ayakashi Hunter

Ayakashi are nothing more than demons who play with the souls of men before devouring them. You won't rest until you've wiped every single one of these innately evil creatures from the face of Tenra.

Karma Cost: 25

Skills: Notice (2), Hunt/Pursuit (3)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 6

Equipment: Black monk robes, "Vajra Blade": A vajra symbol-shaped yoroi shortsword with Taoist demon-warding runes carved into it

Equip Cost: 10

Weapons:

Vajra Blade: Damage +8, RoF 2, Ammo 4

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Hatred of Ayakashi

Description: You are a wandering demon hunter who travels from town to town, making a living from slaying ayakashi for money.

Weapon Collector

You're not sure when it started to happen. But now, every time you see a strong weapon or a unique killing tool, you can't focus on anything other than getting your hands

on it. You have many weapons already, but they are not enough: You need more. That's all you care about.

Karma Cost: 19

Skills: Information (3)

Attribute Penalty: 5

Station Requirement: 5

Equipment: A collection of unique, disturbing, fey, and customized weapons.

Equip Cost: 19

Weapons:

Triple Comet Blade: Damage +3, RoF 3, Range 5m, Ammo 3

Fey Spiked Tetsubo: Damage +7

Double-ended Katana: Damage +6

Divine Lotus (Gunpowder Chaingun): Damage +4, RoF 7, Range 30m, Ammo 14

Tiger Kick (Soulgem Kongohki Foot-Claws): Damage +4, RoF 5, Ammo 10

Katana (many, many katana): Damage +3

Special Abilities: none

Fate: Goal: Collect Unique Weapons

Description: You have made a life-goal out of questing for and collecting unique weapons. You walk into battle like a living arsenal.

SPECIALIST ARCHETYPES: ARMOUR-RIDERS

Yoroi Armour Rider

Your yoroi armour is the closest thing you have to a friend, and you value it over anything.

Karma Cost: 60

Skills: Interface (4), Notice (2)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attribute: Empathy, Station

Station Requirement: 8

Equipment: Yoroi "Devourer", interface helm, soulcord, meikyo mirror, uniform

Yoroi: "Devourer" (Body: 7, Agility: 7, Senses: 7, Vitality: 14)

Armour Wounds: 7/4/2/1

Gale Speed Rollers: Increases speed by x3, provides +2 dice to Evasion checks.

Yoroi Gemblade Katana: Damage +9, RoF, 6, Ammo 12

Howling Dragon Mortar: Damage +9, RoF 4, range 1km, Ammo 6

Explosive Spiker: Damage +7 (+9), RoF 1, range -, Ammo 9

50 additional soulgems

Humanoid head, 2 arms, 2 legs

Equip Cost: 35

Weapons:

Shortsword: Damage +2

Special Abilities: Armour damage. When you are inside your armour, you can choose to absorb some of the wound damage (but not to Vitality) the yoroi would normally take: Distribute this damage to the pilot's wound gauge instead. See the armour rules for details.

Fate: Emotion: Affection for your armour

Description: Yoroi armour pilots are generally chosen from the children of nobles such as vassal lords or from potential shrine maidens. Such children have not yet accumulated much Karma, and are therefore ideal to interface with an armour's meikyo.

Notes: See the armour rules regarding damage and Karma accumulation.

Kimen Armour Rider

You feel great pride in your armour, and believe that that your kimen yoroi is more capable on the battlefield than the samurai or the meikyo-class yoroi armours operated by children.

Karma Cost: 23

Skills: Interface (2), Notice (2), Information (2)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 6

Equipment: Kimen-yoroi, interface helm, food and water provisions

Kimen Yoroi: "Iron Demon Mark II" (Body: 5, Agility: 8, Senses: 8, Vitality: 10)

Gale Speed Rollers: x3 movement speed, +2 dice to Evasion skill rolls

Eyes of Distant Death: +2 dice to Marksman skill rolls

Yoroi Greatsword: Damage +9

Heavy Repeater: Damage +3, RoF 5, Range 50m, Ammo 30 (3 Karma).

Great Cannon: Damage +10, RoF 1, Range 120m, Ammo 1 (3 Karma).

Equip Cost: 23

Weapons:

Holdout Pistol: Damage +3, RoF 3, Range 10m, Ammo 6

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Pride in your Armour

Description: Kimen armours are mass-produced machines operated by those who have accumulated Karma (usually adults and late teenagers. Riders of these armours are often selected from soldiers with considerable combat experience. They are also chosen for missions which make use of such experience, like military campaigns, skirmishes, and protection missions.

Notes: For more details on yoroi armours, please see the armour rules section for details.

Former Armour Rider

Ever since you lost your yoroi armour, your feelings toward them have turned to hatred. You have become a yorori hunter and believe that by destroying them you can somehow save yourself or change what you did.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Interface (3), Etiquette (2), Art of Rule (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Empathy

Equipment: None

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of Yoroi Armours

Description: Not all yoroi armour pilots are able to continue to ride their armours forever. Most who are forced to abandon their yoroi, for whatever reason, cannot cope with the change. But such is war.

Notes: See the armour rules section for more details.

Armour Hunter

You have lived your life striving to be the strongest. You believe that hunting the yoroi, the most powerful force on the battlefield, will be the proof of true strength.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Melee Weapons (4)

Attribute Penalty: 1

Primary Attributes: Agility, Station

Station Requirement: 6

Equipment: Zakt-8 Ultimate Edge, 5 additional soulgems. A yoroi short sword modified so a human can use it. This is considered to be the most powerful melee weapon in all of Tenra.

Equip Cost: 10

Weapons:

Zakt-8: Damage +6, RoF 8, Ammo 8

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Look Up to the Strong

Description: You are a yoroi armour hunter, a member of an elite force of anti-armour personnel. Your vassal lord,

having no yoroi technology of his own, spares no expense hiring specialists like you to combat enemy armours.

SPECIALIST ARCHETYPES: ONMYOJI

Onmyoji—Taoist Sorcerer

Your constant, insatiable desire to see and know things keeps you going. Nothing can get in your way of finding the truth behind something.

Karma Cost: 50

Skills: Onmyojutsu (4), Etiquette (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Knowledge, Spirit, Station

Equipment: Kimenkyo and abacus, ink and brush, 10 prayer strips, 5 soulgems

Equip Cost: 15

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: Onmyoji magic

Fate: Goal: Satisfy your intellectual curiosity

Description: Onmyoji are not only the finest magical artists in Tenra, but the most skilled engineers as well.

Notes: See the onmyoji rules section for rules on summoning.

Onmyoji Apprentice

You focus everything on polishing your skills in sorcery and learning new shiki.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Onmyojutsu (2), Etiquette (2), Evasion (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Knowledge, Spirit, Station

Equipment: Taoist Sorcery tools (various scrolls, charts, and medallions), 1 talisman

Equip Cost: 10

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: Onmyoji magic

Fate: Goal: Improve your onmyojutsu skills

Description: You are still a student striving to become the one of the best Taoist sorcerers of all time. You hope that you can one day see the mystical realms and hidden realities that your mentor sees.

Notes: See the onmyoji rules section for rules on summoning.

Talisman-User

You have a deep, burning hatred of all samurai.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Notice (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Spirit

Equipment: 3 talisman

Anti-Samurai ("Winged Wyrm")

Creation Points: 20	Soul: 10	
Shiki Destroyer: 3		
Flight: 2	(400m/minute)	
Possession: 1		
Abilities: 4	Skills: 2	Vitality: 4
Sense Link: Yes		

Observer ("Demon Eye")

Creation Points: 20	Soul: 10	
Senses: 4 (40 m radius)		
Prolong Summoning: 2	(Spirit x3 rounds)	
Flight: 1	(200m/minute)	
Explosion: 6	(6 pts to all in a 3m radius)	
Possession: 1		
Abilities: 4	Skills: 2	Vitality: 4
Damage : +1	Range: 10m	
Sensory Link: Yes		

Shiki Blade ("Weeping Sakura")

Creation Points: 20	Soul: 10	
Additional Damage: 6		
Possession: 1		
Shapechange		
Abilities: 4	Skills: 2	Vitality: 4

Damage: +6
Sensory Link: Yes

* Transforms into a +6 damage sword. Before transformation occurs, the talisman appears as a young girl

Equip Cost: 30

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of samurai

Description: You have studied the secrets of Tao sorcery in order to defeat with those who have transcended their humanity in return for raw power: the samurai.

Notes: See the onmyojutsu rules for details.

Shiki-Slinger

You have no patience for the Taoist sorcerers of old, the so-called artists who use the power of shiki as in the old days without purpose or growth. You look upon them with scorn and contempt.

Karma Cost: 20

Skills: Onmyojutsu (3), Art of Rule (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Knowledge, Spirit, Station

Equipment: Kimenkyo calculation device, abacus, ink and brush, 10 shiki strips, 5 soulgems

Equip Cost: 15

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Hostility Towards Classical Onmyoji

Description: Shiki-slingers is the nickname given to those who study Onmyoji as a pure science. They enhance their practice with the abacus and kimenkyo in order to cast quickly, and to understand more of the practice of summoning.

Notes: See the onmyoji rules section for more details. Please have a copy of the rules handy for instant casting.

Kijin Shiki-Slinger

You're studied the classics, you've served on the battlefield as a summoner. Now many of your elders refer to you as "that guy who only knows how to sling shiki" and see you as a wildcard, but you're simply pursuing a dream: To follow the ultimate trail of knowledge of onmyojutsu, no matter where it might lead.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Onmyojutsu (3), Criminal Arts (3)

Attribute Penalty: 3

Primary Attributes: Agility, Knowledge

Equipment: Kimenkyo and abacus, brush and ink, 10 prayer strips, 5 soulgems, a number of mechanica:

- **Darksight:** You can see in darkness. Add 2 dice to all sense rolls while in darkness.
- **Sha sensors:** By looking at a shiki or samurai, you can attempt a Knowledge: Omyojutsu roll to determine the level of its abilities.
- **Mechanica arm, Hei-class (one arm):** +3 damage in combat.
- **Kairen Fingers:** When using Onmyojutsu (or Buddhist magic or Ninjutsu), add +3 dice to each roll.

Equip Cost: 15

Weapons: none

Special Abilities: none

Fate: Emotion: Research the Way of Onmyoji

Description: See the Onmyoji rules section for more information on summoning.

SPECIALIST ARCHETYPES: SAMURAI

Samurai

In this dog-eat-dog world, you believe weakness to be a sin. The weak are worthless… like you once were. The fires of hatred burning inside you are not limited to the weakness of others.

Karma Cost: 45

Skills: Willpower (3), Notice (2), First Aid (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Agility, Spirit

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: Samurai Build

Battle: 3 (Body, Agility, and Senses gain a +3 bonus when activated)

Regeneration: 1 (regain 1 point of vitality per round)

Soulfind: 1 (samurai can detect all human or larger life forms in a 10m radius.)

Possession: 1 (to bind the shiki to the samurai)

Soul point cost: 5 to activate

Duration: Number of rounds equal to Spirit

Soulgems implanted: 15

Equip Cost: 35

Weapons:

Greatsword: Damage +5

Special Abilities: Samurai transformation

- This ability consumes 5 Soul every time it is used.
- Activation takes one action. Enhanced samurai ability scores can be used after the activation action has taken place.
- Duration of the transformation is equal to the Spirit of the samurai.
- The character may transform as many times as the Soul activation cost will allow.

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of weaknesses

Description: Samurai are those whose bodies have been enchanted by soulgems. Samurai transformation is the transformation that occurs when these soulgems are invoked. When that happens, you gain power which transcends that of normal humans.

Notes: For other samurai loadouts, please see the samurai rules section.

Fallen Samurai

You fear and loathe the great power that you have attained. Due to the terrible things you are capable of under the power of your shiki, you have vowed to never invoke a transformation again…

Karma Cost: 70

Skills: Melee Weapons (4)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Agility, Spirit

Station Requirement: 3

Equipment: Samurai Build

Battle: 5 (Body, Agility, and Senses gain a +5 bonus)

Regeneration: 2 (regain 2 points of vitality per round)

Possession: 1 (to bind the shiki to the samurai)

Soul point cost: 10 to activate

Duration: Number of rounds equal to Spirit

Soulgem implants: 10

Equip Cost: 50

Weapons:

Katana: Damage +3

Special Abilities: Samurai transformation

- This ability consumes 10 Soul every time it is used.
- Activation takes one action (in combat). Samurai ability scores can be used after the activation action has taken place.

- Duration of the transformation is equal to the spirit score of the samurai
- There is no limit for transformation per day, as long as the character has enough Soul to activate it each time.

Fate: Taboo: Samurai transformation

Description: Samurai are those whose bodies have been enchanted by soulgems. Samurai transformation is the transformation that occurs when these soulgems are invoked. When that happens, you gain power which transcends that of normal humans.

Notes: Feel free to change your Fate in-play, or break your taboo when appropriate for the story.

Specialist Archetypes: Monks

Buddhist Monk

You became a monk and have diligently performed your religious practices ever since. Even though you have left the temple, you continue to faithfully keep the precepts and teach the dharma.

Karma Cost: 35

Skills: Buddhist Magic (4), Persuasion (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Spirit, Empathy

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: Ritual Components, Monk's robes

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Iron Staff: Damage +2

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Taboo: Disobeying the Precepts

Description: As a monk, you must keep the following religious precepts:

Prohibition: against taking another life

Prohibition: against stealing

Prohibition: against consuming alcohol

Prohibition: against sexual misconduct

Prohibition: against speaking falsely

Notes: You are free to choose any sect, but Ebon Mountain is the default sect for this archetype.

Fallen Monk

You constantly put yourself in dangerous situations. You believe that danger should be experienced and enjoyed.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Buddhist Magic (3), Persuasion (2), Information (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Empathy

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: Clothes, monk robes, magic components

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Iron Staff: Damage +2

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: Revel in danger

Description: Whether for some sort of religious practice or simple depravity, you have forsaken the Buddhist precepts and left the cloistered priesthood for the outside world. You now do as you please.

Notes: Read the Buddhism rules section for information on Buddhist magic and abilities. You are free to choose any sect, but Ebon Mountain is the default for this archetype.

The Fist of Acala

The martial arts style known as Fist of Acala the Immovable was developed as kind of a religious practice in order to train the minds of bodies of young monks; therefore it rarely used outside of the monastery. It is forbidden for the art to be used to harm living creatures.

Karma Cost: 35

Skills: Unarmed Combat (4), Art of War: Fist of Acala the Immovable (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Body

Equipment: Black monk's robes

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Martial Arts: Damage +4

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Taboo: Fighting

Description: You are a student of the Fist of Acala the Immovable Lord of Light. Usually a practitioner of the style is a Buddhist monk but this is not required.

Notes: You are free to change your martial arts style to another. Make changes to the damage rating of the martial arts as appropriate. Also, the taboo is not meant to be a straightjacket: It can be bent or broken.

Fist of Merciful Kannon

You believe that the Fist of Merciful Kannon the Thousand-Armed is the strongest form of martial arts in the world. As a martial artist of the style, you have not yet been defeated. Surely this is proof of the power of the art itself, and your skill with it.

Karma Cost: 35

Skills: Art of War: Fist of Merciful Kannon the Thousand-Armed (4), Unarmed Combat (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Agility

Equipment: None

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Martial Arts: Damage +10

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: To be the strongest in all of Tenra

Description: You are a martial artist of the Fist of Merciful Kannon the Thousand-Armed. Nothing can match the speed of your strikes.

Notes: You are free to change the martial arts style. For more information on the martial arts of Buddhist monks, see the Buddhist rules section.

Devoted Warrior-Monk

You believe that if you continue to fight for your sect, you can someday save all of humanity. You are a warrior-monk of the powerful Phoenix order. The iron discipline and unbending loyalty to the sect has made you and your fellow warrior-monks a military force to reckon with.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Melee Weapons (3), Etiquette (3), Persuasion (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Body, Spirit, Empathy, Station

Station Requirement: 6

Equipment: 25 additional soulgems

Equip Cost: 10

Weapons:

Soulgem spear: Damage +5, RoF 5, Ammo 20

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: Save all sentient beings

Description:

Notes: See the Buddhist Monk game section for background on the warrior-monks of the Phoenix order.

SPECIALIST ARCHETYPES: KIJIN

Kijin

Ashamed of your own physical weaknesses, you gave up your physical form and replaced it with mechanica. However you will never

forget the humiliation you felt when you were a nobody and will stand up for those in need.

Karma Cost: 15

Skills: Unarmed Combat (3), Marksman (3)

Attribute Penalty: 5

Primary Attributes: Body, Senses

Equipment:

Kijin Mechanica

Mechanica Sensor: one eye, class otsu, provides +5 to rolls to perception checks

Darksight: You can see in darkness. Add 2 dice to all Sense rolls while in darkness.

Eye of Distant Death: Add 2 dice for all Marksman rolls.

Mechanica Arms: both arms, class otsu, provides +5 to damage to hits with unarmed combat, melee, and thrown weapons

Five-barrel Gatling: Your fingers form a machine gun.

Damage: +3 RoF: 5 Range: 20m Ammo: 30

Vajra Claws: Razor-sharp soulgem claws protrude from your fingertips.

Damage: +3 RoF: 3 Ammo: 6

Grudge Blade: A retractable short sword protrudes from your forearm.

Damage: +5

Weapon Interface: Provides +2 dice to attack rolls with 5-barrel Gatling.

Equip Cost: 0 (but attribute penalty of 5)

Weapons:

Five-barrel Gatling: Damage +3, RoF 5, Range 20m, Ammo 30

Vajra Claws: Damage +3 (+8 total), RoF 3, Ammo 6

Grudge Blade: Damage +5 (+10 total) (the number in parentheses is the adjustment for having otsu-class arm mechanica)

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Sympathy towards the weak

Description: Kijin are a recent development in Tenra; humans who have replaced weak, lost, or disabled body parts with machine. However, there are some who even replace working body parts with mechanica. You can choose if your mechanica were replacements of broken limbs after a war, or healthy limbs after a decision to replace them.

Notes: See the mechanica list for more details, and the kijin section for other possible kijin loadouts.

Specialist Archetypes: Hongohki

Kongohki

The memories of your previous life remain within your meikyo: memories full of regret, sadness, and guilt. This Fate is ranked at four dots initially.

Karma Cost: 70

Skills: Marksman (3), Melee Weapons (3), Unarmed Combat (3), Stealth (3)

Attribute Penalty: 18

Primary Attributes: Spirit

Station Requirement: 3

Equipment:

Gale Speed Rollers: High Speed Movement (x3), +2 to all Evasion checks

Lifepulse: Detect life in a (Spirit x 10) meter radius

Equip Cost: 25

Ninja soulgem sword: Damage +3, RoF 3, Ammo 6

Double-edged soulgem shortsword: Damage +2, RoF 2, Ammo 6

Hooked fang dagger: Damage +1

Special Abilities: Kongohki Overdrive

Flashback: As long as your Fate remains as "Sealed Memory", whenever the number of your Aiki tokens exceed your Empathy

score, you receive a flashback scene from your former life. The flashback consists of dreamlike, fragmentary images—somewhat like a movie trailer. The contents of the flashback are up to the GM. If a flashback occurs in mid battle, the character cannot take actions for that round.

Fate: Kongohki: Sealed Memory

Description: Kongohki are made from binding the soul of an asura (a soul which died under extreme stress or Karma and did not move on to the afterlife) inside of a meikyo soul mirror. The violent soul of the asura is harnessed in a very delicate procedure which ends up suppressing all of its memories. It is this tormented soul that gives the kongohki its strength. However, if this balance deteriorates, you will remember your former identity, and likely go crazy (or become an asura again) in the process.

Notes: At character creation, you have the following attribute scores: Body 7, Agility 9, Senses 7, and 22 points to spend on the other attributes. You cannot add or subtract attribute points from those three attributes at character creation.

Kimen Kongohki

The memories of your previous life remain within your kimen soul mirror: memories full of regret, sadness, and guilt. This Fate is ranked at four dots initially.

Karma Cost: 40

Skills: Marksman (3), Unarmed Combat (3), Stealth (2)

Attribute Penalty: 18

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment:

Gale Speed Rollers: x3 movement speed, +2 to Evasion skill rolls

Brilliant Flower of Destruction: Explodes, doing 30 damage to all in a 15m radius

Equip Cost: 20

Explosive Spiker: Damage +3/+5, RoF 1, Ammo 3

Thunder Mortar: Damage +7, RoF 1, Range 4km, Ammo 1

Shuriken: Damage +1, RoF 5, Range 15m, Ammo: A Lot

Special Abilities: Kongohki Overdrive

Flashback: As long as your Fate remains as "Sealed Memory", whenever the number of your Aiki tokens exceeds your Empathy score, you receive a flashback scene from your former life. The flashback consists of dreamlike, fragmentary images somewhat like a movie trailer. The contents of the flashback are up to the GM. If a flashback occurs in mid battle, the character cannot take actions for that round.

Fate: Kongohki: Sealed Memory

Description: Kimen Kongohki are made from wiping the memories of a fallen Asura soul, then binding it into a kimenkyo calculation engine. While the soul bound to the kimenkyo doesn't surge in power as it accumulates Karma like the meikyo-based kongohki, they are still powerful steel demons on the battlefield. When the soul manifests itself, the kimen kongohki can still fly into a powerful rage or other emotional state.

Notes: At character creation, you have the following attribute scores: Body 7, Agility 9, Senses 7, and 22 points to spend on the other attributes. You cannot add or subtract attribute points from those three attributes at character creation.

Runaway Kongohki

The seal locking out your human memories has already been broken. Sealed away in your meikyo were once the memories of your former self, memories of unspeakable

crimes committed by the fallen soul within you—*your* soul, when you were an Asura. You now have to eventually face that past, or else it will consume you.

Karma Cost: 55

Skills: Unarmed Combat (3), Marksman(3), Melee Weapons (2), Stealth (2)

Attribute Penalty: 18

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 4

Equipment:

Eyes of Distant Death: +2 dice to all Marksman skill rolls

Heaven's Fire: Leap vertically up to 20m, 3 times per session

20 soulgems

Equip Cost: 30

Weapons:

Soulgem Vajra Claws: Damage +3, RoF 3, Ammo 6

Explosive Spiker: Damage +3 (+5), RoF 1, Ammo 3

Heavy repeater: Damage +3, RoF 5, Range 50m, Ammo 30

Special Abilities:

Kongohki Overdrive

Fate: Emotion: Fear of Yourself

Description: Kongohki are made from inserting the soul of an asura inside a meikyo. These memories are normally sealed away behind magical locks. You, however, have found a way to access them. You know who you are, and what you have become: a human soul now residing within a metal body. Your mind is now slowly being consumed by the wild emotions of your former self. Whether you embrace who you were or find a new life is up to you.

Notes: At character creation, you have the following attribute scores: Body 8, Agility 8, Senses 7, and 22 points to spend on the other attributes. You cannot add or subtract attribute points from those three attributes at character creation.

Specialist Archetypes: Ninja

Shinobi

You have lived your life as a tool of the clan, serving the interests of your superiors. However, you have begun to become disgruntled of your life and your role as an object used by others.

Karma Cost: 55

Skills: Ninjutsu (4), Pursuit/Hunt (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Agility, Senses, Spirit, Station

Equipment: Shinobi Seal, ninja tools, disguise kit, ninjustsu abilities

Equip Cost: 20

Weapons:

Ninja sword: Damage: +3

Shuriken: Damage: +1, range 15m, RoF 5, Ammo: A Lot

Special Abilities: Shinobi Dark Arts 4 (decreases Soul costs for ninjutsu use by 4, to a minimum of 1)

Ninjutsu : School of the Shore

2: Possessed by the Inner Wolf, Path of the Split Arrow, Path of the Falling Leaves

3: Possessed by the Inner Demon, Shadowflight, Ninja Duplication Technique

4: Mind's Eye, Shadow Stitch Technique, Shadowless Replication Technique

Fate: Misfortune: Property of the clan

Description: You represent the elite of the ninja, the shinobi. In Tenra, the shadowy histories of the ninja armies are surrounded by war and conspiracy, blood washed with more blood.

Notes: The default style for the Shinobi is Migawari-Ryu, but any other style can be substituted.

Ninja Apprentice

Tired of your over-disciplined village life, you yearn for a life of freedom.

Karma Cost: 5

Skills: Ninjutsu (2), Willpower (2), First Aid (2), Evasion (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Agility, Senses, Spirit

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: Ninja tools

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Ninja sword: Damage +3

Special Abilities: Ninjutsu (Migawari-ryu)

Fate: Emotion: Yearning for freedom

Description: Ninja apprentices are the lowest ranking and most numerous ninja in Tenra. Sometimes referred to as *genin* or "low ninja", they are the workhorses and errand-boys of their ninja camp.

Notes: See the shinobi section for rules on ninjutsu. The character may choose any style, but Migawari-ryu is the default style for this archetype.

Infiltrator

You have seen more than your share of the underside of the world, and now you tend to look at everything cynically.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Ninjutsu (3), Movement (2), Stealth (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Agility, Senses, Spirit

Equipment: Ninja tools

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Ninja sword: Damage +3

Special Abilities: Ninjutsu

Fate: Other: Skeptic

Description: You are a ninja or spy employed by a vassal lord, an intelligence operative for your domain.

Notes: See the ninjutsu rules for more details. Choose any school of ninjutsu.

Specialist Archetypes: Annelidist

Annelidist

You feel that you can relate to the annelids inhabiting your insides better than the humans around you.

Karma Cost: 65

Skills: Wormcharm (4)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Body, Senses

Equipment: Annelids, annelid food, trap, cage

Annelids: Talonfang Bugs (5), Rejuvenation Worm (3) 15 rejuvenation points, Mouth Creeper

Equip Cost: 45

Weapons:

Talonfang Bugs: Damage +5

Mouth Creeper: +1, Poison

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Affection for Annelids

Description: You are an annelidist or "mushi-tsukai", a host to a variety of parasitic insects native to Tenra known

as "annelids". You allow them to live off your body, and in turn they provide you with various benefits.

Notes: See the annelidist rules for more details on mouth creeper poison.

Annelid-Infested

You have a deep hatred of the annelids squirming around inside your body. You refuse to admit the fact that you and the worms inside mutually benefit from the infestation. In truth, they have come to your aid on more than one occasion.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Wormcharm (2)

Ability Penalties: 0

Primary Attributes: Body, Empathy

Equipment: Annelids

Annelids: Chitinshells (5) +5 permanent Vitality, Rejuvenation Worms (2) 10 rejuvenation points

Equip Cost: 20

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of Annelids

Description: The annelids you now house inside your body were once given to you by an annelidist, who offered you a choice. If only you could relive that moment you would surely have made a different choice.

Notes: See the annelidist rules section for details.

Annelid Hunter

This horrible leech now wrapped around your spinal cord and brain was implanted in you against your will. You feel nothing but contempt for this creature, which sometimes acts on its own accord and takes the lives of others.

Karma Cost: 80

Skills: Wormcharm (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Body, Senses

Equipment: Annelids

Demon-of-Battle Annelid: When activated, adds +4 to Body and Agility, +6 to Senses. Vitality increases by 10 points, and 20 Rejuvenation points.

Equip Cost: 80

Weapons:

Clawed Hands: Damage +8

Clawed Feet: Damage +6

Acid Spit: Damage +4, Range 5m, RoF 1. Acid spit is considered a strength 4 acid attack, and will damage the opponent until they wash or wipe off the acid.

Electrostatic Cannon: Damage +8, Range 18m, RoF 1. Electrostatic cannon can only be defended against with the Evasion skill. Use Body: Wormcharm when attacking with hooked and foot claws and lightning bolt. You can defend and make counterattacks with the claws.

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of Annelids

Description: Demon-of-Battle annelids live a parasitic existence inside the brain of their host. Whenever the parasite senses danger it causes two antennae to erupt from the forehead of the host. It then transforms the host's body by pulling the resident sha energy, transforming the host's skin into chitin plates.

Rules: In order for the transformation to successfully take place, you must make a Spirit: Wormcharm check (difficulty 3), or a Spirit: Willpower check (difficulty 4). If you fail the check you blindly attack anything that was perceived by the annelid to be an enemy and continue to attack until the enemy is defeated. The player can choose to activate the annelid at any time, but so can the GM, against the player's will.

SPECIALIST ARCHETYPES: AGENTS

Taira Agent Gyoshi/Miko

You have taken a vow of loyalty to the Court. Discuss with the GM as to which House (Northern or Southern) you are affiliated with, although Northern House is considered the default House for this archetype.

Karma Cost: 35

Skills: Interface (3), Shinto (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Knowledge, Station

Equipment: Amafuda Pass, Meikyo soul mirror, Interface Helm

Equip Cost: 30

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Loyalty to the court

Description: The two Imperial Courts are the organizations which rule over Tenra from the shadows. And while Taira-ranking gyoshi priests and miko maidens are their agents, the average commoners also have a say in whom from their villages and towns are chosen to attain this rank.

Notes: See the Shinto Agent character section for more information on the Priesthood and agent duties. Feel free to test your loyalty or change it in-game.

Meikyo Puppeteer

You find the kongohki repulsive: Those which have the souls of the fallen within them should be destroyed as all Asura are. Their very existence makes you cringe. And yet you excel at controlling them through the meikyo soul-mirror, and are well known for your skill at doing so.

Karma Cost: 50

Skills: Interface (3)

Attribute Penalty: 5

Primary Attribute: Spirit, Station

Station Requirement: 5

Equipment: meikyo, soulcord, splicer interface helm, kimen-kongohki "pet"

Kimen Kongohki: "Dark Raven" (Body 8, Agility 8, Senses 7, Vitality 18)

Battlefield Mastery: Kongohki vision extends range of sight to Senses x200m. It also adds +2 dice to all Strategy and Art of Rule checks.

Lifepulse Extend: Increases effectiveness of the Lifepulse ability to Senses x100m

Brilliant Flower of Destruction: Explodes, doing 30 points of damage to all in a 15m radius

Kongohki Weapons:

Comet blade: Damage +3, RoF 1, Range 5m, Ammo 1

Heavy repeater: Damage +1, RoF 5, Range 50m, Ammo 30

Special Abilities: Kongohki Overdrive

Equip Cost: 90

Weapons: None

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of Kongohki

Description: Meikyo puppeteers interface with other meikyo and kimenkyo using their own meikyo soul-mirror and interface helm. In this way, they can push their own soul into the shell of a kimen-kongohki and manipulate its body as if it were an extension of their own arms and legs. They can control armor or kongohki from afar in this manner.

Note: While controlling Dark Raven or other armours or kongohki, you cannot take any actions, half-actions, or perform any defensive maneuvers yourself.

Interface Helm Notes: An interface helm is a mask or helmet which connects to the user's meikyo soul-mirror, and allows the user to interface with a specific kimenkyo or meikyo from afar. Once the puppeteer interfaces with another unit, they go into a trance, cannot move, and are no

longer aware of their environment except through the senses of the kongohki or armour they control.

Priesthood Double Agent

You work dutifully for the Priesthood… but you also hold a deep hatred for the organization to which you belong. Maybe you've grown to hate the methods of the Priesthood after working with them, or perhaps you infiltrated the Priesthood with the intention of pulling it apart from within.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Stealth (2), Interface (2), Shinto (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Station

Equipment: Amafuda pass, meikyo mirror, interface helm.

Equip Cost: 30

Weapons: none

Special Abilities: none

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of the Priesthood

Description: While you are a member of the Priesthood, you also have a connection to an outside agent or group involved with overthrowing or subverting the Priesthood (Makuu Nindo, Gamou Douan, etc).

Notes: The Amafuda pass allows you and your companions transport anywhere on Tenra. Your betrayal will not affect your ability to use Shinto magic.

Priesthood Zealot

You feel a bond with the Shinto Priesthood that goes beyond mere loyalty. You would do anything in order to protect the organization from harm.

Karma Cost: 10

Skills: Etiquette (3), First Aid (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Empathy

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: Amafuda pass

Equip Cost: 5

Weapons: none

Special Abilities: none

Fate: Emotion: Loyalty towards the Priesthood

Description: You grew up in a town that the Priesthood saved from destruction. You are working to eventually become an agent of the organization, or perhaps you just plan to continue working outside the organization for their betterment. You believe with all your heart that their goals and motives are for the protection and betterment of all of Tenra. Of course, you have no special insight into the inner workings of the Priesthood, nor do you know what their plans are. Not until you become a full-fledged member, or until an agent recognizes your potential and allows you a deeper understanding of their actions.

Notes: The Amafuda pass allows you and your companions transport anywhere on Tenra.

Species Archetypes

Oni (species)

In this world, which sees you and other oni as nothing more than monsters, sometimes even prey, you are an idealist who seeks to coexist with humans.

Karma Cost: 35

Skills: Resonance (4), Movement (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Empathy

Equipment: Laz-Dii-Go (oni medallion)

Equip Cost: None

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: Oni resonance powers

Fate: Goal: Coexist with humans

Description: Oni are the original inhabitants of Tenra, but have been steadily pushed from their native lands, and now face extinction at the hands of humans.

Notes: Spirit must be your highest ability. See the oni sections on resonance abilities for more details.

Half-Oni (species)

Life as a half-oni (or half-human) has brought you nothing but humiliation.

Karma Cost: 5

Skills: Resonance (2), Information (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Empathy

Equipment: None

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: Resonance

Fate: Emotion: Half-Oni Inferiority Complex

Description: Although it is possible for a human and oni to bear children together, the life of the child often ends in tragedy. You always have the option of cutting off your horns. Without horns, you are virtually indistinguishable from humans. However without your horns, you cannot use the resonance power of Alu.

Notes: See the characters and rules sections on the oni people. Note that half-oni can only use the resonance powers of Alu and Dii, and cannot use advanced resonance abilities.

Oni Nussa (species)

You've cut off your horn of your own volition. You have your reasons for doing so, and you don't regret your decision. However, you can't completely wipe away the knowledge that you are one of them.

Karma Cost: 25

Skills: Movement (3), Willpower (3), Resonance (2), Information (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Knowledge

Equipment: Laz-Dii-Go

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: none

Special Abilities: Oni resonance abilities

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of the oni

Description: You are a Nussa, a hornless oni. The reasons behind cutting off your horn are your own to decide, and now you look otherwise human. You can fit in to human society with no problem, yet you're still not completely a human, nor are you a full oni.

Notes: See the Oni sections for background on the oni people and rules regarding resonance. Remember that you can only use powers related to your heartgem (Dii).

Oni-Blooded (species)

You are a half-oni born from parents who had oni blood. Your horns were unnoticeable, and you've lived your life as a human. However, one day you discovered your secret and soon embarked on a journey. Or perhaps someone else discovered your secret, and you are being followed. In any case, although you have never met another oni before, you want to find an oni tribe and meet your people.

Karma Cost: 5

Skills: Resonance (2), Etiquette (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Empathy

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: A charm or relic

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Small knife: Damage +2

Special Abilities: Resonance

Fate: Emotion: Looking up to the oni

Description:

Notes: See the Oni section for rules on resonance powers. Half-oni cannot use special Tae Rayi (resonance) powers until they learn them from an oni elder.

Kugutsu (species)

Raised as a human, you have kept your true nature a secret. No one, not even your closest friends know you are not human.

Karma Cost: 20

Skills: Perform (3), Pillow Arts (3), Etiquette (3), Persuasion (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Empathy, Station

Equipment: None

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: The Butterfly Dream

Fate: Secret: No one knows you are a kugutsu

Description: Kugutsu are living dolls, raised over a long period of time to resemble humans. Kugutsu are extremely valuable in Tenra, worth the price of fiefs and kingdoms.

Notes: Kugutsu cannot be samurai, shinobi, or any other being which requires the implantation of soulgems in living tissue. Also, Empathy must be your highest ability at the time of character creation. For more information on kugutsu, see the kugutsu section of the rules.

Kugutsu Runaway (species)

You have lost the master you used to serve under. Be it the kugutsu-maker who was teaching you how to be human, or the lord who purchased you for his bride, you've left them behind.

When you left, you realized that you had no more connection to anyone, and no real motivation anymore. Yet still, you live on.

Karma Cost: 30

Skills: Perception (3), Pursuit (3), Persuasion (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Senses, Empathy

Equipment: A memento from your past, small knife

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

Small knife: Damage +2

Special Abilities: The Butterfly Dream

Fate: Emotion: Loneliness

Description: You've lost the group you belonged to. Whether you ran away from your master, or your master died or was lost somehow, you long for a connection to people again. There is no one left who knows who you are, and there are no friends who you can confide in. Perhaps one day you will find companionship again.

Notes: See the Kugutsu section for rules on the Butterfly Dream.

Half-Ayakashi (species)

You never intentionally reveal your true nature as half-human, half-fey to anyone.

Karma Cost: 45

Skills: Movement (3), Notice (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Spirit

Equipment: Yohjutsu abilities

Natural Weapon (2): Part of your body can be used as a melee weapon. (claws)

Projectile Attack (2): Part of your body can be used to make projectile attacks. (flame breath)

Flight (2): You can fly speeds up to 1.2km/minute and can carry up to an additional 60kg

Incorporeal: For 3 Soul per round, you can turn incorporeal and pass through solid objects

Shapechange (3): You can alter your appearance and maintain it until you use another yohjutsu ability

Equip Cost: 45

Weapons:

Claws: Damage +5

Flame Breath: Damage +5, RoF 3, range 5m

Special Abilities: None

Weakness: Stone (3) (Any damage taken from stone weapons is multiplied by 3.)

Fate: Secret: You are a half-ayakashi

Description: You were born as a result of the forbidden love between a human and ayakashi. Whether you take this to be curse or a blessing is up to you.

Notes: For details on ayakashi powers see the rules section. The GM or player is free to change the default weakness if they wish. The half-ayakashi archetype is not considered a full species, so it can be combined with oni archetypes.

Ayakashi (species)

You do not understand humans. They are a mystery to you and because of this, you cannot seem to take your eyes off them.

Karma Cost: 50

Skills: Marksman (3), Willpower (3)

Attribute Penalty: 3

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Empathy

Equipment: Yohjutsu abilities

Projectile Attack (4): Part of your body can be used as a ranged weapon (lightning)

Superspeed: Any successes rolled on Body, Agility, and Senses can be rerolled and added to your total successes for that check. This ability can be activated a number of times in a session equal to Body + Spirit.

Incorporeal: By expending 3 Soul, you can become incorporeal for one round and pass through solid objects.

Shapechange (3): You can mimic any creature or person you have seen. This ability reverts when you use another ayakashi ability.

Multiple forms (3): You can create three images of yourself which act independently.

Equip Cost: 80

Lightning Attack: Damage +15, RoF 9, range 100m

Special Abilities: Weaknesses

Weakness: Wet Iron (4): You are vulnerable to iron stained with blood or water. Total damage taken from these weapons is multiplied by 4.

Taboo: Hurting women (3): If you injure or kill a woman, you take 6 damage directly on the Wound Gauge.

Fate: Emotion: Curiosity towards people

Description: You are an ayakashi with human features and an inhuman mind: You look at the world differently than humans do. You keep the fact that you are not human a secret; for if the humans around you knew what you are, life would become uncomfortable to say the least.

Notes: The GM or player is free to change the weakness of this ayakashi.

ADVANCED ARCHETYPES

Elder

The old ways eventually are replaced with the new. You know this in your heart, but still it is painful to see the world around you changing. When you see the younger folks breaking traditions or doing new things, you can't help but to chastise them.

Some may say that you're simply afraid of change, but tradition has served you well. New ways and broken traditions can be dangerous and unbalanced. You seek to keep that balance.

Karma Cost: 15

Skills: Information (3), Etiquette (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Empathy

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: Ornate tobacco pipe, elegant seal of office

Equip Cost: 2

Weapons: Ornate pipe: Damage +2

Special Abilities: none

Fate: Emotion: Times are Changing

Description: A person who has lived for many, many long years. You often reflect on the wonderful things that happened in the past while attempting to come to terms with the new and changing times.

Notes: The seal of office is a wooden block with elegant tassles about the size of one's hand, carved with a royal symbol of the office or kingdom served, and acts as proof of your rank and office (think of it as a police badge). It is also a hollow container which contains a stamp for signing documents of that office.

Kagemusha

As a kagemusha, you are a body double of your master. You exist so that your lord does not get assassinated. Your loyalty runs so deep that you would even sacrifice your own life to save your master. You live only for your master.

Karma Cost: 15

Skills: Etiquette (3), Art of Rule (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Spirit, Station

Equipment: None

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Loyalty to your Master

Description: You were raised by your vassal lord or regent since you were a child, and are his most trusted companion. Chosen in part for your similar appearance to your master, you sometimes take his place in dangerous situations, ready to die for him in a heartbeat.

Kugutsu Maker

Your goal in life is to know the true meaning of beauty. You judge all things, living or otherwise, by determining whether it is beautiful or not.

Karma Cost: 25

Skills: Kugutsu Craft (3), Etiquette (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attributes: Senses, Spirit, Empathy

Equipment: Unfinished Kugutsu (abilities: 0)

Equip Cost: 10 (unfinished kugutsu)

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Goal: Knowing the meaning of true beauty

Description: You are a kugutsushi, a craftsman who specializes in creating the beautiful living dolls known as kugutsu. Wars have been known to break out among regents and vassal lords just to own one of your creations.

Notes: Kugutsu Craft is a unique skill for this archetype. Write it on your character sheet under the Knowledge attribute.

Tactician

You understand the principles of war well and have planned many battles yourself, but deep down in your heart you secretly hate the battlefield, wishing you could avoid fighting altogether.

Karma Cost: 35

Skills: Strategy (4), Art of Rule (3)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Station

Station Requirement: 2

Equipment: War fan, brush, ink bottle

Equip Cost: 0

Weapons:

War Fan: Damage +2, RoF 1, Range 5m, Ammo 1

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Emotion: Hatred of war

Description: As a Tactician, you are the advisor to the general on tactics and strategies on the battlefield.

Notes: See the skills section for an explanation of the use of the Strategy skill.

Kuze Order Member

You are a member of the Kuze-Shu, an order that has sworn to protect the city of Jinrai from the evils of the world. You work with your companions from the shadows to fight evil in all its forms.

Karma Cost: 50

Skills: Any single skill (4), Shinto (2)

Attribute Penalty: 0

Primary Attribute: Station

Equipment: Meikyo soul mirror

Equip Cost: 25

Weapons: None

Special Abilities: None

Fate: Loyalty to the Blue Dragon Monk/ Adamantine Monk (choose one).

Description: You follow the leader of your order, and would protect him with your life.

Notes: This archetype is only appropriate for Kuze-themed scenarios. Also, "Any single skill" means that the player can chose any basic or specialist skill to take at the rank of Master (4).

CREATING NEW ARCHETYPES

The archetypes provided in the core rules will allow you to create just about any character you desire. Through description and role-play, your character will come to life in whatever manner you intend. However, these optional rules will allow experienced players or game masters to craft their own original archetypes for play. Please make sure to play the game as-is a few times before experimenting with new or original archetypes.

CREATING NEW ARCHETYPES IS A SIMPLE 10-STEP PROCESS:

1 **Choose species**
2 **Select skills**
3 **Add special characteristics like equipment or features**
4 **Calculate equipment cost**
5 **Choose weapons**
6 **Calculate Karma cost**
7 **Determine attribute cost**
8 **Choose primary attribute**
9 **Note special abilities**
10 **Choose a Fate for this archetype**

1 CHOOSE A SPECIES

Most characters will be human. However, now is the time to note if this character archetype is for an oni, Kugutsu or ayakashi character. These three species archetypes cannot be mixed in one character, and each species has certain requirements.

Oni characters must take Spirit as their highest attribute.

Kugutsu characters must take Empathy as their highest attribute and they cannot be equipped with samurai soulgems or the ninja dark arts abilities.

Ayakashi have no attribute requirements or limitations, but all ayakashi must take at least one weakness.

2 SELECT SKILLS

You must determine which skills this new archetype grants. Any skill may be picked at any level except at the Supreme (5) rank. The costs of adding skills to an archetype are as follows:

Skilled (2): 5 Karma

Advanced (3): 15 Karma

Master (4): 35 Karma

Oni and kugutsu archetypes have some required skills:

Oni archetypes require the Resonance skill

Kugutsu archetypes require the Performance, Persuasion, Pillow Arts and Etiquette skills

3 ADD SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

This is where you determine which special abilities, powers, or equipment the archetype will provide: Samurai ability, mechanica, annelids, yoroi armour, ninjutsu dark arts, kongohki, original weapons, and so on. Look up the individual rules for each of the above and determine the cost for the characteristics you want to add to the archetype.

4 CALCULATE EQUIPMENT COST

Specialized equipment will increase the archetype's starting Karma. After determining the cost of any special characteristics, keep in mind the costs for the following pieces of equipment:

Meikyo	**25 Karma**
Kimenkyo	**10 Karma**
Heartgem	**25 Karma**
Amafuda pass	**5 Karma**
Unfinished kugutsu doll	**10 Karma**
Onmyoji abacus	**3 Karma**
Prayer strips (10)	**1 Karma**
Soulgems (5)	**1 Karma**

If you wish to add other specialized equipment to the archetype, please consult with the GM. A cost of 5-10 Karma is usually appropriate for such extra items.

5 CHOOSE WEAPONS

Pick weapons from the weapons list. For original or customized weapons (either for the character or for armour), please create them as per the rules, and make note of their cost.

6 CALCULATE KARMA COST

After adding in the Karma costs for any specialized equipment or abilities, use the following equation to determine the Karma cost for the archetype:

Karma Cost = Total of all abilities and equipment + total of all skills - 15

At this point, you can increase the attribute cost for this archetype by one point to reduce 10 points of Karma. This can be done multiple times.

Kugutsu archetypes further reduce their total Karma cost by 15 points.

Characters that do not appear human (oni, samurai, other inhuman-looking characters who would have a hard time being accepted by other people by their appearance alone) have a further Karma reduction of 5-10 points.

The minimum cost for a new archetype is 5 Karma.

7 DETERMINE ATTRIBUTE COST

After calculating Karma, determine the total attribute cost for the character (due to Karma reduction, original weapons, mechanica, etc.). Make sure to note kongohki attribute costs here as well.

8 CHOOSE PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE

Looking over the archetype, determine the ability or abilities which make this archetype useful. This is not a requirement, but it will make it easier for others to build a character using this archetype. If there is a set Station attribute requirement for the equipment that the archetype provides (gemblades, yoroi armour, etc.), make note of that here as well.

9 NOTE SPECIAL ABILITIES

Make note of special abilities given to certain character types, and include them in the character notes.

Kugutsu: Butterfly Dream

Kongohki: Overdrive, Sealed memories

Samurai: Samurai ability, samurai shiki abilities

Armour riders: Armour abilities and wound gauge notes

Ayakashi: Weakness

Annelidist: Annelid abilities

Kijin: Mechanica effects

Write them down, so that the archetype will be easy to equip in the future or share with friends.

10 CHOOSE A FATE

The last step is the most important, as some people go as far as to create new archetypes solely to create a new type of Fate. Come up with an interesting Fate for this archetype. Tell it to the other players and game master, and get their feedback as well.

WEAPONS AND WEAPON CREATION RULES

THE WEAPONS OF TENRA

All weapons cause damage in combat. They have no other modifiers like weight, reach, speed, defensive modifiers, slashing vs piercing weapons, etc. Not much concern has been given to balancing weapons with each other. However, the character's choice of weapons is important because it determines their fighting style and character image. In Tenra Bansho, character image is more important than balance.

ACQUIRING WEAPONS

The Station attribute score determines what weapons the character can have. You are free to choose any weapons as long as you meet the Station requirements.

The basic rules for Station requirements are listed below. See individual weapon descriptions for details.

Certain weapons such as soulgem, gunpowder, and unique weapons require Kiai in addition to Station requirements. Mechanica, yoroi, and kijin weapons have special rules. See those sections for details.

STANDARD WEAPON COSTS AND MODIFIERS

Damage modifier	Required Station	Example Weapon
+1	1	rock, stick, pole
+2	2	dagger, short sword, knife
+3	3	katana
+4	4	spear-type, naginata
+5	5	great sword, rifle, yari
+6	6	cannons, siege weapons, etc

SOULGEM WEAPONS

The uniqueness of soulgem weapons lies in both their destructive power and their social power as a status symbol. Only strong warriors or the ruling class possess such weapons, and the cost to bear such weapons is high.

Characters who possess soulgem weapons at character creation must pay an extra 5 Karma. Ammunition is always considered full (for that weapon) at the start of play.

SOULGEM MELEE AND UNARMED WEAPONS

Soulgem weapons, also called gemblades, are the most regarded weapons in Tenra for both the station of the wielder and their massive destructive power. All of these weapons have some sort of firing mechanism, whether it is a button or trigger. When the mechanism is struck, the soulgem inside is smashed sending explosive energy through

the weapon, thereby doing greater damage than a standard melee weapon. The weapon itself vibrates and shakes with tremendous energy, cutting through flesh and steel like a scythe through a rice paddy.

Multiple soulgems (up to the weapon's Rate of Fire) can be triggered in a melee or unarmed attack. For every soulgem that is triggered on a single attack, the damage is increased by an additional +1 after the attack is determined successful. The number of soulgems spent in this matter can be decided after the attack hits.

GUNPOWDER WEAPONS

As part the open technology policies of the Priesthood's Northern Court, production methods of gunpowder have also been made available. Based on this new technology, various new weapons have been developed. As it is far cheaper to make gunpowder than the valuable soulgems, these weapons have changed the nature of war in Tenra.

Rules for gunpowder weapons are in general the same as those for soulgem weapons. The exception is that you are always considered to have full ammunition to start with, and that once it is depleted that you have no further gunpowder ammunition available on you. Whenever the character depletes their ammunition, they can only refill their ammunition during the next Intermission (where an ammunition refill is considered automatic, at no additional cost of Karma or money). Gunpowder weapons also cost less to take at character creation; they require 3 Karma to take, versus a soulgem weapon or gemblade which requires 5 Karma.

ACQUIRING WEAPONS DURING PLAY

No specific monetary value is given to weapons in this game. The player is free to choose any weapon she wants for her character, even after character creation, as long as the character has a high enough Station score. You could perhaps role-play out an exchange of money, or role-play out the acquiring of the weapon, but it is not necessary. If the character has a high enough station, she can pick up and use weapons from fallen enemies with no problem.

If the character acquires a weapon above her Station score during play, that weapon is lost at the next Intermission phase, or once a game session or scenario is finished (whichever comes first). In the case of such a weapon, a low-station character would simply despise such a high class weapon, consider themselves unworthy of the weapon, find that the weapon's upkeep isn't worth the effort. They will sell it, break it due to inexpert use, or perhaps even claim the weapon and give it to a higher-station noble or lord.

Soulgem and gunpowder weapons are extremely valuable in Tenra, so acquiring them should be worked into the plot of the play session, or else given as a special treasure to characters. If a character attains such a weapon during a session, she must pay the cost in Kiai at the next Intermission phase. The weapon cannot be used beyond the next Intermission until the character has spent the appropriate Kiai.

WEAPON	KARMA/KIAI COSTS
Soulgem	1 for every 5 gems
Gunpowder weapon	3
Soulgem weapon	5
Customized weapon	varies

CUSTOMIZED WEAPONS

While some players are fine choosing standard weapons for their characters, many players will want to create unique weapons for their characters. Unique weapons can be more powerful, but such a customized weapon would certainly

show off the uniqueness of the character who wields it. Soulgem sword-staves, gunpowder-activated kusari-gama, barbed evil-looking fey blades, giant swords as long as a man is tall, or unique rifles can be easily created.

When creating a unique or customized weapon, use the customized weapon table below and an existing weapon as the base. Each unique weapon costs both 1 attribute point and 10 points of Karma to take. In most cases, this means using 39 points for attributes at character creation instead of 40. You are free to envision and create any sort of weapon you can imagine within the genre of the game; for instance, a bladed war fan.

Unique soulgem weapons cost as much Karma as basic non-soulgem unique weapons: 10 Karma points (before customization), and 1 attribute point. The only real cost difference between them is their Station prerequisite. Be careful not to create a weapon of such a high Station requirement that your character cannot wield it.

ARMOUR-SIZED WEAPONS

Simple armour melee weapons can be easily created at a low cost of 5 Karma: Simply take any listed melee weapon and add +4 to Damage.

Most armour weapons are customized. Armours wield large melee and projectile weapons which make use of their great power. These large weapons often have an additional ammo capacity or an increased rate of fire above normal human weapons. Pay 10 Karma and the one attribute point (for the pilot, not the armour), and craft a weapon for the armour as per the customization rules.

CUSTOMIZED WEAPONS

Select one or more features.

Feature	+ Damage	+ Station
Large	+1	+1
Painful looking	+1	+1
Oddly-shaped	+1	+1
Masterwork	+2	+1
Fey/Ayakashi/ Cursed	+3	+2
Yoroi Armour	+4	+2
Combined	see text	see text
Rusted	-1	-1
Broken	-1	-1

DESCRIPTIONS

Large: The weapon is longer or larger than normal

Painful looking: The weapon is covered in spikes, hooks, or jagged blades to inflict addition pain on its victims.

Oddly-shaped: The weapon has some sort of odd feature (covered in fur or even lace) which might call the user's fashion sense or sanity into question.

Masterwork: An exquisite blade tempered by a master swordsmith, which probably has a history behind its forging and use.

Fey/Ayakashi/Cursed: A horrible, demonic blade tempered with ayakashi living materials. Or it might be a magical weapon, more often than not carrying a hidden curse.

Yoroi: An enormous weapon made for yoroi use.

Combined: Combine any two weapons (see text).

SOULGEM/GUNPOWDER CUSTOMIZED WEAPONS

Additional Feature	+ Karma
Increase rate of fire by 2	+1
Decrease rate of fire by 2	-1
Maximum ammunition is increased by 2	+1
Maximum ammunition is decreased by 2	-1

COMBINATION WEAPONS

There is no extra cost when combining two different weapons, such as in the example of the "Gunlance", a popular weapon for elite snipers which combines a long soulgem rifle with an explosive spiker. To create a combined weapon, add the statistics for both weapons together (including Station). Only two weapons can be combined into one in this manner.

Weapons Lists

MELEE WEAPONS

Weaon Name	Dmg mod	Req Station
Iron hammer	+2	2
Short sword/knife	+2	2
War Fan	+2	2
Iron staff	+3	2
Ninja sword	+3	2
Katana	+3	3
Naginata/Pike	+4	3
Great-sword	+5	4
Longspear/Yari	+5	4
Jumonji-yari	+5	4
Kusari-gama	—	3
—Sickle	+2	—
—Weighted chain	+3	—

Iron hammer: A simple hammer for metalsmithing.

Short sword: A dagger, knife or backup sword (like a traditional wakizashi).

War Fan: An iron fan commonly used for signaling troops.

Iron staff: Either a heavy walking stick-looking weapon of iron, or an iron club with spikes (also called tetsubo).

Ninja sword: A straight-bladed sword. Not as strong or finely crafted as curved katanas.

Katana: A traditional curved sword used by most warriors.

Naginata: A pole with a shortsword blade of 30cm on the end, primarily used by women.

Great-sword: A large katana, useful on battlefields but almost impossible to use in closed environments.

Yari: A spear topped by a long, straight blade.

Jumonji-yari ("cross-shaped yari"): A kind of spear where the bladed end looks like a three-pronged fork, with the middle prong extending longer. Commonly used by generals in the Sengoku period.

Kusari-gama ("chain-sickle"): A sickle for close combat, with a long length of chain on the end for making limited range sweep, impact or grappling attacks.

Gemblades

SOULGEM BLADE DESCRIPTIONS

Soulgem short sword: A small blade used for defense by the aristocracy.

Soulgem katana: The most common soulgem blade.

Soulgem katana, advanced: A recent improvement on the soulgem katana with an automatic loading mechanism ("automatic gemblade") replacing the older revolving chamber ("revolver gemblade") design.

GEMBLADES				
Name	**Dmg**	**ROF**	**Ammo**	**Sta.**
Soulgem short sword	+2	2	4	2
Soulgem katana	+3	3	6	3
Soulgem katana, advanced	+3	3	11	4
Soulgem naginata	+4	4	16	5
Soulgem great-sword	+5	2	6	4
Soulgem spear/yari	+5	5	20	6
Zakt-8R Ultimate Edge*	+6	8	8	4
*This is a custom weapon				

Soulgem naginata: A naginata with a soulgem mechanism installed. Because it uses a spring mechanism in which the soulgem is launched up to the blade, reloading is difficult.

Soulgem great-sword: A great-sword with a soulgem mechanism installed. This is an older revolver style soulgem blade.

Soulgem spear/yari: A spear with a soulgem mechanism installed. With this weapon the soulgem is launched through the shaft to the point of the spear upon pulling the trigger mechanism on the handle.

Zakt-8R Ultimate Edge: Also known as *Hachiren Zankoutou*, or "Eight-Repeating Ultimate Cutting Blade", this obscenely large sword is a modified armour shortsword used by armour hunters; its sheer power makes it one of the only weapons that can take on armours in one-on-one combat. It is only available to characters with the Armour Hunter archetype. It is a custom weapon, and requires 10 Karma and 1 Attribute point to take.

GUNPOWDER BLADES

GUNPOWDER MELEE WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Falling Star Blade: This is a short sword which can emit an explosive blast from its gunpowder-filled blade, damaging opponents at short range. Use the Marksman skill when making a ranged attack, and treat such an attack as a surprise attack. The weapon is ruined by the explosion and can no longer be used in combat.

Explosive Spiker: Using the explosive power of gunpowder for greater penetration, this spear-shaped bayonet thrusts into the victim with great force upon impact. It is a close-quarters weapon for use with the Melee Weapons skill. The number in the parentheses applies to damage caused when using the explosive function of the weapon.

Comet Blade: This is a katana which can emit an explosive blast from its gunpowder-filled blade, damaging opponents at short range. Use the Marksman skill when making a ranged attack, and treat such an attack as a surprise attack. The weapon is ruined by the explosion and can no longer be used in combat.

GUNPOWDER BLADES					
Name	**Dmg**	**ROF**	**Range**	**Ammo**	**Sta**
Falling Star Blade	+2	1	5m	1	2
Explosive Spiker	+3 (5)	1	—	3	4
Comet Blade	+3	1	5m	1	3

RANGED WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**ROF**	**Range**	**Station**
Shuriken	+1	5	15m	2
Kunai/throwing knife	+2	3	10m	1
Iron hammer	+2	3	5m	1
Kusari-gama (weight)	+2	—	5m	3
War fan	+2	1	5m	2
Bow and arrow	+3	2	100m	1

Ranged Weapons

Ranged Weapon Descriptions

Shuriken: A classic ninja throwing star.

Kunai: A throwing knife often with a ring in the handle.

Kusari-gama: The weighted and chained end of this combination melee/ranged weapon.

Bow and Arrow: A classic ranged weapon.

Soulgem Firearms

Soulgem Firearm Descriptions

Soulgem light pistol: An older model with a revolving chamber.

Soulgem pistol: A pistol (automatic or revolver) which fires a slug using the explosive energy of a soulgem.

Soulgem rifle: A long-barreled rifle model of the soulgem pistol.

Thunder cannon: A smaller version of the cannon, with a much longer range. Like the cannon, it propels an explosive shell doing damage to the target and all those within 3m of the target.

Prayer seal cannon: Combining soulgem and gunpowder technologies, this weapon uses the energy of the soulgem to propel a large shell filled with gunpowder. The shell explodes on contact, doing damage to the target and all those within 4m of the target. The Tenran answer to the rocket-propelled grenade. It is called a prayer seal cannon because it is often blessed with prayer strips attached for good luck.

Armour-piercing rifle: This is a large anti-yoroi armour sniper rifle which uses large steel-piercing shells.

Gunlance: A customized armour-piercing rifle with an attached bayonet (in the form of an explosive spiker) for close combat. This is a rare weapon used in sniping armour on the battlefield. It costs 10 Karma to possess, and has an attribute

SOULGEM FIREARMS					
Name	**Damage**	**ROF**	**Range**	**Ammo**	**Station**
Soulgem light pistol	+4	3	50m	6	2
Soulgem pistol	+4	4	50m	12	3
Soulgem rifle	+5	2	100m	8	4
Thunder cannon	+6	1	600m	1	4
Prayer seal cannon	+7	3	150m	6	5
Armour-piercing rifle	+7	1	400m	4	4
Gunlance*	+10	1	400m	8	6
Gunlance Spiker**	+4(+6)	1	—	1	—
* Custom weapon					
** Integrated with every gunlance					

GUNPOWDER FIREARMS					
Name	**Damage**	**ROF**	**Range**	**Ammo**	**Station**
Holdout pistol	+3	3	10m	6	3
Scatter gun	+3	5	20m	10	4
Rifle	+5	1	50m	3	4
Repeater	+3	3	30m	12	4
Heavy repeater	+3	5	50m	30	4
Dreadnaught repeater	+3	8	50m	50	5
Great cannon	+10	1	120m	1	5

penalty of 1. It can only be equipped by characters with the Gunlancer character archetype.

Gunlance Spiker: This is a gunpowder-based explosive spiker on the underside of the gunlance. It can be used with the Melee Weapons skill. The number in parentheses indicates the damage done when the gunpowder charge is used. This weapon is included at no extra cost with every gunlance.

Gunpowder Firearms

GUNPOWDER FIREARM DESCRIPTIONS

Holdout pistol: A small light one-handed pistol, about the size of a dagger.

Scatter gun: A long gun which fires small pellets instead of slugs. Colloquially known as a "shotgun" in some warrior circles.

Rifle: The most common gunpowder weapon, used for both hunting and combat. It has become a popular weapon due to its relatively low production costs, although its rate of fire and range is inferior to both the bow and soulgem guns.

Repeater: A gunpowder rifle-like weapon capable of automatic fire. Although it is prone to malfunction, it more than makes up for that drawback in firepower.

Heavy repeater: A Gatling-style heavy repeater rifle which uses an ammunition belt. It is generally fired from a stand and cannot be used as a hand-held weapon.

Dreadnaught repeater: A brutal heavy machine gun. This represents the latest in heavy weapons gunpowder technology.

Great cannon: Used in castle sieges, this cannon is so large that is must be carried by wagon. It cannot be used as a hand-held weapon.

Unarmed Attacks

UNARMED ATTACKS		
Name	**+Dmg**	**Station**
Punch/Kick/Grapple	+0	1
Fist-loaded Punch	+1	2
Vajra Claws	+3	2

Fist-loaded Punch: Punching while gripping a rock, pole, or other hard object in your fist.

Vajra Claws: Hooked claws of indestructible vajra steel that attach to the hands. They can also be used to aid climbing.

Soulgem Unarmed Attack Weapons

SOULGEM UNARMED ATTACK DESCRIPTIONS

Soulgem Vajra Claws: Vajra claws that have been modified to make use of soulgems.

Soulgem Impact Gauntlet: Heavy metal gauntlets or hand replacements which use soulgems. The energy of the soulgem is released when the user strikes/punches an object, causing shockwave to ripple through and damage the target.

White Heat Palm: This weapon is made from the forearm and hand section of a yoroi armour. By spending Soul, the user can release a burst of searing heat through their hand capable of incinerating their target. The character must declare that how much Soul is consumed for each attack. Every two Soul points spent adds one additional damage modifier point.

SOULGEM UNARMED ATTACK WEAPONS				
Name	**Dmg Mod**	**RoF**	**Ammo**	**Station**
Soulgem vajra claws	+3	3	6	2
Soulgem Impact Gauntlet	+2	3	9	3
White Heat Palm	+4 + see text	—	—	6

Gunpowder Unarmed Attack Weapons

GUNPOWDER UNARMED ATTACK DESCRIPTIONS

Impact Gauntlet: A metal gauntlet with a barrel attached to the top of the hand. When the user strikes an object with the gauntlet an explosive blast is released. The number in the parentheses applies to damage caused when using the explosive function of the weapon. This weapon can only be used once before it must be reloaded.

Forearm Thruster: The weapon is a gauntlet which covers the hand and forearm. If the trigger cord is pulled, a small explosive burst is released, adding speed and power to the user's strike.

GUNPOWDER UNARMED ATTACK WEAPONS				
Name	**Dmg Mod**	**RoF**	**Ammo**	**Station**
Impact Gauntlet	+2 (+5)	1	1	2
Forearm Thruster	+2	1	3	3

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

PLAYING FOR THE FIRST TIME

As we suggest elsewhere in the book, if this is your first time playing Tenra Bansho Zero, please select one of the sample characters included in this chapter. These characters are also great for unexpected play opportunities, or if one or more of the players do not own a core rulebook of their own.

The GM might prepare a scenario where the players can select any sample character they wish, or else the GM might suggest the players choose from a limited number of character options (4-5 characters for a 4-player group). Or the GM might have a "squad-based" game in mind, a tight scenario for a very limited number of character types. For example, the GM might prepare a ninja-based scenario where she tells the four players that three of them should use the shinobi sample character, and the fourth to use a war-maiden kugutsu.

USING SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Below are a list of sample characters. Their stats, skills, and special notes are written below. There is a paragraph of text giving the players and GM some play tips for using this character.

If this is your first time playing, you should not edit the character too much: Just use the character as-is for your first game (in terms of attributes, skills and the like). When it comes to name, sex, appearance and personality, those things are entirely up to you. Remember, a group can consist of four characters all picked from the exact same sample character template, yet through player description and roleplaying they will soon appear to be entirely different characters.

The sample characters use the following shorthand for attributes and skill levels:

Attributes: BOD=Body, AGI=Agility, SEN=Senses, KNO=Knowledge, SPI=Spirit, EMP=Empathy, STA =Station.

For samurai, kongohki and annelidist characters, they have adjusted physical stats which appear in parentheses: BOD 7 (10). This represents the character's ability when transformed into a samurai or annelidist, or it represents the kongohki's meikyo bonus applied to every physical roll. For armour-rider characters, they will have a second set of physical attributes for their yoroi armour. Yoroi armour attributes in parentheses also represent the meikyo bonus (kimen-based armours receive no such bonus).

Skills: The skill listings are represented in dots (●). For example, Evasion: ●●

All general skills start at a rating of 1: One dot is already filled in on the character sheet. If the sample character in this chapter shows a general skill like "Melee Weapons: ●●●" (Melee Weapons is a general skill, so it already has one dot filled in on the character sheet), simply fill in two more dots for a total of three filled-in dots. Do not add three *additional* dots to the first, for a total of four.

Wound Gauge: The wound gauge for each character is written in a format similar to this: 5/3/2/1. This means that this character has 5 open Light Wound boxes, 3 open Heavy Wound boxes, 2 open Critical Wound boxes, and 1 Dead Box. On the character sheet, simply draw a line through all unused boxes on the wound gauge so that only the open boxes are left unmarked.

Archetypes, Attribute Cost: These are included so that the player can see how this character was created. You don't have to write these in on the sheet if you don't want to.

Weapons: Some weapons have an adjusted damage rating, which appears in parentheses. This usually represents a special weapon's maximum possible damage, if it is activated and the maximum number of soulgems spent: An armour's explosive spiker damage of +7 (9) means that the spiker does 7 points of damage normally, and 9 points if 1 soulgem is spent to increase its damage as per the special rules on explosive spikers. Other times, this adjustment represents a damage bonus due to mechanica (for kijin).

Finally, each character has some ideas for both the player and the GM. For the player, there are some ideas on role-playing if you are having trouble thinking of how to portray the character. For the GM, there are suggestions on opening Zero Acts, if you are having trouble thinking of a suitable dramatic opener for the character.

These sample characters are also all available pre-filled at the Tenra Bansho Zero website: If you have access to a printer, you could simply download them, print them and bring them to the session.

As was suggested above, the players should try to keep the character as-is their first time playing. They should decide things like the character's job, background, personality, history, style and the like for themselves. In a later session, the players may want to continue to use sample characters, but simply change minor rules-based elements about them to customize them further (starting Fates, samurai ability powers, ninjutsu school, sample shiki, customized weapons).

Armour Rider

The armour rider is the daughter or son of the regent or a highly ranked vassal lord. When she is not piloting the armour, she pretty much can't do anything on her own.

As a character, we'll watch them grow and mature over the course of the game.

Archetypes	Yoroi Armour Rider, Aristocrat/Princess													
Attribute Cost	1	Rider Karma		10	Meikyo Karma		70							
Attributes	**BOD**	3	**AGI**	5	**SEN**	4	**KNO**	6	**SPI**	6	**EMP**	7	**STA**	8
Armour	**BOD**	7 (10)	**AGI**	7 (10)	**SEN**	7 (10)								
Vitality	9	Soul	24	Armour Vitality		14								
Wounds	3	2	1	1	Armour			7	4	2	1			

SKILLS				
Notice	●	●		
Interface	●	●	●	●
Etiquette	●	●	●	
Art of Rule	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Dagger	+2	2	—	6
Armour Weapons				
Yoroi Tachi	+9	6	—	12
Dragon Howler Cannon	+9	4	1km	6
Explosive Spiker	+7 (9)	1	—	9

FATES				
Emotion	Love towards your yoroi armour	●	●	●
Emotion	Loyalty towards the domain	●	●	

Equipment: 50 soulgems, armour, soulcord and interface helm

Notes: Armour moves 3 times normal speed due to roller legs. Armour adds +2 dice to all Evasion die rolls. The armour's meikyo has 70 Karma, which grants a +3 meikyo bonus to all physical actions.

Roleplay Ideas:

- Naive child trying to impress her cold, cruel or aloof father and further his ambitions
- Haughty and spoiled child of privilege and status, who is about to get a crash course in how the real world works
- Tormented adolescent sent to fight because for some reason or other their family can't stand them
- A cold shut-in who is one step away from going crazy from being used. Will quickly find salvation in any new friends she makes
- A skilled rider who knows that her clan relies on her. She pridefully does her duty to further her family's name
- An older teen, with plans on the table to be forcefully retired from duty in order to make way for younger riders or other family duties

Zero Act Ideas:

- The first time the rider is presented with the armour: An experience perhaps both scary and exhilarating
- The rider is in the middle of battle and sees a friend fall before her
- A nightmare about being trapped in a demon made of steel
- The chance to best a good friend from another family in armour combat practice, and the repercussions of that choice

Onmyoji

The onmyoji is a genius at Taoist sorcery. It could be a young sorcerer, or an elderly/wise sorcerer might be fun to play. Aloof, mysterious, naive, sharp-witted, all are acceptable personalities.

They are the specialists in knowledge-based actions. They can summon creatures on the battlefield, but their creatures are extremely useful in non-combat situations as well. If there's something that needs to be known, or needs brainpower to figure out, most likely the onmyoji will come to the answer first.

Archetypes	Onmyoji, Tactician												
Attribute Cost	1	Karma		85									
Attributes	**BOD**	3	**AGI**	5	**SEN**	4	**KNO**	9	**SPI**	6	**EMP**	5	**STA**	7
Vitality	9	Soul	30	Wounds			3	2	1	1				

SKILLS				
Onmyojutsu	●	●	●	●
Information	●	●	●	
Strategy	●	●	●	●
Etiquette	●	●	●	
Art of Rule	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Iron Fan	+2	1	5m	1

FATES				
Goal	Satisfy your intellectual curiosity	●	●	●
Emotion	Hatred of war	●	●	

Notes: Refer to the sample shiki in the onmyojutsu rules section, write down a few sample shiki for casting later.

Roleplay Ideas:

- A weary older onmyojutsu, jaded and put off by the world. However, for some reason has extreme interest in the goals of the session
- A young onmyoji, brainy and aloof, who is leaving the cloistered academy for the first time
- Powerful and ambitious, you perform the tasks you must in order to further your studies and your name
- An outcast or pariah onmyoji who for some reason is the laughingstock of properly-trained academic sorcerers
- You have a talent for magic, but you use it only to fulfill one single overarching purpose

Zero Act Ideas:

- The first time you summoned a shiki, perhaps entirely by accident

- Confronting a bully from a house of much higher station back at the onmyojutsu academy
- Being outcast from a well-known onmoyjutsu school for some real reason or slight
- Seeing your master killed by a runaway chimera
- Being defeated in combat by another more powerful sorcerer
- Your first day at an onmyojutsu academy, having been effectively cast out by your family

SAMURAI

A samurai is a soldier, or perhaps a vagrant mercenary, who has decided to go through the painful samurai surgery in order to attain strength.

The samurai Fate "Hatred of weakness" might manifest itself in interesting ways, especially if the character hates her own lingering weaknesses.

A good starting Zero Act scene for a samurai is seeing the event that led the warrior to become a samurai; usually a brutal defeat at the hands of a foe.

Archetypes	Hard Luck, Samurai, Kabukimono, Playboy												
Attribute Cost	1	Karma		85									
Attributes	**BOD**	6(9)	**AGI**	8(11)	**SEN**	5(8)	**KNO**	3	**SPI**	6	**EMP**	6	**STA**	5
Vitality	12	Soul	18	Wounds			6	3	2	1				

SKILLS				
Evasion	●	●		
Melee Weapons	●	●	●	
First Aid	●	●		
Marksman	●	●		
Notice	●	●		
Pursuit	●	●	●	
Information	●	●	●	
Willpower	●	●	●	
Performance	●	●		
Pillow Arts	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Kunai	+2	3	10m	a lot
Soulgem Great-sword	+5	3	—	12

FATES				
Emotion	Hatred of weakness	●	●	●
Misfortune	Death of your most precious thing	●	●	

Equipment: Large gemblade katana, garish/loud kimono, damaged and worn breastplate, 10 additional soulgems

Notes: Samurai abilities are as follows:

- Costs 5 Soul to activate, lasts for 6 rounds
- Combat Ability 3 (when in samurai form, the samurai adds three dice to Body, Agility and Senses)
- Regeneration 1 (every round, the samurai regains one point of Vitality)
- Soulfind 1 (in samurai form, the samurai can sense all living things in a 10 meter radius)
- Possession 1 (no effect, required for samurai surgery)

Roleplay Ideas:

- A powerful and energetic warrior who wishes to drink deep of everything the world has to offer
- A ronin from a fallen clan, suspicious and wary, who may one day learn again to enjoy living
- A brooding samurai who for some reason hates what she has become
- A confident but kind person who protects the innocent and smites the wicked regardless of honor or station
- A youth turned into a samurai to fulfill an obligation, and will single-mindedly pursue that obligation without fail

Zero Act Ideas:

- Your defeat at the hands of your fated enemy, which led you down the path of becoming a samurai
- Nightmares of a powerful demon controlling your actions, unable to restrain your body
- The last match of the domain lord's public sword tournament; your master asks you to throw the match so that your opponent, trained in the style sponsored by the lord, saves face in front of that lord
- You wake up floating in a stream near a peaceful village, covered in blood and punctured with arrows, with vague recollections of the battle you lost
- All samurai have the "Death of your most precious thing" Fate: There is surely a story to be told there
- The samuraization surgery ends with your betrayal at the hands of the onmyoji you trusted with the surgery

BUDDHIST MONK

This monk, trained in the Fist of Acala martial art, comes from any of the three major orders (usually Ebon Mountain). These characters often have something to learn about themselves.

A good strategy is to give very strong, goal-oriented destinies to monks in order to shake them into action. Otherwise, this character can quickly turn into a "fifth wheel" who simply follows the others.

Archetypes	Buddhist Monk, Fist of Acala												
Attribute Cost	0	Karma		70									
Attributes	**BOD**	8	**AGI**	6	**SEN**	5	**KNO**	4	**SPI**	8	**EMP**	7	**STA**	2
Vitality	16	Soul	24	Wounds			8	4	2	1				

SKILLS				
Unarmed Combat	●	●	●	●
Buddhist Magic	●	●	●	●
Persuasion	●	●	●	
Art of War: Fist of Acala	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Fist	4	—	—	a lot

FATES				
Taboo	Fighting	●	●	●
Taboo	Disobeying the precepts	●	●	

Notes: Refer to the Buddhist magic chapter of the rules for the effects of Buddhist magic.

Fist of Acala at its current rank bestows:

- The monk uses Spirit instead of Body for Unarmed Combat rolls
- +4 damage for all hand to hand attacks
- When you defend (and only when defending), you have the option of declaring The Unmoving Fist: The side which ends up losing the counter-attack (the one with fewer successes) is treated as if they had 0 successes for that attack.

Roleplay Ideas:

- A young monk of the Phoenix sect recently released to the world, still purposefully following scripture
- An older Ebon Order monk, wandering purposeless from village to village
- A kind person yet ruthless killer in the service of the Hidden 28th Chamber
- A monk coming to terms with scripture vs what is needed to perform lasting good in the real world
- A newly-ordained monk with a sordid past

Zero Act Ideas:

- A scene from the person's life before they decided to join the temple and become a monk
- Excommunication from the monastery for heresy or questioning scripture (presumably before joining the Ebon Mountain sect)
- A young monk's first encounter with an eccentric Ebon Mountain monk
- Training side by side with an oni monk of considerable skill, realizing that there is more to these people than what the rumors say
- The first time you used your hands to defend yourself or another innocent person from harm

KIJIN

A kijin has replaced some (or much) of her body with metal mechanica. They are nearly as powerful as samurai or armours, but because of that drive to become more powerful, they have lost much of their humanity to cold steel.

It will probably be easy to role-play the kijin's Fates with the help of the other players, so these characters can be given more moderate destinies.

Archetypes	Kijin, Mercenary												
Attribute Cost	8	Karma		45									
Attributes	**BOD**	5	**AGI**	5	**SEN**	5	**KNO**	3	**SPI**	5	**EMP**	6	**STA**	3
Vitality	10	Soul	16	Wounds			5	3	2	1				

SKILLS				
Unarmed Combat	●	●	●	
Evasion	●	●		
Melee Weapons	●	●	●	
First Aid	●	●		
Marksman	●	●	●	
Notice	●	●		
Information	●	●	●	
Willpower	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Vajra Claws	+3(8)	3	—	6
Grudge Blade	+5(10)	—	—	—
Five-barrel Gatling	+3	5	20m	30

FATES				
Emotion	Sympathy toward the weak	●	●	●
Emotion	Ambition	●	●	

Equipment: A partially eaten riceball, scarred breastplate and kabuto helmet

Mechanica include: Mechanica Sensor (one eye, class otsu, provides +5 to rolls to perception checks)

Darksight: You can see in darkness. Add 2 dice to all Sense rolls while in darkness.

Eye of Distant Death: Add 2 dice for all Marksman rolls.

Mechanica Arms: (both arms, class otsu, provides +5 to damage to hits with unarmed combat, melee, and thrown weapons)

Roleplay Ideas:

- Having been knocked down again and again, you keep coming back for more: Only your anger keeps you going at this point
- An older kijin, watching the world change but unable to stop it
- A young warrior who won't take anything for granted anymore: Wears the latest fashions, drinks the finest sake, eats the finest foods, beds the finest concubines
- You have recreated your body and even soul for one purpose, and pursue that purpose without hesitation

Zero Act Ideas:

- Being brutally wounded in a rout, a battle where your lord sent you to die in order to pull off a larger strategy
- The last time you were with your family: Perhaps even the last time you would ever see them
- You return from war to your lover, but now you look nothing like the person you were when you left
- Being cast out of a clan for losing a battle without having the honor to fight until death
- A lord asks you personally to pursue having your body replaced with mechanica

KONGOHKI

This character has the most combat power of all the sample characters, but it's that much harder to role-play this character. While having the appearance of a fearsome robot, their voices are usually human and normal like other people. They are usually built and purchased for a purpose, and that purpose will often be revealed during the Zero Act.

Please talk to a kongohki player before the game begins, and spend a little time discussing how the character's past (the strongest element of this character) will resurface in play. Destinies aside, do some thinking as GM about elements of the kongohki's past that will emerge during the scenario.

Archetypes	Kongohki												
Attribute Cost	20	Karma		70									
Attributes	**BOD**	7(10)	**AGI**	9(12)	**SEN**	7(10)	**KNO**	5	**SPI**	6	**EMP**	4	**STA**	5
Vitality	13	Soul	22	Wounds			7	4	2	1				

SKILLS				
Unarmed Combat	●	●	●	
Movement	●	●		
Melee Weapons	●	●	●	
Stealth	●	●		
Marksman	●	●	●	
Notice	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Gemblade katana	+3	3	—	6
Double-edged sword	+2	2	—	6
Hooked fang dagger	+1	—	—	—
Shuriken	+1	5	10m	a lot

FATES						
Kongohki	Sealed Memory	●	●	●	●	

Equipment: Several weapons, nothing else

Notes: All physical attributes use the value in parentheses, these are higher due to the Karma/meikyo bonus

Lifepulse: 700m radius

Self-destruct: The kongohki can explode, destroying themselves. This causes 30 points of damage to everyone in a 15m radius

Kongohki Overdrive: 13 times per session. During an overdrive, when performing physical actions with Body, Agility or Senses, every die that comes up as a success is rolled one more time. The second round of successes is added to the total of the first roll. However, dice that come up as successes a second time are not rerolled. The Overdrive can be engaged instantly, no action is required.

Flashback: As long as your Fate remains as "Sealed Memory", whenever the number of your Aiki tokens exceeds your Empathy score, you receive a flashback scene from your former life. The flashback consists of dreamlike, fragmentary images like a movie trailer. The contents of the flashback are up to the GM. If a flashback occurs in mid battle, the character cannot take actions for that round.

Roleplay Ideas:

- A faithful kongohki, performing all duties as expected
- A restless kongohki, having doubts about her service and her lord
- A kongohki with a bright and cheerful personality who likes being around others

Zero Act Ideas:

- Most kongohki Zero Acts will involve receiving their mission from whomever owns them
- Protecting your lord from a vicious assassination attempt

- Destroying another kongohki who went renegade, a kongohki you once trusted and followed
- A nightmare from a past you don't remember
- A flashback to who you were before, vague memories of flesh and blood
- Seeing a child in the street during a war parade or procession, and triggering a flashback

SHINOBI

Shinobi characters are great for players who like the idea of controlling dark power, infiltrating and overthrowing powerful enemies. This kind of character can also have a huge range of personality.

Basic but powerful destinies are good for this kind of character, like ones that give them a mission to accomplish, or which present good or bad relationships to major NPCs or PCs.

Archetypes	Shinobi, Thief												
Attribute Cost	1	Karma		80									
Attributes	**BOD**	5	**AGI**	9	**SEN**	6	**KNO**	4	**SPI**	6	**EMP**	5	**STA**	4
Vitality	11	Soul	20	Wounds			5	3	2	1				

SKILLS				
Stealth	●	●	●	
Movement	●	●	●	
Melee Weapons	●	●	●	
Criminal Arts	●	●		
Marksman	●	●	●	●
Notice	●	●	●	●
Forgery	●	●		
Pursuit	●	●	●	
Ninjutsu: School of the Shore	●	●	●	●

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Ninja sword	+3	—	—	—
Shuriken	+1	5	10m	a lot

FATES					
Misfortune	Property of the Clan	●	●	●	
Emotion	Hatred of hypocrisy	●	●		

Equipment: Ninja stealth gear, costume changes, merchant's clothing, 500 mon and 8 pieces of silver, Shinobi dark arts (4)

Notes:

Dark Arts: reduces ninjutsu ability costs by 4 Soul down to a minimum of one.

School of the Shore style: allows Ninjutsu skill rank to be used for Notice and Marksman

School of the Shore: abilities at rank 4 include Possessed by the Inner Wolf, Possessed by the Inner Demon, Shadowflight, Ninja Duplication, Mind's Eye, Shadow Stitch, Shadowless Replication Technique

Roleplay Ideas:

- A surprisingly cheerful ninja who believes in what she does and serves her clan faithfully
- A rogue or runaway ninja being hunted by the remaining members of the clan
- A doubtful ninja, questioning her position, her station, with thoughts of freedom
- An older ninja: Cold, calculating and ruthless in task, but with a hidden heart of gold
- A cocky young ninja who only cares about the praise from her elders for a mission well done

Zero Act Ideas:

- The last step in your clan's brand of training is mortal combat with another ninja: Your opponent is a friend or sibling
- You return to your village to find it burned, destroyed, or simply… gone
- You hunt down a runaway ninja and deliver the final blow, but their last words haunt you and question your being
- You stand silent guard for a local lord as he does despicable things to innocent people; perhaps he's gone too far this time
- You encounter a commoner in town on a plain-clothes mission, and it is love at first sight
- Your clan elder gives you one final mission, a sacred clan scroll, and tells you to never return

War-Maiden Kugutsu

This is a kugutsu who was trained since her crafting to be a powerful swordmaster. Having said that, she still isn't as powerful as samurai and the like.

Kugutsu stories tend to involve mystery and secrets: Usually their origins are secret, and sometimes the kugutsu doesn't know where she came from, and in some cases doesn't know that she is a kugutsu. These characters tend to have deep, human ideals, so Destinies which focus on something to believe in, or misfortunes of her past, are best for this kind of character.

Archetypes	Kugutsu, Swordmaster, Concubine												
Attribute Cost	1	Karma		70									
Attributes	**BOD**	4	**AGI**	7	**SEN**	5	**KNO**	4	**SPI**	5	**EMP**	8	**STA**	6
Vitality	9	Soul	18	Wounds			4	2	1	1				

SKILLS				
Melee Weapons	●	●	●	●
First Aid	●	●		
Notice	●	●	●	

SKILLS				
Information	●	●	●	
Perform	●	●	●	
Persuade	●	●		
Pillow Arts	●	●	●	
Etiquette	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Great soulgem katana	+5	5	—	8

FATES					
Secret	No one knows you're a kugutsu	●	●	●	
Taboo	Killing people	●	●		

Notes: The Butterfly Dream

Roleplay Ideas:

- A naive kugutsu, experiencing life away from extravagance and servitude for the first time
- A worldly kugutsu on the run, jaded but still finding interest in new experiences and new people
- Rejecting what you are, you try to "common yourself up" as much as possible to try to become more human
- You have no idea that you are a kugutsu, because your creator made sure that you were never informed; but now for some reason others are looking for you
- You've found something to love for the first time, and the experience overwhelms you

Zero Act Ideas:

- Serving in a tavern for as long as you can remember, bounty hunters suddenly kick down the door and seek to take you in
- Your creator is kind, and helps you flee his mansion once complete rather than find a life in service
- Your master is insane, and tries to complete your sword-training by killing an innocent person he's tied up and brought to the mansion
- You find yourself in a village during a local festival, having never experienced anything like it before
- You attempt to escape a cruel or cold lord with a sister kugutsu, but in the end only you escape
- The tea-ceremony where you are introduced to your potential future lord, who is in awe of you yet addresses you only as a thing or object

Annelidist

Annelidists usually have an open heart towards the weak or downtrodden. In many ways, they are similar to kijin characters. While they deal with inhuman worms and bugs, most are still deeply attached to people: They often serve as wandering or stationary village healers.

Annelidists work well with Destinies that give them another character (NPC or PC) to protect, or perhaps which deal with the fallout of someone they failed to protect.

Archetypes	Annelidist, Doctor												
Attribute Cost	1	Karma		75									
Attributes	**BOD**	8	**AGI**	5	**SEN**	6	**KNO**	5	**SPI**	5	**EMP**	6	**STA**	4
Vitality	13	Soul	20	Wounds			8	4	2	1				

SKILLS				
Wormcharm	●	●	●	●
First Aid	●	●	●	
Notice	●	●		
Information	●	●		
Willpower	●	●		

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Talonfang Bugs	+5	—	—	—
Mouth Creeper	+1 (poison)	—	—	—

FATES					
Goal	Protect the Weak	●	●	●	
Emotion	Affection for annelids	●	●		

Equipment: Mushi food, medicinal cabinet with various medicines, plain clothes; Medicine gives +1 dice to all First Aid rolls

Talonfang bugs: Use Wormcharm to attack with them

Mouth creeper: Use Wormcharm to attack, if you hit the enemy makes a Willpower roll against a difficulty of 2: Failure means paralysis for two rounds; otherwise no effect

Rejuvenation Worm: 15 Points

Roleplay Ideas:

- A kind, quiet and unassuming doctor with anger issues
- Disgusted with the hypocrisy in the land, you are a grumpy doctor who will give those you heal expert care and a good tongue lashing if they appear hesitant or scared by your nature
- A person who had the annelids forced upon her, and wants nothing more than to purge them from her body

- A lord's trusted doctor, you have high cultural tastes and never deign to reveal your annelids or their needs in public
- A young and courageous annelidist doctor traveling in a land deeply suspicious or hateful of your kind

Zero Act Ideas:

- A renegade annelidist is out of control, and you destroy him before he can continue his rampage; however something about him reminds you of yourself
- You show up in a village just as the last annelidist to pass through is being hanged by a suspicious and violent crowd
- You are implanted with the annelids for the service of a village or lord, who later reject you when your deeds are done
- You were a normal person, before you accidentally stumbled into that forgotten cave…
- A child breaks his leg nearby; the mother brings him to you for care, but then the father shows up, drunk, with words about his son being touched by a "corpse-eater "

ONI

The native and downtrodden people of Tenra, they are able to use their Resonance abilities to move matter and read minds. This character is likely a young oni, troubled about their people and identity in a land where they are being hunted to extinction. This character might be a hunted adult oni, running away from pursuers intent on bringing them to justice. If this is the case, the character has a small half-oni child companion.

Oni often become the center of attention. It is important for oni characters to receive Destinies which give them focus. Stories involving oni can often be deeply dramatic or tragic.

Archetypes	Oni, Thief, Paragon												
Attribute Cost	1	Karma		80									
Attributes	**BOD**	8	**AGI**	6	**SEN**	5	**KNO**	3	**SPI**	8	**EMP**	5	**STA**	3
Vitality	16	Soul	24	Wounds			8	4	2	1				

SKILLS				
Movement	●	●	●	
Melee Weapons	●	●	●	
Stealth	●	●	●	
Criminal Arts	●	●		
Marksman	●	●	●	
Forgery	●	●		
Resonance	●	●	●	●
Art of War: Southern Seas One-Blade Style	●	●	●	●

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Large, wicked axe	+5	—	—	—
Kunai	+2	3	10m	a lot

FATES					
Goal	Coexist with humans	●	●	●	
Emotion	Hatred of hypocrisy	●	●		

Notes: Refer to the rules on Resonance powers. Refer to the rules for Arts of War on the progression of the Southern Seas One-Blade Style. Notably, Body is used instead of Agility for melee weapon strikes.

Roleplay Ideas:

- A naive young oni who has never mingled with people before, having to learn the hard realities of the world
- A fiercely traditionalist oni who needs to overcome her hatred of humans in order to find common ground with them
- A disguised oni who has lived among humans in town for a long time, who feels the need to return to her oni roots
- A champion of the Kikoku rebellion who travels the world, and has no time for petty human racism
- You are an ambassador of goodwill, making progress with convincing the humans from a local village that your people are not monsters

Zero Act Ideas:

- Your village is raided, and all of the oni but you are killed
- Your village is raided, and almost all of the oni are killed
- You make friends with a human monk who lives peacefully with your people. Then raiders show up…
- You are summoned by Makuu Nindo, who personally asks you to wander the land to help both oni and humans in need
- You are on the deck of the great flying ship Yamato-Takeru during the Kikoku domain's oni rebellion. You single-handedly kill the captain, but his last words haunt you

Miko or Gyoshi

This character is a Miko shrine maiden or Gyoshi Shinto priest. This character is suited for a mission where the Priesthood sends an agent out to gather information, or else manipulate events behind the scenes.

These characters are great for scenarios where the mission or duty assigned by the Priesthood starts to differ from the agent's agenda or wishes. These make interesting and fitting scenarios for agent characters.

Archetypes	Miko, Onmyoji Apprentice, Traveling Performer													
Attribute Cost	0	Karma		10	Meikyo Karma		45							
Attributes	**BOD**	3	**AGI**	5	**SEN**	5	**KNO**	7	**SPI**	6	**EMP**	8	**STA**	6
Vitality	9	Soul	26	Wounds			3	2	1	1				

SKILLS				
Evasion	●	●		
Notice	●	●		
Onmyojutsu	●	●		
Information	●	●		
Interface	●	●	●	
Perform	●	●	●	
Etiquette	●	●		
Shinto	●	●		

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Kodachi	+2	—	—	—

FATES						
Emotion	Longing for a family	●	●	●	
Emotion	Loyalty to the Priesthood	●	●		

Equipment: Meikyo mirror, interface helm, Amafuda pass, flute, Shinto ceremonial equipment

Talisman	**Containing the shiki spirit "Demon Eyes"**
Creation points	20
Soul cost	10
Soulfind	4 (40m radius)
Prolong Summoning	2 (18 rounds/minutes)
Flight	1 (200m/minute)
Explosion	6 (6 damage in a 3m radius)
Possession	1 (bound to a talisman)
Abilities	4
Skills	2
Vitality	4
Sense Link	—

Notes: Refer to the rules on Shinto powers; Refer to the rules on Onmojutsu for summoning spirits, it is likely that the miko/gyoshi commonly uses this skill to summon and bind spirits to talismans for later use; Meikyo bonus is currently +2

Roleplay Ideas:

- A naive miko or gyoshi, traveling the world of Tenra to faithfully perform ceremonies and duties
- A seasoned shrine maiden who knows much about the Priesthood, and faithfully serves them anyway
- A jaded gyoshi who tires of the conspiracies, secrets, and lies, and just wants to help people
- Secretly a higher-ranking member of the Priesthood, in disguise to learn more about the world or further some Priesthood goal
- A faithful member of the Northern or Southern Court, outspoken against the rival Court in a currently contested domain
- A warrior who joined the Shinto Priesthood against her will

Zero Act Ideas:

- Nightmares from the Fall of Jinrai, whether you were there or even alive at the time or not
- Having your rank stripped from a higher level to a lower level in front of masked peers for some mistake (or purposed decision) you made
- Being tasked with an unconscionable deed or betrayal, and living with the consequences of performing or not performing it
- Your last day at your noble house before being sent off to become a miko or gyoshi
- You meet again with the cheerful old Bright Lotus monk who tells you stories and sings old songs in the town square; he is then killed in front of you by a Priesthood mercenary who reads you a pre-written admonishment from an elder.

Armour Hunter

The armour hunter is a specialist at bringing down those steel beasts in melee combat. Most were originally armour riders themselves, and thus have a hatred or fear of the armours they used to love.

Armour hunters are great in stories which feature a major NPC armour rider or an armour rider PC. Over the course of the scenario, we'll see if the hunter can overcome her hatred, or have it reaffirmed.

Archetypes	Former Armour Rider, Amour Hunter, Mercenary												
Attribute Cost	1	Karma		73									
Attributes	**BOD**	7	**AGI**	8	**SEN**	6	**KNO**	3	**SPI**	5	**EMP**	6	**STA**	4
Vitality	12	Soul	16	Wounds			7	4	2	1				

SKILLS				
Movement	●	●	●	
Melee Weapons	●	●	●	●
Marksman	●	●	●	
Information	●	●	●	
Interface	●	●	●	
Etiquette	●	●		
Art of Rule	●	●		

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
ZAKT-8 Ultimate Edge	+6	8	—	8
Shortsword	+2	—	—	—

FATES					
Emotion	Hatred of Yoroi Armours	●	●	●	
Emotion	Look up to the strong	●	●		

Equipment: A merciless sword nearly as big as you, worn breastplate with faded clan symbol, 15 additional soulgems

Roleplay Ideas:

- You are bitter and wary of the world and expect every friend to betray you, every meal to be poisoned; however, while sour and rough, you continue to live on just in case that next person ends up being a true comrade
- A poor but lusty young mercenary in search of all the pleasures of battle, drink, song, food and flesh
- A strategic-minded killer who wastes no motion in battle or speech in pursuit of victory
- A young ex-armour rider, you turned your back on your family, and have nothing but contempt for nobles, clans and status
- A military genius no longer of status or patronage, you are resigned to your current Fate of being a grunt mercenary with a giant sword

Zero Act Ideas:

- You are a teenager piloting an armour, when the armour stops responding and ejects you onto a mud-caked bloody battlefield
- You are a sibling in a noble house: All your brothers and sisters went on to be armour riders, but you never made the cut. This last test is your last chance to be a pilot…
- Penniless, you take on work as a mercenary. However, your first well-paying job turns out to be much more disturbing than you had anticipated
- You return to your castle estate after a rout: Your family casts you out
- You face off for the first time against a yoroi armour on the battlefield, undoubtedly piloted by a child much like you once were

Ayakashi

A mysterious figure, the ayakashi appears to others as a normal human being in appearance, but something is a little… off. They might have slightly unusual features (eye or hair color), always seem aloof, or perhaps speak in an archaic fashion. But no one could imagine that this person is actually an ageless ayakashi spirit. The ayakashi makes efforts to ensure that no one suspects, in this case taking on the appearance of a Buddhist monk (and perhaps even living as one for some time).

Ayakashi PCs can be difficult to integrate with the rest of the characters, because they are so unusual and come from such a different background. However, keep the ayakashi grounded as a type who is profoundly interested in people and culture, and there shouldn't be a problem.

Ayakashi characters are great for mystical or mythology-heavy games.

Archetypes	Traveling Performer, Fallen Monk, Ayakashi												
Attribute Cost	3	Karma		70									
Attributes	**BOD**	6	**AGI**	7	**SEN**	6	**KNO**	3	**SPI**	6	**EMP**	6	**STA**	3
Vitality	12	Soul	18	Wounds			6	3	2	1				

SKILLS				
Movement	●	●		
Notice	●	●		
Marksman	●	●	●	
Information	●	●		
Buddhist Magic	●	●	●	
Persuasion	●	●		
Perform	●	●	●	
Willpower	●	●	●	

WEAPONS				
Name	**Damage**	**RoF**	**Range**	**Ammo**
Iron Shakujo Ringed Staff	+2	—	—	—
Fire Summoning	+15	9	100m	—

FATES					
Emotion	Curiosity Towards People	●	●	●	
Emotion	Longing for Family	●	●		

Equipment: Shakuhachi (thick wooden recorder/flute) or Nohkan (thin flute), monks robes, archaic clothes, traveling bag

Special Abilities:

Projectile Attack (4): Part of your body can be used as a ranged weapon (summon fire)

Superspeed: Any successes rolled on Body, Agility, and Senses can be rerolled and added to your total successes for that check. This ability can be activated a number of times in a session equal to Body + Spirit.

Incorporeal: By expending 3 Soul, you can become incorporeal for one round or minute and pass through solid objects.

Shapechange (4): You can mimic any creature or person you have seen. This ability reverts when you use another ayakashi ability.

Multiple forms (3): You can create three images of yourself which act independently, each with one Vitality point.

Weakness: Wet Iron (4): You are vulnerable to iron stained with blood or water. Total damage taken from these weapons is multiplied by 4

Taboo: Killing people (3): If you kill any person, you take 6 damage directly on the Wound Gauge.

Roleplay Ideas:

- An archaic-tongued wanderer whose personality swings from friendly to aloof, who sometimes references people, places or events long past
- A joyous and always mirthful traveling performer who is always excited to meet new people and visit new places, but always seems to be in the wrong place at the wrong time
- An actually devout Buddhist monk who uses his secret abilities to serve the Phoenix order, who has disturbing and inspirational dreams where the Amida Nyorai buddha speaks to him
- An elderly bikuni female traveling monk, protective of those around her, who sometimes takes on the form of a young, hauntingly beautiful fey woman
- You vow you will never forgive humans for what they did to your great forest and fellow ayakashi. But before you dedicate your existence to eradicating them, you will live amongst them for a few years and give them one more try…

Zero Act Ideas:

- You leave your forest, travel to a village, and happen to save a little girl from a fire. You visit the village a short span of time (for you) later, and meet that girl again: sixty years later as an elderly woman
- You are unaware that you are an ayakashi, you simply have been raised from an orphan to a faithful monk at a local temple all your life. However, one day the abbot of your temple brings you into his chamber to tell you about your past, and to have you face the world
- Mistakenly thought of as an evil ayakashi and hunted down, you turn up injured and desperate at a small, remote Buddhist monastery
- You have a dream that pulls you out of the great deep forest and towards the strange cities of the people
- One of the great elder ayakashi ara-mitama spirits commands you to live amongst the people of Tenra for mysterious reasons

NAME

Age | Sex

Concept

Archetypes

Karma Cost | Attribute Cost

VITALITY

Body+Spirit

Max

SOUL

(Spirit+Knowledge)x2

Max

KIAI

Current | Spent

KARMA

Total | Armour Rider | Armour Meikyo

FATES — What do you Live For?

Cost ○○○○○ | Cost ○○○○○

Cost ○○○○○ | Cost ○○○○○

Cost ○○○○○ | Cost ○○○○○

Cost ○○○○○ | Cost ○○○○○

2 Dots: 0 3 Dots: 10 4 Dots: 30 5 Dots: 70
Total Cost Cannot Exceed Current Total Karma

Total Fate Cost

WOUNDS

□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ Light (Body)

□□□□□ □□□□□ (+1) Heavy (Body/2)

□□□□□ (+2/Vitality Decrease) Critical (Body/4)

□ (+3) Dead

WEAPONS — Rating, ROF, Range, Ammo

POSSESSIONS

SKETCH

BODY ___/___

Unarmed Combat ●○○○○

Wormcharm ○○○○○

AGILITY ___/___

Movement ●○○○○

Melee Weapons ●○○○○

Evasion ●○○○○

Stealth ●○○○○

Ninjutsu ○○○○○

Criminal Arts ○○○○○

SENSES ___/___

First Aid ●○○○○

Notice ●○○○○

Marksman ●○○○○

Pursuit / Hunt ●○○○○

Forgery ○○○○○

KNOWLEDGE ___

Information ●○○○○

Onmyojutsu ○○○○○

SPIRIT ___

Willpower ●○○○○

Resonance ○○○○○

Interface ○○○○○

Buddhist Magic ○○○○○

EMPATHY ___

Persuasion ●○○○○

Pillow Arts ●○○○○

Perform ○○○○○

STATION ___

Strategy ○○○○○

Etiquette ○○○○○

Shinto ○○○○○

Art of Rule ○○○○○

ART OF WAR: OTHER

___ ○○○○○

___ ○○○○○

ベン・モルガン平成二十二年

EMOTION MATRIX

10-1	Unsettled Mind	You have a bad feeling about this person, your feelings projecting an image of stale sediment at the bottom of a pool of black mud. No matter how hard you try, you can't shake this sense of unease around this person.
10-2	Acquaintance	Someone you know casually. Or at least, you have a feeling that you know this person from before. Maybe.
10-3	Desire	Something inside of you is burning. Do you lust for the knowledge they have, to take something they possess and make it yours, or do you simply desire their physical form?
10-4	Pursuer	You feel like this person has been following you, or perhaps you have been pursuing them? Do you even know the reason why?
10-5	Nostalgia	This person is an old friend, or perhaps they remind you of an old friend, someone special to you. Memories of your golden age come and go in your mind.
10-6	Annihilation	This person represents the very destruction of everything you hold dear. Will you be destroyed, or will a new, greater world rise from the ashes of the old?
20-1	Loyalty	This person never coerces you and never bends your will. You are utterly devoted, and you would never turn against their will.
20-2	They Hate You	You don't know why, but you constantly feel this person's animosity towards you. This person will never forgive you. Perhaps you do know the reason why, and you want to heal the rift. Or perhaps… the feeling is mutual.
20-3	Like Your Child	This person reminds you of a child you loved a long time ago, or else you have the feelings of a caregiver towards this person. It might be in the smallest acts they do, or the look in their eyes, but you can't ignore the feelings this person stirs inside of you.
20-4	Dark Dreams	You feel dizzy from the aura this person projects. This sense of foreboding… what is this feeling? Your mind tries to scream a warning…
20-5	Admiration	A warm feeling fills your heart when you think about this person.
20-6	Hmmmm…	There's something about this person. A faint tingling in the back of your head when you think about them. What did they do? What are their true motives? Are they the one responsible for…
30-1	Hatred	Whenever this person is around, you can barely suppress your disgust or anger. You don't get along with them, and feel a strong loathing. Later, you make excuses to yourself and come up with reasons for those emotions.
30-2	I Am Salvation	You have no doubt that, deep down, this person is asking for your help and guidance. You are the only person who can help them, you're sure of it.
30-3	A Warning!	When you first laid eyes on this person, you knew they were dangerous. Better keep an eye on them, just in case…

30-4	Deep Impression	Every word holds you in their thrall. Their whole being gives you counsel, and urges you to action.
30-5	Rival	You can't bring yourself to lose against this person. Your rivalry is probably one-sided, and not necessarily hostile. You may even be close friends. However, until you surpass this person you'll never find your own path.
30-6	Companionship	This person's acts or words tell you that they are of the same mind, and working towards the same goal.
40-1	Purity/Innocence	This person's very existence is purity itself. You almost feel blinded in their presence by their innocent, naked will.
40-2	Killing Intent	A dark, foggy feeling threatens to smother you. You have either been tasked to kill this person, or simply know that it is an inevitability.
40-3	Love at First Sight	The moment you met this person you felt like the world finally became bright and colorful.
40-4	Fear	This person's presence gives you goosebumps. It feels like someone is pouring hot lead into your stomach. Is your fear unwarranted, or does this person's destiny cross yours in an unfavorable way?
40-5	Like a Brother/Sister	This person has a sibling-like relationship with you, or they could even be your actual sibling. A part of your heart grows warm when they are near.
40-6	Unstable Emotions	An unstable, unknowable feeling catches your heart. Where does it come from? Why does this person's presence wreak havoc on your emotions?
50-1	Soulmate	You hear the music that plays when two souls are intertwined. They are you, and you are they. What is the nature of this sympathy, and what path do your crossed destinies take?
50-2	Master	Their every word, their every act teaches you about the world.

	1	2	3
10	Unsettled Mind	Aquaintance	Desire
20	Loyalty	They Hate You	Like Your Child
30	Hatred	I Am Salvation	A Warning!
40	Purity/Innocence	Killing Intent	Love at First Sight
50	Soulmate	Master	Shock
60	Déjà Vu	Chaos	Worthy Rival

50-3	Shock	You can't explain it with words. Don't even try. The only question that your heart screams is… why?
50-4	Goodwill	The way this person talks, acts, and expresses themselves reminds you of how well you get along with this person. This bond will grow deep with time.
50-5	Chains of Fate	Wherever you go, they this person turns up. You don't particularly like this person, but destiny seems to keep pulling you together: A rotten kind of fate. Might as well get used to them…
50-6	Strange Interest	Is it the way this person looks, or is it something deeper? Do you even know why this person triggers feelings of interest? In any case, you have an interest in this person that might be mundane or peculiar.
60-1	Deja Vu	You've had this experience before. You remember this person. Or was it somebody similar to this person? Who is this person, and why do they make you feel like all this has happened before?
60-2	Chaos	Colors blend, feelings merge. This person produces strong, conflicting feelings in your heart. Will one emotion rise strong out of this chaos of mixed emotions?
60-3	Worthy Rival	They recognize you as a worthy rival, as do you they. Your rivalry may be as small as a pebble or large as a mountain. At some point, though, this rivalry will come to an end.
60-4	Thirst for Your Blood	You can feel it: The chill on the back of your neck, those looks they give you. This person surely intends to kill you. Do you know the reason? Will caring why save you?
60-5	Blood Relative	This person looks or feels like someone in your immediate family. Perhaps they even remind you of yourself. Alternately, this person might actually be related to you by blood.
60-6	A Dark Flame	A feeling in your heart, one that you have been trying to ignore. It burns violently, and threatens to consume you. This person is at the center of it all. What will happen when you find out why?

	4	**5**	**6**
	Pursuer	Nostalgia	Annihilation
	Dark Dreams	Admiration	Hmmm…
	Deep Impression	Rival	Companionship
	Fear	Like a Brother/Sister	Unstable Emotions
	Goodwill	Chains of Fate	Strange Interest
	Thirst For Your Blood	Blood Relative	A Dark Flame

INDEX

108 FACTIONS OF THE LORDS OF LIGHT 225
222 THINGS TO DO IN TENRA 375
AD-LIBBING 160
ACQUIRING WEAPONS 419
ACTING PLAYERS 120
ACTIONS 76
ACTS 6, 118
ADVANCED ARCHETYPES 414
ADVICE FOR GAME-MASTERS 362
ADVICE FOR PLAYERS 358
AFTER-GAME DISCUSSION 129
AIKI 50, 51, 54, 104
AIKI AS KIAI 57
AIKI CHITS 57
AIUCHI ATTACK 91
ALU 282
ANATMAN PHASE 64, 127
ANCIENT STYLE - LIGHTNING STRIKE 314
ANNELID IMPLANTATION 21
ANNELID LIST 274
ANNELID RULES 273
ANNELIDS 178
ANNELIDS AND WORMCHARM 89
ARA-MITAMA 294
ARCHETYPE CREATION 416
ARCHETYPE LIST 390
ARMOUR 173
ARMOUR CREATION EXAMPLE 183
ARMOUR CREATION RULES 175
ARMOUR DAMAGE 183
ARMOUR GEAR 180
ARMOUR REPAIR 174
ARMOUR WEAPONS 187
ARMOUR WOUND TRACKS 86
ART OF KI MANIPULATION 312
ART OF WAR 305
ASURA 7, 62, 157
ATTACK ACTION 77
ATTACKING AND DAMAGE 80
ATTACKS 97
ATTACKS WITH RANGED WEAPONS 94
ATTRIBUTES 17
ATTRIBUTES FOR KONGOHKI 247
ATTRIBUTES FOR ARMOUR 175
AUDIENCE 7, 53
AWESOME 30
AYAKASHI 292
AYAKASHI PCs 303
AYAKASHI RULES 293
BACKGROUND 69, 321
BASIC ACTION SUMMARY 29, 30
BASIC COMBAT 75
BENDING THE RULES 169
BENDING THE SETTING 151
BLACK WING GUN STYLE 319
BUDDHIST MAGIC 89, 220
BUTTERFLY DREAM 93, 269, 271
CELESTIAL FORM KUNG-FU 227
CHALLENGE RATING 33
CHARACTER CREATION 14, 112
CHARACTER DEATH 150
CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS 116
CHEER ON 77
CHIMERA 197
CHOICES AND CONTRADICTIONS 151
CLARITY OF HEAVEN STYLE 307
COMBAT 75, 109
COMBINATION WEAPONS 422
CONVERTING KIAI 144
COUNTERATTACK 81, 83, 97
CRESCENT MOON BLADE TACTICS 310
CURTAIN CALL AND EPILOGUE 128
CUSTOMIZED WEAPONS 420
DAMAGE 81
DAMAGE BONUS FOR RANGED WEAPONS 95
DAMAGE EXAMPLE 86
DARK ARTS 22, 258
DEAD BOX 85
DESCRIBING THE SETTING 370
DESTINIES 7, 51, 63, 130, 133, 136, 147
DICE 9, 33
DII 283
DOCTRINE OF NO-SELF 127, 135
DRAGON AND TIGER UNDER ONE SKY STYLE 310
DRAINING WEAPONS 296
DRAMATIC SITUATIONS 148
EMOTION MATRIX 60, 117, 130, 137, 139, 449
EMOTION MATRIX AND PCS 140
EMOTION MATRIX AND THE POWER OF THE DICE 142
EMOTION MATRIX AND NPCS 139
EMOTION MATRIX ROLL 132
EMPTY FIST 317
EMPTY MIND STYLE 309
EPILOGUE 129
EQUIPMENT 19, 37, 184
FAILURE 165
FATE 7, 14, 63, 70, 117
FATE CREATION 65, 118
FATE ROLLS 58, 77, 116, 127, 135
FINAL INTERMISSION 128
FINISHING BLOW 87
FIRST AID 89
FISHING TECHNIQUE 168
FIST OF ACALA THE IMMOVABLE LORD OF LIGHT 226
FIST OF THE CELESTIAL KONGOHKI 312
FRACTIONS 9
GAME DAY PREPARATION 105
GAME DISCUSSION 135
GAME MASTER 106
GAME PREPARATION 100, 110
GEMBLADES 422
GENERAL ARCHETYPES 390

GETTING INTO CHARACTER 136
GM AS JUDGE 57
GM VICTORY CONDITIONS 9
GUNPOWDER WEAPONS 420
HALF-ACTIONS 79
HANDS OF MERCIFUL KANNON
THE THOUSAND-ARMED 226
HEALING 88, 297
HEART ENGINES 372
INJURY AND VITALITY 83
INTERACTION PHASE 76, 80
INTERMISSION 6, 58, 119, 125
INTRODUCING THE WORLD OF TENRA 370
KARMA 7, 25, 51, 62, 178, 248
KARMA AND MEIKYO 21, 71, 173, 243
KARMA COST 15
KARMA EXPLANATION 50
KARMA RULES 73
KIAI 7, 49, 59, 97
KIAI USES 59
KIJIN RULES 229
KIJIN TRANSFORMATION 229
KIMEN ARMOUR 174
KIMEN KONGOHKI 73, 244
KIMENKYO 72
KI-PRESENCE 47
KONGOHKI 94, 243
KONGOHKI AND HEALING 91
KONGOHKI MEMORIES 245
KONGOHKI OVERDRIVE 21, 244
KONGOHKI WEAPONS 253
KUGUTSU BUTTERFLY DREAM 23, 269
LEAVING A SCENE 124
LIVING ARMOUR 176
LONG CAMPAIGN 158
MAKE FAILURE EXCITING 166
MANGA 354
MECHANICA 178, 230, 248
MECHANICA ARMS 232
MECHANICA HEAD 230
MECHANICA LEGS 237
MECHANICA OTHER 239
MECHANICA RULES 229
MECHANICA TORSO 235
MEDIA RESOURCES 352
MEIKYO 20
MEIKYO AND ASURA 71
MEIKYO AND FATES 72
MEIKYO BONUS 71, 173, 243
MEIKYO CLEANSING 72, 223
MEIKYO KARMA 71
MIGAWARI-STYLE SCHOOL OF MARKSMANSHIP 311
MOMENT OF TRUTH 76, 130, 143
MOVEMENT 76
MOVIES 352
MULTIPLE ATTACKS 94
MULTIPLE COMBAT ACTIONS 60
MULTIPLE SUMMONERS 204
NAMES 382
NAMES, ARISTOCRATIC 386
NAMES, BUDDHIST PRIEST 387
NAMES, COMMONER 384
NAMES, KUGUTSU 387
NAMES, ONI 387
NAMES, PLACE 382
NAMES, WARRIOR FAMILY 385
NAMES, YOROI AND KONGOHKI 388
NINJA SCHOOLS 267
NINJUTSU LIST 258
NINJUTSU SCHOOLS AND ARTS 267
NINPOU TECHNIQUES 263
NPC CREATION 115
NPCS 153
ONI 373
ONI RESONANCE 21, 282
ONMYOJUTSU RULES 190
OPPOSED ACTIONS 36
OVERLAPPING SKILLS 16
PERMANENT SUMMONING 202
PILOTING ARMOUR 175
PLAYER KNOWLEDGE 112
PLAYER or PC 6
PLAYER VICTORY CONDITIONS 9
PLAYING FOR THE FIRST TIME 427
PLAYING IN THE PAST 132
POISON 206
POSSESSION 206, 299
PRAYER STRIPS 191
PRE-MADE CHARACTERS 113
PREVIEW 133
PREVIEW OF THE NEXT ACT 125
PROTECT, TAKE THE BLOW 60, 97
PUPPETEERS AND KONGOHKI SERVANTS 246
RAISE ATTRIBUTES 60
RAISE FATE LEVELS 66
RAISE SKILLS AND ABILITIES 61
RAISING DESTINIES 137
RANGED ATTACK 207
RANGED WEAPONS 94, 188
REACTION SCENES 122
RECOMMENDED ARCHETYPES AND DESTINIES 147
RECOMMENDED ATTRIBUTES 17
RECOVERING FROM WOUNDS 90
REDUCING MEIKYO KARMA 72
REGENERATION 207
RENZOKU-MONO 159
RESONANT BLADE STYLE 313
RESOURCES 372
REUSING A TALISMAN 201
REWRITE FATES 66
ROLE-PLAYING 109
ROLE-PLAYING GAMES 356
ROUNDS 75
RULES JUDGMENTS 107
RUNAWAYS AND CHIMERA 196
SAMPLE CHARACTERS 427
SAMURAI ABILITY 22, 92, 215
SAMURAI CREATION 199

SAMURAI LOADOUTS 217
SAMURAIZATION SURGERY 200
SCARLET STEEL SOULGEMS 372
SCENARIO 103
SCENARIO ADVICE 160
SCENARIO CREATION 145
SCENARIOS AND DESTINIES 148
SCENE 6, 57, 119, 125, 131, 152
SCENE JUDGE 8, 56, 139
SCENE JUDGE BONUS 128
SCENE PLAYERS 120
SEIZAN MOUNTAIN SPEAR TECHNIQUE 316
SENKI-MONO 158
SENSE LINK 198, 208
SESSION LOG SHEET 116
SHA 372
SHIKI ABILITY LIST 204
SHIKI ABILITY SCORES 193
SHIKI CRAFTING 190, 195
SHIKI CREATION POINT CHART 191
SHIKI LIST 209
SHIKI, SHIKIGAMI 184
SHIKIGAMI CREATION 190
SHINTO RULES 287
SIMPLE NPCs 156
SITTING AT THE TABLE 116
SKILL 16, 40, 47, 193
SKILL GROUPINGS 46
SKILL LIST 40
SNEAK ATTACK 92
SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CLASS 14
SOUL 18
SOULGEM WEAPONS 93, 419
SOULGEMS 372
SOUTHERN SEAS ONE-BLADE STYLE 306
SPECIAL CHARACTERS AND POWERS 20
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT 39
SPECIES ARCHETYPES 411
STAGE PLAY: THE PRODUCTION 118
STARTING FATES 20
STARTING KIAI 61
SUBLIMATE DESTINY 128
SUBLIMATE FATES 66
SUCCESSES 34
SUMMONING RULES 190
SUMMONING SHIKIGAMI 209
TAE-RAYI 284
TAKE A BREAK 128, 135
TALISMAN CRAFTING 199
TALISMAN CREATION 196
TALISMAN SHIKIGAMI 210
TENRA 10
TENRA GLOSSARY 344
TENRA RULES LEXICON 6
THE GREAT TENRA CONTRADICTION 160
TRUE ILLUSION STYLE 308
TYPHOON RIDER STYLE 315
UNARMED AND MELEE WEAPON NOTES 187, 245
USING A MEIKYO 204
VITALITY 18, 179, 249
VITALITY AND SOUL REPLENISHMENT 89
VOLUNTARY ASURA 63
WAIT 76
WEAPON 184, 419, 420
WEAPON LISTS 422
WEAPONS OF TENRA 419
WHEN DO PLAYER CHARACTERS DIE? 87
WOUNDS 84, 86, 221, 240
WOUNDS AND THE WOUND TRACK 18, 278
YOHJUTSU 293
YOROI ARMOURS AND HEALING 91
ZERO ACT 7, 130
ZERO ACT AND DESTINIES 145
ZERO ACT COMBAT 132
ZERO ACT INTERMISSION 133
ZERO ACT SCENES 131
ZERO SYSTEM 99

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

ELECTRONIC HEI CLASS:

MAIKI, Peter Borah, Bret Gillan, Daniel M. Perez, Joshua A.C. Newman, The Fin, Tyler Lanser, Michael Mancini, Tomas, Brent P. Newhall, Pat Gamblin, Mattias Granlund, Nick Wingedferret Brown, Basil Berchekas III, Brent Hoyler, Seth & Rachael Blevins, Michael Peacock, L. 'tiKi' C., William Lamming, Joey Rodgers, Michael Bassler, T. Harrison, Jonathan, Grimm, David W Shelley, Mitch A. Williams, Stephen Bretall, Rob Brennan, Mircea Ungureanu, Gabriele Fusacchia, Andy, Marzec, MML, Matthew Almarji, Mike D., Scott Gable, Blake Wertz, Ralf Wagner, James "discord_inc" Fletcher, Adrian Menzel, Eli Meyer, David Bowers, Silvernis, Eric Karnes, Stephen D. Sullivan, Eric Graham, David Laurence, Nathan D. Paoletta, Paul "Paulkitty" Lucas, Evgeniy "Jamie" Vasin, Emily Care Boss, Nathan H Kahler, Doug Atkinson, Jeff Wimett, D Hogan, Joshua Noyes, Miles Matton, Wightbred, James Ryan-Henry, David Keyt, C.L. Post, Zed Lopez, Lloyd Ash Pyne, Sciencezam-Friend of Justice, Veronica Courage Wakefield, Jared Buckley, William Mansky, Austin S. Leavitt, Mike Gerdes, Tim Walker, oshingen, Bully Pulpit Games, Bonnie Leach, Fabio Succi Cimentini, Eduard Sanz Arrufat, Cody Reichenau, David M., Brian Joeseph Johnson, Ziek, Randall Jurgens, Charley Meink II, Carey "Tradewind" A., Reverance Pavane, Brandon R. Coleman, Aaron Scott, James Henry MacDonald, Philo Pharynx, T. Carl Kwoh, Brian Scott Walker, Eric Rossing, Conor Toleson, Gary Montgomery, Brandon McGirr, Jack Lee, Daniel Gintner, Keith Nemitz, Matthew Dobervich, Tau, Edward Gomersall, Kevin Maginn, Matt "Quady" Bohme, Tom Smith, Paul-Henry Lemon, Paganetti, C.R., Ian T. Potter, Kyle Wayne LaCroix, Nate Mooney, Dave Weiss, Angel "AnatoleSerial" Garcia, Brian Paul, Don Tyo, Christopher Buss, Chris Fore, Joselito Miguel Hernandez, David Ross, Sam Gregory, Michael Hartog, M V Soumithri, Francois Pare, Leekey, Stormie Teague, Adam Niese, D F White, Denys Mordred, David Yellope, Grant Brownlee, Michael Pleier, Lorenzo Urbano, James Parker, Christopher Hartman, Christopher Wood, Michael E. Dore, Evil Hat Productions, Eloy Lasanta, Marc Majcher, Matthew D. Gandy, Davis Morgan, The Art of the Table - Ben Mandall, Barry Holmes, Jose Manuel Palacios Rodrigo, Ryan, Macklin, Doug "Druthu" Sessler, Brian 'Psychochild' Green, Jeff Tabrum, Keith Setliff, Robert Uhl, Lobuh, J Quelch, Kevin Arthur "Monty" Burns, Andy "awmyhr" MyHR, Morgan Ellis, Klonoadp, Nathan Correll, Hyathin, Michael Zack, Jason A. Joyce, dnl, CJ Saguini, Justin Farmer, David "Zobot" Toboz, Don "Tanglebones" Moman, Peter Hawkins, John C Dodd, Travis Scott, Robert Kornstein, Kevin Portland, Vojtech Pribyl, T.J. Walley, Devin Fitzgerald, Joe Leonard, Patrick Huet, Guy MacDonnell, Josh Rensch, Matt Brown, Daniele Di Rubbo, Peter Fitzgerald, B R McCann, Will Kennedy, Ben "Akira!!" Waxman PA-C, James Ojaste, Marty "Ndoto" McGuire, James Montanari, C. Edwards, W. David Wood, Joshua Lilly, Casey Ross, Elya, Michael Evans, DarkShoal, Stephen Chahn Lee, Jeremy Lam, Jawad Naeem, Ron Hitler-Barassi, Steven Edwards, Michael S. Miller, Rick Harrelson, Tracy Baker, Jake Nelson, John Stavropoulos

ELECTRONIC OTSU CLASS

Christopher D. McDonough, Ben Morgan, Brian Auxier, Cyrad, Eric Moore, Julianna Backer, Nathan Olmstead, David "Wild Wolf" Martinez, Ogaday Willers Moore, Quinn Heath, charm-bangle, Luke Moran, Yes, Robert Vance, Chris Costello, Norimitsu Kaiho, Massimiliano Caracristi, Chris Perrin, Daniel JT Moore, Jason Bradley Thompson, Chay Khalfani, Austin Conley, William H. Hoyt III, Mike "@BrendanAdkins" Sugarbaker, Robert Burson, Paul Burks, Michael Wilson, Thomas Sniadecki, Caleb Osborn, Garth Herbert, Alec Nunes, Ignacio Segura, Leonardo Prunk, Nathan Housley, Valerie Meyer, Kevin Galloway, Gianluca Casu, Lester Smith, Stale Tevik, Charles Starr, Jeremiah Cunkle, B. Schreck, Jonathan Agens, Eldon2, Rabbit Stoddard, Sam Wright, Daniel Cushman, Michael Vaughn Green, Robert de Raaf, Jon "Kabusabe" Meihost, Chris Schoonmaker, David Grimaldi, Rob Donoghue, Colton Nyegaard, Owen Whalen, Cody Oliver, Tony Baker, Jordan Polak, Brybry <3, D. Amis, Renato Ramonda, Benjamin Bauknecht, Marcus Beyer, Mark Jackson, Alexander rogers, Auden Reiter, M. Chan, Matthew Bannock, Michael Steward, Marty Brown, Leah Esperanza, Chrisray Holly, Gustavo la fontaine, Jason Robbins, Aaron Sunlin, TJ Wilson, Peter Tierney, RDMgryphon, Sage SC, Jesse Lumsden, Jesse Lumsden

ELECTRONIC HO CLASS:

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Gollschewski, Craig Gordon, Lim Ye Ping, Colin Earle, Amine Hsu Nekuchan, Oliver Matthews, Rafael Rivera, Lightweight, Jesse Reynolds, Canezar the Dragon, Chris "K41N" Keller, iamharrynelson, Ian McKechnie, Rafael "Faesin" Favaro, Flavio Mortarino, Imban, Philippe Deville, Ray Mitchell, Jan Heitger, Zalzator, Ben Bernard, Michael P. Chien, Flozz, Matt Erik Katch, Olivier Darles, Rainer Wagner-Ballner, Christopher Alan Slater, Joe Alden, Jon Wooley, Scott Dorward

Physical Hei Class:

Noah "Teegan" Hinz, Albert Andersen, Kyle Simons, Michele Gelli, Robin Zane Miller, Eusebi Vazquez, Christopher Parisi, Alexander "SquidLord" Williams, Chris Chinn, Lindsey Wilson, Ron Beck, Stuart Broz, Mad Gav, Eric Provost, Tim Hodge, Adam Windsor, Donnell Carey, Jonathan Thiele, Keith Stetson, Misha Favorov, Jackson Brantley, Roberto Nieves, Joao, Maeve McCartan, Eli Hoyt, Majdi Badri, Jason Corley, Nora Hailey, Mychal H. Marquez Santiago, Clint and Cassie Krause, Shawn Ingram, Felipe Ferreira, Colin Fredericks, Jason Petrasko (JP), Monsieur Choc, RaggedKarma, Jon A Shelky Jr., Lxndr, James Downs, George Vasilakos, NinjaDebugger, Kirt "Xiombarg" Dankmyer, Klawzie, Andrew C. H. White, Jose Luis Porfirio, Jeffrey "Cheffheid" de Wit, Alex Manley, Daniele Lostia, Evan Silberman, Kevyn Dietz, Brian Fowler, Devin Fitzpatrick, Wajanai Snidvongs, Tobias Southworth-Barlow, Lou Goncey, Jeb Boyt, Frank J. Manna, Alex Lapin, Alanna D., Clement Chow, Chong Sim Chung, Danielle Lynch, Russell Collins, Casey C Clark, Steve Hudson, Bren Rowe, Shanti Massey, Selene Tan, Jorge Jesus Barrera Vazquez, David K., Mark DiPasquale, John Scheib, WCovill7, Adam M. Coleman, Bill Paulson, Lancia-Racine Productions, PJ Grant, Iain Jackson, Justin Stallone, Nathan Haslam, Rene John Kerkdyk, Rob Alexander, dennis beebe, Daniel Blackwell, Alexandre "Kobayashi", Edward MacGregor, Daniel J. Marr, Raiyan Gurasukausuki, Timo Newton, Andrew Park, Ash Brown, Brandan Landgraff, Chris Czerniak, Kira Scott, Patrick O'Shea, Tim Gemma, Andrew "Andy-san" Hauge, None, Scott Hastings, Richard Almaraz, Tresi Arvizo, Ivo Reitz, Stephanie Pegg, Iain Milligan, however you want, George Austin, Matt Snyder, Eric Franklin, Jean-Baptiste Vlassoff, Joshua Kenney, Anonymous, Matt May-Day, Richard Jewett, Belinda Kelly, George Grannis, Joseph "Supa-Kitsune", Neil Curry, Crazy Kabuki Actor, Nick Cardwell, Mark Stout, Andrew Williams, Jeremy, William Soh EC, Ara, Arlene Medder, Timothy Golaszewski, Andrew Chang, NexAdruin, Colter Rogers, Mike Slivka, Robert H. Oates III, Christopher Slye, Nich Maragos, Scott Rubin, J Aaron Farr, J.A.Maysonett, Samuel Shelsy, William Alambre, Joseph Tong, Joseph Kogin, Doug Macdonald, Benjamin Q. Swanekamp, Ben Kaser, Guy Builta, Fred Peiffer, John Gaskell, Ben Reed, Leland Myrick, Daniel J. Owsen, Jarkko Hamalainen, J V Purvis, Jason Porath, X. Wolfs, Robert Dowsett, Justin Barr, Daniel Brown, Bonsai, Mark J. Lauer, Jin-Ping Lim, David Yauch, Sky & Michelle Corbelli, Sam Ashbach-Sladek, Franz "Jensik" Thomas, Ian Vullo, Stephen Koros, Wim R. Crols, Joshua Eyre, Mads Egedal Kirchhoff, Fredrik Forssen, Scott Prutton, Jan, Charlene Lord-Sawyer, Pete Fischer, Not Sure, Terran Olson, Albert Hwang, Graham Starfelt, Dan Caruk, wyrmgear, Andre Luis Gobbi, Alexander Swanson, David "The Beast" Griffith, John Mark Hawley, Sara Williamson, Matt Zimmitti, Dan Bidwa, Drew Huntley, Keir B McGinlay, Robin Booth, Michael Pureka, Matthew Nielsen, Vasilis Zitros, Michael Lawrence, Frank Gawryla, Brian Clevinger, T. Taylor, Zakharov "Zaksquatch" Sawyer, William A.Kotas, Graham Baas, Damien Marble, Hayden L. MacDonald, Dean McNabb, Heath_Bar, K. L. Munnings, Luke T. Paloutzian, Jared A. Sorensen, Nicolas Brian, James L Hays, Daniel Anctil, Brandon Smith, Jeremiah L Plummer, Martyn and Fay Maillardet, Brett Easterbrook, Dan Maruschak, Jason Ellwanger, Alex 'Musashi' Mayo, Brandon Pancost, Gilbert Milner, Jonathan M. Thompson, Jeff Schecter, Julien Pirou, Antoine Fournier, Stefan Lachmann, Chris Morris, Dustin Brody, Carlos Restrepo, Slaz, Alexander Newman, Echlir, Mark A. Wilson, Ethan Groshens, Moira Tagle, Michael Y McAlexander, Jonathan Lee Bolding, Octavio Arango, Geoff Ellis, Matt Sanchez, Frederick Melhuish III, Gabriel G Rosauro, Michael Petersen, William Spears, Larry Lade, tRens, Gino Chong Inhin, B. Pasmeny, Bryan Hilburn, Burrito, James Lofshult, Kelsey Hawley, Patrick J. Holloway, Trent Boyd, Kylemore, Scott Culver, Stevie P., russ levy, Brooks Sligh, Michael J Miller, Matthew Wolf

Physical Otsu Class

Mickael Morvan, Brad Osborne, Luke Bailey, Edward Damon, BokkenRyanZX 20XX, Darren Hennessey, James Chilcott, Austin Stanley, Bastian Dornauf, Evan Torner, Fabrice Breau, Kayne 'Antiable' Newell, Peter Ellvag, Josh Dorion, Andrew Meltzer, nova, Aaron "Zawmbie" Tiffner, Justin Burr, Adam S., Kaiu Keiichi, Justin W. Davis, Chris, Roland Ker, K Whiting, Michael R. Fitzgerald, ***TiN-MaN***, Collin Smith, Maxwell C. means, Erik Dubois, Shane Phillips, Fr. Adrian Milik, Kyle Schiepan, Buzz Tilford, Nathan Black, Dave LeCompte, Alan Gordon, Clayton Hamrick, Michael, William Fahrer, Chris Fitzsimmons, cena6665, Matt Bednar, Ville Halonen, Frank Wang, Glyn H, Clay Gardner, Glen Green

Honor Wall

Josh Devon, Jeremy Penter, Ted V Melnick, Andy Cregan, Kari 'Zael' Alatalo, Chris Tomasetti