

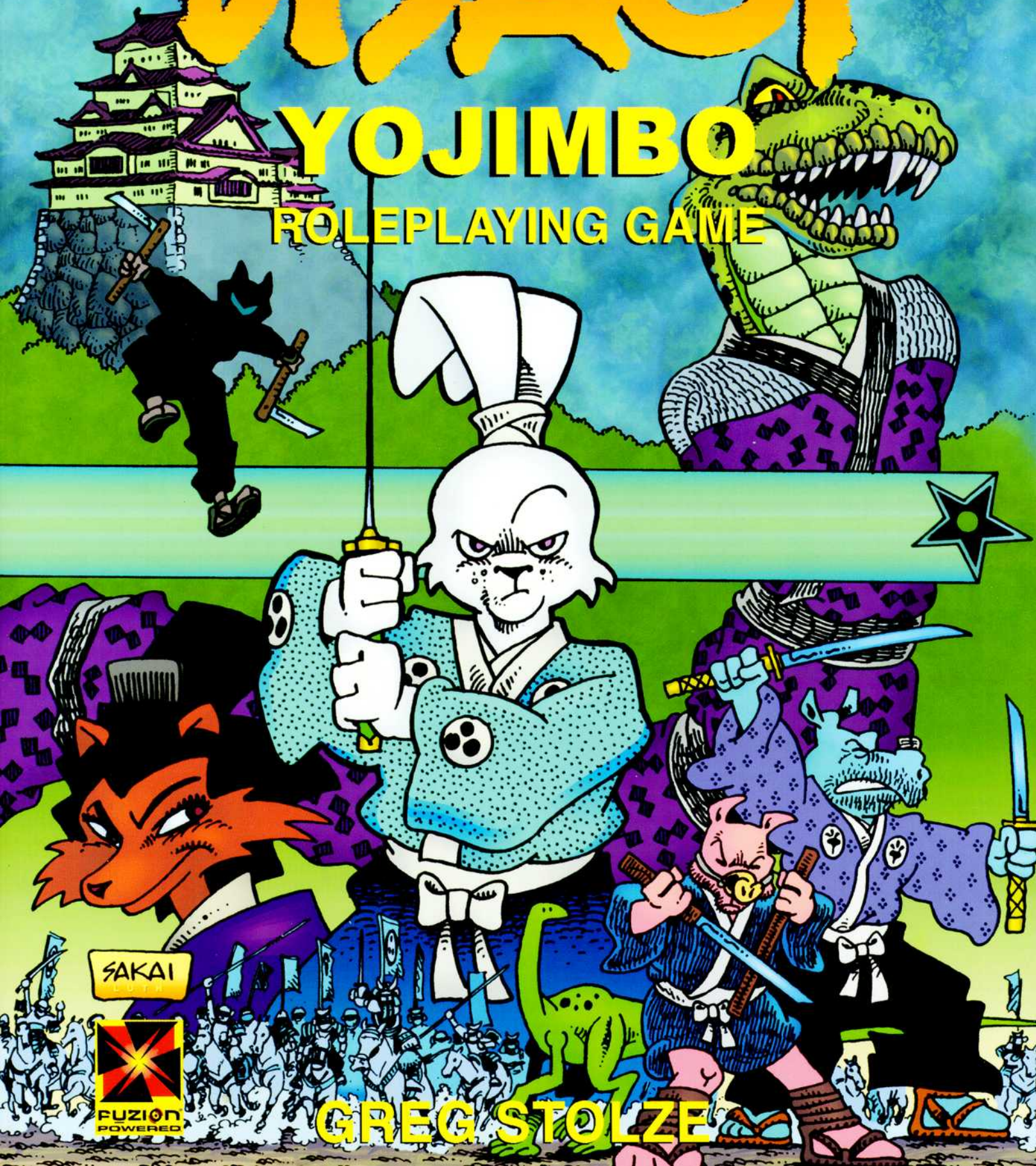


TM

# USAGI

## YOJIMBO

ROLEPLAYING GAME



SAKAI



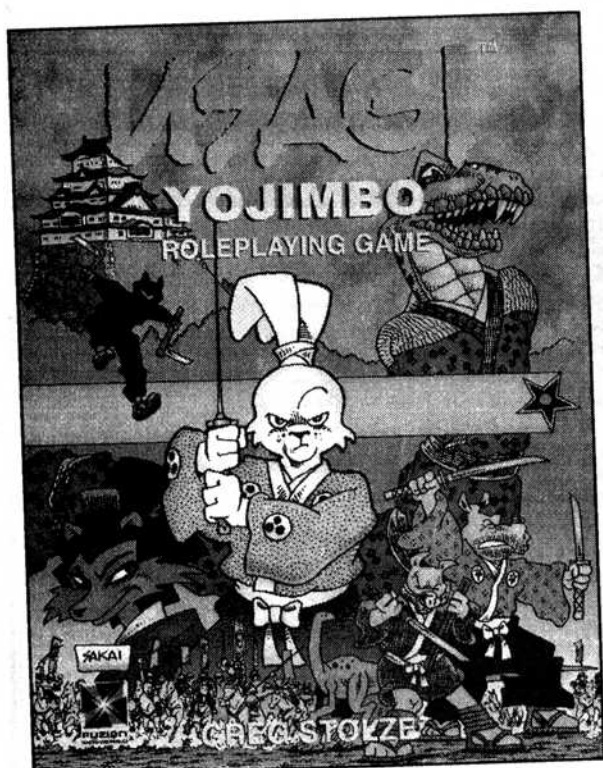
GREG STOLZE



# USAGI<sup>TM</sup>

## YOJIMBO

### ROLEPLAYING GAME



\*TO MY MOTHER SUSAN C. STOLZE, A HERO FOR THE 1990S.\*

AUTHOR: GREG STOLZE  
FUZION<sup>TM</sup> ROLEPLAYING RULES: DAVID  
ACKERMAN-GRAY, RAY GREER, BRUCE  
HARLICK, GEORGE MACDONALD, STEVE  
PETERSON, MIKE PONDSMITH, BENJAMIN  
WRIGHT

OTHER WRITING CONTRIBUTIONS: MARK  
ARSENAULT, TODD BUSTILLO, GLENN  
MASUDA AND JARED SMITH

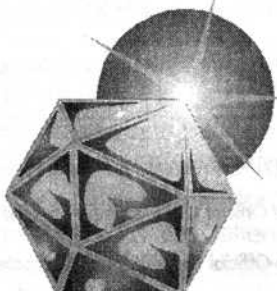
EDITING: MARK ARSENAULT, PAUL ARDEN  
LIDBERG

LAYOUT DESIGN: PHILIP J. REED, JR.  
GRAPHICS: MARK ARSENAULT, PHILIP J.  
REED, JR.

COVER ILLUSTRATION: STAN SAKAI

COVER COLORING: TOM LUTH

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS: STAN SAKAI



Copyright © 1997 by **GOLD RUSH GAMES**. All rights reserved under International Copyright Convention. **Fuzion<sup>TM</sup>** is the **FUZION Lab Group's** trademark for its multi-genre game system. "**Usagi Yojimbo**" copyright © 1985-1997 by Stan Sakai and **Usagi Studios**. All rights reserved. **Usagi Yojimbo<sup>TM</sup>** and all characters are trademarks of Stan Sakai and **Usagi Studios**. Used under license. All situations, incidents and persons portrayed within are fictional and any similarity without satiric intent to individuals living or dead is strictly coincidental.

Published and Distributed by **GOLD RUSH GAMES**, P.O. Box 2531, Elk Grove, CA 95759-2531. (916) 684-9443 (Tel/Fax).  
GoldRushG@aol.com.

Web: <http://members.aol.com/goldrushg/>

**GOLD RUSH GAMES**

**U100 ISBN 1-890305-02-2**

**Second Printing**

Don't miss the **Usagi Yojimbo RPG** on the web, located at the  
**Usagi Yojimbo Dojo**, the official **Usagi Yojimbo** Web Site!  
[www.usagiyojimbo.com/uypg.html](http://www.usagiyojimbo.com/uypg.html)

# USAGI YOJIMBO

## ROLE-PLAYING GAME

# CONTENTS

<b>Chapter One: The Very Basics</b> .....	3	The Way Of The Horse .....	50
About Stan Sakai & <i>Usagi Yojimbo</i> .....	3	Kyudo: The Way Of The Bow .....	50
For Comics Fans: What Gives With All These Rules And Numbers?.....	4	The Yielding Way .....	50
A General Question: What Do Characters In This Game Do?.....	5	Warning: Complicated Rules Ahead .....	50
Gaming Etiquette .....	5	Four Important Things To Know About Jujutso.....	51
Gamer's Lexicon .....	6	Damage And Healing.....	51
<b>Chapter Two: The Advanced Basics</b> .....	7	Healing Stun Damage.....	51
The Setting .....	7	Healing Hits.....	51
Sometimes A Horse Is Just A Horse .....	7	Weapon Damage Chart .....	52
Usagi's Japan (Map) .....	8	Ranged Weapon Damage Chart .....	52
Your Place In Usagi's Japan.....	8	<b>Chapter Six: The Way Of The GameMaster</b> .....	53
The Samurai .....	9	Comedy And Tragedy.....	53
Samurai Clans .....	9	How To Lead A Good Story .....	55
Samurai In Love .....	9	Preparation.....	55
Priests And Monks .....	10	The Freedom Of The Players .....	55
Ronin.....	10	Details .....	56
Peasants .....	10	The Climax (Or, How To Let Endings Happen) .....	58
Outlaws And Ninja .....	10	A Tough Decision.....	58
Instant <b>FUZION™</b> Rules .....	11	Action.....	58
How To Do Everything .....	12	Conclusions .....	58
Critical Success & Failure .....	13	The End .....	58
Skills.....	13	Magic In The World Of <i>Usagi Yojimbo</i> .....	60
Practice Makes Perfect.....	18	<b>Chapter Seven: Adventures</b> .....	61
Experience Points .....	18	Adventure 1: The Haunted Temple.....	61
Buying Stuff With Your Points .....	19	The Characters.....	63
<b>Chapter Three: Your Character</b> .....	21	The Ghost Samurai .....	64
Definitions.....	21	Adventure 2: The Butterfly .....	64
Your Basic Character.....	22	Lords And A Lady .....	64
The Steps Of Generating A Character .....	22	Enter The Heroes.....	65
For <b>FUZION™</b> Fans.....	22	Bandits And A Blacksmith .....	65
Your Species .....	22	Love At First Sight .....	66
Your Job .....	28	Ninja Attack!.....	66
Free Stuff .....	32	If The Heroes Sleep Through It Or Weren't Present.....	66
<b>Chapter Four: Characters From The Comics</b> .....	33	If The Heroes Defeat The Ninja.....	67
The Heroes .....	33	Ronin And Romance.....	67
The Bad Guys .....	41	If Miyagino Is Returned To Her Father.....	67
<b>Chapter Five: Way Of The Warrior</b> .....	43	If Miyagino Is Captured By Higari .....	68
First Step: Who Goes First .....	43	If Miyagino Remains The Prisoner Of Motonari .....	68
Second Step: Pick A Strategy .....	43	If Miyagino Runs Off With One Of The Heroes .....	68
Using Cards To Help .....	44	The Characters.....	68
The Three Strategies .....	44	The Butterfly .....	68
Outcome.....	45	The Blacksmith .....	69
Total Attack Vs. Total Attack.....	45	The Hunting Pack .....	69
Total Attack Vs. Total Defense .....	45	The Bandits .....	70
Total Attack Vs. Cautious Attack .....	45	<b>Combat Summary Sheet</b> .....	72
Cautious Attack Vs. Cautious Attack.....	45	<b>Appendix A: The Official <i>Usagi Yojimbo</i> Timeline</b> .....	73
Cautious Attack Vs. Total Defense.....	45	<b>Appendix B: The Official <i>Usagi Yojimbo</i> Character Index</b> .....	79
Step Three: Comparing Scores And Rolls .....	45	<b>Appendix C: Glossary</b> .....	83
Step Four: Dealing Damage .....	45	<b>Appendix D: Converting <i>Usagi Yojimbo</i> To <i>FUDGE</i></b> .....	85
How To Run Attacks On Multiple Enemies .....	46	<b>Character Sheet</b> .....	86
How To Pick A Strategy.....	47		
Armor.....	47		
The Weapons Of Feudal Japan.....	47		
The Way Of The Sword .....	49		

# CHAPTER ONE



## CHAPTER ONE: THE VERY BASICS

WELCOME, ESTEEMED READER, TO THE WORLD OF *USAGI YOJIMBO* - A WORLD OF HEROISM AND VILLAINY, OF COWARDICE AND HONOR, OF TREACHEROUS COURTIERs AND BOLD SAMURAI WARRIORs.

Also, incidentally, a world of talking animals.

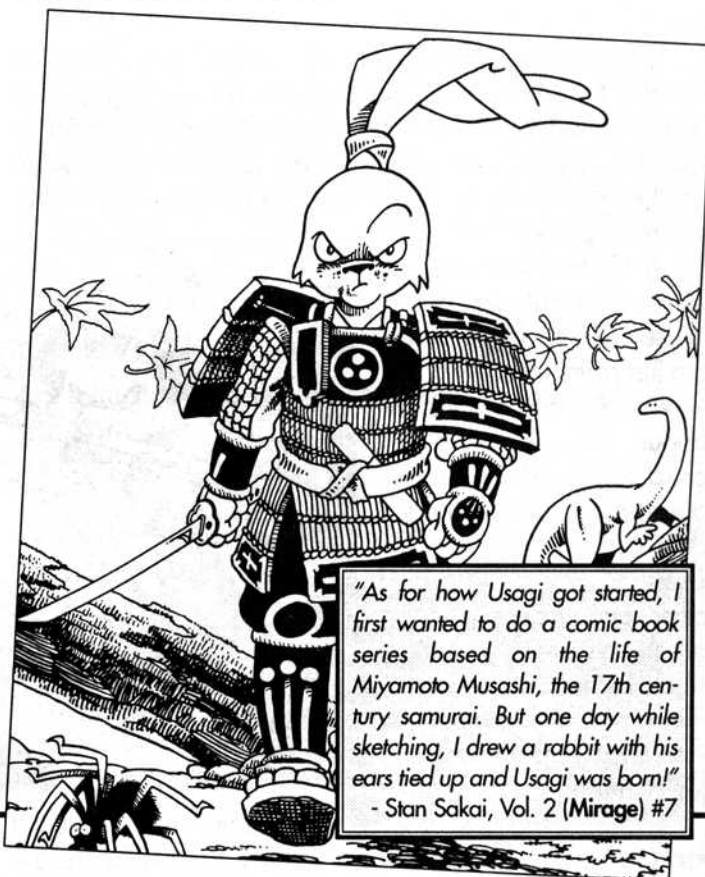
Since this is a role-playing game based on the comic book, you are probably: 1. A role-playing gamer who hasn't read the book; 2. A fan of the comic who isn't sure what kind of game this is; or 3. A little bit of both.

Since Usagi Yojimbo is the name of the comic book, the game and of its main character, it's important to know which name we mean when we use it. When you see put the words in italics like this - *Usagi* - we're referring to a book. When you see Usagi in normal print it's referring to the rabbit himself.

If you're familiar with both role-playing games and *Usagi Yojimbo*, you can probably skip straight to Chapter Three and have a look at making a character. You might want to come back to this after you've read the rest of the book, but it will probably be old hat. Feel free to skip ahead; it's not a novel, after all.

For the rest of us, here's a few basics.

FOR GAMERS: WHO IS USAGI YOJIMBO, AND WHY IS HE A RABBIT?



### ABOUT STAN SAKAI & USAGI YOJIMBO

**STAN SAKAI** earned a Fine Arts degree at the University of Hawaii and has also attended the Art Center College of Design. He has won two Eisner Awards for his work in the comic book industry. Stan's first break into comics was as the letterer for Sergio Aragones' *Groo the Wanderer* (which he still does). Stan created *Usagi Yojimbo* when he was 29 years old. Usagi's first appearance was in *Albedo* #2, back in



1985. Usagi has since been published by three other companies: **Fantagraphics Books** (issues #1-38), **Mirage Publishing** (issues #1-16) and most recently **Dark Horse Comics** (#1-13, and still going strong). In addition, **Fantagraphics** still publishes the collected Usagi stories in graphic novel form and **Radio Comix** has published *The Art of Usagi Yojimbo*.





# CHAPTER ONE

If you aren't familiar with *Usagi Yojimbo*, you're in for a treat; Stan Sakai is very talented, and his setting will provide you with a lot of good gaming. However, it will take some getting used to.

The world of *Usagi Yojimbo* bears a striking resemblance to 17th century Japan, an era known as the Tokugawa or Edo period. The traditions, clothes and culture are all very similar; the major difference is that most of the people in the story aren't really people; they're critters drawn in the "funny animal" style - rabbits, rhinos, cats and dogs - known as "anthropomorphic."

This would seem to be an unlikely combination, at best; but it works. It works because, like life, the stories in *Usagi Yojimbo* go back and forth between humorous and serious. Consider; in issue #8, a woman tries to hire Usagi to kill her own son. In another issue, a wandering warrior gambles his own life against others to provide for his family. On the other hand, some stories (Kitsune and Horse Thief for example) are just plain funny.

A comic that was just about funny animals could never carry the serious themes of honor and duty that are central to *Usagi Yojimbo*. On the other hand, stories set in a purely historical Japan would be hard pressed to mesh with the comedy that characterizes *Usagi* just as much.

In short, *Usagi* gives you the best of both worlds. But don't take our word for it. Do yourself a big favor and get some of the comics.

## FOR COMICS FANS: WHAT GIVES WITH ALL THESE RULES AND NUMBERS?

If you are a comics fan who has never roleplayed before - welcome!

In some ways, role-playing is a lot like other games; it has rules, there are several different players, it uses dice and (most important) it's fun. However, role-playing games are probably quite a bit different from other games you're prob-

ably familiar with.

The goal of the game is to create a good story; since those things that make a good story are hard to measure, there's no real way for anyone to "win" a role-playing game. Instead of concentrating on making the most money (like in *Monopoly*®) or nailing the most bad guys (like in *Doom*®) the focus of a role-playing game is telling a good tale.

In other ways, role-playing is like writing a story; there are characters, plots, heroes and villains, triumphs and setbacks. However, there are also differences here as well. Normally, a story is written by one writer who knows how things are going to turn out. A role-playing session is uncertain by nature.

Each player takes the role of one specific character in the story. Everyone has read a book or watched a movie and thought "Well, if I were him, I wouldn't go off into the woods



alone!" Role-playing games give you the chance to take that impulse and run with it. As a player, you will dictate the choices made by your character in the game, just as your fellow players control their characters.

The exception to this is the Game Master - a sort of referee, director, set designer and general casting department rolled into one. While the players control their specific characters (who are, of course, the main characters - the heroes and heroines) the Game Master (or GM) takes on the roles of the secondary characters - everyone from the children playing in the road to the frightened shopkeepers to the menacing ninja. The GM evaluates the actions taken by the characters, and then (using the rules and his imagination)



# CHAPTER ONE



describes the outcome.

Imagine that the story *Kitsune* (in issue #23, Vol. 2) was a role-playing session. The main characters are Usagi and Kitsune. The gambler is important to the story, but he really doesn't do much that's fun. It would be the decision of Kitsune's player to steal Usagi's wallet; the GM would figure out if she was successful.

The GM would also play the roles of Hatsu the gambler, Hatsu's bodyguard, and the men who try to kill them both. Furthermore, the GM would have the job of describing the things that happened to Usagi and Kitsune - from the tiresome chore of dishwashing through the climactic battle with the brigands.

Clearly the Game Master's role is important and takes a lot of work, which is why the players should respect the judgments made. Fortunately, the GM has a lot of help with the task of masterminding the story - the rules.

There are some role-playing games where the GM simply decides what happens, using nothing but his or her own judgment and sense of story; however, many players are uncomfortable with this. It's understandable; if you try something and your friend tells you that you can't do it, it can get frustrating.

If a random element is used (some games use cards; *Usagi Yojimbo* uses dice), it's less personal. It also keeps the GM honest! More about characters can be found in Chapter Three. More about the rules can be found in Chapters 2 and 5

## A GENERAL QUESTION: WHAT DO CHARACTERS IN THIS GAME DO?

That is up to you, your fellow players, and the GM. The experience system is set up to encourage you to find goals for your character; self improvement can give your character direction. ("It's a month long journey to find this sword master, but what the heck?")

Another option is to have all the characters serve in the retinue of a great lord; in that case, the characters simply have to do what their master tells them. This opens all sorts of possibilities for investigating mysterious crimes, relieving towns besieged by ninja (or worse), carrying important messages, performing delicate diplomatic missions, guarding important people or trade caravans - the possibilities are many. It's up to you; just use your imagination.

On the other hand, it can be very interesting to play out

the role of the ronin - the masterless warrior who travels the countryside looking for... what? Peace? Enlightenment? Purpose? Redemption for failing to die with his lord?

A game involving ronin characters can be difficult to GM if the characters do not have set goals for themselves. It is easier to structure a game if the players have clearly defined objectives - even if the objective is just "Walk the Tokaido road from one end to the other." Once the characters have goals, it is easy to create stories that get in the way of those goals or that offer opportunities for characters to get closer to achieving their goals.

## GAMING ETIQUETTE

Like most other activities, gaming has a few "unwritten rules" to make things go smoothly and help everyone have a good time. For your convenience, we'll mention them here.

### 1. PLAYERS, RESPECT THE GAME MASTER

If you think a mistake has been made, don't bring it up in the middle of the story. Nothing breaks the mood of a thrilling battle faster than someone who says "No, I should have made that hit because on page 82 it says..." The common name for such a person is "rules lawyer." If a GM is unfamiliar with the rules and asks for help, that's one thing; but otherwise, the word of the Game Master is final. This game is not a democracy.

### 2. GAME MASTERS, RESPECT THE PLAYERS

If you're going to run a game of *Usagi Yojimbo* your job is to make it fun for the others. To do this, you need to present them with challenges. Don't be fooled into thinking that you must "beat" the players just because you're controlling their enemies. Players get frustrated quickly when confronted with battles they cannot win. This doesn't mean that every fight should be a cakewalk; fights that can't be lost become just as boring and pointless as fights that can't be won.

While you have a lot of control over the story, remember that your players have minds of their own. They may not do what you expect, or what you think they "ought" to do. This is okay; in fact, it's what makes role-playing games unique. If they take you by surprise, they're giving you ideas you would not have otherwise had. Don't reject these gifts just because they're unexpected.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





# CHAPTER ONE

## GAMING ETIQUETTE

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

### 3. PLAYERS - DON'T BE A PLOT HOG

Different game sessions will focus on different characters, depending on the story. If you want other players to let you be in charge when your character is central, you have to be willing to let them be the most important when their characters are at center stage. If there are four players in your game, you should only be the center of attention about one fourth of the time. (Of course, most of the time you should be working together; just make sure you do work together, rather than each person fighting for their own way!)

### 4. BE PREPARED

As a player, this means you should be familiar with your character's abilities, how often they can be used and what, exactly, they do. It also means you should remember the people you meet, the places you go and the things you do. Finally (and most importantly), remember what kind of person your character is; not just in terms of numbers and stats, but in terms of personality.

For GMs, preparedness is even more important. Know in advance where you think the game might go. It may not end up there, but most of the time you'll at least have a basis from which to figure things out. If you know that certain people will be met by the characters, figure them out ahead of time and make them interesting. If all your shopkeepers are the same grouchy old man or all your villains are the same huge cruel fighter, they will become generic to your players. How about a huge, cruel merchant or a grouchy old villain?

Also, the GM should be as familiar with the rules as the players are - hopefully more familiar. This will prevent you from getting bogged down in arguments (see rule #1) and it will make running the game much easier and more fun. We have tried to make the Fuzion rules as simple and obvious as possible, but players should read the whole thing at least once before playing it - preferably twice if you're new to being a GM. Check over anything that seems complicated before playing. And in a pinch, don't be afraid to just roll some dice and figure out an outcome that "feels okay." After all, gaming is about having a good time. If you miscalculate a little now and then, no one will care (or even notice).

## GAMER'S LEXICON

Here are a number of terms used in this game which should be familiar to experienced role-players, but which may need some explaining to newcomers.

**D6 OR SIX-SIDED DIE:** This is a typical square die with numbers on it, one through six. These are the most common type of dice in the world. Most board games have them and you can buy more at most game and hobby stores (like the place you bought this book) if you need them.

**ATTRIBUTES:** These are stats indicating certain basic truths about the character's body and mind. Someone with a high Physical (see page 11) stat is very strong and healthy, for example. These scores generally do not change in the course of play; that's just how the character is. A particularly disastrous accident might lower an attribute, but this would be extremely rare.

**GM:** The Game Master (or, if

you prefer, Game Moderator). While the players take on the roles of certain individuals, the GM takes on the roles of everybody else in the "world," describing all the people and events therein.

**HERO:** Another name for a player character. This term is used because the PCs are the main characters in a game of Usagi, just as the rabbit ronin is the main character in the comic book.

**NPC:** This stands for "Non-Player Character" - in short, anyone who isn't a PC. The GM has to control a wide number of these, from nervous innkeepers to swagging ronin to kindly lords. They are secondary characters, less important than the heroes, and often set against them. In game terms, Lord Noriyuki would proba-

bly be an NPC, as would Shingen and Lord Hikiji. In fact, Usagi and Tomoe might even appear in your games as NPCs.

**PC:** This stands for "Player Character" (not "personal computer" or "politically correct") and indicates the person in the story controlled by one of the players. This term is used most often to distinguish between characters controlled by the players (PCs) and characters controlled by the Game Master (NPCs, see below).

**SKILL:** Skills are stats that indicate how skilled a character is at certain tasks. They represent knowledge, training and learning that a character has received. They can be improved in the course of play.

**STATS:** These are numbers which indicate how good a character (PC or NPC) is at doing certain tasks. Physical (described on page 11) is a stat; so is a skill like Kenjutsu (described on page 15).





# CHAPTER TWO



## CHAPTER TWO: THE ADVANCED BASICS



Many lords were killed before the Shogun's Peace, and their followers were left without leaders. They, like Usagi, have become ronin - war-

rriors in a land at peace, followers without a master, remnants of a time of civil war that most hope will not return.

Some important concepts (with their Japanese names) are:

**GIRI** - This roughly means "duty" or "obligation." When a

### THE SETTING

THE SHOGUN'S PEACE IS ON THE LAND. ANY LORD (CALLED A DAIMYO) WHO ATTACKS ANOTHER IS CONSIDERED TO BE ATTACKING THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE, AND CAN EXPECT OPPOSITION FROM THE SHOGUN AND HIS FOLLOWERS. (IN THEORY, THIS SHOULD BE EVERYONE - BUT IN THEORY, NO LORD WOULD DARE DEFY THE SHOGUN IN THE FIRST PLACE.)

"Adachi Plain, the city of Sendai (mentioned in Book 2) and Usagi's village are all in Mutsu Province which takes up the entire northeast portion of the main island of Honshu. Lord Hikiji was inspired by Date Masamune (1566-1636) the lord of Mutsu who also aspired to become Shogun. The Geishu (also called Aki) Province is located in the southern portion of Honshu and is now a part of Hiroshima which my family, three generations ago, came from."

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 2 (Mirage) #34

Lord Hikiji has ambitions to rule all of Japan, but is opposed in this by the young Lord Noriyuki of the Geishus, who is a loyal supporter of the Shogun.

Before the Shogun's Peace, Hikiji defeated Usagi's lord, Mifune, at the battle of Adachigahara. As a result, Hikiji was given much of Mifune's territory, including Usagi's home village.

### SOMETIMES A HORSE IS JUST A HORSE

One thing to understand about the setting of Usagi is that some animals are people, while other animals are simply animals. In the comic, the main characters have human-like bodies with their heads (and sometimes a few other features) indicating their animal species. The important exceptions to this are Spot and (to a lesser extent) Noriyuki's dog, Koro, who are both regular animals.

No one in the comic seems to have trouble telling the difference between a talking, human-like dog and a plain, ordinary dog like Koro. No one expects Koro to wear clothes or speak intelligently. Similarly, no one would think Ino was a dumb pig who could be cut into bacon and pork chops without fear of retribution. A horse-person could easily ride into town on the back of a regular horse without anyone commenting on it. Similarly, when Usagi catches a turtle for dinner, he doesn't have to talk to it to make sure it isn't intelligent.

Because no one in the comics has trouble with the distinction, there's no reason that players should be given any trouble telling the difference between a "dumb animal" and a person who happens to be an animal (like Usagi or Gennosuke - almost everyone except Hikiji.). If there's any doubt, the GM should make it clear.





# USAGI'S JAPAN

samurai talks about giri, personal desire does not enter into it. The only choice is between fulfilling the obligation or being completely dishonored. The strength of the debt implied by giri dwarfs the samurai's personal desires, or even opinions. Next to duty, self is nothing. A samurai does his duty or does not deserve the title of samurai.

**SAMURAI** - "One who serves." Samurai follow a strict code of obedience (called bushido) that compels them to offer everything in the service of their lord - up to and including their own life.

In many ways, the samurai is considered simply a tool of the lord. One famous riddle is this; is it better to adequately serve a good lord, or to faithfully serve a bad one? The answer is that it is better to provide good service to a bad ruler, because duty to one's master takes precedence over all other obligations.

Many would not consider a samurai to be guilty of a crime if it was done on the orders of the samurai's lord. The samurai is no more guilty of the deed than a hammer is guilty for striking a nail.

**RONIN** - "Wave Man." If a samurai is one who serves, what happens to a samurai whose master is gone? A samurai's life is defined in terms of service to his master; remove the master, and the life loses its focus, its center, its reason for being. Such a man is as rootless as the waves upon the beach.

Usagi is a ronin, which does much to explain his inability to settle down. Some samurai follow their masters even into death, committing suicide in the hopes of serving their masters in the next life. Others take new masters, though they are unlikely to be highly honored retainers. Still others pledge their lives to more abstract things - the search for inner peace, or Zen enlightenment, or the perfect sword cut.

## YOUR PLACE IN USAGI'S JAPAN

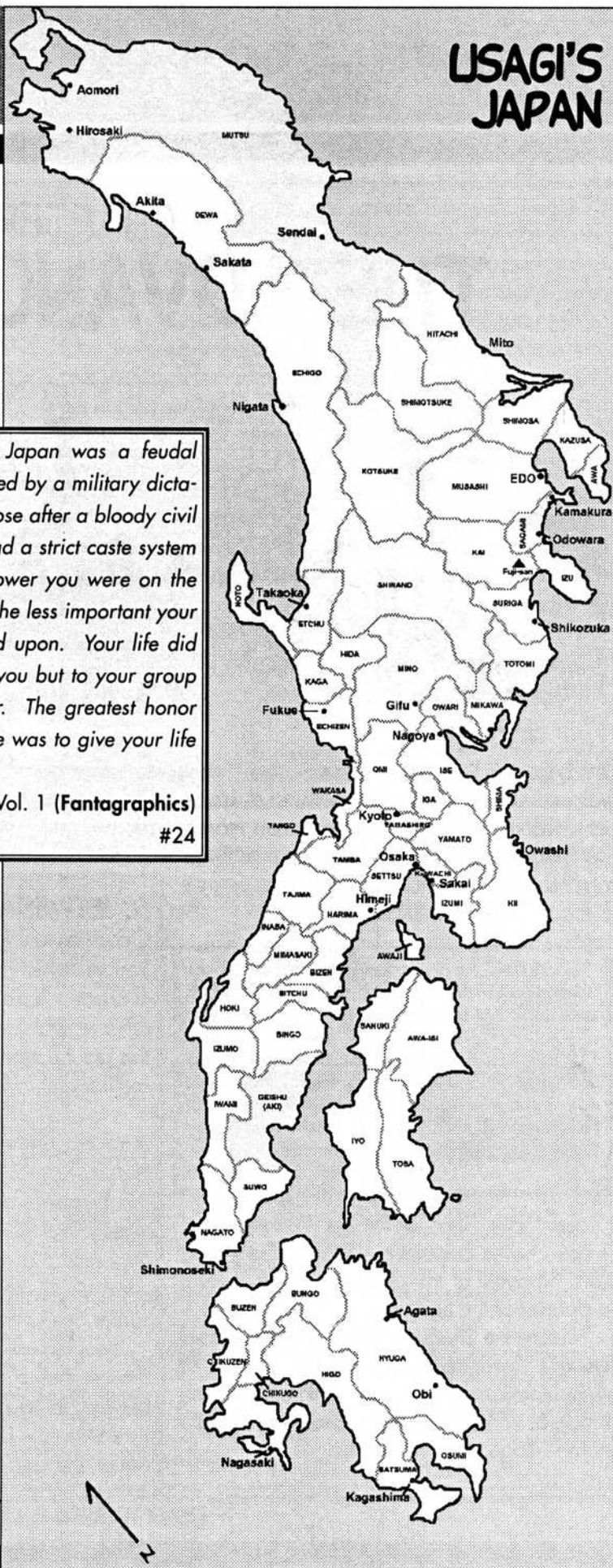
### SOCIAL HIERARCHY

The idea of rank and social position are very important in the world of *Usagi Yojimbo*. Those who are in an inferior position (being of lower social or family status) are expected to defer to those above them in all things.

*"17th century Japan was a feudal society governed by a military dictatorship that arose after a bloody civil war. It also had a strict caste system in which the lower you were on the social ladder, the less important your life was looked upon. Your life did not belong to you but to your group or your master. The greatest honor one could have was to give your life to your lord."*

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics)

#24



# CHAPTER TWO



## THE SAMURAI

The highest position among the samurai or warrior class is that of Shogun. The Emperor is also theoretically important, but is actually more of a figurehead with no real power. Beneath the Shogun are the daimyo - some important, some minor, but all of them have a higher social status than is available to PCs. Daimyo are in charge of whole samurai clans and they govern large areas of land (sometimes entire provinces) for the Shogun.

The most important job a player character can have (in terms of status, anyhow) is that of courtier. Courtiers are generally of good family and can expect the respect of other retainers - and especially the respect of ronin and peasants. (In the case of ronin, they may not necessarily get it, but they are owed it.)

Under that come retainers of a lord. A lord's personal bodyguard would be a highly respected servant; a messenger, probably less so (many courtiers are also retainers). One form of retainer is the village magistrate (or machi-bugyo), who command considerable authority in their own districts. The lowest level retainers are the common soldiers. These low-ranking samurai are responsible for pulling guard duty at the castle and acting as foot soldiers during battles.

## SAMURAI CLANS

The following are some of the samurai clans that have appeared in *Usagi Yojimbo* over the years. The clan name and mon (crest) are listed below.



Geishu Clan



Hikiji Clan



Ikeda Clan



Miyagi Clan



Shirogeta Clan



Higashi Clan



Hirano Clan



Mifune Clan



Muteki Clan



Tamakuro Clan

## SAMURAI IN LOVE

The views of love and marriage in feudal Japan are very different from the usual opinions of Westerners in the 20th century. For one thing, the two were considered to have very little connection.

Most marriages - especially marriages in the ruling (i.e., samurai) class - were arranged. They weren't set up to make husband and wife happy; they were planned to result in political advantage. For example, if two lords were friendly, one might encourage the other to marry his daughter. In this manner, the bonds of family strengthened the bonds of friendship.

On the other hand, other weddings were arranged between former enemies. A relative in an enemy court might be offered as a guarantee of future peace or a daughter might be taken from a defeated enemy to provide a handy hostage. On still other occasions, a female was married into a rival clan to act as a spy.

Many samurai had little reason to expect love in their marriage. Instead, some samurai believed that the noblest love was that which was held for someone completely out of reach - an infatuation with the wife or sister of one's daimyo, for example. These philosophers believed that love starts to die the instant it is expressed, and that the highest form of affection is to never let the beloved know how one feels. (To modern thinking, this is more likely to result in moping, but it does make for good tragic stories.)

The perfect example of all this from the *Usagi* comic is, of course, the marriage of Mariko and Kenichi. Usagi loves Mariko and doesn't seem shy about telling her. She loves him in return but she is unwilling to leave her marriage; her love for Usagi is less important to her than her duty to her husband Kenichi.





## CHAPTER TWO

### PRIESTS AND MONKS

Priests and monks are somewhat outside the usual social ladder. While they are not owed respect from title or position, they are often respected for being teachers and keepers of wisdom. On the other hand, there are many monks who are little better than beggars, and are treated as such. Overall, it depends on the conduct and reputation of the monk, himself. In any event, monks are expected to be humble and respectful of everyone - even peasants.

### RONIN

Ronin are very low on the social scale; it is usually expected for a samurai to follow his master even to death. A samurai who hasn't done so is considered to have failed in his duties. On the other hand, they are still members of the warrior (buke) class and therefore allowed to carry weapons and travel freely. Ronin are technically above peasants in terms of social status, but are often treated with suspicion by everyone, samurai and peasants alike.

### PEASANTS

Peasants are the foundation of society - and as such, they're at the bottom of the social ladder. They

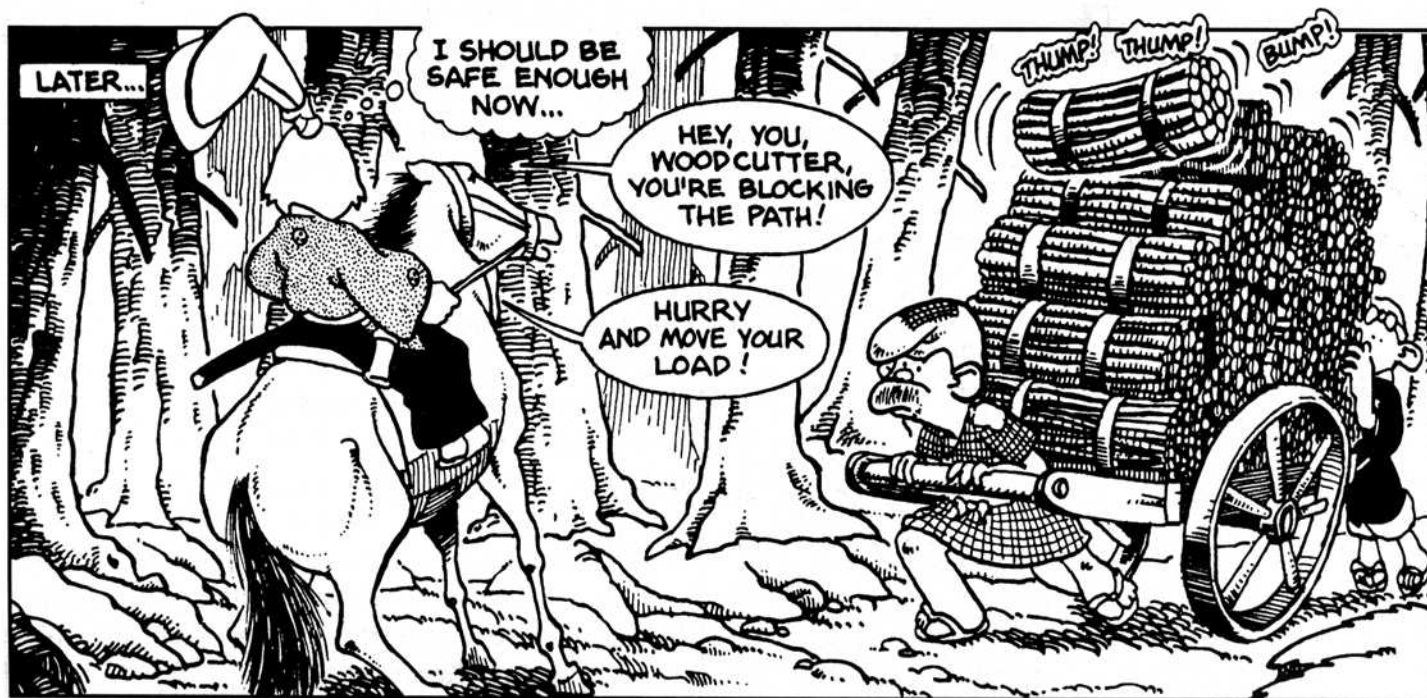
have no legal recourse against those of samurai of class or higher (Ronin can still be held responsible for crimes against peasants, however). On the other hand, farmers are responsible for planting and harvesting rice, the main food source in Japan. Without the peasants to grow the rice, the samurai would have no food!

*"...those songs the farmers sing are all made up by myself so they are by no means authentic folks songs, but they are fun."*

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 2 (Mirage) #15

### OUTLAWS AND NINJA

The only thing lower than a peasant is an outlaw - and ninja certainly qualify. Anyone caught engaging in ninjutsu can be executed without trial, so the ninja try very hard not to get caught. Since the ninja come from peasant bloodlines, they usually maintain a "secret identity" as a peasant. This usually works; peasants all look the same to samurai. Other outlaws include petty thieves, some gamblers and bandits, all of which are far too common in Usagi's world.





# INSTANT FUZION™ RULES

THIS IS A FAST, EASY VERSION OF THE FUZION™ ROLEPLAYING SYSTEM. FUZION LETS YOU MAKE UP HEROES AND PRETEND TO BE THOSE HEROES. THEN YOU PLAY THE HEROES IN A STORY THAT ALL THE PLAYERS HELP MAKE UP. ONE PLAYER IS THE GAME MASTER (GM); THE GM RUNS ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE THE HEROES MEET. THE DICE USED ARE STANDARD SIX-SIDED DICE.

## STATS

THESE ARE NUMBERS THAT SHOW HOW GOOD YOUR HERO IS IN ACTION. INSTANT FUZION HAS 4 BASIC STATS AND 2 DERIVED STATS. THE 4 BASIC STATS ARE:

- Physical:** How strong and healthy your hero is.
- Mental:** How smart and determined your hero is.
- Combat:** How well your hero fights.
- Move:** How far your hero moves.

THE 2 DERIVED STATS (HOW YOU DERIVE THEM IS LISTED AFTER THE STAT) ARE:

- Defense** (= 2 x Physical): How tough your hero is.
- Hits** (= 5 x Physical): How hard your hero is to kill or knock out.

## COMBAT

WHEN THE HEROES GET INTO A FIGHT, COMBAT TIME STARTS. Combat Time means keeping track of things so that each hero (and bad guy!) gets a fair chance to hit and be hit. Combat Time goes in Phases; each Phase is 3 seconds long. Each hero can do one Action in a Phase. When every hero and bad guy has acted, the Phase ends and a new Phase begins.

Every 4 Phases is called a Round. At the end of each Round all heroes and bad guys get back any Hits they have lost, up to (2 x PHYSICAL) in lost Hits, if the attacks have not been especially lethal (such as bullets, knives, or lasers). If the heroes or bad guys have lost more Hits than they recover, they are still hurt. They must wait until the end of the next Round to get back more Hits.

The Actions a hero or bad guy may take are listed below. Each Phase, the hero or bad guy with the highest Mental stat goes first. If two characters have the same Mental stat, then the character with the highest Combat stat goes first. If they are still tied, they act at the same time.

## ACTIONS

EACH HERO CAN DO ONE ACTION WHEN THEIR TURN COMES IN A PHASE. HERE ARE THE ACTIONS:

- Attack:** Use any type of attack.
- Block:** Stop any one hand-to-hand attack. The Target Number is the attacker's Combat Stat + (Fighting or Weapon) Skill + 10.
- Dodge:** Add +3 to your Evasion Skills for this Phase against all attacks; you may not attack this Phase.
- Get Up:** Stand up if you have been knocked down or thrown. You may take one other Action, too (except Run or Sprint).
- Grab:** You can grab a person or object; your Action Total is -2, and your Evasion Skill is -3 this Phase.
- Other Action:** Any other single action the GM lets you do.
- Half Move:** Move up to half your Move stat, plus take one other Action (except Run or Sprint).
- Run:** Move up to your full Move stat.
- Sprint:** Move up to twice your Move stat; your Combat stat is 1/2 normal and your Evasion Skill is 0.
- Throw:** Throw a person or object (-4 to Action Total if not made for throwing).

## FIGHTS

WHEN YOUR HERO TRIES TO HIT SOMETHING, OR SOMETHING TRIES TO HIT YOUR HERO, YOU ROLL DICE TO SEE IF THE ATTACK HITS OR NOT. HERE'S WHAT YOU ROLL:

$$\text{Attacker's Combat Stat} + (\text{Skill}) + 3 \text{ dice} = \text{Action Total}$$

The skill you use depends on what the hero attacks with. If punching or kicking, use Fighting Skills; if using a weapon, use Weapon Skills; if using a Power, use Power Skills. If your Action Total meets or beats the Target Number, the attack hits. To find the Target Number, the defender does this:

$$\text{Target Number} = \text{Defender's Combat Stat} + \text{Evasion Skills} + 10$$

## DOING DAMAGE

IF THE HERO IS USING THEIR STRENGTH (PHYSICAL STAT) TO ATTACK, THEN ROLL A NUMBER OF DICE EQUAL TO THE PHYSICAL STAT. The number of points in a Power is usually the number of dice of damage to use, unless modified (see Powers). The total of the dice is the amount of Hits done to the target. Stun weapons (like clubs, fists and tonfa) do Stun damage. Swords, spears and other sharp weapons do Killing damage.

## TAKING DAMAGE

When a hero is hit by a Stun attack (like a fist, club or tonfa), they subtract Defense from the number of Hits done by the attack. Only armor reduces the damage caused by killing weapons. Any Hits left over are subtracted from the hero's Hits. When the hero has no more Hits, the hero is knocked out or dead (complete with a little skull floating above the character's head).

If any of the damage that brought the character to 0 Hits was from a Stun weapon, the character is knocked out. If all of the damage was caused by a killing weapon (like a sword or a kama) then the character is dead. Note that once a character is knocked out, all damage he suffers from that point on is killing damage, even if it is from a Stun weapon.

## SKILLS

SKILLS ARE THINGS YOU LEARN HOW TO DO. EACH SKILL HAS A NUMBER THAT SHOWS YOU HOW WELL YOUR HERO KNOWS THAT SKILL. EACH SKILL IS USED WITH A STAT TO FIGURE OUT IF YOU SUCCEED AT A TASK; THE STAT USUALLY USED IS LISTED WITH THE SKILL (THE GM MAY DECIDE TO USE A DIFFERENT STAT). THERE ARE 21 SKILLS IN *USAGI YAJIMBO*, ALL OF WHICH FALL INTO SIX SKILL GROUPS:

**PHYSICAL SKILLS:** Anything to do with physical stuff (Physical). PHYSICAL Skills include:

- Acrobatics:** Jumping, tumbling, spinning and leaping.
- Climbing\*:** The skill of climbing trees, cliffs, buildings and other difficult surfaces and objects.
- Feat of Strength:** Using your strength to great advantage and achieving spectacular results.
- Ninjutsu:** The ninja ability to disappear from sight (Note: this skill may be taken by ninja only!)
- Riding:** The skill of riding a horse well.
- Stealth\*:** Moving quietly and remaining hidden from view.

**MIND SKILLS:** Anything to do with using your mind, will, or charm (Mental). Mind Skills include:

- Artistry (Skill Group)**
- Etiquette:** The skill of high society (e.g., samurai courtiers), knowing how to act in public, etc.
- Games:** The skill of playing games of chance and knowing how to cheat at them.
- Perception\*:** The skill of noticing things around you using any of your senses.
- Persuasion\*:** The skill of influencing people, using charm, flattery or intimidation.
- Tracking:** Following a person or animal over distances and finding them.

**EVASION SKILLS:** How good you are at not getting hit in combat (Combat). There is only one Evasion Skill:

- Evoke\*:** The skill of avoiding attacks, including melee, hand-to-hand and missile attacks.

**FIGHTING SKILLS:** How good you are at hitting things with your body (Combat). Fighting skills include:

- Jujutsu:** The "yielding art" of Japanese self-defense. Similar to modern day Judo.

**WEAPON SKILLS:** How good you are at hitting things with a weapon (Combat).

- Archery:** Using the daikyu or yumi (longbow) and hankyu (short-bow).
- Jittejutsu:** The skill of using the jitte (forked dirk) or sai in combat.
- Kenjutsu:** Using swords in combat, including the wakizashi (short sword), katana (long sword) or ninjato (ninja sword), and nodachi (two-handed sword). This skill can also be used with the tanto (knife) and other small blades.
- Peasant Weapons:** This skill of using the nunchaku, kama (sickle), kusarigama (chain and sickle) and tonfa in combat.
- Polearms:** The skill of using the bo, jo, yari (spear), yari-nage and naginata in combat.
- Tetsubo:** The skill of using the huge, studded club or large iron bar in combat.
- Throw\*:** Throwing small weapons like knives, darts and throwing stars (shuriken).

**NOTE:** Skills marked with an \* indicate skills which all characters start at a level of 2 for free (these are called Everyman Skills).

## USING SKILLS

When your hero tries to use a skill, you roll dice to see if the hero succeeds or not. Here's what you roll:

$$\text{Stat} + \text{Skill} + 3 \text{ dice} = \text{Action Total}$$

If your Action Total meets or beats the Target Number (TN), you succeed.

TASK IS	TN
Easy	14
Hard	18
Really Hard	22
Mega Hard	26

The highest Target Number (or TN) you're likely to encounter in *Usagi Yajimbo* is a 26. That would be the TN for something like spinning around suddenly and cutting off a berry that was stuck on your student's nose... without hurting the student.





## CHAPTER TWO

### HOW TO DO EVERYTHING

The rules of this game (attributes, skill numbers, rolling dice and picking strategy) exist to help the story, not vice versa. In any case where the mechanics and the story conflict, the mechanics should quietly be set aside. The ideal system for a story telling game is one which is simple and does not draw attention to itself. The events should never just be an excuse for combat. However, if you enjoy a higher degree of combat complexity, you can certainly tailor the Fuzion rules as you wish.

For example, a Ninja character is very skilled at Stealth (skill 6) and has an average Physical stat (Physical 3). Her GM decides the wall to an enemy fortress is not only steep and smooth, the stones are also wet. Climbing to the top without falling will be very difficult, even for a skilled individual. He picks a task number of 22, because climbing the wall in those conditions is exceptionally difficult.

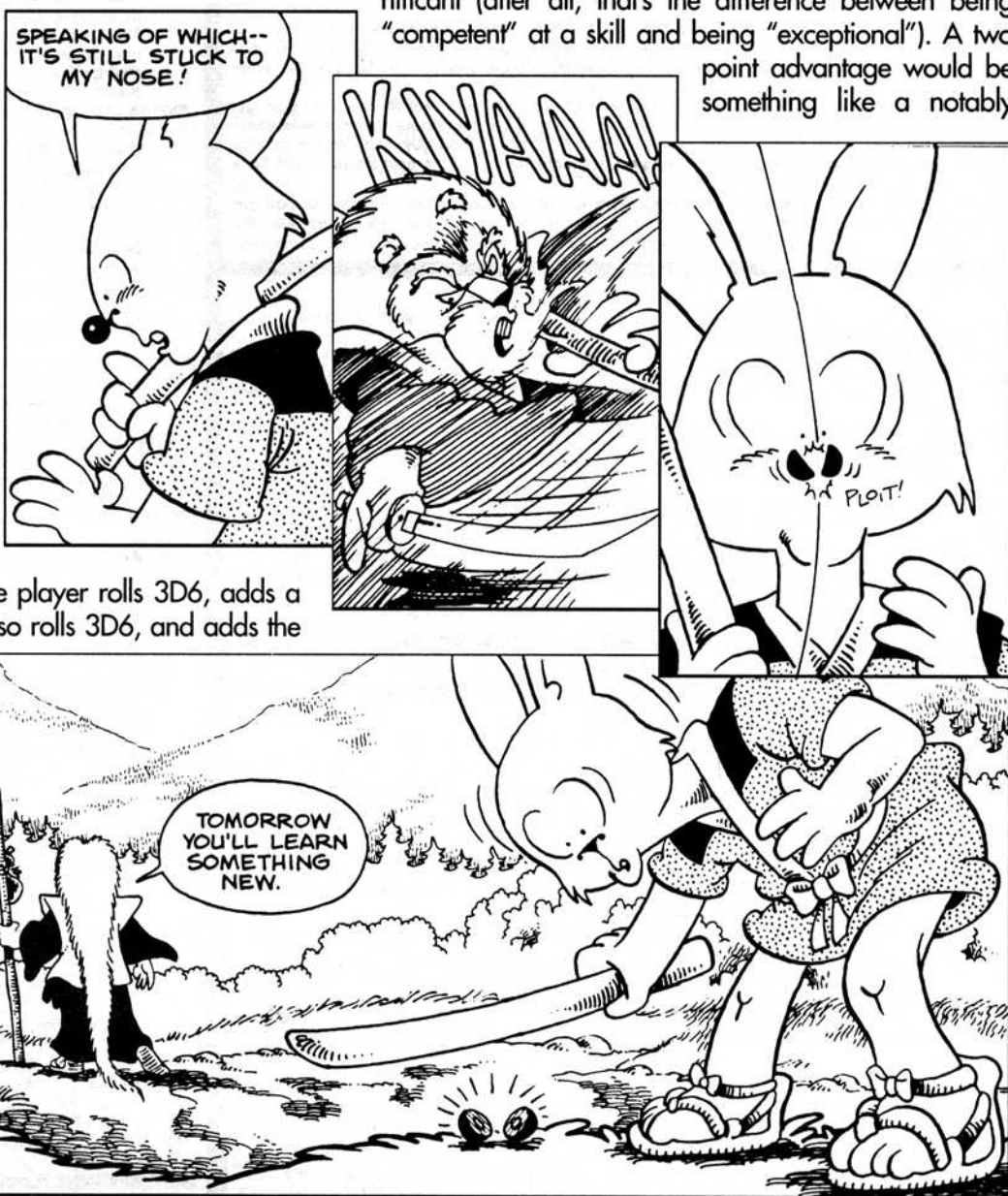
There are special rules for combat actions, and they're found in Chapter Five; however, while combat has a few more steps beforehand, it's still this; the player rolls 3D6, adds a skill and an attribute. The GM also rolls 3D6, and adds the skill and attribute of the enemy character.

Those are rules of thumb, and you really don't need to know much more; but if you want to fine tune the system or use a few other Fuzion options, here they are.

This system can be used for any contest. A mounted pursuit? Roll your Physical + Riding + 3D6. Compare it to your

opponent's Physical + Riding + 3D6. Whoever has a higher score is ahead. A friendly game of Go? Mental + Games + 3D6 on each participant's part. A drinking contest? Physical + 3D6 on each side. Easy, huh? In case of a tie, consider it a tie if necessary, or the GM can decide who wins a tie based on the needs of the plot.

On the other hand, what if it's a mounted pursuit when one person has a thoroughbred war-horse and the other is on a tired old nag? In such cases, the GM may give characters penalties or bonuses. A change of 2 points is pretty significant (after all, that's the difference between being "competent" at a skill and being "exceptional"). A two point advantage would be something like a notably



# CHAPTER TWO



better horse in a chase. In the example of the drinking contest, your GM might give you a -2 penalty if you had already taken a few drinks before the contest began, while your opponent was fresh. A significant change is a 3 or 4 point shift.

For example, fighting someone who has been blinded when you can see perfectly well would give you a +4 advantage. Trying to fight with both your ankles manacled together would be a -4 disadvantage. These penalties and advantages are up to the GM to decide, with +/-2 being usual, +/-3 being unusual and +/-4 being very rare. In contests, the GM should give the modification to the character before the roll is made, so it can be added to the skill and attribute.

Note that when the outcome is not against a live opponent, these pluses and minuses can be factored right into the Generic Difficulty Chart, saving some bothersome adding and subtracting.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS & FAILURE (OPTIONAL RULE)

Sometimes a character does something exceptionally well or really badly, which is out of the ordinary. To reflect this, there is the Critical Success and the Critical Failure.

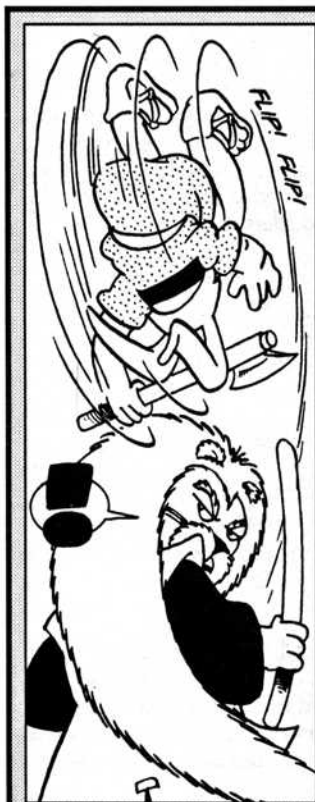
Whenever a player using a Skill rolls an 18 on 3D6, it is a Critical Success. The player rolls another 2D6 and adds that roll to his Action Total! On the down side, any natural roll of 3 on 3D6 is a Critical Failure; the player rolls 1D6 and subtracts it from his Action Total.

If GMs allow players to use one they must allow the other. It is up to the GM if he will allow Critical Successes and Failures when he rolls dice for the NPCs' actions, with one exception: If the players don't get to roll Critical Successes and Failures, then neither do the NPCs!

## SKILLS

Before you actually build a character, here's a list of the skills specific to *Usagi Yojimbo* (It's always a good idea to decide what you want before you go shopping). The skills are presented in alphabetical order, with sample difficulties listed for non-combat actions. In parentheses next to each skill is the stat that goes with it listed.

Skills marked with a \* are "Everyman Skills." All characters start with a 2 in Everyman Skills, for free (but they must pay to increase them above 2, just like regular skills).



### ACROBATICS (PHYSICAL)

This skill covers your ability to jump, tumble, survive long falls and perform cool moves like swinging on vines or jumping off a wall into a horse's saddle. Some sample difficulties for Acrobatics are:

#### STUNT TASK NUMBER

**Easy:** Doing a roll and coming to your feet 14

**Hard:** Jumping from one galloping horse to another right next to it. 18

**Really Hard:** Jumping off a cliff and catching yourself mid-flight with a grapnel line. 22

**Mega Hard:** Doing a double backflip off a moving horse and keeping your footing while landing in mud - on a broken leg. 26

### ARCHERY (COMBAT)

Archery (or kyujutsu) was one of the primary samurai skills, especially because the samurai class grew out of mounted archers. Later, the sword eclipsed the bow in importance, but it was still considered an important and honorable weapon, and samurai were expected to be adept in its use. The samurai longbow (called a daikyu or yumi) was usable both mounted and on foot.

Note that this is not the skill used to fire rifles or to throw shuriken; to hit with a rifle requires the Teppo skill (see under Other Weapon Skill, below) and to throw a shuriken you need the Throw skill.

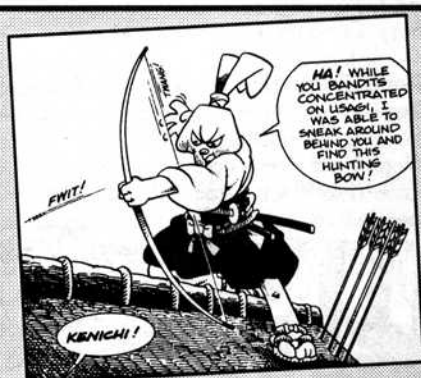
#### SHOT TASK NUMBER

**Easy:** Hit a man-sized target at 30 feet 14

**Hard:** Hit a man-sized target at 30 feet in the rain. 18

**Really Hard:** Hit a hand-sized target at 30 feet from the back of a galloping horse 22

**Mega Hard:** Hit a coin at 30 feet while blindfolded. 26







# CHAPTER TWO

## ARTISTRY (MENTAL)

This is a wide, catch-all category indicating skill with a particular art form. It does not represent a mastery of all arts, of course; when you get this skill, pick one art form of which you specialize. This does not include the martial arts (like Kenjutsu).

Some arts your character might specialize in include the shamisen, a stringed instrument; bonsai, the art of cultivating miniature trees (keep in mind that it takes many years for the cultivation of a bonsai tree to be completed; this is not an art a wandering ronin can practice); calligraphy, the art of beautiful writing (called sho-do in Japanese); pottery; the tea ceremony (cha-no-yu), or one of Usagi's favorite pastimes, painting (sumi-e).

Using an artistic skill usually involves creating an object (or, in the case of music or tea ceremony, a situation) of beauty. The chart below gives the difficulties for various degrees of beauty.

CREATION	TASK NUMBER
Easy: A knickknack for a peasant hut.	14
Hard: A gift worthy of a lord.	18
Really Hard: A gift worthy of the emperor or shogun.	22
Mega Hard: A national treasure.	26

## CLIMBING\* (PHYSICAL)

This skill should be fairly self-explanatory; it measures a character's ability to go up and down on surfaces that weren't really designed for it - trees, cliffs, walls and ropes. Even if a character doesn't take this as one of his skill choices, he can still make a climbing roll using just his Physical + 3D6!

THE CLIMB	TASK NUMBER
Easy: Climb up a rope or an old willow tree.	14
Hard: Climb a cliff with few handholds.	18
Really Hard: Climb a sheer surface, with finger and toe-holds only.	22
Mega Hard: Climb across a sheer, inclined surface in a rainstorm, at night.	26



## ETIQUETTE (MENTAL)

Etiquette (or reishiki) This governs your knowledge of manners and the proper way of doing things - very important in status-conscious Japan. The essential concept to feudal Japanese manners is that of "face" - more

or less the image someone presents. If you give someone face, it means you have helped them to present the image they wish. Proper etiquette often means saying or doing certain respectful things even if you don't really mean them.

Difficult etiquette challenges are those where circumstances are strained and awkward, or where the situation is so obscure that it's difficult to know the proper response.

SITUATION	TASK NUMBER
Easy: Greeting the local daimyo.	14
Hard: Apologizing to your lord after a great failure without upsetting him further.	18
Really Hard: Refusing to answer an enemy lord's questions without being rude.	22
Mega Hard: Knowing how to treat the emperor's favorite second cousin's ex-wife.	26

## EVADE\* (COMBAT)

Evaude is a catch-all skill. It is used when defending against attacks, whether they are hand-to-hand (including Jujutsu), melee attacks (swords, maka, etc.) or missile attacks (shuriken, arrows, etc.). Every character in Usagi Yojimbo has a starting score of 2 in Evade, but it may be increased by spending points, just as other skills.

In combat, the defending character rolls his Combat + Evade + 3D6. When being attacked in hand-to-hand or melee, the defending character has his choice of using either Evade or his regular weapon skill (such as Kenjutsu), if he has his weapon handy.

## FEAT OF STRENGTH (PHYSICAL)

While Physical measures your inborn ability to lift big things and survive hardship, this skill measures the degree to which you have taken advantage of your natural propensity. Someone who was born big and strong would have a high Physical score; someone who was scrawny but lifted weights and ran long distances to build up strength and endurance would have the Feat of Strength skill. In many ways it is inferior to the Physical score, in that it does not raise Defense, Hits or the damage you can do with a weapon; however, it can be used to impress the locals, or to perform combat actions like throwing boulders at people.

FEAT	TASK NUMBER
Easy: Lift someone your own size and carry them up a flight of stairs.	14
Hard: Lift someone your own weight over your head and throw them, or break a rope of average thickness with your bare hands.	18
Really Hard: Break a stout rope that is completely wound around your body.	22
Mega Hard: Break chains wound completely around your body. Climb a hundred feet on a rope, using only your arms, with someone on your back (This would also require a good Climb roll.)	26

## GAMES (MENTAL)

The essential skill for the gambler, this skill measures your facility with everything from games of chance (such as dice) games of skill (beigoma or fighting tops, which are heavy and used in a game where you try to knock your opponent's top out of a ring) and games of strategy (such as Go, a board game of encircling your enemy's pieces and taking territory).



# CHAPTER TWO



and "jutsu" means "art" or "technique." To a samurai, Kenjutsu is much more than a way to defeat an enemy in combat; it is a way to attain perfection of the soul. In the practice of kenjutsu, all distractions are put aside in order to concentrate on a single effort. This is very much in keeping with the philosophy of Zen.

Kenjutsu covers the use of all swords, from the small dagger or tanto up through the immense no-dachi. For more information on kenjutsu, see page 49.

While the most obvious uses of Kenjutsu are in combat, there are many other tests and displays of sword skill. These are often attempted by members of a certain school of swordsmanship (and there are dozens of styles in Usagi's Japan) in order to impress members of a rival school.

## DISPLAY

## TASK NUMBER

<b>Easy:</b> Draw and cut through two poles in under three seconds.	14
<b>Hard:</b> Draw and cut through a falling leaf.	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Draw and cut through two moving targets while blindfolded.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Cut a live fly into four pieces before it hits the ground.	26

## NINJUTSU (PHYSICAL)

This is the body of skills used by the mysterious and secretive ninja in their various shady activities. It is something of a catch-all, covering the abilities a ninja needs to complete criminal tasks.

Generally speaking, the ninja are assassins, thieves and spies. They obviously need the skills of Stealth, Climb, and Perception in addition to combat abilities; their skill in Ninjutsu covers pretty much everything not included in the above skills. However, a few definite abilities will be described.

First off, the ninja are widely feared assassins; this is because Ninjutsu allows them to do extra damage with any weapon when they attack from surprise. Simply add a number of points of damage (not dice of damage!) to a successful attack that is equal to the ninja's score. This only works when the victim is not aware of the ninja!

For example, the ninja Shingen (page 42.) has the skill of Ninjutsu at 4. Suppose he wants to sneak up on a guard and kill him. First, Shingen must make a check of his Stealth against the guard's Perception. If Shingen is successful, then he can strike. For the strike, he uses his Kenjutsu skill against the guard's. If that check succeeds, when he rolls damage, he adds an extra four points because he knows just how to hit an unsuspecting target.

Another ability the ninja have is the ability to get into secure areas. While the skills of Climb and Stealth are also used often in such circumstances, Ninjutsu would be used for such things as sneaking in through sewage tunnels or coming up from under the floorboards.

Ninja are skilled at detecting traps, and at setting them as well. When a ninja sets a trap, add the ninja's Mental + Ninjutsu scores + 3D6; this is the Task Number that someone must beat with Perception to notice the trap. The damage of the trap should be judged by the GM, but a number of dice equal to the trap-setter's Ninjutsu skill is a good guideline.

Furthermore, while anyone with the Stealth skill can hide, only ninja can use the Stealth skill while someone is looking right at them. That's right; a ninja can seemingly vanish into thin air. Doing this is very difficult; the

## TASK

## TASK NUMBER

<b>Easy:</b> Win a small sum at a night of dice.	14
<b>Hard:</b> Win a large sum on a single chance wager. ("I'll bet that fly lands on my plate before it lands on yours.")	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Beat a Zen master at a game of go.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Bet your life against incredible odds.	26

## JITTEJUTSU (COMBAT)

Jittejutsu (ji-tay-joot-soo) is the skill of using the jitte and sai in combat. The jitte is the symbol of authority for police, known as doshin, in Usagi's world.

## JUJUTSU (COMBAT)

The name of this martial art is difficult to translate. "Ju" means "gentle" or "yielding" while "jutsu" indicates a course of study, or a martial science. The essence of jujutsu is to use your enemy's own strength against him. There are few punches or kicks in jujutsu; remember, the samurai were accustomed to fighting enemies in armor. Instead, jujutsu concentrates on knocking an opponent down (which is uncomfortable in the best of times, and even worse when armored) or attacking the joints of the arm and wrist. These arm and wrist attacks usually bend the arm in ways it was not intended to go, producing pain, damage and immobility. Many of these techniques, if used properly, can allow a very small person to hold a much larger, stronger person immobile, because the body refuses to move in a fashion that produces too much pain.

For more on Jujutsu, go to Chapter Five on page 50.

A list of sample difficulties is not given because this skill is only used against people.

## KENJUTSU (COMBAT)

This is the martial art of swordsmanship. "Ken" is Japanese for sword,



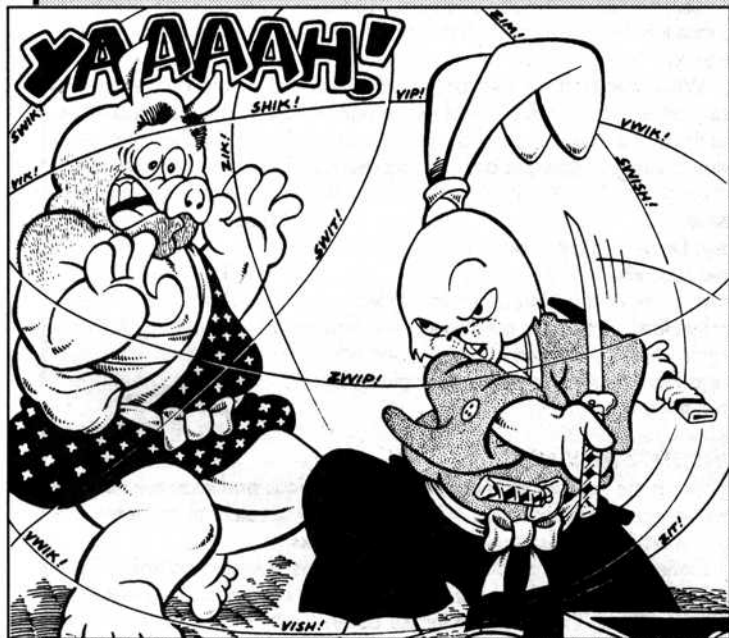




# CHAPTER TWO

ninja takes a -4 penalty (at least - more if the GM sees fit) to their Stealth roll when trying this, unless a smoke bomb has been set off or the watcher has been distracted.

Speaking of smoke bombs, the ninja are widely known for their use of unusual weapons and gadgets. These include...



**Shuriken** - the ninja throwing star. These are illegal, but only really dangerous in the hands of a ninja. (See Weapon list)

**Smoke bombs** - not really bombs, since they do no damage; they create a puff of smoke and create a diversion, allowing the ninja to escape. (-5 to Perception rolls to spot someone through the smoke)

**Nageteppo** - This is a tube filled with tiny, sharp metal fragments. These are flung in an enemy's eyes to cause blindness. (It takes your battle action to use a nageteppo; use whatever close combat skill you were using, and the target defends normally. If you are successful, the target is blind for that round and for the next round. Nageteppo can only be used once before they must be refilled, and they can only be used at a very short distance - a number of yards equal to the thrower's Physical score.)

**Hand Bombs** - These are very rare and very dangerous. They are small, hand sized containers of gunpowder with fuses. While nowhere near as dangerous as a modern hand grenade, they're based on the same principle. They're thrown using the Throw skill, and when they go off they do 4 dice of damage to everyone within five feet of where they hit.

TASK	TASK NUMBER
<b>Easy:</b> Get a shuriken or build a tripwire	14
<b>Hard:</b> Get some smoke bombs or open the lock on a castle prison door. Disappear in shadows on a moonlit night.	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Build a trapdoor that is very difficult to spot; Get a nageteppo, or refills for one.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Disappear in broad daylight, in front of a whole crowd of villagers.	26

## OTHER WEAPON SKILLS (COMBAT)

Like the Artistry skill, this does not give you a general ability with all weapons except naginata, bow and sword. Rather, this indicates that you can choose to have knowledge of other Japanese weapons. Some examples of traditional Japanese weapons include nunchaku, sai, tonfa, or kama (a type of sickle and chain). For more information on these weapons, see page 47 in Chapter Five.

## PEASANT WEAPONS (COMBAT)

This skill allows the character to use weapons associated with the commoners, including the nunchaku, kama (sickle), kusarigama (chain and sickle) and tonfa. Samurai sometimes used the kusarigama or kama, but would usually never be seen with nunchaku or tonfa because they are associated with farmers.

## PERCEPTION\* (MENTAL)

This is a general measure of how aware you are of the world around you. If you have a high Perception skill, it means you are attuned to the sounds, sights and smells of your surroundings. Your GM may require a Perception roll to notice anything out of the ordinary.

The most frequently used sense is sight, closely followed by hearing. If you have been blinded, there is usually a -4 penalty to Perception, unless: 1) you have a special ability to compensate, or 2) the event you're trying to notice is revealed by something other than sight (smell or sound, for example).

Keep in mind that while you, the player, may know something is happening (for instance, if you overhear the GM telling one of your fellow players about the sudden stillness in the forest) your character does not know about it until you have either made a successful Perception check, or until another character has told him. (Keeping the distinction between "player knowledge" and "character knowledge" is a critical role-playing skill. Without that, it is very difficult to keep your character's personality straight, and it also makes things hard for the GM.)

EVENT TO NOTICE	TASK NUMBER
<b>Easy:</b> Notice the door you had closed is now slightly open.	14
<b>Hard:</b> Realize that the "peasant" standing nearby has hands too smooth to have ever worked in a rice paddy.	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Detect the direction from which a thrown shuriken came in a completely dark room.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Notice that someone touched your sword hilt while you were out of the room.	26

## PERSUASION\* (MENTAL)

This measures your ability to convincingly argue and speak well. Someone with a high Persuasion skill is a smooth talker, a talented orator, and (possibly) a persuasive liar as well. Someone with a low skill is irritating and unpleasant to hear.

### WARNING AGAINST PERSUASION ABUSE

GMs cannot make characters do anything their players don't want them to, even with a successful Persuasion check by a NPC. Similarly, the GM can declare that some people simply will never be persuaded of certain things, no matter how convincingly the case is argued. It is generally impossible, for instance, to convince a parent to kill a child.

# CHAPTER TWO



Judging how difficult a persuasion attempt is depends on how unreasonable the position of the persuader. If the listener is already inclined to believe, it is much easier to persuade. On the other hand, someone with a closed mind will be much harder to convince, even if the position is completely reasonable.

Instead of using the task numbers listed below, the GM may wish to use a NPC's Mental + Persuasion, or Mental + Perception if the character is being told a lie. If the listener's total is higher than the speaker's, the listener does not believe what he is being told.

POSITION	TASK NUMBER
<b>Easy:</b> "I'm sure we've met before."	12
<b>Hard:</b> "No, I don't know the password, but you really ought to let me in."	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> "You really should betray your lord."	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> "But you are the Emperor's long lost son!"	26

## POLEARMS (COMBAT)

The Polearms skill includes the skills to use the bo, jo, yari (spear), yari-nage and naginata in combat.

The bo is a six foot long wooden staff. It is used by pilgrims, priests and commoners alike. The jo is a shorter version of the bo, and is only about four feet long.

The yari is the Japanese spear. It consists of a long (6 to 10 feet) bamboo shaft reinforced with metal rings, with a long straight blade on one end. The yari is used for thrusting and slashing and is not thrown. It is the standard weapon of ashigaru (common footsoldiers). The yari-nage is a shorter weapon, similar in appearance to the yari, but can be used with one handed.

The naginata is a weapon with a slightly curved blade on the end of a long pole. It offers range, power and defensive flexibility - though unlike a sword, it cannot be drawn from a seated position or easily concealed. In traditional Japan, the naginata was considered a more "appropriate" weapon for noble women to study, though in Usagi's Japan the sword is also studied by women. The naginata, and its combat techniques, are discussed more on page 48.

Because polearms are usually used against characters in combat, there are no sample tasks for it.

## RIDING (PHYSICAL)

Riding covers the skill of riding horses. This is another one of the traditional samurai arts, also known as bajutsu. All samurai were expected to be at least adequate riders. Battlefield troops had to be better than adequate; it takes quite a bit of skill to convince a horse to charge into danger (most horses are too smart for that).

An important idea to keep in mind when evaluating riding tricks is the difference between the Riding skill and the Acrobatics skill. For instance, if someone jumps down from a roof into the saddle, which skill do they use? A kind GM might just let them use whichever was higher.

On the other hand, you might want to use the following guideline; if a trick is something you do with your body while getting into, or getting out of the saddle, or while you're in it, it's probably Acrobatics. On the other hand, if it's something you're trying to get your horse to do, or stop doing, it's probably the Riding skill. In any event, the decision of the GM is final on the question of which skill gets used.

A final consideration when dealing with horses is that the quality of the mount can influence Riding rolls a lot. A great rider can only do so well on a skittish horse, or a slow one.

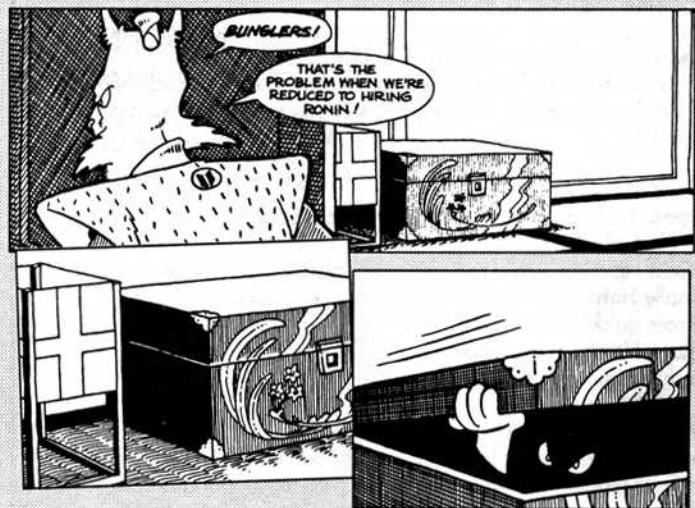
## TRICK

	TASK NUMBER
<b>Easy:</b> Gallop through mud without falling.	14
<b>Hard:</b> Guide your horse through a battle without using your hands.	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Get your horse to jump off a 40 foot cliff into a river.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Get your horse to go fetch help while you're trapped in a well.	26



## STEALTH\* (PHYSICAL)

This skill, also known as shinobijutsu, covers hiding and sneaking. This means both hiding an object (like concealing a letter) or hiding yourself (by ducking behind a tree or into a chest). Stealth is also the skill used for moving quietly - making it essential for ninja.



TASK	TASK NUMBER
<b>Easy:</b> Hide in a familiar forest	14
<b>Hard:</b> Put a few coins somewhere that a thorough search won't find them.	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Hide a naginata from determined searchers in a small wagon.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Hide in a flat, empty field in the middle of the day.	26

## TETSUBOJUTSU (COMBAT)

This is the skill of using a large wooden club with metal studs, or a large iron bo. The tetsubo can deal devastating damage, and is an espe-





# CHAPTER TWO

cially fearsome weapon in the hands of a well-trained user.

## THROW\* (COMBAT)

This governs your ability to hit a target with a thrown object - anything from a small rock to a shuriken to a vase. You may also wish to throw something really heavy, like a large boulder. Your GM may also assess penalties or increase the Task Number if you are throwing something clumsy or poorly balanced.

This is not the skill used for "throwing" a person with a hand to hand maneuver; that would be covered by the Jujutsu skill.

In battle, thrown weapons or other missiles are dodged with Combat + Evade. Instead, the GM may allow characters to use their highest combat skill.



STUNT	TASK NUMBER
<b>Easy:</b> Throw a piece of paper into a wastebasket at five feet.	14
<b>Hard:</b> Hit a hut with a rock from 200 paces.	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Throw a stone into a moving cart as it rolls quickly down a dusty hill.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Hit a galloping horse in the eye with a shuriken.	26

## TRACKING (MENTAL)

This is the skill of following trails through forests, along roads, or in cities. It requires a keen eye for prints, broken twigs and other small signs of passage, but it also involves an instinct for the chase. It is an essential skill for bounty hunters.

STUNT	TASK NUMBER
<b>Easy:</b> Track a drunk through thick forest	14
<b>Hard:</b> Follow a wild animal back to its lair	18
<b>Really Hard:</b> Follow a group who have taken care to hide their tracks.	22
<b>Mega Hard:</b> Track a cunning ninja through the rain; Follow a trail that's over two months old.	26

## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

The rules above describe various degrees of expertise at different skills. Some characters will, of course, be better at certain tasks than others. In the next chapter you will make a character of your own and you will have to make choices about being better in some skills than others.

This is necessary, but in the course of play, you may wish your character were better at one skill or another. You may also wish your character had a special ability that he does not currently possess. The rules in this section explain how you can improve your character's skills.

One option, used in the Basic Fuzion system, is to simply appoint "points" for certain activities, which can be traded in for improvements later. However, this can create motivations other than those intended by the game designer; for example, if the GM gives out points for killing "monsters," then killing monsters soon becomes a means to an end, instead of a choice that characters make as part of a story. In Usagi especially, where it can sometimes be hard to tell good people from bad, it would be inappropriate to reward you every time you killed something.

Here's the basic Fuzion system for experience, available if you choose to use it.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

Experience points are awarded to players at the end of each game. There are five basic ways that characters can earn experience points:

**Study & Practice:** The character receives one point of experience for each month he spends studying and practicing a skill. That point may only be used to increase the skill he was studying.

**Finding a Teacher:** Studying under a sensei is the quickest way to improve a skill. The teacher must have a higher Skill score than the student and must have the time (and desire) to teach. Characters receive 2 points for each month they spend studying under a sensei. Once the student's score equals the teacher's, however, he cannot gain any more points from that teacher.

**School of Life:** Characters can gain points from the GM for especially impressive actions or for important, dramatic actions in the game's story. These points are awarded right on the spot, and are at the GM's discretion. We recommend awarding no more than one of these every two or three game sessions. Points gained in this manner may only be used to

# CHAPTER TWO



increase the Skill that was used.

For example, Murashi is cornered by four Komori ninja. His only chance of escaping is by knocking over a lantern and starting a fire, which will temporarily blind the Komori. Murashi throws his wakizashi (his only weapon) at the lantern. The GM gives this a TN of 22. Murashi's player rolls the dice and he makes it! The GM feels that this particularly daring and impressive act is worth a reward, so he gives Murashi 1 point toward his Throw skill.

**Roleplaying:** While it isn't part of the game "reality," GMs should reward their players for how well they play the character; after all, that's why we're doing this. Here are some guidelines for awarding experience for roleplaying:

## ROLEPLAYING

Player was clever, inventive or roleplayed well	1 or 2 pts.
Player solved a mystery or major point of plot	1 pt.
Adventure was a resounding success	2 or 3 pts.
Base points for being in the scenario	1 or 2 pts.

## AWARD

## BUYING STUFF WITH YOUR POINTS

So now you have some experience points - great! Now what? Experience points are used to buy new levels in skills, increase your characteristics (stats), and even to buy new job Special Abilities. Here are the costs of each:

**TO BUY UP SKILLS:** ONE point for each LEVEL of the new skill. Example: To increase a skill from 3 to 4 costs 4 points, to increase a skill from 7 to 8 costs 8 points, and so on.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** FIVE points for every one point of Characteristic improvement, plus the permission of the GM. Example: To improve your Physical from 5 to 6 would cost 5 points and your GM's permission.

**BUYING A NEW SPECIAL ABILITY:** TWENTY points to obtain a new Special Ability, plus the GM's permission! Obtaining new Special Abilities should be very rare and a hard-earned prize for characters. Note: Special Racial Abilities cannot be bought after play begins; only job Special Abilities can be learned.

Another option, however, is to use the specialized Usagi experience rules. The simple rule is this;

To improve a skill, or gain an ability, you and your Game Master agree upon three tasks which will educate you in that ability or skill.

Skills can be improved; and if you successfully change jobs (completing three tasks that demonstrate or teach competence in that profession) you can gain the special talent of a new job. It is even possible, with great efforts, to gain the ability to use your job's ability more often. (For example, Tomoe Ame can use Loyal Intensity twice per session instead of once - see page 35.) Special Species Abilities cannot be improved or learned.

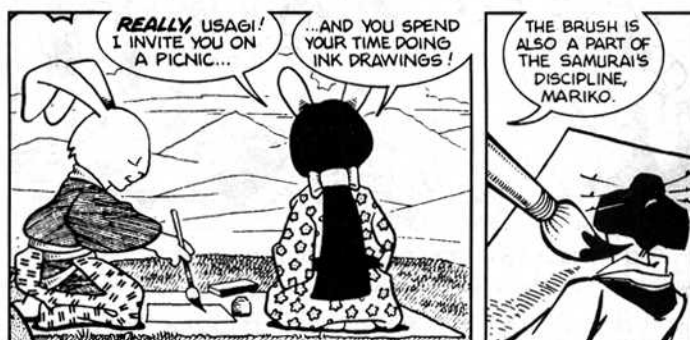
Let's look at an example of improvement. The shugyosha Otsu decides that she needs a higher Perception score. At some convenient time (preferably when the GM is not doing something else - before or after the main events of a game session is a good time) she and the GM meet to discuss what Otsu would have to do to improve her ability to perceive the world around her.

The discussion might go something like this:

**OTSU'S PLAYER:** Otsu's Perception score stinks. What do I have to do to get better at it?

**GM:** Hm... what sort of things make you better able to observe the world around you?

**PLAYER:** What if she took up drawing?



**GM:** Sure, that would teach her to observe the world around her, but it's not very... challenging. What if she had to travel to Edo to a famous teacher, convince him to accept her as a student, and then create some really impressive work of art?

**PLAYER:** Hm... we're already traveling away from Edo on Toshi's pilgrimage, and I don't want to choose, or to split up the party... what if I draw pictures each session?





## CHAPTER TWO

**GM:** That's a neat solution. Another thing could be asking Akira to show you how he tracks people. Searching for tracks would be part of perception.

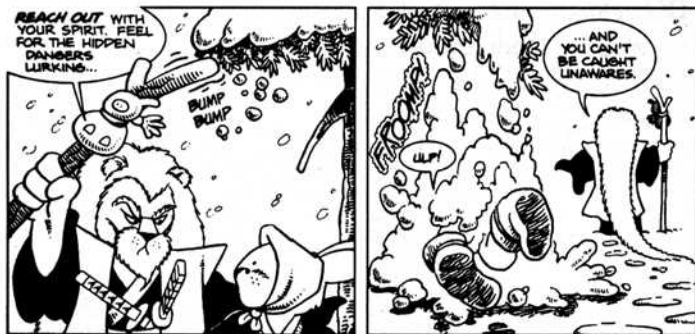
**PLAYER:** Okay. What about the third?

**GM:** We could just wait and decide. If you do notice something important that's part of a plot, I'll let you have that as your third thing.

**PLAYER:** Seems all right to me.

The above example offers several standard possibilities for tasks that lead to learning. Studying from a teacher is a good one, as is traveling somewhere in pursuit of training. Finally, the option to "wait and see" is always okay. If Otsu completes the first two requirements (studying tracks and drawing pictures) Otsu's player can have another talk with the GM.

Another possibility is "negative learning" – when you learn from a bad experience. A real life example is someone who learns not to touch a hot stove by touching a hot stove. In the above example, the GM might decide to give Otsu one "experience" towards improving her Perception if someone successfully snuck up on her and beat her badly as a result. From the bad experience (getting a beating) Otsu learned to pay more attention.



A generous GM may give certain characters experiences towards skills they have not yet expressed an interest in, but this is not required. In a similar spirit, a player whose character has just successfully jumped from one moving horse onto another may ask the GM if that would count as an experience towards improving the Riding skill.

In all decisions about what applies as experience, the GM's decision is final, but a few guidelines should be kept in mind:

1) Generally, the lower a skill level is, the easier it should be to improve. Going up a point from Stealth 3 is much easier to teach than going up a point from Stealth 8.

2) Skills that are used more often should also have trickier tasks associated with improvement; adding a point to your Artistry: Shamisen skill shouldn't be as dangerous or difficult as adding a point to your Kenjutsu skill.

3) The tasks should be things that allow for stories from the GM. Simply declaring that your character is practicing quick sword draws every morning doesn't add anything to the story; deciding that your character will challenge every village kenjutsu champion she meets certainly does.

4) It's better for the tasks to have something direct to do with the skill, but not necessary; they simply have to show dedication to improvement. For example, it's fairly difficult to think of three really good tasks for improving one's skill at Artistry: Bonsai (the art of growing really tiny trees). However, if your character is dedicated enough to the art of bonsai that he is willing to travel back and forth across the country to study fine examples and learn from different masters, that shows a real determination to improve.

It's impossible to think of every possible way a skill could be improved, but here are a number of good, generic tasks to perform.

- Go on a long journey to see an example or find a teacher.
- Search out some long forgotten knowledge of the skill in question.
- Defeat in a competition someone who is widely regarded as having higher ability.
- Make some sacrifice appropriate to the skill. (For example, a bounty hunter who turns down a fat job in order to hear a shamisen concert.)
- Study with an acknowledged master.
- Role play several examples of your character giving something up to hone his or her skill. ("I'd love to go to the festival, but I haven't done my meditation today!")
- Go to great lengths to acquire exceptional tools for the task in question (i.e., a magnificent bow, a very expensive horse, costly courtier's robes in the newest fashion).
- Create a number of interesting details for your new skill – things that enhance the enjoyment of the other players. (The drawings done by Otsu's player are one example of this. To improve in Kenjutsu, one might invent a new school of tactics, with impressive and amusing descriptions of the sword blows and parries. An Etiquette improvement might require the player to tell a story about how the character made a terribly rude mistake, and so on. *Karate Kid*-style training sequences can also be good.)

# CHAPTER THREE



## CHAPTER THREE: YOUR CHARACTER

THIS CHAPTER WILL BE ABOUT DESIGNING A CHARACTER FOR YOU TO CONTROL IN YOUR ROLE-PLAYING ADVENTURES THROUGH THE WORLD OF *USAGI YOJIMBO*.

First, think about the type of character you want to play. Make it someone you would be interested in - someone you would like, because you'll have to make the decisions for your character in the course of the story. Is your character naturally fierce or reluctant to fight without a compelling reason? Grumpy or cheerful? Crafty... or perhaps a bit dense? Cynical and bitter or still young and innocent? Once you have an idea of the type of character you'd like to play, you can select your character's species, and figure out the profession he or she would have picked.

In very general terms, your character will be described by

four attributes; your Physical, Mental, Movement and Combat scores. These should be pretty self explanatory. Once you have gone through the character generation process, you will figure out three more attributes; your Hits, Stun and Defense scores.

**NOTE: BEGINNING CHARACTERS CANNOT HAVE ANY ATTRIBUTE ABOVE 8!**

Your character will have certain skills and abilities. You will get to pick a few to start with. Your character's profession will determine some of his or her skills, while species will change some of your character's skills or basic attributes. In addition, each species has a special ability that no other species has. Similarly, each profession has a special ability that cannot be used by people who have not trained in that

### DEFINITIONS:

**Physical** generally describes you in terms of raw strength and endurance. Someone with a high Physical score is likely to be heavily muscled, tough, and able to work for long periods of time without rest.

**Mental** describes how smart and clever you are. Someone with a high Mental score will be able to quickly figure out what's going on, and is more likely to notice and understand events than the less intelligent.

**Combat** reflects how fierce and swift your character is in battle. It is not tied to Physical; someone can be terrifically strong (high Physical) but unable to land a blow. Another character might seem weak and old, but be a deadly combatant because of speed and skill (low Physical, high Combat).

**Movement** is a measure of how quick you are, how fast you can run and how rapidly you react to changing situations.

**Hits** is a measure of how much damage you can take before you are killed. Hit point damage is usually taken from weapons; to figure out what happens when you're hit with fists or feet, read up on the Stun stat, below.

Hits are found by taking your Physical score and multiplying it by 5; if you have Physical 3, you have 15 Hits. Some species are exceptionally hardy, and receive extra Hits. These are added *after* you have multiplied your Physical score.

**Defense** is a measure of how resistant you are to Stun damage. Your Defense score is subtracted from all Stun damage you take; so if you have Defense 8 and you take 10 points of Stun damage, only 2 points of the damage gets through your natural toughness. The other eight points are "soaked" by your Defense. Your Defense number is equal to Physical x2. Therefore, if you have 3 points in Physical, you have 15 Hits, 15 Stun and 6 Defense. (For more on Stun, Defense and Hits, see Chapter 5.)





# CHAPTER THREE

particular job. Some species and professions also have drawbacks to offset particularly powerful abilities or increases in skill or attribute.

## YOUR BASIC CHARACTER

You begin with three points in each of the four basic attributes, Physical, Mental, Combat and Move. You may now take four more points and add them to those attributes as you wish. For example, you could add one point each to Physical, Mental, Movement and Combat to create someone who is generally well rounded; or you could add all four to Mental to make someone who is exceptionally brilliant.

Decide where to add these four points before you go on to picking a species and a job; but don't figure out the three derived attributes (Hits, Stun and Defense) yet.

You also begin with the following Everyman skills at a level of 2.

- Climbing
- Evade
- Perception
- Persuasion
- Stealth
- Throw

## THE STEPS OF GENERATING A CHARACTER

**I. Concept** - who is the character? What is he or she like? What events in the past were really significant in forging the character's personality?

### II. Basic Attributes & Skills

- A. Start with 3 points each in Physical, Mental, Combat and Move.
- B. Divide 4 free points between Combat, Physical, Mental & Move.
- C. Record the following starting skills: Climbing 2, Evade 2, Perception 2, Persuasion 2, Stealth 2, Throw 2

### III. Pick a Species

- A. Add species bonuses to attributes and skills.
- B. Write down special species abilities.

### IV. Get a Job

- A. Add job bonuses to attributes and skills.
- B. Write down special job ability.

### V. Free Stuff

- A. Divide 10 points any way you choose between skills, or add new ones. No skill may start higher than 8.

You will have an opportunity to improve these skills, or add others, later in the character generation process.

## FOR FUZION FANS

### HEY, WHERE ARE THE CAMPAIGN POINTS?

Instead of the usual Fuzion system of using Campaign Points (CPs) to buy perks and powers, *Usagi Yojimbo* replaces it with your choice of Job and Species. Each species and profession has been given a Special Ability of its own, to streamline the system. If you want to import Fuzion's system of Complications, feel free to, but it's been "unplugged" for this game.

If you do decide to tinker, you can give your player the option of creating "unemployed" characters with no job. (They still have to have a species, of course.) Instead of getting a professional Special Ability, these unemployed characters get 20 CPs.

## YOUR SPECIES

The question of species is an interesting one in the world of *Usagi*. In one sense, everyone is Japanese. In another sense, there are many different species - foxes and rabbits and cats. There doesn't seem to any particular shame attached to one animal rather than another; rabbits don't look down on foxes, and bears don't associate solely with other bears. (Two exceptions are moles and bats, who have bad reputations.) It is perfectly possible for a rabbit to fight with a bear over the affections of a fox; nobody would consider it weird.

**Kame Ninja:** Hey, guys, this place is fantastic! It's just like seventeenth century Japan - except with animals instead of humans!

**Gen:** Who're you calling an "animal?"

**Kame Ninja:** How did they evolve? Why is a horse a horse but a rabbit a person?

**Usagi:** "Evolve?" I don't understand. We are creations of the gods as are all things around us.

**Kame Ninja:** Yeah, but a bunny as big as a rhino? And what about the talking cats, dogs and other critters walking around? There are so many questions! Like... do you guys have tails?

**Gen:** Hey, don't get personal! At least we wear clothes!

- *Usagi Yojimbo* Vol. 2 #2 (Shades of Green)

# CHAPTER THREE



In *Usagi*, the animals demonstrate human characteristics, and therefore certain species tend to act certain ways. However, the guidelines are just for "the usual." It stands to reason that not every fox is cunning and tricky, and not every pig is stubborn.

One species you will not find on this list is "human." This is because humans are rare in *Usagi's* world, and when they do appear, they generally aren't very nice. Witness the monstrous Ocho (in Village of Fear), the mysterious demon piper, and (of course) the evil Lord Hikiji.

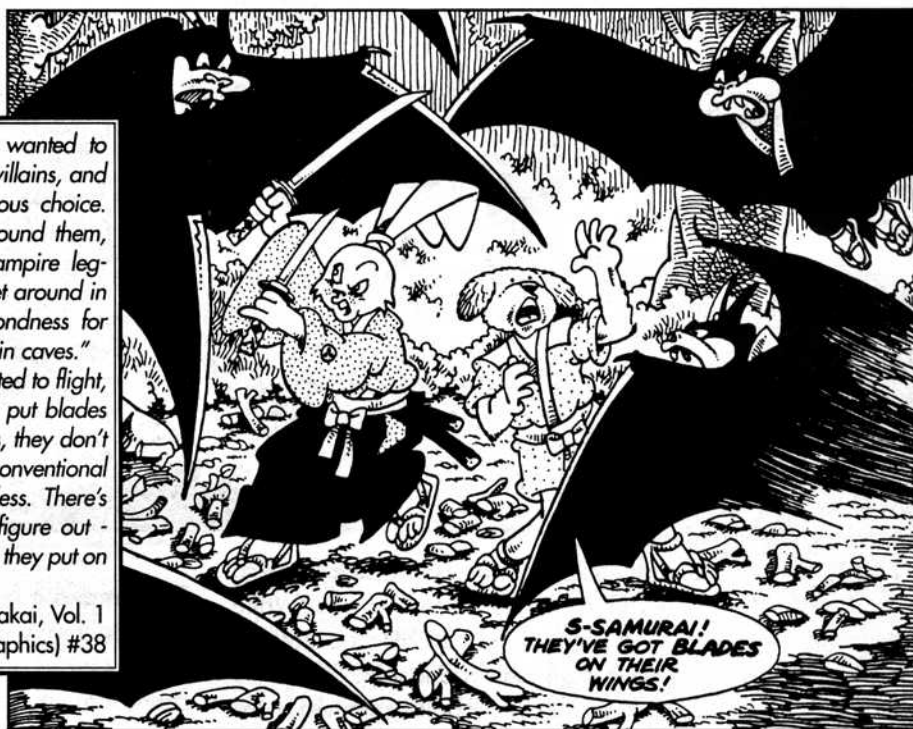
## BAT

Bats are rare in the Japan of *Usagi Yojimbo*. Many of them are members of a secretive and evil clan of ninja, and this reputation stains even the honest bats who have nothing to do with criminal deeds.

Bats are generally impulsive and quick to change their minds. They do whatever they feel like at the moment, regardless of what they said before or what might happen afterwards. However, along with a lack of forethought comes an ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances. (Very useful for surviving the results of hasty decisions.)

"For a long time I'd wanted to introduce some flying villains, and bats seemed the obvious choice. There's a mystique around them, created by the old vampire legends, their ability to get around in darkness, and their fondness for hanging upside down in caves."  
"Because they're adapted to flight, it seemed a natural to put blades on their wings. Besides, they don't have real hands, so conventional swords would be useless. There's just one thing I can't figure out - without hands, how do they put on their clothes?"

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1  
(Fantagraphics) #38



the same -3 Perception penalty as a mole character when in sunlight. This penalty does not apply to perceptions made using their radar sense. In addition, bats cannot use their hands to hold tools or weapons, although they can fit blades to their wings (use the same damage as the katana).

## BAT

- Fly
- Radar Sense
- -3 Perception in sunlight

No attribute bonuses are given to Bat characters. Instead, Bats have a couple of very potent Special Abilities. First, they can Fly. They can't fly very far, or for much longer than half an hour at a time; but then again, they rarely need to. This ability can get them away from losing fights, or get them into otherwise well-defended areas. And, of course, a swooping charge is a frightening thing to defend against!

The bat's second Special Ability is that they have a Radar Sense. They can tell the shapes of everything around them, even in total darkness. Of course, this ability cannot be used to read; bats must read with their eyes like everyone else.

Because they are used to darkness, a bat character takes

## BEAR

Neither as arrogant as rhinos nor as brash as bulls, bears rival both in their size and strength. This size and power usually makes them easygoing and confident, willing to forgive, forget, and go along to get along. Few bears become bullies; they have nothing to prove. (Note: In the *Usagi Yojimbo Roleplaying Game* pandas, like Lord Noriyuki, are considered bears for purposes of making characters.)

As a rule, the average bear is law abiding and peaceful. If a bear gets into a fight, it's usually because someone else started it or because the bear is fighting on behalf of a lord





# CHAPTER THREE

in pursuit of some greater good. Bears are often retainers, messengers and town guards.

Like bulls, bears get 2 extra points to Physical. Their special ability is Courage of the Bear. Once per game session, the bear can gain back five Hits. A bear cannot do this on a round when he has attacked, and when he does it, he does not get to attack that round.

## BEAR

- Physical +2
- Courage of the Bear

## BULL

Bulls, like rhinos, are big and strong. Their courage is legendary. Unlike rhinos, bulls are known for their fierce tempers. It does not take much to start a fight with a bull, but it takes a lot to end one. While they can be fierce in their rages, they can also be equally intense when showing generosity and friendship.

Bulls gain two extra points to Physical. (You should figure out their Hits and Defense after this has been factored in.) Their special ability is a Ferocious Charge. When a Bull makes a Total Attack

## BULL

- Physical +2
- Ferocious Charge



(see page 44.) in battle, he or she gains a +3 bonus on attacking, in addition to any other bonuses.

## CAT

Cats tend to be more calm and aloof than rabbits. Some would say "snooty" but cats prefer "dignified." Cats tend to think before they act or speak. They usually dislike anything that makes them look foolish or clumsy.

Cat characters are soft-footed and have very good balance. Therefore they gain the skills Stealth, Acrobatics and Climbing at +2 each (These skills can be raised later).

Furthermore, they have an amazing ability to cheat death - the Nine Lives for which they are famous. Your cat character will begin play with "extra" lives; when you go through an experience that would kill another person, you can "miraculously" survive.

Many GMs will allow cat characters to start with all nine lives intact. Some will require cat players to roll a six sided die (the standard square die you get in **Monopoly™** or **Risk™**) and subtract the number rolled from 10 to get the number of lives the cat has left. Which method is used is up to the GM, but it should depend on the experience of the player and how dangerous the GM expects his or her game to be for the characters.

To make it interesting, the GM roll in secret and not tell you how many lives remain. Rest assured it will make combat much more interesting than it would be if you knew how many lives your character had left to lose.

If your character begins play with fewer than nine lives, think up a few stories about how their first lives were lost.

## CAT

- Stealth +2
- Climbing +2
- Acrobatics +2
- Nine Lives

## DOG

Dogs can be the most loyal, patient and generous people. They can also be the most cruel, brutal and cowardly. Their temperament depends largely on their upbringing. Dogs tend to be idealistic, believing strongly in decency and goodness; those who see evidence to support these beliefs become even

# CHAPTER THREE



more friendly and generous. Dogs whose beliefs are betrayed, however, become vicious, cruel and bullying.

Dogs tend to be followers more than leaders. More than anything else, most dogs want a strong, honorable leader they can believe in and follow without question. If such a leader turns evil, it can turn loyal dog soldiers into murderous thugs.



## DOG

- Combat +1
- Perception +3
- Tracking

Dogs characters add one point to Combat, and they gain a Perception Skill bonus of +3. (This may be raised again later.) Their special ability is Tracking. While a pig may have a better ability to scent things in the air, no one beats a dog at telling one scent from another. While their ability is similar to that of the pig, it is not identical; while a pig could tell you that someone was coming down a mountain trail, a dog could tell you how many people had walked the trail in the last week. As a rule of thumb, pigs scent the air, dogs scent the ground; pigs sense the present, while dogs sense the past.

## FOX

Some think foxes are simply good looking dogs, but this is not completely accurate. Many dogs are blindly loyal, while foxes are rarely blind about anything. Like cats, foxes like to think things through, but unlike cats, foxes have little interest in appearing to know valuable secrets – even when they do know valuable secrets. Foxes are clever, charming and sometimes downright sneaky.

Foxes get two extra points in Mental and a bonus of +2 to their

## FOX

- Mental +2
- Persuasion +2
- Fast Talking

Persuasion skill. Their special ability is Fast Talking. Once per game session, a Fox character can try to fool or distract someone with a line of interesting chatter. It does not have to be totally persuasive or even make a lot of sense – as long as it sounds good. Some GMs allow their players to roll for this ability, while others simply let the player do the talking for the character and decide, based on that, whether the ability works or not.



## MOLE

Moles tend to be careful, methodical types. They'll take a while to look a project over, and then some time to decide on a plan, and then they carefully get the tools they'll need together, and only then will they do something. This makes them great builders and miners, but they are sometimes at a disadvantage in situations requiring snap decisions.

Once a mole's mind is made up, he or she will tend to stick to the plan. This is not the stubbornness of the pig; it's just a single minded determination that moles are known for.

It should be noted that some moles have a bad reputation because they're seen only at night; people reason that honest folks go about their busi-



## MOLE

- Physical +1
- Tunneling
- -3 Perception in bright light





## CHAPTER THREE

ness during the light of day, while only those with something to hide work at night. The moles, of course, simply claim that the sun hurts their eyes.

Moles gain an extra point to Physical. Their Special Ability is that they can Tunnel through soft earth as quickly as they can walk (If they hit hard stone they must either go around or break through like anyone else). Moles have the option of leaving their tunnels open behind them, so that non-mole allies can follow, or of collapsing them to make a clean escape.

Moles also take no Perception penalties from darkness, because they're used to the dark underground. However, with this ability comes a drawback; Moles are blinded by intense light such as sunlight or a bright fire. In the presence of such light, they take a -3 Perception penalty unless they're blindfolded. This is why they usually operate at night or during cloudy days.

change their minds. This can make them deeply loyal friends or implacable enemies. Unlike rabbits, pigs tend to have little use for a life of ideas; they are both more practical and more emotional.

Pigs are exceptionally tough. Add one point to Physical. Then, after you have figured out your Hits and Stun normally, add another five points to each. They also possess of a remarkable Sense of Smell. While most players will not have the abilities of the blind Zato-Ino, who could scent a falling leaf accurately enough to strike it, they will be able to sniff out such things as poisoned food, approaching people, or freshly spilled blood. Furthermore, pig characters can tell a person's profession by their aroma.



### PIG

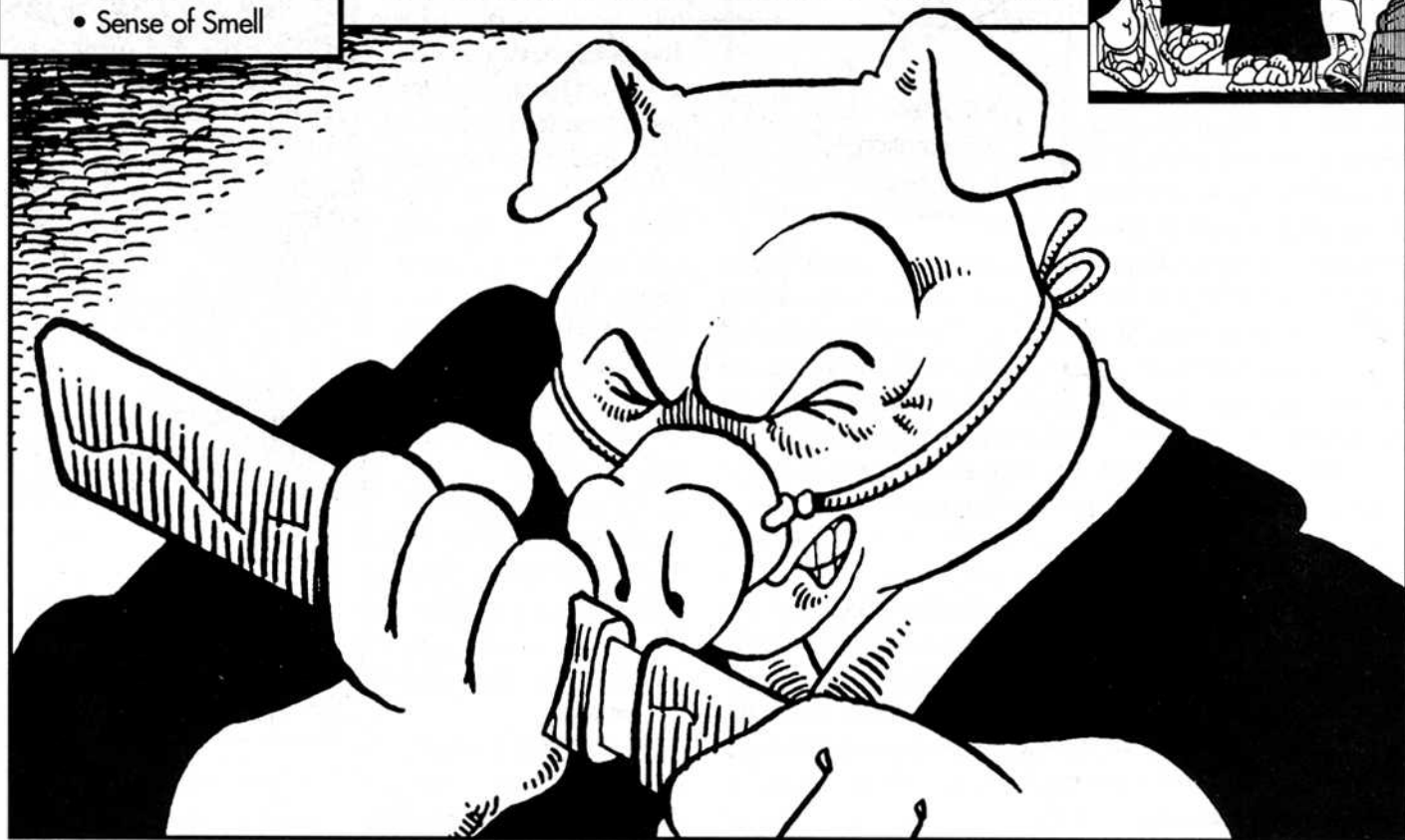
- Physical +1
- Hits +5
- Sense of Smell

### PIG

Most pigs tend to be very stubborn. Once set in their ways, it takes great effort to

### RABBIT

Rabbits are obviously common in *Usagi* and they



# CHAPTER THREE



show many different characteristics – from the grim Kenichi to the gentle Mariko. Most rabbits tend to be upright, idealistic folks; they make up their minds to live a certain way, and they base their actions on that decision.

Rabbit characters gain bonuses on Combat and Movement. Add one point to Combat and two points to Movement because rabbits are quicker than most other people.

The special ability of rabbits is a Spectacular Leap. Just how far a rabbit can jump depends on the strength of the rabbit (and the needs of the plot.) Several body lengths in height and a bit more in length is common for trained warriors. Assume that the character can leap a number of 2 meter (or 2 yard) hexes equal to his Physical score.

## RABBIT

- Combat +1
- Movement +2
- Spectacular Leap

## RHINO

Rhinos are generally big, strong and commanding individuals. They have the self-confidence that comes from being bigger than most people, and can come across as arrogant or superior. As befits an animal of their bulk, it can be hard to get a rhino started – on anything from getting up in the morning to charging into an attack. Once they start something, however, they are even harder to stop.

Rhinos gain two extra points in Physical and an extra point in Combat. (You should figure out their Hits, Defense and Stun after this has been factored in.) Their special ability is Withstanding. Once per game session, the Rhino's player can reduce the damage from one single blow or source to zero. This can be done after the player finds out how much damage was taken. However, it cannot be done on a turn when the rhino has attacked, and a rhino who uses this ability cannot attack that turn.

## RHINO

- Physical +2
- Combat +1
- Withstanding

## SERPENT

Like foxes, serpents are known for smooth talking and guile. However, people are much likelier to forgive a handsome fox than a slithering serpent.

Serpents are calm, methodical thinkers who pride themselves on their cold-blooded assessment of every situation. It is almost impossible to get a snake to show anger or fear; some people claim they just aren't built for it.

Serpents gain one point to their Mental score, one to their Combat score and one to Movement.



Furthermore, serpent characters have a special ability called Speed of the Serpent. This ability can be used once per gaming session; it gives the snake character the highest initiative in a combat round, automatically (for more on initiative, see page 43.)

One limitation placed on snakes is that they can never learn to use the bow or the rifle, although they can clutch most other weapons in their scaly coils.

## SERPENT

- Mental +1
- Combat +1
- Movement +1
- Speed of the Serpent
- Can't use bow or rifle





# CHAPTER THREE

## YOUR JOB

Player Characters in *Usagi Yojimbo* are rarely rank beginners; they start out with considerable experience and history in place. Your character too, will not begin play as an unskilled novice; your character is considered to be seasoned already by his deeds and his past.

Pick a job for your character; this will reflect the skills, experience and training he or she has. It is possible to change jobs in the course of play, as was explained in Chapter Two.

## BODYGUARD

As a bodyguard (known in Japanese as a yojimbo) it is your duty to protect your client by any means necessary – up to and including your own death. This is a highly honored position, because it means your employer trusts you enough to keep you near at all times.

Not every bodyguard has a permanent employer, however. Some are wanderers who simply work for anyone who can pay their way for a time.

Bodyguard characters gain a +2 to their Kenjutsu Skill, and receive +3 to their Perception. Furthermore, bodyguards are specially trained to watch for danger to others. In a battle, if someone on your side is being attacked, you may choose to defend in their place. This special ability is called Claiming the Blow. You cannot do this if you have already attacked an enemy that round, and if you choose to defend for an ally, you cannot attack. (A bodyguard character with a high Movement can choose not to attack, waiting instead to defend if necessary.)

If you are going to defend for someone else, you must

declare you are doing so as soon as they are attacked, before either person declares their strategy (see Chapter Five for more on strategies). Then you figure it out exactly as if you had been attacked, instead of your friend.

## BODYGUARD

- Kenjutsu +2
- Perception +3
- Claiming the Blow



## BOUNTY HUNTER

In this time of Japan's history, there are many people running around with dangerous martial arts training and no worthwhile leader to follow. These warriors often become bandits. Consequently, there is a lot of work for bounty hunters tough enough to face down gangs of murderous thugs.

Bounty hunters gain +2 to the Kenjutsu and Tracking Skills, and a +1 bonus to the Movement attribute. Furthermore, bounty hunters quickly gain the ability to Evaluate Enemies to see who poses the greatest threat. Once per combat round, before anyone does anything else, Bounty Hunter characters may ask the GM who, on the other side, is the most (or least) skilled, swift, tough or strong. Or, they may pick out a specific person and ask "Is that enemy better than me?" at being skilled, or tough (Combat score), or strong (Physical), or fast (Movement). The GM must answer honestly. A roll may be required against Perception to get this information, but only if the enemies are particularly sneaky or have made a special effort to deceive the bounty hunter.

## BOUNTY HUNTER

- Kenjutsu +2
- Tracking +2
- Movement +1
- Evaluate Enemies

# CHAPTER THREE



## COURTIER

Courtiers are in a more rarefied position than retainers. Usually members of proud families in their own rights, Courtiers are respected and listened to. They often serve as envoys to different courts or castles, or they may be sent to act as magistrates in a daimyo's own domain.

Courtiers gain +3 to Etiquette, and +4 in the Artistry skill of your choice (origami, bonsai, shamisen, tea ceremony, etc.)

### COURTIER

- Etiquette +3
- Artistry +4
- High Social Rank

The courtier's special ability is High Social Rank. In addition to being wealthy, the courtier is also generally respected by those of lower rank. Peasants will tend to obey a courtier's orders without question, and everyone is more likely to trust and believe someone with a good family name.

Players and GMs should be aware that non-courtier characters should, in theory, regard courtiers as their bosses. GMs may wish to disallow courtiers if they feel that it would allow one player to boss the others around; however, if played maturely, courtier characters can be good leaders – especially since their combat skills can be pretty dismal.

## GAMBLER

In a time of great uncertainty, some choose to ally themselves with the forces of fate, living off their wits and their skill with dice. Gamblers come in all shapes, sizes and levels of success, from dusty con men in tattered clothing, to success-







# CHAPTER THREE

ful gamblers who are well dressed, wealthy and always have impeccable manners.

Gamblers gain +1 to the Mental attribute, +2 to Perception and +3 to the Games Skill.

## GAMBLER

- Mental +1
- Perception +2
- Games +3
- Lucky

Professional

gamblers tend to be luckier than others, and this good fortune is reflected by their special ability; Lucky. Once per gaming session, they can discard a bad roll and replace it with an 18 (this is not treated as a Critical Success, however; the Gambler does not add another 2D6 to the roll). They don't have to decide to do this until after they've made their roll and found out it wasn't good enough. Keep in mind that this can be done with damage dice as well!

## MESSENGER

Messengers have the important and often dangerous job of carrying information from one daimyo (samurai lord) to another. While ordinary messages can be carried by normal people, samurai messengers are those with the skills required to get battle plans or secret messages through dangerous terrain. As a samurai messenger, you have the skills to outride most enemies, and outfight many others.

Messengers get +2 to Riding, +1 to

## MESSENGER

- Riding +2
- Archery +1
- Stealth +2
- Never Get Lost

Archery and +2 in Stealth. Furthermore, messengers have the special ability that they Never Get Lost. No matter where they are or what has happened to them, they can quickly figure out which direction they're supposed to be going.

## MONK

Monks are those who study the way of Zen Buddhism and try to lead simple lives in order to gain spiritual insights and enlightenment. They are almost always poor, relying on what they can beg or scavenge to survive. However, most monks do not mind their poverty, since Zen teaches that wealth and possessions only distract you from what is truly important and valuable.

It is not uncommon for monks to study the martial arts as a way of clearing their minds. Monk characters begin with Jujutsu +3 and they add an additional +2 to their Mental attribute.

The special ability of Monks is Wisdom. To reflect this in game terms, a monk's player is allowed to discuss things with other players that ordinarily they would not be allowed to speak about.

Look at the example on the facing page. Does this example give Akira and Atsumi an advantage in preparing for the bandits, even if they don't know exactly how or where they're attacking? You bet! Wisdom is contagious; associating with monks can make people remarkably perceptive.

This communication is a two way street.

Akira has successfully followed leader of an evil criminal gang through the woods and, taking him by surprise, killed him with an arrow. Normally, the other players would not be allowed to give Akira's player advice because their characters are not present. However, Toshi's player is allowed to remind Akira to take out his distinctive arrow and carry it away from the scene.



# CHAPTER THREE



This may seem complicated, but it really isn't. Just remember this; any character can give advice to another character if they're nearby. Only the player of a Monk is allowed to give (or get) advice from other players.

Mike's character is a monk named Toshi. Toshi and his friend Otsu are up in the mountains trying to sneak up on a group of bandits, while two of their other friends (Akira and Atsumi) stay behind at a village to defend it. The GM might take Otsu and Toshi's players off to another room and play out the scene, so that the players for Akira and Atsumi don't know what's going on. Or he might play it out in front of the other two, but not allow them to make suggestions or give advice.

Instead of sneaking up on the bandits, the bandits sneak up on Otsu and Toshi, and manage to throw them both off a cliff. The bandits (who are played by the Game Master) then decide to go back to their lair, get their horses, and raid the town where Toshi's other friends are waiting. Toshi successfully climbs back up the cliff, but Otsu is injured and will need help. Toshi must now decide whether to leave Otsu stranded (where wild animals might come and kill her) but warn the village, or help Otsu up and let Akira and Atsumi get (possibly) ambushed.

Normally, Toshi's player would only be allowed to discuss the situation with Otsu's player. However, because he is wise and knowledgeable, he is allowed extra information. He can talk to the players for Akira and Atsumi, although he is not allowed to warn them about the incoming bandits if the GM chose to keep that information from them. He can look at their character sheets, and ask them general questions. ("Is the village ready for another attack?" "Is it better to leave one to definite danger to warn many about possible danger?") but he can't come out and say "The bandits are riding in from the west by sunset!"

## MONK

- Mental +2
- Jujutsu +3
- Wisdom

## NINJA

The ninja clans are secret societies of spies and assassins culled from the lowest levels of society. Although most nobles



consider them beneath contempt, a few daimyo have found their secretive skills extremely useful.

Ninja themselves take great care not to be discovered, for anyone revealed to be a ninja can, in some provinces, be executed without trial.

Characters who belong to this shadowy world gain a +2 bonus to both Stealth and Climbing. Their unique power is the skill Ninjutsu at +4. (Remember, only ninja characters may learn Ninjutsu.) For more on Ninjutsu, see page 15.

Note: Ninja cannot wear armor while using Ninjutsu.

## NINJA

- Stealth +2
- Climbing +2
- Ninjutsu +4

## RETAINER

A samurai retainer is simply a samurai who is currently in the employ of a daimyo. Other characters with different jobs may be employed by a lord (in fact, this is a superb way to explain your characters' knowing each other), but they have specific jobs - bounty hunter, messenger, etc. A retainer's job is more general; your responsibilities consist solely of doing whatever your daimyo orders you to do.

Naturally, retainers tend to be more versatile than other





# CHAPTER THREE

professions, and their skills reflect this. When you become a retainer, you gain +1 to Kenjutsu, +1 to Archery, +1 to Jujutsu and +1 to Riding.

The special ability of the retainer is Loyal Intensity. Once per session, you concentrate on your training and loyalty to your lord in order to overcome fatigue and difficulty. In game terms, this means you can reduce all your Stun damage (see page 11 or 51.) to zero. Note that you cannot use this ability if you are defying your daimyo or doing are acting contrary to your lord's interests (or orders).

## RETAINER

- Kenjutsu +1
- Archery +1
- Jujutsu +1
- Riding +1
- Loyal Intensity

## SHUGYOSHA (STUDENT WARRIOR)

During the era of *Usagi Yojimbo* there are many samurai whose masters have been killed in combat. Some of these samurai go on to enter the service of other masters, but many believe that one can only serve one master in a lifetime. One path open to a masterless samurai (or ronin) is to dedicate oneself to the study of the sword.

These followers of the Way of the Sword generally travel from place to place, studying the methods of different weapon schools (or ryu). They are known as shugyosha. Alternately, many student warriors come from samurai families, but simply never entered the employ of a master.

Shugyosha gain +2 to the Kenjutsu Skill, and an additional +2 in a weapon of their choice (or in Jujutsu).

The special ability of the student warrior is Specialized Tactics. It reflects their familiarity with many different schools of combat. This ability can be used once per round, instead of attacking. This means that when the Shugyosha is attacked, he can decide which of the three strategies (see page 44.) to use after seeing which strategy an enemy has chosen.

So, if your Shugyosha character is attacked by someone using a Total Attack, you can choose a Total Attack in return (which gives you a chance for a great victory) or you can use Total Defense (which means you cannot be harmed by a Total Attack.) Alternately, if you see your enemy is using a Cautious Attack, you can choose to use a Total Attack in response,

knowing that you will either overwhelm his defenses or spoil his attack.

The student warrior can use this ability in response to an attack, but if he or she does, then that counts as the Shugyosha's attack for that round; the student is not allowed another. If a student warrior gets a high initiative, he or she may choose not to attack, waiting instead until an enemy attacks and using Specialized Tactics.

Note: instead of just saying "I'm using Specialized Tactics," try to think of specific tactics; "If he's charging I'll use the Feint of the Dying Crane to distract him, then hit him with the Cut of the Scorned Geisha!" What do these names mean? Oh, nothing; but they sound cool.

## SHUGYOSHA

- Kenjutsu +2
- Jujutsu (or Other Weapon) +2
- Specialized Tactics

## FREE STUFF

In addition to the skills you already have, you can now get new ones, or you can increase your old skills. You have 10 points to spend on skills as you please - with one exception. You cannot raise any starting character's skill above 8. No one starts play that good. The skills you can choose for your character are explained in Chapter Two.



# CHAPTER FOUR



## CHAPTER FOUR: CHARACTERS FROM THE COMICS

ONE OF THE GREATEST STRENGTHS OF *USAGI YOJIMBO* IS THAT IT IS RICHLY POPULATED WITH INTERESTING, BELIEVABLE CHARACTERS. WHILE THEY MAY SEEM SIMPLE ON THE SURFACE (WHICH IS ALMOST UNAVOIDABLE IN THE GENRE OF "FUNNY ANIMAL" OR ANTHROPOMORPHIC COMICS), THERE IS AN INTEGRITY TO THEM THAT IS HARD TO COME BY IN ANY GENRE OF FICTION.

For example, while Gennosuke appears on the surface to be brash, arrogant and dishonest, there is more to him than that. Although he seems hard and tough, his hardness is brittle, and there's a pain hidden inside. It shows in his fear when Ino nearly beats him in a duel. It shows when he gives a rich reward to a pair of beggar children. It shows in the way he constantly tells Usagi "I'm your best friend" - when he would never admit that Usagi is his best friend.

The characters of *Usagi* are presented here for use in your games - with a reminder that, while these characters are wonderful, the characters you create are likely to be more interesting and fun for you.

However, if you do decide to run Stan Sakai's excellent characters, some of them have been slightly modified into "PC" versions, which were "built" using the character creation rules in this book. The PC version of Usagi, for example, has a lower Kenjutsu skill. Otherwise, he would not only be more skilled than most opponents, he would be more skilled than the other player characters. This could unbalance the game, creating a situation where one character gets more than their fair share of the GM's attention and the game's action.

While it's fine for Usagi to be central to the comic book, it's less fun for a game with multiple players. Ultimately, GMs and players are free to use either version of the characters, however.

### THE HEROES MIYAMOTO USAGI

"Many of the characters in *Usagi* were inspired by people in history or Japanese fiction. Usagi himself was very loosely based on Miyamoto Musashi, a samurai who lived in the turn of the 17th century."

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1  
(Fantagraphics) #24

As the title character of the comic, it is natural that Usagi is the most complex and well developed character. If you've read the comics you have something of an idea what he is like, but here's a short summary to keep in mind if you decide to use Usagi in your games.

Miyamoto Usagi is perhaps the senior remaining student of the great kengo (sword master), Katsuichi. Usagi often fights with a sword in each hand (in a style called ni-ten). He carries a pair of matched swords creat-







## CHAPTER FOUR

ed by the famed master swordsmith Koetsu. The katana is called Yagi no eda (Willow Branch) while the wakizashi is named Aoyagi (Young Willow). He has slain many opponents in combat and in duels, but he is not a remorseless killer. If anything, Usagi's constant confrontation of death has given him a finer appreciation of the value of life.

At one time Usagi was the trusted personal bodyguard of Lord Mifune, whose mon (family crest or seal) Usagi still wears on his clothes. Usagi last saw his master at the battle of Adachigahara, where Lord Mifune's army faced that of Lord Hikiji. Lord Mifune was killed after one of his retainers fled rather than defend him from Hikiji's troops. Rather than let his master's head be taken as a trophy by Hikiji's men, Usagi raced away from the battle with it and buried it. Since that day, Usagi has been a ronin – a servant without a master, wandering without purpose.

Usagi is a wanderer – sometimes working as a bodyguard-for-hire, sometimes studying the Way of the Sword in pursuit of personal excellence, other times simply going about as aimlessly as a leaf in the wind. Usagi enjoys painting and has been known to play the flute (shakuhachi) on occasion. We also know that waking up with bugs on his face gives him the creeps.

Above all else, Usagi is loyal to his friends. Though not a retainer of the Geishu clan, he is a close friend to the young Geishu lord Noriyuki, and he has been of inestimable aid to them on several occasions. One of his closest friends is the Geishu retainer Tomoe Ame.

First and foremost, Usagi seeks always to do what is right. Although this may not always be the easy or obvious course, Usagi follows his heart fearlessly. Usagi prefers the katana, which is the standard fighting sword and is much longer than the wakizashi.

### RABBIT SHUGYOSHA/BODYGUARD

**Physical 5, Mental 4, Combat 8, Movement 5, Hits 25, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 5, Archery 4, Etiquette 3, Evade 6, Flute 2,

Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 9, Painting 3, Perception 5, Riding 6, Stealth 3, Throw 5

**Special abilities:** Spectacular Leap; Claiming the Blow; Specialized Tactics

### Rabbit Bodyguard (PC version)

**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 6, Movement 5, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 2, Archery 3, Etiquette 1, Evade 4, Jujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 5, Perception 4, Riding 2, Stealth 3, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Spectacular Leap; Claiming the Blow

### Does Usagi Have a Tail?

*"I knew it would come up some day, and I've dreaded it since the beginning. Frankly, I don't know. I don't know if any of my characters have tails. I know they should have tails, but giving them tails would make them somehow a bit too animalistic. I've avoided answering this question by always keeping my characters clothed."*

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics) #24

### TOMOE AME

Tomoe Ame is the closest and most trusted retainer of Lord Noriyuki of the Geishu clan; she serves him as loyally as her father, Tatsutaro, served his father. In fact, her family has served the Geishus for ten generations.

Growing up, she had to live up to her father's great reputation. As the founder of the Falling Rain school of sword fighting, he was widely respected and honored. He taught his daughter everything he knew, and she has become a credit to his school.

Tomoe is an alert and dedicated retainer. She would lay down her life for Noriyuki in an instant, without giving the matter a second thought. If he asked it, she would willingly kill herself – though part of her



# CHAPTER FOUR



loyalty may be due to the fact that she serves a kind and decent lord who would never ask such a thing.

She is a calm and thoughtful woman, which contributes to her fierce effectiveness as a warrior. If some (notably Gennosuke) have found her "too formal" is because of her dutiful nature and dedication to her station.

*"There was a samurai woman named Tomoe Gozen who was remarkable for her beauty and courage. She became Tomoe Ame. Tomoe Ame, by the way, is also the name of a Japanese rice candy."*

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics) #24

## CAT RETAINER

**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 6, Movement 4, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 6, Archery 5, Climbing 4, Etiquette 5, Evade 4, Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 8, Perception 4, Riding 8, Stealth 3, Throw 2

**Special abilities:** Nine Lives (three remain); Loyal Intensity (Due to her extreme loyalty, Tomoe can use this ability twice per session if necessary.)

## Cat Retainer (PC version)

**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 5, Movement 3, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 3, Archery 1, Climbing 2, Etiquette 2, Evade 2, Jujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Perception 3, Riding 3, Stealth 4, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Nine Lives; Loyal Intensity

that many had felt for him was replaced by fear and greed for the reward that Ino's head would bring.

In this fashion, Ino became trapped in a circle of violence. People would attack him out of fear. The attack would only make him angrier. His anger made him kill those who fought him. Those he killed only made others fear him more.

Usagi's first meeting with Ino met with tragedy, when Ino forced him into a duel and Usagi cut off his nose, "blinding" him. Ino had a wooden nose made, however, and wears it to this day.

While fighting against the power-mad Lord Tamakuro, Ino was wounded, almost fatally, while saving the life of Gennosuke. Gen returned the favor by letting everyone think that Ino was dead, killed in the explosion that destroyed Lord Tamakuro's castle.

Ino eventually found his way to a small, secluded village where he still lives. All along, he claimed that all he wanted was peace and seclusion; now he faces the challenges of those who get what they ask for. It remains to be seen if his heart has fully mended, and if he has given up his anger and warlike ways for good.

*"Zato-Ino, the blind swordspig, was inspired by Zato-Ichi, the blind swordsman, the star of 27 movies and a TV series. Zato-Ichi was recently updated and westernized into a movie starring Rutger Hauer (Blind Fury - Ed.)."*

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics) #24

*"Ino was one of my favorite characters and the most skilled of all the swordsmen of Usagi's world. But he was the most misunderstood. He just wanted a life of peace but people kept getting in the way."*

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 2 (Mirage) #6

## ZATO-INO

Ino is possibly the most bitter person in the whole Empire. Blind from birth, he has felt belittled and cursed since his earliest days. He hoped that learning the art of the sword would allow him to take some pride in himself. Because of his quick temper and inability to leave a slight unavenged, however, Ino quickly found himself with a bounty on his head. The pity

GREETINGS, MIYAMOTO USAGI. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME BUT SURELY YOU RECOGNIZE ME!

ZATO-INO!





# CHAPTER FOUR

## PIG SHUGYOSHA

**Physical 5, Mental 3, Combat 8, Movement 5, Hits 30, Defense 10**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Evade 5, Jujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 10, Massage 5, Perception 6, Stealth 2, Throw 2

**Special abilities:** Scent; Special Tactics; Blindfighting (Ino takes no penalties to perception or fighting in complete darkness.)

### Pig Shugyosha (PC version)

**Physical 5, Mental 3, Combat 6, Movement 3, Hits 30, Defense 10**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Evade 4, Kenjutsu 8, Perception 3, Stealth 2, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Scent; Special Tactics

**Special Flaw:** Blind (Ino cannot read, use missile weapons or find his way around as well as a sighted person; however, he takes no penalty when fighting due to his superb training.)

## GENNOSUKE

Murakami Gennosuke (or "Gen" to his friends) is big, brash, ill-mannered and has been called amoral. Perversely, he seems to take pride in being considered a boor and a scoundrel. The truth is somewhat more complex.

Gen's father, General Murakami, was a loyal retainer of the Shirogeta clan. When his lord was assassinated, Murakami set out on a mission of vengeance. Gen's childhood was spent on a fruitless quest for revenge. Years later Gen found his father's dai-sho (paired swords)



"Gen was modeled after Toshiro Mifune's 'Yojimbo/Sanjuro' character but I didn't remember why I decided to use that name. It was probably just because it sounded good."

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics) #28

and carries them to this day.

As an adult, Gen has decided that he's never going to be a flunky for someone else; instead, he's looking out only for himself. Anything that doesn't benefit him is worthless. At least, that's what he likes to think, and what he likes others to think. In reality, he has a soft spot for his friends (especially Usagi) and is motivated by more than money.

Gen's horn was cut off by Zato-Ino in a duel. Gen has since had it replaced with a ceramic horn, in which he once had the maker conceal a small blade.

## RHINO BOUNTY HUNTER

**Physical 6, Mental 3, Combat 7, Movement 4, Hits 30, Defense 12**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Evade 4, Kenjutsu 8, Perception 3, Riding 2, Stealth 2, Throw 2, Tracking 5

**Special Abilities:** Withstanding; Evaluate Enemies

### Rhino Bounty Hunter (PC version)

**Physical 6, Mental 3, Combat 7, Movement 4, Hits 30, Defense 12**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Evade 4, Kenjutsu 6, Perception 3, Riding 1, Stealth 2, Throw 2, Tracking 4

**Special Abilities:** Withstanding; Evaluate Enemies

## KITSUNE

An attractive and charming entertainer, Kitsune makes her living by traveling from town to town, demonstrating her skills with koma (tops) for the pleasure of the locals. A skilled performer, Kitsune can balance a spinning top on the blade of a sword and run it up to the impaling point – or even run a top along the edge of a fan!



# CHAPTER FOUR



However, tricks with tops are not always enough to keep Kitsune's purse (and belly) full. As she herself says, she lives by her wits and does what she must to get by. In her case, that means stealing. Kitsune is not a professional thief or a cat burglar, but she is a deft pickpocket, and not above lifting a purse to pay her way.

## FOX GAMBLER

**Physical 4, Mental 6, Combat 4, Movement 5, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 2, Climbing 2, Evade 2, Games 5, Kenjutsu 4, Perception 4, Persuasion 2, Pick Pockets 8, Riding 3, Stealth 4, Throw 3

**Special Abilities:** Fast talking; Lucky

### Fox Gambler (PC version)

**Physical 4, Mental 6, Combat 4, Movement 5, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 1, Climbing 2, Evade 2, Games 2, Kenjutsu 1, Perception 3, Persuasion 2, Pick Pockets 3, Riding 1, Stealth 4, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Fast talking; Lucky

## LORD NORIYUKI

Lord Noriyuki is leader of the Geishu clan. Although he is young, he is wise beyond his years and has seen enough danger and intrigue for a man many times his age. While traveling to be recognized as his clan's lord, he was ambushed many times by agents of Lord Hikiji, who coveted the holdings of the young lord. With the help of his loyal servant Tomoe, and a wandering ronin named Usagi, he was able to assume his rightful place as daimyo of the Geishu clan. A quick study of politics, he has been an irri-



tant to Lord Hikiji ever since.

Although he has, by necessity, become tough and self-reliant, Noriyuki is still, in the best ways, a boy. He has faced many, many threats to his life – natural and supernatural. Instead of cowering in fear or becoming bitter and paranoid (as many grown men would do) Noriyuki has simply decided to be cautious, without allowing the danger of death to interfere with his enjoyment of life. He can be as enthusiastic and energetic as any lad of his age when presented with something delightful, and this joyfulness has endeared him to several lords at court.

## BEAR LORD

**Physical 4, Mental 5, Combat 4, Movement 4, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Archery 2, Climbing 2, Etiquette 6, Evade 2, Kenjutsu 5, Perception 5, Riding 4, Stealth 2, Tea Ceremony 4, Throw 4

**Special abilities:** Courage of the Bear; High Social Rank

### Bear Lord (PC version)

**Physical 5, Mental 5, Combat 4, Movement 4, Hits 25, Defense 10**

**Skills:** Archery 2, Climbing 2, Etiquette 4, Evade 2, Kenjutsu 4, Perception 3, Riding 2, Stealth 2, Tea Ceremony 4, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Courage of the Bear; High Social Rank.

## KENICHI

Kenichi was Usagi's childhood playmate – and rival. For all of his life, he's been trying to get the better of Miyamoto Usagi, and it seems to him that he can never do so. When they were younger, Usagi beat Kenichi – and all his classmates at the Dogora Fencing School – in a swordfighting tournament. Because he had sworn to defeat Usagi, Kenichi was disgraced and forced to leave the school. Usagi was accepted as an honored retainer to a great lord; Kenichi returned to their village. When Usagi's father bravely stood up to Hikiji after the defeat at Adachigahara, Hikiji cut the old man down. Kenichi was appointed village magistrate by the Dark Lord in the older rabbit's place, and he quickly gave





## CHAPTER FOUR

Hikiji the village's supplies. Many starved that winter, but Kenichi will loudly declare that any resistance would have been met with many more deaths.

Usagi served honorably at Adachigahara; Kenichi became the servant of a tyrant. Even marrying Usagi's childhood sweetheart has not given Kenichi any peace of mind - possibly because he fears that her child is not his, but Usagi's.

Despite the fact that Kenichi has saved Usagi's life, and Usagi has saved his, the two are still bitter rivals. This envy and self hate has made Kenichi a grim and joyless man. Kenichi's jealousy is so great that he does not even realize that he has a position of responsibility, a home, wife and child while Usagi is a rootless wanderer. In Kenichi's mind, the two are still competing children.

### RABBIT MAGISTRATE

**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 5, Movement 6, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Archery 5, Climbing 2, Evade 4, Kenjutsu 7, Knowledge of Law 4, Perception 2, Riding 2, Stealth 2, Throw 4

**Special Abilities:** High Social Station (not as high as a Courtier, but higher than ronin and mid-level Retainers); Spectacular Leap

### Rabbit Magistrate (PC Version)

**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 5, Movement 6, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Archery 3, Climbing 2, Evade 3, Kenjutsu 5, Knowledge of Law 2, Perception 2, Riding 1, Stealth 2, Throw 3

**Special Abilities:** High Social Station (not as high as a Courtier, but higher than ronin and mid-level Retainers); Spectacular Leap

### MARIKO

Standing between Usagi and Kenichi is Mariko; she is perhaps the greatest barrier between the two of them. All three were childhood playmates, but as the two boys grew into manhood, Usagi began to develop different feelings for Mariko - feelings more appropriate for a man and a woman than for two children.

The code of bushido, however, leaves little room for romance. Usagi could not serve his heart while serving Lord

Mifune. He chose to leave Mariko behind in the village of her birth while he followed the samurai's path of blood and honor. On his last day in the village, however, Usagi and Mariko had a romantic picnic and something happened.

After Usagi left, Mariko discovered she was carrying Usagi's child. Despite her child being Usagi's, Kenichi offered to marry Mariko. Mariko accepted and they were married shortly after Usagi left.

Usagi still loves Mariko, and she still loves him; but she knows they can never be together. In this, she is perhaps the more realistic of the pair. Mariko knows that her love of Usagi is something from the past, and that the present and future belong to her husband and son.

### RABBIT WIFE

**Physical 3, Mental 4, Combat 3, Movement 5, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Etiquette 4, Evade 2, Keep House 4, Painting 3, Perception 3, Stealth 2, Throw 2

**Special ability:** Spectacular Leap

### Rabbit Wife (PC Version)

**Physical 3, Mental 6, Combat 4, Movement 5, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Etiquette 3, Evade 2, Keep House 4, Painting 3, Perception 2, Stealth 2, Throw 2

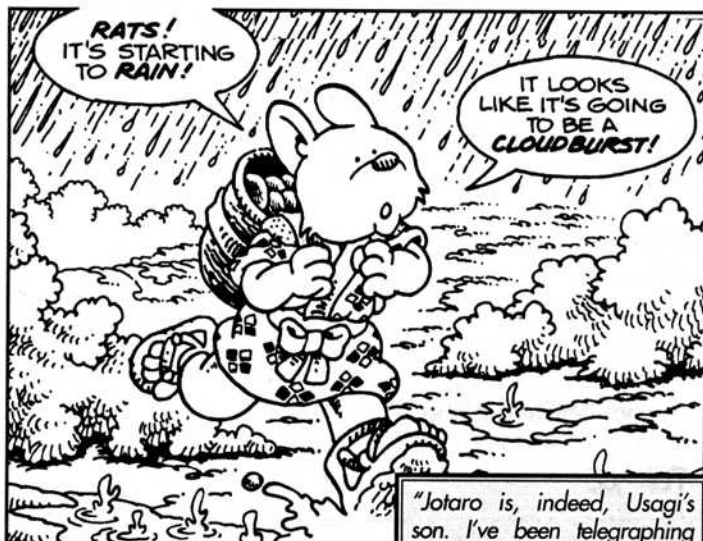
**Special ability:** Spectacular Leap



# CHAPTER FOUR



## JOTARO



Mariko's son Jotaro is still young but he's old enough to be brave. When the Mogura ninja clan attacked his village and took him hostage, Jotaro facilitated his own escape by biting the hand of his captor at an opportune moment.

Although Jotaro is truly Usagi's son, Jotaro does not know this; he believes that Usagi is his uncle. He has only ever known Kenichi as his father. Both Usagi and Kenichi feel very affectionate and protective towards Jotaro.

## RABBIT

**Physical 3, Mental 3, Combat 4, Movement 5, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 1, Mushroom Hunting 3

**Special Abilities:** Spectacular Leap

## YAGI

This onetime retainer to Lord Higashi was betrayed and framed by three of his fellow courtiers – the counselors Wakame, Tadon and Kagihana. Disgusted by their treachery and unable to clear his name, Yagi became a ronin – and an assassin.

Although he sells his sword, Yagi is particular about the

contracts he accepts; he will only agree to slay those whom he feels deserve it. He would agree to kill a ninja, a bandit or anyone who betrayed their lord, but he would not kill anyone innocent of wrongdoing, or one who offended by acting righteously.

Yagi's only companion in his travels is his son, Gorogoro. Though only an infant, Gorogoro is almost as hard-bit-ten and remorseless as his father. Gorogoro's baby carriage is perhaps the deadliest pram in the history of Japan.



"Jotaro is, indeed, Usagi's son. I've been telegraphing that since Critters #10 with Kenichi's intensified hatred of Usagi, references to that last picnic and, especially, the family resemblance. I titled the storyline 'Circles' to show the circles our lives take, even having children sometimes close the circle."

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1  
(Fantagraphics) #31

"Lone Goat and Kid is, of course, a homage to Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima's epic manga series Lone Wolf and Cub, which featured a wandering samurai, Ito Ogami, and his son, Daigoro."

"I based the characters on my recollection of the movie series I had seen almost 15 years ago. The cub has always been the more appealing of the two characters. The fact that he could be replaced by a brick and not change any of the storylines is, possibly, what gives him his charm. However, I did deviate from their established characters by allowing them to exhibit emotions and actually giving the Kid a speaking part (something a brick cannot do unless under great duress)."

"Incidentally, 'Yagi' means 'goat' and 'Gorogoro' is the sound your stomach makes when it rumbles."

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics) #38

## GOAT SHUGYOSHA

**Physical 5, Mental 4, Combat 8, Movement 5, Hits 25, Defense 10**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 2, Climbing 2, Evade 5, Jujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 8, Perception 2, Polearms 5, Riding 2, Stealth 3, Throw 3, Tracking 3

**Special Abilities:** Specialized Tactics (Due to his incredible prowess with the blade, Yagi may attack up to four opponents at once with a Total Attack); Withstanding

## Goat Shugyosha (PC Version)

**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 7, Movement 3, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Evade 4, Jujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 6, Perception 2, Polearms 4, Riding 1, Stealth 2, Throw 3

**Special Abilities:** Specialized Tactics (Due to his incredible prowess with the blade, Yagi may attack up to four opponents at once with a Total Attack); Withstanding



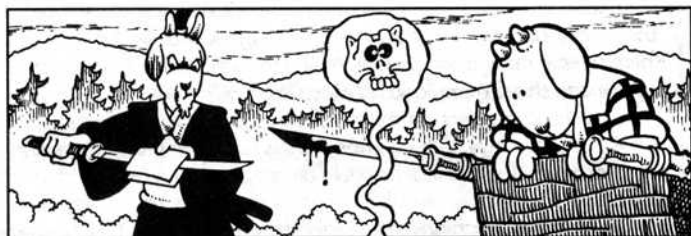


# CHAPTER FOUR

## GOROGORO

The infant son of Yagi, Gorogoro was born with death at his side. For better or worse, Yagi considers him a full partner in the assassination business. Too young to speak or walk far under his own power, Gorogoro has nonetheless mastered the many deadly gimmicks built into his baby carriage.

If your heroes get into a fight with Yagi, Gorogoro will certainly fight as well – if he's able. His cart is armed with a variety of spring-loaded weapons: chains, blades and darts. For ease of play, assume the weapons that seem to pop from every available surface on the cart all have a Damage Class of 3 and that Gorogoro can use them at their full DC despite his low Physical score.



## GOAT KID IN CART

**Physical 2, Mental 2, Combat 4, Movement 1, Hits 10, Defense 2**

**Skills:** Climbing 2, Evade 2, Fighting Cart Operation 5, Perception 2, Stealth 2, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** None

## THE MONKEY WOODCUTTERS

This husband and wife pair have crossed Usagi's path many times: they found the egg that would eventually hatch the fire-breathing Zylla; they unwittingly helped to cast suspicion on Shingen when he disguised

"Funny thing about those monkeys... Stan originally drew them as human beings (that's the way they were in the original Xeroxes of the story I saw), but then relented at the last moment and changed them to simians. And now he's apparently grown attached to them."

- Kim Thompson, Editor, Vol. 1  
(Fantagraphics) #14



OH, WE WORK FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN--  
AND ALL WE'VE GOT TO SHOW FOR IT--  
ARE THE BLISTERS ON OUR HANDS--  
OH WOE, A PEASANT'S LIFE IS A HARD LOT!

himself as a woodcutter; they blocked Usagi's trail when he was being pursued for horse theft, and they were near Tamakuro's castle during Usagi's brief stint in that Lord's service.

These two (who refer to each other simply as "husband" and "wife") are wanderers, simply trying to cut and sell wood and make ends meet.

## MONKEY WOODCUTTER (PC AND NPC VERSION)

**Physical 3, Mental 3, Combat 4, Movement 5, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Ax 3, Climbing 4, Evade 2, Perception 2, Stealth 2, Throw 2, Woodcutting 4

**Special Abilities:** None

## TOKAGE

"The lizards are just a figment of the writer's imagination, although they do serve a purpose in the ecosystem. With few exceptions, rats, cats, and dogs are 'people' in Usagi's world, so the tokage serve as the system's scavengers and as pets."

- Stan Sakai (Dark Horse) #11

The world of Usagi Yojimbo seems to be overrun with lizards called "tokage." About the size of a house cat, tokage are the scavengers of Usagi's world. Tokage are docile creatures most of the time and they will typically run away from danger. They enjoy raiding gardens for vegetables, eat table scraps and will often follow someone who feeds them.

Tokage are aggressive only in unusual circumstances, such as when specially trained (see UY Book 7), desperately hungry or provoked. Tokage are gener-

"The most often asked question I get at book signings and conventions is: 'What are those little dinosaur/lizard things that always appear in the backgrounds.' The second most asked question is: 'Are you ever going to do a story about them?' What can I say? I love dinosaurs. I love their shapes and I love to draw them. They've appeared somewhere in all my stories except one. I call them 'tokage' which, in Japanese, simply means 'lizard.' They're omnivorous and are the scavengers of Usagi's world, taking the place of rats and other vermin in ours. They're also cute and cuddly and are enchanting pets."

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics) #7

# CHAPTER FOUR



ally harmless individually, but they can be very nasty in groups. Furthermore, some will form extremely loyal emotional ties (Spot, the companion of Usagi, and later Ino, is the perfect example of this).

## AVERAGE TOKAGE

**Physical 2, Mental 1, Combat 3, Movement 6, Hits 10, Defense 4**

**Skills:** Bite, Claw and Strangle with tail 4 (2D6 Damage), Perception 3 (5 using scent)

**Special Ability:** Swarm - For every three Tokage attacking at the same time, all Tokage get +1 to their attack skill. Therefore, if twelve Tokage attack in a pack, each lizard has an attack skill of 8. Each lizard still defends at 4.



## SUPERIOR TOKAGE

**Physical 3, Mental 1, Combat 4, Movement 20, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Bite, Claw and Strangle with tail 5 (3D6 Damage), Perception 4 (6 using scent)

**Special Ability:** Swarm (note that while superior tokage might swarm with average tokage, no one has run into a swarm composed entirely of superior tokage.)

## THE BAD GUYS

### LORD HIKIJI

Lord Hikiji is Usagi's ultimate nemesis – a treacherous, powerful and thoroughly evil man who loves nothing as much as he loves power, and who will stop at nothing to attain it. He betrays his allies almost as often as his enemies, and his secretive spies and agents are everywhere. His ambition is to become Shogun, by whatever means necessary.

No game statistics are included for Lord Hikiji, because it is rare for him to be directly involved; he is almost an idea more than a person. Characters will fight his servants and lackeys, and may get the better of them; but the dark lord himself remains forever hidden from view, biding his time and hatching new schemes.

In other words, the reason no game statistics are included for him is simply this; after the characters kill him, what do they do for an encore?

### LORD HEBI

Hebi is the serpentine vassal of Lord Hikiji. Although Hebi is a lord in his own right, he is subordinate to the Dark Lord.

Like many courtiers, Hebi is not, primarily, a warrior. He prefers to get others to do his fighting for him – preferably two groups of enemies, and preferably fighting far away from his presence. He is deceitful, tricky and smooth of speech; an apt and able manager for the schemes of the Dark Lord.



## SERPENT COURTIER

**Physical 4, Mental 7, Combat 5, Movement 3, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Bite 6 (4D6 Damage), Bonsai 3, Climbing 2, Etiquette 6, Evade 2, Jujutsu 8, Kenjutsu 4, Perception 6, Stealth 2, Tea Ceremony 2, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Speed of the Serpent; High Social Rank





# CHAPTER FOUR

## SHINGEN

(NOTE: THE LAST TIME SHINGEN WAS SEEN, HE HAD BEEN SHOT AND WAS STRIKING A SPARK INTO A KEG OF GUNPOWDER. HE DID THIS TO START AN EXPLOSION THAT DESTROYED AN ENTIRE CASTLE. IT'S ALMOST CERTAIN THAT SHINGEN IS DEAD; I'VE INCLUDED HIM HERE IN CASE YOU WANT TO RUN ADVENTURES WITH HIM THAT ARE SET BEFORE HIS DEATH. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE IS A CAT...)

Shingen was (or is?) the leader of the nefarious Neko ninja clan. Servants of Lord Hikiji, they were his agents for missions of assassination, theft, espionage and terror. Shingen was their most skilled agent; either their best (if he was working with you) or their worst (if he was working against you).

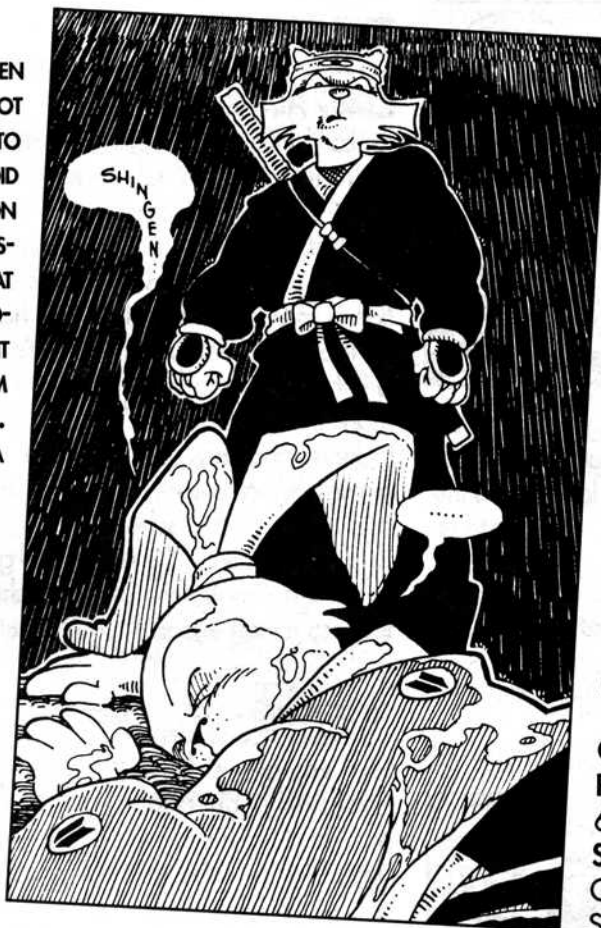
### Cat Ninja (PC version)

**Physical 4, Mental 3, Combat 4, Movement 5, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 3, Climbing 4, Evade 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kusarigama 3, Ninjutsu 4, Perception 2, Riding 2, Stealth 4, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Nine Lives

Usagi got the better of Shingen a number of times. Not only did he prevent Shingen from stealing the famous (and priceless) Muramasa blade from the Geishus, he also defeated him in two separate duels. However, while Shingen harbored some resentment because of these losses, he still came to respect Usagi when he learned that Usagi had honored the dead of a slaughtered ninja village. The two went on to foil Lord Tamakuro's *Dragon Bellow Conspiracy* – an adventure



that lead (it is assumed) to Shingen's death.

## CAT NINJA

**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 6, Movement 5, Hits 20, Defense 8**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 5, Climbing 6, Evade 4, Kenjutsu 5, Kusarigama 7, Ninjutsu 8, Perception 5, Riding 2, Stealth 6, Throw 5

**Special Abilities:** None (he's run out of lives)

## HATSU

Hatsu has already spent at least one of his nine lives escaping from Usagi's wrath. A crook, cheat and liar, Hatsu makes a good (if irregular) living as a gambler; unfortunately for him, he has a tendency to get people angry at him. Perhaps it's his perpetual scheming; maybe it's his ratty, unkempt appearance; or it could be his tendency to gloat and insult those around him.

### CAT GAMBLER (PC AND NPC VERSION)

**Physical 3, Mental 4, Combat 3, Movement 6, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Acrobatics 2, Climbing 4, Evade 2, Games 8, Kenjutsu 3, Perception 4, Riding 1, Stealth 4, Throw 2

**Special Abilities:** Lucky; Nine Lives



# CHAPTER FIVE



## CHAPTER FIVE: WAY OF THE WARRIOR



BATTLES IN *USAGI* ARE SWIFT, EXCITING AND SPECTACULAR. TO RECREATE THIS IN THE GAME, FIGHTS SHOULD INVOLVE DESCRIPTION, TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY. THE RULES FOR COMBAT ARE SECONDARY TO CREATING THE *FEELING* OF COMBAT. WITH THAT SAID, A FEW RULES ARE NEEDED TO GOVERN HOW THINGS ARE DONE, AND TO CREATE THE UNCERTAINTY THAT MAKES A FUN BATTLE. HERE'S HOW FIGHTS HAPPEN IN THIS GAME.

### FIRST STEP: WHO GOES FIRST

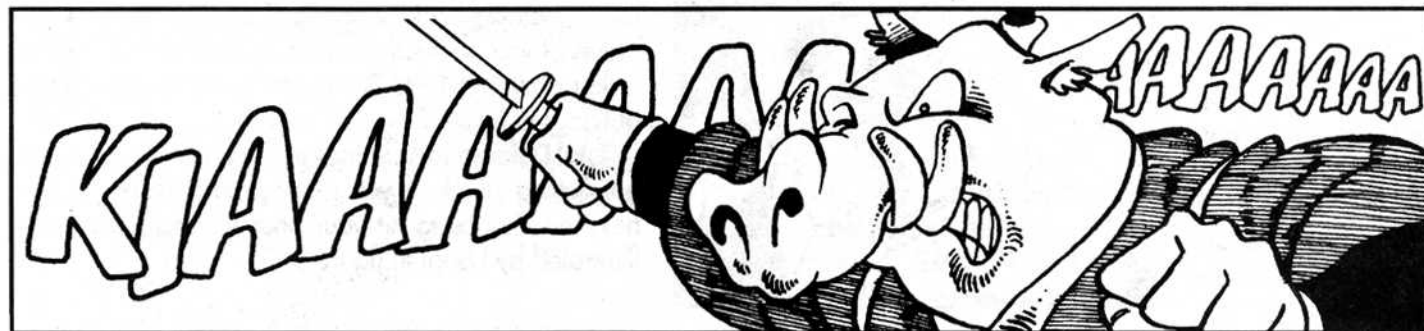
Whoever has the highest Mental stat goes first, then the second highest, and so on until everyone has made one attack. (Characters who wish to do so may wait and act last.) This is called a Round. After one round ends, a new round starts, with the fastest character going first again. This keeps happening until one side is beaten or runs away. If two characters have equal Mental scores, each rolls one die to see who goes first, re-rolling any ties.

### SECOND STEP: PICK A STRATEGY

For your attack, you can choose to do a Total Attack or a Cautious Attack. Alternately, you may choose to wait, in which case you will attack last in the round. If more than one person decides to wait, the person with the highest Combat gets to decide to attack first after everyone else has gone. If you decide to wait twice, you do not get to attack that round.

In addition to your one attack per round, you are also quite likely to be attacked. If someone is foolish enough to take a swipe at you, you can behave exactly as if it was your turn to attack; you can respond with a total attack or a cautious attack. Or, you can choose instead to make a Total Defense.

The three strategies (Total Attack, Cautious Attack, Total Defense) are something like the game of rock, paper and scissors. Both combatants decide in advance which of the three strategies they will use, and they declare them at the same time.







# CHAPTER FIVE

## USING CARDS TO HELP

One good idea is to give every player four cards from a normal deck of playing cards. It doesn't matter what number, as long as each player has one club, one spade, one diamond and one heart. When the time comes for strategies to be revealed, people can simply throw down the card that represents their choice. (This is easier than the GM and player speaking simultaneously.)

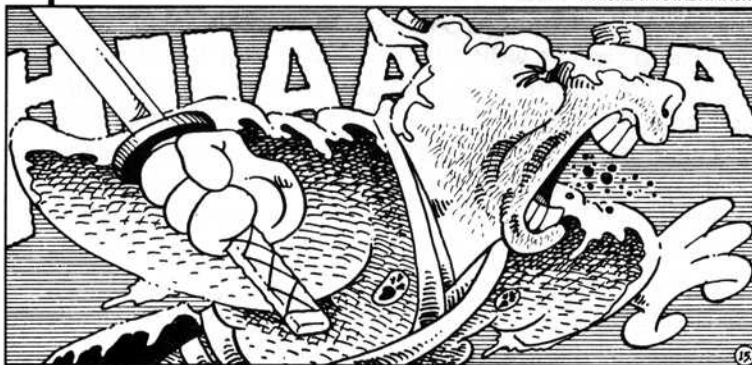
**Clubs = Total Attack • Spades = Cautious Attack • Diamonds = Total Defense • Hearts = Run Away**

Another way to handle this is to simply write out the strategies on index cards and let the players use them. One set of index cards can be passed around between all the players, since no one will be attacking at the same time.

## THE THREE STRATEGIES

**Total Attack** means you are giving it all you've got, trying your hardest to kill your enemy as quickly as possibly. They can be somewhat risky, but it's possible to do truly appalling amounts of damage. It is usually a full blown charge with plenty of muscle. For an example, see figure 1.

FIGURE 1. TOTAL ATTACK



Furthermore, optional rules have been included to allow Total Attacks that can strike at up to three enemies at once. (This is how characters like Usagi and Yagi can slaughter a dozen opponents of lesser skill in a single battle.) You may only do this when it is your turn to declare an attack! If someone attacks you, you

FIGURE 3. TOTAL DEFENSE



cannot declare a Total Attack in response and then hit him and one of his friends!

If you're attacking multiple enemies, you don't want the GM to know you're doing a Total Attack - even though total attack is the only way to attack more than one person. Therefore, if you want to attack more than one person, you only have to name one of the people you're attacking before you reveal your strategy. Once you reveal your Total Attack, you can name one or two other, nearby enemies to strike as well. (The enemies have to be very close by for you to attack all of them at once; standing in a row is the most common.)

FIGURE 2. CAUTIOUS ATTACK



A **Cautious Attack** is not quite as risky. It means you're trying to hurt your enemy, but you're saving a little something back to dodge or parry if your enemy strikes at you. It usually consists of several short, quick strikes or a few feints. To see a Cautious Attack, look at Usagi in figure 2.

**Total Defense** means you are concentrating only on not getting struck. If you make a total defense, you have no chance to hit your enemy. Total Defense is illustrated by Usagi in figure 3.

# CHAPTER FIVE



## OUTCOME

What happens when both sides reveal their strategies depends on which two strategies are picked.

### TOTAL ATTACK VS. TOTAL ATTACK

In this case, no one is really defending; it's all a matter of who gets there first. In this case, go on to step three – but whoever gets the greater score in step three does *double* damage.



### TOTAL ATTACK VS. TOTAL DEFENSE

In this case, the attack is so huge and obvious that it is easy to dodge. The defender can dodge it; it is not necessary to go to step three. Just go on to the next attacker.

### TOTAL ATTACK VS. CAUTIOUS ATTACK

A total attack will overpower the partial defense of a cautious attack. Go on to step three – if the character using the Total Attack gets the higher score, he or she does damage. If the character using Cautious Attack gets the higher score, no one does any damage.



### CAUTIOUS ATTACK VS. CAUTIOUS ATTACK

This result yields a lot of stepping, feinting, parrying, and possibly one of those cool chest to chest pushing contests.

Go on to step three – the attacker who gets the higher score does damage.

## CAUTIOUS ATTACK VS. TOTAL DEFENSE

A Cautious Attack is the only thing that can get through a Total Defense. This is because a series of short, testing attacks have a chance to find a weakness in the defense; while a Total Attack puts everything behind one blow. Go on to step three – if the cautious attacker gets the higher score, damage is done. If the total defender gets the higher score, no damage is taken.

**Note:** when it's your turn to act, you can't choose Total Defense as an action. This means there will never be a situation of Total Defense vs. Total Defense; nothing would happen anyhow. You may choose not to attack, if you wish. It is also possible to try to run away during your action, in which case you simply compare your Movement to that of your opponent. If your Movement is lower, your opponent gets to attack your back, with whatever bonuses your GM feels are appropriate.

## STEP THREE: COMPARING SCORES AND ROLLS

To figure out who hurts whom in a fight, you compare two numbers, one for the attacker and one for the defender. The numbers are found out in the same way in each case; (Combat + Weapon Skill + roll of the dice). Depending on strategy, the higher roll may do damage, or may simply indicate a successful dodge.

## STEP FOUR: DEALING DAMAGE

Once you hit someone with a weapon or with your bare hands, you do a certain amount of damage to him. If you hit with bare hands or feet or a wooden weapon, you do only Stun damage; it can knock someone out but not kill them. If you hit with a pointed or bladed weapon, you do both Stun damage and Hits. This can knock someone out and kill them.

To find out how much damage you do, look at your character's Physical score and the Damage Rating of the weapon being used; take the lower of these two numbers, and roll that number of six sided dice.

### EXAMPLES:

Lord Hebi has Physical 4 and is striking at an enemy with a nodachi (two-handed sword). The nodachi has a Damage Rating of 6. When he hits, however, he rolls 4 dice instead of 6 because he is not physically strong enough to use the nodachi to its fullest potential (though that doesn't mean it's





# CHAPTER FIVE

## HOW TO RUN ATTACKS ON MULTIPLE ENEMIES

Basically, you handle a multiple attack as if all the combatants were one person. You pick one strategy, you use one set of stats. The only difference is, you roll once for each combatant.

Find the target with the highest combination of the Combat score and Skill rating in whatever weapon is being used (sword, naginata, etc.). Use that as the stats for all the defenders. Pick a strategy – all of them will use that strategy. It's not strictly realistic, but it's very true to the *Usagi* comic book, where all the nameless flunkies attack or flee in unison.

The hero making the multiple attack rolls once and adds Combat and Skill, as usual. Compare this to each of the defenders and see how much damage is done. Simple, right? But just in case, here's an example.

Akira has a Combat score of 6 and a Kenjutsu score of 7. He is facing off against a wicked merchant and the merchant's three thugs. The main thug has Combat 6 and Kenjutsu 3. The merchant has Combat 4 and Kenjutsu 4. The other two thugs have Combat 3 and Kenjutsu 4.

Akira's player announces he is striking the main thug. He and the GM both pick out their strategies, then reveal them. The thug picks a Cautious Attack, in order to feel out his opponent. When Akira's player reveals his Total Attack, he says he's going to attack the two other thugs as well. The GM can decide if they're close enough to the main thug to allow this; in this case, they are.

Akira rolls and adds 13 (Combat 6 + Kenjutsu 7). He rolls a 10, so his total is 23. To find out if the others are hit, the GM picks the most able opponent; the main thug. Each of the thugs now rolls as if he had the main thug's abilities. (Because, let's face it, hitting three is much harder than hitting one.)

In this case, each thug rolls and adds 9. Even though the other thugs have better skill scores, they use the main thug's skill score, because their high skill is offset by their low Combat ability. (And also to give the GM only one number to remember, not three.) Thug number one rolls a 8, thug number two rolls a 10 and the main thug rolls a 15. This gives them, (respectively) totals of 17, 19 and 24. Therefore, Akira hits the two lesser thugs, but the main thug dodges. (Remember, since Akira made a Total Attack against a Cautious Attack, Akira doesn't take damage even when the total is higher than his.)

Let's look at another example, which highlights some of the dangers of recklessly attacking three armed people.

The monk Toshi has Combat 4 and Polearms 6. He is fighting a group of ninja and picks out the shortest one as

his target. What Toshi's player doesn't know is that the GM had decided in advance that the shortest ninja was their leader, who has Combat 5 and Kenjutsu 6.

When they reveal their strategies, the ninja leader has also chosen a Total Attack. Toshi says he's going to strike at the two ninja to the short one's left, as well. (He

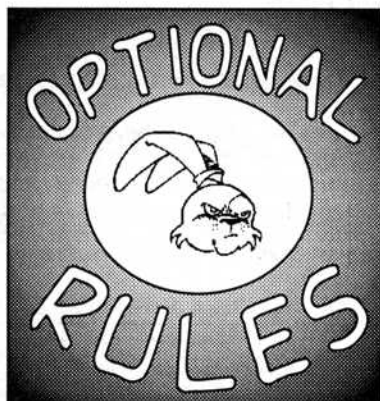
had decided to do so before he saw that the enemy's strategy was a Total Attack, and sticks to that. He could change his mind about the multiple attack at this point, but he would still be doing a Total Attack against the shortest ninja.)

Now Toshi is in big trouble; all three ninja roll and add 11 (the combined Combat + Kenjutsu scores of their leader), while Toshi rolls once and adds 10. Toshi gets a 10, for a total of 20. The ninja leader gets a 8, for a total of 19 - Toshi hits him. The other two ninja get a 10 and a 12, totaling 21 and 23 - two hits. However, since both sides took Total Attack as their strategy, all hits have their damage doubled. Toshi does double damage to the ninja leader - but both the followers do double damage to him!

One question you might have about combined attacks is their effect on a Bodyguard's ability to Claim the Blow (explained on page 28.). If a Bodyguard is one of the targets of a multiple attack, he or she can choose to Claim the Blow directed against one of the other targets. The Bodyguard can only do this if he or she has not made an attack that round, and if it happens the Bodyguard doesn't get to attack; however, the bodyguard does not have to dodge twice.

To make this perfectly clear, here's another example: Akira attacks Oichi, who is the Bodyguard of Motonari. She picks a strategy of Cautious Attack, and when Akira reveals his Total Attack, he targets Motonari as well. Oichi declares that she will use Claim the Blow, to intercept Motonari's strike; now Motonari does not have to roll to defend. Oichi only has to roll once - but since she used Claim the Blow, she cannot take an action later in the round.

One final thing about multiple attacks. If the initial target of a multiple attack chooses Total Defense, no further rolling has to be done; the attack can't succeed, and the defenders (who are all effectively using Total Defense) cannot harm the attacker.



# CHAPTER FIVE



not still a very dangerous weapon).

Atsumi has Physical 7 and hits an enemy with a bo (staff), which has a damage rating of 3. He rolls three dice for damage. In this case, the weapon he is using is too light for him to apply his full strength to it.

To keep this in perspective, rolling three dice of damage gives an average of 11 Hits. This is enough to kill someone with Physical 2 (or at least knock them out) in a single blow! A good roll on three dice could kill someone with a Physical score of 3.

## HOW TO PICK A STRATEGY

Naturally, there is no way to know what your opponent is going to do (unless you're a Shugyosha using Specialized Tactics) but having an educated guess is critical to combat success in Usagi. Even if your character has great scores, you will not do well in battle if you consistently pick the wrong strategy.

Total Attack is, in many ways, a double or nothing strike (or, in the case of striking multiple enemies, quadruple or nothing). Unless you're very confident in your character's skill and Combat level, or unless you have some reason to believe your opponent is inferior (such as a bounty hunter's Evaluation ability) this is not a good opening gambit; if you try it on someone who is better than you, you're likely to get handed your head with a nice thank you note. However, once you have isolated the best fighter on the other side, you can use Total Attack on the lesser fighters – possibly in groups.

Total Attack can also be a terrific defensive tactic. Remember that a Total Attack cannot be penetrated by a Cautious Attack.

Cautious Attack is best for getting an idea of an opponent's skill level. If someone responds to your attacks with a Total Attack, that probably means they're either very confident in their abilities, or they're desperate. In either case, Total Defense against them may be warranted.

Total Defense has the advantage of canceling out half the attacks made on you, no matter who makes them. Furthermore, they can also stop attacks if you roll higher, so use Total Defense against superior opponents. It's also a good idea to use it against any attacking Bull, since they get a bonus to Total Attacks.

## ARMOR

Armor is pretty rare in *Usagi Yojimbo*. Because the Shogun's Peace is on the land, there's little need to wander around in a heavy, awkward suit of metal, leather and lacquer.

There are a number of drawbacks to armor:

**It's heavy.** Samurai armor is lighter than full European plate, but it's still a lot of extra mass to haul around. Due to this, someone in armor performs all non-combat actions as if he had one less point of Physical.

**It's awkward.** It's hard to be nimble, lithe and quiet in a full suit of armor. People in armor cannot use the Ninjutsu skill at all. Furthermore, they take a -2 penalty on all uses of Stealth, Throw, Acrobatics and Climb. This is in addition to the Physical penalty.

**It's time consuming.** Do you know how long it takes to put on a full suit of armor? Try about an hour, with a skilled assistant. Without help, it simply can't be done – not even if you're double-jointed.

**It's expensive.** Not only is buying the armor costly, there's also costs for repairs when it's been damaged. Only people who are Courtiers will have the resources to own a suit of armor. (A lord might purchase armor for a Retainer, if the Retainer's position required it.)

That said, armor does have one thing to recommend it; it does keep you from getting cut up.

Here's how armor works; samurai armor has 12 points of "stopping power." This means that every time you get hit, twelve points of damage are deducted from the Hits you would ordinarily lose. Not bad, eh?

In short, armor has a big effect, but it is a big pain in the neck. If you know in advance that you're going into a battle, putting on armor is a great idea. On the other hand, you probably won't get advance notice that often – and when you do, you'll be fighting other people in armor.

## THE WEAPONS OF FEUDAL JAPAN

Historically, a great deal of inventiveness has gone into producing ways for people to kill each other, and feudal Japan certainly was no exception. The names of their weapons may be unfamiliar to you, so here are some quick descriptions of the weapons of the samurai, as well as special rules for their use in the game.





# CHAPTER FIVE

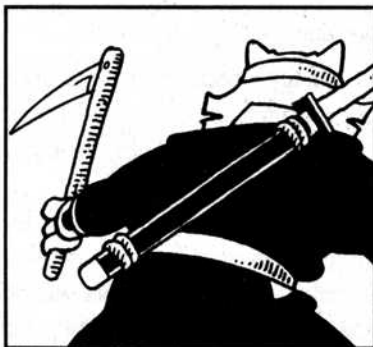
**Bo:** The bo is a basic staff. It's a simple weapon; a six foot long pole, sometimes slightly tapered on the ends. The bo is also a complicated weapon; it can thrust like a pool cue, strike equally well from either end and is long enough to make an excellent tool for parrying. Skilled practitioners can use it to trip unwary opponents, or even wrap it between their limbs to lift and throw them.

**Bokken:** The bokken is a wooden practice sword; it weighs about as much as a real sword and is made of hard wood. The Kenjutsu Skill is used to strike with it.

**Jo:** The jo is the bo's shorter cousin. The jo is only four feet long. It has all the drawbacks of the bo (light and not as hard as metal), as well as many of the advantages of the bo (light, quick, easy to obtain).

**Kama:** This weapon has a foot long blade attached at right angles to a straight stick about the length of a forearm. Many of the better kama are made so that the blade can be folded down into the handle. The kama is much more dangerous than it appears; not only can it slash and stab, it can be used to hook; so if a skilled enemy attacks you with a kama, you don't just have to defend against the blow, but against the recovery as well. A common attack is to strike at the head; if the strike misses, the kama-holder can still try to get the blade behind the enemy's head and draw it against the back of the neck. This hooking attack can also be used to get at armpits, elbows and the backs of knees - places where a samurai's armor has joints instead of plate. No wonder this weapon was favored by peasants for use against armored enemies.

**Katana:** The classic samurai sword, also known as a daito. The blade is curved, and sharper than a razor blade. The katana is usable with one hand or both hands. The shorter, straighter sword used by ninja is called the ninjato or shinobikatana. In game terms the ninjato does the same damage as the katana.



**Kusarigama (Chain and Sickle):** Many agree that the best weapon to use against a sword is a chain. This is because the chain can be used to entangle the sword, impeding it, and also because a chain, if parried, simply wraps around the blocking weapon and continues to move. For example, if a chain is swung at your head and you block it in the middle, the rest of the chain will swing around and still, possibly hit you; you'll just get hit in the back of the head instead of the side.

The chain and sickle (or kusarigama) generally has about six or eight feet of chain with a weight on the end, used for entangling weapons and long range attacks. The end of the chain is attached to the base of a single kama (see above) which is used for close-in attacks. All in all, a weapon for all seasons.

**Naginata:** The naginata consists of a five foot long pole with a long, curved blade on the end. It's usually used two-handed. This weapon is longer than most other weapons.

**No-dachi:** This weapon is basically a slightly curved sword with about two and a half feet of handle attached to four and a half feet of blade. That's right; it's basically a two handed sword that is taller than its user. Such a weapon can inflict horrendous damage in the hands of a very strong wielder. However, there is a drawback to using a no-dachi; it is so long and heavy that it cannot be drawn quickly. If you do not already have your no-dachi unsheathed and in hand when a combat begins, you must use your first action to draw it.

**Nunchaku:** This is basically a pair of sticks connected by a short chain or rope. They began as a makeshift weapon and developed into a recognized weapon. Contrary to

most movies, nunchaku are rarely constantly spun; instead, they can be used to catch weapons or strike around them, or they can be used to pinch and crush hands, throats and elbow joints.

**Sai:** This is a short trident-shaped weapon with a long middle prong, but no edge. It is very useful for catching and deflecting weapons, and in the hands of a skilled user it can easily disarm an

*"The Ninja sword was completely different than the Samurai's blade both in its meaning and in appearance. The katana was an almost mythical symbol of the samurai's class whereas the shinobikatana was merely another tool used by the ninja. The samurai's sword was crafted by master swordsmiths but the ninja's weapon was of poor quality, little more than a length of sharpened iron.*

*"It was a straight blade, shorter than the samurai sword and with an oversized tsuba or handguard. The scabbard was about three inches longer than the blade to accommodate a hidden compartment in which powders or poisons could be carried. The ninja carried his sword across his back and the shorter, straight blade made drawing it in confined areas such as low-ceilinged Japanese homes easier than a samurai-type katana."*

-Stan Sakai, Vol. 2 (Mirage), #14

# CHAPTER FIVE



enemy or restrain one by the wrist. A variant of the sai, called a jitte, had only one short tine. The jitte is the symbol of police authority. Both the jitte and the sai can be used with the same Skill.

**Shuriken:** The traditional weapon of the ninja, this is usually a star shaped metal blade about as big as the palm of a hand - the "ninja throwing star." This also applies to small, hand thrown darts about six inches long.

**Tanto:** A tanto is a bladed weapon shorter than a wakizashi, but longer than the average knife. The western equivalent is the dirk.

**Teppo (Arquebus):** Teppo is the Japanese word for gun, but in this case refers to what a historian would call an arquebus. These are matchlock guns; they are loaded by stuffing gunpowder down the barrel, then a lead ball, and then packing it all with a pole. To reload a teppo in the middle of a battle takes two of your actions, and if you are reloading your teppo you cannot use any strategy except Total Defense when attacked. However, there is a reward for all this trouble; a teppo always does 5 dice of damage, regardless of the Physical score of the shooter; this is because it isn't based on strength. This means that a teppo is the only way someone with Physical 3 can do more than three dice of damage.

**Tetsubo:** The tetsubo is a huge wooden club with metal studs. It bashes and crushes; not a weapon for the subtle.

**Tonfa:** Like the nunchaku, the tonfa are considered a "peasant weapon" because it developed from a common object in everyday use. In this case, the handle used to turn a millstone. The tonfa is basically a pole a little longer than a forearm, with a handle about half of the way down from one end. They are usually held by the handle, with the length of the pole lying along the forearm. This way, you can block a blow or a weapon without hurting your arm. They can also be spun by the handle to strike with the

tip, or they can be held by the other end and used to hook knees or elbows.

**Wakizashi:** With the katana, the shorter wakizashi (or shoto) makes up the paired swords which are the symbol of a samurai's status. The wakizashi is about forearm length with a slightly curved blade. A versatile weapon, many are balanced for throwing.

## THE WAY OF THE SWORD

A sword is a spectacularly dangerous weapon, and samurai swords are even more dangerous than their European counterparts; a good katana in the hands of a skilled wielder could cut through a man from shoulder to hip.

There are countless schools (ryu) of swordsmanship in Japan even today; trying to recreate the intricacies of different kenjutsu moves would be too cumbersome for a game such as this. The principal elements of sword combat are the same, however, regardless of specific techniques.

At the most basic, one can attack, defend, or do a little of each. For the purposes of this game, these are represented by **Total Attack**, **Total Defense** and **Cautious Attacks**, as explained above. The tactics of picking one of these three strategies should not get in the way of entertaining descriptions of your attacks. Which of the two descriptions below sounds better to you?

**PLAYER ONE:** I'll make a Total Attack.

**PLAYER TWO:** I'll make a Total Attack by using the Falling Rain school's signature "Tsunami of Steel" movement - whirling the blade above my head once, then slicing around at his belly and then his legs!

Not every attack has to be







# CHAPTER FIVE

described poetically, of course. Combats seem to work best when there's a balance between simple statements and die rolls ("Cautious Attack with 5 die wakizashi") on one hand and overblown, lengthy descriptions on the other. ("Gritting my teeth and muttering 'This is for my father and brother, you treacherous swine!' I'll spit in his eye, stomp on his foot, knock his naginata out of the way and bury my sword in his chest, rejoicing as his hot blood flows down my wrists...")

If the pace seems too slow, try less description (though the pace will naturally increase as you and your players become more familiar with the rules). If it isn't interesting, try describing fancier moves. They don't have to change the rules (everything is still, basically a Total Attack, Cautious Attack or Total Defense) but they can make the plain rules more fun. Fun is the goal, after all.

## THE WAY OF THE HORSE

Samurai horse riding (bajutsu) primarily involved combat riding; and it takes a lot of skill to convince a horse to gallop towards pointy metal objects. A good horseman knows how to remain seated even if the horse rears, jumps or suddenly stops. It's also good to know how to dismount quickly.

Horses in Usagi's Japan are usually guided by bit and bridle, requiring at least one hand on the reins to guide the steed. However, the stirrup is also in use, so a good rider (Riding Skill of 5+) can guide the horse using knees only, thus having both hands free for the use of bow or sword. It's also possible to hold the reins in your teeth, but doing so isn't easy. Getting a horse to go straight forward or stop has a Task Number of 9; turning left or right with the reins in your teeth is a Task Number 10.

## KYUDO: THE WAY OF THE BOW

For many samurai, the art of the bow (known as kyujutsu) was closely aligned with the practice of Zen. In Zen, the goal is to get rid of the sense of Self – to stop evaluating and start simply doing. This attitude is sometimes called *mugumushin* ("no-mind") and in that state, one acts with unfettered skill. This was especially sought by archers, who found that if their mind was completely empty of all thought, their accuracy would increase greatly. There was no feeling of separation between themselves, the arrow, and the target. The outcome was never in doubt; the arrow simply went to the target.

Naturally, your characters probably won't be this adept – at first.

Missiles projected by a hand weapon (bows or slings) do

1D6 of damage and have 20 yards of range for every point of Physical that the archer has, up to a certain maximum (to find out these damage limits, see the table at the end of the chapter). Thrown weapons have a maximum range of 5 yards for each point of Physical. For more details about missile weapons, see the Missile Weapon Damage Table (below).

## THE YIELDING WAY

### WARNING: COMPLICATED RULES AHEAD

The rules for the yielding way are a bit more complex than the standard rules for combat. This is not entirely true to the spirit of the comic. (Almost no one fights empty-handed in *Usagi Yojimbo*.) It is, in a very simplified fashion, somewhat representative of reality. However, it can be a big headache to run. If you wish,

simply forget this section's complicated grabbing and throwing rules, and just use the following rules.

- 1) Empty hand attacks do Stun Damage only.
  - 2) If you hit (using the normal strategies and rolls) you roll damage dice equal to your Physical score.
  - 3) If you want to take someone's weapon away from them, you have to beat them by 4 points or more.
- There; that's the EASY rules. Coming up, the complicated rules.



The yielding way (or jujutsu) is based on the idea that if you meet force with force, both people get hurt; if you give way before a forceful attack, you will be unharmed. A classic illustration of this is the flexible bamboo plant, which can sway in the wind without having to snap.

A typical Jujutsu move would go something like this; an enemy swings at you with a sword. Ducking under the blade, you pull on his arms – tugging him farther in the same direction he was going. Since he was expecting resistance when he hit you, he's now off balance. You can put your foot out and easily trip him.

The main attacks used by jujutsu are throws and joint locks. Joint locks work because the joints in the human body

# CHAPTER FIVE



(usually the shoulder, elbow and wrist) only go a couple of ways. When pressure is applied against them just right, the pain is intense. This pain response can be used to put someone off balance for a throw (throws are explained next paragraph) or can be used to render someone immobile.

The human body is not built to deliberately injure itself, so someone in a good jujutsu lock cannot escape, no matter how hard they try. Usually, they give up quickly, because the more you struggle, the more painful the lock is. However, most jujutsu locks are not inherently injurious; that is, they don't have to cause permanent damage. After a lock is released, your wrist will probably be a little sore, but in a few minutes you'll be as good as new.

## FOUR IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT JUJUTSU

- 1) Jujutsu damage is not decreased by armor. This is because armor protects against penetration, not joint twisting or damage from falling.
- 2) Damage from Jujutsu joint locks is Stun Damage only, and if you release the lock, all the Stun Damage you've done is instantly restored. If you get a good lock, there are ways to do real injury, but if someone can escape the lock, all your hard work is undone.
- 3) Anyone with a weapon has an advantage against an unarmed opponent. It is very hard to attack someone who has longer reach; if you're unarmed and attacking someone who has a hand to hand weapon (even something small like a dagger or a sai) you take a -1 penalty to attacking. If it's a huge weapon (like a no-dachi or a naginata) you take a -2 penalty.
- 4) You cannot attack more than one person with Jujutsu, even with a Total Attack.

Throws are a bit different, in that they can actually injure someone badly. If you've tripped and fallen, you know how much it can hurt. Now imagine someone throwing you to the ground with all their strength. Now imagine that you can't use your arms to catch yourself. Ouch.

## DAMAGE AND HEALING

Damage is subtracted from a character's Hits. Once you're damaged, you probably want to get your character healed up so that he won't die. Since the *Usagi Yojimbo*

*Roleplaying Game* doesn't use the Recovery derived stat, healing is really easy. There are two basic rules:

### HEALING STUN DAMAGE

All Stun Damage is recovered as soon as the battle is over, unless you were knocked unconscious. If you were knocked out, you stay out until the GM decides you wake up (GMs, don't abuse this; anywhere from five minutes to overnight is typical, depending on the needs of the plot).

### HEALING HITS

All damage taken to Hits is recovered between adventures. Note that there is a difference between a "session" and an "adventure." A session is each time the players and GM get together to play the game. An adventure is a complete story. Therefore, a long story (like *The Dragon Bellow Conspiracy*) would be an adventure which could take several sessions. If you have any problem telling when one adventure has ended and another has started, just assume that any time the character has had a week or more without further injury, their wounds have been recovered.

Although characters in *Usagi* have gotten maimed (both Ino and Gen have gotten bits chopped off) the game has no rules for this. GMs and PCs can play it by ear (no pun intended). A rule of thumb should be that PCs don't get permanently crippled unless there's good reasons - both plotwise AND because they made bad decisions.







# CHAPTER FIVE

## WEAPON DAMAGE CHART

Name	Damage
Ax	2
Bo (staff)	3 (Stun)
Jo (short staff) or club	2 (Stun)
Kama (sickle)	2
Katana or Ninjato (sword)	4
Kusarigama (chain and sickle)	2
Naginata	5
Nodachi (2-handed sword)	6
Nunchaku	4 (Stun)
Sai	1 (Stun)
Tanto (knife)	1
Tetsubo	6
Tonfa	3 (Stun)



## WEAPON DAMAGE CHART CONTINUED

Name	Damage
Yari (spear)	3
Yari-nage (javelin)	2
Wakizashi (short sword)	2

Remember; characters can only do as many dice of damage with a weapon as they have points of Strength.

\* Weapons listed as "(Stun)" do not do normal Killing damage; characters subtract their full Defense from the damage caused by Stun attacks.

## RANGED WEAPON DAMAGE CHART

Type	Max Damage
Hankyu (short bow)	5
Daikyu (long bow)	7
Shuriken	2
Sling	2
Teppo (arquebus)	5 (AP)*
Thrown Wakizashi	2

\*The teppo (arquebus or matchlock rifle) is the only ranged weapon that has a damage factor, and this damage factor applies regardless of Physical score. In addition, the damage from the teppo is Armor Piercing; any armor is halved before subtracting from the damage!

# CHAPTER SIX



## CHAPTER SIX: THE WAY OF THE GAMEMASTER

THERE'S MORE TO BEING THE GAME MASTER THAN MASTERING CHAPTER ONE'S ETIQUETTE RULES AND FIGURING OUT HOW TO RUN A GOOD FIGHT. ON TOP OF THAT, YOU HAVE TO GET PEOPLE TOGETHER ON A REGULAR BASIS, KEEP YOUR PLAYERS FROM PUSHING YOU AROUND (WHILE RESISTING THE TEMPTATION TO PUSH THEM AROUND), YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO STRING A SERIES OF SMALL STORIES INTO A LARGER EPIC — AND, NOT LEAST OF ALL, YOU NEED TO HAVE SOMETHING HAPPENING EVERY TIME YOUR PLAYERS GATHER FOR A GAME SESSION. THIS CHAPTER ALSO GIVES ADVICE AND INSTRUCTION ON HOW YOU CAN WRITE YOUR OWN ADVENTURES IN KEEPING WITH THE WORLD OF *USAGI YOJIMBO*.

To help you get started running your own *Usagi Yojimbo* game, we've provided two adventures (or "plotlines") suitable for *Usagi* characters. The first is *The Haunted Temple*, which is a very simple, straightforward story.

The second is *The Butterfly*, which could take two to three (or more) sessions to resolve. *The Haunted Temple* has a simple conflict, and it's easy to tell what the right thing to do is. *The Butterfly* is much more complicated, with several groups working at cross purposes; it requires more attention, but the complexity can yield a much better story.

It's important for the GM to read through these adventures before running them for the players, so he can get an idea of how the story should flow, learn about the important characters and so on. As you play more and become comfortable as a GM, you can create your own adventures for your friends.

### COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

As I have said before, *Usagi* is a curious mix of the humorous and the serious. The setting is strong enough to support both types of play; if you wish to run a series that is all lighthearted and playful stories, that's entirely appropriate. You could also concentrate on stories that are completely serious and intense; but most people seem to prefer stories that go back and forth.

I certainly can't tell you how to be funny, except maybe

that you probably shouldn't try too hard. When you get a group of friends, relaxed, going through the details of an *Usagi* adventure together, humor will flow naturally; or, if it doesn't, it's because your group isn't in a laughing mood. That's fine.

Take *The Haunted Temple* adventure in this book for example; there are no "funny" characters in there — but there's certainly the seeds of humor in Shino's superior attitude, Hoichi's shyness, and the abbot's faith in whichever character bragged the most at dinner, especially if the character was exaggerating or just plain lying.

What we can help with (we hope) is a few tips for running adventures in a more serious vein. First off, let's examine two of the most tragic and moving stories in the *Usagi* comic series; *The Duel* in issue 26, and *A Mother's Love* in issue 8.

The center of the first story is Shubo, a swordsman in league with a gambler. Shubo challenges the local kenjutsu







## CHAPTER SIX

champion to a duel, and the gambler places bets. People usually bet on the local favorite, but Shubo always wins. However, while Shubo is a remorseless killer, he is not vicious or cruel; his greatest wish is to get enough money to retire in style with his wife and infant son. The climax of the story is when Shubo challenges Usagi, who has no choice but to kill him. The story ends with Shubo's wife, waiting on a hillside for a husband who will never come.

*A Mother's Love* is just as tragic. Usagi meets a widow whose husband was a generous moneylender who was a great help to his village. When he died, the woman's son inherited all the loans and began exploiting and abusing those who owed him money. Usagi has a few inconclusive conflicts with the son and his thugs, but nothing comes of it. The old widow begs Usagi to kill her son, but Usagi refuses; then the old woman tricks him. Using Usagi as a distraction, she stabs her son in the back. The story ends with her asking Usagi to kill her, too, as she lacks the strength to



kill herself. Usagi initially refuses. But in the end, he gives in to her pleas, kills her and walks away into the night, deeply saddened.

Heavy stuff for bunnies and kitties, huh?

What makes these stories so moving is that there are no easy answers. In a story like this book's *Haunted Temple* or in the *Usagi* stories *The Doors* or *Village of Fear* there is an obvious evil; the choice between good and bad is very simple. In *A Mother's Love*, however, it is very hard. Which is worse; for the town to be destroyed by one man's greed, or for a mother to kill her own son?

It has been said that the most difficult choice is not between good and evil, but between two conflicting goods. This is the case in *The Duel*. Respect for the lives of others is clearly a good thing; but so is taking care of your family. What makes Shubo



tragic (instead of evil) is that he has good motives for his evil deeds.

A similar conflict can be added to *The Butterfly* if a love interest develops between Miyagino Kuroda and one of her father's retainers; the retainer must now choose between love, and his obligation to his master. He cannot have both and must choose to lose one.



# CHAPTER SIX



One thing that ruins a tragic plotline quicker than anything else is inappropriate humor. Nothing is more frustrating than figuring out a real sticky challenge for the your players' loyalties - and having them make a joke of it. If this happens, there's little you can do about it; however, just because they don't take the moment of decision seriously, does not mean they don't have to suffer the consequences of their actions.

*"The defense of the level of violence in Usagi was pretty unanimous from our readers. My own take on this is that Stan, despite his frequently humorous depictions of fairly extreme violence - I mean, we are talking about cute little animals being sliced open from stem to stern here - places enough weight and gravity on its consequences, and on the finality of death, to avoid the charge of either trivializing or exploiting a sensitive subject."*

- Kim Thompson, Editor, Vol. 1 (*Fantagraphics*) #26

However, there's a fine line between "creating logical consequences for character actions" and "punishing characters (and their players) for not taking things seriously enough." If your players don't seem to be taking the game seriously, perhaps a few less serious plots will satisfy them, and leave them more ready for something a little more intense.

You cannot tell your players what their characters should do; but you can remind the player that their character know the code of Bushido. You may warn them when they're about to break the rules that all samurai live by, but you can't keep them from breaking them. (Also, nagging players about their character's dishonorable behavior is no fun for either you or them; remind them once a session if you need to, and then let the chips fall where they may. Just keep in mind that if the characters are known to be dishonorable types, no one will trust them...)

The fine balance between the comic and the tragic is hard to walk, but that's what *Usagi* is all about. However, you should be fine if you follow your instincts; after all, there's know way I can know better than you what your players will enjoy.

*"I do not put any gratuitous violence in any of my stories, but I would never compromise the story by cutting out a violent scene or scenes. Nor will I compromise the culture and traditions that my stories are based upon."*

- Stan Sakai, Vol. 1 (*Fantagraphics*) #24

## HOW TO LEAD A GOOD STORY

The question of comedy and tragedy has been covered above. It gets its own section because it is, perhaps, the most important question of tone. However, there is more to the nuts and bolts of building a story than the question of whether it is funny or serious.

For a good story to happen there must be noteworthy events, or plot. There must be characters to whom the plot happens. Finally, the events and characters must be well communicated to the players through the use of description.

## PREPARATION

Preparedness is important for making both people and events interesting and believable. Both are important; no one is going to care about a very believable story where nothing much happens to dull people. On the other hand, an interesting set of events can be ruined if the players keep giggling or saying "Give me a break! That's just silly!"

Making up your mind in advance about characters and events can make running a session incalculably easier. This is not to say that you have to have ever possibility planned out, or that you have to know what each character had for breakfast; but if you know that the sword polisher doesn't like to talk much but knows something of interest to the characters, it will make him easier to play when they talk to him, and easier to help the characters get his information (if they need help; don't just hand them clues to everything you're doing).

Consider *The Haunted Temple*. You don't know why Shino is so stuck on himself, and you don't really need to know; but when you're playing Shino for your gaming group, you have a quick pattern for his reaction in just about any situation. Similarly, not every possible action that the players could take has a result prepared; however, the situation is clear enough that a GM should be able to wing it no matter what decisions the players make.

## THE FREEDOM OF THE PLAYERS

Your gaming group is playing because they want to take part in making the story - not because they want to be led around the plot like dogs on a leash. It is very tempting to set up scenarios where the players go from Point A to Point B to Point C no matter what they do. Some GMs are very good at steering their players, and can even fool them into thinking that the whole thing was their own idea - but it's often easier and more satisfying to give the players power





# CHAPTER SIX

over the plot. This is especially true of the players' own characters. Remember that you can speak as the character's conscience, dreams or memories, but the player is the character's will. Ultimately, they decide what actions their characters attempt.

Certainly you can second-guess what your characters are likely to try – that falls under the heading of preparedness. However, sooner or later, even the best prepared GM is caught flat footed. This is simply a consequence of letting the players have real input into what their characters do.

It may feel awkward at first, but try to roll with the punches. Instead of thinking of the unexpected as a disruption of your carefully laid plans, consider them

ends with him killing her – then the character will be satisfied and the player will have the memory of a long and intricate story.

## DETAILS

Once you have characters and events somewhat in mind, the question of getting them across to the players comes up.

One thing you should never do is give out the stats of your NPCs. Not only is this the most boring way you can tell about them, it also puts the cart before the horse by making the rules more important than the story.

Instead, think of the facts those stats stand for, and what details your heroes might sense because of those facts. Here are a few examples.

**WRONG:** "He has Physical 7."

**RIGHT:** "He's tall and thick, with big bulging muscles. He carries a huge nodachi, and he handles it like it weighs no more than a chopstick."

**WRONG:** "The two on the right are cats with Naginata 3, while their leader is a rhino shugyosha with Kenjutsu 6."

**RIGHT:** "The two cats on the right clutch long polearms, but they look at their leader nervously and shift their hands on their weapons.

Their leader, on the other hand, looks at you arrogantly over his horn, sizing you up. He draws his sword with a smooth, swift movement and grins."

**WRONG:** "The fox rolls a 6 and has a Mental 5, so he convinces you that you're supposed to let him pass."

**RIGHT:** "The fox continues to argue, and everything he says seems to make sense... he points out that you could be in big trouble for keeping him waiting, and he clearly knows all about the fortress, so he's not an outsider. He talks like one of the captains of the guard, he's got the right badge. All he needs is his pass, which he doesn't have and which he can't get because he forgot it inside. Do you let him in or not?"

**WRONG:** "You'll need to roll a six or higher to climb the

OH, JUST A WHIM. TO A WANDERER, ONE PLACE IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER!



as votes from the players; they're telling you (in one way or another) how they'd like the story to go. Since they're your audience as well

as your co-authors, it's wise to listen to them. Just keep in mind the fine balance between giving the players what they want, and making everything a cakewalk for the characters.

For example, if the character Akira perpetually wants to hunt down the ninja woman who killed his sister, it would be very easy to put him in a situation where he can surprise the ninja from advantage and kill her. Although this might seem to be what the player wants, on a deeper level it isn't. The character wants to kill the ninja; the player wants a story about overcoming the ninja, which is something else entirely. If the character can simply waltz up and slay this enemy, I guarantee the player will be disappointed. If, on the other hand, there are a series of setbacks, chases, inconclusive duels, escapes and reversals (possibly taking several sessions, or more) and then has a hard fought, climactic duel which



# CHAPTER SIX



wall."

**RIGHT:** "The wall is steep and smooth... it's pretty dark, and the rocks seem pretty slippery. You still going to try it? You'll need a six or higher."

As you can see, the trick is to keep in mind what the numbers represent, and to come up with words describing the way those things look, feel, sound and smell. For instance, someone with a low Physical score might be thin and frail, possibly even walking with a cane. On the other hand, someone with a high Combat might always be looking around, alert for an attack. Someone with a low Mental might always talk...really... slow and have to think a long time to come up with... the right... word. Someone with a high Mental, on the other hand, might always talk quickly and use big words or poetic ones. However, translating a character's stats into description is only part of getting characters across to your players. You also have to figure out how to show their personality with description.

**WRONG:** "Toshi is a wandering monk who cares little for material things."

**RIGHT:** "Toshi is thin, and his sandals are worn from the road. He wears a simple saffron robe and his head is shaved. He carries a monk's ringed staff, and a type of flute which many monks play to earn a few coins."

**WRONG:** "Captain Torame is a stern samurai who believes firmly in duty."

**RIGHT:** "Captain Torame always stands ramrod straight. His swords are perfectly placed in his belt - edge down to prevent a swift draw, but ready to be turned at a moment's notice. His clothing is perfectly clean. His kimono is plain enough that it isn't showy, but the quality is good enough that no one can say his master is stingy with him."

**WRONG:** "Miyagino is a beautiful woman who likes to flirt."

**RIGHT:** "Looking at Miyagino's delicate features, wide deep eyes and graceful posture, you find yourself feeling sweaty and itchy. Your mouth is dry and your words don't seem to want to come out right when she bats her eyes at you."

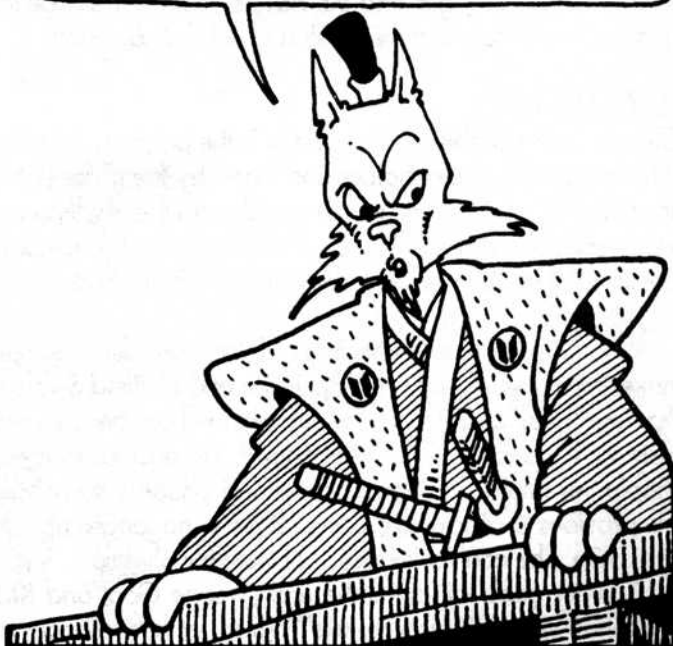
In addition to revealing what the character's personalities are like, the right descriptions paint mental pictures of them. A few other techniques are revealed in each example as well. The description of Toshi is an example of using detail from

research to make an impression more realistic and memorable. The details of the flute and shaved head remind the players that this is feudal Japan.

Torame's description, on the other hand, is an example of how you can help your players keep their own characters in mind. Worked into the description are judgments of the type a samurai might make of Torame. A description given to a bounty hunter might stress his apparent wealth, while a ninja might notice that he is alert and aware, and thus a difficult target.

Finally, the description of Miyagino gives another technique to use when portraying characters; you can describe their effect on the hero looking. A ninja might draw out responses of fear or contempt in a samurai, but greed in a bounty hunter, or a sense of challenge in a student warrior. ("At last you can test your skills against the secret techniques of the Mogura Ninja!") This is a method that should be used lightly; after all, these are the players' characters, and it's up to them to decide how they react. Going into a PCs reactions should only be done when the "right" reaction is obvious (a

I HAVE, SINCE CHILDHOOD, BEEN TRAINED IN THE MARTIAL ARTS AND THE SAMURAI DISCIPLINES. I LEARNED BY HEART ALL THE TENETS OF THE CODE.







# CHAPTER SIX

virtuous man watching someone beat up an old woman, for example).

These techniques don't just apply to people, of course; events, actions and places can all benefit from these same methods. Describing a castle as "big" or "strong looking" is less vivid than describing how it blots out the stars, or how the walls are granite ten feet thick.

## THE CLIMAX (OR, HOW TO LET ENDINGS HAPPEN)

The climax of a story is the point of maximum excitement, when the various events of the story come together and sort themselves out. Everything before the climax sets it up; everything after it is just mopping up. A good climax should have one or more of the following:

### A TOUGH DECISION

If you've followed the advice about creating a tragic plotline, your characters will have a difficult choice – between love and duty, perhaps, or even between life and honor. Simply making a decision one way or another is dramatic when the choice is such a tough one.

### ACTION

The big final battle is standard for a good reason; it's fun and it works. Even a comic plot line may end with a big fight (look at *Horse Thief* and *Kitsune*). It is also appropriate for a tragic plot line; danger and the risk of death (for self or for innocents) can heighten the tension of a tough decision.

### CONCLUSIONS

Climaxes solve problems. The climax is the point at which the characters make their choices and stand by them, for better or worse. When their choices are made and the results occur (or are made apparent if the results will take a while to come to fruition) then the story (or one part of it) is finished.

With these three elements in mind, let's consider a few climaxes from the comic. A classic is the end of *Blind Swords-Pig*. Usagi has a tough choice; fight Ino (whom he does not want to kill) or die by the pig's sword. He decides to try to cripple Ino instead. The two battle, and Usagi is successful; this provides a conclusion, because Ino is no longer able to harm him. The conflict is over ... at least for a while.

Another good climax is the end of *Lone Goat and Kid*, where Counselor Wakame tells Yagi to let him escape, or

Wakame will kill Yagi's son. This is a tough call; Wakame has betrayed and framed Yagi, giving the goat a good reason to want revenge. Yagi decides, however, to forgo his revenge for his son's life. It is then the infant son who decides that vengeance is more important than his own life and kills Wakame. This results in action again, as Usagi must then save the young kid. Once Usagi has done so, the enmity between him and Yagi ends, leaving the story neatly concluded.

Of course, role-playing games are by nature unpredictable, in a way that stories with only one creator are not. You probably will not get a tidy climax every session; you may have to make do with what presents itself. Every session may not need a climax; if you're setting up a larger plotline, several sessions of buildup may be required to produce a truly great confrontation at the end.

However, all plans for game sessions must be flexible, because the decisions of the players are unpredictable. In this case, you may not get the climax you want. Instead, you should try to recognize a potential climax as it occurs. If a situation arises that involves one or more of the elements described above, you can simply give it more attention, more discussion and more description until it becomes a climax.

In other words, planning a big showdown will often work; but when it doesn't, you must be ready to recognize a climax that can be just as significant, if handled properly.

## THE END

Often, the climax is not the end of the story; it is only point of greatest impact. Afterwards comes some mopping up known as the "falling action." It's called this both because the excitement level of the story gradually returns to normal, and also because it is during this phase that all the characters (who were shaken up by the climax) fall into place – often new places.

This is a short time after the climax to tie up loose ends, show (through detail) the changes brought on by the climax, and also set up potential for new stories.

For example, look at the end of *The Dragon Bellow Conspiracy*. The climax is the destruction of Tamakuro's castle; but afterwards there is a great deal of falling action which shows the changes the adventure has brought. Noriyuki has received respect from the Shogun, and can probably expect to be taken more seriously – both at court and by his rivals. Usagi is offered a position with Noriyuki, which he refuses. Gennosuke, for once, walks away from a substantial cash







## CHAPTER SIX

reward. Finally, it is established that Ino is widely considered dead, though he did in fact survive.

The story ends with all the results of the conspiracy settled, and the characters open to new tales. This is demonstrated nowhere as well as the fate of Zato-Ino, whose injury from the

battle at Tamakuro's castle has a significant effect on his next story.

This is what you should aim for in your falling action; clarify of the resolutions made in the climax, and establish potential for the next session or story.

### MAGIC IN THE WORLD OF USAGI YOJIMBO

Unlike many games with supernatural elements in the setting, this one does not allow characters the option of using magic. There are two reasons for this, the primary one being that no major character in *Usagi* does. The second reason is that the supernatural, whether magic used by people (Such as in *Usagi Color Special #2, The Doors*) or in the form of creatures (the recurring demon piper, or Ocho from *Village of Fear*) is mysterious, scary and evil. Nothing overcomes a sense of mystery faster than mastery; characters who can use magic aren't going to be impressed by magic.

If you wish to include the supernatural in your stories, by all means do so. This book does not include any rules for it, except this; the supernatural threat or power should never become more important to the story than the player characters. A magical threat might be more powerful than your characters, but it should never be in a position where they are helpless before it; reducing the PCs to helpless pawns pushed around by some supernatural agent is no fun for them, and resentful players are no fun for you.

Another thing to keep in mind is that overexposure to the fantastic will make it mundane; if your characters are constantly overcoming ghosts, monsters and wizards, soon these fantastic threats will become boring. On the other hand, if they only encounter magic rarely, and if they have no idea what to expect from it, the suspense, the thrill and the excitement will all be higher.



# CHAPTER SEVEN



## CHAPTER SEVEN: ADVENTURES



THIS ADVENTURE TAKES PLACE WHEN THE HEROES ARE TRAVELING, BUT ARE IN NO PARTICULAR HURRY TO GET WHERE THEY'RE GOING (I.E., THIS IS NOT A GOOD ADVENTURE FOR A MESSENGER WITH AN URGENT DELIVERY). THEY COULD BE ESCORTING SOMEONE, TRAVELING TO THEIR NEXT DESTINATION, OR SIMPLY WANDERING (SOMETHING USAGI SEEMS TO

SPEND A LOT OF TIME DOING). AS NIGHT FALLS, THEY COME UPON A TEMPLE. THEY MIGHT HAVE EVEN KNOWN IT WAS THERE; TEMPLES FREQUENTLY LET TRAVELERS STAY FOR FREE, MAKING THEM A GOOD PLACE TO ARRIVE IN THE EVENING.

(This is based very, very loosely on the story "Hoichi the Earless" from the movie *Kwaidan*.)





# CHAPTER SEVEN

They will be welcomed to the temple by a friendly (but somewhat self-important) senior monk named Shino, who will direct them to the guest quarters and invite them to offer their prayers to the Buddha. As the sun sets, the heroes will hear the haunting sounds of a man singing along with the sounds of a shamisen. If the heroes ask, Shino will explain (with some pride) that the singer is Hoichi, one of the initiates at the temple. If the heroes seem interested, Shino will introduce them.

Hoichi is blind. He is also very shy and polite. He will blush if complimented about his playing, and will answer with embarrassed single word answers if asked anything. The abbot of the monastery will invite the heroes to eat with him, and will ask them to tell stories of their travels. (Prompt the heroes to brag it up pretty good here, but be subtle.) Afterwards, he will send Shino to get Hoichi to play again for the characters.

As Shino leaves, he will explain that Hoichi is very skilled at telling the Epic of the Battle of Dan-no-Ura, a sea battle which occurred nearby over four hundred years ago.

The Battle of Dan-no-Ura is a genuine historical event. It took place in 1185, and was a devastating defeat for the ruling Taira samurai clan at the hands of their enemies the Minamoto clan.

A fascinating story is the Battle of Kurikara, which happened two years before Dan-no-Ura, and which set the Taira up for their eventual defeat.

Shino will be gone an embarrassingly long time, and then will return to report that Hoichi is missing. This will prompt a search for Hoichi (the heroes may participate) in which nothing is found. During the search, the characters may overhear some monks joking (or muttering angrily) that Hoichi must have found a girlfriend. The abbot will apologize and Shino will show the heroes to their beds.

The next day, Hoichi returns – pale and exhausted. When asked, he will say only that he had “urgent business” to attend to. He looks miserable and conflicted – not like a young man who had a hot date. But he will say nothing of his experience.

After Hoichi’s questioning, the abbot will pull aside one of the heroes and speak to him. (He will pick a Monk if one is available, or a courtier. Failing that, he’ll talk to anyone who looks respectable, or the hero who bragged the most the

night before.) The abbot will confide that there are stories that the spirits of the departed Taira clan do not rest easy in their watery graves. He does not think Hoichi went to see a woman; he thinks he was taken away by a ghost, and he would be deeply indebted if the hero would watch Hoichi that night and follow him.

When night falls, a storm comes. In the rain, the hero (or heroes, if the character who was spoken to decides to confide in his or her fellows) will see Hoichi waiting by the front of the temple with his shamisen. Then the character will see three glowing lights swooping through the rain – ghost lights. They will hover in front of Hoichi, who will briefly speak with them, and then they will lead him off.

If the hero follows, he will see Hoichi taken down to the seashore. As he walks, the ghost lights slowly transform themselves into the shadowy shapes of nobles in armor. When they reach the shore, a phantom pavilion will rise from the water, filled with the shades of dead Taira samurai and nobles. Hoichi will begin to play his shamisen and sing the ballad of the battle.

The ballad is long; if the heroes wait, they’ll be standing in the rain all night and will see Hoichi escorted back to the temple just before dawn.

If the heroes try to keep Hoichi from being taken from the temple in the first place, they will be attacked by the ghostly samurai. Similarly, if they try to drag Hoichi away from the watery pavilion, the three samurai will attack, while the pavilion sinks once more beneath the waves.

Fighting the samurai spirits is very dangerous, because they cannot be harmed by normal weapons, but their ghostly swords can cut through mortal flesh with an icy chill. If the hero makes enough commotion in front of the temple, the abbot and other monks will emerge, and the ghosts will withdraw. If the character or characters take a stand by the pavilion, they should realize quickly enough that they cannot possibly win this battle; if they try to pull Hoichi back to the temple, they can get him away from the spirits. If they abandon him, he finds his own way back in the rain.

At this point Hoichi will break his silence and tell them what happened. His is not a very complicated story; a man approached him and asked him to come play for a gathering of great nobles. Hoichi could tell from the man’s accent that he was very noble, and so he dared not resist. The man then ordered him not to tell anyone about where he had gone, but to wait for him the next night.

The abbot will be very interested, and very concerned. If

# CHAPTER SEVEN



the characters haven't told Hoichi that he was being abducted by ghosts, the abbot will now do so. He will furthermore tell Hoichi that if he goes with them a third time, he will belong to the world of the dead and will no longer be able to return to the world of the living.

Having said this, the abbot will ask the heroes to help save his initiate. He believes that if their weapons are painted with the holy words of the Buddhist sutras, they will be able to use them against the spirits effectively. If the heroes agree (and if they don't, poor blind Hoichi is effectively doomed to death) the abbot and Shino spend the day painting the sutras on the heroes' swords, arrowheads and kama blades.

That night, the three ghost lights will return for Hoichi once more; only this time, the heroes will be waiting for them.

A climactic battle should ensue. The spirits are great warriors, but as they are struck by the sutra-painted weapons, they will become injured. They will not receive the injuries the heroes give them, however; instead, the old wounds of their battle appear. A character might slash a ghost across the ribs, but instead of a gash there, a few arrows might suddenly appear stuck in his arm. When a spirit takes enough damage to "kill" it, it will suddenly age into bones before their eyes and vanish.

When all the spirits have been defeated, there will be a moment of silence. Then the ghost lights will reappear, and reform into the spirit samurai. The characters should have a

moment to express their dismay and fear before the three samurai bow gravely, then turn and head back to the shore.

The next day will dawn bright and clear, and the abbot will thank the heroes gratefully. The temple is very poor, but he will bless them thoroughly and invite them to stay as long as they wish.

A few sessions later, the heroes should hear that a musician-monk named Hoichi has gained great fame for his singing of "The Battle of Dan-no-Ura." It is said that nobles from all over are traveling to the temple to hear him sing, and are donating great treasures to the temple.

(If they go back and ask for money, the Abbot will explain that the money was given in response to Hoichi's singing, and belongs to Buddha. He will treat them to a sumptuous meal and a lecture on the evils of materialism.)

A few game sessions after they hear about Hoichi's new fame, they will be passing through a village and hear a song called "The Second Battle of Dan-no-Ura." This is not a classic shamisen tune, but a popular song – telling (in rather exaggerated terms) about the heroes and their defeat of the ghosts! The heroes will slowly but surely gain a reputation as mighty warriors (since the song describes them defeating thousands of horrible ghost warriors...each.)

## THE CHARACTERS

No stats are given for Hoichi, Shino or the Abbot since







# CHAPTER SEVEN

there's no reason for them to be in combat. If (for whatever bizarre reason) the heroes attack one of these characters, they should be able to kill any of them easily with a single blow. However, if they do this, feel free to inflict the murdering character with whatever dying curse you feel is appropriate – perhaps that the first 10 the character rolls in combat every session is turned into a 1. Or, you could have their ghosts show up for revenge, but that's not a very monkly thing to do.

## THE GHOST SAMURAI

In addition to their combat skills (which are impressive) the

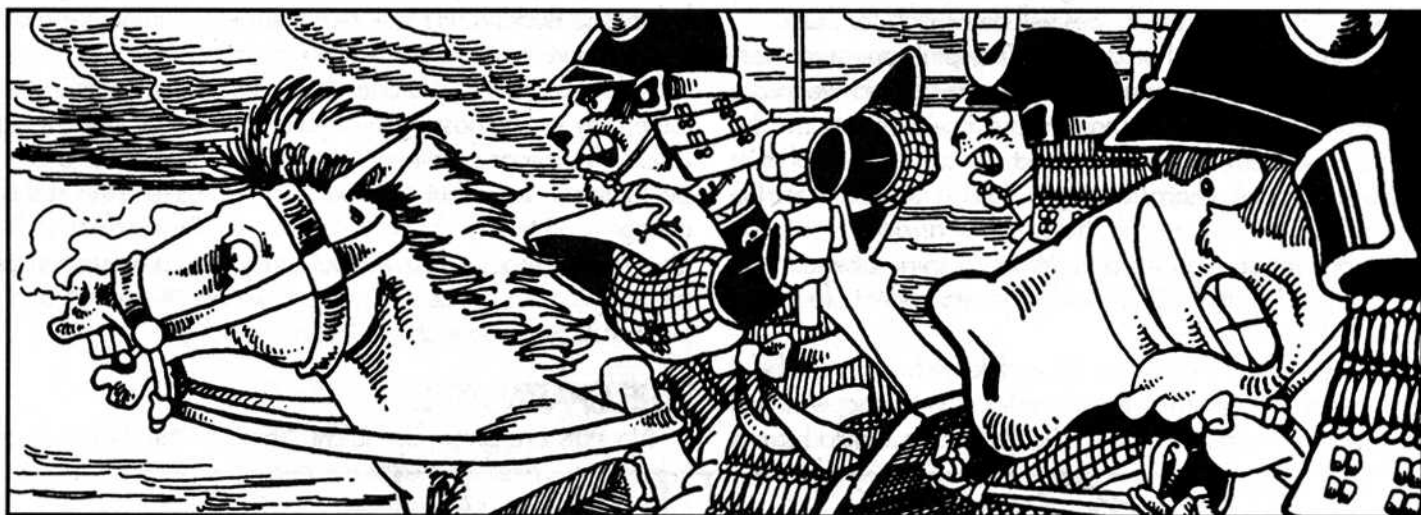
three ghost samurai have special abilities unique to their ghostly nature.

### RABBIT RETAINER/GHOSTS

**Physical 5, Mental 3, Combat 7, Movement 4, Hits 25, Defense -**

**Skills:** Kenjutsu 7

**Special Abilities:** Spectacular Leap; Spirit Bodies (Can only be harmed by weapons with sutras painted on them. The ghosts never take any stun damage; It's as if they automatically use Loyal Intensity every turn.)



## ADVENTURE 2: THE BUTTERFLY

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN HAS FLED FROM HER FATHER. THE PLAYERS' HEROES ARE SENT TO RECOVER HER – BUT SHE HAS FOUND HERSELF A DEFENDER IN A PEASANT BLACKSMITH. THE HEROES WILL HAVE TO DECIDE HOW TO DEAL WITH HER WELL INTENTIONED, BUT MISGUIDED GUARDIAN – AND QUICKLY, BEFORE BANDITS CAN OVERTAKE THEM ALL. THEN, OF COURSE, THERE'S ALSO THE AGENTS OF A RIVAL LORD SENT TO FIND HER – AND THE EMOTIONAL ENTANGLEMENTS OF THE HEROES THEMSELVES.

### LORDS AND A LADY

Miyagino Kuroda is widely considered the most beautiful woman in the land. Her nickname "the butterfly" refers to her grace – but also her personality. Miyagino is far from stupid, but she tends not to think things through. She is as rash and unpredictable as she is lovely. Furthermore, since her father has kept her sheltered for most of her life, she has no idea how dangerous the world outside of her father's tea cham-

# CHAPTER SEVEN



bers and Zen gardens are.

Miyagino's father, Lord Kuroda, is as crafty and calculating as his daughter is beautiful and headstrong. His family has never had the most powerful armies, but they are known for unexpected strategies. Similarly, his lands are not the wealthiest, but his influence at court is great. It is a testament to his power that every lord from Hikiji to Noriyuki owes him a favor. Even more impressive, almost every noble secretly considers Lord Kuroda to be on "his side."

As for Kuroda's true loyalties - who can say? His cunning is so great that any apparent loyalty could easily be a mask meant to deceive. What is known for sure is that he loves his daughter.

In fact, he loves her so much he has hesitated to arrange her wedding. This is not only because he likes having her around. But he is seeking a marriage that will both please her and strengthen his own position. However, his neighbor Lord Higari has lately been scheming against Kuroda in court, and Higari's powerful merchant connections have put Kuroda in an awkward position.

Kuroda finally decided it was time to marry off his daughter; but when he told her of his decision, she ran away from him.

Now Kuroda is trying to find her before the knowledge of her flight can cause him great public shame. He has hired a team of "specialists" to recover her. However, Higari has learned of her escape and has sent his own agents.

## ENTER THE HEROES

If your player's characters are in the service of a daimyo, their lord could easily be used in place of either Kuroda or Higari. In either case, their objective is to return Miyagino unharmed.

Stats for a group of ninja ("The Hunting Pack") have been prepared for use by the GM. If the heroes work for Kuroda, the ninja have been hired by Higari; if the heroes serve Higari, it is Kuroda who has employed the ninja.

## BANDITS AND A BLACKSMITH

There are any number of ways the heroes can track Miyagino to the smithy; Pig or Dog characters might be able to track her by smell. Asking questions of the peasants in the area might turn up some clues, especially if a courtier or

retainer is asking.

What astute listeners will hear is that a very pretty girl has been seen at the home of Goro the blacksmith, which is a few rice fields away from the village, near a stream. (Only characters who ask about Goro and who seem polite and upright to the villagers will be told about Goro's daughter and the bandits - the full story is on page 69.)

Once the heroes head to the smithy, they will meet Goro. At first he will be friendly and open, asking if they need horseshoes, explaining that he is not skilled enough to repair swords, and so forth. If the heroes start asking questions or trying to look around, Goro will become suspicious, then angry. If they ask specifically about a woman, he will deny everything.

In the meanwhile, Miyagino will be hiding in the woods, watching the heroes. If they track her to the forest line, Goro will threaten them with his kusarigama (chain and sickle) and he will specifically say something like "You bandits keep your filthy hands off my daughter!"

If Miyagino sees the heroes preparing to fight Goro, she will step out of the woods and threaten them with her sword. If the heroes say they've come from her father, Goro will say he's her father (which is obviously untrue) and she will threaten to kill herself if they capture her or hurt Goro.

Now the heroes are in a real pickle; Goro is more than willing to kill to defend Miyagino, and she's willing to kill to defend him. The heroes can't kill Miyagino, obviously, and it should be clear to them that Goro is very confused.

The heroes are probably skilled enough to kill Goro, and may be good enough to disarm Miyagino; but if they simply carry her off she will make their lives miserable. She'll constantly try to run off, she'll refuse to eat, she'll fight the instant her hands are cut loose, and (if returned to her father) will tell him that the heroes took liberties with her. Kuroda will not only refuse to pay the heroes (since "unharmed" refers to her dignity and virtue as well as her skin) but will order his loyal retainers to attack them!

It is much better to talk. Goro will still be suspicious and will keep his weapon near at hand, but Miyagino will be able to soothe him.

Her reaction depends on whether the heroes say they're from her father or whether they say they're from Higari.

If they claim to work for her father, she will immediately feel that she has the upper hand. She will tell them to go back to her father and tell him that she will kill the next team of bounty hunters he sends, or will die trying. If they say they're





# CHAPTER SEVEN

from Higari, she will make dire threats about her father's influence at court, claiming that Lord Kuroda could ruin the whole Higari family by proving that they had "kidnapped" his beautiful daughter.

Now, if Miyagino has decided she's in love with one of the heroes (see "Love At First Sight" in the sidebar) she may be more cooperative, playing along for a while, but then trying to convince her chosen hero to steal away with her instead of delivering her to her father (or to Higari).

Goro, meanwhile, simply will not let her go. It is possible (though it would take some fast talking) that he can be convinced that a daimyo has seen his daughter and fallen in love

– but he will insist on accompanying the heroes to the daimyo's court. If this happens, Miyagino will decide to give up – at least she'll have her new friend at court with her.

The story could end here, with Miyagino and Goro accompanying the heroes off to the court of Lord Kuroda. (Or, with the heroes kidnapping them by force and dragging them off to Lord Higari.) It's a good place to end a session; but the story is far from over.

## NINJA ATTACK!

What happens next is, the ninja attack. They showed up about the same time as the heroes (if not earlier) and have been watching events with a great deal of interest. They will attack at night, naturally.

If the heroes left Miyagino in Goro's care for any reason, Goro will attack them the day after the ninja attack, accusing them of kidnapping his daughter. He'll be hard to reason with, but the characters might eventually get a description of the "black clad men" who took Miyagino. In any event, they'll know something bad happened to her.

If the heroes are present, they may have a fight on their hands. The ninja will try to sneak in while the heroes sleep (sneaking up on any guards and knocking them out, if any were posted), grab Miyagino, and march her off (at sword point if necessary).

To see if the ninja can sneak up on them, have the ninja all roll their Stealth scores (6, 4, 4, and 3, as it happens). If a hero is asleep, have them roll half their Perception skill (rounding down.) If they're awake, have them roll Perception at -1 because it's dark. If the all the ninja beat all the Perception checks, they get away with Miyagino before anyone can notice they're there.

Of course, if a guard is posted, he'll be alerted when Denzo tries to knock his block off from behind, but Denzo might well knock him unconscious in a single blow. (If a Gambler is present in the party, have him roll a die. If the number is even, he chooses that moment to wake up and get a drink of water. If it's odd, he sleeps through the invasion.)

## IF THE HEROES SLEEP THROUGH IT OR WEREN'T PRESENT

They must now track the ninja (no easy task at night). Even pig and dog characters should only be allowed to try to follow the ninja if they have the Tracking skill. (The ninja are clever enough to cross the stream to confuse tracking. They are dogs themselves, after all.)

## LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

An optional complication to throw at one of your male characters is love at first sight. Simply describe to the player that when his character looks at Miyagino, his mouth goes dry, his heart beats like after a heavy battle, and his mind becomes entirely unfocused. It is up to the player to decide if this is "real love" or simply an extreme reaction to a beautiful woman.

This option is not presented to give the GM something to torment a player or make him uncomfortable; but the love between Usagi and Mariko gives a lot of extra interest to the story Homecoming.

It is also up to the GM to have Miyagino fall for the character in return or (to make things more interesting) have her be attracted to a different character altogether.

This can get very complicated; not just because of the emotional ties of the heroes, but because Lord Kuroda wants to make an advantageous alliance by marrying his daughter to another daimyo. (Such marriages were common in feudal Japan; in fact, marriage for love was almost unheard-of among nobles.) If handled properly, one character may have to choose between love and loyalty; and the other characters must decide whether their duty to their lord overrides their loyalty to their friend if their friend decides on betrayal.

(For more information on the samurai attitude towards romance, see page 9. in Chapter Two.)

# CHAPTER SEVEN



If the heroes cannot track the ninja, they will hear nothing about Miyagino for a couple of days; after that, however, the ninja will approach the heroes! After telling them about the bandit attack (described below) they will ask the heroes to help them rescue Miyagino.

Even if the heroes successfully track the ninja, they'll only find the place where the ninja had their horses hidden. By this time, the ninja will have ridden off, and will have a good head start. However, a tracker, Messenger or Bounty Hunter will know that all is not lost; they have a head start, and can't be tracked at night from horseback *but* they have a captive who will slow them down, and they won't be able to take her through the main roads. If the heroes start right away, leading their horses, they might be able to out-ride the ninja the next day.

However, the next day they will catch up to the ninja as they are nursing their wounds and burying the head of the Ninja Swordsman. See, the ninja scout had found a perfect hideout in the hills during the day; but when the ninja showed up there at night, they arrived only minutes ahead of Motonari and his gang.

The ninja tried to escape, but they couldn't get away *and* carry off Miyagino. They killed several bandits, but their swordsman was killed in a duel with Oda before the ninja could give up on the girl and use their vanishing skills. They carried the swordsman's head off with them and fled the campsite.

They will now propose a truce with the heroes, until such time as Miyagino can be rescued from the bandits. It's up to the heroes to decide if they want to accept this bargain; but the ninja can take them right to the bandit campsite.

## IF THE HEROES DEFEAT THE NINJA

The heroes can proceed the next day; but they'll have the misfortune to run into Motonari and his gang, who were on their way to the village to raid it. This can result in a mounted combat on the road. If the bandits win, they won't kill the heroes; they'll just carry Miyagino off as their prize. This will make it necessary for the heroes to go into the hills after them (possibly meeting Denzo and his crew, who will offer a truce since both groups want Miyagino safely rescued from the bandits.) If the heroes defeat the bandits on the road, they can continue on to their reward.

If the heroes confront the bandits in their campsite (no matter what has gone before) there are a couple of ways they can handle it. They can charge in, in which case they'll sim-

ply have to slash their way through all the bandits and Oda; but they'll have the advantage of striking from surprise. This approach is the most likely to convince the bandit followers to flee.

Alternately, they might surround the camp by night and attack the guards with arrows. If they can kill all the guards (there will be four or five) before even one of them can sound the alarm, they then have a chance of sneaking in. Then they can grab Miyagino and sneak out, or murder the bandits in their sleep, or do whatever else they wish. This offers a relatively combat-free option *if* they can kill all the guards quickly and silently. If they can't, the whole camp will be alarmed and armed in a minutes. Bandit followers will be unlikely to flee in this situation, because they'd know they were just as likely to be fleeing towards the enemy.

A final option is to ride up and challenge the bandits; if the heroes' champion can beat the bandit champion, the girl goes free. If this is done, Oda will step forward as the bandits' champion. If the heroes' champion can beat Oda, Motonari might just let Miyagino go; or he might cheat on the deal and order his bandits to attack. Even more likely, he'll accept the bet, but secretly order his followers to surround the heroes while they're distracted by the duel. If Oda loses, he'll order his followers to show themselves, and then he'll try to rob the heroes, beat them, and send them on their way. The heroes can either accept this, or fight their way out when they're completely surrounded. (Of course, there's nothing to keep perceptive heroes from noticing the flanking maneuver or to keep clever heroes from using the duel as a distraction to get their troops in place.)

## RONIN AND ROMANCE

### IF MIYAGINO IS RETURNED TO HER FATHER

Miyagino's father will initially be very pleased, but it is possible that Miyagino will tell him that the heroes abused her. (She will only do this if they killed Goro or if they really DID harm her.) The heroes can expect a substantial reward, especially if they bring him the head of the bandit chief Motonari (unlikely, given his seven lives and fanatical body-guard, but possible). He may even offer to make them retainers, if they aren't already in his service.

If one of the heroes asks to marry Miyagino, have that hero make an Etiquette roll; if he makes the roll, he should realize that such a request is completely inappropriate. If the hero asks anyhow, Kuroda will not be pleased. If the hero





# CHAPTER SEVEN

asks him in public, in front of many courtiers, he will make a great show of saying that his daughter, so willful and flighty, is unworthy to marry such a dedicated and talented warrior. Inside, he'll be furious at such rudeness.

If the hero asks in private, Kuroda will make the same protestations (as are polite and proper) but will secretly be more amused than angry (since in this case he was not embarrassed in public). He will then go on to obliquely explain to the hero all the problems that such a match would cause for both the hero and Miyagino; the cost of keeping her in a manner to which she is accustomed, the burdensome duties of court attendant upon marrying into the Kuroda family, etc.

Alternately, you might explain to the player that if his character can talk Kuroda into the match, you (as GM) will allow it; but that the player will then have to stop using that character, since his new duties will preclude any adventuring.

## IF MIYAGINO IS CAPTURED BY HIGARI

Higari will be very pleased as well. The heroes will be well paid and sent away as Miyagino sobs and screams her defiance at their employer. Don't let the delivery be a triumphant scene; the heroes may have discharged their duty, but Miyagino's fear and sorrow should sour it a bit. (If you are playing Higari as a good guy and Kuroda a bad guy you can soften this a little, but no matter how bad her dad is, Miyagino loves him and will be terrified to be in the hands of his worst enemy.)

If one of the heroes is in love with Miyagino and Higari realizes it, he may offer to "have them married." He would do this to further humiliate Kuroda. (Kuroda would lose a lot of face if his willful daughter not only ran away, but married a lowborn retainer in the service of his greatest rival.) If the hero really loves her, he may have to decide if he wants her on these terms, since Miyagino would certainly know why the marriage was performed.

If Higari doesn't marry Miyagino off to one of his retainers, he will return her, with great pomp and ceremony, to Kuroda. This, too, will cause great harm to Kuroda's reputation, and will furthermore put Kuroda publicly in Higari's debt.

## IF MIYAGINO REMAINS THE PRISONER OF MOTONARI

Motonari will eventually ransom her back to her father for a kingly sum. Kuroda will tell everyone that Miyagino was kidnapped from his house. (He'll still lose face for not being

able to protect her, but not as much as if she'd run away.)

In a bizarre twist, the presence of a well-funded and dangerous bandit in their regions will bring Kuroda and Higari together; Miyagino will be married off to Lord Higari and the two houses, united, will send their forces into the hill to find the infamous brigand. Motonari will be long gone by that time, however; he'll take his men and his money off to a distant city, where he will hire enough ronin thugs to become the city's crime lord. In this capacity, he will almost certainly cause trouble for the heroes again.

## IF MIYAGINO RUNS OFF WITH ONE OF THE HEROES

They can find a friendly monk (possibly one of the other characters) to perform a marriage, and the character will now have a wife. If Goro got to kill Uda, he will return to sanity and wish the heroes well as he departs. If not, he may still trust the husband of his "daughter" and will return to his smithy.

Unfortunately, Miyagino is not very good at living in the "outside world." She'll habitually do things like refuse the only food there is to eat, complain about perfectly adequate lodgings if they are not sumptuous, and speak longingly about her maids back in her father's castle.

On the plus side, however, she is friendly, intelligent, affectionate and certainly beautiful. Moreover, she's surprisingly talented with the sword (what, you think a feudal warlord's daughter sits around arranging flowers all the time?) and can earn a fair living writing letters with her calligraphy skill. After the initial adjustment period, she'll grow into a very useful, likable and skilled adventuring companion.

The problem is her father; he will not rest until she is returned to him, and he has the resources to make life miserable for the heroes. Basically, he can turn them into hunted outlaws; and it's not like a beauty as brilliant as hers can be disguised all the time.

So, overall, the hero will have a beautiful wife who's a good fighter, but he'll have to get used to being attacked by ferocious ronin screaming "Lord Kuroda sends his greetings!" Such is the life of a wandering outlaw.

## THE CHARACTERS

### THE BUTTERFLY

Miyagino is graceful and intelligent, witty in conversation, but the obvious sometimes takes her by surprise. This is because she is not used to the everyday, practical aspects of

# CHAPTER SEVEN



life; she has always had servants to attend to mundane details. She's a quick study, however.

Her attitude towards the heroes is likely to be haughty or playful at first, but she will not want to go with them, and will resist. This is doubly true if they were not sent by her father.

## MIYAGINO KURODA

Fox Courtier

**Physical 3, Mental 5, Combat 6, Move 3, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Kenjutsu 7, Riding 5, Perception 2, Acrobatics 2, Manners & Etiquette 3, Calligraphy 4

**Special Abilities:** Fast Talk, High Social Rank

It should be noted that Denzo, the ninja leader, has higher statistics than the heroes can have, as does Motonari, the leader of the bandits. This is not because they should be able to defeat the heroes; it is to make them a fair challenge to a group of heroes. This is especially true of Motonari; when the heroes confront the bandits, they may (if they handle things right) have both Goro and Denzo's Hunting Pack fighting alongside them.

Also, both Denzo and Motonari make excellent recurring characters. If the heroes foil their plans, these two could well escape to trouble the heroes later in your stories. Alternately, Denzo could (under the right circumstances) become an ally to the heroes once more; they might even think of him as a friend. However, unless one of them saves his life or does something equally impressive, Denzo will not hesitate to murder a hero for money, vengeance or any other advantage.

## THE BLACKSMITH

Goro's story is a tragic one; his own daughter was killed when the bandits attacked their home. Motonari was going to carry her off, and both father and daughter resisted, her so strenuously that Oda killed her in front of her father's eyes. Overcome by grief, Goro was struck from behind and left for dead.

His sorrow has driven Goro just slightly mad; when Miyagino showed up, he convinced himself that she was his lost daughter, escaped from the brigands and returned to him. Miyagino, recognizing the need for a place to stay and someone to protect her, has played along.

Goro is a strong and honorable man, if not overly bright. If anyone tries to take Miyagino away, he will resist them as savagely as he fought Motonari's gang.

Miyagino will fight alongside him; she has become very fond of Goro, and somewhat protective. Miyagino will hate for life anyone who kills Goro.

If Goro sees the bandits, he will forcefully recall his daughter's murder. He will spend his first combat action looking between the bandits and Miyagino, confused. The next round, he will charge into battle and kill Oda. (You can pretend to roll for it, but Goro's revenge makes for a much better story.)

## GORO

Bull Blacksmith

**Physical 8, Mental 3, Combat 4, Move 3, Hits 40, Defense 16**

**Skills:** Chain & Sickle fighting 4, Smithing 4, Jujutsu 4

**Special Ability:** Ferocious Charge (+3 to Combat when making a total attack)

## THE HUNTING PACK

These four ninja have been working together for a long time. While they are nowhere near as numerous as the Neko or Mogura ninja clans, they are nonetheless a force to be reckoned with. They have worked for their current employer on more than one occasion, but they know that if they are discovered, he will deny all knowledge of their existence.

Their orders are very clear; return Miyagino to their employer unharmed. They will fight to defend her (though not to the death). Unlike samurai, these ninja won't feel bad about fleeing a fight they cannot easily win.

Denzo is the most important of the ninja, and he's the only one with a clearly prepared personality; the others will more or less follow his orders. Their jobs in the Hunting Pack should be clear; the scout is their spy and guard, the archer tries to stay back and hinder enemies with missile fire, and the swordsman goes right into the thick of things.

**The Ninja Leader:** Denzo was raised in the strict training regimen of a ninja warrior; however, as a member of a peasant family, he was always expected to be meek and humble before his "betters" - the samurai and the nobles. As he grew, he became bitter about this double life; he knew he was a better fighter than most of the samurai swaggering about his province, but he had to keep his skills hidden.

When he became an adult and finally got the opportunity to work for a daimyo, he was very pleased, indeed. He normally charges very high





# CHAPTER SEVEN

rates for his services, and he spends his money in an extravagant fashion in order to make the samurai around him jealous. He is a proud man who often looks down on those with the good fortune to be born into plush circumstances (such as Miyagino). He is actually more likely to respect a ronin than a samurai, for he believes that ronin, like himself, have to confront the true difficulties of life.

Denzo has a sense of honor, though not the code the samurai follow. He will always keep his word of honor (if freely given), will never betray a fellow ninja, and would never stoop to torture. On the other hand, he would be willing to kill a helpless prisoner without a second thought.

**DENZO**  
Dog Ninja  
**Physical 5, Mental 4, Combat 6, Move 6, Hits 25, Defense 10**  
**Skills:** Kenjutsu 7, Riding 3, Stealth 6, Perception 5, Acrobatics 3  
**Special Abilities:** Tracking, Ninjutsu 5

**NINJA SCOUT**  
Dog Ninja  
**Physical 4, Mental 4, Combat 5, Move 5, Hits 20, Defense 8**  
**Skills:** Kenjutsu 4, Riding 6, Perception 7, Acrobatics 2, Stealth 3  
**Special Abilities:** Tracking, Ninjutsu 4

**NINJA ARCHER**  
Dog Ninja  
**Physical 3, Mental 3, Combat 7, Move 4, Hits 15, Defense 6**  
**Skills:** Archery 7, Riding 3, Perception 4, Acrobatics 2, Stealth 4  
**Special Abilities:** Tracking, Ninjutsu 4

## NINJA SWORDSMAN

Dog Ninja  
**Physical 5, Mental 3, Combat 5, Move 5, Hits 25, Defense 10**  
**Skills:** Kenjutsu 8, Riding 3, Perception 4, Acrobatics 3, Stealth 4  
**Special Abilities:** Tracking, Ninjutsu 4

## THE BANDITS



This violent group of bandits have been plaguing the border between the lands of Lord Kuroda and Lord Higuri for several years. Their leader Motonari is very clever; he knows that if either daimyo sends in a force large enough to deal with him and his troops, the other lord will consider it an invasion. If pursued by Higuri's troops, he flees into Kuroda's lands. If discovered by Kuroda retainers, he flees to one of his hideouts in Higuri territory. If the two lords cooperated, they could easily crush him and his band; but both fear coming out on the weakened side of a three-way conflict. Motonari knows this very well, and is careful to spread his attacks evenly. He even tries to make it seem to each lord that the other lord is suffering more bandit attacks.

Both lords have offered significant rewards for the head

# CHAPTER SEVEN



of Motonari.

**The Bandit Leader:** Motonari is a lithe, thin man with a scar that reaches from the corner of his mouth down to his collarbone on the left side; the scar was given to him by Denzo, who had been offered a heavy bounty for the outlaw's head. Motonari barely escaped the assassination, and has been on his guard ever since.

Motonari has slowly been gathering strength in the mountains. He knows he's no match for the armies on either side of him, but he also knows that they are unlikely to attack if he stays cautious and doesn't get too greedy. If he kidnapped Kuroda's beloved daughter, however, he knows he could extort enough for her safe return to retire a very wealthy man.

He does not yet know that Miyagino has fled her father; he comes to the smithy when he hears about the heroes. He thinks at first that they are bounty hunters after his head, and has decided the best defense is a sudden offense. When he sees Miyagino, he realizes right away that she's more than a simple peasant girl.

One important thing to know about Motonari is that while he will lie, break his word and quickly let his followers die to save his own skin, he will *not* kill in cold blood. He will kill people in combat, but will not execute helpless prisoners. Instead, he is more likely to rob them, beat them and send them on their way.

In this, he provides a contrast to Denzo, who is honorable and will always keep his word – but who will also murder anyone helpless if there is profit or advantage in it for him.

## MOTONARI

Cat Shugyosha

**Physical 3, Mental 5, Combat 6, Movement 4, Hits 15, Defense 6**

**Skills:** Kenjutsu 7, Jujutsu 5, Riding 3, Archery 4, Stealth 2, Acrobatics 4, Climb 2

**Special Abilities:** 5 lives left; Special Tactics

**The Bandit Champion:** Oda is a huge, grossly fat rhino. He is loud, obnoxious, and has rotted stumps for teeth. However, he is also deceptively quick on his feet and very strong.

## ODA (RHINO BANDIT)

**Physical 6, Mental 3, Combat 6, Movement 3, Hits 30, Defense 12**

**Skills:** Naginata 6, Riding 3

**Special Ability:** Withstanding

**Motonari's Bodyguard:** Motonari has actually become so concerned with his safety that he has recruited a skilled bodyguard to stay with him at all times. He also suspects (correctly) that she is falling in love with him. Her name is Oichi, and she will fight to the death for Motonari.

## OICHI (PIG BODYGUARD)

**Physical 5, Mental 3, Combat 6, Movement 3, Hits 30, Defense 15**

**Skills:** Kenjutsu 6, Perception 5, Riding 3

**Special Abilities:** Scent; Claiming the Blow (In combat, she will not attack; instead, she will hold back to use her Claiming the Blow ability against anyone who attacks Motonari.)

**The Brigands:** Motonari has a gang of about fifteen or twenty shiftless scum in his employ. They are mean, but gutless; if Motonari dies (or disappears) or more than half of their number are killed, the survivors will flee.

## BANDITS (VARIOUS SPECIES)

**Physical 2, Mental 2, Combat 3, Hits 10, Defense 4, Movement 9**

**Skills:** Kenjutsu 4, Riding 2







# COMBAT SUMMARY SHEET

## STEPS IN COMBAT

**I. INITIATIVE.** Person with highest Mental goes first. Each person gets one action in a round, working from fastest to slowest.

**II. TARGETING.** Attacker picks target. If a bodyguard wants to intercept, this is when it happens.

**III. STRATEGIES.** Both attacker and target pick strategies and reveal them at the same time. If the attacker reveals a Total Attack, he may choose to attack multiple opponents (see **ATTACKS ON MULTIPLE ENEMIES**, below).

**A. Total Attack vs. Total Attack** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. Higher total does damage, which is DOUBLED.

**B. Total Attack vs. Total Defense** - Nothing happens. Go to step II for the next attacker.

**C. Total Attack vs. Cautious Attack** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. If the Total Attack is higher, normal damage gets rolled. If the Cautious Attack is higher, no damage is done.

**D. Cautious Attack vs. Cautious Attack** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. Higher total does normal damage.

**E. Cautious Attack vs. Total Defense** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. If the Cautious Attack is higher, normal damage gets rolled. If the Total Defense is higher, no damage is done.

**IV. DAMAGE.** The person who is doing damage rolls a number of d6 equal to their Physical score OR the damage factor of their weapon - whichever is LOWER.

If it was a Total Attack vs. a Total Attack, this damage is now doubled.

If the defender is wearing armor, 12 points are taken off the damage.

The defender can now use any special abilities that would decrease or negate damage.

If the attack is with bare hands, the damage is reduced by the target's Defense score. If the attack is with a weapon, only armor deducts from the damage. Any damage remaining is subtracted from the target's Hits. (If your opponent rolled two sixes and a three for damage, you take fifteen points to your Hits.)

A character who runs out of Hits because of non-lethal attacks (punches, kicks, clubs, etc.) is unconscious. A character who runs out of Hits from lethal attacks (swords, spears, explosions, etc.) is dead.

## ATTACKS ON MULTIPLE ENEMIES

This is a subset of the STEPS, above. It takes place after steps I and II, and in the middle of step III - after strategies have been revealed but before the rolls are made.

**A. The attacker picks three enemies who are close together.**

**B. The GM finds which defender has the highest TOTAL Combat+Skill.**

**C. Each defender rolls 3D6+the total found in B.**

**1. Total Attack vs. Total Attack** - The higher total does damage, which is doubled. It is possible for some defenders to win while others lose.

**2. Total Attack vs. Total Defense** - Nothing happens. No defenders get hit.

**3. Total Attack vs. Cautious Attack** - If the attacker rolls higher, the defender takes damage. If the defender rolls higher, nothing happens to that defender.

Now return to the normal STEPS at step IV.

## MISSILE ATTACKS

**I.** The person shooting goes when it's their turn, as described in STEP I above (the INITIATIVE phase).

**II. TARGETING.** The attacker rolls 3D6+Combat+Skill (Throw, Archery, Teppo - whatever is being used.) The target rolls 3D6+Combat+their highest combat skill. NO STRATEGIES ARE PICKED.

• If the target rolls higher, nothing happens.

• If the attacker rolls higher, damage is done.

**III. DAMAGE.** This is done as described in STEP IV above (the DAMAGE step). The only difference is if a teppo (rifle) was used. In that case, the weapon's damage factor (5 dice) is used regardless of the Body score of the shooter.

## JUJUTSU RULES OUTLINE COMPLICATED VERSION

(If you want to use the simple rules for Jujutsu, look on page 50. They're factored into the STEPS above.)

**I.** The jujutsu attacker goes when it's their turn, as described in STEP I above (the INITIATIVE phase).

**II. TARGETING.** Attacker picks target. If a bodyguard wants to intercept, this is when it happens.

**III. STRATEGIES.** Both attacker and target pick strategies and reveal them at the same time. Multiple opponents may NOT be attacked with jujutsu.

**A. Total Attack vs. Total Attack** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. If the jujutsu attacker is fighting an armed opponent, the jujutsu fighter takes a -2 penalty, or -3 against large weapons like nodachi and naginata. Higher total does damage, which is DOUBLED.

**B. Total Attack vs. Total Defense** - Nothing happens.

**C. Total Attack vs. Cautious Attack** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. If the jujutsu attacker is fighting an armed opponent, the jujutsu fighter takes a -1 penalty, or -2 against large weapons like nodachi and naginata. If the Total Attack is higher, normal damage gets rolled. If the Cautious Attack is higher, no damage is done.

**D. Cautious Attack vs. Cautious Attack** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. If the jujutsu attacker is fighting an armed opponent, the jujutsu fighter takes a -2 penalty, or -3 against large weapons like nodachi and naginata. Higher total does normal damage.

**E. Cautious Attack vs. Total Defense** - Both add together 3D6+Skill+Combat. If the jujutsu attacker is fighting an armed opponent, the jujutsu fighter takes a -2 penalty, or -3

against large weapons like nodachi and naginata. If the Cautious Attack is higher, normal damage gets rolled. If the Total Defense is higher, no damage is done.

**IV. ATTACK EFFECTS.** Pick between a hold or a throw, and roll a number of D6 equal to your Body.

**A.** If it's a hold, apply Stun Damage only.

**1.** If the damage is greater than or equal to the victim's Defense, the defender cannot attack except to escape (see **ESCAPING**, below) and can only use Total Defense at -3. If the target does not escape, on the next turn the jujutsu attacker can attack at +3, no Strategy needed, and do a number of D6 non-lethal damage equal to their Physical stat, OR the attacker can throw the target next turn by rolling a +3 attack, no Strategy needed.

**2.** If the damage is less than the target's Defense, the target can act normally. The attacker still has a grip, and next turn can make another jujutsu attack the next turn. If that attack is successful, the damage is added. If it fails, nothing happens, but the jujutsu attacker maintains a grip.

**B.** If it's a throw, roll a number of D6 equal to the attacker's Physical score. The target's Defense is subtracted from this amount. Any remaining damage is subtracted from the target's Hits. The damage is *not* stopped by armor, and the target must use their next available action to stand up, unless they have a Jujutsu skill score of 4 or higher (they roll with the throw and get up as a free action).

## ESCAPING

This is only used if someone is in a jujutsu hold. The person attempting to escape uses these steps when it is their turn to attack.

**I.** The person trying to escape goes on their turn, as defined by their Movement in STEP I on the list above.

**II.** If you still have some Defense left, roll 3D6 + Combat + your highest hand to hand combat Skill. (Missile skills like Archery or Throw can't be used to escape.) The person holding you rolls 3D6+Combat+Jujutsu. If your total is higher, you escape and instantly regain all Stun damage taken from the hold. If the holder's total is higher, the grip is maintained. You do not take any more damage.

**III.** If you have no Defense left, roll 3D6+Combat+Jujutsu-3. (If you don't have Jujutsu, you cannot add a Skill to this roll.) The person doing the hold rolls 3D6+Combat+Jujutsu. If your total is higher, you escape and instantly regain all Stun damage taken from the hold. If the holder's total is higher, the grip is maintained. You do not take any more damage.

# APPENDIX A



## APPENDIX A: THE OFFICIAL USAGI YOJIMBO TIMELINE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS TIMELINE IS TO PRESENT IN A CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER ALL OF THE EVENTS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN *USAGI YOJIMBO* CONTINUITY UP TO UY3 #14. THIS TIMELINE WAS COMPILED AND WRITTEN BY JARED SMITH, MARK ARSENAULT, GLENN MASUDA, AND TODD BUSTILLO OF THE *USAGI YOJIMBO DOJO*. MANY THANKS TO *USAGI YOJIMBO* CREATOR STAN SAKAI FOR HIS HELP AND MAKING THIS AN "OFFICIAL" *USAGI* TIMELINE. ARIGATO GOZAIMAS'U!

The following abbreviations are used throughout: A = Albado; C = Critters (Fantagraphics Books); UY1 = *Usagi Yojimbo* Vol. 1 (Fantagraphics Books); UY2 = *Usagi Yojimbo* Vol. 2 (Mirage Studios); UY3 = *Usagi Yojimbo* Vol. 3 (Dark Horse Comics); UYB = *Usagi Yojimbo Book* (Fantagraphics Books); UYCS = *Usagi Yojimbo Color Special*; UYSS = *Usagi Yojimbo Summer Special*; RP = Reprint

### PREHISTORY (EARLY): THE MYTHICAL CREATION OF THE EARTH AND JAPAN

In the beginning, the heaven and earth were not yet separated, and were in a chaotic mass, known as "In" and "Yo" (Much like the Chinese concept of Yin and Yang.) The clearer and pure part separated first, and formed Heaven. The heavier part settled down and formed the earth. A reed-shoot appeared between the Heavens and Earth, then transformed into the deity known as Kuni-tokotachi. The kami (deities) were produced and many generations of various deities were born. In the seventh generation there came Izanagi no Mikoto, and his wife Izanami no Mikoto. (Mikoto is the honorific term for any deity or royalty descended from the gods. In Japanese mythology, royalty and deity are considered to be one and the same.) Izanagi and Izanami descended to the earth and lived as the first human couple. There, they created the Japanese islands and bore children: Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess; Tsuki-yumi, the Moon God; and Susano-o, the God of Storms. (*Grasscutter Prologue One: Izanagi and Izanami*, UY3 #13)

### PREHISTORY (EARLY)

Susano-o was to be banished to the Land of Yomi for his harsh nature. Before he left, his father's ten-span sword was given to him by Amaterasu, but he quickly resorted to his general nature and frightened his sister, who then became very angry and left the heavens to hide in a cave. The world was plunged into darkness, but the gods lured Amaterasu out of the cave with much jewelry and

beautiful mirrors. One of these mirrors, the Yata-no-Kagami ("The Star Hand Mirror"), and the jewels Yasakani-no-Magatama, later became part of the Imperial Regalia. Susano-o descended from heaven to earth and rescued a young woman from an eight-headed serpent. In the tail of the slain serpent he discovered a magnificent sword, which he gave to Amaterasu. The sword is known here as Ame-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi (lit. "Sword of Gathering Clouds of Heaven"), and belongs to the insignia of the Imperial House of Japan. (*Grasscutter Prologue Two: Susano-o*, UY3 #13)

### PREHISTORY (LATE)

After much time had passed, Prince Ninigi no Mikoto ("Celestial Grandson" of the Goddess Amaterasu) was sent down to govern the earth. He is sent down as the gods are not pleased with the behavior of the humans dwelling on the land. He was given the imperial jewels, the star-hand mirror, and the Murakumo Sword. He alighted on Mt. Takachiho (Kyushu) and married the Princess Kono-hana no Sakuya (Sakura) upon seeing her. They had three children, one, Hono-Orino-Mikoto, became the grandfather of Jimmu-Tenno, the first of the Imperial line in Japan. Jimmu later was known as the First Emperor.

### 600 B.C.

(February 11th): Enthronement of Emperor Jimmu-Tenno (who's real name was Prince Kamu-Yamato-Iware-Hiko). (*Grasscutter Prologue Three: Yamato-Dake*, UY3 #13)

### 81 A.D.

Prince Ousu is born to the Emperor Keiko (12th). (*Grasscutter Prologue Three: Yamato-Dake*, UY3 #13)

### 97 A.D.

Prince Ousu, son of the Emperor Keiko (12th) when only 16 years old, subdued and slew Kawakami Takeru, a rebellious chief of the Kumaso in Kyushu, who dubbed him with his dying breath, "Yamato-Dake" (lit. Brave Hero of Japan.) (*Grasscutter Prologue Three: Yamato-Dake*, UY3 #13)

### 110 A.D.

Again Eastern rebels rose up to the Imperial Court. On his way to subdue them, Prince Yamato-

Dake stopped at Ise Shrine to pray. At the temple, his Aunt, Princess Yamato-hime, gave him a bag of flints and the sacred Murakumo Sword. When the Prince came to the province of Suguru, the rebels took him under the false pretense of hunting deer, and set fire to the fields with the Prince in the middle of the field. The prince saved himself by cutting the down the high grass with the sword. He found that the sword was magical, as wherever he cut down the grass, the wind would blow in that direction. He made use of this fact, saving himself. He then used the flints given to him by his Aunt and dispatched his would-be assassins with fire. The sword with which he defended himself was renamed "Kusanagi no Tsurugi" (*Grasscutter*). (*Grasscutter Prologue Three: Yamato-Dake*, UY3 #13)

### 668 A.D.

August 5th: A Buddhist priest steals the *Grasscutter* Sword and tries to take it to Korea. There is heavy resistance from the kami of wind and rain, so the priest is forced to turn back. After throwing the sword into the sea to appease the dragon god, the dragon-king of the sea returned the sword to Atsuta, where it remained for a century.

### 686 A.D.

June 10th: The Emperor's mysterious illness is determined to be due to a curse from The *Grasscutter*, so it is moved to a shrine at Atsuta.

### 794 A.D.

Kyoto becomes the seat of imperial power. The Fujiwara clan assumes a dominant role in the ruling of Japan.

### 1100 A.D.

Crime, corruption, and discontent is rampant in the capitol. The reigning political factions in the 12th Century are the Taira (Heike) and the Minamoto (Genji) clans. Both are ancient families descended from the Kuge (royalty), but the Taira has close ties to the Emperor's Court. The Minamoto, though great warriors, are considered rustics. The Fujiwara clan is forced to engage the Minamoto and Taira clans to use military force to stabilize society. They eventually are played off against one another and a long period of





# APPENDIX A

warfare between the clans begins. By the middle of the century, the Fujiwara clan is no longer in dominance. A distinct military class is beginning to appear. (*Grasscutter Prologue Four: Dan-no-ura*, UY3 #14)

## 1180 A.D.

September 8: The rivalry between the Minamoto and the Taira came to a boil when Hojo Tokimasa of the Minamoto Clan attacked and killed Lieutenant-Governor Taira Kanetaka of Izu. (*Grasscutter Prologue Four: Dan-no-ura*, UY3 #14)

## 1182 A.D.

The famed Minamoto General Kiso Yoshinaka, husband of the beautiful female warrior Tomoe Gozen, seizes the capital and forces the Taira to flee with the young Emperor Antoku-Tenno, his mother, and his grandmother, taking with them the three sacred treasures of the Imperial Regalia. They escape by sea but are pursued by Minamoto Yoshitsune.

On March 21st, Yoshitsune crosses to the Awa Coast during a raging storm. The Taira are taken entirely by surprise and flee again with Antoku to the strait of Shimonoseki. (*Grasscutter Prologue Four: Dan-no-ura*, UY3 #14)

## 1185 A.D.

April 25th: The epic Gempei War, between the Minamoto and Taira clans, comes to a head at the naval Battle of Dan-no-ura. Minamoto Yoshitsune and Benkei defeat the Taira forces by driving them to the sea. The boy emperor, Antoku-Tenno, wears the Grasscutter into battle. When all is lost, his grandmother, Nidomo, takes him into her arms and jumps into the sea, where both perish and the sword is thought to be lost. Although the Genji (Minamoto) clan persevered, Japan was to suffer a long period of wars, which prevents a unified central government. (*Grasscutter Prologue Four: Dan-no-ura*, UY3 #14)

## 1300 A.D.

In the early part of this year, the Minamoto clan also falls out of power, as they also failed to establish an effective centralized government.

## 1329 A.D.

The swordsmith Koetsu of Bizen Province creates the daisho (paired swords), consisting of a katana called Yagi no Eda ("Willow Branch") and a wakizashi called Aoyagi ("Little Willow"). They are purchased by retainers of the Mifune Clan. These swords would one day be awarded to Miyamoto Usagi (*Daisho*, UY2 #11, p. 1-7)

## 1500 A.D.

The entire country is embroiled in endless civil wars until the end of the 16th century, when Tokugawa Ieyasu unites the country under a military dictatorship. This period marks the end of the great wars (the Sengoku-jidai), and Japan is governed by successive dynasties of military dic-

tators until the Meiji Restoration of 1868. This period of time also heralded the dominance of the military class. It is when the special code of behavior and morality (Bushido) is formally developed. It is also the time of the formation of the samurai caste/class. The samurai is known as "one who serves."

## 1577 A.D.

Lord Takagi, a Geishu (Aki) Clan retainer, kills his wife in a fit of rage. (*The Obakeneko of the Geishu Clan*, UY3 #12, p. 23)

## 1578 A.D.

Miyamoto Usagi is born in a small village in Mutsu province, in Northern Honshu.

Lord Takagi remarries a beautiful woman who turns out to be the cat of his former wife, turned into an obakeneko. The obakeneko kills Lord Takagi and the entire household on a moonless night, and the house remains deserted, haunted by the obakeneko. (*The Obakeneko of the Geishu Clan*, UY3 #12, p. 23)

## 1588 A.D.

Young Usagi has his first fight with playmate Kenichi, and they find a tokage cave in the Eastern Mountain (*Homecoming II*, C #11, p. 4-5; RP UYB1, p.124-5)

## 1592 A.D.

Spring: In the Geishu Province, young Tomoe Ame (age 12) defeats her brother Tajima in a sparring match before their father, Tatsutaro, Master of the Falling Rain School of Fencing. She later finds out that because she is a girl, she could never head the school after her father, no matter how skilled she is with the sword. (*Tomoe's Story*, UYCS #1, p. 6-8)

## 1593 A.D.

Summer: Usagi is told by his father that he and his playmate Kenichi must go to the Dogora Fencing School to learn swordsmanship, since they will soon be of age and receive their samurai top-knots (*Samurai I*, UY1 #1, p. 5; RP UYB2, p. 9)

Usagi leaves home at the age of 14 (almost 15) with Kenichi (*Samurai I*, UY1 #1, p. 5-6; RP UYB2, p. 9-10)

Three days after leaving home, Usagi and Kenichi see Katsuchi fight and beat some Dogora students. Usagi becomes determined to have Katsuchi as his sensei (teacher), while Kenichi continues on to the city of Sendai and joins the Dogora Fencing School (*Samurai I*, UY1 #1, p. 6-9; RP UYB2, p. 10-13)

After a day of waiting, Katsuchi agrees to take Usagi on as a student (*Samurai I*, UY1 #1, p. 13-14; RP UYB2, p. 13-14)

Early Fall: Usagi is captured by an obakemono that has also captured Aki-Onna, the Autumn-Woman (*Autumn*, UY2 #3, p. 21-28)

Fall: Six months after beginning study Katsuchi begins to develop Usagi's awareness by hitting him with a bamboo stick when he isn't careful.

Winter: Usagi has developed his awareness to the

point where he is cautious as second nature...almost. (*Samurai II*, UY1 #1, p. 14; RP UYB2, p. 18)

## 1594 A.D.

Spring: Lord Araki rebels against his Lord Geishu Mataichi. Lord Araki's forces are led by General Ikeda but they are defeated and Lord Araki commits seppuku. General Ikeda becomes a peasant and begins raising a family, all the while waiting for the chance to gather the Araki loyalists and get revenge on Lord Mataichi. (*The Patience of the Spider*, UY3 #10, p. 17-22)

Fall: Usagi thinks he accidentally kills Katsuchi (*Gaki*, UY1 #32, p. 1-8; RP UYB7, p. 33-40)

Katsuchi presents Usagi with his first bokken and begins his training in earnest (*Samurai II*, UY1 #1, p. 16-17; RP UYB2, p. 20-21)

## 1595 A.D.

Spring/summer: Katsuchi fights off ruffians (*Samurai III*, UYB2, p.26-33)

Lord Hikiji's territorial expansions are brought to a temporary halt due to a defeat from Lord Mifune. Usagi and Katsuchi go to the scene of that recent battle, where Usagi steals a wakizashi from a dead soldier. After nightmares he returns it but is caught by Mifune soldiers who think he is a looter. Lord Mifune and Gunichi, his bodyguard, arrive. Lord Mifune sees Usagi's integrity and lets him go. (*Battlefield*, UY2 #6-8)

Fall: About a year after receiving his bokken, Usagi strikes his first blow versus Katsuchi (*Samurai II*, UY1 #1, p. 18-20; RP UYB2, p. 22-24)

## 1597 A.D.

Summer: Usagi goes with Katsuchi to a tournament sponsored by the Dogora fencing school, which he wins by defeating Kenichi. As a trophy, Usagi is presented with the daisho of Yagi no Eda and Aoyagi (crafted by Koetsu in 1329) by his future Lord Mifune. (*Samurai III*, UY1 #2, p. 1-10; RP UYB2, p. 35-44)

Fall: Two months later: Usagi leaves Katsuchi and secludes himself in an abandoned hut in the mountains to get used to his new swords, meditate, and prepare to serve Lord Mifune (*Samurai IV*, UY1 #2, p. 11; RP UYB2, p. 45)

One month later, Gunichi, bodyguard to Lord Mifune, challenges Usagi to a duel. Dogora students, jealous of Usagi's winning the tournament, ambush them and interrupt the duel. Gunichi and Usagi fight them off, resulting in Usagi's first kill. Their duel is called a draw and Gunichi says he will recommend Usagi's skills to Lord Mifune (*Samurai IV*, UY1 #2, p. 11-20; RP UYB2, p. 45-54)

After the duel, Usagi returns to his village once more before entering Mifune's service. On the way, he stops at an inn one day from the village and finds a drunken and disgraced Kenichi. They then hear of bandits terrorizing their village, so both return to help (*Samurai V*, UY1 #3, p. 3-10; RP UYB2, p. 57-64)

The following day, Usagi and Kenichi arrive in their village and help fight off the bandits. That

# APPENDIX A



night, Mariko learns that Usagi is planning on leaving the village after a few weeks to serve Lord Mifune. She also learns that Kenichi will be staying, not going on to serve Lord Mifune. (*Samurai VI*, UY1 #3, p. 11-20; RP UYB2, p. 65-74)

Usagi stays with his father for a few weeks.

The day before Usagi leaves his village, he and Mariko have a picnic in the countryside. One thing leads to another and the two conceive a child (Jotaro), although Usagi doesn't know this. (*Homecoming I*, C #10, p. 4; RP UYB1, p. 114; *Circles Chapter 2: Remembrances*, UY1 #29, p. 4-5; RP UYB6, p. 110-111)

The following day, Usagi leaves his village and goes to visit Katsuchi to say good-bye. Usagi arrives as Dogora Fencing School students and Chief Instructor Hagashimori attack Katsuchi, knocking Katsuchi off a cliff into a river. Usagi, in a rage, responds by killing Hagashimori. (*Circles Chapter 1: Wind Over the Tombstones*, UY1 #28, p. 5-9; RP UYB6, p. 90-95)

Usagi spends a week searching for Katsuchi's body in vain. Believing that Katsuchi is dead, he goes to present himself to Lord Mifune. (*Circles Chapter 1: Wind Over the Tombstones*, UY1 #28, p. 10; RP UYB6, p. 96)

Lord Mifune accepts Usagi as a retainer

ing himself by military right to reign as Shogun

Lord Hikiji passes through Usagi's village to meet Lord Mifune in battle. Usagi's father stands up to Hikiji and is killed. Hikiji appoints Kenichi magistrate (*Homecoming I*, C #10, p. 5-7; RP UYB1, p. 115-7)

The Battle of Adachigahara takes place - the final battle between Mifune and Hikiji. Lord Mifune's army is winning until General Toda turns traitor. Gunichi decides to escape, abandoning Lord Mifune. Usagi swears to kill him, but then Lord Mifune is felled by archers. Usagi beheads Lord Mifune and fights through Hikiji's lines, encountering Hikiji himself! Lord Hikiji strikes Usagi in the head, giving him his trademark scar above his left eye. Usagi escapes the battle and buries Mifune's head in the surrounding hills so that it may not be displayed and disgraced. Usagi returns to the plain but the battle is over. (*Samurai VIII*, UY1 #4, p. 8-18; RP UYB2, p. 82-92; *Goblin of Adachigahara*, A #2, p. 2-4; RP UYSS #1, p. 3-5; RP UYB1, p. 4-6; *Return to Adachi Plain*, UYB4 Hardcover, p. 181-187; *Return to Adachi Plain*, UY3 #10, p. 2-7)

After the battle, Usagi runs to the Tangled Skein, a haunted forest, to hide from Hikiji troops looking for Mifune stragglers Geishu (*The Tangled Skein*, C #38, p. 1-3; RP UYB7, p. 65-67)

Usagi seeks shelter in a hut of an old woman who turns out to be a obakemono and is rescued by the ghost of Lord Mifune (*The Tangled Skein*, C #38, p. 3-8; RP UYB7, p. 67-72)

After the battle General Tadaoka, who served Lord Mifune, attempts to commit seppuku. But he is killed by Hikiji soldiers before he can finish, causing his spirit to haunt the area. (*Broken Ritual*, UY1 #33, p. 7-13; RP UYB7, p. 49-55)

Usagi hides in the Tangled Skein for one week, living on grubs and rain water. (*Samurai VIII*, UY1 #4, p. 18; RP UYB2, p. 92)

Usagi leaves the Tangled Skein and escapes to another province, beginning his life as a ronin. (*Samurai VIII*, UY1 #4, p. 18; RP UYB2, p. 92)

## 1601

*Spring*: Lord Geishu Mataichi dies, and is succeeded by his son, Noriyuki. Araki loyalists gather for revenge, asking General Ikeda to lead them, but Ikeda refuses, realizing he is more dedicated to his family now. (*The Patience of the Spider*, UY3 #10, p. 23-24)

A few days later: Usagi meets the new Geishu Lord Noriyuki and his retainer Tomoe and helps them fight off assassination attempts by Hikiji agents. Noriyuki hires Usagi as a bodyguard to help him reach Edo, where he is to be instated officially. Usagi and Tomoe talk a little of their pasts. (*Lone Rabbit and Child, Part 1*, A #3, p. 1-7; RP UYSS #1, p. 11-16; RP UYB1, p. 13-18)

The next day Usagi, Tomoe and Noriyuki continue towards Edo, until Tomoe is badly

wounded in another ninja attack. Noriyuki and Usagi get her to the town of Narai. (*Lone Rabbit and Child Part 1*, A #3, p. 7-12; RP UYSS #1, p. 16-21; RP UYB1, p. 18-23)

Two days later Usagi and Noriyuki continue on with Noriyuki pretending to be Usagi's son. Usagi fights off an attack by Neko ninja, then Noriyuki's Edo retainers finally arrive and escort him to safety. (*Lone Rabbit and Child Part 2*, A #4, p. 1-7; RP UYSS #1, p. 22-28; RP UYB1, p. 24-30)

A few days later in Edo, Usagi discretely leaves Noriyuki to continue his wanderings, while Tomoe finally arrives in Edo a week later. Tomoe sets off to find Usagi and thank him on behalf of Lord Noriyuki. (*Lone Rabbit and Child Part 2*, A #4, p. 8; RP UYSS #1, p. 29; RP UYB1, p. 31)

A few days later Usagi hears the dying confession of a samurai carrying a missive implicating Lord Hikiji in the assassination attempts on Lord Noriyuki and swears to deliver it. Neko ninja attack Usagi for the message and he is only saved from their overwhelming numbers by the arrival of Tomoe. (*The Confession*, UYSS #1, p. 34-43; RP UYB1, p. 35-44)

A few days later, Usagi and Tomoe have returned to the Noriyuki mansion in Edo, where Usagi is healing from his battle with the Neko ninja. Together they take the missive to be presented to the Shogun, where it is turned over to a counselor under Hikiji's influence. (*The Confession*, UYSS #1, p. 44-47; RP UYB1, p. 45-48)

Two weeks later Usagi takes his leave of Noriyuki and Tomoe escorts him out of Edo. (*The Confession*, UYSS #1, p. 48; RP UYB1, p. 49)

Usagi meets a bounty hunter named Gen who hires him to help catch a bandit (*Bounty Hunter*, C #1; RP UYB1, p. 53-61)

Weeks later, Usagi and Gen receive the reward for capturing the bandit, but Gen leaves Usagi with the bill for their stay while waiting (*Bounty Hunter*, p. 8, C #1; RP UYB1, p. 62)

Usagi fights some bandits in hope of a reward, but only ends up with a horse that leads into trouble. (*Horse Thief*, C #3, p. 1-10; RP UYB1, p. 65-74)

In late Spring, Usagi enters a village terrorized by a beast and destroys it with the help of a villager named Gon, although Gon is killed. (*Village of Fear, Doomsday Squad #3*, p. 1-8; RP UYB1, p. 77-84)

The next day Usagi leaves a memorial for Gon and goes on his way. (*Village of Fear, Doomsday Squad #3*, p. 8; RP UYB1, p. 84)

*Summer*: Usagi stops in an inn and demonstrates his skill to a band of drunks. (*A Quiet Meal*, C #6, p. 1-10; RP UYB1, p. 87-96)

In the late Summer, Usagi encounters the blind masseur Ino, who uses his sense of smell to get around. Usagi camps with him, not realizing he is also a wanted outlaw. (*Blind Swordsplay*, C #7, p. 1-5; RP UYB1, p. 99-103)

The next day Usagi discovers Ino's outlaw status and cuts off his nose, "blinding" him.

## 1598 A.D.

*Winter*: A few months later, Usagi receives word from his father that Mariko has married Kenichi. He is heartbroken. To take his mind off that, Gunichi sends Usagi on a baby-sitting assignment to transport Princess Kinuko to her future husband, but on the way they are ambushed by Neko ninja, led by Shingen. Usagi and Kinuko fall in love, although their duty keeps them apart. (*Runaways*, UY2 #13, p. 4-20, UY2 #14, p. 2-26)

*Spring*: In Geishu province, Tomoe Ame becomes a retainer to the Geishu Clan, to whom her family has been loyal for ten generations. Upon saving Lord Geishu Mataichi's wife (Lady Etsuko) and their son (Prince Noriyuki) from a Neko Ninja assassination attempt, Tomoe is appointed Protector of the Heir. (*Tomoe's Story*, UYCS #1, p. 9-20)

With Gunichi's recommendation and his skill with swords, Usagi rises quickly in rank and becomes Lord Mifune's personal bodyguard (*Samurai VII*, UY1 #4, p. 1; RP UYB2, p. 75)

## 1600 A.D.

*Spring*: Lord Mifune's wife Lady Kazumi and his son Tsuruichi are assassinated by Neko Ninja. Believing the Neko to be servants of Lord Hikiji, Lord Mifune begins preparations for war (*Samurai VII*, UY1 #4, p. 2-7; RP UYB2, p. 76-81)

Over the next 6 months, full scale war between Mifune and Hikiji develops.

*Fall*: On September 15th, the Battle of Sekigahara in central Honshu (see map) takes place. Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu emerges victorious, establish-





# APPENDIX A

Rather than accepting Usagi's offer of help, Ino runs off, swearing revenge. (*Blind Swordspig*, C #7, p. 6-9; RP UYB1, p. 104-107)

**Fall:** Ino has his nose replaced with a carved wooden one that allows him to smell just as well as before, and begins looking for Usagi for revenge. (*Blind Swordspig*, C #7, p. 10; RP UYB1, p. 108)

**Winter:** Usagi passes near the site of the Battle of Adachigahara and meets an old woman who turns out to be the wife of Buichi Toda, the Mifune general who turned against Mifune and led to his defeat. Toda has become a goblin and tries to kill Usagi but Usagi kills him. (*Goblin of Adachigahara*, A #2, p. 1-2, 4-8; RP UYSS #1, p. 2-3, 5-9; RP UYB1, p. 3-4, 6-9) **Note:** This was the first UY story ever published, and was not published in normal UY continuity. It appears here per Stan Sakai.

Usagi returns home to find his village being robbed by Mogura ninja who have taken Mariko's child Jotaro hostage. Usagi saves Jotaro and helps Kenichi, who is the new village headmen, fight off the Mogura ninja, during which they save each others lives. (*Homecoming I-II*, C #10-11; RP UYB1, p. 111-128)

The following day: Usagi pays a visit to his father's grave (*Homecoming II*, C #11; RP UYB1, p. 129)

## 1602

**Spring:** Usagi meets Gen for a second time. Gen talks Usagi into going after a statue stolen by bandits. (*Bounty Hunter II*, C #14; RP UYB1, p. 135-143)

One week later the bounty on the stolen statue arrives. This time Usagi sticks Gen with the tab. (*Bounty Hunter II*, C #14; RP UYB1, p. 144)

**Fall:** Usagi finally finds Gunichi and kills him in a duel (*Samurai I*, UY1 #1, p. 1-3; RP UYB2, p. 5-7) After killing Gunichi, Usagi meets Gen for the third time and tells him of his past (*Samurai I*, UY1 #1, p. 4-5; RP UYB2, p. 8-9; *Samurai II*, p. 20; RP UYB2, p. 24; *Samurai III*, UYB2, p. 25, 34; *Samurai III*, UY1 #2, p. 1; RP UYB2, p. 35; *Samurai IV*, UY1 #2, p. 20; RP UYB2, p. 54; *Samurai V*, UY1 #3, p. 1-3; RP UYB2, p. 55-57; *Samurai VI*, UY1 #3, p. 20; RP UYB2, p. 74; *Samurai VII*, UY1 #4, p. 1; RP UYB2, p. 75; *Samurai VIII*, UY1 #4, p. 18-20; RP UYB2, p. 92-94)

In the late Fall, Usagi tries to save a samurai from the clutches of a kappa. (*Kappa*, UY1 #6, p. 1-10; RP UYB2, p. 97-106)

Usagi gets ambushed at a hot spring, but is saved by his new friend, Zylla (*Zylla*, UY1 #6, p. 11-20; RP UYB2, p. 109-118)

Usagi is hired to protect a town from bandits, who are after the products of the silk fair. (*Silk Fair*, UY1 #5, p. 1-20; RP UYB2, p. 120-139)

## 1603 A.D.

**Winter:** In late Winter, Usagi rescues a tokage from an irate innkeeper. The lizard becomes Usagi's pet, who Usagi names Spot (*The Tower*, UY1 #7, p. 1-20; RP UYB3, p. 3-22)

(Late Winter/Early Spring) Usagi gets involved in the conflict between a mother and her son, a corrupt moneylender (*A Mother's Love*, UY1 #8, p. 1-20; RP UYB3, p. 25-44)

**Spring:** (Early Spring) The vengeful Zato-Ino finds Usagi but leaves due to the interference of Spot. Spot then leaves Usagi to follow Ino (*Return of the Blind Swordspig*, UY1 #9, p. 1-20; RP UYB3, p. 47-66)

Usagi fights a strange spearman named Jei who claims to be sent by the gods to eradicate evil. Jei is struck by lightning and is apparently killed (*Blade of the Gods*, UY1 #10, p. 1-20; RP UYB3, p. 69-88)

Usagi meets Gen again, in Geishu province, and helps him deliver a priceless tea cup (*The Tea Cup*, UY1 #11, p. 1-20; RP UYB3, p. 91-110)

Usagi travels towards the Geishu castle. He meets Tomoe, who tells him that a sword to be given to the Shogun was stolen. Usagi retrieves the sword from the thief, who is none other than Shingen, leader of the Neko ninja (*The Shogun's Gift*, UY1 #12, p. 1-22; RP UYB3, p. 113-134)

At Geishu castle, Lord Noriyuki hears of suspicious activity by Lord Tamakuro, a supporter of Lord Hikiji. Noriyuki sends Tomoe to investigate. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter I: The Clouds Gather*, UY1 #13, p. 4-5; RP UYB4, p. 10-11)

Days later, at Tamakuro fortress, Tomoe presents herself to Lord Tamakuro as an envoy of Lord Noriyuki. That night, she discovers that Lord Tamakuro is collecting guns; enough to overthrow the Shogun himself. She attempts to escape with this information, but is captured and taken back to Tamakuro's fortress. On the way, they pass Usagi who follows after Tomoe to rescue her. Lord Tamakuro tortures Tomoe in an attempt to discover what she knows, but she doesn't tell him anything. At the same time, Gen is closing in on Zato-Ino. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter I: The Clouds Gather*, UY1 #13, p. 1-4, 6-20; *Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter II: The Winds Howl*, UY1 #14, p. 1-4; RP UYB4, p. 7-10, 12-26, 29-32)

The next day, Lord Hebi (a servant of Lord Hikiji) sends Shingen to supervise the Neko ninja, who are also investigating Lord Tamakuro to make sure he has not also turned against Lord Hikiji. Usagi comes across a Neko ninja village that was wiped out by Tamakuro to ensure secrecy. Shingen sees Usagi leaving the village and believes he is responsible. Shingen attacks Usagi, but falls off a cliff (seemingly) to his death. Usagi continues to Tamakuro's fortress, where he enlists in his army in an attempt to find Tomoe. Usagi is made an officer and uses this to gain access to Tomoe and frees her. Usagi is found out and Tomoe stays behind to hold Tamakuro's soldiers while Usagi tries to reach Noriyuki with news of Tamakuro's upcoming rebellion. Usagi is defeated by a Tamakuro patrol and only saved by the appearance of Shingen, who saved himself with a grapple line. Tomoe escapes the Tamakuro soldiers and hides in the fortress, forcing

Lord Tamakuro to move up his schedule to attack the Shogun. Shingen takes Usagi to a secret Neko cave, where the ninja are preparing to attack Tamakuro's fortress and Usagi joins them. On the way, they run into Gen and Ino, who have finally met and are fighting. Usagi convinces them both to join forces and together they all assault the Tamakuro fortress. The assault fails but Shingen ignites Tamakuro's gun powder killing himself and Lord Tamakuro while Usagi, Gen, Tomoe and the remaining Neko ninja escape. Ino was shot in the attack. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter II: The Winds Howl*, UY1 #14, p. 5-28; *Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter III: Downpour*, UY1 #15, p. 1-28; *Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter IV: Thunder and Lightning*, UY1 #16, p. 1-28; *Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter V: The Heart of the Storm*, UY1 #17, p. 1-26; RP UYB4, p. 33-56, 59-86, 89-116, 119-144)

The following day, the Neko ninja depart. Usagi, Gen and Tomoe head back towards Geishu province. Unfortunately, they come across a Tamakuro checkpoint and must kill all the guards. They continue on but, although they reach the Geishu lands, night falls before they reach the castle. They meet Lady Takagi who offers them shelter for the night. Lady Takagi turns out to be an obakeneko (cat demon) and tries to kill all of them. Tomoe is hurt and Usagi sends her to report to Lord Noriyuki and get help while he holds the obakeneko. Usagi succeeds in slaying her but is knocked unconscious. (*The Obakeneko of the Geishu Clan*, UY3 #12, p. 2-21)

The next day: Usagi dreams of Mariko waking him but it's actually Tomoe, with Lord Noriyuki, who met Tomoe as he and his troops were marching to stop Lord Tamakuro. A retainer tells the legend of the obakeneko that killed Lord Takagi 25 years ago after he killed his wife. Usagi, Gen, Tomoe and Lord Noriyuki then return to the Geishu castle, where they shall stay for a few weeks. (*The Obakeneko of the Geishu Clan*, UY3 #12, p. 22-23; *Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter V: The Heart of the Storm*, UY1 #17, p. 27-28; RP UYB4, p. 145-6)

Usagi spends several weeks with Tomoe Ame at the White Heron Castle of the Geishu Clan as a guest of Lord Noriyuki. Gen is not seen around the Geishu Castle during this period of time. It is speculated that Gen kept a low profile to contemplate the possibility of becoming a retainer to the Geishu Clan. In the end, Gen decides that joining the Geishu Clan would not be in his best interest, and thus avoids Lord Noriyuki during his stay.

Usagi tells Lord Noriyuki and Tomoe the tale of how he encountered the ghost of his dead Lord Mifune while being attacked by an obakeneko in the forest of the Tangled Skein, shortly after the Battle of Adachi Plain. (*The Tangled Skein*, C #38, p. 1-8; RP UYB7, p. 65-72)

Usagi and Tomoe spar with bokken in the Geishu countryside. The duel ends as a stalemate, and Tomoe proceeds to tell Usagi of her

# APPENDIX A



life story and how she became Lord Noriyuki's Personal Retainer. (*Tomoe's Story*, UYCS #1, p. 1-5, 20)

Goyemon, a painter, presents a set of sliding doors to Lord Noriyuki. That night Noriyuki has a nightmare. (*The Doors*, UYCS #2, p. 1-7)

The next day Noriyuki enters a mysterious coma, although he has no illness. Usagi and Tomoe keep watch over him that night and see the painted spider on the doors come to life. Tomoe battles the spider while Usagi battles Goyemon, who turns out to be a demon, and the horrible things that come to life when he paints them. Usagi kills Goyemon and all the paintings vanish. (*The Doors*, UYCS #2, p. 8-26)

The following day, Lord Noriyuki is healed and remembers nothing, while the demons' paintings have been stolen by a little boy who paints a butterfly to life. (*The Doors*, UYCS #2, p. 27-28)

Usagi and Tomoe seek shelter in the hut of a woman named Kuzunoha, who turns out to be a kitsune, or shape-shifting fox. She puts Usagi under a spell and is only stopped by the intervention of Tomoe and a young fox Usagi had helped earlier. (*Fox Fire*, UYCS #3, p. 1-19)

A few days later, Usagi and Tomoe care for the young fox then release it and return to Noriyuki's castle. (*Fox Fire*, UYCS #3, p. 19-20)

After several weeks at the Geishu castle, Lord Noriyuki offers to make Usagi a retainer. Usagi politely declines. Gen sneaks away to avoid the same offer. Usagi leaves the castle and meets up with Gen. Usagi tells Gen that his disappearance embarrassed him. They talk for a while, then again part ways. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter VI: Storm Clouds Part*, UY1 #18, p. 1-9; RP UYB4, p. 149-157)

Although Gen reported Ino was shot, Ino still lives, though he is badly wounded. He escaped the explosion of Tamakuro's fortress but eventually passes out from his wounds. He is found by some villagers and taken to their village. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter VII: Fate of the Blind Swordspig*, UY1 #18, p. 10-13; RP BK 4, p. 161-164)

Three days later Ino awakens in a village, where he has been cared for by a girl named Fujiko. The village is attacked by bandits who rob the village. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter VII: Fate of the Blind Swordspig*, UY1 #18, p. 14-20; RP UYB4, p. 165-171)

The next day one of bandits recognizes Ino, so they return to get the reward on him. Ino and the villagers defeat the bandits but Ino's pet tokage, Spot, is killed by one of the bandits. Ino buries Spot and Fujiko asks if he would like to remain in the village. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter VII: Fate of the Blind Swordspig*, UY1 #18, p. 21-26; RP UYB4, p. 172-177)

Several weeks later Lord Hebi pays a visit to Lord Noriyuki to ensure that the "rumors" of Lord Hikiji's involvement with the Neko Ninja Clan are squelched. Noriyuki reluctantly concurs, but hopes that there is not a bigger storm brewing in

the distance. (*Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Chapter VII: Fate of the Blind Swordspig*, UY1 #18, p. 27-28; RP UYB4, p. 178-179)

At the behest of Lord Noriyuki, Usagi, while making his way out of the Geishu Province, assists Lady Koriko in retrieving her dead husband's swords. (*Frost and Fire*, UY1 #19, p. 1-20; RP UYB5, p. 7-26)

In late Spring, in Niigata Prefecture, Usagi gets mixed up with some crooked gamblers in the midst of a kite festival. (*A Kite Story*, UY1 #20, p. 1-20; RP UYB5, p. 29-48)

Summer: Usagi is approached by a ghost who says she was murdered by her husband. (*Yurei*, C #50, p. 1-3; RP UYB6, p. 55-57)

The following day Usagi passes off the ghost encounter as a dream, but runs into the ghost's husband and sets off the ghost's quest for vengeance. (*Yurei*, C #50, p. 3-8; RP UYB6, p. 57-62)

Usagi comes across a village being held hostage by the Komori ninja clan. To keep the clan secret, the Komori plan to murder all the villagers. Usagi attempts to escape to warn the local lord, Lord Hirone, but is captured by the ninja. The ninja then put their plan into action and capture a gold shipment of Lord Hirone. Usagi escapes and returns to the village, where he organizes the villagers against the ruthless Komori. (*Blood Wings Part I*, UY1 #21, p. 1-20; *Blood Wings Part II*, UY1 #22, p. 1-20; RP UYB5, p. 51-90)

Usagi meets the great General Oyaneko, former servitor of Lord Hirone. Oyaneko is dying and wishes to duel Usagi so he can die as a samurai rather than from illness. (*The Way of the Samurai*, UY1 #23, p. 1-20; RP UYB5, p. 93-112)

Hirone clan loyalists frame a clan retainer named Yagi as a traitor and force him from the clan. To prevent him exposing the truth, they trick Yagi into fighting Usagi, hoping they will kill each other off. (*Lone Goat and Kid*, UY1 #24, p. 1-20; RP UYB5, p. 115-142)

Usagi helps defeat the evil spirit on a cursed bridge. (*The Bridge*, UY1 #25, p. 1-22; RP UYB6, p. 9-30)

Usagi gets drawn into a duel with Shubo, a ronin working with a crooked gambler. (*The Duel*, UY1 #26, p. 1-20; RP UYB6, p. 33-52)

Fall: Traveling north, toward home, Usagi spends the night in a peasant house. He tells a tall tale of his adventures to rescue a princess to entertain the children. (*My Lord's Daughter*, UY1 #27, p. 1-20; RP UYB6, p. 65-84)

Nearing his home, Usagi comes across the fateful battle plain of Adachi (*Return to Adachi Plain*, UYB4 Hardcover, p. 180-182, 188; *Return to Adachi Plain*, UY3 #10, p. 1-2, 8)

Usagi saves a man and his daughter from bandits, and hears of a demon leading a band of brigands near his village. (*Circles Chapter 1: Wind Over the Tombstones*, UY1 #28, p. 1-4; RP UYB6, p. 87-90)

Usagi stops to pay his respects at his teacher's grave marker and finds Katsuichi still alive.

(*Circles Chapter 1: Wind Over the Tombstones*, UY1 #28, p. 4, 10-17; RP UYB6, p. 90, 96-103)

Later that same day, Jotaro is captured by the demon, who turns out to be Jei! (*Circles Chapter 1: Wind Over the Tombstones*, UY1 #28, p. 18-20; RP UYB6, p. 104-106)

The following day, after spending the night at Katsuichi's hut, Usagi duels Katsuichi and observes him practice with his new student. (*Circles Chapter 2: Remembrances*, UY1 #29, p. 1-3; RP UYB6, p. 107-109)

Usagi takes his leave of Katsuichi and heads towards his village, where he meets Kenichi and search party looking for Jotaro. Usagi joins the search until bandits attack the village. (*Circles Chapter 2: Remembrances*, UY1 #29, p. 6, 11-15; RP UYB6, p. 112, 117-121)

Usagi meets Mariko and spends the night at hers and Kenichi's home. Meanwhile, Jei receives word that Usagi has finally arrived. (*Circles Chapter 2: Remembrances*, UY1 #29, p. 16-20; RP UYB6, p. 122-6)

The next morning, Usagi and Kenichi lead a band of peasants from all the villages to attack Jei's hideout. Usagi chases down Jei and Jotaro, saving Jotaro. Usagi battles Jei, ultimately stabbing Jei with his own spear and hurling him over a cliff into the river. Kenichi again saves Usagi's life. (*Circles Chapter 3: Shroud Over the Mountain*, UY1 #30, p. 1-20; UY1 #31, p. 1-10; RP UYB6, p. 127-156)

Far downstream, a fisherman pulls Jei's (again) seemingly dead body from the river. (*The Nature of the Viper*, UY2 #10, p. 23-25)

One week later Jei awakens and kills the fisherman, then renews his quest for Usagi. (*The Nature of the Viper*, UY2 #10, p. 26-29)

One week later, Mariko meets Usagi and asks him to leave the village. She finally reveals to him that Jotaro is his son, but says that Kenichi is his father now. Usagi agrees and reluctantly leaves, seeing Jotaro and his new pet tokage, Spot, on his way out. (*Circles Chapter 4: Closing the Circles*, UY1 #31, p. 11-21; RP UYB6, p. 157-167)

Jei delivers his unique brand of "justice" upon some bandits, and a young girl named Keiko decides to follow him. (*Black Soul*, UY2 #13, p. 1-8)

Usagi resumes his wanderings, and eventually meets Kitsune, a performer with koma (tops) and a pickpocket. Usagi also encounters the crooked gambler from the kite festival again. (*Kitsune*, UY1 #32, p. 1-20; RP BK 7, p. 11-30)

Usagi passes through a town near the plain of Adachi. He learns that the town is haunted by the unfulfilled ghost of General Tadaoka, who served under Mifune at the battle of Adachigahara but who was killed before he could complete his seppuku. (*Broken Ritual*, UY1 #33, p. 1-7, 13-15; RP UYB7, p. 43-49, 55-57)

The next night Usagi purifies his blade and acts as the ghostly general's "second," allowing the general to finish his act of seppuku, thus granting his spirit peace. (*Broken Ritual*, UY1





# APPENDIX A

#33, p. 15-20; RP UYB7, p. 57-62)

## 1604 A.D.

**Spring:** Usagi saves Gen from a brigand with a pack of killer lizards. They decide to wait for the reward in town to allow Gen's wounds to heal. (*Gen Chapter 1: Lady Asano's Story*, UY1 #34, p. 1-10; RP UYB7, p. 75-84)

Over the next few days, while waiting, Usagi and Gen meet Lady Asano. They learn that Lady Asano was a member of the same clan as Gen's father, General Murakami. Although her clan has been abolished, Lady Asano still searches for Oda, the traitor who killed Lord Asano. Usagi and Gen both get drawn into her quest for vengeance, ending in both Lady Asano and Oda's deaths. (*Gen Chapter 1: Lady Asano's Story*, UY1 #34, p. 11-20; *Gen Chapter 2: Sins of the Father*, UY1 #35, p. 1-20; *Gen Chapter 3: Lady Asano's Revenge*, UY1 #36, p. 1-16; RP UYB7, p. 85-130)

The next day Usagi and Gen bury Lady Asano, and Gen discovers the swords he took from Oda are his father's swords. (*Gen Chapter 3: Lady Asano's Revenge*, UY1 #36, p. 17-20; RP UYB7, p. 131-134)

Several days later Usagi and Gen run into Kitsune again, who is mixed up in the affairs of two oil merchants. (*The Return of Kitsune*, UY1 #37, p. 1-18; RP UYB7, p. 137-154)

The next day Usagi gives Gen a ryo (gold coin), finally telling him that Kitsune's a pick-pocket. Gen checks and quickly discovers that, indeed, Kitsune has stolen all of Gen's money! (*The Return of Kitsune*, UY1 #37, p. 19-20; RP UYB7, p. 155-156)

**Summer:** (Early Summer) Taking another of Gen's shortcuts through the mountains, Usagi and Gen find a wounded Ino who has married Fujiko, who is herself pregnant. They nurse Ino back to health, leaving the next day so he won't know who helped him. (*The Last Ino Story*, UY1 #38, p. 1-29; RP UYB7, p. 159-187)

Usagi and Gen continue through the mountains, encountering a strange snake monster. (*Hebi*, UYB7 Hardcover, p. 189-198; Usagi Yojimbo Roleplaying Game)

Usagi and Gen's trip through the mountains ends as they are ambushed by Neko ninja and jump into the river to escape. They arrive at a small village where a sorcerer named Kakera enlists their aid, along with some magically summoned ninja turtles. Kakera is captured by the Neko, but together they are able to rescue him, after which Kakera returns the ninja turtles to their home. (*Shades of Green*, UY2 #1-3)

The following day Gen heads north after a bandit, while Usagi decides to head east. (*Shades of Green Chapter 3*, UY2 #3, p. 20)

Usagi wanders randomly and comes to a town. There he defends a vegetable seller named Moyashi from bullies and goes with him to his home in Izumi valley. Usagi discovers that the bullies work for the Magistrate. (*Shi Part 1*, UY2 #4, p. 1-8, 13-23)

The next day Usagi calls a village meeting,

asking for no one to leave the valley until he finds out what's going on. A villager named Nobu leaves anyway and is severely beaten by the bullies. He also encounters the assassin band called "Shi." Usagi and the villagers find him and bring him back to town. (*Shi Part 1*, UY2 #4, p. 24-28; *Shi Part 2*, UY2 #5, p. 1-2)

The next day Nobu tells Usagi what has happened, and Usagi believes that Shi were hired to drive off the peasants from the valley. The peasants vacate the village and Usagi fights Shi that night, defeating them all. Usagi then leaves when he hears of the death of Magistrate by his own brother. (*Shi Part 2*, UY2 #5, p. 3-26)

Usagi heads into the mountains, where he is saved from an ambush by a group of tokage. (*The Lizard's Tale*, UY2 #6, p. 1-20)

Usagi and his band of tokage meet a Kumaso priest named Omori Kazan. Kazan camps with him for the night. (*The Music of Heaven*, UY2 #7, p. 1-8)

The next day Omori is killed by the last survivor of Shi, who then attacks Usagi. Usagi kills the would-be assassin, buries Omori and leaves. The tokage stay behind. (*The Music of Heaven*, UY2 #7, p. 9-18)

Usagi comes upon a town and spends the night there. (*Blood Money*, UY2 #8, p. 8, 11-13)

The next day Usagi is drawn into a duel engineered by the same gambler who worked with Shubo. Usagi kills the duelist and the gambler is poisoned by Shubo's widow. (*Blood Money*, UY2 #8, p. 14-20)

Usagi rescues a boy named Hiro who tells him of the bandits imprisoning his village under the direction of General Fujii. Usagi sends Hiro for help and goes to the village. (*Slavers Part 1*, UY2 #9, p. 1-8)

The next day Usagi enlists with the bandits in an attempt to help the villagers, but is found out and imprisoned. (*Slavers Part 1*, UY2 #9, p. 9-18)

The following day Usagi is beaten by Fujii and left tied in sun, while Fujii takes his swords. Hiro frees Usagi and they free all the villagers. (*Slavers Part 1*, UY2 #9, p. 19-20; *Slavers Part 2*, UY2 #10, p. 1-16)

The next day Usagi leads a revolt of the villagers, defeating the bandits. But Fujii escapes with Usagi's swords. Usagi and the villagers rush after Fujii, who narrowly escapes by cutting a rope bridge. Usagi sets off to find Fujii and his swords on his own. (*Slavers Part 2*, UY2 #10, p. 17-21; *Daisho Part 1*, UY2 #11, p. 8-13)

Two weeks later Usagi finds one of Fujii's band, who tells him where to find Fujii. Usagi comes upon a village, and a girl named Hanako offers to show him where Fujii's camp is. They set off into the mountains and run into Gen and Stray Dog, another bounty hunter, both of whom are after Fujii. Together they attack the bandit camp at night, with Usagi finally killing Fujii and regaining his swords. (*Daisho Part 1*, UY2 #11, p. 14-21; *Mongrels*, UY2 #11, p. 6-7; *Daisho Part 2*, UY2 #12, p. 1-26)

Several days later Gen and Usagi part ways

again. Usagi goes to a town where the procession of Lady Hirano passes by, and Usagi remembers his service as her bodyguard and how they fell in love. (*Runaways*, UY2 #13, p. 1-4, 20; UY2 #14, p. 1, 26-28)

Usagi meets a seaweed farmer named Kichiro and spends the night at his house. (*Kaiso*, UY2 #15, p. 1-6)

The next day: Usagi works the seaweed fields with Kichiro and his son Hayato. (*Kaiso*, UY2 #15, p. 7-10)

The following day Usagi accompanies Kichiro into town to sell his seaweed. He sets up a plan to discover who has been raiding Kichiro's seaweed beds and discovers it is Yamanaka, the town seaweed broker. (*Kaiso*, UY2 #15, p. 11-20)

A few weeks later Usagi is ambushed by a gang of thugs hired by Yamanaka in revenge for Usagi's interference. Usagi is saved by a strange samurai named Inazuma. (*A Meeting of Strangers*, UY2 #16, p. 1-20)

**Fall:** (Early Fall) Usagi meets Kitsune again, who is working in conjunction with a mute she calls Noodles. Unfortunately, Noodles is arrested by the town yoriki (police administrator) to cover the thievery of the gamblers he is in debt to. The administrator has Noodles executed and sets the gamblers upon Usagi and Kitsune. (*Noodles Part I*, UY3 #1 p. 1-20; *Noodles Part II*, UY3 #2, p. 1-17)

One week later, Kitsune sets up the yoriki as revenge for Noodle's death. The yoriki is ordered to commit seppuku. (*Noodles Part II*, UY3 #1-2, p. 18-20)

Usagi helps defend a merchant's daughter from demons of the Tangled Skein forest, but is wounded fighting a tanuki demon. (*The Wrath of the Tangled Skein*, UY3 #3, p. 1-19)

Three days later Usagi is healed from his fight and journeys on with the priest who exorcised the demons, Priest Sanshobo, a former samurai who tells Usagi his tale. (*The Wrath of the Tangled Skein*, UY3 #3, p. 20; *The Bonze's Story*, UY3 #3, p. 21-24)

Usagi meets Chizu again as she is being pursued by the rival Komori ninja clan. She is carrying a secret gun powder formula. Usagi helps her fight off the Komori ninja and then Chizu goes her way. (*Bats, the Cat, and the Rabbit*, UY3 #4, p. 1-24)

Usagi is joined in his travels by Ichō, an assassin disguised as a medicine dealer, who is trying to kill Lord Miyagi. (*The Chrysanthemum Pass*, UY3 #5, p. 1-14)

The next day Usagi helps defend Lord Miyagi from an ambush of assassins and Mogura ninja, and is forced to kill Ichō in the process. (*The Chrysanthemum Pass*, UY3 #5, p. 15-24)

Usagi meets Inazuma, who tells him of her life, how she learned the sword and how she killed a gambler's son in revenge for her husband's death. (*Lightning Strikes Twice*, UY3 #6, p. 1-24)

(Late Fall) Usagi meets a ronin named Nakamura Koji and is eventually drawn into a

# APPENDIX A



duel with him, which Usagi loses. Nakamura spares his life, telling Usagi to bring his challenge to Katsuichi. (*The Withered Field*, UY3 #7, p. 1-24)

**Winter:** While traveling in the mountains, Usagi meets a wounded merchant and his daughter and gets them home safely only to discover the daughter died a week earlier. (*A Promise in the Snow*, UY3 #8, p. 1-24)

Usagi visits Priest Sanshobo at his mountain temple when a wounded Hikiji samurai arrives, bearing a pact by eight Lords against the Shogun. Bandits, who wounded the samurai, attack the temple. The bandits are defeated by Usagi, Sanshobo and the monks. During the battle a Neko ninja named Kagemaru, under orders from Chizu, kills the samurai and steals the document. (*The Conspiracy of Eight*, UY3 #9, p. 1-24)

## 1605 A.D. to Present

**Winter:** (Late Winter) Jei continues his search for Usagi, sailing on a boat accompanied by Keiko, where he destroys the evil of all aboard. (*The Crossing*, UY3 #10, p. 9-16)

**Spring:** (Early Spring) Usagi meets the mysterious swordsman Oyama Tadanori, known as the Lord of the Owls, who has death in his eyes. Usagi comes to help Oyama defend himself against brigands but discovers Oyama is a

skilled swordsman. Oyama predicts that one day he and Usagi will be adversaries, and that one of them will die. (*The Lord of the Owls*, UY3 #11, p. 1-12)

The Neko ninja Kagemaru presents part of the stolen document to Lord Hebi as proof of his loyalty to Lord Hikiji. Kagemaru keeps the portion containing the signatures for himself. Kagemaru also confirms Hebi's suspicions that Chizu was turning traitor to Lord Hikiji. (*The First Tenet*, UY3 #11, p. 13-17)

The next day Lord Hebi travels back to Edo after meeting with Kagemaru. Hebi's entourage is attacked by assassins (who were secretly hired by Kagemaru). Kagemaru and the Neko ninja then "save" Hebi, by killing all the assassins, and accuse Chizu of hiring the assassins. (*The First Tenet*, UY3 #11, p. 18-24)

Usagi enters the edge of Geishu province and comes across the mansion of Lady Takagi. He remembers his encounter there with an obakeneko after the end of the Dragon Bellow Conspiracy. His memories lead him to be startled by a pair of peasants and he runs off. (*The Obakeneko of the Geishu Clan*, UY3 #12, p. 1-2, 24)

## POSTSCRIPT TO THE OFFICIAL USAGI YOJIMBO TIMELINE

After *The Obakeneko of the Geishu Clan* (UY3 #12) the 8-issue *Grasscutter* story arc begins. In

UY3 #13 and 14, normal UY continuity is temporarily interrupted by the 2-issue prologue of the *Grasscutter* epic, featuring the pre-17th Century origins of the Kusanagi Sword included in this Timeline.

Normal UY continuity returns in UY3 #15, with Usagi traveling to the Geishu Province to visit Tomoe Ame and Lord Noriyuki once again. It is the year 1605, and the inauguration of the new Tokugawa Shogun is about to commence. However, a mysterious ring of eight powerful Daimyo (feudal lords) known as the "Conspiracy of Eight" plot to overthrow the Shogunate and reinstate power to the Emperor. To do this, they'll need to reclaim the lost Kusanagi Sword of the Imperial Family, which ends up in the possession of Miyamoto Usagi.

The story which appeared in *Dark Horse Comics' UY Color Special, Green Persimmon*, was published outside of normal UY continuity. *Green Persimmon* actually takes place sometime after the *Grasscutter* story arc, which ends in UY3 #20. How soon after remains unknown. Stan Sakai knew the story, which was originally serialized in *Diamond's Previews* catalog, would be collected and published in a single issue, but had not expected it to be published before *Grasscutter*. It was thought that the issue would be published about one year after it was serialized. It can be speculated that *Green Persimmon* takes place sometime in the year 1606 or 1607 A.D.

## APPENDIX B:

# THE OFFICIAL USAGI YOJIMBO CHARACTER INDEX

(Current as of November 1, 1997, through UY3 #13) by Mark Arsenault with contributions from Todd Bustillo

Characters are listed in alphabetical order, by family name (if given) or first name. Titles are included but are not considered for listing order.

Note: A = Albedo; C = Critters; UYB = UYB, published by Fantagraphics Books; UYCS = Usagi Yojimbo Color Special; UY1 = Usagi Yojimbo Volume 1, published by Fantagraphics Books; UY2 = Usagi Yojimbo Volume 2, published by Mirage Publishing; UY3 = Volume 3, published by Dark Horse Comics.

**ABURAGE:** An oil merchant and rival of Yuden. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #37

**AMATERASU:** The Sun-Goddess and daughter of Izanagi and Izanami. Her brother, Susano-o presented her with the Grasscutter sword.

Appearances: UY3 #13

**ANDO:** The peasant headman of the village terrorized by the Komori ninja. His son was killed by the ninja while seeking help with Usagi. Appearances: UY1 #21

**ANTOKU TENNO:** The boy emperor of the Taira Clan possessed the Grasscutter sword into battle at Dan-no-Ura in 1186 A.D. When all was lost, his grandmother, Nidomo, took him into her arms and jumped into the sea, where both perished. The sword was thought to be lost... but then again... UY3 #14

**LORD ARAKI:** Cousin of General Ikeda and a high ranking retainer of Lord Mataichi of Geishu province, who challenged Mataichi for power. He took his own life after his castle was overtaken by Mataichi's army. Appearances: UY3 #10

**MERCHANT ARAKI:** A merchant who is attacked by bandits as he travels through the snowy mountains to pray for his dead daughter (Araki

Fumiye) at a Buddhist temple. His life is saved by Usagi, aided by Fumiye's ghost. Appearances: UY3 #8

**ARAKI FUMIYE:** Daughter of merchant Araki, who fell ill and died a week before Usagi encounters her father. Her ghost returns to help Usagi save her father's life. Appearances: UY3 #8

**LADY ASANO:** Widow of Lord Asano Nobu of the Shirogeta clan. Appearances: UY1 #34-36

**LORD ASANO NOBU:** Daimyo of the Shirogeta clan. Lord Asano was betrayed and assassinated by Councilor Oda. As Lord Asano had no heirs, the Shirogeta clan's holdings were given to a distant relative. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #34

**ATSUKO:** Peasant girl who fell in love with a samurai named Nagao, who was later killed by her brother. She kept his swords as a memento. After Usagi offers to buy them back (for Nagao's widow, Lady Koriko), Atsuko's brother takes the swords by force, and accidentally kills her in the





# APPENDIX B

- process. Appearances: UY1 #19
- ATSUO:** Atsuo took over his father's money-lending business when his father died. Atsuo became corrupt and motivated by greed, and was later killed by his mother. Appearances: UY1 #8
- BOSS BAKUCHI:** A powerful yakuza oyabun (gambler gang boss) in Edo. Appearances: Mentioned in UY2 #16; UY3 #6
- BLACK SHIPS:** Western trading ships (see Southern Barbarians). Appearances: Mentioned in UYCS #4, UY3 #4
- BUNJI:** A peasant kaiso (seaweed) farmer from the coastal village north of Kichiro. Appearances: UY2 #15
- CHIZU:** Chizu is a kunoichi (female ninja) of the Neko ninja clan, and the sister of Shingen, the Jonin of the Neko ninja clan (who was killed in the Dragon Bellow Conspiracy). She then vies for control of the clan against Gunji. She eventually kills Gunji after he tries to kill her in an ambush and becomes the new Neko ninja clan jonin (ninja boss). Appearances: Dragon Bellow Conspiracy (UY1 #13-17 and UYB 4), UY2 #1-3, UY3 #4, 9
- THE CONSPIRACY OF EIGHT:** A mysterious ring of eight high-ranking daimyo (feudal lords) who seek to overthrow the Shogun and restore power to the Emperor. To do this, they hatch a plot to recover the long-lost Grasscutter sword, the possessor of which is the true ruler of Japan. Appearances: UY3 #9, #14
- EIJI:** A member of the Neko ninja clan. Appearances: UY1 #16, UY2 #2
- EIZO:** A member of the Koroshi, the assassin's guild, and a master archer. He "kills" Lord Miyagi in his kago (palanquin) - who later turns out to be a mushaninyo (warrior doll) - before escaping. Appearances: UY3 #5
- GENERAL FUJII:** Ex-general turned criminal ronin. He enslaved the inhabitants of Higashi village in order to sell their harvest for profit. He captured Usagi, then took his swords and fled when the villagers rose up against his men. He is killed in a final duel with Usagi. Appearances: UY2 #9-11
- FUJIKO:** She found Zato-Ino, wounded and near death, along side the road with Spot. She nursed him back to health, and eventually married him. Appearances: UY1 #18, 38
- LORD FUJITAKO:** Lord of a neighboring province to the Geishu's, with whom the Geishu's were negotiating a treaty. Appearances: Mentioned in Shell Shock #1
- GAMBLER WITH NO NAME:** Gambler who makes his living by hiring ronin to fight duels and then taking bets on them. He is later poisoned by the widow of one of his slain ronin, Shubo. Appearances: UY1 #26, UY2 #8
- GENNOSUKE:** Son of the famous General Murakami. He is a bounty hunter, and loves to drink sake almost as much as he loves collecting rewards. Appearances: C #1, 14, UY1 #1-4, 11, 13-17, 34-38, UY2 #1-3, 11-13, UY3 #12
- GON:** Gon was the sole survivor of a party of villagers who attempted to slay a cat beast. Upon returning to his village he had gone mad and was obsessed with killing it. He is killed by the beast at the end of the story. Appearances: UYB 1
- GON 2:** An assassin that was killed by Gennosuke. Appearances: Mentioned in UY2 #11
- GOROGORO:** The young son of Yagi, the "Lone Goat." Appearances: UY1 #23-24
- GROO:** A barbarian from unknown lands who carries two katana, and loves cheese dip! Also known as the "Cheese Dip Wanderer." Appearances: A #4, UY1 #20, Mentioned in #27
- GUNICHI:** Once a samurai retainer and bodyguard of Lord Mifune. Gunichi challenged Usagi to a duel. He later betrayed Mifune, and was slain by Usagi. Appearances: UY1 #1-2, 4, UY2 #8, 13
- GUNJI:** A Chonin of the Neko clan who tries to become Jonin after the death of Shingen. His rival is Shingen's sister, Chizu. He tries to ambush and slay Chizu but she instead kills him. Appearances: UY2 #1-3
- HACHI:** Friend of Fujiko. Was with Fujiko when she found Zato-Ino at the roadside, on the way back from trading for supplies. Appearances: UY1 #18
- HAKUIN:** Master of Zen Buddhism. Appearances: Mentioned in UY2 #7
- HANAKO:** A peasant villager whose headman was wounded by General Fujii. She employs Usagi to help the headman, then leads Usagi to General Fujii's hideout in the mountains. Appearances: UY2 #10-12
- HANZO:** Member of the Neko Ninja clan. Killed by Lord Noriyuki on a bridge outside Edo after blinding Usagi with blinding powder. Appearances: A #3-4
- HATSU:** An itinerant gambler and member of a yakuza gang. He accuses Usagi of getting all the yakuza thrown out of town (UY#20). Appearances: UY1 #20, 32
- COUNSELOR HEBI:** (see Lord Hebi)
- LORD HEBI:** Lord Hebi is one of Lord Hikiji's senior retainers and a scheming, evil samurai. Appearances: A #4, UY1 #11, 14, UY3 #11
- HEIZO:** A bandit who worked for General Fujii. He is killed by Usagi. Appearances: UY2 #10
- LORD HIGASHI:** Before he died, he forbade his followers from performing Junshi (seppuku) and made his son Hirone his successor. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #23
- HIGASHIMORI:** Chief instructor of Dogora fencing school. Led a group of Dogora students to attack Katsuichi in Usagi's absence. He was slain by Usagi after Katsuichi's apparent death (UY#28). Appearances: UY1 #2, #28
- LORD HIKUJI:** Lord Hikiji (also known as "the Shadow Lord") is an evil daimyo "of a small neighboring province" near Geishu province, who seeks to overthrow the Shogun ("His eyes lust after new provinces rather than look after the one he already has." - Lord Noriyuki). Shortly before defeating Lord Mifune at the Battle of Adachigahara, he killed Usagi's father, who was the town magistrate. He is also responsible for giving Usagi his characteristic scar. Appearances: A #4, C #10, UY2 #6, UY3 #10, Mentioned in UY3 #9 (and numerous other issues)
- HIMESAMA (MIFUNE):** Lord Mifune's daughter. She was captured by an oni in a story told by Usagi to some children (it is uncertain if she is his real daughter or just a figment of Usagi's imagination). Appearances: UY1 #27
- LADY HIRANO KINUKO:** Formerly Princess Takamatsu Kinuko of the Takani clan. She marries Lord Hirano in an effort to form a strong alliance between the Hirano and Mifune clans. Usagi and Kinuko fall in love before her marriage, but duty prevails and Kinuko marries Lord Hirano. Appearances: UY2 #13-14
- LORD HIRANO:** Lord of a neighboring province of the Geishu. Appearances: UY2 #14
- HIRO:** A young peasant boy from Higashi village. His father is the head man. Appearances: UY2 #9-10
- HIROKAZU:** Late son of Priest Sanshobo. UY3 #3
- LORD HIRONE:** Son of Lord Higashi, who inherited the clan upon Lord Higashi's death. Hirone "discounted the advice of his fathers advisors and listened, instead, to those scandal-lickers who curried favor." Hirone plotted the downfall of all of his fathers counselors. Appearances: UY1 #23
- HISASHI:** A young, low-born samurai with whom Inazuma fell in love and eloped. Hisashi turned ronin and became abusive toward Inazuma. He was eventually killed by Masakazu the gambler. Appearances: UY3 #6
- HOKUSE:** The great Geishu Tea Master. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #11
- ICHINOBEI:** A gambler. Lost big to Hatsu in his own gambling house! Appearances: UY1 #32
- ICHIRO:** Also known as "One-eye Ichiro," a thief and a murderer wanted in three provinces. Both he and his brother, Kenichi, were killed by Gennosuke and Usagi. Appearances: C #1
- ICHIRO 2:** A young peasant child rescued by Usagi in Green Persimmon. Appearances: UYCS #4
- ICHO:** An assassin who disguises himself as a traveling medicine dealer. He is a member of the Koroshi assassin's guild. Appearances: UY3 #5
- IKEDA:** A warrior and brilliant tactician, Ikeda was the cousin of Lord Araki and former General of Lord Araki's army. After losing a battle against Lord Mataichi, Ikeda took the role of a peasant farmer to hide his true identity as he waited for the right time to exact his vengeance. Ikeda eventually realized he had become exactly what he tried to portray himself as. When the opportunity came for him to get his revenge, he could not find it in his soul to do so. Appearances: UY3 #10
- INAZUMA:** A fierce female renegade and master fencer who travels the warrior's road with a price on her head. Formerly the wife of a high-ranking samurai turned drunk, her husband has since been killed. Now Inazuma, having avenged her husband's death, seeks to hone her warrior skills. Appearances: UY2 #16, UY3 #6
- INUKAI:** A bounty hunter; Gen's rival. He killed a fugitive named Kuichi in the past, and was hunting General Fujii. Appearances: UY2 #11-12
- ISHII:** Head instructor of the Surudoi kenjutsu ryu (school of swordsmanship). He disgraces himself by trying to prevent his master, Ueno, from facing Nakamura Koji in a duel and eventually commits seppuku (ritual suicide). Appearances: UY3 #7

# APPENDIX B



**IZANAGI:** Seventh generation deity who, with his wife Izanami, spawned the Japanese islands, and gave rise to more kami. UY3 #13

**IZANAMI:** Wife of Izanagi. She left her husband and created great chaos in the world. UY3 #13

**JEI:** Surviving a lethal cut from Usagi's sword, Jei was afflicted with a bad fever, which makes him insane. He hears voices which he believes to be the gods telling him to slay evil people; when he slays enough evil people he, too, will become a kami (deity). Appearances: UY1 #10, 28-31, UY2 #10, 13, UY3 #1, 10

**JIMBEI:** Fencing instructor of Dogora fencing school. Appearances: UY1 #2

**JIRO:** Jiro is a worker for the Kaiko Silk Works. Jiro's life was saved by Usagi from a group of bandits who attacked him while he was out hunting mushrooms. He has five children (one boy named Genta). Appearances: UY1 #5

**JIRO 2:** Peasant who discovered gold in a river near his village. After reporting it to the Magistrate (Sueoka), Sueoka has him killed and made to look like an accident. Appearances: UY2 #4-5

**JIRO 3:** A Buddhist priest under priest Sanshobo. He is killed by Kagamaru while trying to protect a secret conspiracy document. Appearances: UY3 #9

**JOTARO:** Son of Kenichi and Mariko, but is truly Usagi's son. Appearances: UY1 #28-31

**JUBEI:** A retainer of General Ikeda, who stays with Ikeda while he assumes the role of a peasant farmer. Jubei eventually comes down with fever and dies. UY3 #10

**JUZO:** Sake-loving brother of Magistrate Sueoka, who eventually kills his brother and is then killed by the Magistrate's guards. Appearances: UY/M #3-4

**COUNSELOR KAGIHANA:** Aid to Lord Hirone. He was a co-conspirator against Yagi and General Oyaneko. Appearances: UY1 #24

**KAGEMARU:** A high-ranking Neko clan chunin (officer) and second in command to Chizu, who secretly conspires to overthrow Chizu as leader of the Neko ninja clan. UY3 #9, 11

**KAIKO-SAN:** Mr. Kaiko owns the Kaiko Silk Works. Appearances: UY1 #5

**KAKERA:** A mahotsukai (wizard) living in a village threatened by Neko ninja. He casts a spell over four turtles and summons the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. He is kidnapped by Neko ninja, rescued by Usagi, then returns the Kame (Turtle) ninja to their world. Appearances: UY2 #1-3

**KAME NINJA:** The "turtle ninja" (aka Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles). Appearances: Turtle Soup #1, Shell Shock #1, UY1 #10, UY2 #1-3

**KATSUICHI:** Retired master swordsman who rebelled against the 8 Kyoto styles of swordsmanship and founded his own kenjutsu school. He was also Usagi's sensei (teacher). Appearances: UY1 #1-2, 6, 28, 32, UY2 #6-7, UY3 #7

**KEDAMONO:** A ronin swordsman; new partner of the gambler who runs a duel scam. Kedamono once worked as a bouncer in a brothel until the gambler hired him. Appearances: UY2 #8

**KEIKO:** A peasant girl who lives in a hut with her grandfather. Her grandfather, Ojii-san, is killed

by bandits who are themselves slain by Jei. Jei lets Keiko live. Seeing her hut burn down and feeling alone, she follows after Jei. Appearances: UY2 #13, UY3 #1, 10

**KENICHI:** Boyhood rival of Miyamoto Usagi who married Usagi's childhood love, Mariko. Was named town Magistrate by Lord Hikiji after Hikiji killed the old magistrate - Usagi's father! Kenichi loses to Usagi in the Dogora-sponsored tournament and is forced to leave the school in disgrace. Appearances: C #10, UY1 #1-3, #28-31

**KENICHI:** Brother of "One-eye Ichiro," a wanted bandit and thief. (See Ichiro). Killed by Usagi. Studied at Dogora fencing school. Appearances: C #1, UY1 #1

**KICHIRO:** A peasant and kaiso (seaweed) farmer. Appearances: UY2 #15

**KIMIE:** The daughter of a peasant farmer, Moyashi. She is bored with village life and gets a crush on Usagi, begging him to take her with him when he leaves. After Nobu challenges Usagi to a duel (out of jealousy), she falls in love with Nobu and they are married. Appearances: UY2 #4-5

**KINKO:** A master shakuhachi craftsman. He makes shakuhachi from bamboo grown in Shikoku. Appearances: Mentioned in UY2 #7

**KITSUNE:** An entertainer and petty thief. She specializes in cast iron beigoma (fighting tops). Appearances: UY1 #32, 37, UY3 #1-2

**LADY KIZUMI:** Wife of Lord Mifune. Her son is Prince Tsuruichi. Appearances: UY1 #4

**KOETSU:** Master sword smith. Appearances: Mentioned only (Unk issue)

**LADY KOMACHI:** A woman who was once plagued by demons, but was saved by Priest Sanshobo. Appearances: UY3 #3, mentioned in UY3 #9

**KOMORI NINJA:** A bat ninja clan who work for Lord Hikiji through Lord Hebi. They fight for Hikiji's favor over the Neko Clan, who are their bitter rivals. UY1 #21-22, UY2 #1-3, UY3 #4, mentioned in #11

**LADY KORIKO:** Samurai of the Geishu clan. She is the widow of Nagao, a samurai who was killed by a peasant after Nagao had an affair with the peasant's sister, Aisuko. Appearances: UY1 #19

**KOROSHI (THE ASSASSINS' GUILD):** A band of mercenaries hired by the Tarako clan who attempted to assassinate Lord Miyagi, on his way to a meeting of the area lords. "It is said they never fail." Appearances: UY3 #5

**KUCHI:** A fugitive who was captured (or killed) by Inukai (aka "Stray Dog"). Appearances: Mentioned in UY2 #12

**KUNYO:** Wife of Shubo, the ronin who worked for the gambler. Was to meet her husband on the hill East of town. Appearances: UY1 #26, UY2 #8

**KURODA:** Retainer of General Ikeda, who goes to the Geishu capital to act as Ikeda's spy. Appearances: UY3 #10

**KUZUNOHA:** A young woman who Usagi and Tomoe meet while traveling. She turns out to be a mystical kitsune (fox spirit) in disguise. Appearances: UYCS #3

**MARIKO:** Mariko is a samurai, and was the childhood love of Miyamoto Usagi. She marries Usagi's boyhood rival, Kenichi, and has a son

named Jotaro, though Jotaro is truly Usagi's son! Appearances: C #10, UY1 #3, 28-29, 31, Mentioned in UY2 #13

**MASAKAZU:** A yakuza (professional gambler) and son of boss Bakuchi. Masakazu, who ran the biggest gambling house in Edo. Masakazu was responsible for the death of Inazuma's husband (Hisashi), and was eventually killed by Inazuma. Appearances: UY3 #6, mentioned in UY2 #16

**YORIKI MASUDA:** Masuda is the yoriki (chief police administrator) of a town that Usagi travels through. He is secretly telling the local yakuza (gambler) gang who to rob and looking the other way because he owes them a large gambling debt. He frames Noodles and has him executed, but is himself exposed by Usagi and Kitsune. Appearances: UY3 #1-2

**LORD MATAICHI:** Former daimyo of Geishu province. After Mataichi's death his son, Lord Noriyuki, inherited his father's position and control of Geishu province. Appearances: Mentioned in A #3, UY3 #10

**MATSUTARO:** A ronin hired as a yojimbo (bodyguard) by Kaiko-san. Appearances: UY1 #5

**LORD MIFUNE:** Once Miyamoto Usagi's daimyo (provincial samurai lord) and a patron of the Dogora fencing school. Lord Mifune was killed at the battle of Adachigahara battling against Lord Hikiji's army. Appearances: UY Summer Special, C #38, UY1 #2, 4, UY2 #8, UY3 #10

**MINAMOTO YOSHITSUNE:** Hero of the Gempei Wars. In March of 1186 A.D., the epic war between the Minamoto and Taira Clan came to a head at the Naval Battle of Dan-no-Ura. Minamoto Yoshitsune defeated the Taira forces by driving them to the sea. The sword Grasscutter was thought to have been lost at sea during this famous battle... or so it was thought. Appearances: UY3 #14

**MITSUTOSHI:** Late Son of Lord Shigeki, who died under the supervision of Sanshobo. Appearances: UY3 #3

**LORD MIYAGI:** A daimyo (feudal lord) who is loyal to the Shogun and has a network of spies. Miyagi holds the deciding vote over whether to initiate trade with the Southern Barbarians, thus earning the scorn of Lord Hikiji. Miyagi becomes the target of an assassination attempt by the Koroshi assassins but survives, partly due to Usagi's help. UY3 #5

**MIYAMOTO USAGI:** Studied under Katsuchi in the mountains as a youth. Served under Lord Mifune, who was killed at the battle of Adachigahara. After Mifune's death, Usagi became a wandering ronin (masterless samurai). Appearances: Do we really need to list them all?

**MOGURA NINJA:** The nefarious mole ninja. Appearances: C #10-11, UY3 #5

**MONSHIRO:** General Oyaneko's servant. He has been the General's servant since his youth. Appearances: UY1 #23

**MOYASHI:** A farmer who takes Usagi in and enlists Usagi's aid against the thugs (hired by Magistrate Sueoka) trying to run him out of the valley. His daughter, Kimie, gets a crush on Usagi. Appearances: UY2 #4-5





# APPENDIX B

**GENERAL MURAKAMI:** Famous General of the Shirogeta clan, and Gennosuke's father. Murakami was eventually killed by Magistrate Oda. Appearances: UY1 #34-35

**MURAKAMI GENNOSUKE:** (See Gennosuke)

**MURAMASA:** The late Muramasa was a master swordsmith, who crafted the "Muramasa Blade." He is rumored to be mad. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #12

**MUTSUTOSHI:** The son of Lord Shigeki. He was killed in an accident while walking along a cliff path with Sanshobo (before he became a priest). Appearances: UY3 #3.

**NAKAMURA KOJI:** A highly skilled swordsman and once a teacher of one of the 8 Kyoto schools of swordsmanship. Koji was defeated by his rival, Katsuichi, at a public duel. He now travels the musha-shugyo (warrior's pilgrimage), honing his skills in the hopes of one day confronting Katsuichi in a rematch. He is the only known swordsman to have defeated Usagi in a fair duel. Appearances: UY3 #7

**NEKOHANA:** A retainer of the late Lord Nerai, counselor to Lord Hikiji. Nekohana carried a note for the Shogun (supreme military ruler of Japan) from Lord Nerai, but Nekohana is ambushed by Hikiji's agents" (i.e., Neko ninja). Usagi finds him and Nekohana's dying wish was for Usagi to deliver the message to the Shogun. Appearances: UYB 1

**NEKO NINJA:** Ninja clan in service to Lord Hikiji, until the Dragon Bellow Conspiracy (UYB 4). Temporarily replaced by the Komori ninja. Originally led by Hanzo, later by Shingen, then by Shingen's sister, Chizu. Appearances: Turtle Soup #1, Shell Shock #1, A #4, UY2 #1-3, UY2 #13-17, UY3 #12 (and others)

**COUNSELOR NERAI:** Lord Hikiji's counselor who was responsible for the "Geishu operation" to assassinate Lord Noriyuki. He had sent Hanzo and other Neko ninja to kill Lord Hikiji, but they were defeated by Usagi. Counselor Nerai was ordered to commit seppuku (ritual suicide) as a result. Appearances: Mentioned in A #4

**LORD NERAI:** (see Counselor Nerai)

**NISHIMURA:** Owns a corner bookstore in the village haunted by General Tadaoka. He related the story of General Tadaoka to Usagi. Appearances: UY1 #33

**NOBU:** A peasant villager, who is betrothed to Kimie. When Kimie gets a crush on Usagi, Nobu tries desperately to prove to Kimie he is not a coward. He foolishly challenges Usagi to a duel after helping to rescue Kimie, but backs down. He ends up marrying Kimie. Appearances: UY2 #4-5

**NOBURO:** Village headman and father of Hiro. Appearances: UY2 #9-10

**NOODLES:** Noodles is a mute soba (buckwheat noodles) vendor who was befriended by Kitsune. He is not bright but he is very strong. Noodles is framed for stealing by Yoriki Masuda and is executed. Appearances: UY3 #1-2

**LORD NORIYUKI:** Young Lord of the Geishu samurai clan and loyal to the current Shogun. His father, Lord Mataichi, died, leaving Noriyuki the only heir to the Geishu clan. If he dies, the Geishu clan

will be abolished and its holdings distributed. Lord Hikiji is behind several assassination attempts. Noriyuki resides in the White Heron castle of the Geishu clan. Appearances: A #3-4, UY1 #12-13, 17, UYCS #1-4, UY3 #12, mentioned in UY3 #10 (and others)

**OBAASAN:** Obaasan is an elderly woman whose son, Atsuo, was a corrupt money lender, having inherited the business when his father died. Obaasan killed Atsuo after realizing how corrupt and dishonorable he had been. Appearances: UY1 #8

**OCHO:** A shape-changer and is a cat beast, terrorizing the village. She is slain by Usagi. Appearances: The Doomsday Squad #3

**COUNCILOR ODA:** A low-ranking member of the Shirogeta clan court, under Lord Asano. He is "despised by all for his low morals and was passed over many times for honors he believed should have been his." He took a bribe to assassinate Lord Asano. 20 years later he is killed by Lady Asano. Appearances: UY1 #34-36

**MAGISTRATE ODA:** (see Councilor Oda)

**OJII-SAN:** Peasant grandfather of Keiko. They lived alone in a hut. They are harassed by three bandits who eat all of their food. Ojii-san is killed by one of the bandits. Appearances: UY2 #13

**OKI ASHIYUBI:** Chief counselor of the Shogun. "Most trusted advisor" to the Shogun. In league with Counselor Hebi. Appearances: UYB 1

**OKI HANA:** A tea master, rival of Hokuse, who attempts to steal a master quality tea cup being delivered by Gennosuke. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #11

**OMORI KAZAN:** A komuso (wandering priest) of the Fuke' sect of Zen Buddhism. He is killed by one of the members of "Shi" shortly after meeting Usagi. Appearances: UY2 #7

**OSHIRO:** Student of Dogora fencing school who fought Usagi in his first tournament match. Appearances: UY1 #2

**OWARE:** Master craftsman who makes tea cups. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #11

**OYAMA TADANORI:** A very mysterious warrior known as the "Lord of Owls," who has the ability to see death in the eyes of others (i.e., he can foresee a person's death). Appearances: UY3 #11

**GENERAL OYANEKO:** A general who once served under the late Lord Higashi, and is famous for single-handedly routing the ogres of the Eastern mountains. Retired from service in disgrace after being framed by Higashi's son, Hirone, and ordered to serve as magistrate of a small town. General Oyaneko was dying of an illness. He died three weeks after meeting Usagi. Appearances: UY1 #23

**MAGISTRATE OYANEKO:** (See General Oyaneko)

**RYUZO:** A friend of merchant Araki who often borrows coal from Araki's house. Appearances: Mentioned in UY3 #8

**LORD SAKAMOTO:** A daimyo of a province near Geishu province and a supporter of Lord Hikiji. Sakamoto was involved in a scheme to receive teppo (matchlock rifles) from the Black Ships. Appearances: Mentioned in UYCS #4

**SANSHOBO:** A former samurai and hatamoto (per-

sonal retainer) to Lord Ikeda, who has since become a bonze (buddhist priest) due to the loss of his son. Appearances: UY3 #3, 9

**SEIBURO:** A villager from Usagi's village. He goes after Jotaro when he runs from Jei's hideout. He finds Jotaro, but is killed by Jei. Appearances: UY1 #30

**SEIJIRO:** Villager from Usagi's village who alerts Kenichi to bandits in the village. Appearances: UY1 #29

**SENIJURO:** Head of Dogora fencing school. Appearances: UY1 #2

**SHI ("DEATH"):** Mysterious group of four assassins, each a master of a different weapon: bow (daikyu), sickle and chain (kusari-gama), spear (Yari) and sword (katana). They spell their name using the Chinese ideogram for the number "four," which also sounds like the word "death." Appearances: UY2 #4-5

**LORD SHIGEKI:** Former Daimyo of Priest Sanshobo. Appearances: UY3 #3

**SHINGEN:** Chunin (executive officer) of the Neko ninja clan. He was hired by Lord Hikiji to steal the priceless Muramasa blade from Geishu castle. Appearances: UY1 #12, 14-17, UY2 #13, 14

**SHUBO:** A ronin working for a gambler, fighting duels and taking a share of the winnings. He was saving money to take his wife and son away to retire. One month before meeting Usagi, he killed another of Katsuichi's students "in that Northern village." He is eventually killed by Usagi in a duel. Appearances: UY1 #26

**SHUNICHI:** Brother of Shuniji, and student of Katsuichi. Found Katsuichi after his fall from a cliff and nursed him back to health. Their mother had died and their father was a jizamurai (country samurai), who shaved his head and became a monk. Appearances: UY1 #28

**SHUNJI:** Student taken by Katsuichi after Usagi's departure to serve Lord Mifune. Shuniji and his brother, Shunichi, found Katsuichi after he fell off a cliff into the river and nursed him back to health. Their mother was dead and their father was a jizamurai (country samurai) who shaved his head and became a monk. Appearances: UY1 #28

**SOUTHERN BARBARIANS:** Japanese term for European traders who came to Southern Japan via Macao. Appearances: Mentioned in UY3 #4

**SPOT:** Spot is caught stealing food and is rescued by Usagi. Usagi and his new friend, who he names Spot, continue on the lonely road. Spot eventually leaves Usagi to travel with Zato-Iro, and is ultimately killed by a bandit. Appearances: UY1 #7-9, 13-17

**SPOT 2:** Befriended Jotaro and freed him from ropes in Jei's hut (#30). Was named Spot by Jotaro (#31). Appearances: UY1 #29-31

**SUSANO-O:** The god of the seas and skies, and son of Izanagi and Izanami. It was he who slayed an eight-headed serpent and found the sword Grasscutter which became part of the Imperial Regalia. A very wild and temperamental kami, he has caused great chaos among the deities in Heaven. Appearances: UY3 #13

**MAGISTRATE SUEOKA:** A corrupt official who hires

# APPENDIX B



thugs to try to scare inhabitants of a village after gold is discovered there. His brother, Juzo (the better swordsman) later hires a group of assassins called "Shi" to kill Sueoka, in order to keep the gold for himself. Sueoka tries to kill Juzo, but is killed by Juzo instead. Appearances: UY2 #4-5

**GENERAL TADAOKA:** General in Lord Mifune's army who fled to a village, pursued by Lord Hikiji's men. He prepared to commit seppuku but was interrupted and killed by a Hikiji ashigaru. His spirit haunted the village each year, until Usagi solved the mystery and put the ghost to rest. Appearances: UY1 #33

**COUNSELOR TADON:** Aid to Lord Hirone. He was a co-conspirator against Yagi and General Oyaneko. Appearances: UY1 #24

**LADY TAKAGI:** A samurai lady of the Takagi clan (supporters of Lord Mataichi). She was killed by her husband 26 years ago. Her faithful cat lapped her blood and became an Obakeneko ("spirit cat") and eventually extracted revenge for Lady Takagi's death. "Lady Takagi" haunted their home for many years until she was slain by Usagi. Appearances: UY3 #12

**LORD TAKAGI:** A samurai of terrible temper who slew his wife, Lady Takagi, 26 years ago. A year later he remarried a beautiful young woman who was, in reality, his former wife's cat turned Obakeneko. Appearances: Mentioned in UY3 #12

**PRINCESS TAKAMATSU KINUKO:** (see Lady Hirano Kinuko)

**TAKENOKAMI:** Takenokami is a brigand working for General Fujii. Later, at the urging of his fellows, he challenges Fujii and is killed. Appearances: UY2 #12

**LORD TAMAKURO:** A daimyo who attempts to overthrow the Shogun in the Dragon Bellow Conspiracy. He is also the owner of Tamakuro Fortress in a province near Geishu province. He is a supporter of Lord Hikiji. Appearances: Mentioned in UY1 #13-17, UY3 #12

**TARAKO CLAN:** A clan who supports Lord Hikiji. Appearances: Mentioned in UY3 #5

**TATSUSABURO:** Tatsusaburo is a peasant kite-maker, his favorite being the odako (giant kite). Appearances: UY1 #20

**TENGU:** A mountain goblin. Appearances: UYCS #2

**GENERAL TODA:** General in Lord Mifune's army who turned against Lord Mifune, turning the tide of the war to Lord Hikiji's favor. Appearances: UY1 #4

**TOKOHANA:** One of Lord Tamakuro's samurai retainers, and the best spearman in the Tamakuro clan. Usagi defeated him in a duel to gain a position in the Tamakuro clan, and was later slain by Usagi during the raid on Tamakuro Fortress. Appearances: UY1 #15, 17

**SHOGUN TOKUGAWA IYASU:** Military dictator of 17th Century Japan. Currently maintains "Shogun's Peace" upon the land and enforces isolation from outsiders. Appearances: Mentioned in several issues.

**TOMOEO AME:** Chief retainer of Lord Noriyuki, and potential romantic interest of Usagi. She is the daughter of Tatsutaro, founder of the Falling Rain school of Swordsmanship. Beautiful, but deadly with a sword, she has sworn loyalty to the Geishu Clan, to which her family has been loyal for generations. Appearances: A #3-4, Shell Shock #1, UY1 #12-17, UYCS #1-4, UY3 #12

**CAPTAIN TORAME:** A samurai, senior retainer of Lord Tamakuro. He remained loyal to Tamakuro to the bitter end, and was killed by Usagi in a duel during the raid on Tamakuro Fortress (UY#17). Appearances: UY1 #14, 16-17, mentioned in UY3 #12

**TSUBO:** A villager who fled to get help against the deadly Komori (bat) ninja clan. He was discovered by Usagi moments before he died from a Komori ninja attack. Appearances: UY1 #21

**LORD TSUNA:** A daimyo who was aligned against Lord Hikiji. Lord Tsuna was assassinated in his own castle by the Koroshi (who were hired by Lord Hikiji). Appearances: Mentioned in UY3 #5

**PRINCE TSURUCHI:** Young son of Lord Mifune and Lady Kizumi. Appearances: UY1 #4

**UENO:** A sword master, and head of the Surudoji fencing school. Appearances: UY3 #7

**USAGI:** (see Miyamoto Usagi)

**USAGI'S FATHER:** A samurai and Magistrate of Usagi's home village in the Northern province. Was beheaded by Lord Hikiji when he refused to give Hikiji's army provisions from the town's stores. Appearances: UY1 #1, 3

**COUNSELOR WAKAME:** Aid to Lord Hirone. He was a

co-conspirator against Yagi and General Oyaneko. Appearances: UY1 #24

**WATAZUMIDO:** Master shakuhachi (flute) player. "I once heard master Watazumido draw a raging storm from his shakuhachi." - Komuso. Appearances: Mentioned in UY2 #7

**YAGI:** Was once the late Lord Higashi's bodyguard, was framed by Higashi's son, Hirone. Now he travels the road to hell as a sword for hire with his son, Gorogoro. Together they are known as Lone Goat and Kid. Appearances: UY1 #23-24

**YAMANAKA:** A kaiso (seaweed) broker in a village. He is a merchant. Yamanaka-ya is his shop or business. Appearances: UY2 #15, 16

**YAMATO-DAKE:** Led an expedition against the Eastern rebels in 110 A.D. armed with the "Murakumo-no-Tsurugi." When the Prince came to the province of Suguru, the rebels took him under the false pretense of hunting deer, and set fire to the fields with the Prince in the middle of the field. The prince saved himself by cutting the down the high grass with the sword. He found that the sword had magical attributes (wherever he cut down the grass, the wind would blow in that direction). He made use of this fact, saving himself. The sword with which he defended himself henceforth was known as the "Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi" or Grasscutter. Appearances: UY3 #13

**YAMATO-HIME:** Aunt of Yamato-Dake. Appearances: UY3 #13

**YUDEN:** Pompous oil merchant. Rival of Aburage. Appearances: UY1 #37

**ZATO-INO:** Zato-Ino is a blind masseur (zato). His nose is cut off by Usagi (UYB 1), but he replaces it with a wooden one (two weeks later). Later, he marries Fujiko, a young village girl. Appearances: C #7, UY1 #9, 13-18, 38

Groo is a trademark of Sergio Aragones. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is a trademark of Mirage Studios. Usagi Yojimbo and all other characters are trademarks of Usagi Studios and used under license by Gold Rush Games. This compilation is copyright 1997 by Gold Rush Games.

## APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

The following is a list of the Japanese words and terms used in the various Usagi Yojimbo comics over the years.

abayo  
Ahaji  
Aki-onna  
Amakuni  
Amanogawa  
Ama-no-have-giri

so long  
island where Izanagi retired to a cave in legend  
kami of Autumn  
maker of the first true samurai sword  
"Heavenly River"; the Milky Way  
"Heavenly-fly-cutter"; Susano's ten-grasp sword

Ame-no-mi-nakanushi-no-kami  
Ama-no-uki-hashi  
Amaterasu

Ame-Murakumo-no-tsurugi

Ashi-na-zuchi

bara-no-hime

Master-of-the-august-center-of-heaven  
"Floating bridge of heaven"  
female kami of the sun; official kami of the Imperial Court  
"Sword-of-the-village-of-the-clustering-clouds"; legendary sword that became "Grasscutter"  
"Foot-striking-elder"; a minor kami of the mountains  
"rose princess"





# APPENDIX C

Bimbo-gami	kami of poverty	negi	green onion
bonze	Buddhist priest	neko	cat
chi	earth	nori	sun-dried sheets of seaweed
chunin	officer (usually of ninja)	nue	a mythical creature with the head of a monkey, a badger's body, tiger's legs and a snake for a tail, which is said to descend as a black cloud from the sky.
daimyo	lord(s)		haunt(s)
dairokkan	sixth sense		monster(s)
dobutsu	animals	obake	supernatural cat; ghost cat; vampire cat
doshin	police, police assistants; of the samurai class but carry only one sword	obakemono	moon-clouded night
	the king of Hades (also Emma)	obakeneko	grandfather
Enma	social outcasts; restricted caste who handled dead animals, leather-working, etc.	oborozuki-yo	townspeople who patrol a town or city acting as the eyes and ears for the doshin
eta	Fuke sect of Buddhism; its priests are known as komuso	ojii-san	last day of the year
	loincloth; a common undergarment worn by men and boys	okappiki	island formed by Izanagi's spear
Fuke-shu	carrying cloth		New Year
fundoshi	bed; bed roll	Omisoka	chivalrous men
	(ninja) footsoldiers	Onogoro	pre-fight etiquette
furoshiki	the sound your stomach makes when it grumbles	Oshogatsu	measure of distance; 3.9 km
tuton	feudal clan	otokodate	gold coin(s)
genin	personal retainer (of a daimyo or Shogun)	reishiki	the dry riverbed of Yomi
gorogoro	a mountain in Japan; a militant sect of Buddhist warrior monks; period of Japanese history (794-1185 A.D.)	ri	rice wine
han	princess	ryo	folding fan
hatamoto	lightning flash	Sai-no-kawara	ritual suicide
Heian	wild boar	sake	bamboo flute (can also be used as a club)
	dog	sensu	four; death
hime	"Welcome!"	seppuku	professional assassin
inazuma	"Male-who-invites"; seventh generation kami who formed the Japanese islands	shakuhachi	lover's suicide
ino	"Female-who-invites"; seventh generation kami, wife of Izanagi	shi	ninja
inu	forked dirk; the police symbol of authority	shikakunin	"white sand"; where a confessed criminal goes before the magistrate for sentencing
Irrasshaimase!	Buddhist patron saint of children and pregnant women	shinju	military ruler
Izanagi	chief, leader (usually of ninja)	shinobi	the Vega or "weaver" star
	New Year's Eve	shirasu	student warrior
Izanami	kami of fire		throwing star
jitte	turtle(s)	Shogun	buckwheat noodles
Jizo-bosatsu	deity	Shokujo	pickpocket
	"Divine-producing-wondrous-deity"	shugyosha	kami of the sea plain (also Susano-o-no-mikoto)
jonin	seaweed wrapped around rice and cucumbers	shunken	"His-swift-impetuous-male-augustness"; Shinto kami of storms (also Susano-o)
Joya	Magpie (bird), whose outstretched wings allow Kengyu and Shokujo to cross the Heavenly River	soba	Plain of High Heaven
Kagu-tsuchi	seaweed	suri	"High-august-producing-wondrous-deity"
kame	"crow goblins"; a type of tengu with a man's body, a crow's beak and wings	Susano-o	"bamboo dragonfly"; a wooden children's toy
kami	chief	Susano-o-no-mikoto	octopus
Kami-musu-bi-no-kami	master swordsman		octopus dumplings
kappa-maki	the Altair star	Takama-no-hara	"Festival of the weaver star"; Once each year two lovers cross the heavenly river and meet again for one day.
kasasagi	chrysanthemum	Taka-mi-musu-bi-no-kami	badger-like dog; often a shape-changer
	flower doll, used during festivals	take tomo	prayer streamer; prayer is written on the streamer then tied to a tree
kaio	money pouch	tako	a straw mat, about 3 x 6 foot in size and several inches thick.
karasu tengu	fox spirit; mischievous shape-changers with supernatural powers	tako-yaki	heaven
	Japanese pumpkin, squash	Tanabata matsuri	"Hand-stroking-elder"; a minor kami and wife of Ashi-na-zuchi
kashira	spinning top(s)		mountain goblin, usually with a big nose and wings (and expert swordsmen)
kengo	bat	tanuki	lizard
Kengyu	"Monks of emptiness"; priest of the Fuke sect of Buddhism	tanzaku	male kami of the moon
kiku	literally "kill" or "murder"		eel
kiku-ningyo	female ninja	tatami	hare, rabbit
kinchaku	"Wondrous princess"; daughter of Ashi-na-zuchi	ten	harmonious spirit
kitsune	town magistrate; a samurai assigned to keep peace in a town or city	Te-na-zuchi	sandal
	the traditional loincloth worn by Sumo wrestlers		shop or business
kobacha	mole	tengu	goat
koma	crest		mountain witch
komori	warrior doll	tokage	ancestors of modern day Ainu (Japanese aboriginals)
komuso	warrior pilgrimage	Tsukiyomi	apparitions
	a style of swordsmanship	unagi	the Shinto underworld; Hades
koroshi	cabbage	usagi	police administrator of a town or city
kunoichi		wa	
Kushi-nada-hime		waraji	
machi-bugyo		-ya	
		yagi	
mawasi		yama-uba	
mogura		yemishi	
mon		yokai	
mushaningyo		Yomi	
musha-shugyo		yoriki	
mutekiryu			
napa			

# APPENDIX D



## APPENDIX D: CONVERTING USAGI YOJIMBO TO FUDGE

Conversion from **FUZION** to **FUDGE** is remarkably easy, though (as with all translations) it requires some, er, fudging on the part of the GM, of course.

In general, **FUZION** Values range from 1-10, and can be roughly translated to **FUDGE** as follows:

Value	FUZION Label	FUDGE Term
Less Than 1	Challenged	Terrible to Poor
1-2	Everyday	Mediocre to Fair
3-4	Competent	Fair to Good
5-6	Heroic	Good to Great
7-8	Incredible	Great to Superb
9-10	Legendary	Superb to Legendary
More Than 10	Superheroic	Legendary + Levels

Sometimes you'll translate a 3 as Fair, sometimes as Good, for example, depending on your perception of the character in question.

### CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

**Use Chapter Three:** Your Character as written, with the following modifications:

**Hits and Stun:** these aren't used in **FUDGE**. Instead, your Damage Capacity is based on your Physical stat. The GM can rule some weapons do stun damage instead of wounding damage if desired. In this case, any stunning beyond Incapacitated then begins to wound - start as a Scratch at that point.

**Defense:** if used at all, set this one or two levels higher than Physical.

Begin with each of the four basic attributes at Fair. Add four levels to these as desired, but you shouldn't start with any attribute higher than Great without the GM's permission.

You also begin with the following skills: Kenjutsu Good, Horse Riding Fair, Perception Fair, Acrobatics Mediocre. (Note: you may instead start with Perception Mediocre and Acrobatics Fair if desired.)

You then pick a species and job, as per the **FUZION** rules. The only thing you have to convert in these sections are bonuses and penalties. Divide any **FUZION** bonus by two and round up when converting to **FUDGE**. For example, a bonus of +1 or +2 both become +1. Bonuses of +3 and +4 both become +2, etc. For any penalties, divide by two and round down. So a -1 and -2 both become -1, for example, and penalties of -3 and -4 both become -2. This is true for all bonus and penalty conversions from **FUZION** to **FUDGE**, not just in this section. Special abilities are handled in **FUDGE** just as they are in **FUZION**. The GM may have to fudge some distances and times, however, but all **FUDGE** GMs are used to that ...



You then have five free levels to spend on skills as you please - you can get new ones or raise existing ones. One level spent on a new skill gets it at Mediocre, since Poor is the default for most skills in **FUDGE**. You may not start with a skill higher than Superb.

### SAMPLE CHARACTERS IN FUDGE

**USAGI YOJIMBO: RABBIT SHUGYOSHA/BODYGUARD**

**Physical** Good, **Mental** Good, **Combat** Superb, **Movement** Great, **Defense** Legendary

**Skills:** Kenjutsu Legendary, Riding Great, Perception Great, Acrobatics Great, Etiquette Good, Archery Good, Jujutsu Good

**Special abilities:** Spectacular Leap; Claiming the Blow; Specialized Tactics

**RABBIT BODYGUARD (PC VERSION)**

**Physical** Good, **Mental** Fair (or reverse Physical/Mental), **Combat** Great, **Movement** Great, **Defense** Great

**Skills:** Kenjutsu Superb, Horse Riding Good, Perception Great, Acrobatics Fair, Etiquette Mediocre, Archery Fair, Jujutsu Fair

**Special abilities:** Spectacular Leap; Claiming the Blow

### PUBLISHERS

To obtain back issues of *Usagi Yojimbo* comics and other *Usagi* merchandise, contact the following publishers:

**Fantagraphics Books** • 7563 Lake City Way NE • Seattle, WA 98115

**Mirage Publishing** • P.O. Box 486 • Northampton, MA 01061 • (800) 657-1100

**Dark Horse Comics, Inc.** • 10956 SE Main Street • Milwaukie, OR 97222 • (800) 862-0052



CHARACTER  
SKETCH

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Species: \_\_\_\_\_  
Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PHYSICAL</b>	_____	<b>DEF</b> (2xPhysical)	_____	<b>HITS</b> (5xPhysical)	_____
<b>MENTAL</b>	_____				
<b>COMBAT</b>	_____				
<b>MOVE</b>	_____	<b>RUN</b> (2xMOVE)	_____	<b>SPRINT</b> (3xMOVE)	_____
		<b>SWIM</b> (1xMOVE)	_____	<b>LEAP</b> (1xMOVE)	_____

SKILLS	SCORE	+ STAT	AV/DV
ACROBATICS	_____	+ PHYS _____	= _____
ARCHERY	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
ARTISTRY: _____	_____	+ MENT _____	= _____
CLIMBING*	_____	+ PHYS _____	= _____
ETIQUETTE	_____	+ MENT _____	= _____
EVADE*	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
FEAT OF STRENGTH	_____	+ PHYS _____	= _____
GAMES	_____	+ MENT _____	= _____
JITTEJUTSU	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
JUJUTSU	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
KENJUTSU	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
NINJUTSU	_____	+ PHYS _____	= _____
OTH WEAP (_____)	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
PEASANT WEAPONS	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
PERCEPTION*	_____	+ MENT _____	= _____
PERSUASION*	_____	+ MENT _____	= _____
POLEARMS	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
RIDING	_____	+ PHYS _____	= _____
STEALTH*	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
TETSUBO	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
THROW*	_____	+ COMB _____	= _____
TRACKING	_____	+ MENT _____	= _____
_____	_____	+ _____	= _____
_____	_____	+ _____	= _____
_____	_____	+ _____	= _____

## ACTIONS

**Attack:** Use any type of attack

**Block:** Stop any one HTH attack. The target Number is the attacker's Combat Stat + (Fighting or Weapon) Skill +10.

**Dodge:** Add +3 to your Evade skill against all attacks for this Phase.

**Get Up:** Stand up if you have been thrown or knocked down. You may take one other Action, too (except Run or Sprint).

**Grab:** You can grab a person or object; your Action Total is -2 and your Evade skill is -3 this Phase.

**Other Action:** Any other single action the GM lets you do.

**Half Move:** Move up to half your Move stat plus take one other Action (except Move, Run or Sprint).

**Move:** Move up to your Move stat.

**Run:** Move up to twice your Move stat in meters/yards.

**Sprint:** Move up to 3x your Move stat in m/y; your Combat stat is at 1/2 normal and your Evade skill is 0 this Phase.

## HITS TAKEN

STUN TAKEN

WEAPONS CARRIED

TYPE	DAMAGE
_____	___D6
_____	___D6
_____	___D6
_____	___D6
_____	___D6

## POSSESSIONS

[illegible]

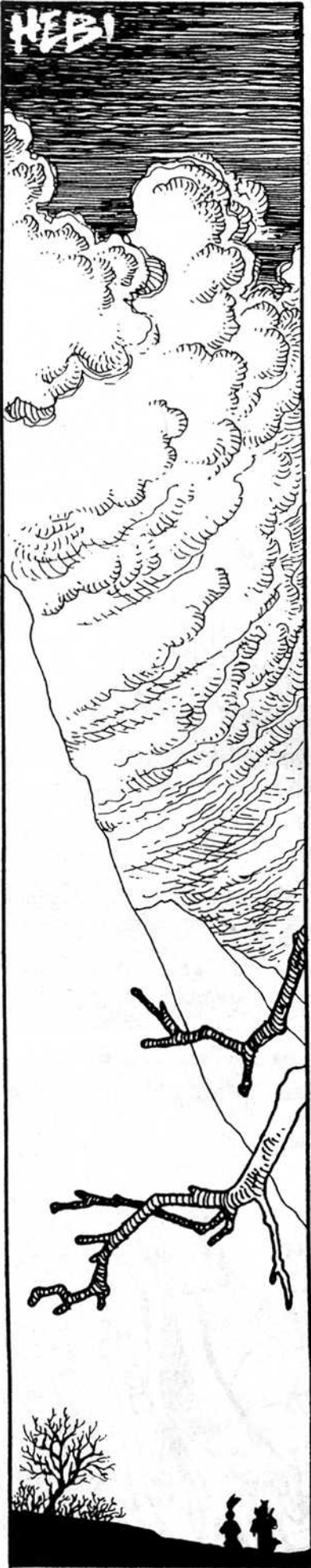
### SPECIAL ABILITIES

[illegible]

COPYRIGHT 1997-1998 BY GOLD  
RUSH GAMES. ALL RIGHTS  
RESERVED.

PERMISSION GRANTED TO  
PHOTOCOPY FOR PERSONAL USE  
ONLY. USAGI YOJIMBO IS A  
TRADEMARK OF USAGI STUDIOS.  
USED UNDER LICENSE.









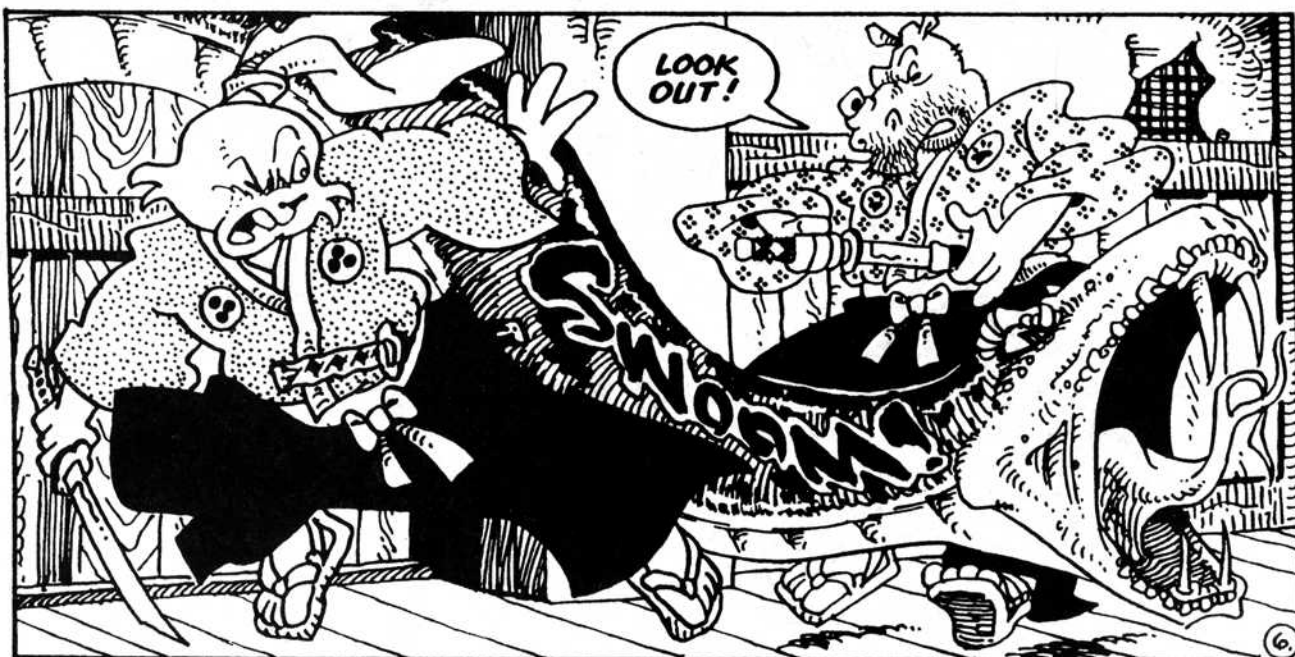


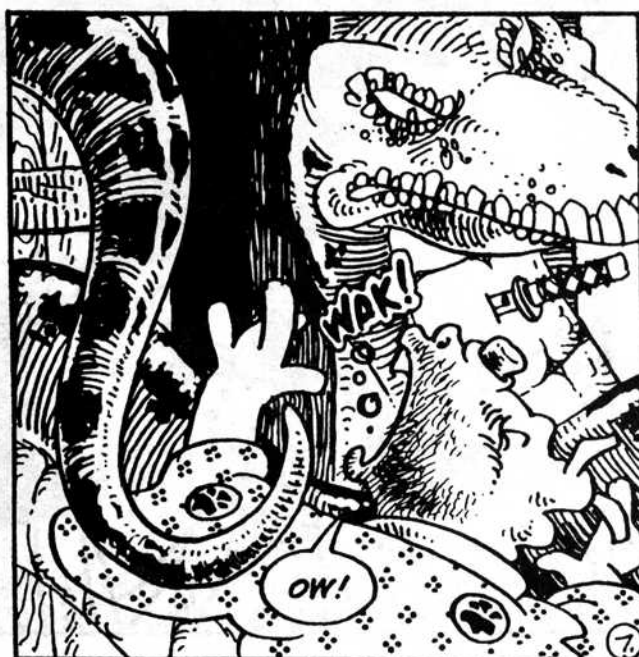




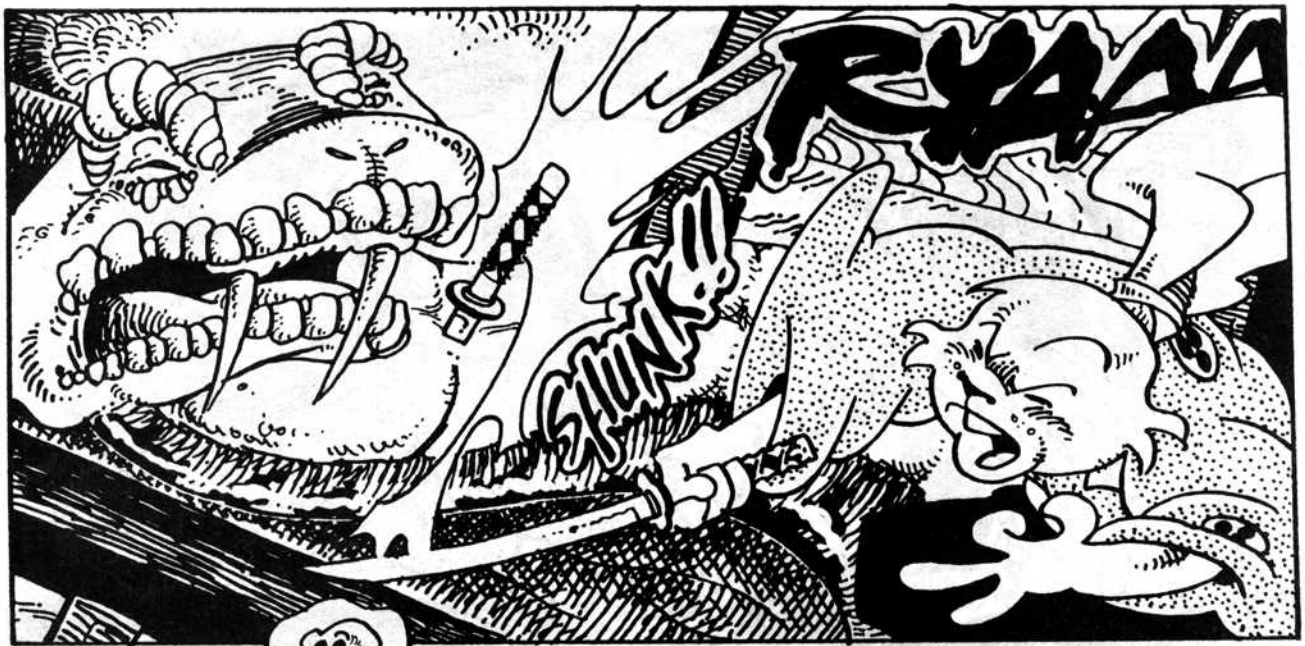












END.

THE OFFICIAL


# USAGI™ YOJIMBO WEB SITE!


The *Usagi Yojimbo Dojo* is a free-for-all internet site dedicated to promoting *Usagi Yojimbo* and other works by award-winning cartoonist Stan "Sensei" Sakai.


The UYD is much more than a mere website... it's an international phenomenon! Loaded with news and previews directly from Sakai himself, and more info than you could ever handle, the UYD is fast becoming the benchmark of excellence by which all other comic book websites are compared. It also doubles as a UY Fan Club, with *FREE* membership, e-mail newsletters, and unlimited access to tons of UY info and artwork! Look at what's here for you:





Usagi Yojimbo and Gennosuke are trademarks of Usagi Studios. Copyright 1997 by Usagi Studios. Used with permission.

 **Usagi Yojimbo Cover Gallery:** Full-color images of every single UY cover in existence, for your downloading pleasure. From *Albedo* #2 to the latest installment from Dark Horse, they're all here!

 **The Grasscutter Website:** Featuring the latest news and info on the new UY story arc - GRASSCUTTER! With previews, character info, historical data, everything you could ever want!

 **Usagi Yojimbo Journal:** Synopses of every single UY story ever published!

 **Usagi Yojimbo Concordance:** Lists every single UY appearance to date!

 **Official Usagi Yojimbo RPG Website:** Info on Gold Rush Games' new *Usagi Yojimbo Roleplaying Game*!

Tomoe Ame Website  
DojoChat Conversations  
Stan Sakai Dojo  
UY Fan Art and Fiction

DojoBoard Discussions  
Nilson & Hermy Website  
Dragon Bellow Conspiracy Site  
European UY Dojo

Space Station Usagi  
Usagi Yojimbo Q&A  
UY Buyer's Guide  
Animated UY Images

Usagi's World  
Internet Contests (w/ prizes)  
*Albedo* #2 Website (seriously!)  
UY Video Game Site

**But that's not all:**

**And more...**

**So jump on the web and visit the Usagi Yojimbo Dojo soon... it's an experience unlike any other!**

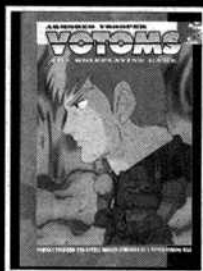
## [www.usagiyojimbo.com](http://www.usagiyojimbo.com)

[UYD 2.0 Satellite] [www.geocities.com/Tokyo/4271/](http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/4271/)  
[UYD 4.0 Satellite] [inet.uni-c.dk/~i33126/usagi.html](http://inet.uni-c.dk/~i33126/usagi.html)

[UYD 3.0 Mirror] [www.engr.csulb.edu/~tbustill/usagi.htm](http://www.engr.csulb.edu/~tbustill/usagi.htm)  
[UYD 5.0 Satellite] [www.geocities.co.jp/Playtown/5723/](http://www.geocities.co.jp/Playtown/5723/)



# WELCOME TO



# FUZION™ POWER!



Fuzion Labs is the partnership formed between R. Talsorian Games and Hero Games when they first set out to create a joint rules system. That system, with roots in the best-selling **MEKTON®** and **CHAMPIONS®**, is **Fuzion™**.

## What is Fuzion?

### *or The Introduction of a Metasystem*

Fuzion is a universal role-playing game system. Since Fuzion is so flexible, it allows you to simulate just about any genre or setting, giving you almost infinite gaming environments. Unlike previous "universal" systems, Fuzion is an metasystem, not a multisystem.

An multisystem basically allows you to play the same way in a number of different genres or settings. While a multisystem might work extremely well for a specific genre, it requires some changes to the rules when used for other genres.

A metasystem, on the other hand, allows you to not only do this, but also combine elements of many different genres into one setting (for instance, giant robots and fantasy characters) as well allowing you to customize those core rules to best fit the individual genre by adjusting the level of their impact on your game. The idea is that in each Fuzion setting, we may use the same tables, but they are applied differently by adjusting their effects on the game.



## Why Do We Do It This Way?

### *or The Power To Make It Your Own*

Fuzion was designed as a whole, not as a series of parts for different genres. That means we've tried to cover as many different conditions that we think might arise over hundreds of genres and settings instead of putting out new rules as new settings come up. This allows you more flexibility in creating your own genres; if you want to add starships to your fantasy game (like in Poul Anderson's *High Crusade*), you don't need to wait till we come out with a specific book combining these elements. This is especially important when you consider the number of new genres and settings arising every day in anime, comics and movies—with zombie cowboys, parapsychic FBI agents, superpowered ninja rangers and so on.

And, since Fuzion was designed from the roots of both the HERO and Interlock systems, it also has the advantage of being able to use previously published materials from both of these systems with very little conversion required. And since Fuzion can be applied to a wide variety of genres, it has been licensed to other game settings as well as RTG and HERO's settings, allowing players to use parts of these offspring systems as well.

## Customizing Fuzion

### *or Plug-Ins, Switches, and Dials*

Fuzion is unique in that it is designed to allow gamemasters to customize its functions to better fit the particular needs of their campaigns. This is done by using three important concepts, called Plug-Ins, Switches, and Dials.

Plug-Ins are mini rules systems. They can be anything from building super powers to building mecha suits to buying magic spells. Of course, Plug-Ins are transportable—you can move a Plug-In from one game to another. Plug-Ins are one of the elements that allows Fuzion to use the same rules in many genres while still maintaining the feel of the specific genre you are playing.

Switches are rules that could be turned on and off for your campaign without unbalancing everything else. Fuzion highlights those important, switchable rules and makes it easy to pick them out from the ones that really affect the total balance of the game.

Dials are a way of setting the level of effect of a particular rule on your Fuzion campaign. Dials are usually set according to the Reality Level of the campaign; from Everyday

(pretty much like real life) to Superheroic (the world of four color comics and mythology). To use a dial, you decide at the start of your campaign what reality level you want that particular rule to be set at. The rule then automatically has that level of effect on your campaign. Dials are an incredibly powerful tool, because they allow you to tailor the rules of the campaign to exactly fit the required flavor. And since all Fuzion games use the same dials, it's easy to cross genres and worlds.

## Endless Possibilities

### *or Why Is Fuzion Cool?*

Since Fuzion is designed to be flexible, you can easily drop systems and rules from one game setting into another. Need super-powers in your cyberpunk game? Just tell your players to use the powers Plug-In from *Champions: New Millennium*. You can even add Japanese magic to your *Bubblegum Crisis* game by taking the sorcery Plug-In from Gold Rush Game's *Sengoku*.

In addition, Fuzion is being licensed to many different game companies. This means that a wide variety of games, covering many different genres and settings, will be coming out **using the same rules**. Since all of those games will use Fuzion, it is no effort to take elements from one game and add it to another. Currently, Fuzion covers everything from fantasy Japan to giant robots. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination.

And if that wasn't enough, you can get a copy of the core Fuzion rules for **free!** While this rules set won't have all of the plug-ins and campaign setting information of a published set of rules, they will tell you how to play, and allow you to create your own games. For more on the Fuzion system, or to download your own copy of the Core Design Rules, visit the Fuzion Labs website at <http://www.fuzionlabs.com> or contact R. Talsorian Games, P.O. Box 7356, Berkeley, CA 94707.

Fuzion is the FUZION Labs Group™ trademark for its multigenre game system.

**R. TALSORIAN  
GAMES, INC.**





# USAGI<sup>TM</sup>

## YOJIMBO

### ROLE-PLAYING GAME

From the exciting comic book series  
by Eisner Award-winning creator Stan Sakai!

- Complete game in one book!
- Official *Usagi Yojimbo* timeline!
- Character index!
- Map of Usagi's Japan!



Uses the *Instant Fuzion* game system.  
It's easy to learn - you'll be playing in minutes!  
And it's compatible with all other Fuzion products,  
including *Sengoku*<sup>TM</sup>, *Champions: New Millennium*<sup>TM</sup>,  
the *Dragonball Z*<sup>TM</sup> RPG & *Shards of the Stone*<sup>TM</sup>: Core!



\$16.00 U.S. Stock No. U100  
ISBN 1-890305-02-2

Usagi Yojimbo is a trademark of Usagi Studios. Used under license. Fuzion is a trademark of The Fuzion Group.  
Used under license. Sengoku is a trademark of Gold Rush Games. Champions is a registered trademark of  
Hero Games, Inc. Dragonball Z is a trademark of Toei Animation (RPG published by R. Talsorian Games under  
license). Shards of the Stone is a trademark of Shards Entertainment/Cybergames.com.

Published and distributed by  
**Gold Rush Games**  
P.O. Box 2531, Elk Grove, CA 95759  
[www.goldrushgames.com](http://www.goldrushgames.com)

MEMBER  
**CMAA**  
THE GAME  
MANUFACTURERS  
ASSOCIATION



Another Quality Scan by:

**AKRITTERA**