



WAY OF THE OPEN HAND



ORIENTAL ADVENTURES



THE WAY OF THE OPEN HAND™

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

To use the LSR RPG 2nd Edition portions of this book, a GM needs the *Game Master's Guide* and the *Player's Guide*. A player needs only the *Player's Guide*.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Way of the Open Hand™ is a sourcebook with a dual purpose. On one hand, it is intended to add flavor and depth to the Brotherhood of Shinsei and Rokugan's monastic orders. On the other, it is designed to present new and dynamic fighting styles, from the realistic to the bizarre and mystical. All of the styles, history, and character options in this book are inspired by the martial arts traditions of history and legend alike, and given a uniquely Rokugani spin. The ideas contained here can be incorporated easily into any given *Legend of the Five Rings* campaign, or taken and transplanted into any *d20 System™* setting. Just as in the Tao itself, dear reader, you are encouraged to use what you find interesting and enlightening and leave the rest behind.

Way of the Open Hand is broken down into chapters as follows:

Chapter One lays out some general rules for Rokugani martial arts, as well as detailing the vows and recent history of the Brotherhood.

Chapters Two through Four each deal with major groups within the Brotherhood.

Chapter Five details groups that, while technically outside the Brotherhood of Shinsei, yet maintain monastic beliefs and traditions.

Chapter Six introduces a multitude of new martial arts for the Great Clans, ronin, Nezumi, and even gaijin characters, encompassing a wide variety fighting styles from the offensive to the defensive to the simply bizarre, to fit nearly any campaign.

The entire team had a blast writing this book; it introduces a lot of new legends, mysteries, and just plain fun to Rokugan. We hope you enjoy *Way of the Open Hand™*.

NEW MECHANICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

TORITAKA TATSURE

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

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

Sometimes material must be presented for one system or the other. In such cases, this text will be contained in a callout box with a gray background, such as the one below. The headers for these boxes will clearly label which information is for the *d20 System™* and which information is for the *L5R RPG 2nd Edition ("L5R RPG 2E")*.



CHAPTER ONE:

MARTIAL ARTS
STYLES

Shiba Gyukudo sat down in the shade with his bowl of rice, away from where the other bushi were taking their midday meal. The pale young bushi looked casually at the others, studying their actions before beginning his meal. All about the Shogun's camp, men and women were moving quickly from one duty to the next, making sure the site would be ready by nightfall. Kaneka demanded his soldiers master the art of striking camp quickly. The soldiers became quite adept at the task. Nonetheless, it was a furious, inelegant matter this setting up and breaking down camps repeatedly. Shiba Gyukudo wondered if he would ever grow accustomed to serving in the Shogun's army, but so long as the slengenja he protected was commanded to follow Kaneka, he was duty bound to follow.

It was a rare moment when he was able to step away from Isawa Jun's side, though he was never unaware of where she was. Like all trained by the Shiba Yojimbo Academy, Gyukudo shared a supernatural sense of his charge, and he made certain he never strayed too far even in moments of rest. His senior rank among the other bushi in the camp allowed him the small luxury of walking to the edge of the camp and turning his back on the bustle it contained, and Gyukudo took advantage of it.

The yojimbo looked out upon the rolling grass plains and attempted to share in their quiet harmony. The tips of the long grass waved slowly in a mild breeze, and Gyukudo closed his eyes as he allowed the sensation of floating to overtake him. The stress and cares of the past days fell away from him, allowing the yojimbo to have a moment of —

"I think they gave you more rice than I got," a voice, sharp and irritating snapped Gyukudo out of his meditation in an instant. The Shiba ignored the comment, reflexively attempting to fall back into his trance.

"Just as well," the man continued, obviously coming closer. "I think I'd get tired if I had a full stomach."

Sighing inwardly, Gyukudo slowly opened his eyes and turned his head to regard the intruder. The yojimbo's anger rose as he saw the unkempt ronin before him. The other man wore ill-maintained armor and tattered rags that may have once passed for a kimono. The ronin's unshaven face was still regarding the bowl in his hands as if staring at it forlornly would cause more rice to appear.

"You are disturbing me," Gyukudo said curtly. "Please leave me to my meditations."

"Meditations? Are you a monk?" the ronin asked with impolite curiosity.

"I am not a monk, ronin, nonetheless I am meditating," came the Phoenix's response, this time somewhat more irritated.

"I am not a ronin, Phoenix, I am eating!" the other man cackled in response, mocking Gyukudo's words.

Gyukudo took a deep breath, then stood and turned to fully face the ronin. The Phoenix bushi towered a good foot over the annoying man and glared down at him. "What are you doing in the Shogun's camp, ronin?"

Just as swiftly as Gyukudo stood up, the other man sat down and plopped his rice bowl in his lap. "I was invited, if you must know," he said wagging a finger at the Phoenix in a scolding gesture. "Though I find it rude a samurai is so curious of another's business."

"I have a hard time believing such an insolent ronin would be given the honor to share in the glory of the army of Kaneka, the Shogun."

"Glory?" the ronin replied quickly, looking from side to side. His eyes were wide with sudden, eager awe. "I did not know there was glory here. I came for the food. Where is the line for the glory?"

Gyukudo went slack jawed in shock as he stared at the little man. "Stop playing games, ronin, and leave before I have you beaten for annoying me."

The ronin's face became deadly calm as he looked up at Gyukudo. "I not an annoying samurai. And I warn you against trying to have me punished. I would not like to harm your lackeys for having to carry out your misguided commands."

"That's enough!" Gyukudo nearly roared, and more than one of the other bushi in the camp began to take notice of the scene. The Phoenix samurai reached for his katana as he took a step toward the man on the ground.

With alarming speed, the little man tossed his rice bowl at the Phoenix's feet, causing the yojimbo to stumble. From his sitting position, the ronin leapt at Gyukudo's chest, gripping the samurai's sword hand with his own and forcing them both to the ground with his momentum. Gyukudo slammed into the earth with his chin and chest, while the ronin landed on the yojimbo's back, pinning Gyukudo's arm behind his back.

"Apologize," the man chided.

Shiba Gyukudo was not a man given to fits of rage, but he was swiftly reaching his limit. With a loud grunt, he shifted his weight and slipped over. The ronin sprang away nimbly, and Gyukudo quickly got back on his own feet. The two combatants circled each other warily for a moment, and a small group began to watch the proceedings. Two Shiba samurai began to move towards the gray, but Gyukudo raised a hand and barked, "Stand down! This is my fight!"

Seeing an opening, the ronin leapt forward again, but the Shiba was ready. Gyukudo turned to the side, tucking both arms behind his back and lashing out with a side kick at his airborne opponent. The ronin twisted impossibly in the air, dodging the attack and once again landing on his feet. Not missing a moment, Gyukudo drew his sword and made a skilled cut through the air at the ronin. The blow stopped an immeasurably small distance from the ronin's face, and both men stood absolutely still as they locked gazes.

"The Way of the Phoenix is the way of peace, ronin. I would prefer not to take your head." Gyukudo said through clenched teeth. "Give me a reason to spare you, ronin."

"Here's one," the man replied, smiling innocently as if his death was not a razor's edge from his own face. "I am not a ronin; I am a monk. Also," the man continued, and Gyukudo's arms suddenly felt lighter than air, "because you don't have a sword."

Confused, Gyukudo looked down at his arms, which were both held by the shabby monk's hands in a complex grip. It was at that moment that the Phoenix realized he could not feel his arms at all, and his sword's hilt was resting between his opponent's forearms.

"Koan!" a familiar voice barked, and both men snapped to attention instantly. The crowd that gathered quickly fell in as well as they recognized the stern command of their Shogun. Gyukudo's sword fell to the grass and the yojimbo flicked his gaze to it for a half second before realizing any movement at this point would be an affront to Kaneka.

"Koan," the Shogun repeated, walking up slowly to the two men. The Shogun looked the ronin up and down critically and finally said, "You're here, then. Good. Gyukudo-san," he said, turning to the Phoenix. "Pick up your sword and salute your new sensei."

Koan smiled.

MARTIAL ARTS STYLES

Way of the Open Hand introduces a number of new martial arts styles utilized by the Brotherhood of Shinsei, the Great Clans, and other groups throughout Rokugan and beyond. Martial art styles in this book are divided into two types, major and minor. Major martial arts are highly advanced schools that have existed for centuries. Minor schools, while still impressive, have not yet quite progressed to the same heights as major styles. Characters progress through these styles by gaining a chain of abilities, each of which must be learned in the proper order.

MARTIAL ARTS STYLE CHAIN FEATS

Each major martial art style is described as a series of five style chain feats — Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Expert, and Master. Minor martial art feats have only three feats — Novice, Advanced, and Master.



These martial art feats often count as kiho feats, so that inkyo characters might have easier access to them, depending on the particular style. The styles of certain Great Clans might also count as clan feats if that style is exclusively used by bushi of that clan (though access to these feats can be gained by taking the Different School feat normally). Martial art styles that are frequently utilized by non-bushi members of a clan might not count as technique feats — see the description of individual feats for details.

Each martial art style chain is designed to work independently. Feat requirements are kept to a minimum, though Improved Unarmed Strike is common and all require the previous links in the style chain. However, many style chains do have additional abilities if combined with feats outside the style chain. No two martial artists are alike, even in the same style, and would-be martial artists are encouraged to experiment and combine abilities to taste.

Unlike other feats, all martial art style chain feats require a teacher. This teacher must possess the feat in question. Once the student has studied for what the GM feels is an appropriate amount of time, the character gains the feat normally.

Some GM's may require players to spend months honing their skills. Others may feel that the player has mastered most of his art through 'on-the-job training' and merely requires a few hours with his sensei to process what he is learned. This is left up to individual play styles and the demands of the campaign.

There is no specific rule against taking feats from more than one style chain. However, students of a particular discipline may be reluctant to share their secrets with a known practitioner of another martial art. In many cases it may require a great deal of effort, respect, and perhaps even guile on the part of the student if he wishes to find a willing teacher.

MARTIAL ARTS STYLE CHAIN TITLES

The Jujutsu skill is the default hand-to-hand combat skill for all martial art styles. This counts as a Weapon Class skill rather than a Specialized Weapon Skill (see the *Player's Guide*, page 175, for a definition of Weapon Class Skills and Specialized Weapon Skills).

For a character to become adept in a certain martial art style, he must first gain the Specialized Weapon Skill that pertains to that style. Gaining this Specialized Skill does nothing in and of itself other than granting the character the normal advantages of a Specialized Skill. However, once the character has acquired the appropriate amount of skill ranks, he may purchase a title.

Each major martial art style is described as a series of five style chain titles — Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Expert, and Master. Minor martial art feats have only three titles — Novice, Advanced, and Master. These titles are technically Advantages, and each one costs a certain number of character points. Each style also lists cost reductions that might apply if the character is of the appropriate clan, profession, or has certain Advantages. All reductions are cumulative.

KNOW THE SCHOOL

D20 SYSTEM:

The Know the School feat, as presented in *Rokugan*,[™] can be applied to martial arts styles as well as clans. At the GM's option, practitioners of a particular style who have grossly offended a player character in some manner (like, for instance, killing the character's teacher) might result in granting double the normal bonus. If, at some point, the player character resolves this conflict (by, for instance, killing the master of the rival school that murdered his teacher) this feat can be exchanged for any feat from the character's martial arts style chain that could have been taken when Know the School was originally required. This feat may be taken without the aid of a teacher, representing the knowledge the character obtained through defeating his enemy.

15R RPG 2E:

The Know the School skill, as presented in *Way of the Samurai*, can be applied to martial arts styles as well as clans. At the GM's option, practitioners of a particular style who have grossly offended a player character in some manner (like, for instance, killing the character's teacher) might result in granting double the normal bonus. If, at some point, the player character resolves this conflict (by, for instance, killing the master of the rival school that murdered his teacher) this skill can be cashed in for the experience points spent, which can then be spent on ranks in martial art specialized skills or advantages from the character's martial arts style chain. Style chain titles may be taken without the aid of a teacher, representing the knowledge the character obtained through defeating his enemy.

For a title to be gained, the character must be of the appropriate Insight Rank. These Insight Ranks are as follows: Novice (1), Intermediate (2), Advanced (3), Expert (4), Master (5). In addition, all martial art style chain titles require a teacher. This teacher must be of an Insight Rank equal to or higher than the student, and must possess the title in question. Once the student has studied for what the GM feels is an appropriate amount of time, the character gains the feat normally.

Some GM's may require players to spend months honing their skills. Others may feel that the player has mastered most of his art through 'on-the-job training' and merely requires a few hours with his sensei to process what he is learned. This is left up to individual play styles and the demands of the campaign.

There is no specific rule against taking titles from more than one style chain. However, students of a particular discipline may be reluctant to share their secrets with a known practitioner of another martial art. In many cases it may require a great deal of effort, respect, and perhaps even guile on the part of the student if he wishes to find a willing teacher.



UNARMED COMBAT RULES

The unarmed combat rules and descriptions of kaze-do and mizu-do in the Player's Guide are designed for use in any campaign. The versions of kaze-do and mizu-do described in this book are more detailed, and overrule the ones presented in the Player's Guide if this book is used in a campaign. In addition, other unarmed combat rules have been updated and consolidated here to keep things organized and up-to-date.

UNARMED DAMAGE

The default damage of an unarmed attack is 0k1. The attacker rolls extra die equal to his Strength as normal. The Hands of Stone Advantage increases this damage to 0k2. The Large Advantage allows the attacker to add +5 to Damage rolls. Both of these Advantages are described in the Player's Guide, and can be extremely useful for unarmed combatants.

UNARMED VS. ARMED

Generally speaking, an unarmed combatant facing a trained samurai is in a great deal of trouble. There are no penalties for fighting unarmed against an armed opponent, other than the fact that the armed character likely does greater damage and has other advantages granted by the weapon. Using the right martial art styles, however, can give the unarmed character a decided advantage.

THE SHOBO

This weapon was described in the *Exotic Arms Guide*,TM but is of particular interest to martial artists. The shobo is a short iron cylinder with a single iron ring welded halfway down the shaft, allowing it to be held in a variety of positions. The shobo is similar in function to brass knuckles, adding weight to the fist so that additional damage can be inflicted. This weapon is popular among the more militant sects of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, as well as with ronin, fire-man gangs, and assorted common thugs.

D20 SYSTEM:

This weapon grants a +2 damage bonus when fighting unarmed. A character wielding a shobo is not considered armed unless he has the Improved Unarmed Strike feat. It costs 3 bu and weighs 1 lb.

LSR RPG 2E:

This weapon allows the wielder to roll an extra die on all unarmed damage.

GRAPPLING

If an attacker wishes to grapple his opponent, he must first make contact with an attack roll using his Wrestling skill. (Some Specialized Martial Art Skills can be utilized in place of Wrestling.) Armor provides no TN bonus against this attack. The attacker may declare Raises at this time in order to gain an equal bonus on the ensuing grapple if successful.

If the attack is successful, the attacker may make a contested Strength roll to grapple. He gains a +5 bonus on his Strength roll for every Raise declared on the initial attack roll for this purpose. If the attacker is successful, he gains control of the grapple.

On their turn, the combatant who controls the grapple can either choose to release the grapple or inflict unarmed damage on the opponent and hold them motionless for one round. If the combatant who controls the grapple maintains it, they must make another contested Strength roll every round on their turn to maintain it, though the controller gains a +5 bonus on his roll. If the defender wins this contested roll, he may either escape the attacker's grip or attempt to gain control. This requires a second contested Strength roll (the former controller gains no bonus for this).

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

Certain bushi schools provide multiple attacks at higher levels. These multiple attacks may be used for unarmed strikes, at the bushi's discretion, but may not be used for multiple grapple attempts or other advanced attack forms provided by a martial art (tackles, sweeps, joint locks) unless specifically stated in that martial art's description.

THROWS

A throw is a basic maneuver that can be performed by anyone with at least one rank in an unarmed fighting art (including Jujutsu and Wrestling). A throw follows the same rules as a grapple, but the attacker must make two Raises on his initial attack (these do not provide a bonus on the contested Strength roll).

If the attacker strikes his opponent and succeeds at the contested Strength roll, the defender is a number of feet away equal to the attacker's Strength $\times 2$ and lands prone and takes normal damage for an unarmed attack (at the GM's option possibly more if he is thrown onto broken glass, a spear, off a cliff, etc).

If the thrown character makes an Agility roll greater than the attacker's initial attack roll, he lands on his feet but suffers a +5 TN penalty to all attacks for one round.

WRESTLING

Note that Wrestling skill as described in the Player's Guide is intended as a sport, not a combat skill. Any character using the Wrestling skill in combat, he suffers a -10 Initiative penalty.

HISTORY OF ROKUGAN'S MONASTIC ORDERS

Fortune worship begins in Rokugan: pre-history

The primitive tribes of humans scattered throughout what will one day become Rokugan discover the presence of powerful nature spirits. These spirits, denizens of Tengoku, hold tremendous sway over events in the mortal world. These spirits come to be known as Fortunes and are worshiped in countless shrines and temples across the land.

The Tao of Shinsei transcribed: year 42

Shinsei, the Little Prophet, arrives in the Hantei's court. He promises a victory over the armies of Fu Leng, and gains an audience with the Emperor. The two speak throughout the night, their conversations dutifully recorded by Hantei's brother Shiba. Shinsei's advice, to gather a band of mortals from every Great Clan, ultimately leads to the Fu Leng's defeat. The legend of the Seven Thunders is born, and Shinsei vanishes into history.

The first Great Convocation is held: year 44

Two years after Shinsei's disappearance, those who have taken up the study of his words come together in Shinsei no Sumai Mura, a village devoted to the Little Prophet in the Dragon lands. At this council, the various groups of monks who have come to embrace Shinsei's wisdom agree to compile and codify tales of his travels and combine them with Shiba's own transcriptions. Thus the Tao of Shinsei is born. It is agreed that a convocation shall be convened at Shinsei no Sumai Mura every ten years, when the various leaders of different monastic groups can come together and address issues that pertain to all students of Shinsei's wisdom, and additions may be made to the Tao if necessary.

Shinseism and Fortune Worship combined: year 48

Two years after taking the throne, the Shining Prince Hantei Genji officially unites Shinseism and the worship of the Fortunes, declaring both to be equally important and official religions of the Empire. There is initial resistance from fundamentalists of both beliefs, but the Empire soon adjusts to the idea that these two sets of beliefs are not mutually exclusive.

The Phoenix Clan discovers Uikku, the Serene Prophet: year 72

In a remote province, the Phoenix discover the child Uikku, cursed with the terrible gift of prophecy. His maddened ravings vary between inspiring insights into Shinsei's wisdom and terrifying prophecies of death and darkness. The Phoenix take Uikku into their custody and care for him, dutifully recording all his prophecies. The Phoenix share this information freely with the Brotherhood, who help them to understand more obscure and enigmatic portions of Uikku's ramblings. The serene prophet lives comfortably in the Phoenix's custody for almost twenty years before succumbing to a terrible fever.

Formation of the Shinmaki Shinseist sect: year 234

At the tenth Great Convocation, a monk called Basso appears, claiming to have in his possession a lost compilation of Shin-

sei's wisdom, written immediately before the Little Prophet disappeared into the Shadowlands. Many believe its philosophies are an outgrowth of Togashi's interpretations of Shinsei's wisdom, rather than Shiba's. Basso urges the wisdom of this "Diamond Sutra" over other collections of Shinsei's writing. Basso's urgings were considered outrageous by some, including the legendary monk Kobo, who left the meeting and was never seen again. At the Convocation's end, enough monks had embraced Basso's ideas that a new sect, Shinmaki Shinseism, came into being. The exact teachings of this sect remain a mystery to all save those within it, as the differences between the Diamond Sutra and the original Tao are subtle to be sure. Even so, subtle differences in a document as important as the Tao are enough to cause a wise rift between the Shinmaki and other Shinseists.

Togashi Kaze is executed: year 251

The ise zumi Togashi Kaze, progenitor of kaze-do, is called before Hantei Ningi to demonstrate his martial arts. Kaze refuses, citing that he has only taught his art to peasants so that they might defend themselves in the face of an Imperial decree forbidding them from carrying weapons. The Emperor commands his Emerald Champion to dispatch Kaze, but the Champion refuses and commits seppuku. The Emperor's general, a Matsu, is offered the position as Champion on the condition that he execute Kaze. The Lion warrior cuts the monk down without hesitation, but kaze-do survives.

Formation of the Shintao sect: year 254

At the twelfth Great Convocation, the Brotherhood of Shinsei decides to peacefully resolve growing philosophical disputes among the order by formally separating the Brotherhood into multiple sects. Shinmaki is recognized among these, but the most predominant is the Shintao sect. Students of the Shintao path believe that studying the Tao is unnecessary to achieve enlightenment. Shinsei himself achieved that elusive state before the Tao was ever written, they claim, and thus anyone can achieve enlightenment if only they do what is necessary. This sect places great emphasis on meditation and contemplation, and immediately draws the attention of many more internal and philosophical Brotherhood members.

The Asahina family of the Crane is formed: year 353

The powerful Phoenix shugenja Isawa Asahina launches a vengeful campaign against the Crane, only to be swayed by the honor and selflessness of a single Doji samurai-ko. Asahina joins the Crane clan and is given a family name in return for his many contributions. Asahina forms a close bond with the Brotherhood of Shinsei, particularly the Order of Mercy, a sect devoted to the Fortune Jizo. Many new monasteries and shrines are built throughout Crane lands as a result of this bond.

Hantei Kusada sponsors the Brotherhood of Shinsei: year 428

The eighth Hantei Emperor, Hantei Kusada, becomes a pawn of the Gozoku Alliance. This cabal of Crane, Scorpion, and Phoenix leaders train Kusada to be a loyal pawn after kidnapping him to gain control of his father, Hantei Fujiwa. Kusada's only accomplishment of note is his sponsorship of religion, and he is responsible for building over two dozen magnificent temples in Otosan Uchi in places where Shinsei visited or performed a holy act. At one point, it occurs to Kusada that the Brotherhood is completely beyond the Gozoku's control, and orders them to serve him as his spies while he seeks an escape from their domination.

The Brotherhood has little choice but to obey, as the Emperor is the supreme authority for all Shinseist orders. The Gozoku discovers four of the spies and publicly executes them for treason, all in the Emperor's name. The Brotherhood is outraged by this action, and begin to resist the Gozoku openly. The gozoku strike back, arresting Gaman, Master of the Four Temples, and burning three sohei monasteries. The peasantry see the Emperor's servants attacking the peaceful monks of Shinsei and rebel. The Gozoku are forced to cease all action against the Brotherhood and make reparations to the order, but the damage is already done. The Brotherhood of Shinsei have proven that the Gozoku are not invincible, and it is not long before their grasp upon the Emperor is broken.

Coronation of Hantei X: year 487

The first Emperor to be traced back from a lost branch of the Otomo when the previous Empress dies without an heir, Hantei X surrenders his personal name so that he might just be known as the Hantei. This becomes a tradition for the Hantei dynasty and eventually for the Toturi dynasty that follows.

Hantei X is well known for his distaste for shugenja. Thus he sponsors the Brotherhood and other prominent monastic orders throughout his rule, viewing them as a preferable alternative to the mystic rituals of shugenja. This creates somewhat of a rift between shugenja and monks, causing each to pursue their own agendas more frequently than cooperating with one another.

Temple of Lost Gods created: year 597

Hantei XVI, also called the Steel Chrysanthemum, is well known for his disregard of religion among his many other deep character flaws. During his reign of terror, Hantei XVI abuses his status as leader of Rokugani religion to elevate dozens of mortals to lesser Fortune status as a means of eternally humiliating them. Such Fortunes include the Fortune of Torture, the Fortune of Dung, and other such abominable titles. Following his death, Hantei XVII establishes an arrangement with the Four Temples within Otosan Uchi. In the future, all such decrees are handed down from the Emperor to be formally announced by the head monk in the Four Temples, and will not be announced unless the head monk can find an 'auspicious time to do so.' The definition of what is 'auspicious' is intentionally left up to the Brotherhood, granting them unofficial power to file away dishonorable or frivolous requests indefinitely. Even with this new edict, the Steel Chrysanthemum's blasphemy cannot be undone (and, technically, is not blasphemy). A small temple in Phoenix lands is dedicated to these "lost" Fortunes but they are otherwise ignored in both the mortal realm and in Tengoku.

The first Tournament of Thunder is held: year 675

The Order of Thunder, followers of Osano-Wo, hold their first great tournament on the Plain of Thunder near the vast Shinomen Mori. The monks there invite great warriors from all across the Empire in an attempt to find a mortal worthy of receiving the Thunderer's blessing. Over a hundred competitors enter the first tournament, representing all Great Clans and most major sects of Shinseism. A monk follower of Bishamon emerges victorious and receives the blessing of both Fortunes. The monk takes the name Kobo, after a legendary monk from early in the Empire's history. The Tournament of Thunder is not held again until Kobo's death many years later.

The first shugenja wins the

Tournament of Thunder: year 912

A shugenja emerges victorious in the Tournament of Thunder, practicing a previously unknown mystical art that none else at the tournament recognize. The shugenja adopts the name Koan and sets out into Rokugan to hone his art.

The Pure Land sect is formed: year 1004

At the ninety-sixth Great Convocation, a new sect is formed within the Brotherhood of Shinsei. This sect comes about from a group of younger monks who assert that Shinsei was a Fortune, much in the same way that the Order of Mercy viewed the Fortune Jizo. Upon Shinsei's death, they claim that he ascended into a pure realm free of the Celestial Order and the karmic wheel of existence. The Pure Land sect claims that those who are worthy can ascend to the same realm upon their death and achieve enlightenment from the Little Prophet's direct teachings. Although most sects and samurai find this idea somewhat strange, it is soon embraced by many peasants, who pray to Shinsei to allow them or their ancestors entrance into this paradise realm.

Yogo Junzo launches a campaign against the Brotherhood: year 1126

Consumed by Taint and corruption, the fallen Scorpion shugenja Yogo Junzo and his horde of undead and demonic followers rampage across the Empire. Junzo targets all manner of historical records and libraries, but his foremost targets are Brotherhood monasteries in hopes of finding Shinsei's descendant. By necessity, the monks are forced to enter the Clan War and face Junzo's dark forces or lose all their order has built.

The Second Day of Thunder: year 1128

Shinsei's descendant, known as the Hooded Ronin, gathers together the reincarnated Seven Thunders to face Fu Leng, who has possessed the last Hantei Emperor. While the Brotherhood fights side-by-side with the Great Clans against the Shadowlands horde, the Hooded Ronin guides the Thunders in their fight against the Dark Lord. Fu Leng is defeated and the Shadowlands Horde is broken.

The New Tao: year 1128

Following the Day of Thunder, the Hooded Ronin has a prolonged discussion with Toturi, the hero who is to become Rokugan's new Emperor. Isawa Osugi records this discussion, which the Brotherhood dub the New Tao. Shortly after this discussion, the Hooded Ronin disappears into the same obscurity from which he came.

The death of Hida Kisada: year 1130

The Great Bear Hida Kisada, Crab Clan Champion, is declared the Fortune of Persistence by the Emperor Toturi I. Kisada is the first mortal granted Fortune status by Imperial decree in several centuries, and some find it highly ironic that one of Toturi's first decrees grants Fortune status to a man that was once his bitterest enemy. The pronouncement leads to celebration throughout the Crab lands, and many elderly warriors shave their heads to begin a new life as monks revering Kisada. The Brotherhood is granted numerous resources within Crab lands to aid in establishing this new order, giving rise to many new monasteries appearing throughout the Crab lands. This creates a close bond between the Brotherhood and the normally indifferent Crab Clan that continues to the modern day, which some theorize was Toturi's intent all along.

Loss of the True Tao: year 1132

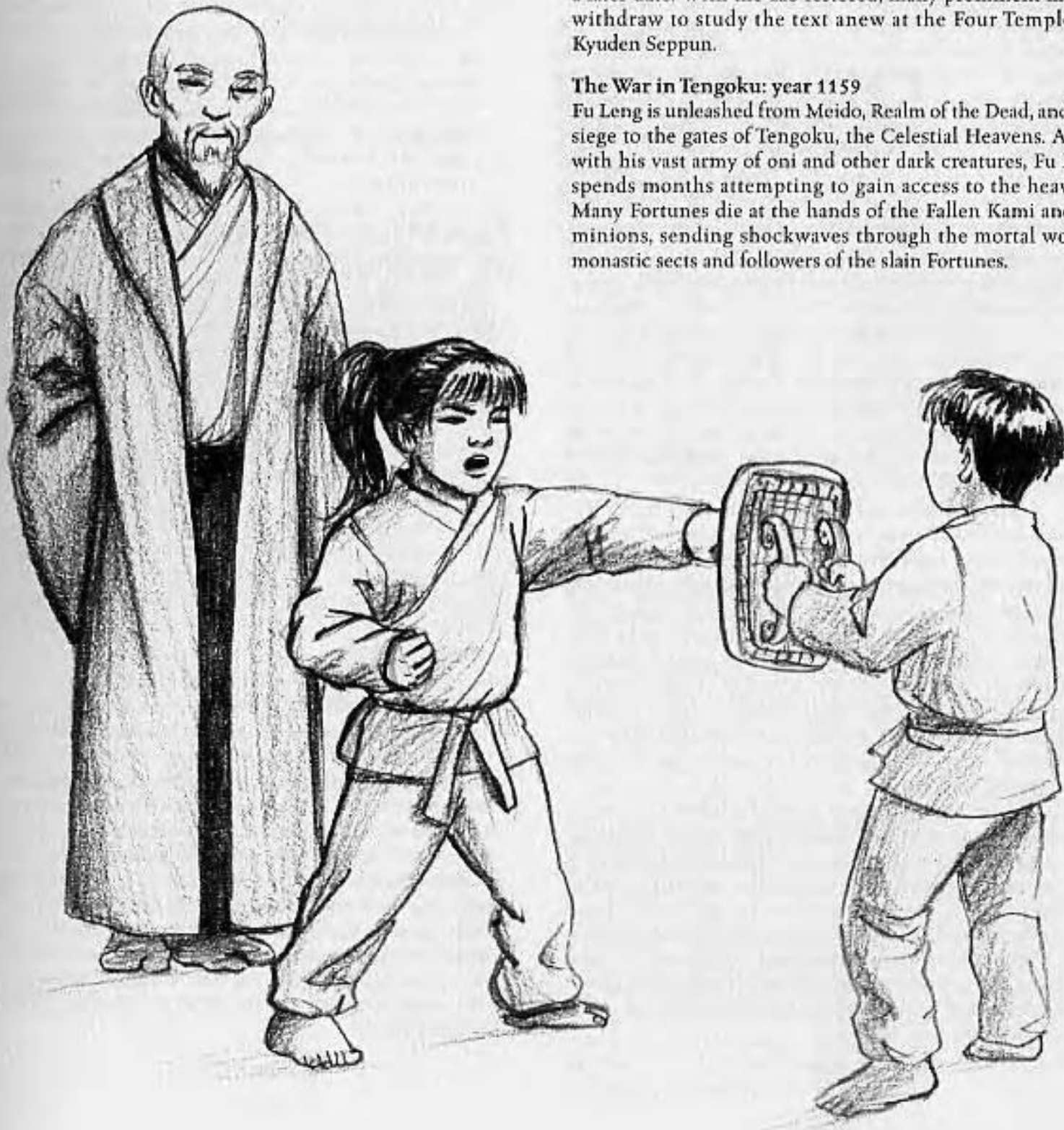
The original copy of Shinsei's Tao, including the New Tao, is stolen from Otosan Uchi by the Kolat in an attempt to protect it from the Shadow. Half the Tao is consumed by the Lying Darkness, and presumed lost forever. The other half is eventually given back into the safekeeping of the Crane Clan.

War in the Heavens: year 1132

During the peak of fighting with the Lying Darkness, the Empire is plunged into chaos. Onnotangu, the Lord Moon, sends an avatar to Otosan Uchi to aid in the city's destruction. A monk named Takao, the Acolyte of Fire, defeats the Moon's champion in single combat and breaks the Shadow's hold over the city. He thereafter bears the title "Master of Five."

The Master of Five disappears: year 1153

Takao disappears. All attempts to discover his whereabouts are fruitless. The Brotherhood decrees that the Master has gone in search of some pivotal aspect of his enlightenment and makes no move to fill the position.



Tsi Xing Guo ascends: year 1155

The ronin blade smith Tsi Xing Guo is selected by Lady Moon and Lord Sun to ascend to Tengoku and serve them as the Fortune of Steel. Tsi Xing Guo serves the Lord and Moon by crafting weapons at their behest, that they may continue their battle across the heavens for eternity.

Shiba Tsukune ascends: year 1158

Shiba Tsukune, Phoenix Clan Champion, chooses to abandon her family and clan in order to save the immortal soul of Shiba. She succeeds and takes her place among the heavens at Osano-Wo's behest, becoming the Fortune of Rebirth.

The lost Tao is recovered: year 1158

A cabal of Scorpion shugenja, seeking to plumb the secrets of the Spirit Realms to determine if the Lying Darkness is truly destroyed, inadvertently summon forth the lost half of Shinsei's Tao. Yogo Tjeki returns the Tao to the Brotherhood on behalf of his lord Bayushi Yojiro, reminding the monks that the Scorpion may call upon them for a favor of equal caliber at a later date. With the Tao restored, many prominent monks withdraw to study the text anew at the Four Temples of Kyuden Seppun.

The War in Tengoku: year 1159

Fu Leng is unleashed from Meido, Realm of the Dead, and lays siege to the gates of Tengoku, the Celestial Heavens. Along with his vast army of oni and other dark creatures, Fu Leng spends months attempting to gain access to the heavens. Many Fortunes die at the hands of the Fallen Kami and his minions, sending shockwaves through the mortal world's monastic sects and followers of the slain Fortunes.

Plains Wind monastery worships the Lords of Death: year 1161

A small but prominent monastery within the Unicorn lands, Plains Wind monastery, announces to the Brotherhood its intention to change its predominant focus from reverence for the Fortune Kuroshin to worship of the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, the so-called Lords of Death. These former gaijin gods, newly revered by the Moto, seized power in Meido during the War in Tengoku and now, the monks of Plain Winds monastery assert, should be revered with equal devotion to Emma-O, the Fortune of Death.

The rest of the Brotherhood is generally shocked by this potentially blasphemous declaration, too outrageous even for their open-minded membership. The monks of Plains Wind are cautioned to rethink their proclamation, but they refuse. Most of the Brotherhood shun Plains Wind Monastery and avoid contact with its monks until the later ascension of Toturi III, who officially recognized the status of the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang as minor Fortunes.

MONK CHARACTER CLASSES IN ROKUGAN

Monastic traditions are among Rokugan's longest-standing cultural and societal institutions. Monks devoting themselves to the Seven Fortunes have existed as long as any historical records known to exist, and some believe certain sects predate the Kami's fall from Ningen-do from the Celestial Heavens. The study of Shinsei's wisdom began not long after that, with the first students taking up the writings that would become the Tao even before the Little Prophet and his Seven Thunders disappeared into the Shadowlands.

Representing the different philosophies of the different monastic orders in Rokugan is a relatively simple matter that can be modified to allow for a large number of variants. Prestige classes and feats allow for a great deal of customization, of course, but the basic building blocks of a monk character begins with the three monk base classes available to characters in Rokugan: the Monk (from *The Player's Handbook™*), the Sohei (from *Oriental Adventures™*), and the Inkyo (from *Rokugan™*). Each of these classes has varying abilities and strengths that can be used to represent different facets of Rokugan's many monastic traditions.

The basic monk class is an excellent means to represent a monk who has a slightly less passive and more martial bent. As a monk increases in level, the abilities become more and more impressive, bordering on the superhuman. This is an excellent means of reflecting a monk beginning to experience the abilities that kiho and enlightenment bring. Monks that follow minor Fortunes often have access to these abilities, although they rarely advance to the type of abilities possessed by the other monk classes.

The sohei class represents a pure warrior monk. The class's abilities are considerably more combat-oriented than the standard monk, and make for an excellent Seven Fortunes monk, at least for those Fortunes that are more wrathful and destructive. Bishamon, the Fortune of Strength, would certainly have a monk with such abilities. Even some minor Fortunes, particularly powerful or combative beings, might share an affinity for combative abilities. Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Fire and Thunder, is perhaps the finest example of a divine power that has followers from the sohei class. If the *Oriental Adventures* sourcebook is not available, however, the standard monk or an inkyo with the proper feats can fulfill this role with ease.

The inkyo is a monk on the path to enlightenment, a soul in touch both with his inner energy and the elemental energy that all mortal men can access if only they learn how. Even among a Brotherhood monastery, there are typically only a handful of inkyo, and most never advance to true mastery of their abilities. A high-level inkyo is an exceptionally rare individual, and tend to be legends among their brethren, remembered for all time as the truly enlightened souls of Rokugan. While inkyo are rare individuals, this is not to say they are rare player characters. As player characters tend to be powerful, charismatic, and extraordinary individuals inkyo make excellent choices for a player character on the path of enlightenment.

PLAYING A MONK IN ROKUGAN

The presence of a monk in a party of player characters can be problematic. Monks hold a curious place in the Celestial Order, existing in a nebulous state that places them technically in the same category as heimin, though above samurai in that they are honored advisors and keepers of knowledge. While samurai are not required to pay them any attention, and monks generally acknowledge no lords other than the Emperor, it is a foolish samurai indeed who ignores the advice of the Brotherhood.

The primary obstacle in the inclusion of monk characters in a campaign is motive. Monks in Rokugan are often ascetics, and pursue a life of contemplation and study rather than adventure. Exceptions always occur, however, and there are a number of means by which a monk could come to travel alongside samurai.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

According to convention, a samurai usually shaves his head and retires to a monastery at the age of 40. This tradition is overlooked by a large number of samurai, but there are still many who follow it. Not all find the life of a monk to their liking, however, and come to regard matters from their previous life with increasing importance. It is not unheard of for such individuals to return to the Empire at large to complete some task. Some even return to serve their lord in a different capacity, such as the monk Konetsu served Doji Kurohito. Such individuals are typically viewed with mild disdain for failing to follow through on their commitments, however they are often treated with the respect a fellow samurai would normally receive.

ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH ADVERSITY

Some monastic orders teach that enlightenment can only be achieved by thoroughly challenging one's mental and physical abilities. The Togashi ise zumi are the most prominent of these, but there are many sects devoted to worshipping the Fortunes that have similar philosophies. Monks of Osano-Wo, among others, believe that they honor their patron with feats of strength and bravery.

EVANGELISM

Though Shinseism is not a proselytizing religion, the Brotherhood of Shinsei embraces the importance of education as one of its primary vows. It is not uncommon for brother monks to travel through the Empire spreading Shinsei's wisdom to those who require it. Of course those who require it are not always aware of their need, and some individuals require unconventional training in the forms of life lessons (usually at the hand of a prankster monk). Thus a monk may join a party because he feels a particular player character requires instruction, or merely so that he might travel beside the other characters and spread Shinsei's wisdom along their travels.

VOWS OF THE BROTHERHOOD

"The world is simple. It is those who perceive it that make things complicated."
 — Shinsei

Shinseism is, by its nature, a religion with no dogma and relatively few inherent strictures for its practitioners. The Book of Duties, which lists the responsibilities of Shinseist monks, is written in the form of a series of cautionary parables rather than as a set of rules. Each sect of the Brotherhood interprets the Tao's instructions differently, with the vows of one sect differing wildly from the next.

One important consideration when understanding the Brotherhood is the nature of a vow. Vows are not a lifelong commitment to be followed blindly. They are a promise, voluntarily taken to aid a soul on the path to harmony. A vow, if broken, is not moot nor is a monk forever damned for a single mistake. If a vow is violated, it is a monk's duty to adhere to it even more strongly in the future. Likewise, not all vows are eternal. A vow of silence, for example, might be adopted while the monk learns the value of patience and communication. Once he feels this lesson has been adequately understood, the vow can be set aside.

All vows are very personal, only entered into by choice. Even so, some sects are somewhat stricter in their beliefs, and thus may require their adherents to obey certain vows. A monk who fails to maintain these vows may no longer be welcome to that particular sect, but he is by no means cast out of the Brotherhood entirely. In most cases, such a parting may even be amicable. The sect may recognize that the monk can learn nothing further by adhering to their beliefs, and must continue his journey elsewhere.

Though most vows are optional, there is a series of vows recorded in the book of duties that is considered central to a monk's duties. These are known collectively as the Four Vows, and though all sects adhere to them, interpretations vary wildly.

LIVING BEINGS ARE COUNTLESS;

I VOW TO SAVE THEM ALL.

Of the Four Vows, the first causes the greatest amount of controversy between worldly sects and their more reclusive counterparts. The idea that it is a monk's duty to 'save' others is not in dispute, but what it means to 'save' another and how precisely this should be accomplished is open to degrees of interpretation.

The yamabushi monks of the northern mountains, for example, firmly believe that one can only obtain true wisdom individually. For this reason, they remove themselves from society so that others might be left to find this ultimate truth themselves. Monks of the Questioner sect, on the other hand, believe that an ordinary soul, if left to his own devices, will stagnate in ignorance. Thus Questioners venture out into the world, seeking to shatter the preconceptions of everyone they meet with difficult questions and odd behavior.

Almost all sects interpret this vow to be an admonishment against violence and killing. This is the reason many sects take vows of pacifism, and others take strict vows against consuming meat products of any kind. Numerous sects extend this interpretation beyond themselves. It is not enough to simply refuse to harm others — a monk must make it his duty to actively prevent others from harming one another. The Seven Fortunes monks accept this interpretation as an encouragement to act as diplomats and arbiters, aiding in the resolution of disputes and advising men and women in power so that peaceful solutions can be found. Other extreme sects have been known to protest war in the name of this vow, blocking the paths of armies even at the cost of their own lives.

Most sects have somewhat fuzzy interpretations of this vow where the Shadowlands is concerned. A handful of sects hold absolute views on this matter — even Shadowlands creatures are not beyond redemption and thus it is not a monk's responsibility to deem their lives forfeit. Other sects, notably the monks of Osano-wo and the Kuni Witch Hunters, do not believe that this vow includes Shadowlands creatures. These sects see Shadowlands creatures as living embodiments of evil, corruption, and death thus they are not only unprotected by this vow.

DEFILEMENTS ARE ENDLESS;

I VOW TO ELIMINATE THEM ALL.

Another simple vow with infinite interpretations. Almost all sects see this vow as a warning against material entanglements. By becoming too enmeshed in the material world, one will inevitably be seduced by corruptive influences and led down a false path. Observance of this vow frequently leads to a number of secondary vows, including vows of poverty, celibacy, chastity, silence, and solitude.

Some sects have a great deal of difficulty weighing the importance of the second vow against the first. How can one save all living beings if the world is rife with impurity that must be eliminated? Reclusive sects would argue that it the only possible way is to serve as an example. Society is created by corrupt and imperfect beings — only by removing oneself from society can one stand as an example of the purity and wisdom that can be obtained by refusing the values of the material world. Worldly sects argue the exact opposite. To ignore the corruption found in normal society does not eliminate it, rather it encourages it. Only by becoming a part of the world and undoing evil wherever it may be found can both the first and second vows be fulfilled.

A handful of sects grant this vow a somewhat more arcane interpretation, and view it as a monk's encouragement to deal with unquiet spirits. By lingering in a realm where they are no longer needed, the ghosts of the dead create defilement and disharmony that it is a monk's duty to combat. For this reason many monks study the arts of exorcism and spirit lore, and are accomplished at finding methods of easing the unquiet dead. Taken a step further, sects such as the Crab Witch Hunters see the Shadowlands as a living embodiment of defilement. Thus it is a monk's duty to destroy the Taint wherever it is found, showing neither mercy nor fear.

**SHINSEI'S TEACHINGS ARE UNLIMITED;
I VOW TO LEARN THEM ALL.**

This vow has been met with a considerable number of interpretations, due partly to the fact that some versions of the Tao record this vow as "the teachings are infinite; I vow to learn them all." So, while some sects see this vow as an encouragement to master the Tao as written, others view it as an encouragement to study.

The Four Temples monks adhere to this latter view. No subject of learning is beneath their notice. Thus Four Temples monks are more scholarly than most, and many are well versed on a variety of academic subjects. The Four Temples serve as much as libraries as temples, and contain a wealth of scrolls detailing all manner of obscure and arcane lore.

Some worldly sects, including the Questioners, do not believe Shinsei ever intended his monks to restrict their learning to the Tao, but rather use the Tao as a starting point as they moved on to learn new things. For these monks, this is the most important of the Four Vows, and their interpretation of the other three vows is viewed through this perspective. In their goal to help others in accordance with the First Vow, these monks act as teachers and advisors — sharing the infinite teachings in order to save all living beings. In their goal to remove all defilements in accordance with the Second Vow, knowledge is never sought blindly. All things contain impurities, and learning is no exception. It is not enough to merely learn something; both the student and the subject must be improved by the learning. It is a scholar's duty not only to record data in memory, but to improve upon what he has learned and leave a notes on his discoveries for the next generation. As for the Fourth Vow, there is very little distinction between it and the Third Vow, for learning is a path to enlightenment in and of itself.

**THE PATH OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS
SUPREME; I VOW TO ATTAIN IT.**

At once both the simplest and most demanding of the four vows — a monk must always seek enlightenment.

Some sects believe that enlightenment can be found in a simple and calculated manner. The monks of the Lotus sect, for example, believe that repeatedly chanting the phrase "Homage to the Lotus Sutra" is a difficult but guaranteed path to enlightenment. A single perfect recitation of this phrase, it is said, is enough to attain enlightenment. Of course the definition of 'perfect,' is far from specific, and each member of the sect is left to explore the mysteries of this perfection on their own.

Most sects believe that enlightenment is a far less definable notion. No two souls find enlightenment in the same manner. Further, enlightenment is not a permanent state. A soul that finds perfect harmony might just as easily lose that state

within moments, and spend a thousand lifetimes trying to regain it. It is not enough to simply attain enlightenment; it is a state that must be eternally preserved.

Some sects believe that they have methods of discerning when a soul is enlightened, and even go so far as awarding certificates to those who have proven themselves to be enlightened. Most sects scoff at the idea that a material certificate could prove one's soul has obtained a state of perfect harmony. Whether or not a mortal being can truly be said to be enlightened is a truth that can only be realized at the end of their life. Much like the Third Vow, a number of interpretations of this vow stem from the fact that not all copies of the Tao record this vow in the same manner. The Diamond Sutra, a recording of the Tao followed by the Shinmaki sect, records this vow as "The paths of enlightenment are infinite; I vow to attain them all." By this interpretation, becoming enlightened once is a simple task. In fact, all souls are enlightened in some small way. This is not sufficient to become truly enlightened. A person must become enlightened an infinite number of times, an infinite number of ways, to attain true wisdom. If the path seems impossible, then that is, after all, the point.

Enlightenment is not meant to be easily had.

**SO HOW DO I BECOME
ENLIGHTENED?**

Inevitably, a player character is going to ask this question. How can their wise, pious inky unlock the secrets of the universe — and what do they get for it. A canny GM might counter that any individual who seeks enlightenment merely for the power it brings will never truly become enlightened. Some GM's, on the other hand, may encourage this sort of behavior and wish to grant mechanical benefits for becoming enlightened.

Shinsei stressed that true enlightenment and harmony was, of necessity, an intensely personal path. No two men could discover the truth that lay within themselves in the same manner. Likewise, the rewards of enlightenment are seldom the same in two cases. If GM decides to give concrete benefits for enlightenment, he should feel free to use his imagination and invent rewards appropriate for the character in question, the path they took to enlightenment, and the campaign.

**MYTHS AND
LEGENDS**

Mysteries abound in Rokugan. Each clan and faction has secrets that they keep to themselves, from the inhuman origins of the Kitsu family, to the mystical traditions of the Asako, to the horrors the Hiruma witness beyond the Kaiu Wall. Enlightenment, however, is a mystery understood only by the select few who have reached it, and even in these cases some cannot say how they truly came to be enlightened. Many beliefs regarding enlightenment fall into one of four categories.

ΠΑΝΑΚΕΑ

In many poverty-stricken peasant villages, enlightenment is thought of as simply an end to the elevated soul's level of discomfort. Generations of peasants have taken the stories of the serene monks to indicate that such people have no problems, and that enlightenment is a solution to earthly pain. These individuals may seek the life of a monk simply to be freed from the tedious labor that is their lot, rather than seeking enlightenment to truly understand the nature of their existence.

COMPREHENSION

A common myth is that enlightenment is simply the deepest level of understanding everything. Many think that Shinsei was simply too humble to show off his knowledge, but in fact knew everything that had occurred, was occurring, and would occur. Such omniscience is believed to be part and parcel of enlightenment according to dozens of sects and millions of individuals across the Empire. Many scholars (who are otherwise quite well informed and educated) seek enlightenment for this sake, mistakenly believing it will grant them the ultimate knowledge they hunger for.

POWER

Some seek enlightenment merely out of a desire for power. The extraordinary abilities possessed by monks and tales of Shinsei's great fighting prowess only lend credence to the belief that enlightenment grants real ultimate power upon its possessor. While this is, in a certain manner of speaking, true, the idea that someone seeking to understand the true understanding merely so that he might gain the power to subject others to his will is a contradiction that many elder monks regard with great amusement. Anyone who gained true enlightenment, after all, would not abuse their power in such a fashion.

ΑΠΟΘΕΩΣΙΣ

The Asako believe that an enlightened mortal, one who has achieved the pinnacle of mortal existence, will surpass the mortality and become a Fortune, breaking free of the cycle of reincarnation. The Asako keep their secret well, but their belief is not unique. Many sects believe that through a regime of meditation and proper behavior one could obtain Fortune status. Other Shinseists will point out that to become a Fortune one need only for the Emperor to declare you one — such ascension is more often the result of a magical effect than true enlightenment. To become enlightened is not to become a thing that you are not — it is to understand who you are.

TRADITIONAL VIEWS ON ENLIGHTENMENT

CRAB

The Crab largely reject the pursuit of enlightenment, as they consider it wasteful when their duties lie upon the Wall. That being said, there are a number of extremely pious and introspective Crab. When faced with the horrors they encounter daily, many grizzled veterans turn inward seeking meaning in their endless battle, or turn to religion as a source of hope and strength. A surprising number of experienced Crab samurai have a much deeper and profound understanding of themselves than any realize, and a number have found a small piece of enlightenment in the midst of their interminable battles.

CRANE

To the Crane, for whom perfect excellence is the most sublime of all goals, enlightenment is the most honorable goal any samurai can attain. Though enlightenment is more frequent in the monastic orders, the Crane recognize that it is not exclusive to monks, and many samurai study the Tao or practice meditation in their spare time hoping to attain enlightenment. For most Crane enlightenment is akin to the mastery of the blade or mastery of the court: complete oneness with one's art, where the student of enlightenment's art is the world.

DRAGON

Of all the Great Clans, the Dragon Clan is the most open and eager to embrace the concept of enlightenment. For the Three Orders, enlightenment is a primary pursuit, and many tattooed men spend a great deal of time seeking this state in one form or another. While some believe that their mystic tattoos grant them an edge on their quest to enlightenment, the tattooed men know this is not true. The tattoos are merely a tool that teaches them more about themselves; the real advantage they have in their quest is that all tattooed men are supported and aided by a group of like-minded individuals, ready and eager to aid one another on their quest.

LION

Much like the Crab, the Lion are a clan of warriors. They find little solace in what they see as the trite words and empty platitudes of Shinsei. They seek to leave their mark on the world through action, not contemplation. Allowing a pacifist monk to tell them how to 'understand the universe' is, in their view, a waste of time. Ironically this stubborn insistence on finding their own way through existence places them a step closer to true enlightenment than most, though their obsession with material accomplishments often prevents them from finding true wisdom.

MANTIS

For the Mantis, enlightenment is a foreign concept. Absorbed as they are in mercenary activities, accumulation of wealth, and ambitious quests for personal power, the path of enlightenment is not one that is open to many Mantis (or that even holds any interest for them). For those few Mantis who do seek this path, usually members of the Moshi family, the isolated mountains and quiet beaches where this clan makes its home are ideal for philosophical pursuits.

PHOENIX

The Phoenix are the keepers of the Empire's wisdom and knowledge. As the original authors of the Tao, enlightenment is a primary goal for members of this clan. Even bushi and peasants in Phoenix lands can quote the Tao and spend a great deal of time in pursuit of enlightenment. For the Phoenix, such activity is not seen as a dereliction of one's duties — to seek enlightenment is the duty of all Phoenix.

SCORPION

Often too concerned with appearance and its manipulation, most of the Scorpion Clan eschew enlightenment straight out. Why waste time seeking harmony with the universe or peace in the next world when one can master this one? In contrast, many junshin and retired samurai, sick of the deception required for their life, embrace the life of a contemplative monk seeking enlightenment.

UNICORN

The Unicorn Clan does not view enlightenment as an exalted state, simply an elevated one. Most Unicorn recognize it as a state some achieve, some do not, and for the most part those who are not enlightened live lives as worthy as those who are. While it is not unusual for any Unicorn to seek enlightenment, it is not common either. Monastic life is especially common among the Moto.

IMPERIAL FAMILIES

The Otomo family often look upon enlightenment as a myth, a harmless task to occupy the minds of those with too much time on their hands. The Seppun and Miya are more accepting of the idea, though commonly they consider it something to be left until after retirement. The Toturi family is simply too young to have any sort of uniform opinion on enlightenment; each samurai who bears the Toturi name looks upon the concept in their own unique manner.

SHINSEI

Shinsei holds a curious position in the Empire's history. He is simultaneously the most beloved and mysterious figure in Rokugan's history. His origins are unknown. He appeared seemingly from nowhere. He had no family, no comrades, and none of the old tribes that existed before the Kami fell knew of his name. He humbly presented himself before the Emperor and asked that he might help find a way to defeat Fu Leng. The fact that Hantei obeyed the strange man's request only deepens the mystery. Did Shinsei perhaps say something or reveal some now forgotten wisdom that impressed the first Emperor? Was it Hantei's own divine heritage that allowed him to recognize the weight of destiny that rested on the little prophet's shoulders? Was it simply pure luck that allowed Shinsei to arrive at the time of the Kami's greatest desperation, when even the advice of a wandering stranger was too precious to ignore?

All that is truly known is that Shinsei was Rokugan's first great hero. His clever insights saved the Empire from destruction at the hands of Fu Leng, and his kind wisdom inspired the Empire that was built in the peace that followed. That he Shinsei, a man of peace, is so greatly respected in a nation ruled by warriors may seem something of a contradiction — but such contradictions are often to be expected when one plumbs the mysteries of the Tao.

THE TRUTH

The truth about Shinsei has never been spoken in any court of the Empire. It is known only to Shinsei's true descendant, and the handful of loyal monks who share his lonely path. Before the dawn of the Empire, Shinsei was a scholar. He traveled the lands extensively, recording the lineage and histories of the rough tribes that ruled the land in those days. He never spent a great deal of time in any single place, always moving on to the next horizon, the next mystery. There was little respect for men of learning in those days and Shinsei's face was forgettable. None took note of him. He served no master but his own curiosity, for few truly cared about the answers he sought.

Shinsei chose not to bow to the Kami when they fell from the Celestial Heavens, for he did not trust that such strange creatures would rule mortals wisely. He had seen many con-

querors come and go in his long life, and in his eye these domineering gods seemed even more dangerous than most. He quietly departed, seeking new lands to explore.

During his travels across what would one day be called the Plains Above Evil, Shinsei was caught in a terrible storm. Forced to take refuge within a secluded cave, he made a marvelous discovery. He found the ruins of an ancient temple, older than any he had seen, with the contents preserved in perfect condition. The walls were carved throughout in the language of strange inhuman creatures. In those days association with such creatures was not unusual, and Shinsei had found it useful to learn the language of the kenku. Thus Shinsei discovered that he could understand some of the writings he found.

Studying the writings in more detail, Shinsei saw the patterns of time laid out before him. He learned the history of a powerful civilization, an assembly of five races now ground into dust beneath their own arrogance. Every one thousand years, he learned, there came a powerful confrontation between the opposing Spirit Realms. At this time, Jigoku would strike at the Celestial Heavens through Ningen-do, the Realm of Mortals. Each realm would choose its champions from the denizens of Ningen-do and set them against the other. Jigoku's power was in corruption and raw destruction, thus its champions were always near-divine beings. Tengoku, in contrast, drew its power through wisdom and understanding. Thus its champions were always simple mortals, guided by honor and courage. Whichever side triumphed would determine the fate of all existence for ten centuries to come.

Shinsei realized even as he read this how closely the tales of past battles echoed those of the present. Fu Leng, who now rose in the south and threatened the Kami's fledgling Empire, could be none other than Jigoku's champion. Surely if he did not return and warn the Emperor, all who dwelled in the mortal realm would suffer for one thousand years. If he returned, his life would be at risk, for the Kami had little patience for those who chose not to serve them. Heedless of the danger to himself Shinsei returned to the Empire, hoping that Hantei would be patient enough to hear his warning.

Ironically it was the cloak that the little traveler bore that truly gained the Emperor's attention. Just as his guards prepared to turn Shinsei away, Hantei noticed the black crow emblazoned upon his back. Shinsei had found the robe in the ancient ruins and thrown it over his shoulders to warm himself after the rain. The crow was a symbol of the ancient kenku. Even the Kami respected the kenku's wisdom, thus Hantei offered Shinsei an opportunity to speak his piece.

It took Shinsei only a few moments to give his warning, and explain the gravity of the situation. Once he had the Emperor's attention, however, Shinsei saw how foolish he had been to turn his back on the Empire. He saw that Hantei and the others meant the Empire no harm, they merely wished to create some semblance of the order they found in Tengoku. Though many had stepped forward to serve them, none truly understood them. Most of their own samurai feared them. The Kami were strangers in their own Empire.

So Shinsei spoke to them. He told them of his adventures across the Empire, the people he had met. He shared the simple wisdom he had learned on his journeys — and the First Emperor listened intently. Though the Empire had existed for decades before, the little prophet had taken the first true step towards an understanding between the mortal and the divine. Hantei and Shinsei spoke for hours. Each learned a great deal from the other and Shiba recorded every word.

THE DAY OF THUNDER AND AFTER

The First Day of Thunder was the greatest challenge in Shinsei's life. Drawing upon a lifetime of skill and wisdom, he narrowly led the Seven Thunders to victory. In the wake of that battle, he was regarded as a hero across the Empire. The Emperor offered him a place of honor in his court, with standing equal to any of his divine brothers and sisters. A Great Clan, symbolized by the crow, would be his. Shinsei politely refused.

At first, Shinsei's refusal was for simple reasons. He had seen great horrors during the War Against Fu Leng. The heroes he had come to see as friends, the Seven Thunders, had given up their lives and souls so that the Empire would survive. Shinsei's heart was shattered. He wanted nothing more than to be left in peace, in solitude with his grief. Over the months that followed, Shinsei realized he had made the right choice. He watched as a mountain of importance was built around his simple conversation with the Emperor. He watched temples rise in his name, dedicated to his wisdom. He watched as people began the path of enlightenment, following his example. The idea that so many could draw so much from the words of a simple man such as himself was terrifying. How could any man live up to such expectations? Shinsei knew the truth — he was just a man. Could he truly say he was enlightened? (The same humility that allowed Shinsei to deny his own enlightenment is, of course, an sign of enlightenment.)

Enlightened or no, Shinsei knew that he was mortal, and thus flawed. The Shinsei that walked through the pages of Shiba's Tao was perfect — a symbol that all men could emulate. Shinsei feared that the real man, the mortal man, might destroy the good that the Tao could do by his very existence. If he should ever stumble, if he should ever fail, all those who followed the Tao would fail with him. Instead, Shinsei chose to withdraw from the same Empire he had saved and inspired.

Before Shinsei departed he told the Emperor's brother, Togashi, of his reasons for leaving. Togashi understood, and promised that when Shinsei's descendants returned that he would be the first to greet them. Togashi also promised that he would remember Shinsei's warning. When one thousand years had passed and another Day of Thunder approached, he would help prepare the mortals for what they must do.

THE HOODED RONIN

In the year 1128, at the climax of the Clan Wars, an individual known only as the Hooded Ronin appeared. This mysterious hero fought the servants of Yogo Junzo and offered his wisdom to the Empire's beleaguered heroes. When it became clear that Junzo was a puppet of Fu Leng, the Hooded Ronin stepped forward and revealed himself to be the descendant of Shinsei. Gathering the descendants of the original Seven Thunders, he led them into battle against Fu Leng and defeated him a second time.

After the Second Day of Thunder, the Hooded Ronin remained only long enough to help Toturi I establish his role as the new Emperor. The

Hooded Ronin's discussions with Toturi were recorded by his scribe, Isawa Osugi, and soon became known as the New Tao. Once Toturi's reign seemed secure, the Hooded Ronin vanished as mysteriously as he appeared.

This time, however, Shinsei's descendant did not remove himself entirely from the Empire. Hiding among the common people, he watched as Rokugan grew and changed. He watched as wicked men attempted to use what they called the New Tao to change the Empire and were instead changed by it. He watched as the Sun and Moon fell, and aided Mirumoto Hitomi on her quest to set things right once more. He watched as the Four Winds divided the Empire among themselves, and Otosan Uchi, the place where his ancestor had revealed the original Tao, burned for their arrogance. He watched as the death of one Wind taught the other three their folly, and the Empire was made whole once more. He watched as Iuchiban's Rain of Blood left a stain of corruption across the heart of the Empire.



The Hooded Ronin died in a small hut well hidden in the mountains. Though surrounded by his family and loyal students proud to have served him, he wondered if he had truly succeeded. He wondered if perhaps there was more that he could have done, if perhaps the Empire would have suffered so greatly had he not withdrawn as his ancestor had. As he died he drew a promise from his son, Rosoku — not to let Shinsei's guidance vanish from the Empire forever.

ROSOKU AND THE KEEPERS OF THE FIVE RINGS

Rosoku, the son of the Hooded Ronin, has returned to the Empire using his father's well known alias. Rosoku knows it is of critical importance that Shinsei's line continue so that Shinsei's spirit can guide future heroes on the next Day of Thunder, but he cannot deny his father's dying wish to insure that his family's wisdom guide the Toturi Dynasty. How can he remain in hiding, yet continue to provide guidance? The answer is simple — he must find someone else worthy to guide.

To that end, Rosoku has assembled a collection of wisdom, observations penned by his enlightened ancestors during their centuries of seclusion. These scrolls have been organized into five books, each named after a particular element. Appearing before the Emperor, Rosoku offered to grant each of the books to whoever could meet his challenges.

- The smith who can craft a helmet strong enough to shatter one thousand blades shall keep the Book of Earth.
- The scholar who can contain one thousand years of learning on a single parchment shall keep the Book of Air.
- The warrior who can defeat a thousand enemies in a single stroke shall keep the Book of Fire.
- The general who can lead his armies from one end of the Empire to the other in a single night shall keep the Book of Water.
- And the sage who can perform a task greater than these four things combined shall keep the Book of the Void.

And to the soul who can master all five of these, an even greater gift — a collection of these five scrolls supplemented by ancient scrolls penned by the original Shinsei. Rosoku calls this volume the Book of Five Rings.

With the return of Iuchiban and countless lesser wars threatening the Empire's safety, a lesser Emperor might have ignored Rosoku's offer or at least forced him to postpone his challenges. Ever the cunning statesman, Toturi III sent messages throughout the Empire proclaiming Shinsei's return. The Emperor saw the true potential in these challenges. He hoped that news of the Hooded Ronin's reappearance might light the spark of hope in a fearful populace, and that great heroes might attempt to meet the Ronin's challenges in battle against the Bloodspeakers.

THE ELEMENTAL KEEPERS

Though many great heroes may step forward to fulfill the Hooded Ronin's challenges, Rosoku reserves special rewards for those who are first to fulfill each challenge. These individuals receive the original copies of the five books, and thereafter their descendants will be the Keepers of those books.

Though it has only been a short time since the Hooded Ronin offered his challenges, there has been a great deal of conjecture regarding what magical power the elemental books and the Book of Five Rings hold. The truth, as only

Toturi III has already guessed, is simple. There is no magic in the books, only simple wisdom. Those with the luck, talent, and skill to obtain the books might be surprised to find that they do not truly need them.

It is in the seeking, not the finding, that true enlightenment is found.

THE FIVE CHALLENGES IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Hooded Ronin's five challenges are a natural adventure hook for any GM who doesn't mind adjusting canon Rokugan a bit for his own campaign. One of the party members may hear of Rosoku's challenges and attempt to become a Keeper. Perhaps multiple members of the party may make the attempt, either in unison or in competition with one another.

If a GM wishes to run Rosoku's challenges as an adventure, he is encouraged to be creative in his interpretation of the challenges. The challenges seem impossible, but they are not meant to be taken completely literally, and the more cunning a character is in fulfilling them, the more likely the Hooded Ronin is to award them with one of the Books. The Book of Fire, for example could be won by a clever character that, with a single stroke of a sword, overturns a small rock that, in turn, buries his enemy's army in an avalanche. Alternately, a courtier who ends a war by signing a treaty with a single stroke of an ink brush might also be worthy of the Book of Fire.

SHINSEI IN THE TAO

Shinsei sought no followers (other than the Seven Thunders) and did not ask that his words be recorded or revered. It was the Phoenix scholars and peasant monks who later organized his teachings and founded the Shintao religion that (rightfully) placed such great importance on his profound wisdom. The fundamental document of this religion is the Tao, which is divided into three books: the Book of Discussion, Book of Duties, and Book of the Soul.

The Book of the Duties details precise rules governing the behavior of Shintao monks. It contains 225 laws, each accompanied by a parable of tragedy regarding the dire fate that befell a monk who did not obey the laws.

The Book of the Soul contains none of Shinsei's wisdom, but was instead written by Phoenix monks attempting to resolve discrepancies between the Tao and kami worship. This book also contains extensive discussions concerning the nature of human thought and behavior, and has frequently found a place in the libraries of magistrates and generals as well as inkyo.

The first and largest book, the Book of Discussion, is the only volume that directly addresses Shinsei's life. It contains not only the legendary conversation between Shinsei and Hantei, but many stories of the little prophet's adventures afterward on his way to battle Fu Leng. From a purely logical standpoint, it would be impossible for all of the tales recorded in this book to have occurred between Shinsei's departure from Otosan Uchi and his arrival in the Shadowlands. If con-

fronted with this fact, most Shintao monks would care little. The lessons one can learn from Shinsei's adventures are what is truly important — whether or not they ever truly happened is irrelevant.

The Book of Discussion has changed over the centuries. Later authors and scribes have altered the original stories gradually, making them more accessible to modern audiences. Other authors have also quietly added in 'new' tales of Shinsei's travels. These adventures are not tales of the original Shinsei, but stories of his descendants who, though anonymous, continue to influence and inspire people. The few monks who know the secret of Shinsei's lineage continue to record these tales, changing the names and details so that they appear to have happened to the original Shinsei, and include them in new copies of the Book of Discussion when the opportunity arises.

THE NEW TAO

At the beginning of Toturi's reign, the new Emperor's conversations with the Hooded Ronin were recorded and added to the Book of Discussion. This conversation, along with later analyses of it that appear in the Book of the Soul, have come to be collectively known as "The New Tao." These sections originally featured numerous tales that focus on the power of human accomplishment, and the strength of free will. Some, when read in the proper context, even appeared to stress that a truly enlightened soul was independent of the Emperor and his laws.

None of this comes as a great surprise when you consider that Isawa Osugi, the scribe who recorded the New Tao, was a Kolat agent. The Kolat had hoped to subtly pervert the New Tao with their philosophy and agendas, thereby slowly twisting sentiment against the Emperor. Unfortunately their plan went awry when the Lying Darkness invaded the Empire. As part of the Darkness' plan to wipe out the Empire's history, half of the original copy of the New Tao (along with the Emperor's own copy of the original Tao) was consumed in darkness.

Isawa Osugi rescued the other half and successfully hid it within the Emperor's Palace. Consumed with remorse over how she had tainted wisdom intended for the ages with her own agenda, Osugi rewrote the remaining half of the Tao, removing the Kolat propaganda that had been seeded throughout. She then smuggled the Tao out of the palace via her Kolat contacts only minutes before her execution at the hands of the Shadow-possessed emperor. Unaware that the New Tao had been restored, Kolat Master Akodo Kage gave the missing half of the Tao to the Crane Clan, whose artisans rapidly copied and distributed it throughout the Empire so its wisdom would not be lost. By the time Kage realized that the Tao was no longer seeded with Kolat propaganda, it was too late. Too many copies had already been distributed. The opportunity seemed forever lost.

Yet opportunity smiled upon the Kolat five years ago, when the Scorpion shugenja Yogo Tjeki discovered a means by which the lost half of the Tao could be restored from its consumption by the Lying Darkness. Unaware that the restored half of the Tao was still twisted by Osugi's Kolat sympathies, Tjeki gave the restored Tao to the Brotherhood of Shinsei. It has since been copied and distributed throughout the Empire, and though many scholars have noted how different in theme and style it seems from the rest of the Tao, none have yet guessed the truth.

KIHO

Unlike shugenja, who use their unique gifts to summon the aid of the elements, a monk's supernatural art (kiho) draws from within. Kiho focus the inner strength, the chi, of the practitioner for results that are far beyond the abilities of most mortals. Masters of certain kiho arts can shatter steel with an open hand, render themselves immune to the ravages of even the most terrible weather, and sustain themselves without food and drink for supernatural periods of time.

Though kiho are mostly practiced by monks who attempt to align their spirit and body in a quest for personal perfection and enlightenment, they are not solely the province of such men and women. All that is required for the most basic kiho is patience, focus, and a desire to center one's spirit with one's body. However, the advanced kiho require a deep understanding of and attunement with the environment, and thus are the domain of wise and experienced monks alone. Dabblers in these arts will be rewarded for their effort, but true masters can walk through stone, heal their own wounds with a thought, and produce other such amazing effects.

AIR FIST

One of the most basic kiho taught to students of the martial arts, the Air Fist kiho focuses the user's unarmed strikes with the speed of the wind. Using this kiho causes the hands and feet of the attacker to feel somewhat light and insubstantial, almost as if they were made of fog.



Air Fist [Kiho Feat]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, Void Use, Dex 13+

Benefit: Once per turn, when making an unarmed strike, you may spend a Void point to gain a bonus to your attack roll equal to your initiative modifier. If the attack is successful, the resulting damage suffers an equal penalty (minimum one).

Air Fist (Air Kiho)

Type: Mushin

Mastery: 3

By focusing your elemental Air into your strikes, you strike your foes with the speed of the wind. You may choose to add your Air to your total attack roll when making an unarmed attack, but the resulting damage suffers an equal penalty.

WATER FIST

The spirit of water is one of change, adaptability, and boundless strength. This kiho summons the raw strength of the monk, using it to overpower and topple his enemies with a single blow.

Water Fist [Kiho Feat]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, Void Use, Str 13+

Benefit: When you make a successful unarmed strike against an opponent, you may spend two Void Points to have the attack initiate a bull rush against the target instead of inflicting damage. This must be declared before the strike is made; if the attack fails the Void Points are lost.

Water Fist (Water Kiho)

Type: Mushin

Mastery: 3

Drawing upon the strength of the tides, you focus your elemental Water into a single unarmed strike against an opponent. If the attack is successful, no damage is done but instead you make a Contested Water roll against the target. If you win, the target is knocked prone and must spend his next action getting back on his feet. You must spend two Void Points to activate this kiho, whether or not the attack is successful.

FLAME FIST

Fire is often respected for its well-recognized destructive nature, burning everything in its path until there is nothing left. Though this aspect is not to be ignored, more educated martial artists do not wish to emulate fire for such reasons, but instead attempt to mimic fire's manipulation of energy. It draws life and vitality from everything around it and never yields until completely quenched. Even the smallest spark left behind can transfer its energy to a new source of fuel and once again blossom into a roaring flame.

Flame Fist [Kiho Feat]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, Void Use, Dex 13+

Benefit: If you ever become stunned, you may spend two Void Points to make a single unarmed attack against any living enemy within reach. If the attack is successful, the target takes no damage but instead must make a save

KIHO IN THE LSR ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM

Rules for kiho were originally introduced in Way of Shinsei along with many kiho for use by monks and non-monks alike. For ease of reference, the rules for attaining and performing kiho are condensed and repeated here.

Monk characters begin with three kiho and may select more upon creation at the cost of twice the kiho's mastery level in Character Points. A monk may not know any kiho that has a mastery level higher than the monk's Rank + relevant elemental Ring. Each new Insight Rank the character gains as a monk earns him two more kiho, though he may never have more kiho of a single element than his Ring in that element.

Shugenja and non-monks that belong to certain mystically-aligned groups (such as the Tattooed Orders, the Henshin, the Witch Hunters, and similar schools) may learn and use kiho with heavy restrictions. Such characters may only know one kiho per Rank they have in such schools, and purchase them by expending Character Points or Experience Points equal twice the mastery level of the kiho. Shugenja may add half their Insight Rank (instead of their full Rank) to their Elemental Ring when determining what kiho they may learn; non-shugenja use only their Ring. All School or Insight Rank dependent effects of a kiho used by a non-monk treat the users effective Rank as 1.

Kiho are divided into four types, *mushin*, *aiki*, *kharmic*, and *aiki*. *Mushin* kiho are delivered via attacks (unarmed unless stated otherwise) and only one *mushin* kiho may be applied to each attack. *Aiki* kiho represent a state of meditative focus that is on until the kiho is ended; only one *aiki* kiho may be active at a time. *Kharmic* kiho react to a specific trigger and do nothing until that trigger occurs; like *aiki* only one *kharmic* kiho may be active at a time. *Zanshin* kiho defy categorization; any rules governing their use will be outlined in the description of the kiho. A character may switch from one active *aiki* or *kharmic* kiho to another via fifteen minutes of meditation or by expending a single Void Point.

of the same type and DC as the original stun effect, but with a +4 circumstance bonus. If this save fails, you are no longer stunned and the target becomes stunned for the rest of the duration of the original effect.

Flame Fist (Fire Kiho)

Type: Mushin

Mastery: 3

If you make a successful unarmed strike against an opponent and spend two Void Points, you may choose to deal no damage and instead reduce your Wound Rank by double your Fire Ring for a number of rounds equal to your Void. The target's TN penalties are increased by an equal amount for an equal amount of time. You cannot ignore the effects of being Down, Out, or Dead with this effect.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE BROTHERHOOD
OF SHINSEI

The first rays of light were still nearly an hour from shining across the horizon when Banasu awoke. His eyes opened slowly and he took a deep breath of fresh morning air. As was his custom, he had lain to rest for the night in a room with a window open to the north so that the cool mountain breeze could blow through his chamber. Others, guests who had stayed in the monastery over the years, had complained that the wind was far too bracing. Banasu had always found it quite refreshing, but then old men were allowed their eccentricities. He dressed quickly, wearing only a coarse hakama and simple sandals.

The hills surrounding Dawn's Light monastery were breathtaking in their simple, elegant beauty. Banasu had willingly taken the vows of an ascetic many years ago, but enjoying the magnificent local surroundings in the first light of dawn was among the few pleasures he had allowed himself over the past few decades. It was, in fact, the reason he had requested to be placed at this particular monastery long ago. He remembered it from a former life, and wished to see it again before he left the mortal world. Banasu had never imagined he might live so long.

The old monk sat down upon the hill to face the impending sunrise. He placed a small bowl of rice and a bottle of water at his side, for he often meditated here until midday. Opportunities missed were the greatest waste, the Tao said. Banasu was not one to miss an opportunity to seek harmony in the universe through the simple beauty of a sunrise.

Shortly before the sun rose, however, the old monk's contemplation had been interrupted. The village in the hills below the monastery was active far earlier than normal, and from the sounds that the morning breeze carried up to him, something was terribly wrong.

Kinto Mura was a small village, unremarkable in every respect. It was large enough to farm a sizeable swath of land for the Dragon Clan, whom the peasants served, but there was little else in the way of resources. The only quality that separated the village from a thousand others like it was the level of education the average peasant possessed. The monks of Dawn's Light monastery were particularly forward in the Brotherhood's philosophy of education, and traditionally the denizens of Kinto Mura were extremely well educated as peasants went. Many among them were artists of a sort, and their simple trinkets were valued by merchants for resale elsewhere in the Empire.

It was this fact, sadly, that had let the bandits to attack the village.

Chikiri led the attack. The merchant caravan he and his men had attacked days ago had possessed a large number of small trinkets that he recognized from Kinto Mura. Since the village was less than a day's ride, why not supplement their profit by taking the money the merchant had spent? It was a sound plan.

Unfortunately, the plan appeared to be flawed. Chikiri and his men had scoured the village in the pre-dawn light. The peasants scattered before them, many dying in defense of their homes. Chikiri found their deaths distasteful; he did not like attacking families in their homes. It was ultimately unavoidable. The possible gains were too great. In the end, they were only peasants... even the ones whose faces he knew.

As the sun began to rise, Chikiri grew increasingly angry. He and two of his men smashed through the barred doors of a small teahouse. The interior light was dim, and there was no sign of the peasants that had fled within only a few moments ago. "Find them," Chikiri insisted. "Try not to kill them, or they can't tell us where the money is."

"The money is not here, my friend." An old man stepped out from the kitchen. "Nor are the ones you seek. I helped them to safety already."

"What do you mean there's no money?" Chikiri demanded. "We saw the caravan!"

"The caravan of which you speak traveled through this village over a month ago," the old man explained. "It was on its way back to Unicorn lands when you attacked it."

"The money must still be here!" The bandit on Chikiri's left was growing angry. "There's nothing to use it on in this swamp of a village!"

"The villagers gave the majority of it to their lords as an offering of their loyalty. They are a pious and honorable people." The old man's eyes narrowed. "You could learn much from them. It is not too late."

The angry bandit gave an inarticulate snarl of rage and pointed toward the old man. "Get him out of our way," Chikiri commanded. The old man looked sorrowful. "I have no love of violence."

"Good," one of the bandits said, his voice thick with menace. He shifted his blade from one hand to another and darted forward with a brutal overhand strike. The old man moved casually aside, his entire body moving less than a foot. The strike crashed down into a table, cutting it jaggedly in two. The old man reached out and almost playfully tapped the man on the temple. He collapsed into an unconscious pile and did not move.

The bandit on Chikiri's right hurled his wakizashi at the old man, its tip pointed at his heart. The old man caught the blade neatly between his palms and threw it back. The handle struck the bandit squarely in the face. He too collapsed.

Chikiri leapt forward to attack. He had always been the fastest blade among his men, but the old man moved faster than his eye could follow. In seconds, he was on the floor, his weapon gone and his leg twisted beneath him in pain. "You said you had no love of violence," he hissed through the pain.

"I do not," the old man said, foot pressing down on Chikiri's chest. "But sadly, I am no stranger to it." The monk frowned in thought. "What is your name?"

"Chikiri," the bandit said with a sneer. "Why do you care?"

"I knew a Chikiri once," Banasu said. "An arrogant young boy with a fiery spirit... he abandoned this village when his parents died of the plague many years ago. I always wondered what became of him."

"Why have you done this?" Chikiri demanded. "Why would someone so powerful care about people so worthless, Banasu?"

"I never said my name," the old man said with a patient smile. "I was once like you, Chikiri, a violent and evil man. A monk took me under his wing and I learned from him."

"Why?" Chikiri repeated.

"Because I attempted to kill him," Banasu explained flatly. "He injured me and then gave me the choice I present to you." He held his hand out. "You may come with me, and I shall teach you while you heal. When you are well again, you may choose to leave or remain with me. I will not force you."

"And if I do not?" the bandit demanded.

"Then I will leave you here to do as you wish," Banasu said. "Of course, with your leg broken, it may prove difficult to escape before the magistrates arrive. They will not be so merciful, I think."

"This is no choice," Chikiri spat.

"I thought the same thing, once," Banasu confessed. "I was wrong."

Chikiri was silent for a long moment. The idea was tempting, a chance to stop looking over his shoulder, waiting for the moment when one of his men would inevitably turn on him. A chance to start again. It was hard to believe. "Why me?" Chikiri asked.

"Because, unlike these others, you still have a flicker of compassion in your heart," Banasu said. "Though you may not recognize it."

"What use would your order have for a man like me?"

"That is for you to decide," Banasu said.

The bandit considered the matter for several moments. "I will accompany you."

"Wonderful," the monk smiled. "You have taken the first step on the road to wisdom, my friend."

BACKGROUND

Although he never took a direct role in establishing the Brotherhood of Shinsei, the original Shinsei is known and revered throughout the Empire, from lowly eta to the Imperial Families. Even though the Brotherhood of Shinsei has developed beyond the simple teachings of a single man, the order's history cannot be easily separated from the man for whom it is named.

During the first War Against Fu Leng the Empire's armies fought valiantly but were ultimately no match for the Dark Kami. When Shinsei approached the Emperor, offering a means to defeat Fu Leng where even Akodo and Hida had failed, Hantei was skeptical. However, after one night conversing with Shinsei, Emperor Hantei realized that Shinsei understood things that even he and his fellow Kami did not. The next day, Hantei gave Shinsei his blessings and support in assembling the Seven Thunders to fight Fu Leng.

The story is known throughout the Empire. After assembling the Seven Thunders, Shinsei guided them into battle against Fu Leng, where Isawa bound him into the Black Scrolls for a thousand years. Shinsei's accomplishment in defeating the dark god, along with the self-evident wisdom contained within the Tao of Shinsei, left a permanent impression upon the Empire. Shinsei is revered as both the greatest hero and the greatest teacher the Empire has ever known. No samurai's education is complete without some knowledge of the Tao.

After the Day of Thunder, Shinsei's words, deeds, and accomplishments grew with each telling. Even though Shinsei never took followers, his teachings were popular. A few came to realize that the unique quality Shinsei possessed that allowed him to attain enlightenment was not mystical or unusual, but that he was willing to re-examine concepts thought sacred, conclusions thought established. Shinsei's true wisdom stemmed from the fact that he was curious enough to ask questions when others would not.

By that point, the Tao of Shinsei had been widely circulated throughout the Empire, and many had been exposed to his teachings, either from having met Shinsei or by having read the Tao. A few, whose lives had been most affected by the ideas Shinsei espoused, continued his work, as they felt that Shinsei's wisdom offered a plateau for all to aspire to. Often, samurai and eta alike would ask these first successors of Shinsei why they devoted their lives to spreading the teachings of another man.

The answer was always the same: "With respect, we do not wish to merely spread Shinsei's words."

To which they were always asked: "Then what is it that you wish to do?"

"We wish to help others achieve enlightenment, the same way his example showed us the way."

Many, particularly those who had personally met Shinsei, were moved by these words and provided support — food from farmers, goods from merchants, and money from nobles. Likewise, several shrines, libraries, and temples had already been independently erected in honor of Shinsei, his accom-

plishments, and his teachings. These were quietly put to use by Shinsei's successors in hopes of helping each person to achieve enlightenment. Over time, these successors, who refused any formal title recognition as "students" or "disciples" of Shinsei, became known as his brothers and sisters — companions in a combined effort to bring an understanding of the teachings to anyone who valued them. Before long, the appellation "Brotherhood of Shinsei" was adopted and widely accepted.

For the Brotherhood, the thousand years between the First and Second Day of Thunder were spent quietly preparing for the day when Shinsei's wisdom would be needed again, for those who truly understood the Tao held little doubt that Shinsei's work was not yet complete. Shinsei knew that the victory the Seven Thunders scored against Fu Leng had not brought permanent harmony to the cosmos. Like enlightenment, true harmony was a never ending quest. Within their quiet monasteries, the Brotherhood of Shinsei began preparing for the next confrontation with Fu Leng.

During the Clan War, the maniacal Yogo Junzo sought to slay Shinsei's descendant, thus preventing him from gathering the Seven Thunders to battle his master, Fu Leng. Numerous Shinseist temples were razed as Junzo and the Shadowlands Horde desperately sought to assassinate Shinsei's heir, but the Brotherhood did not go meekly to slaughter. Brave sohei leapt to the forefront of battle. Skilled martial artists stepped forth to defend peasants from the undead hordes. Enlightened mystics emerged from their temples to offer the wisdom of the ages to Toturi and heroes like him. In time, Shinsei's descendant revealed himself and also joined the battle against Fu Leng's minions.

Though great damage had been done to many temples of the Tao, the wisdom of Shinsei survived the Clan Wars intact.

In the years following the Second Day of Thunder, the Brotherhood focused its efforts on rebuilding and continuing its work, showing Rokugan that though each person had to find his own path to enlightenment, shared insights made the path possible to travel. The war with the Lying Darkness proved the truth behind that philosophy as the Brotherhood again lent its wisdom and power to the might of the great clans. When the monk hero, Takao, defeated Lord Moon's avatar it struck a resounding blow against the Lying Darkness and set a heroic example for the Empire as a whole.

With the Day of Thunder now a memory, the Brotherhood of Shinsei has returned to its more familiar role as teachers and confidants of those on the path to enlightenment. Fading back into the background, the Brotherhood is avoiding active entanglement in the Empire's day-to-day politics, concentrating instead on rebuilding, recruiting, and exploring the changes that have affected the Empire in recent generations.

PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES

The Brotherhood of Shinsei is based upon the principle that earnest investigation into the phenomenal world, combined with a willingness to look deeper into concepts previously accepted as truth, is the key to enlightenment. To the Brotherhood, there is nothing enigmatic or mystical about enlightenment, it is merely a question of combining an intellectual understanding of life with an intuitive appreciation of the marvels of creation. Enlightenment, it claims, is the natural product of casting aside your preconceptions while retaining your good sense. To qualify something as 'mystical' or beyond comprehension is to surrender the quest for true understanding.

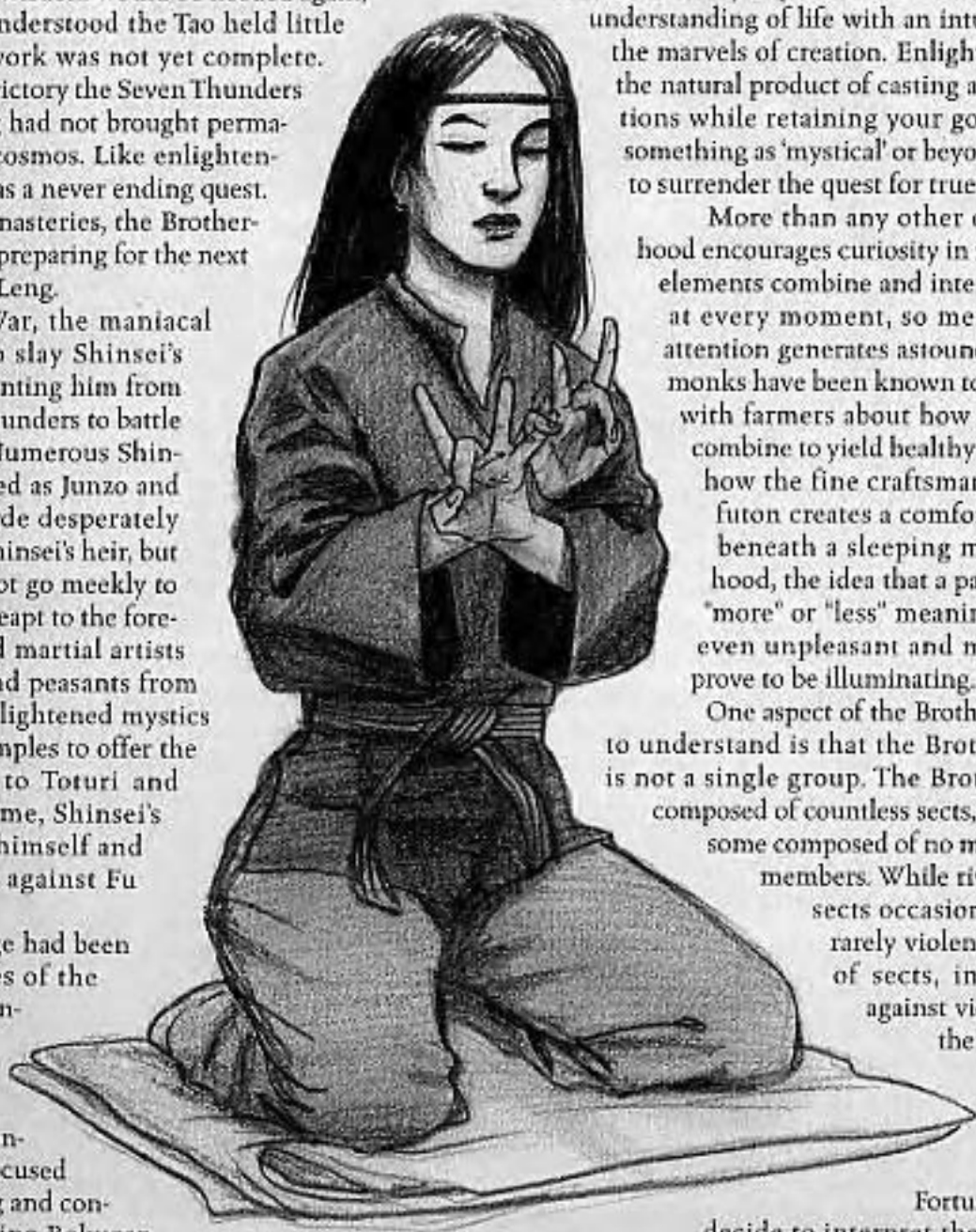
More than any other quality, the Brotherhood encourages curiosity in its members. The five elements combine and interact in countless ways at every moment, so merely pausing to pay attention generates astounding insight. Shinsei monks have been known to spend hours talking with farmers about how earth and water can combine to yield healthy crops, or to marvel at how the fine craftsmanship in a particular futon creates a comfortable cushion of air beneath a sleeping man. To the Brotherhood, the idea that a particular event can be "more" or "less" meaningful is ludicrous — even unpleasant and mundane things can prove to be illuminating.

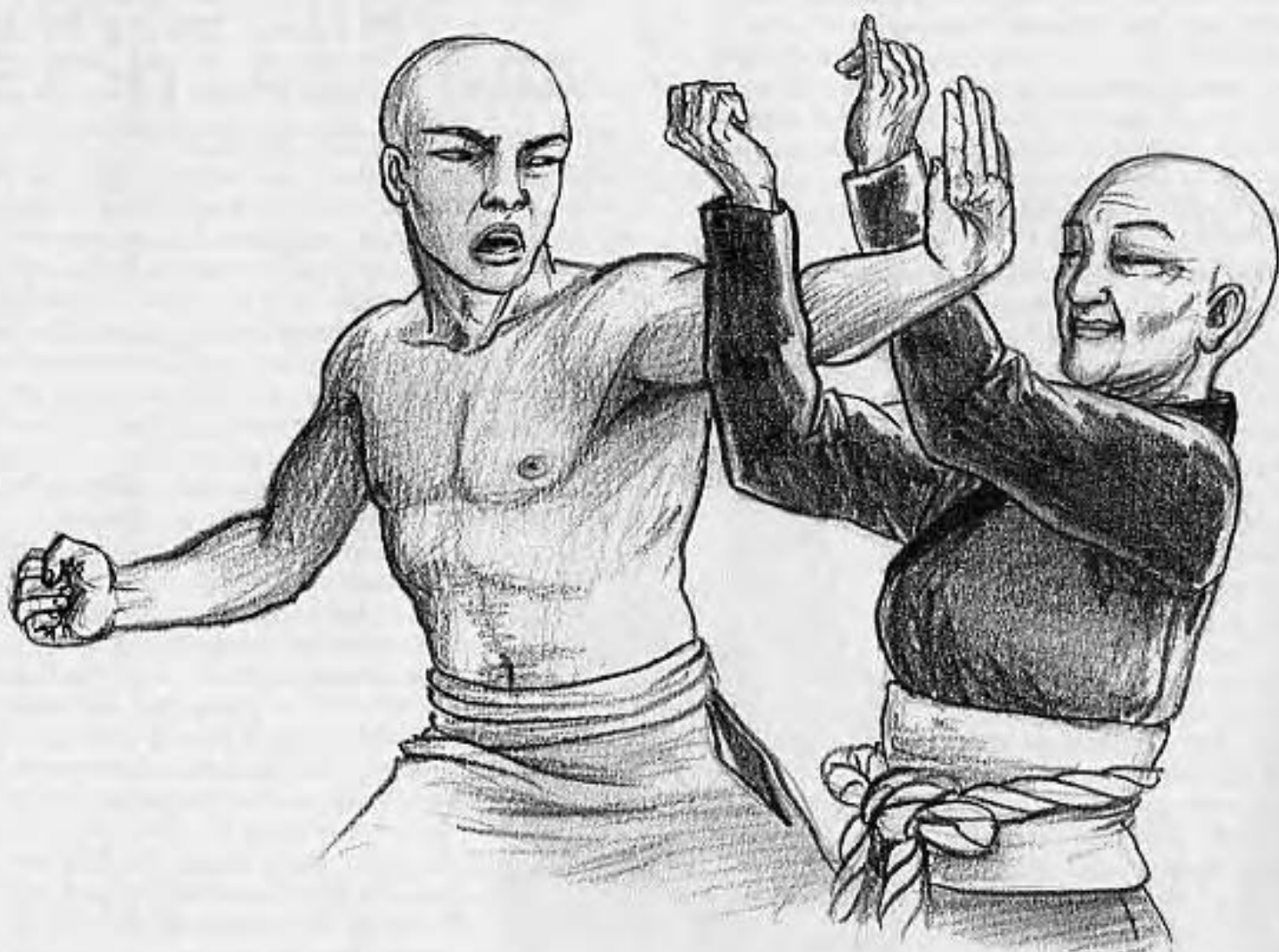
One aspect of the Brotherhood that most fail to understand is that the Brotherhood of Shinsei is not a single group. The Brotherhood is, in fact, composed of countless sects, some quite large and some composed of no more than a handful of members. While rivalries between these sects occasionally occur, they are rarely violent. The very existence of sects, in fact, is insurance against violent conflict within the brotherhood. Should a group of monks decide to take strange vows, hold an unusual

Fortune in high esteem, or

decide to interpret the Tao in a heretofore unknown way, they need not worry about conflicting with their brethren and creating disagreement. They simply find those that agree with them and begin their own sect.

This is not to say that the sects never meet with one another or try to convince one another of their point of view. Conversation and debate are frequent Brotherhood activities, for such behavior fosters a keen mind and proves the strength (or weakness) of one's ideas. A popular pastime and instructional method is to discuss famous works of literature outside the Tao, from the Kakita's *The Sword* to Tengen's *Lies*, and interpret each through the wisdom of the Tao. Such discussions are rarely held with consensus in interpretation as their goals; instead, the point is to try to come to understand the true meaning of the original writing, the true meaning of the Tao, and why others interpret each in their own way.





Brothers are expected not only to be familiar with the precepts of the Tao, but to also tie it into their personal experiences and values. Once an initiate has begun to travel, it is very common for him to visit multiple clans, to get as wide an exposure to different philosophies as possible. Brotherhood monks particularly enjoy soliciting opinions from the Akodo, as that family has opinions regarding the Tao that are unique to say the least.

Likewise, when opportunities present themselves, many Shintao monks attempt to observe the goings-on of noble houses, particularly the politically active Crane and Scorpion, as the two Clans attempt to reconcile higher philosophical ideals with the cold realities of political expediency. So far as the Brotherhood is concerned, the world is a classroom, and seeing it and its inhabitants is an effective way to come to terms with your self.

Nowhere is this dual philosophy of understanding oneself and one's environment clearer than the Brotherhood's approach to the martial arts. In addition to the practical purposes of self-defense and fitness, the martial arts cultivate an understanding of anatomy, motion, and psychology. The interplay of the elements and the importance of focus and discipline are more readily apparent when people are locked in battle, be it during practice sparring or in an earnest discussion, than at any other time. In addition, body language speaks with an eloquence all its own, and understanding the limits of your body helps to expand your mental horizons.

From martial disciplines to philosophy to travel, the Brotherhood devotes its efforts to understanding and sharing Shinsei's ideals. One of a handful of statements whose meaning is generally accepted throughout the Brotherhood is Shinsei's famous quote "Fortune favors the mortal man." Hantei and his

siblings interpreted this to mean that humanity had a special role in their Celestial Order, but the Brotherhood has since concluded that Shinsei may have had another meaning in mind, one that escaped the Kami's notice. The Celestial Order was developed by the Kami as a mirror of Tengoku's laws. Even though this served as a useful model from which to structure Rokugani society, Shinsei recognized something that the Kami chose not to: the Celestial Order is still merely a model, and does not bind individuals the same way the cosmic laws of Tengoku binds Fortunes and Kami. Samurai and other nobles have different duties and opportunities than the lesser social classes, but unlike the inherent differences that set apart Lesser Fortunes and the Great Kami, there is little inherent difference between any two humans, even between eta and samurai. Given training and ability, any person can improve himself to the point of achieving enlightenment.

CHILD'S INNOCENCE MONASTERY

HISTORY

Located in Unicorn lands, a few miles from Shinden Horiuchi and the Kojiin orphanage, the Temple of Child's Innocence was originally founded by the Brotherhood to help the Horiuchi family tend orphans of the Clan Wars and War Against the Darkness. Despairing orphans with no other source from

which to draw strength often had to look to themselves, a process that broke the spirits of many. At Child's Innocence, the Brotherhood, with the assistance of the Horiuchi family, attempted to make the path from grief easier for their wards.

With a little support from caring adults, most of the children overcame their sorrow. Many children were taught the rudiments of Shintao, and most could speak eloquently about how the insights of Shinsei and the Brotherhood resonated in their own lives. As an appreciation for life and the ability to communicate it are skills the Brotherhood wishes to develop in its members, the role of Child's Innocence has gradually evolved from providing succor to the young to teaching people how to help each other.

TRADITION

Monks assigned to Child's Innocence learn to see the world through the eyes of a child, and learn to see how precious and rare the perspective of a child is. Children at the monastery are always orphans, many of whom have seen their parents and loved ones slain in battle. Many monks assigned to the monastery have seen hearts broken, hopes shattered, and young lives surrendered to apathy and despair. Yet the monks persist, and many children, while never leaving the grief behind them, eventually do learn to look to the future.

Child's Innocence caters to children who have been brought in by the Unicorn or wandering Shintao monks, and therefore has few formal traditions — the background of many of its inhabitants diverge wildly across social and geographic boundaries. The monks encourage the children to remember the ways they were taught rather than set their memories aside, and thus Child's Innocence is a strange blend of cultural traditions from across the Empire. Monks serving at the temple are expected to listen, to understand, and to accept the worries and sorrows of the children. Likewise, the monks have come to realize that prying into the past or demanding specific answers is often too much for children to bear. Those who study at Child's Innocence are good listeners, and stand ready to offer encouragement or solace to those who need it — when they are ready to accept it.

In most other respects, Child's Innocence is fairly typical of larger monasteries. It is supported largely by donation from the noble classes. The Horiuchi in particular are sympathetic to its cause. The monks spend a great deal of time teaching children about the Tao, and learning how a different mindset approaches Shinsei's wisdom. Likewise, Child's Innocence is typical of larger temples in that even without being actively political, it has significant influence. Brotherhood monks travel all over the Empire, and the monastery is sufficiently well-known that even those unaffiliated with the Brotherhood have been known to deliver children in need of care. Those children who leave Child's Innocence to seek their own destinies remember the monks fondly, and are always ready to lend aid to their beloved teachers when necessary.

TRAINING

There is no formal training regimen at Child's Innocence other than a general schooling in the Tao, as the Brotherhood has found it impossible to "teach" emotions or genuine sympathy. Instead, initiates are expected to learn how and why children feel more deeply and more openly than adults, and the children have a chance to see how a balanced, philosophical approach to life can help them to overcome grief. So far, the results have been admirable — those who have spent time at Child's Innocence are generally able to sympathize with

pain and share joy, and a deep emotional connection between speaker and audience invaluable when addressing such vague concepts as enlightenment.

The majority of training that occurs at Child's Innocence is directed towards the children in residence. The monks primary duty is to insure that the children are watched over and educated. In most cases, the monks and children work on the same tasks side by side, with the monks in a supervisory role.

Another important aspect of education at Child's Innocence that some find surprising is training in the martial arts. All residents are welcomed to learn the Brotherhood's martial arts not as an art of self defense, but as an art of self discipline, focus, and physical fitness. Ordered rows of acolytes and aged masters can be found practicing beside toddlers and teenagers. By learning together, practicing together, growing together, the residents of Child's Innocence have become more than a mere collection of secluded monks and forgotten souls. They are a family.

SENSEI

The head sensei of Child's Innocence Monastery is usually also the head administrator, mostly for logistical reasons. The head sensei serves until he or she dies or steps down as many Brotherhood members find an urge to change their surroundings after a time. Replacements are chosen from the various monks serving at the shrine through a process of informal peer selection, although usually, the head sensei will designate her replacement before leaving. Sensei teach classes on everything from gardening (the monastery grows much of its own food, as a way to cultivate appreciation for nature and *heimin*), to the Tao, to martial arts. Subjects are assigned based on a sensei's expertise as well as being based on demand.

Becoming a sensei at Child's Innocence is actually rather easy, as the shrine always needs more people. Generally, a working knowledge of the Tao and a willingness to learn more about it, life, and other people is enough for the monks to extend an invitation. Since the term sensei is applied quite liberally by the children to every adult on the grounds, the title is somewhat less prestigious than it is elsewhere in the Empire.

Asuko, Sensei of Child's Innocence Monastery

[Unicorn Shugenja 8/Inkyo 4; Horiuchi Shugenja 4]

Formerly Horiuchi Asuko, Asuko is, in spite of her status as "retired," still an active and energetic woman. Having retired just before the death of Toturi I, she attempted to settle down into a position at Child's Innocence, using her influence within the Clan to have a few retired warhorses donated to the monastery. Even though her tendency to go on extended trips, voyages, and jaunts proved unabated by her new responsibilities, she managed to tie together her wanderlust and her love of children, taking them on short rides throughout the Unicorn lands and occasionally into neighboring provinces as well.

Under her tutelage, the children emerged from their emotional shells quickly. Few activities could foster an appreciation of the world faster than seeing it. Before long, her frequent expeditions began to gather notice from the rest of the monks. When Iku, then master of the monastery, decided to leave Child's Innocence for a less demanding position in the Mantis Isles, his choice as a successor was easy.

Asuko has not allowed her promotion to change her attitude. She still takes children out regularly to show them the wonders of the world, and she still assigns stable duty as both a reward for good behavior (horses need to be walked and

ridden), and as punishment for poor behavior (they also need to be cleaned up after). Though she is now quite aged (none can say for certain how old given her excellent health) she shows no signs of slowing down, and everyone who is associated with Child's Innocence is glad this is the case.

MOUNTAIN SONG MONASTERY

HISTORY

One of Shinsei's most cryptic quotes was that "enlightenment can be found in the song of stone, if only one can learn to listen." The exact meaning of this baffling koan was debated for decades following the Little Prophet's disappearance. Most interpreted it as some form of elemental interpretation, perhaps indicating a means through which shugenja could achieve enlightenment by communicating with the elemental earth. Many have spent their lives in communion with such spirits, finding no greater (or lesser) success than those taking any other path to enlightenment. As any shugenja would attest, the spirits of earth are gruff, surly beings with little love for song. It was finally assumed that it was nothing more than a riddle of some sort, one of hundreds or thousands that Shinsei left that was not intended to be deciphered.

Three hundred years after Shinsei disappeared, a lone monk seeking enlightenment was wandering the mountains that dominate the Dragon Clan lands. An ascetic, the monk had forsaken food for several days and was on the brink of exhaustion when he stumbled across a plateau high in the mountains, dotted with great stone pillars twisted into strange shapes by exposure to the wind and elements.

Struck by the beauty of this hidden place, the monk stopped to rest and meditate. While contemplating the void, his reverie was interrupted by the strange sound of the wind, blowing through the twisting stone towers, producing a musical sound that was almost too beautiful to bear. Enraptured by the sound, the monk immediately broke his fast and returned to share the news of his discovery.

It was not long before someone within the Brotherhood connected the plateau with the obscure quote from Shinsei. Knowing that Shinsei had traveled the Dragon mountains on at least one occasion, the Brotherhood's more prominent scholars and philosophers had to consider the notion that the quote was made with this particular location in mind. The decision was made to construct a monastery there, but only under the conditions that the monastery would not interfere in any way with the natural features that defined the area. It was decided that the only course that would be acceptable would be to do the impossible: to build the monastery into the side of the mountain on which the plateau rested.

Construction of Mountain Song monastery took nearly half a century. The work was done almost exclusively by Brotherhood members, many of whom were former craftsmen or engineers. A handful of peasant workers and samurai assisted in the task, those who heard tales of what was being done and who wished to be involved. When it was finally completed, the monastery was elegant in its simplicity. The building was carved from the mountain itself, making it among the most unique structures in the Empire. Stone stairways wound up to the plateau where the brothers could meditate, and downward

toward the distant paths leading to Dragon lands. It was, all agreed, a magnificent building. That the soft music from the wind and stones above could be heard throughout the monastery during all hours of the day was enough to make Mountain Song monastery an instant legend among monastic circles.

In the centuries since its creation, Mountain Song has become a center of activity for the Shintao sect of Shinseism. The Tao is still studied extensively, of course, as there are representatives of many different sects present within the monastery, but the prevailing atmosphere is one of agreement with the Shintao philosophy: that enlightenment can be achieved primarily through meditation, contemplation, and introspection. As might be imagined, the plateau above the monastery is a domain for constant meditation, with monks present at all hours meditating in the serenity and harmony of the mountain's song.

The monastery's presence in Dragon lands has proven problematic at times during its history. Its remote location protected it from harm during the Clan War, for it was so high in the mountains that even Yogo Junzo's inhuman forces were unable to reach it without risking attack from the assembled Dragon armies. During the War Against the Darkness, the Hoshi order temporarily used the monastery as a center of operations when they were attempting to prevent the Dragon from being consumed by the Lying Darkness.

The greatest threat that Mountain Song monastery has faced since its construction, however, is the Dragon-Phoenix war that began seven years ago. The volcanic eruption that sparked the conflict took place dangerously near Mountain Song, so close it was possible to see lava streams from the plateau atop the monastery. The brothers refused to abandon the monastery, however, and several were killed as the environmental conditions became nigh unbearable. It was only through incredible self-discipline, exceptional physical conditioning, and the assistance of several ise zumi that allowed the brothers living at the monastery to survive until the Tamori could calm the wild volcano.

TRADITION

Mountain Song monastery is a bastion of tradition, occupied as it is by so many monks of varying sects. It would be impossible to maintain a serene atmosphere with so many different beliefs and philosophies assembled in a single place unless those who oversaw the monastery implemented any but the most basic practices.

There are morning, afternoon, and evening rituals that all brothers of a certain rank and below are expected to attend. Higher-ranking members are free to pursue their own path, but many choose to attend in order to serve as an example to newer members and to remain grounded in the simple elements of their belief system. The period between morning and afternoon ritual is filled with traditional tasks of physical conditioning for newer members. Again, many older members choose to partake, although they are free to pursue their own agendas if they wish. The period between afternoon and evening ritual is when the younger members perform the countless chores that are necessary to maintain the monastery. This period is when most pilgrims and higher-ranking members choose to pursue their individual paths to enlightenment as they see fit.

TRAINING

Mountain Song monastery is not generally regarded as a place for training new inductees into the Brotherhood of Shinsei. There are initiates present, of course, as they are necessary for the natural order to continue within the monastery. These men and women receive the traditional training that any member of their order would, namely extensive physical conditioning and academic instruction followed by in-depth spiritual development through meditation and study of the Tao.

SENSEI

The position of administrator of Mountain Song monastery is a prestigious appointment, considering the temple's grand history. The monastery has traditionally been administered by moderate brothers, men and women not particularly devoted to one sect or another. In this way, the Brotherhood hopes to prevent philosophical differences from dividing those who visit the monastery.

Tadahisa

[Inkyo 14; Brotherhood Monk (Insight Rank 4)]

Tadahisa's life before he joined the Brotherhood is unknown, though it is believed that he was once samurai. He is well known among his fellows for his keen mind and silent nature, and for finding new wisdom in familiar passages of the Tao. His appointment to Mountain Song is no surprise, for many believe he is on the brink of enlightenment.

THE MOUNTAIN'S SONG

You may focus your inner energy with great clarity, drawing upon your spiritual energy to aid you in even the simplest tasks.

Prerequisite: Depths of the Void, Void Use

Benefit: Whenever you spend a Void point on any non-combat action, the bonus is increased by +1. This is cumulative with any class benefits that similarly increase your Void bonus.

THE MOUNTAIN'S SONG (10 POINTS)

When spending a Void point to increase a skill roll, you may add your lowest Ring to the total.

This ability may not be applied to any combat action or roll, nor any roll that is intended to deceive or manipulate another.

NEW MECHANICS

TASAI-DO (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

When Shinsei first approached Hantei the First, the Emperor was skeptical. One overzealous guard, seeking to please the Emperor, attempted to remove the Little Prophet by force. Shinsei swiftly defeated the guard, using nothing more than his hands and doing the man no harm. The significance of this is largely ignored in official histories, as Shinsei's subsequent conversation with Hantei, the Tao of Shinsei, and Day of the

Thunder have captured Rokugan's imagination. However, for one palace guard beaten by Shinsei, that day marked his first steps on Shinsei's path.

The guard, a young bushi named Tasai, was astounded by the ease with which Shinsei dispatched him. He was also deeply moved by the wisdom Shinsei shared with the Emperor, and was among the first to follow the precepts of Shinseism. By the time Tasai retired, he had become an expert on applying the Tao's precepts to his life, and had begun to devise his own methods of unarmed combat. Tasai's techniques and philosophy, that martial training was an essential part of understanding the whole of existence, became the foundation for modern Tasai-do (named after its inventor long after his death), practiced by most Brotherhood monasteries and temples throughout Rokugan.

STYLE

Visually, Tasai-do is neither flashy nor intricate, to the point where most cannot help but wonder why it is so effective. The style is premised upon understanding how movement, force, chi, and motion are all intertwined, allowing simple motions to have profound effects. Tasai-do does not look elegant as much as it looks efficient, and its kata, although unassuming to watch, are premised upon knowing how and why things happen.

The style is as much a tool of self-education as it is a tool of defense, incorporating many kata whose primary purpose is exercise or relaxation. In practice, the kata stretch the limits of Tasai-do's students in a literal sense since many motions force practitioners to push themselves, they became more aware of their bodies and what they are capable of. Tasai-do fosters an intuitive appreciation for the body, its capabilities, and its relationship with the spirit. This not only is seen as a necessary step on the path to enlightenment, it means that Tasai-do practitioners never hesitate during conflicts — they know exactly what they can and cannot accomplish and thus rarely overextend themselves or miss opportunities.

Tasai-do sensei describe the style as highly reactive, although most outsiders think of it as relatively aggressive. The difference can be attributed to one of perspective: whereas as most people see that the student moves quickly to exploit openings, sensei argue that flaws in opponents' defenses invite attacks. In either case, Tasai-do is intricate in its design — and the intricacy goes into making the style simple to practice.

PURPOSE

Tasai-do has become a philosophical expression for the Brotherhood of Shinsei. Practitioners combine knowledge of anatomy and the physics of motion, making them flexible combatants capable of surmounting most obstacles. Even though Tasai-do is intended as a tool to help achieve meditative focus first and as a combat technique second, the techniques it provides combined with the Brotherhood's mastery of kiho makes its practitioners capable against both mundane and supernatural threats.

Tasai-do is not explicitly designed to be lethal, but the same anatomical knowledge that most monks possess can easily be put towards hyper-extending joints and breaking bones. A Brotherhood monk never enters into combat lightly because most are extremely aware of the implications of battle for its participants.

TRAINING

Training in Tasaii-do is easy to obtain, as monasteries all over the Empire offers open public sessions to promote health and introspection. The basic kata, stances, and maneuvers of the style are fairly easy to learn, and the Brotherhood is quite willing to train interested candidates, particularly if they also exhibit a desire to learn the Tao. In most cases, the Brotherhood does so to encourage a commonality of interests and backgrounds between the Empire's different castes, as everyone is considered an equal on the dojo floor.

Even though instruction in the basics of Tasaii-do is readily available, learning the advanced techniques and unlocking the style's true power requires considerable dedication. Much like the Brotherhood and philosophy that spawned it, Tasaii-do is easy to get in to, but the rewards of deeper insight are significant. Progressing through Tasaii-do requires dedication that is difficult, if not impossible, for non-monks to attain.

TASAII-DO MECHANICS

NOVICE

A novice in Tasaii-do learns to zone out all distractions during combat, to focus solely upon himself and his opponents.

Tasaii-do Novice [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: If you voluntarily impose a penalty to your attack roll (due to Power Attack, Combat Expertise, or similar abilities) and miss your target due to the penalty you impose, you may reroll your attack roll once with the same penalties. If this attack roll is successful you strike your target but lose any benefits you gained when the penalty was imposed (heightened damage, AC, etc.).

Note: All feats in this style chain that rely upon unarmed attacks may also be performed with a bo staff (quarterstaff).

Tasaii-do Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Tasaii-do (1 rank)

Cost: 7 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (5 points)

If you make Raises on an unarmed attack and fail to strike your enemy due to the Raises, you may spend a Void point to make a second attack roll against the same TN. If this succeeds, you strike your target without the benefit of any Raises.

Note: Tasaii-do may be used with a bo staff as well as unarmed. All maneuvers in this style chain that refer to unarmed attacks may also be performed with a bo.

INTERMEDIATE

The intermediate student learns to disrupt the tempo of his opponents' attacks by interrupting them with attacks of his own.

Tasaii-do Intermediate [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tasaii-do Novice

Benefit: If you ready an unarmed attack against an opponent's attack, you may make an opposed attack roll. If your attack roll is higher than your attacker's, their attack automatically misses you.

Tasaii-do Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Tasaii-do (3 ranks)

Cost: 14 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (10 points)

If you have higher initiative than your opponent, you may delay your action until their turn. If that opponent attacks you, you may make a contested Tasaii-do roll against their attack roll. If your roll is higher, their attack is canceled.

ADVANCED

An advanced practitioner of Tasaii-do knows his limits and capabilities thoroughly, allowing him to push harder when he needs to push his limits.

Tasaii-do Advanced [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tasaii-do Novice, Tasaii-do Intermediate



Benefit: For every three points by which you lower your attack bonus when using Power Attack, Combat Expertise, or similar abilities while fighting unarmed, the bonus you receive is increased by one.

Tasaii-do Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Tasaii-do (5 ranks)

Cost: 21 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (15 points)

For every three Raises you make when fighting unarmed you receive the benefits of a Free Raise.

EXPERT

An expert in Tasaii-do has learned to focus the wisdom of the Tao, granting heightened ability to gauge an opponent's strengths.

Tasaii-do Expert [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tasaii-do Novice, Tasaii-do Intermediate, Tasaii-do Advanced.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to unarmed attack and damage rolls against any opponent who has used a feat or ability to lower their attack bonus (such as Power Attack or Combat Expertise) since their last action.

Tasaii-do Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Tasaii-do (7 ranks)

Cost: 28 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (20 points)

You gain a Free Raise on unarmed attack rolls against any opponent who has made a Raise (Free or otherwise) on an attack roll in the last round.

MASTER

The master of Tasaii-do wastes no movement, with every motion creating new opportunities to evade attacks and deliver crushing blows.

Tasaii-do Master [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tasaii-do Novice, Tasaii-do Intermediate, Tasaii-do Advanced Tasaii-do Expert.

Benefit: You do not need to declare your use of Combat Expertise, Power Attack, or similar feats until after you have made your first attack roll of the round. After rolling for your first attack, you may choose to apply either these Feats normally. All applied bonuses and penalties apply for the normal duration thereafter.

Tasaii-do Master

Required Specialized Skill: Tasaii-do (9 ranks)

Cost: 30 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (20 points)

You may spend three Void Points to declare raises for damage after you have rolled to hit an opponent.

NEW KIHOU

HARMONY OF THE BODY [KIHO]

By amplifying the body's natural tendency to keep the Five Elements in balance, you can resist disease, poison, or other debilitating effects.

Prerequisites: Concentration (8 ranks), Cleansing Spirit, Fortune's Breath, Void Use, Con or Wis 13+

Benefit: Whenever called upon to make a Fortitude or Will save the monk may spend 2 Void Point to add his base save from the other save type (Fortitude or Will) as an insight bonus to his saving throw.

Note: Improved Void Use and Superior Void Use improve the results of this bonus normally.

HARMONY OF THE BODY (EARTH KIHOU)

Type: Kharmic

Mastery: 5

The Brotherhood of Shinsei realizes that everything in the world is composed of the Five Elements, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the human body. When the Five Elements are in balance, an individual will remain healthy and sound in both mind and body. When the Five Elements are out of balance, illness and other symptoms appear.

The Harmony of the Body kiho is based upon the principle that the human body naturally acts to keep the Five Elements balanced. Any time the user must make a Willpower, Stamina, or Earth roll, he may spend a Void Point to roll an additional number of dice equal to his Earth.

HARMONY OF THE MIND [KIHO]

An enlightened mind possesses the best features of both a child and an adult—endlessly curious and attentive, yet calm and focused.

Prerequisites: Spot (9 ranks), Int or Wis 13+, Alertness, Void Use

Benefit: Once per encounter, the character may make a Spot check against one target (DC 10 + target's Hit Dice + target's Charisma modifier). If this Spot check is successful, he learns any one of the following: the target's lowest ability score modifier, the target's lowest saving throw type, one martial art style known by the target, or the target's highest class level. Note that specific values are not learned (such as the exact bonus of a target's highest saving throw).

HARMONY OF THE MIND (NEW AIR KIHOU)

Type: Zanshin

Mastery: 6

Monks of the Brotherhood are known across Rokugan for their ability to quickly analyze and assess any individual. This kiho may, in part, be responsible for this belief.

Once per day, you may make an Awareness roll against a single target, with a TN equal to 10 + the target's Insight Rank \times 5. If this roll is successful, you may learn the target's lowest Trait in a selected Ring, one martial art style known by the target, or the target's highest School Rank. Note that specific information regarding the target's rank in a Trait or School are not given.

BROTHERHOOD WAYFINDERS (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The Brotherhood of Shinsei, more than any other monastic order in the Empire, wants to bring enlightenment to everyone, irrespective of social class or affiliation. To that end, many in the Brotherhood take time to explore the empire, sharing ideas as they travel. These people sometimes call themselves wayfinders, and are largely responsible for keeping the Brotherhood informed about the Empire even as they keep the Empire informed about the Brotherhood.

During their training, initiates in the Brotherhood are typically assigned to study under a master, chosen to reflect the temperament of both student and teacher. Master-student pairing change over time, as the needs and philosophies of both evolve. Often, after a period of time studying within a monastery, students will develop a hunger to explore the empire. Such students are paired with like-minded masters, so that both can be challenged by each other's thoughts, and to provide a second voice and perspective with which to explain the Tao to those the two travelers encounter.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a wayfinder, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Skills: Diplomacy: 4 ranks, Gather Information: 4 ranks, Knowledge (Shintao): 8 ranks, Profession (Teaching): 8 ranks, Wilderness Lore: 4 ranks

Feats: At least five kiho feats, including Void Use

Special: Must travel and study with a member of this Prestige Class for at least one month.

CLASS SKILLS

The wayfinder's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read Lips (Int), Tea Ceremony (Wis), Wilderness Lore (Wis)

Skill Points Per Level: 6 + Int Modifier

CLASS FEATURES:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Wayfinders do not gain any additional Weapon or Armor Proficiencies for joining this prestige class.

Unarmed Combat Progression: Even though their focus upon learning and teaching distracts them from studying more esoteric forms, wayfinders maintain their studies of the martial arts. A monk or inkyo character may add his class level as a wayfinder to either his Monk or Inkyo Class Levels for determining his unarmed base attack bonus and damage of his unarmed attacks.

Path of Wisdom (Ex): All wayfinders quickly learn that the path to, and rewards of, enlightenment are unique to each individual. The wayfinder receives a special +4 insight Bonus that can be applied to any skill, save, or attack roll that can be used once per day per Class Level. Alternately, the wayfinder may use this ability to advise another, naming a specific saving throw, skill, or weapon. The next time that character uses that skill, makes that save, or attacks with that weapon within the next twenty-four hours, he gains the +4 insight bonus. The wayfinder may not make use of this ability (for himself or for another) until the person he has advised has used the bonus.

Neither Will I (Ex): The actions of one individual can often have dramatic effects on those around him. The wayfinder may use the aid another action to simultaneously aid a number of individuals equal to his Charisma bonus.

The Way of the World: Insight and wisdom apply not only during times of peace, but during times of strife as well. The wayfinder adds his Wisdom bonus to her AC in the same manner as a monk would. If the wayfinder receives this bonus from levels in the monk class, he gains a +4 dodge bonus to AC instead.

Knowing Your Weakness (Ex): Recognizing your failings is the first step in overcoming them. Any time the wayfinder is called upon to make a skill, save, or attack roll based upon an attribute, he may spend a Void point to substitute his highest attribute bonus instead. As a standard action, the monk may spend three Void Points and extend this bonus to an ally within thirty feet. The target must be able to hear the wayfinder.

A New Way (Ex): Much as there is more than one path to enlightenment, worldly problems often require more than one attempt to be solved. If the wayfinder fails a skill roll, he may immediately spend two Void Points to attempt the roll again (this new roll receives all bonuses and penalties of the original roll). He may continue using this ability as long as he has Void Points to spend, but if he fails the final roll he suffers the normal consequences. This ability can apply to opposed skill checks, allowing the wayfinder to reroll his result until he is successful or no longer wishes to spend Void Points.

BROTHERHOOD WAYFINDER (NEW PATH)

Insight Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Brotherhood of Shinsei Monk 1

Path of Egress: Brotherhood of Shinsei Monk 2

Technique: Path of Wisdom

The wayfinders specialize in learning from, teaching, and working with other people, to the benefit of all. The wayfinder can gain a bonus to any skill roll equal to his Void Ring a number of times per day equal to his Void + Insight Rank. He can also pass a use of this bonus to another person by speaking to them briefly, granting them the same bonus the next time they use a skill named by the wayfinder within twenty-four hours. The wayfinder may not use this ability again until the target uses the bonus.

TABLE 2-1: BROTHERHOOD WAYFINDER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Unarmed Progression, Path of Wisdom
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Unarmed Progression, Neither Will I
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Unarmed Progression, The Way of the World
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Unarmed Progression, Knowing Your Weakness
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Unarmed Progression, A New Way

CHAPTER THREE:

MONKS OF THE SEVEN FORTUNES

"You are late, vermin," a voice hissed into the night.

In the pale light of Young Lady Moon, the three villagers winced at the words coming from the woods. The peasants stood at the edge of the darkened forest, each carrying small sacks full of trinkets, coins, and other assorted items. The tallest of the three, the son of the village headman, took a step forward and stammered "I am... sorry. Some of the others... did not understand."

"Oh?" the inhuman voice asked. A pair of glowing eyes appeared in the shadows of the forest. "Tell me, young one. Did you... convince them?"

"Yes," Bokatu, the headman's son, replied. At his reply, the other two villagers looked to him then to the ground, guilt clearly written on their faces. "The... the tribute must be paid," he said, remembering the words his father drilled into his head. The tribute must be paid. The samurai demand rice, and the forest spirit demands gold. Defiance of this principle resulted in a meeting with death... or worse. The last villager who attempted to warn a samurai of what lived in the forest served as a stark example of what fate could be worse than death. The peasants still did not know what had become of the samurai.

"Yes, yes," the spirit said, its eyes bobbing in agreement and encouragement from the darkness, "the tribute must be paid. You are wise, Bokatu. Wise like your father to protect the village." In the moonlight, the spirit's teeth glowed as he grinned broadly. "Tell me, son of the headman. How did you convince your villagers?"

Bokatu shifted uneasily. "I... do not know what yo—"

"Do not be so stupid, child," the spirit growled. "Tell me. Did you beat them for their insolence?"

"Y... yes," the young man replied, his face echoing the pain of the other two villagers.

"Did you do it as I had told you, hmm?"

"Yes, sama," Bokatu's guilty expression softened a little, as if trying to placate the forest spirit with his obedience. "I used the sticks and the fire. They began to understand quickly." With that last part, the young man's grin began slowly to match the demon's.

"And what will you tell your samurai lord, Bokatu?" another, unfamiliar voice came from behind the peasants. Bokatu and his companions turned quickly to see a single man standing in the falling moonlight. He wore simple robes and a wide jingasa covered his face. The monk's hands were stretched out wide in a questioning gesture, and one held a long wooden staff. "Will you tell him you have punished your father's subordinates for refusing to bow to the will of this demon?"

"Get away," the spirit's voice called from the darkness. "Leave me be, monk, or I shall devour you as easily as I have broken these wretches."

"You do not command me, corruptor," the monk replied, his gentle tone taking a hard edge. "Begone, demon, and trouble these peasants no longer. The honest men and women have their burden to bear in the balance of the Way, and you will not add to it."

"Words will not scare me, little man!" the demon roared, leaping from the shadows of the trees. The villagers screamed and fell backwards as they attempted to flee the beast that charged from the forest. Its dark skin reflected the moonlight as if it were covered in black oil. Spined tentacles whipped through the air, pulling the beast across the ground. "This village is mine!" it spat through rows of endless, razor-tipped teeth as it moved with feline agility towards the monk.

"You own nothing here, demon," the monk replied, taking a step back smoothly and setting the end of his staff into the ground. "You are an abomination. You are an imbalance that must be corrected, and the universe will move to do so." He did not flinch as the oni grew closer, until at the last second he brought the leading end of

his staff up with a resounding crack into the jaw of the beast. The monk's eyes closed as the strike connected, and a deafening peal of thunder echoed across the still night.

The oni fell backwards and away from the monk and landed on the ground in a heap of uselessly twitching tentacles and a hissing, gurgling growl. "My... village," it said again, attempting to rise and strike out at the monk again.

"Misguided spirit," the monk said as he raised his staff to end the threat for good. "These men and women have worked these fields for generations. You could no more possess what they have built than I can take a fistful of air to claim as my own. Contemplate this in the Pit."

With that, the monk sent the demon back to Jigoku with a final thrust of his staff.

BACKGROUND

While unorganized tribes still wandered throughout Rokugan, mortals began to recognize there were unseen powers guiding them. The thought that powerful entities might exist inspired them to believe that offerings might curry favor with these forces. Their dedication was rewarded with plentiful harvests and good fortune in battle. The pre-Rokugani began to build small shrines and set up regular offerings to the Fortunes.

So that their followers would know whom they were worshipping, the Seven Fortunes gifted some of their more devout followers and artisans with their names and a vision of their likenesses. Such divine images inspired sculptors to cast elaborate statues conveying Benten's beauty, the strength of Bishamon, and Daikoku's generosity. With the Fortunes guiding their hands, the caretakers of these shrines became much sought after to speak to the people about the wondrous powers of the Fortunes. The artisans were viewed as blessed and many wealthy patrons begged them to create paintings for homes or carve netsuke of the Fortunes to carry their favor while they traveled. These artisans came to devote their lives to the Fortunes they had depicted, and thus became the first true monks. Word of these shrines and their blessed caretakers spread to distant tribes, members of which made pilgrimages to behold the statues created in honor of the Seven Fortunes.

Pilgrims brought offerings for the Fortunes, which gave the shrine's caretakers the resources they needed to build larger temples. These temples served to house the monks guarding the shrine as well as the influx of visitors. In addition to teaching worshippers more about the Seven Fortunes, the monks began to set down the ideology of their religion. They stated that the greatest of the Kami were the Sun and Moon, but they rarely interfered in human affairs. The Seven Fortunes were quite powerful and there were a variety of lesser Fortunes that watched over all aspects of every day life. The monks listed one thousand Fortunes who helped and tested mortals on this plane, shaping their existence. They went on to further note that a spirit was within many apparently mundane objects, such as rocks, trees, and roads, a secret already known to the handful of humans who practiced elemental magic. Among the doctrine they established rules on what protocols were to be followed when beseeching the Fortunes for favors. It was also advised that those who sought petty favors would earn the disfavor of the Fortunes. The gods wished mortals to be respectful, but not rely upon them for all problems.

The first large monastery for the Seven Fortunes was founded about one hundred years before the children of Sun and Moon fell to Ningen-do. It was built in Gisei Toshi, devoted to the Seven Fortunes who had the greatest influence over the realm. Every depiction of the Kami pictured them in a beatific and loving aspect.

After the children of Amaterasu and Onnotangu fell to earth, many of those who still doubted the Fortunes' existence doubted no longer. The Kami's descent was quite literally a sign from on high that their religion was based in solid fact. The Kami revealed that the Fortunes and gods were ruled by a complex caste system, and created a reflection of that caste system when they built Rokugan's government. Each being should know their place and function in the world.

With a sudden surge in belief in the Fortunes, the monks prospered. Their large temples doubled as colleges in those early days. As the monks felt that warfare was a task better left to samurai, an effort that distracted holy men from heavenly pursuits, they became pacifists for the most part. They taught that those who believed in the Seven Fortunes and trusted in them would lead long and prosperous lives as long as they lived a just life free from vice. Hard work, discipline, and compassion were the core of their philosophy. For a time the worship of the Seven Fortunes was the dominant religious belief and its monks were regarded as the most knowledgeable and enlightened mortals.

The monks of the Seven Fortunes continued their practice of seclusion and passive contemplation until Shinsei's appearance. As Shinsei's teachings spread across the Empire, many Seven Fortunes monks became resentful. Taken from a certain perspective, Shinsei's philosophies encouraged mortals to draw upon their own natural sense of strength and their inherent wisdom; if mortals had such strength, then what purpose would there be for the eternal Fortunes? As Shinsei's followers grew in number, the Seven Fortunes monks turned to the Emperor. Surely the Son of Heaven could find some way to rekindle the people's faith in the Fortunes who had done so much for them without shaming the heroic example Shinsei had set.

Hantei Genji's solution was simple and elegant, yet surprising. He found one common bond within these two popular religions — that adherents of both loved, honored, and obeyed their Emperor. Rather than abolishing Shinsei's Tao or forcing Shinsei's followers to acknowledge the Fortunes, he simply declared, despite all evidence to the contrary, both religions a single religion and that he was the leader. Presented with such a declaration, the followers of each religion could no more speak out against one another than they could defy their beloved Emperor. Both began to see the wisdom and value in the other. Prominent scholars stepped forward to find the mutual truths and inherent similarities between Fortune worship and the Tao, offering legitimate proof to support the Emperor's arbitrary proclamation (as the Emperor knew they would). To this day the followers of Shinsei and worshippers of the Seven Fortunes exist peacefully as a single religious body. Over the centuries each has drawn wisdom and inspiration from the other, until the two have become virtually inseparable.

PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES

"We are not the masters of our world, but pebbles upon its shore. So long as we think we are something other than the pebbles, we remain separate from the shore, and apart from the world. Once we understand what we are, we become a part of the world and it no longer masters us."
— Chou-sin

Because the worship of the Seven Fortunes predates even the fall of the Kami, this sect is the oldest religious group known to the Empire. The long history of this group has given rise to a great many strong traditions, nearly all of which have remained unchanged since the first tribes of mortals began worshipping the Seven Fortunes.

Since the inception of the sect, monks of the Seven Fortunes have adhered to strict patterns of behavior, organization, and thought. Though the Fortunes are the manifestations the monks worship, the followers of the Seven Fortunes understand that the gods are merely incarnations of the great Kharmic Wheel. It is the Kharmic Wheel, the Celestial Order, and the natural dance of the universe that Seven Fortunes monks truly seek to understand and live in perfect harmony with. This is the most defining principle that sets the monks of the Seven Fortunes substantially apart from the greater Brotherhood — while the Brotherhood of Shinsei seeks to unlock the strength found in each mortal soul and realize man's ability to change the future, Seven Fortunes monks seek to understand the pattern instead and live in harmony with it. The Brotherhood wishes both to see, and to understand. To the Seven Fortunes monks to see is to understand, but to see cannot be done without understanding.

The teachings of the Seven Fortunes naturally place a great deal of importance on law and order, even more so than a typical samurai's attitude in such matters. Roku-gan is an Empire built upon rules and strictly enforced classes, but the monks of the Seven Fortunes understand that to disobey the order of things is not just inviting the wrath of a magistrate — it is courting the fury of the Celestial Order. To reflect this, the monasteries, temples, and shrines are organized with a strict adherence to rank that even an Akodo general would envy. Like a samurai, each Seven Fortunes monk is keenly aware of his station relative to other Seven Fortunes monks, and the importance of his home temple in comparison to other holy sites. Authority and jurisdiction is clearly defined throughout the sect, and disobedi-

ence is rare. Those who show signs of a rebellious nature hardly make it below the rank of initiate while the monks attempt to teach them a more mannered and ordered lifestyle.

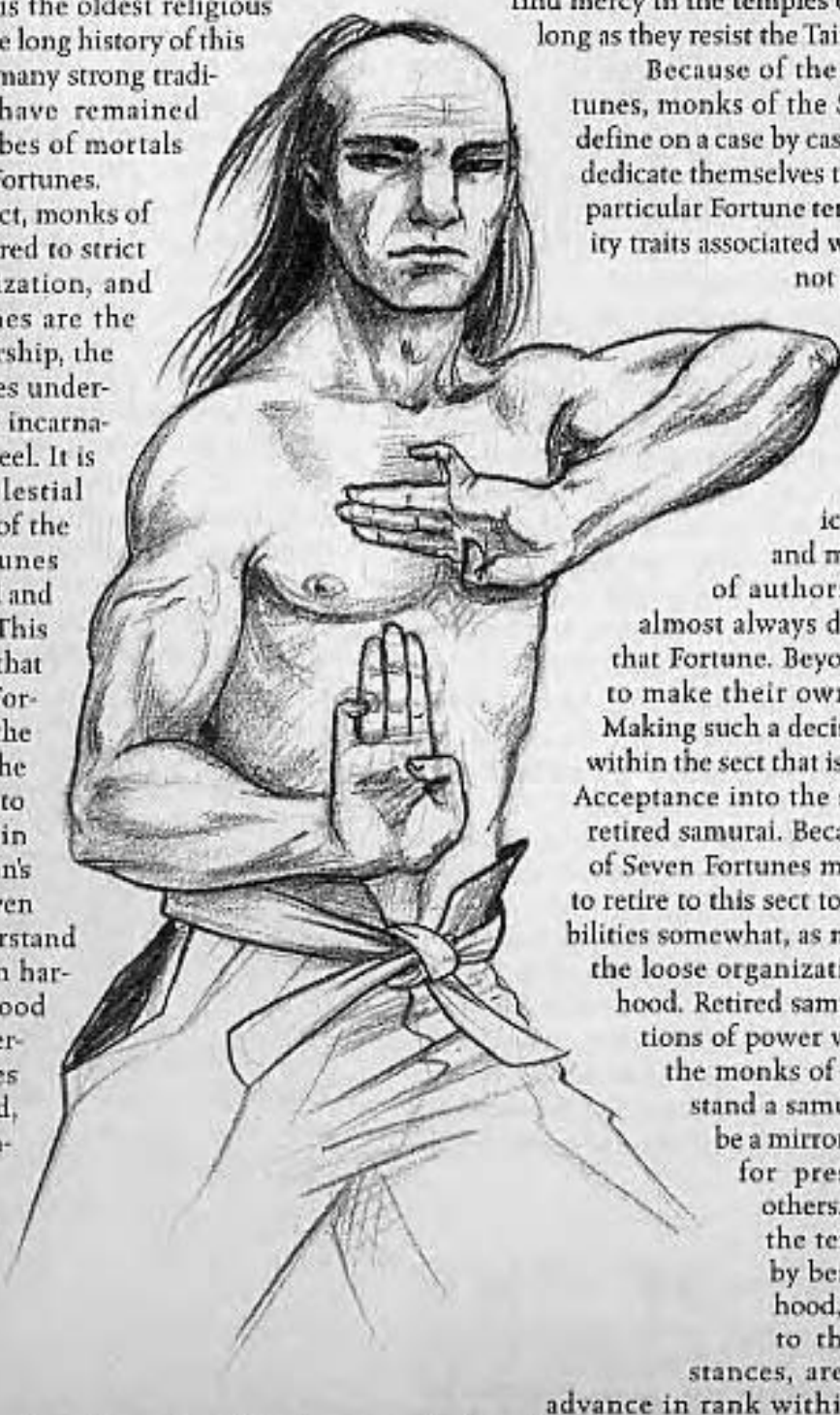
Monks of the Seven Fortunes on average tend to be less prone to violence than their peers, with the notable exception of the sohei of Osano-Wo and Bishamon. Like the Phoenix, the monks believe violence causes disharmony when used inappropriately — it is a defilement to be avoided. Like the pacifistic Asahina, they also make an exception for Shadowlands creatures. These beasts represent a total corruption of the Celestial Order, and must be destroyed. Those who are Tainted but still in control of their wills and are repentant can find mercy in the temples of the Seven Fortunes, for as long as they resist the Taint's sinister call.

Because of the myriad nature of the Fortunes, monks of the Seven Fortunes are hard to define on a case by case basis. Those who choose to dedicate themselves to the study and worship of a particular Fortune tend to take on many personality traits associated with that Fortune, if they did not possess such attitudes previously.

Such dedication is common among the sect, though it is not a rule. Each major temple tended by the monks of the Seven Fortunes is dedicated to a particular Fortune and monks in the upper echelons of authority within the temple are almost always dedicated to the worship of that Fortune. Beyond that, the monks are free to make their own choice in such worship. Making such a decision is one of the few things within the sect that is not regulated and enforced. Acceptance into the sect is a simple process for retired samurai. Because of the ordered lifestyle of Seven Fortunes monks, many samurai choose to retire to this sect to avoid upsetting their sensibilities somewhat, as many bushi cannot adjust to the loose organization of the greater Brotherhood. Retired samurai do not hold many positions of power within the sect, however, as the monks of the Seven Fortunes understand a samurai's retirement should not be a mirror of his days as a noble, vying for prestige and authority over others. Those who are adopted into the temples earlier in life, either by being accepted in their childhood, retiring due to some failing to the clan, or other circumstances, are the ones who generally advance in rank within the temple. The monks

believe that those who become monks before reaching the age of retirement are brought to the life of a monk by the Celestial pattern for a reason.

Because monks of the Seven Fortunes habitually view themselves as subordinate, imperfect, and inferior to the Fortunes, they are exceptionally forgiving of failure. The human condition is one of great potential but also great weakness. In their many scholarly discussions, monks of the Seven Fortunes often point out to other Shinseists that the second group of Seven Thunders was comprised of a thug, a womanizer, a vengeance-crazed samurai-ko, a dishonored ronin, a



Tainted shugenja, a seductress, and a samurai who later fell to corruption. The only true failure in the eyes of the Seven Fortunes is the failure to strive for greatness and cower in the face of opposition. Incompetents are educated repeatedly, the infirm are taught how to conquer their weakness, and failures are invited to redeem themselves. If anything, the studies and philosophies of the Seven Fortunes monks provide a great deal of insight into how to properly deal with weaknesses of both body and mind.

Duties of each temple are always defined by the Fortune represented there. Just as the Clans serve the Emperor in some unique way, each Fortune's group of dedicated worshippers contribute in a specific way to the larger sect. Monks of Benten use their natural charm and understanding of human emotion to deal with those outside the order when the need arises. Monks of Bishamon are a martial force that are often underestimated and dismissed by others, but can be used to enforce peace in Rokugan and combat the spiritual threat of the Shadowlands. Though money is usually not a concern for monks, temples do not fund themselves, and monks dedicated to Daikoku are usually called upon to deal with the worshippers when things do not go smoothly with annual donations. When peace fails and war ravages the land, monks of Ebisu are brought forth to help organize peasants and monks alike in rebuilding efforts and lend their own hands to the task as well. Monks dedicated to Fukurokujin are respected for their wisdom beyond even other learned monks and a great many samurai and even other monks seek them out for guidance. The monks of Hotei are often spread out among the many temples in the Empire, helping guide souls towards a peaceful path and bringing assistance to those who are of troubled mind. Finally, the monks of Jurojin are by far the most traveled of all Seven Fortunes monks, as their healing arts are easily the equal of the Asako and Asahina.

Seven Fortunes monks tend to be reclusive, preferring to let the universe unfold as naturally. The monks are not slow to give assistance when it is needed, however, and are somewhat infamous in the courts of Rokugan for being impossible to dissuade once set upon a task. Courtiers who invite Seven Fortunes monks to aid in a small matter eventually find the monk pointing out every major flaw or problem connected to the original issue, though they never would have pointed out said faults before they were asked. For this reason, wise samurai only ask for the counsel of a Seven Fortunes monk if they are prepared to have everything around them deconstructed and examined under the x-ray vision dictated by the monk's almost insane perfectionism.

TEMPLE OF THE FOURTEEN HANDS

Like the Fortunes themselves, the temples dedicated to their worship are varied in appearance and purpose. As one of the largest orders of monks, they are spread throughout the Empire, from the remote reaches of the Unicorn plains to the southern coasts of the Yasuki lands.

HISTORY

Located on the southern edge of Phoenix Lands, the Temple of the Fourteen Hands is the third oldest temple maintained in honor of the Seven Fortunes, surpassed only by Gisei Toshi and the ruins found in Ootosan Uchi. When the Phoenix Clan began settling the wilderness that the Emperor had ordered them to maintain, they did not go about settling as the Lion and the Crane had. Instead of attempting to bring civilization to every inch of land beneath their feet, the Phoenix planned to maintain a few great cities and create small outposts of their influence without unduly disturbing nature. Due to their pacifistic nature, they did not build castles and keeps where they settled. Small temples sprang up across the Phoenix lands, all built with the intention to coexist with the forces of nature. As these were the only structures outside the major cities of each family, they soon became the outposts visitors visited on their way to Kyuden Isawa or Shiro Shiba.

One of the earliest temples built was called the Temple of the Fourteen Hands, a reference to the hands of the Seven Fortunes. The Phoenix named the temple to reflect the forces that moved and shaped the mortal realm — the fourteen hands of the Fortunes. This temple rested just at the edge of the Phoenix border with Lion lands, and served in many ways as a point of entry and exit from the Phoenix provinces. Honored guests of the Phoenix stayed in the Temple of the Fourteen Hands before beginning the long journey to the heart of Phoenix territory (at the time, few roads were built, which compounded the relatively wild nature of the Phoenix lands). This was due to the temple's location rather than any sort of protocol, though eventually the Phoenix recognized the importance of the Temple of the Fourteen Hands and its location.

After the first few generations came and went, the temple had grown at an extraordinary rate, which caused it to become a primary location for retired Phoenix nobles. The Phoenix soon faced a problem regarding the temple's population of monks, as they began to take up spaces that had been reserved for traveling emissaries to the Phoenix lands from other clans. They could not rightly force the monks out for deciding to live in a temple, though the Phoenix Clan's travel routes had grown somewhat dependent on the location of the temple. Building a city around the temple was also impractical, as the purpose of the structure was to blend in with the natural surroundings, not overwhelm them. Finally, the Phoenix decided to build another city on a nearby plain. The task was complicated, aggravating to visitors and Phoenix alike, but it was one of the first major examples of the Phoenix choosing to adhere to their principles over an easier path. Though the city is now known as Honored Treaty City, the temple remains to the south, at a distance from traveled routes and now nearly forgotten by those who do not wish to find it.

The temple was left in control of the monks under the jurisdiction of the Shiba family. Over the years, the Temple of the Fourteen Hands has grown slowly, though not considerably so since its time as an unofficial border city of the Phoenix. It is due to its short duty in that regard that the temple is unusually large, even for a Phoenix temple. Its sheer size has caused it to remain a common choice for Phoenix samurai to join upon retirement as well as being an indispensable resource of knowledge for the Phoenix Clan. Though the monks are technically without alignment in the political and military struggles in the Empire, they do not hesitate to aid the Phoenix on missions of mercy and healing when they are called upon.

TRADITION

The Temple of the Fourteen Hands is the template for the ritual traditions practiced by all Seven Fortunes monks. It is the oldest functioning base of power for the sect, and is as such the most "typical." Monks maintain strict disciplines of meditation, physical labor, and study set in a rigorous daily schedule. The only thing that varies day to day is exactly what chore is performed, the subject studied, and the subject (if any) of the meditation.

Monks are free to allow their minds to center on nothing, something, anything, or everything during their personal meditations, so long as it brings them balance and focus. It is a time of personal reflection, as even the heavily structured Seven Fortunes monks realize that few humans are exactly alike. Those who seek the wisdom of the Tao are encouraged to learn from it, while others may try to find wisdom or answers in other works. Each method of study must be brought before a superior monk for approval, though few things are considered forbidden topics. Finally, the chores of manual labor and physical exercise are completely regimented by the master of the temple. Whatever needs repair is given to monks with the appropriate skills for maintenance, along with the day to day chores of cleaning, gardening, and cooking.

Monks place an equal importance in strength of body and mind. They look to the Celestial Heavens for wisdom, but do not ignore the gift of flesh given to them by the universe. Younger members of the sect often train in unarmed martial arts, while the older members practice light exercise and soft, slow arts that focus on coordination and stretching. Because of this balanced and regimented lifestyle, those adopted early into the temples of the Seven Fortunes tend to lead extraordinarily long lives by no supernatural means. Retired samurai in these temples also tend to outlive their peers who retire to other sects.

TRAINING

The Seven Fortunes teach one thing above all else — balance. Balance in the Elements, balance between the Spirit Realms, and balance between body, mind, and spirit lead to harmony in the universe. To imbalance yourself is to bring disorder to the world and cause suffering to the Celestial Order. Training in the temples consists equally of scholarly and physical pursuits, as well as learning to accept the ebb and flow of natural forces in the world.

To achieve balance is not to ignore imbalance, but to understand how to recognize and return it to a state of balance. Imbalance, in some manner, maintains balance for excessive balance can lead to stagnation. Monks of the Seven Fortunes are not expected to set aside anger, grief, or confusion, but must learn to temper these with compassion, joy, and clarity. When a monk brings pain and anger into the world, he must correct the imbalance by performing a task of atonement, usually in direct corollary to his failing. A monk who loses his temper will be instructed to meditate for an equal period of time or a monk who lashes out needlessly at another must spend more time among the sick, tending their illnesses. This is not to say these measures take the place of any proper punishment the monk may deserve, monks are still subject to the laws of the Empire and the reprimand of their superiors, but they are also expected to heal the imbalance the monk brings into the mortal realm.

In dealing with others, in and out of combat, the monk is taught to apply this philosophy in the same manner. Mortals move in a complex web of needs and wants and combat flows

in a pattern of movement can be predicted. Understanding the pattern the monk lives within does not free him of it but gives him the power to understand the movements and motivations of others with startling clarity. Those seeking to outwit and outmaneuver the monk find themselves out of their depth and undone quickly. A Seven Fortunes monk can easily be picked out in combat by his nearly supernatural ability to avoid the strikes of others and predict nearly everything that will happen around him.

SENSEI

The master of the Temple of the Fourteen Hands is a powerful and prestigious position that is carefully given to a monk who has no desire for prestige or power. The position eventually makes the monk the most authoritative member of his sect and can wield a great deal of influence within his own group and throughout the Empire. Because the position is not inherited and held as it would be in the samurai world, those who would or do abuse the power of the post are removed quickly.

Iko

(Inkyo 14; Seven Fortunes Monk 5)

Iko is the aged and wise master of the Temple of the Fourteen Hands and has held the position for eleven years. He is a quiet man not prone to speaking loudly or moving quickly at any time. In fact, Iko is not likely to speak or move at any given time, preferring to listen to the rhythm of the world through his long meditations. Iko's dealings with the physical world grow shorter each day and when he does rise from his contemplations, he always has at least a dozen monks waiting to petition him for his words of wisdom and experience. Iko understands that his time in the mortal world is growing short, but does not care. Other monks have begun bothering him about his responsibilities and duties, which the aged master ignores. Their concerns are not proper for their place, though few of them realize it. He has grown too old to pry the incorrect thoughts from those around him, and instead chooses to spend his time with the younger initiates in the temple, attempting to ensure they are instilled with the proper degree of respect, appreciation, and wonder for the world they have inherited.

THE TEN THOUSAND TEMPLES

HISTORY

The Ten Thousand Temples is the youngest major temple of the Seven Fortunes. It was constructed just outside the walls of Toshi Ranbo shortly after the coronation of Toturi III. As the Emperor is the leading mortal figure in Rokugani religion and Toshi Ranbo held no major temples in its lands (the people who dwelled in Violence Behind Courtliness City were never particularly religious), the monks of the Seven Fortunes quickly moved to correct this oversight. The temple was constructed in under a year and the sect quickly chose many of its finest members to live there. It is important to note that during the winter of the temple's construction there was no deep freezing period, an omen the monks viewed as

the Fortunes' own blessing upon their labors. This allowed the workers to labor for seven months straight without interruption. After working for seven months, the monks ordered construction to halt for seven days before continuing, allowing them to give thanks to each Fortune for a whole day.

The Ten Thousand Temples takes its name from the nearly impossible number of shrines located on its grounds. Once the initial construction of the temple was complete and the grounds were structured properly, the monks began erecting numerous shrines all over the grounds, inside the temple, and around the outside. Each shrine represents a known Fortune, from the mighty Seven Fortunes down to the most obscure and esoteric Fortunes ever made known. While there are likely not ten thousand shrines actually here, the true total cannot be far from that amount.

The master of the temple, Kiharu, knows each shrine and its associated Fortune by sight, as he is also the monk who constructed over half of the shrines. Viewed in groups, the shrines seem scattered almost haphazardly throughout the area, but once the larger picture is considered, they form a pattern much like the branches and roots of a tree. The shrines to the Seven Fortunes are spaced apart from each other and relatively important Minor Fortunes associated with each Fortune has their shrine placed nearby. The association between the location of the shrine and its importance continues, until the outer reaches of the temple grounds house the shrines for such Minor Fortunes as the Fortune of Plum Trees or the Fortune of Knots.

The Temple did not originally stand within the borders of Toshi Ranbo, a fact Toturi III quickly remedied by redefining the borders of the city to include his Empire's new center of worship. While the Ten Thousand Temples is technically the Emperor's personal temple, he only exercises his authority to empty the place of all other worshippers on rare occasions. The Emperor is, at heart, not an openly religious man, but he can easily appreciate a silent place for contemplation and the silent power of faith, even if it is a power he sometimes finds difficult to rely upon when cold logic is close at hand. All Imperial observances of holidays and holy rituals are held within these sacred walls, though usually under the supervision of the Seppun guardsmen and shugenja.

Because of the temple's obvious importance for the religion of Rokugan, it has quickly replaced the holy Four Temples near Otsan Uchi as a physical representation of the heart of worship. Though the monks of the Four Temples understand that they should not wish for prestige and learn to accept their new place, a small rivalry has built up over the years between the Four Temples and the Ten Thousand Temples. Even the name is viewed by some as a subtle insult, an obvious attempt to make the Emperor's new temple outshine the old. Though neither side is so absorbed into the matter to cause any true strife, any "unimportant" requests from one temple tend to get ignored or intentionally mishandled by the other.

TRADITION

The temple's proximity to the nexus of Rokugani political and military power results in the monks of the Ten Thousand Temples having an atypical understanding of politics. Monks who reside in this temple rarely have the time to work among the peasants or pass their days in quiet contemplation of the Tao. Instead, the halls of the temple are constantly filled with powerful and influential nobles, including Toturi III and his entourage. Many statesmen come to seek refuge from the endless and draining political struggles that go on within Toshi

Ranbo, while others come to present a pious face to their peers in the Imperial Court while they carry out their intrigues. In either case, the monks of the Ten Thousand Temples are chosen for their ability to deal with such powerful figures discreetly and politely. Those that cannot cope with such demanding duties are sent elsewhere in haste; the Emperor tolerates no failures in the heart of his temple.

While the monks do their best to accommodate their endless stream of visitors, they also strive to remain neutral within the web of power and conflict that makes Toshi Ranbo run. They remain in a unique position to stand the ultimate test of avoiding the subtle ego temptations that inherent in being in the company of such successful leaders and to their credit few succumb to such desires.

TRAINING

Monks of the Ten Thousand Temples attempt to maintain a regimented training schedule in both the matters of the body and mind, but their proximity to the Emperor's Court often intrudes on day to day activities. When the temple was founded, the monks (like any other newcomer to the Imperial Court's presence) were astounded just how many times a week the Clans stood on the edge of declaring war upon each other. Though the vast majority of these incidents end without any serious repercussions, they almost always involve the monks of the Ten Thousand Temples in some manner as both sides seek guidance or support from the Brotherhood. Courtiers come calling to meditate and regain their focus, or seek the wisdom of the monks. Bushi seek blessings for the conflicts ahead, or forgiveness for words rashly said. These constant intrusions, while irritating are accepted now as an unavoidable circumstance by the ever pragmatic Seven Fortunes monks.

Maintenance of the temple is also a matter that the monks do not often attend to on their own, depriving them of a monk's usual source of physical exercise outside of martial practice. The clans, constantly vying for the Emperor's attention and favors, often attempt to get into the Emperor's good graces, are well aware of how he favors his Temple. Thus many important nobles offer clan artisans to perform chores and maintenance on the Ten Thousand Temples. While this prevents many of the monks from having a regular course of physical discipline and scholarly research common to other temples, they have learned to work in a more spontaneous fashion toward these ends.

SEPPUN

To date, there has only been one master of the Ten Thousand Temples due to its exceptionally young history. Seppun Kiharu is somewhat young to be the senior monk of such an important temple, and though he is retired he maintains his family name to show his dedication, above all, is to the Imperial Families. Though this would be unseemly in any other temple, the monks understand the position of the master of the Ten Thousand Temples is unique. When Kiharu steps down from his station, it is expected his successor will be chosen for their ability to serve in two distinct worlds just as Kiharu does.

Seppun Kiharu (Inkyo 12; Seven Fortunes Monk 4)
 The Master of the Ten Thousand Temples is a gregarious, well-spoken, and widely liked man in his early thirties. Kiharu is one of numerous Seppun who maintain very close ties with the monk brotherhoods but maintain ties to the Imperial

families as well. As the Seppun are one of the most spiritual families, even more so than most of the shugenja families of the clans, this association has never caused any strife among either group. When Toturi III agreed to the construction of a massive temple to serve as the Emperor's personal spiritual sanctum, the Seppun immediately began working to make sure one of their number would become a powerful influence in the temple. Where many other families would attempt to do this out of a need for political power and gain, the Seppun viewed such an action as their duty to both guard the Emperor and serve as his spiritual compass.

Kiharu was chosen for a good number of reasons, the least of which is his ability to remain completely inoffensive and persuasive to all parties in matters of negotiation. He is, simply put, a competent man with no ambition whatsoever. Others trust Kiharu implicitly. While Kiharu's title is certainly a subject of true envy in the courts, he takes even greater (though quiet) pride in an even rarer accomplishment — he is one of the few souls whom Toturi III considers a true friend. Naseru finds Kiharu's intelligent yet guileless demeanor refreshing, and often confides in the temple master when matters of the court begin to weigh upon his soul.

Kiharu takes his duties in stride and with humility — the mark of his bloodline.

NEW MECHANICS

SEBUN-DO (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

The origin of sebung-do dates back to the reign of Hantei the First. The monks dedicated to the Seven Fortunes often found themselves beset by bandits and their temples fouled by roving beasts, against whom their peaceful wisdom proved a poor defense. It is possible that the order might have ceased to exist had the Fortunes not intervened.

An acolyte named Fusae soon found herself beset by nightmares reflecting the order's worst fears. In dreams, Fusae saw shrines to every Fortune cast down, and her brethren standing by as a place of worship was desecrated. Helpless to do anything, Fusae cried out in anguish as she watched her Shadowlands beasts and ruthless bandits murder her brothers and sisters. Eventually her entire order was wiped out and the people began to forget the Fortunes. These dreams continued and grew in clarity and persistence so that a night hardly went by where she didn't awaken soaked in sweat and shaking. Believing this was a message from the Fortunes she meditated on how to continue on in harmony with the forces of the cosmos while maintaining a proper defense of one's life and home. After the seventh day of meditating on the question, Fusae was gifted with a series of visions from the Fortunes. Each vision revealed a movement that resonated with the Fortunes' divine essence. When she came to her senses, she found their instructions clearly embedded within her memory, and her temple in the midst of attack by bandits. This time they found no easy prey as she quickly dispatched the small band of ruffians within minutes. After defeating her foes she turned to her dumbfounded brethren and told them the Fortunes had answered their prayers. Thus sebung-do was born.

STYLE

Sebung-do is a relatively passive art, focusing on evading and redirecting an opponent's strikes and using an attacker's strength against them. The punch of a sebung-do artist is likened to that of being punched by someone whose fist is coated in cotton, as the blows are quick and soft. Rather than focus on hardening the body and building strength, overall health and well-being is encouraged. This martial style focuses more on speed and hitting key accupoints on the target to inflict damage.

PURPOSE

Sebung-do is mainly used in defense, and is considered a soft art in many ways. Unlike other defensive arts, sebung-do does give the artist the ability to strike out offensively. More precision and morality is demanded of the sebung-do martial arts form, as one punch hit in the wrong place can cause the entire body of their opponent to shut down.

TRAINING

Before any punches are thrown or stances taught, the student of sebung-do is instructed on how to deal with others in a moral way, so as not to invite attack. Philosophical teachings and debates as well as morality lessons dominate the early portions of training. After ascertaining that their students are prepared to learn, the sensei will show them how to use the art of sebung-do to improve their body and to heal that of others. Many students are turned away due to their inability to conform to the strict morality imposed by the instructors. A sense of compassion and kindness are necessary traits fostered in sebung-do students.

In addition to teaching their students to be noble in spirit, those who teach sebung-do also require that their pupils learn to use their knowledge to heal others. While there is a considerable potential to harm others inherent in this martial style, there is equally the potential to heal. While learning what points to touch in order to inflict harm on their opponent, the novice also learns about the various points in the body that can bolster the immune system. This makes sebung-do masters both efficient killers and healers.

SEBUN-DO MECHANICS

NOVICE

At this level the apprentice learns to evade, redirect and blend attacks directed towards them, also begin to be able to read the energies within their opponent and have some limited ability to sense in which manner their enemy will strike next.

Sebung-do Novice [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex. 13+, Heal skill, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: You gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC when fighting defensively. You get a +2 bonus to Heal checks.

Sebung-do Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Sebung-do (1 rank)

Cost: 9 points

Cost Reductions: Seven Fortunes Monk (5 points), Soft-Hearted (2 points)

You gain a Free Raise on all Defense and Medicine rolls. You may choose to keep as few as one die on any damage rolls. The Sebung-do skill may be used on all unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

CHAPTER FOUR:

MONKS OF THE
MIKOKAMI

The Twilight Mountains painted a bleak and unforgiving landscape. The weather was relentless, and it was a rare day when the sun shone brightly. Countless legends surrounded the mountains, detailing the creatures and spirits that dwelled among the jagged cliffs. Peasants all across the Empire lived in fear of what terrors the Twilight Mountains contained, and for good reason: the myths were often true.

Solitary travelers were rare in these mountains. And yet, on this day one such man did brave the elements to scale the great peaks. He was clad in a thick traveling cloak that might once have been blue but had long since faded to gray. He climbed slowly but surely through the rocks, his steps cautious. Rocks skittered down the incline under his hands and sandals, but he did not stop.

Finally, the peak receded into a plateau. The traveler sighed once, a determined sound, then struggled to his feet. He brushed the dust from his robe absently and took in the spectacle before him. The plateau was home to a single defining feature: a large, simple building, hewn from the mountain stone. It bore a strong resemblance to many lesser strongholds scattered throughout the Crab lands, a fact which brought a wistful smile to the traveler's face. As he stood waiting, a figure emerged from the stone building and strode purposefully toward him.

The newcomer was tall and broad of shoulder. His form was muscled from long hours of exertion, his clothing rough and coarse. His head was closely shaven. "Greetings, friend," the man said with a curt bow. "I am Boku, brother of the Order of Steel. I welcome you to the True Blade monastery."

"The Order of Steel," the traveler smiled. "There is a legion of warriors in the Empire at large that call themselves by the same name. I wonder if they are aware that your order bears the title as well."

"It is of little consequence," Boku said without malice. "They may petition the Fortune of Steel if they wish it to be changed. I doubt he will answer them."

"So it is true, then," the traveler said. "Your monastery is devoted to the worship of Tsi Xing Guo, the Fortune of Steel?"

"We are his adherents; that is correct. There are but three monasteries maintained by our order, although there has been talk of a fourth. Why have you sought us out?"

The traveler unfastened his cloak to reveal his non-descript clothing within and a lone wakizashi upon his belt. "Until three days ago, I was known as Kaitu Eurojin. I was a smith and engineer for my lord for nearly twenty years, but I have reached the customary time of retirement. It is time for me to seek a new path."

"And you have chosen our order? For what reason?"

Eurojin removed his blade from his obi and held it out to the monk. "The one true love of my life has been working steel. I was grateful for the chance to do so in my lord's name, but my soul was not pure. I did not live to serve him. I lived for the experience." He paused for a moment and regarded the blade. "That is why I chose to retire, though many choose otherwise. I need to seek the purity in myself."

Boku nodded. "You are wise. You have embraced the gifts Tsi Xing Guo has given us. You will be welcomed here. Come, brother. Let me show you our monastery." The two men strode through the large stone doors and into the courtyard.

True Blade monastery was laid out in a contemporary and simple manner common to most temples and monasteries that Eurojin had visited. The interior courtyard, however, was quite different. Rather than bearing a sand garden of some sort, it was home to the largest forge he had ever seen outside of Kaitu Shiro. "Magnificent," Eurojin breathed.

"It is indeed," Boku agreed. "It is a testament to our Fortune's wisdom and power."

"Boku-san," the old Crab said hesitantly, "I must be truthful with you. I know nothing of the Fortune of Steel. I have known him only through his works and creations. I wish to join your order, but I have never been a pious man."

The monk smiled. "This is not a monastery to the Seven Fortunes, nor the study of Shinsei. Our patron was a mortal man only a short time ago. He does not covet your prayers or meditation. You reverence for him is evident in the love you share for his craft. We are monks, but only in the sense that we have abandoned our worldly goods and pursuits in exchange for devotion to what he represents." He smiled. "You are mistaken, my friend. You are indeed a pious man."

Furojin looked down and ran his hand across the hilt and tsuba of his exquisitely crafted wakizashi. "I have dreamed of such a thing my whole life."

"Welcome home, brother." Boku removed his shirt and picked up a large hammer. "Come. It is time for our morning prayer." He gestured to the forge and smiled again, more broadly.

Furojin laid down his blade and picked up another hammer.

BACKGROUND

The term "monks of the mikokami" is frequently used in Rokugan to describe dozens of small independent monastic sects. These groups, are often limited to a single monastery or a handful scattered across the Empire. Their philosophies, while varying wildly, are often highly specific and may contain more extreme tenets that are generally overlooked by most Rokugani because of the obscurity in which these smaller groups tend to operate.

Obviously, there is no one means by which these myriad sects developed. Each group has its own unique origin and history. There are, however, certain elements that can be considered common among the historical records. In particular, there are two common origins that give rise to new sects.

One common option for the creation of a new sect is in the strong religious beliefs of a particularly charismatic individual. This is a tale common throughout history, and is not unique to monastic sects. Some men are gifted in the art of inspiring others, whether that inspiration may be to take up arms against one's lord, to ride the highways as a bandit, or even to enter into a monastery and take up reverence of a lesser Fortune. These men and women are often simple peasants who had some sort of dramatic religious experience, awakening their natural talents and giving them purpose. To many, this is nothing less than a manifestation of true enlightenment, or perhaps divine will. The oldest known monastery devoted to Inari, the Fortune of Rice, was founded by a farmer who claimed to have been visited by the Fortune in a dream. In his dream he saw a vast field of land that yielded a bountiful harvest. The man found the land from his dream, which others had abandoned, and planted his crops. When harvest time came, his yield was more than double that of anyone else in the province. Others flocked to the land, and the farmer began a monastery devoted to the field's divine patron.

In a similar vein, there are occasions when an instance of divine intervention is so obvious and powerful that it affects many people at once. Given that the Rokugani are largely a pious people, it is not uncommon for such things to result in small numbers of witnesses joining a monastery or even creating a new one in honor of the kami responsible. The most

notable example of this phenomenon is the creation of the first monastery devoted to Osano-Wo, Fortune of Fire and Thunder. Shortly after Hida Osano-Wo's death, his son Kaimetsu-uo and his Mantis followers laid siege to Shiro Shiba, where the assassin was hiding. The young warrior called out to his father for aid, and lightning split the castle's gate instantly. The Shiba daimyo, awed by this display of power, surrendered the assassin to Kaimetsu-uo and immediately retired. He and several others, both Phoenix and Mantis alike, moved to the Plains of Thunder and built the first monastery to revere the Thunderer, mightiest of all lesser Fortunes. Osano-Wo's sect continues to be the largest of any mikokami currently in existence.

Still, despite similarities, these myriad sects typically have little in common with one another beyond the simple organizational structure they all tend to follow, a template established by the Tao's Book of Duties. Examine any dozen monasteries and one will discover a dozen unique histories. While detailing all of them would be a task worthy of a historian's entire lifetime, there are a handful of larger sects that are well known.

KAMI-NO-KAZE

The Fortune of Wind is among the oldest revered Fortunes in Rokugan. A cult existed prior to the Kami's arrival in Rokugan that venerated a wind god. When the Hantei Emperor united Shinseism and Fortune worship as the official religion of Rokugan, he adopted several prominent pre-existing religions into the pantheon of Fortunes. Kami-no-Kaze was among these new Fortunes.

Kaze-no-kami and the other so-called Unnamed Fortunes, all remnants from before the Kami's fall, have had few adherents since the Empire's birth. Those monks devoting themselves to the Fortune of Wind have removed themselves from the Empire at large. Few have heard of their monasteries throughout history, as they tend to congregate in secluded mountain temples or shrines situated in the center of empty, wind-swept plains. Peasants pay homage to the Fortune at small, untended shrines left by the monks across the Empire, but do not regard it with the same reverence as other Fortunes. To many, Kaze-no-kami has ever been a primal, primitive being more akin to a nature spirit than any sort of divine entity.

During the Four Winds Era, the assault on Tengoku by Fu Leng and his demonic minions resulted in the deaths of several Fortunes, Kami-no-Kaze among them. The death of their patron has caused Kami-no-Kaze's adherents great distress and conflict. Many among them believe that the Fortune of Wind shall be reborn, even as the dying breeze stirs again after a period of quiet. Most believe that this reincarnation will embody itself in one among their number, who will ascend into Tengoku to replace the dead wind god. Needless to say, many adherents are eager to prove their worth, and the masters of the temple are constantly searching for any sign of the reborn kami.

EMMA-O

The Fortune of Death is not so much revered in Rokugan as feared. Monks who serve Emma-O are rare indeed, and barely warrant the term order. Monks of Emma-O are solitary individuals who tend to the many small shrines to their patron that dot Rokugan's landscape. Those who take up the Fortune of Death's ways tend to come from professions where death is abundant. Peasants who deal with the dead, war-weary sol-

ASCENSION VIA IMPERIAL DECREE

The most reliable means for a human being to become a lesser Fortune is through an Imperial decree issued by the true and rightful Emperor of Rokugan. This ability was given to the first Hantei by his beloved mother Amaterasu, and has remained at the Emperor's discretion ever since. Upon Toturi's ascension to the throne, the Hantei ancestors passed this power to his dynasty.

Such Imperial decrees are issued rarely under most circumstances (with the exception of Hantei XVI), and most Emperors have gone through their entire reign without ever having issued one. Only when the Emperor is convinced that an individual personifies the essence of some trait or quality is this act even considered. Only then will a righteous Emperor admit that individual's soul to Tengoku by numbering them among the Fortunes.

diers, former torturers, and others who must face the reality of death on a daily basis are among the Order of Death's numbers. Kuni born without the ability to speak to the kami are likewise often drawn into this sect.

Those who wish to join the Order of Death must seek out a brother monk and convince them of their sincerity. Those who are successful are taken under the elder monk's wing and taught basic rites and practices, then permitted to go on their way, for solitude is an important vow among Emma-O's adherents. There is little concern among the order for the behavior of individual members. Those who fail or disappoint Emma-O need not be punished in this world, for the Fortune of Death shall find them in time.

SUITENGU

The Fortune of the Sea is revered all across Rokugan's coast, not only by sailors but by any whose livelihood is bound to the ocean. Fishermen, shipwrights, merchants and travelers pay homage to the vengeful being at the shrines that are present at every dock or port on the Empire's shores.

Suitengu's monastic followers have existed almost since the Empire was established. Even in the earliest times, men took to the seas for a variety of reasons, and in each case they made prayers to the Fortune of the Sea to watch over and protect them. Given Suitengu's tempestuous nature, however, there have always been lives lost to the sea. Over the centuries, those spared such wrath, either because of simple omission or survival, would take up reverence of Suitengu as a means of thanking the Fortune for sparing their lives. Thus the Order of the Sea was born.

The order's greatest concentration exists in the Mantis Islands, where no less than half a dozen monasteries dot the various isles that the clan occupies. There are many more across the coast, but none so large as those off the shore, surrounded by Suitengu's majesty.

KOSHIN

The Fortune of Roads is one of Tengoku's more carefree entities, unconcerned with formality and ritual. Koshin has always been revered by traveling merchants and the Miya hermits, but his order was never significant enough to be note-

worthy until the Unicorn Clan's return to Rokugan. The children of Lady Shinjo are travelers first and foremost, and more shrines to Koshin appear in their lands than in the rest of Rokugan combined — ironic when one considers that the nomadic clan uses few true roads.

Although Koshin has been known and honored by the Rokugani people since the Empire was founded, the monastic sect devoted to him was not founded until the fourth century. Historical records indicate that a minor branch of the Daidoji family, predominantly made up of merchants and traders, came to prominence within the clan following the Emperor's construction of a new series of roads and highways. This minor branch fully committed every resource at their disposal to developing merchant caravans, a concept that was not popular at that time. The plan was a great success, and this particular family branch became one of the dominant groups within the family. Upon his retirement, the family patriarch established a monastery and temple to Koshin in the Crane trade city of Heigen Toshi, which remains the largest of Koshin's temples to this day.

THE SHI-TIEN YEN-WANG

Strangest of all mikokami, the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang (or Lords of Death) are not Fortunes at all, but lesser gaijin gods who have earned their place among the Rokugani cosmology and thus gained Fortune status by default. They haunted the Moto for centuries, despising the nomads for abandoning them in favor of Rokugan's gods. Moto Chagatai, Khan of the Unicorn Clan, took pity upon them and swore an oath to revere them equally among the Fortunes. In return, he demanded they cease their fruitless vengeance against his family. The Lords of Death accepted, and ascended to Tengoku to petition for entrance into the Celestial Heavens.

The Lords of Death were not welcome in Tengoku upon their arrival, and it was not until Fu Leng's assault on the Gate of Heaven that they found a measure of acceptance. The Lords aided Tengoku in its defense, saving Okura no Oni from death or worse at Fu Leng's hands. In return, they were granted control over Meido, the Realm of the Dead, alongside the Fortune of Death Emma-O. They have become, for all intents and purposes, lesser Fortunes of Death. Some also describe them as Fortunes of Vengeance or Fortunes of Judgment. As yet, there are but three temples devoted to the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang in the Unicorn lands, each with a small contingent of monks and shugenja who serve and commune with the Lords of Death.

PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES

Much in a manner that mirrors their history and development, no two sects devoted to lesser Fortunes have exactly the same belief system, philosophy, or daily rituals. Each pursues the doctrine of their patron in their own way. This is complicated somewhat by the fact that several lesser Fortunes were once mortal beings who ascended to Tengoku either through Imperial decree or through some other divine means. With the ability to learn more about a Fortune's mortal life, a sect of monks can become decidedly different than the norm, not appreciating that ascension radically transforms the human soul.

There are several conventions that are commonly held by these smaller sects. While it cannot be said that all of these conventions are uniformly respected and adhered to strictly, they are generally acknowledged among most sects:

REVERENCE FOR THE FORTUNE'S PATRON

Lesser Fortunes are invariably connected in some way to one of the Seven Fortunes. It is commonly believed by many shugenja that lesser Fortunes were created by the Seven Fortunes to do their bidding or to embody certain aspects of their divinity. The few monks who revere Ekibyogami, Fortune of Disease, equally revere her patron Jurojin, the Fortune of Longevity. The great Osano-Wo, legendary Fortune of Fire and Thunder, is a servant of Bishamon, the Fortune of Strength in much the same way as a samurai warrior serves a clan daimyo. The wise and elegant Tengen, Fortune of Writing, serves Fukurokujin, the Fortune of Wisdom. Sects do not always agree on what Fortune a given mikokami serves, and the Fortunes are often not forthcoming about the nature of their service. There are, for instance, two distinct schools of thought within the order of Inari, Fortune of Rice. Many believe Inari serves Ebisu, the Fortune of Honest Work. Others believe that the Fortune of Wealth, Daikoku, is Inari's patron. Emma-O, Fortune of Death, refuses to reveal which, if any, of the Seven Fortunes he favors. In any case when there is debate, the sects tend to revere any and all Fortunes that might serve as their Fortune's patron.

THE LOST GODS

A unique subset of once-mortal mikokami is the collection of entities known as the Lost Gods. These pitiable beings have virtually no adherents in the mortal realm, and are outcasts even in Tengoku. Their plight is remembered by a small number of monks who tend to a small shrine in their honor deep in the wilderness in Phoenix lands.

The Lost Gods' suffering is a remnant from the mortal rule of Hantei XVI, the madman history remembers as the Steel Chrysanthemum. Ever a petty and vindictive man, Hantei XVI delighted in cursing those who aroused his ire to an eternal afterlife of shame and suffering. A Seppun guardsman who plotted against the Hantei was proclaimed the Fortune of Torture upon his execution. A fastidious Kakita courtier that attracted the Hantei's ire with an off-color comment was proclaimed the Fortune of Dung after being executed in a unique manner not recorded in the histories. Over a dozen such decrees were issued, and many more would likely have followed if not for the Steel Chrysanthemum's death.

The Brotherhood has made it their goal to remember these lost Fortunes, for they are still divine beings despite their disgrace. The denizens of Tengoku hold the Lost Gods in low regard, but grudgingly acknowledge their rightful place among the Heavens. There are no sects that revere these beings, but the Brotherhood maintains a single shrine in their honor.

STUDY OF THE TAO

Although this is less emphasized among mikokami sects, the Tao is still recognized as the greatest source of wisdom that the mortal world has ever produced. No monk of any tradition would speak ill of Shinsei, though some might regard the traditions of the greater Brotherhood with disdain. Reverence for Shinsei's teachings is particularly strong among those sects that follow Fortunes who were once mortal. Some believe that by reaching enlightenment through the Tao and a pious lifestyle, they can ascend to serve their patron in the next world. Others acknowledge these Fortunes not out of interests in ascending themselves, but merely out of great respect for these mortal souls who have found divinity.

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL PURITY

Almost invariably, mikokami sects adhere strenuously to the oldest and most ancient monastic traditions, achieving absolute purity of body and spirit. There are of course exceptions to this, as there always are. Monks of Inari typically partake of sake on a regular basis, and monks that revere Toyouke-Omikami drink a significant amount of the various alcoholic brews that come from their patron's granaries. These monks do not view inebriation as defilement, as other orders do, but as both a blessed gift and an ongoing test from the Fortunes who watch over them. Those who can partake of these substances yet maintain focus and control have mastered one more step on the path of enlightenment.

UNIQUE PRACTICES

Although it would be impractical to describe the countless permutations in rituals and customs that are practiced daily by the various mikokami sects, there are a few that are particularly noteworthy. These sects often have traditions that are a radical departure from what is expected of a standard Shinseist shrine. This is not to say that these customs are inappropriate or even frowned upon by the Brotherhood, although that has occurred in the past, but rather are simply noteworthy as a result of their divergence from the norm.

THE ORDER OF STEEL

The monks of Tsi Xing Guo, the Fortune of Steel, are perhaps the most unconventional of any practicing sect currently operating in Rokugan. They adhere to the basic monastic precepts described above, but the resemblance to most other sects ends there. The brothers of steel revere their patron as well as Bishamon, whom they consider Tsi Xing Guo's benefactor. Above Bishamon, however, the brothers worship the Lord Sun and Lady Moon, who elevated their patron to the heavens.

The Brothers of Steel place a strong emphasis on meditation and contemplation, but not in a form that other sects might recognize. They believe that true peace of mind and spiritual purity is achieved through the working of steel, just as their patron did in life and continues to do in the heavens. Initiates in the order hone their bodies through the mining of raw ore from the mountains, and senior members achieve purity through forging all manner of weapons and tools.

These monks believe that their own impurities are purged just as they are purging the impurities from the steel. Only a pure soul can forge a pure blade, and the mark of impending enlightenment is the creation of a true, perfect blade. While many of these monks were never trained in the samurai tradi-



tion, this order has special dispensation from the Emperor, allowing its members to touch the katana they have forged despite their peasant status. These peasant monks are still forbidden to use katana as weapons, and though they will test the weapons against inanimate targets they will never use them against a living being, not even in self defense.

THE ORDER OF MERCY

Monks who follow Jizo, the Fortune of Mercy, are perhaps the most altruistic of any sect in Rokugan. Their doctrine of contemplation and introspection is complemented by a busy schedule of tending to the needs of nearby communities. Villages and towns with nearby monasteries devoted to Jizo are among the healthiest and best-maintained for hundreds of miles.

Jizo monks begin their day with lengthy periods of meditation and physical training, exactly as countless other sects do throughout Rokugan. The majority of their day, however, is spent outside the monastery, in the service of others. Brothers of Mercy are trained in a variety of healing arts. These are mostly herbal in nature, but a few have introduced acupuncture and other advanced medicines as well. When not tending the sick or aiding peasants in their labor, many Jizo monks travel the Empire to areas of need. Any natural disaster, be it an earthquake, famine, flood, or disease, will draw Brothers of Mercy in large numbers. These men and women are much beloved by the peasants and are popular among more peace-loving families such as the Asako and Asahina.

THE ORDER OF JUDGMENT

Although the Brotherhood strongly discourages the use of such a name, the Order of Judgment is the name given to those monks who follow the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, the Lords of Death revered by the Moto family. The sect has existed for less than a decade, but their controversial practices and beliefs have ensured that many within the Brotherhood know their name.

The brothers of judgment consider their patrons' mandate to be their own. Just as the Lords of Death judge the dead, so do their adherents pass judgment on the living. Brothers of judgment can often be found lending aid to the Unicorn Clan's many magistrates, whether through direct action (when permitted) or through research and investigation. Unique among the Brotherhood, the order of judgment holds little regard for Shinsei's teaching beyond a mild historic curiosity. For its members, studying the wisdom of a mortal is insignificant compared to communing directly with divine beings who believe in taking an active role in the mortal world.

THE ORDER OF OSARO-WO

The Brothers of Thunder are undoubtedly the most famous of all mikokami sects. The wrathful Fortune of Fire and Thunder was once a mortal, the son of Hida and the Thunder Dragon, and is counted among the greatest warriors Rokugan has ever known. Understandably, bushi of all clans are drawn to his service following their retirement.

More so than any other monastic tradition in Rokugan, the Order of Thunder eschews spiritual purity for the purification and perfection of one's physical form. Just as Osano-Wo ascended upon his death, so too do the brothers of thunder believe that they can earn a place at his side, or at least among his descendants in Yomi, by striving to achieve the same greatness and battle prowess he possessed in life. The order is debatably the most militant of all orders, challenged only in this regard by the monks of Bishamon, Fortune of Strength. These monks are known for their martial prowess, as well as their uncouth practices of ritual scarification to prove their strength and dedication to the Thunderer's way. Most of their day is spent in vigorous martial training and meditation. While they favor the ono (a weapon invented by this order) and unarmed combat, Brothers of Thunder study a wide variety of fighting arts. These monks also embrace the Tao and are, according to their own viewpoint, pacifists. Through focusing their strength and focusing upon the martial arts, they guarantee that none would be foolish enough to disturb the peace and sanctity of their temples. Though the Brothers of Thunder never initiate a conflict, they are always eager to finish one once it's in play.

THE ORDER OF THE SHORE

Monks who follow Isora, Fortune of the Seashore, lean towards the tempestuous and the melancholy. Their patron is a mournful Fortune, said to have lost her lover to the Lying Darkness centuries ago. While most mikokami monks choose a Fortune so that they might share that divine entity's wisdom, monks of Isora instead hope that they might stand as an example for Isora, helping her to conquer her madness and set aside her tempestuous ways.

Outside of their normal activities, Isora Monks tend large fires in their temples and shrines. These are maintained with tireless vigilance, and are never extinguished even when threatened by the harshest storm. If a flame should somehow be extinguished, the brothers immediately reignite it and maintain a prayer vigil for seven days before allowing any of their number to leave the temple once more. These fires serve a dual purpose in both demonstrating the monks' dedication to their patron and providing a signal to those at sea, helping them avoid Isora's unfocused wrath.

GARAN KOKONURUI MONASTERY

HISTORY

Temple Suitengu is located on one of the most beautiful beaches in the Mantis Isles, only a few hours' ride south of Toshi no Inazuma. It also bears the distinction of being one of the oldest temples dedicated to Suitengu. In Year 137 by the Isawa Calendar a wealthy Crane merchant named Mishima led a trading vessel from Crane lands to the Mantis Isles. On the way they were beset by a violent storm. Of the crew of about one hundred sailors, only Mishima survived.

For days she was left stranded in the middle of the ocean with no hope of rescue. Without food or water she entered into a state of delirium where she could swear she heard the

fish within the sea debating on what day she would die and they would be free to consume her. At last, severely dehydrated and starving, she fell unconscious. While she slept, Mishima dreamt that she was floating in gentle ocean waters. The form of a man with perfectly shaped features rose out of the ocean's surface and spoke with her. He told her he was Suitengu, Kami of the waters and he had saved her life. She had profited from her many trips taken over his waters, and now she could repay the favors he had granted her. Suitengu bade her to use her wealth to build him a temple of surpassing beauty. The first piece of land she set foot upon should be the site for his new temple.

When Mishima awoke she was on the shore of one of the Mantis Islands. Believing that the dream had no significance, she tried to book a passage on a kobune to head back to Crane lands. The kobune prepared to leave only to notice that their ship would not budge. One of the sailors noticed that the bottom of the kobune appeared to be covered in barnacles that bound the vessel to the sea floor. Mishima tried to book passage on a second ship only to meet the same result. Realizing that the dream had truly been a vision, she walked back to the beach where she had washed ashore. The outline of her first footprint was clearly marked, despite many days having passed since her return. Beside it, there lay an unopened oyster. Mishima cracked open the oyster and inside was a blue pearl the like of which had never been seen. Within it, one could see the movements of the sea.

Using all the funds at her disposal, Mishima hired villagers to aid her in building Suitengu's Temple. After years of labor and her entire fortune all but spent, the monastery was at last whole. The blue pearl was set in a place of honor, in the outstretched palms of Suitengu's statue.

A large dock surrounds the temple and several fishing vessels are berthed there. The monks and the local fishermen use these boats from time to time, and it is said that no fisherman who makes his home in Suitengu's village and truly honors the Fortune will be lost at sea.

TRADITION

Most of those who tend the Temple of Suitengu are former sailors, retired from a long life at sea. The atmosphere in the temple is peaceful and serene, and the sounds of ocean waves echo always through its halls. As the largest temple to Suitengu in all of Rokugan it has a steady stream of visitors seeking the Fortune's favor.

Each day the villagers supply the temple with fresh fish to feed the monks. The monks themselves often go out on fishing vessels and lend a hand in the labor, enjoying the work as well as the opportunity to commune with Suitengu's domain. The sailors believe that to have a monk of Suitengu on board the ship is a sign of good fortune and that the Kami will surely not harm a ship so blessed.

TRAINING

Novice monks are apprenticed to merchant vessels, youths and retired samurai alike. Many former samurai have a hard time stomaching orders from a heimin, but humility is a lesson that must be learned one way or another. After they learn to humble themselves to their fellow man then they might be humble enough to serve the Fortune of the sea.

Sailing and swimming are taught to all Suitengu monks. They also learn the history of their order and are taught to respect the Fortune of the Sea, as he holds life in his hands for those sailing in his waters. Net making and weaving sea plants

into baskets is also taught to the apprentices. Though the Tao is still recited frequently, life experience is valued more than knowledge that can be learned in any scroll. Many monks of Suitengu are, in fact, illiterate. All that they know of the Tao is carefully recorded in memory.

SENSEI

When the old master of the order dies or retires to seclusion, Suitengu's blue pearl is taken and thrown into the waters in front of the temple. The monk who finds the pearl and returns it to the temple becomes the new master. Due to the pearl's opalescent blue color, the pearl is extremely difficult to find in the deep water; the monks believe that it is in fact impossible to find the pearl without Suitengu's aid, for despite the virtual impossibility of the task, the pearl is always found. On occasion Suitengu will decide that none of the monks in his order is suitable to be leader of the temple and an unwary pearl diver will discover it. The monks immediately initiate this peasant into their order, promoting the surprised soul to master status. Though this seems reckless way, the masters of this temple are noted as among the wisest and most enlightened souls in the Brotherhood of Shinsei.

Nandemonai, Temple Master of Garan Kokonmurui

[Fighter 4/Monk 12; Yoritomo Bushi 1/Mikokami Monk 4]

The current leader of the temple is close to sixty years old, but still quite active in the daily affairs of the temple. A former samurai serving under Yoritomo during the Clan Wars, he chose to retire to serve Suitengu when he felt he was too old to

serve his daimyo in battle. Nandemonai is a skilled sailor and has even traveled as far as the Ivory Kingdoms as part of several smuggling expeditions (which never officially occurred). Time and time again he should have drowned during a violent storm, but was saved by Suitengu's grace.

After joining the order, he never expected to become master. In fact he was not even aware the previous master had died when, while taking his morning swim, the blue pearl floated up in front of his face and hit him in the nose.

Due to his extensive relationship with the history of sailing, many Mantis smugglers come to pay homage to Suitengu and ask his advice about what routes to take. Other old warriors such as he sometimes visit to reminisce in memories of Yoritomo and days gone by. Nandemonai always greets visitors with the same polite courtesy and quiet wisdom, whether they are samurai lords or humble fishermen.

SHINDEN OSANO-WO

HISTORY

This temple to Osano-Wo was established in year 97 by the Isawa Calendar shortly after Osano-Wo was recognized as a Fortune. Several of Osano-Wo's former vassals, led by the monk Umaso, were already at the age of retirement and decided to construct a temple in honor of the Fortune. Umaso decided to



build the temple on the mainland, closer to Osano-Wo's home in Crab lands. After much debate, the Miya offered to let them build their temple on the Plains of Thunder so that every Clan would be able to visit the monastery and pay homage to the fire Kami. The Miya also provided them funds and masons to aid in the construction of the temple. The early temple was crafted out of limestone and is a humble building with three floors. A large maze surrounds the monastery's main entrance and makes it impossible to access unless one knows the proper routes; the monks and other visitors are encouraged to enter through more easily accessed side doors as the maze and front gates are a symbolic part of their training.

Umaso was a skilled bushi and a charismatic leader. Even though he had retired from life as a warrior he refused to let his fighting skills languish. The monks drove off bandits attempting to raid the temple as well as those seeking to prey upon nearby villages or their Miya patrons several times. Many villagers were so grateful that sent their children to Umaso's monastery to learn more of Osano-Wo. Unlike other monasteries, the monks here did not believe that warfare and enlightenment were mutually exclusive. They did not seek out violence, but were quick to strike down anyone who would threaten the temple or their brothers. After a time they even began to patrol the Plains of Thunder to guard them from both bandits and arrogant samurai who would exploit the sacred plains for their own benefit. These monks came to be known as sohei, "warrior-monks," and their reputation as tenacious combatants only grew with the re-telling.

Some would say the sohei truly earned their extraordinary reputation after defeating a band of invading Unicorn, using the terrain and great reach of their axes to their advantage against the cavalry. The Unicorn had sought to move through the Plains of Thunder to attack their enemies beyond. As the Miya had charged the sohei with guarding those lands, the sohei felt little compunction about initiating battle against such aggressive invaders. The Unicorn realized their mistake in trying to use the Plains of the Thunder as a shortcut and saw no advantage to starting a full-scale war with the Brotherhood. Though some within their Clan were affronted, they decided to let the matter rest and simply withdraw rather than provoke another embarrassing and profitless confrontation.

TRADITION

Typically the sohei of Osano-Wo wear heavy coverings of cloth which shroud their face and body make it nearly impossible to recognize a particular individual. Intense scarification and brands to the flesh mark these warriors as the temple's defenders. Those who wish to be forgotten by the rest of the world can find a home in Shinden Osano-Wo's walls. Many of the monastery's inhabitants are hiding from something or running away from famine, war, or enemies from their old life.

The teachers here give prospective students new names, and until their teachers are satisfied they may not choose their own names. Their former lives, no matter how scandalous, hold no meaning here. Criminals who enter the temple seeking to escape punishment are put through a more rigorous training process, as they must earn Osano-Wo's respect and forgiveness. Many acolytes happily go back to whatever punishment awaits them outside the temple walls rather than endure another moment of such torment. Those that do pass the trials are regarded as one who has been reborn in Osano-Wo's flames, eternally a member of the Brotherhood and thus beyond whatever punishment awaited them in their former life.

Magistrates who seek former criminals within the temple's confines find the sohei highly uncooperative. To punish one whom Osano-Wo has chosen without understanding the Fortune's judgment is to insult Osano-Wo. If a magistrate wishes to extract a criminal who has become a sohei all he need do is prove himself to the order — by undergoing the same initiation as his quarry. Otherwise, he can expect the entire order to stand against him, violently if need be, before they allow one of their number to be taken away. Legend has it, a Shinjo magistrate by the name of Ichijo once underwent such initiation, so great was his hatred for the murderer he sought. However, once the ritual was complete, he understood that his judgment was nothing compared to the demands Osano-Wo now placed on the repentant criminal. Wishing the order his best, he forgave his new brother and left him in peace.

TRAINING

The monks of Shinden Osano-Wo receive training in a variety of weapon techniques as well as in some more scholarly pursuits. Patience and cunning are both virtues; a strong man might defeat a weaker enemy but a strong, patient, cunning man can defeat any enemy. Storms constantly besiege the Plains of Thunder so new students are made to sit out in the elements for hours hardening their flesh to not suffer discomfort. After ten years spent in training, their final test to see if they are worthy of being a monk of Osano-Wo is carried out — they must find their way through the maze and exit through the temple's front gates.

While they find their way through the maze older students who have already passed this initiation ambush them and beat them with sticks when they make a wrong turn. Some areas hide geysers of hot steam that erupt unexpectedly. The maze is beset with traps of all kinds, non-lethal for the most part though horrible injuries occur regularly. Blocking the gates, a large iron urn sits over a fire, filled with hot coals. To complete the final stage of the trial they must lift the pot up with their forearms and carry it outside the gates. The process of doing so brands the symbol of Osano-Wo on their chest and forearms, forever marking them as one of temple's initiates.

SENSEI

Shinden Osano-Wo's master is chosen by a vote among the monks at the temple. Once a leader is chosen, as master they must stay at the temple until their death. Many monks turn down leadership of the temple, as they wish to continue their exploration and adventures beyond Shinden Osano-Wo.

The main duty of the temple master is to ensure the students are trained properly and to keep an ear open for the wishes of Osano-Wo. In most cases the Kami is impartial as to what his followers do, but he will on occasion direct his monks towards some work on his behalf.

Ageku, Temple Master of Shinden Osano-Wo

[Fighter 8/Monk 8; Kuni Witch Hunter 2/Monk 3]

Ageku might have never come to the temple had his name not come under suspicion by his Kuni brethren. A talented Witch Hunter, he brought in countless Tainted artifacts and slew numerous maho practitioners. While he was so busy away from his home he did not notice the evidence of his wife playing with darker powers. One day he came home only to find his family and several of his brother Witch Hunters dead. His wife was poised over the fallen, bloodied hands frantically working some dark magic to hide the truth from him. He quickly dispatched her, but the damage was done. His Kuni

masters believed that he should have seen the signs in his own home and they no longer trusted him to perform his duties. Shamed, he left Crab lands and found his way to Shinden Osano-Wo. He proved himself a diligent pupil and was a great favorite of the temple's former master. Upon the master's death he was made the new master of Shinden Osano-Wo. He has found peace in service of the Thunderer, and has no wish to leave the temple's walls again so this suits him admirably.

NEW MECHANICS

TENSHIDO (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

For centuries the monks of the Mikokami order have borrowed the martial arts of other clans and used a mixed collection of styles and techniques. Within a single sect one could expect over a dozen martial arts would be taught. Larger monasteries that housed former warriors could effectively continue teaching pupils the more advanced aspects of martial arts, while the smaller monasteries were sometimes forced to have little to no training due to an unskillful following.

Some of the monks who revered the more commonly worshipped Fortunes such as Osano-Wo looked down upon their more pacifistic brethren with disdain. The followers of other Fortunes such as Inari who attracted former farmers and peasants could not match their monks fighting prowess. The more militant orders of monks often questioned the fighting prowess of monks trained in monasteries devoted to more peaceful deities. While Osano-Wo's followers agreed that peace was preferable to violence, and that complete pacifism would work in a nonviolent world, wouldn't it be better to be able to defend yourself against attacks that were sure to come?

As brash as the Osano-Wo monks were, many of the other orders began to see that these words were not entirely without merit. Many mikokami monks began to question their ability to defend the monasteries they fought so hard to build. They had to admit that their ill-trained acolytes would likely fare poorly should a temple be attacked by bandits or Shadowlands creatures. While it was wise to follow the advice of their brethren, most found the idea of learning the arts of combat extremely distasteful — violence would only beget more violence. Many of the techniques espoused by the Great Clans were too violent for them to use in good conscience.

A young acolyte of Souin Kureta named Ihara was one of those who espoused the belief that aggression detracted from the pursuit of enlightenment and the service of the kami. He also agreed that those in service to the Fortunes should not be helpless in their own defense. If they devoted themselves to learning martial arts they would be promoting violence. If they allowed themselves to be incapable of defending themselves they left themselves defenseless. Ihara realized that no answers were going to be found within the monastery's walls. If he left the monastery he might be able to find the answer, and perhaps he might discover a way to find a compromise between the two dilemmas.

During his time away from the monastery Ihara observed how the kami interacted with mankind on a daily basis and how the elements interacted with each other. With closer

examination their patterns of movement could be discerned and even emulated. The one key factor common to all the elements was that they were in constant motion, even the earth moved in its ponderous way. He also traveled to several martial arts dojo, offering to work as a servant while he observed the students. He found no answer in one single technique, but saw that each style had a selection of moves intended to avoid aggression or harmlessly incapacitate an attacker. The foundations for a new martial art founded on the philosophies of pacifism took root in his mind. This new art would forego the standard offensive punches and kicks and instead focus on throws, and redirection of force. He integrated the lesson of the kami by always moving and never presenting a still target. To test his theories he practiced his maneuvers against the students of the households he served in friendly matches. As the sensei would watch him, prize student after student would feel obligated to challenge Ihara for the honor of his school. Though Ihara always saw the flaws in the sensei's technique, he would always allow the sensei to defeat him, thus leaving the school's honor intact. In this way he learned the strengths of every style and left an impression on those he faced, while making no enemies. After twenty years of practice, contemplation, and testing his new martial art against several dojo, he felt ready to return home.



When Ihara returned to his brothers and sisters in Souin Kureta, he explained how the art was to function and demonstrated the basic kata that lay at its foundation. Many of his peers viewed his new technique with skepticism, failing to see how any martial art could not encourage violence. To prove the validity of his new martial art, Ihara demonstrated his art against several Osano-Wo monks. Every challenger met with the same result: Ihara turned their attacks back on them and inflicted the same amount of damage upon them and incapacitated them without harm.

He explained that though the new fighting technique was effective, it was virtually impossible to instigate aggression using his maneuvers. They would no longer have to worry about bandits or ruffians and they would be able to defend themselves should the need arise. Even the monks of Osano-Wo acknowledged it was an effective means of defense. Souin Kureta located in the Great Crater is acknowledged to contain the best teachers of tenshido, even after its creator has passed on. Tenshido is practiced by many of the mikokami who serve Inari and the nameless Fortunes.



STYLE

Tenshido is a martial art focused on movement. It is also a purely non-offensive fighting technique and is for the most part only useful for self-defense. Joint locks and throws are commonly used. While a large emphasis is on unarmed combat, tenshido does train acolytes in the use of weapons such as staves. The underlying principle for tenshido always remains the same: Violence is turned back upon its creator.

PURPOSE

A martial artist trained in tenshido should only use it for self-defense. Some students of tenshido mix the defensive maneuvers with attacks from other styles, inviting a counter-attack so that they may disable the attacker with a tenshido defense. Tenshido sensei frown upon this practice, and refuse to teach those with a reputation for such brash behavior.

TRAINING

A large part of tenshido training is teaching self-awareness and increasing one's powers of observation. Many psychological and physical patterns in behavior are altered and realigned to allow the artist to observe what is going on before reacting by instinct. Every movement is thought out, whether it is based on using centrifugal force or the precise placement of a foot or hand on a foe. Students are encouraged to aid one another in progressing further in skill in competitions, even surpassing their fellow pupils, is discouraged. A student does not truly succeed unless his brethren succeed with him.

When a partner is not available, students practice kata on their own which is highly beneficial as many of the moves if used against a partner might injure them. This enables them to perfect the forms of tenshido and allows them to observe how their bodies move. Repetitive action also allows these maneuvers to be performed with the merest effort. After the forms are mastered each pupil begins to understand how they can be used in defending against an attacker.

TENSHIDO MECHANICS

NOVICE

The novice begins to learn the basics of tenshido defense.

Tenshido Novice [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Wis 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: Any time an opponent charges you, you may make an opposed attack roll vs. their attack roll. If your attack roll is higher, their attack is canceled and they continue moving ten feet past you or to the extent of their movement, whichever is less. If they invite an attack of opportunity from you for this movement, you may only use this attack for a trip or grapple attempt.

Tenshido Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Tenshido (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (4 points), Soft-Hearted (2 points)

Any time an opponent makes a full attack against you, you may make a contested attack roll. If your attack roll is higher, their attack is canceled and they continue moving ten feet past you. The Tenshido skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

INTERMEDIATE

The student has learned to resist most instinctual responses, honing practiced maneuvers in the place of instinct.

Tenshido Intermediate [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Wis. 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tenshido Novice.

Benefit: You gain a +2 attack bonus on any attacks that deal no damage (such as trip attacks, disarm attacks, bull rushes, and grapples) or on attacks that deal only subdual damage.

Tenshido Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Tenshido (3 ranks)

Cost: 16 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (8 points), Soft-Hearted (4 points)

When making a melee attack, you may gain a number of Free Raises equal up to your Strength. Any damage rolls that result from this attack roll a number of fewer dice equal to your Strength. You may not use Free Raises gained from this ability to increase damage, nor make any Raises for damage (free or otherwise) on this attack.

ADVANCED

All of the basics precepts of tenshido have been mastered and the pupil creates their own variants to the basics of form.

Tenshido Advanced [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, Wis. 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tenshido Novice, Tenshido Intermediate.

Benefit: If you have readied an attack action in response to an opponent's melee attack against you and you use this attack action to make a trip attack, you gain a +4 bonus to your attack roll and a +4 bonus to your Strength check to trip your opponent.

Tenshido Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Tenshido (5 ranks)

Cost: 24 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (12 points), Soft-Hearted (6 points)

If your initiative total is higher than an opponent's, you may delay your action until they attempt a melee attack against you. If they attempt to attack you in melee, you may attack first with two Free Raises, but may not perform an attack that deals direct damage (only throws, grapples, disarm attempts, etc). You must select a specific opponent when you choose to use this ability, and cannot switch to a new opponent until your next turn.

EXPERT

When fully prepared, the expert in tenshido is almost impossible to harm in battle, as he seems to evade all attacks.

Tenshido Expert [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Wis. 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tenshido Novice, Tenshido

Intermediate, Tenshido Advanced.

Benefit: When performing the total defense maneuver, you may select a single opponent. You are considered to have readied an attack against this opponent's next melee attack against you until your next turn. You may use this attack only for trip and grapple attempts.

Tenshido Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Tenshido (7 ranks)

Cost: 32 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (16 points), Soft-Hearted (8 points)

Whenever you are attacked, you may spend a Void Point to make a contested Perception check against your attacker. If you succeed, the attack automatically misses and you gain a free Raise on your next grapple related roll against that opponent.

MASTER

As one with the elements, the tenshido is completely centered and focused. He can topple the strongest opponents without leaving permanent damage.

Tenshido Master [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +9, Wis. 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Tenshido Novice, Tenshido Intermediate, Tenshido Advanced, Tenshido Expert.

Benefit: Any time you successfully trip an opponent they must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your Wisdom modifier + 1/2 your character level) or suffer two points of temporary Dexterity damage. Unlike normal Dexterity damage, this damage heals at the rate of one point per hour.

Tenshido Master

Required Specialized Skill: Tenshido (9 ranks)

Cost: 14 points

Cost Reductions: Monk (20 points), Soft-Hearted (10 points)

Any time you successfully throw an opponent they must make an Earth roll vs. your Agility $\times 5$. If they fail this roll, their Reflexes are reduced by one. If their Reflexes are reduced to zero, they are rendered unconscious until they have at least one Reflexes. Lost Reflex ranks return at the rate of one per hour. A Path to Inner Peace spell cast specifically for this purpose will also restore one rank of Reflexes, plus one per Raise.

NEW ADVANTAGES

FRIEND OF THE AIR KAMI

The spirits of the air smile on you and help you in all your endeavors. They will also speak with you on occasion and tell you the secrets they have learned on their travels.

FRIEND OF THE AIR KAMI [GENERAL]

Prerequisite: Monk or Inkyo Level 1+

Benefit: You gain the spell-like ability to use *commune with elements* but are limited to communicating with only

air spirits. You may use this up to three times a day, as a shugenja of your character level. You gain a +2 to all Diplomacy skill checks.

**FRIEND OF THE AIR KAMI
(5 POINT ADVANTAGE)**

You receive on free Raise on all social rolls involving Awareness. As per the shugenja spell, Commune, you can communicate with the air kami, as many times a day as your Air Ring.

**FRIEND OF THE
EARTH KAMI**

The soft voices of earth spirits lull you to sleep every night and you gather strength from knowing that the earth beneath your feet always rises up to meet you.

FRIEND OF THE EARTH KAMI (GENERAL)

Prerequisite: Monk or Inkyo Level 1+

Benefit: You gain the spell-like ability to use *commune with elements* but are limited to communicating with only earth spirits. You may use this up to three times a day, as a shugenja of your character level. You gain a +1 bonus to all Will saving throws.

**FRIEND OF THE EARTH KAMI
(5 POINT ADVANTAGE)**

You receive on free Raise on all Willpower rolls. As per the shugenja spell, Commune, you can communicate with the earth kami, as many times a day as your Earth Ring.

FRIEND OF THE FIRE KAMI

Many people have learned to fear fire, but you have always found it to be a warm friend that refuses to harm you.

FRIEND OF THE FIRE KAMI (GENERAL)

Prerequisite: Monk or Inkyo Level 1+

Benefit: You gain the spell-like ability to use *commune with elements* but are limited to communicating with only fire spirits. You may use this up to three times a day. You receive damage reduction 10 vs. all non-magical fire.

**FRIEND OF THE FIRE KAMI
(5 POINT ADVANTAGE)**

As per the shugenja spell, Commune, you can communicate with the fire kami as many times a day as your Fire Ring. Attacks involving non-magical fire roll and keep one less damage die.

**FRIEND OF THE
WATER KAMI**

Whenever you swim in a stream or river you are buoyed from drowning by the spirits within. They also delight in talking to you and need little encouragement to give you advice.

FRIEND OF THE WATER KAMI (GENERAL)

Prerequisite: Monk or Inkyo Level 1+

Benefit: You gain the spell-like ability to use *commune with elements* but are limited to communicating with only water elementals. You may use this up to three times a day, as a shugenja of your character level. You gain a swim speed of 20 feet.

**FRIEND OF THE WATER KAMI
(5 POINT ADVANTAGE)**

As per the shugenja spell, Commune, you can communicate with the water kami, as many times a day as your Water Ring. You gain three Free Raises on all rolls involving swimming.

CHAPTER FIVE:

MONKS IN THE GREAT CLANS

THE ASAKO HENSHIN

Asako Toshi held his hand against the candle's fire, palm down, and closed his eyes. The feeling of the flame was familiar to him, even soothing. No smoke emanated from the place where the fire touched the Asako daimyo's skin. He felt no pain.

Beside him, Toshi's student watched carefully. Toroko studied her sensei as he had taught her — not by seeing with her eyes but by perceiving how the elemental kami danced and moved around and through him. She could see the fire spirits coiling around Toshi's hand but not burning their way into his skin the way they normally would. Instead, the kami rolled and pressed against his hand affectionately, almost curiously.

"Do you see?" the Asako lord asked quietly, opening his eyes and looking at Toroko. "We do not command the kami, nor do we seek to manipulate them," Toshi continued, looking down at the fire as if it were a favored child. "They are our friends," he said quietly, smiling. "And if we are fortunate, they may one day be our kin."

Toroko nodded silently, unwilling to break the serenity of the scene before her.

The followers of a philosophy as old as the Tao, the Asako Henshin are a sect of mystics dedicated to unlocking the latent potential in the human soul. Their origins begin with Lady Asako, one of Shiba's closest friends and advisors. When Shiba revealed the Path of Man to her, the means by which a mortal can become a Fortune, she in turn taught it

to a select few of her followers. Since that time, the Asako have held what is possibly the greatest secret in the mortal realm while the Isawa attempt to pry the forbidden knowledge from them.

Throughout the generations, the Asako family has come to share many traits with their founder, becoming some of the finest librarians and healers in Rokugan. The Asahina and Seppun respect the Asako family's extensive knowledge of anatomy and medicine. Though they are considered a shugenja family, the Asako have an equal number of monks, mostly henshin. Most casual observers don't see a great deal of difference between the philosophies and practices of a henshin and a Brotherhood monk. The differences seem subtle, amounting to slightly different meditation practices and a few unusual sutra, but the henshin are quick to point out that they are an entirely unique order (though they don't explain why).

Unlike many monks, the Asako are born of noble status. The balance between monastic sensibilities and a samurai's responsibilities is a difficult path, but one the Asako family has learned to tread gracefully. The few cities the Asako control are well cared for and nearly free of crime and poverty. Though the Asako, like all Phoenix families, are extremely wealthy, nearly all of their money goes towards maintaining their cities and temples. Few would be able to distinguish an Asako noble from an ascetic monk, though Asako cities are immediately recognizable by their pristine cleanliness and magnificence. During the Clan Wars, the mighty Yoritomo, fighting his way through Phoenix lands, refused to attack Kyuden Asako for fear of disrupting its magnificence.

Each successive generation of Asako gives rise to a new generation of henshin, all of whom quietly steer outsiders down the Path of Man, in the direction of complete harmony with the universe. For an Asako, a subtle change is enough — enlightenment cannot and should not be gained in one lifetime. Before enlightenment can truly be met with, a soul must accumulate sufficient wisdom to be reborn as an Asako. Even then, it may require many lifetimes before one understands the mysteries that make up their legacy.

SHRINE OF THE PATH

HISTORY

The Shrine of the Path is a hidden temple located just south of Road's End Village, the undisclosed stronghold of the Asako henshin. There is nothing remarkable about the shrine, though its recent construction in and of itself makes it unusual in the Phoenix lands where most holy sites have histories that stretch back for hundreds of years.

The purpose of the shrine was for the henshin of Road's End Village to have an outlet to interact with the outside world. Though it had been traditionally believed that the masters were too far beyond their mortal lives to safely interact with the world and, such delusions have been since dispelled by Asako Toshi. The hidden henshin of the small village could not simply appear from nowhere without raising an eyebrow or two, so it was instead decided that a shrine would be created to house the ancient and wise Asako monks. In the shrine, they are hardly out of place, and visitors are often kept company by at least one of the formerly-isolated henshin for the duration of their stay.

TRADITION

Though the purpose of the Shrine of the Path is effectively to bring the mortal world to Road's End Village, it is otherwise a typical Asako shrine where the teachings of Asako, Shiba, Isawa, and Shinsei are studied in the serene setting. There is little emphasis placed on physical labor, though it is not frowned upon, either. The Asako recognize and respect that each mortal soul is perfectly unique, and while they all must move along the same Path, everyone moves at a different speed. There are few peasants even remotely close to the nearly abandoned village, so practically all labor that is performed both in and around the shrine is performed by the monks.

Because of the unique nature of the shrine's masters, there is little in the way of bickering among the monks. Those who lead the monks are immortals that have lived for decades or even centuries, and their wisdom is unimaginable. Reverence for one's elders is expected when the older members of the temple are practically Fortunes in their own right, but this also means that youthful monks have a great deal of difficulty making their voices heard.

TRAINING

Studies of the Tao, the New Tao, Asako's Path, and nearly every major work of philosophy continue daily at the Shrine of the Path. Martial arts are part of the daily regimen of physical activity, but only the basic soft arts that stress maintaining

coordination and proper health over any sort of real combat ability. Some of the henshin have extensive knowledge of combat techniques (simply because they've lived so long they've picked up a few things), and lead small groups in lessons on a regular basis.

SENSEI

There is no one master of the Shrine of the Path, as a dozen of its residents are immortal henshin with extraordinary wisdom. Those who have nearly accomplished the Path are recognized for what they are and given equal standing with their peers. These ageless monks rule as a council, directing not only the functions of the temple, but extending their council and wisdom to the Asako outside the shrine.

STUDENT OF THE PATH

Those that study at the Shrine of the Path have the honor of studying with the timeless henshin masters that have nearly completed their journey along the Path of Man. Many such henshin who remain in the Shrine do so of their free will, forsaking personal advancement along the Path in order to guide those who travel the Path alongside them.

STUDENT OF THE PATH [PHOENIX KIHOU]

Prerequisites: Depths of the Void, Void Use, Wis 13+, Int 13+

Benefit: As a student of the immortal henshin masters, you have learned to touch the greater whole of the universe with your own spirit. Your Elements are balanced in a way that makes them unshakable to most outside influences. You may spend any number of Void Points to heal an equal amount of ability score damage.

STUDENT OF THE PATH

(7 POINT ADVANTAGE)

As a student of the immortal henshin masters, you have learned to touch the greater whole of the universe with your own spirit. Your Elements are balanced in a way that makes them unshakable to most outside influence. Whenever you make a Contested Roll using a Trait, you may spend a Void Point to substitute the Trait in question with the accompanying Trait of the same Ring. For example, if you have a Perception of 5 and a Strength of 3 and had to make a Contested Strength roll, you could roll five dice instead of the three you normally would.

THE ASAHINA FAMILY

Cherry blossoms drifted to the ground, carried softly by the crisp spring breeze. Numerous Asahina shugenja and monks sat upon the ground all throughout the grove, lost in silent meditation as the delicate flowers showered everything in a silent rain of color. Daidou Itoru attempted to move quietly through the trees, but he felt as clumsy as an ox amid such tranquility. He frowned at this thought and picked up his pace.

A woman sat near the grove's center, her simple blue kimono covered with the delicate petals. Itoru waited quietly for several moments before finally working up the courage to speak. "Excuse me, Barako sama," he said quietly.

The sensei opened her eyes and smiled slightly. "Yes, Daidoji-san. What brings you to here?"

"Forgive my intrusion, my lady, but I bring a message from my lord Kikaze. He impressed upon me to deliver it with utmost haste."

Barako's smile faded as her eyes filled with sadness. "Why have you brought this insult before me?"

Itoru drew back in horror. "My lord Kikaze-sama is an honorable man..." he began defensively.

"I do not mean your lord's message," Barako corrected gently. She pointed to his obi, where his daisko rested. "I mean the steel you carry. Why have you brought it into this sacred place?"

Itoru frowned. "It is my duty to my lord to carry the blades he has given me at all times."

"And it is my duty to my lord," Barako offered, "to remember that conflict erodes our spirit." She smiled sadly. "Leave this place. I will receive you upon my return to the monastery, providing you find a suitable place to store your weapons."

The Asahina family uniquely blends both Crane and Phoenix traditions which make up the family's unique ancestry. The original Asahina was a warrior, transformed by his experiences of conflict to a man of peace. The Asahina family reflects his experiences, as a family of pacifists who remain completely attuned to the heavy price of war. The family as a whole eschews the use of weapons of any kind. They are, by and large, a family of shugenja who embrace a range of monastic traditions.

The average Asahina samurai begins their instruction in the Tao's wisdom years before their gempukku ceremony. They are ascetics by Crane standards, although the average monk would consider his lifestyle opulent. Their daily lives are filled with meditation, contemplation, study, and ritual. The primary difference between their lifestyle and that of a traditional monk is that the Asahina divide their time between the Tao and implementing this same wisdom with their interactions with the kami. The secrets unlocked by Isawa Asahina allow the family to create new and unique magical practices, including but not limited to their creation of tsangusuri, simple nemuranai that can be used for a single magical effect. The Asahina consider this practice far more sophisticated than the imprisonment of kami in more permanent nemuranai.

Others Crane look upon the Asahina with curiosity and not a little befuddlement. Their practices are not what is expected of other samurai families, yet their valuable contributions to the clan cannot be denied. Most are content to leave the Asahina to their own devices, appreciating their assets and not dwelling upon their peculiarities. Other clans are not as forgiving, however, and many more militant families, particularly the Matsu, Hida, Moto and the like, have disparaging opinions of the family. Among other shugenja families, the Asahina are viewed as somewhat eccentric, but not without a unique wisdom.

SHIRO HANAMIDOKI

Shiro Hanamidoki is a quiet, unassuming castle nestled amid plains and hills in the southern Asahina provinces. The land surrounding it is not particularly arable, and has not been farmed for centuries, with Crane leaders placing more emphasis on the fertile lands elsewhere in the clan's holdings. With few precious resources and no immediately accessible cities or even large villages, Shiro Hanamidoki can go for months on end with no visitors or disturbances of any sort. This is, to the Asahina, an ideal situation.

Shiro Hanamidoki takes its name from the small grove of cherry trees near the castle. While they are perhaps not as beautiful as those found in Unicorn lands, they are still an exquisite sight to behold. Many Asahina meditate beneath the trees each day, and in the springtime when the blossoms are in full bloom, the entire castle's population can be found there, communing with nature and the kami in an extraordinary display of harmony.

Unlike most castles, there are no heimin or eta servants at Shiro



Hanamidoki. There are a small number of monks who live side-by-side with the Asahina, and most simple housecleaning tasks that would normally be performed by servants are taken care of by the Asahina. They consider this a means of remaining humble and remembering that every man is equal in the bigger picture. The most unsavory tasks, those that would normally be dealt with by eta, are performed by monks, just as would be the case in any true monastery. The Asahina do not look upon their brother monks with distaste for this, however, but rather consider it a valuable service, and if any should be rendered impure by their labors, finding a priest to supply a blessing is easy.

TRADITIONS

The entire day at Shiro Hanamidoki is a carefully orchestrated routine that has been maintained for centuries. The shugenja and monks assemble at sunrise each morning for a joint ritual where the highest-ranking shugenja in attendance leads a joint prayer. This particular ritual varies with the topics of the day, but most recently the topics tend toward general prayers for wisdom and peace. The ritual's length varies somewhat, but tends to last between an hour and two hours depending upon how concerned the family's leaders are with current events.

Following the morning ritual, the assembled denizens are released for unsupervised activities. Both monks and shugenja go about their assigned chores, tasks that they refer to as their duty. As in a monastery, higher-ranking members tend to have fewer assigned tasks so that they may devote more time to personal study and the necessary bureaucratic tasks that even the Asahina cannot avoid indefinitely. Lower ranking shugenja complete their tasks and spend the remainder of the morning in independent study, furthering their education under the careful guidance of wise and venerable sensei. Lower-ranking monks spend the hours following the completion of their chores in martial training, an activity that the Asahina eschew but accept as a necessary corollary to a monk's training in the harmony of mind and body.

TRAINING

Those who study at Shiro Hanamidoki study the Tao first and foremost. Shinsei's wisdom is the governing authority at the castle, and has forever been the advisor closest to the governor's heart. It is the common link that unites the shugenja with their monastic brothers, and which helps them understand true universal harmony, which mortal man has muddled with reckless passions and heated hearts.

Young shugenja are not typically present in any great number at Shiro Hanamidoki. The family prefers to place more experienced men and women within the castle, for in addition to its status as a center of harmony and contemplation, the castle is also a great center of learning and research for the family. Research and innovation are not less supported than a thorough grounding in the Tao. The castle contains a vast library that the shugenja use extensively each day in an attempt to discover new resources for the family or to find new means of applying the Tao's wisdom in the everyday world.

The remainder of any given day at the castle consists of periods of independent study and organized rituals. There are multiple smaller shrines throughout the castle in addition to the primary one, and high-ranking shugenja may request the use of such rooms for whatever purpose they deem appropriate. There is always at least one that is filled with shugenja and monks praying to support the Emperor.

SENSEI

The term sensei applies only marginally to the lord of Shiro Hanamidoki, for the castle is administrated very much in the same manner as a traditional monastery. The position has traditionally been filled with philosophers, theologians, and nurturers. Many among the Doji and Kakita believe this position to be for those who are too weak to be of other use to the family, but Asahina leaders view Shiro Hanamidoki as a pillar of their family's spiritual development, and entrust it only to those who show the proper reverence for all they hold dear.

Asahina Barako, Mistress of Shiro Hanamidoki [Shugenja 14; Asahina Shugenja 4]

Once, years ago, Barako was among the more militant members of her family. She advocated that the Crane commit all their resources to destroying the Shadowlands, including the Asahina's full might, a theory only reluctantly accepted by the rest of her order. Sekawa himself is said to have condemned her outlook in the past as too extreme. If true, then Barako must have been violent indeed.

What happened to change Barako's outlook on life is unknown, but the change is dramatic. She recanted her violent ways and took up the Tao new fervor. Her newfound devotion and compassion do not go unnoticed, and she was selected to manage Shiro Hanamidoki just over a year ago. During that time, she taught her students much concerning the power of peace and good will, and guides the Asahina's future with a caring hand.

NOTABLE RESIDENTS

Those who dwell at Shiro Hanamidoki rarely go on to achieve great notoriety or fame. These are not things upon which the Asahina place much value, and those who enjoy a quiet contemplative life certainly do not seek glory. Nevertheless, the enlightened environment within the castle gives rise to more than one individual who has made their mark upon the family, and the family's leaders often look to those who dwell here for signs of future greatness.

Asahina Itoeko [Shugenja 8; Asahina Shugenja 2]

Despite her relative youth, Itoeko has gained some degree of notoriety among her family due to her gift for divination. The timid young woman has had a number of visions during her time at Shiro Hanamidoki, some of which have come to pass. That the accuracy of her visions is imperfect results in many dismissing her as a madwoman, but a few proclaim her as a seer and a prophet. Time will tell which characterization proves true.

NEW MECHANICS

BROTHER OF BLOSSOMS (CRANE KIHOU)

Your training has granted you the ability to focus your energies on a single task with perfect clarity and composure.

Prerequisites: Depths of the Void, Void Use, Concentrate (4 ranks).

Benefit: Any time you take 20 on a skill roll, you receive a +10 Void bonus to that roll.

BROTHER OF BLOSSOMS (5 POINTS, CRANE ONLY)

You gain a Free Raise on any skill roll for every minute you spend preparing for the skill roll, up to a maximum number of Free Raises equal to your Void Ring. This ability may not be used in combat.

THE THREE ORDERS

The forest was silent today. In a small clearing, Togashi Tatsuji moved easily from one form into the next, each movement a measure of practiced grace and quiet strength. The tattooed monk stood on one leg in a rising crane stance, then fluidly fell forward into a roll and came up in a crouch, arms held low to each side. He bowed his head, eyes closed, focusing his thoughts. The crimson dragon painted across his shoulders shimmered and twisted in the light. Tatsuji threw back his head and released the focused energy with a loud cry. A billowing cloud of red fire erupted from his mouth, swirling in the shape of a soaring dragon before vanishing on the wind.

Tatsuji smiled slightly, noting the surprised cry from the edge of the tree line.

"Well?" he called out expectantly. "That was what you wanted to see, yes? Was it everything you hoped?"

There was no reply.

Tatsuji smiled wryly. "No sense in pretending you are not there," he said. "I have known you were following me since we left the village." The young monk looked back over one shoulder, his eyes shining a pale golden color.

A peasant girl stepped out from behind a tree. She was young, perhaps only a few years younger than Tatsuji. She was dressed in simple garments, plain but well kept. Her hair was tied back, to be out of the way while she worked her lord's fields. She stared at Tatsuji with undisguised awe for a moment, then quickly bowed her head.

"What trick shall I do next?" Tatsuji asked, folding his arms across his thick chest. "Shall I run across the Empire and fetch you a flower from the Emperor's garden? Shall I pull a tree from the earth by its roots? Shall I summon your grandfather's spirit so you might ask him a question? I can do all these things, you know... or so the stories say. I never really tried that last one."

The girl looked up with a shy smile. "I am sorry if I offended you, *uma*," she replied. "I have never seen a true tattooed monk before, and I merely wondered..." she trailed off quietly.

"Wondered if our magic was as powerful as the stories say?" he asked. He sat cross-legged on a stump, watching the young girl curiously. "Or perhaps you were going to ask if you could have a tattoo? I hear we do that, you know. We give magical tattoos to everyone we meet, like a farmer giving feed to his chickens. Or so I hear, though I've never tried that either."

"No," she said with a laugh. "I was wondering why you were here."

"Oh?" Tatsuji replied. "Where should I be?"

"I don't know," she replied. "This place is very far from your homeland, isn't it?"

Tatsuji shrugged. "Home doesn't need me," he said. "This place needs me more."

"Why do you say that?" she asked.

"This place has unanswered questions," Tatsuji replied, rising from his stump and, with a single deft leap, alighting on the branch of a nearby tree. "This place has mysteries unanswered."

The girl looked up at him with an amused grin. "This is just a boring farmer's village," she said. "There are no questions here."

"There are plenty of questions here," he replied, sitting back upon his branch and kicking his legs out along its length. "Yours, for one."

"Fair enough," she said, "but this place has no mysteries."

"It doesn't?" he asked, surprised. "Then I suppose finding them shall be the first mystery."

The girl laughed.

"This is the way of my order," Tatsuji said with a serene smile. "We help others on the path to their destiny, and in so doing we find our way. If I have come here, then this place must be a part of my destiny. If you have come to me, then you are a part as well. I can no more abandon you, or fail to guide you, then I could fail to guide myself. Do you understand?"

"No," she said with a laugh.

"Good," Tatsuji answered with a smirk. "Then perhaps you can help me understand as you do."

THE THREE ORDERS OF THE DRAGON

Of all the monastic orders in the Empire, perhaps none are quite as legendary as the Three Orders of the Dragon Clan. The Three Orders are well known for their magical tattoos, their peculiar behavior, and their penchant for turning up in the most unlikely places. Outside the Dragon Clan, and even within it, few truly understand who these tattooed monks are or why they do what they do. While these monks never fail to explain themselves to curious outsiders, their enigmatic logic usually serves only to cause greater confusion. These strange souls seek enlightenment not only for themselves but also for those around them, causing others to consider the truth of their own existence as they ponder the monks' strange words and behavior.

All who enter the three orders share one thing — their trademark tattoos. These tattoos bear powerful magic, but that magic is unfocused until the moment the tattoos appear on the body. Each tattoo is an expression of some piece of its wearer's soul, some facet of his or her own personality, some fundamental mystery of their existence that must be overcome before enlightenment can be reached. Though there are a few common patterns that appear on many tattooed monks, no two individuals are quite the same. It is not uncommon for a tattooed monk with a unique destiny to appear with a tattoo that has never been seen before, or to draw upon the power of the tattoo magic in a heretofore unknown manner.

For many centuries there was only a single order of tattooed monks — the order of *ise zumi*, also known as the Togashi family. Following Togashi Yokuni's death and the Dragon Thunder Hitomi's ascension to Dragon Clan Champion, the monks were forced to face some very real philosophical differences within their order. While some wished to follow Togashi Yokuni's example by passively guiding the Empire's destiny, others embraced Hitomi's more active, aggressive policies.

For a group such as the *ise zumi*, where emotion and personality tends to take very real physical form due to the power of their tattoos — these differences took a very real physical form, as Hitomi's followers developed tattoos of a more violent and destructive nature. The mad tattooed man Kokuji capitalized on the growing rift within the tattooed monks; ingratiating himself to Hitomi, he encouraged her to demand personal fealty from the *ise zumi* and begin a purge of all those who followed Togashi's 'outmoded' philosophies.

THE THREE ORDERS

While they are treated in brief detail here, a great deal more information regarding tattooed monk characters, including specific mechanics for *ise zumi*, *kikaze zumi*, and *tsurai zumi*, can be found in *Secrets of the Dragon*.

Many Togashi who refused to change their ways were slain by Kokujin and Hitomi's other loyalists. Togashi Yokuni's son, Hoshi, refused to swear fealty and led many other former Togashi into self-imposed exile. They found refuge in the temples of the Brotherhood.

Many of the Shintao monks became intrigued by the Togashi philosophy, and offered to aid Hoshi in his quest to claim leadership of the Dragon Clan. Hoshi granted many of these monks tattoos, but the results were not what he expected. These tattooed monks came to embody a third philosophy — one of balance and harmony. Learning from his Brotherhood allies, Hoshi realized that a campaign of violent conflict would not make the Dragon Clan whole again. Hitomi's followers may have been set on a false path by Kokujin, but to confront them with violence would only compound the harm done.

When Hitomi eventually confronted Hoshi again, she challenged him to single combat. Hoshi accepted, but allowed Hitomi to win the duel. When Hitomi realized that she had been prepared to kill the son of her clan's founder at the behest of a deranged outcast, she began to see the mistakes that had been made. Kokujin fled from the lands of the Dragon, and Hoshi's exiled followers were allowed to return and take back the Togashi name.

Hoshi knew that the Togashi, and Hitomi monks would never be able to peacefully coexist in a single order again. There was too much water under the bridge, the differences in their philosophy were too great. Rather than force one side to adapt to the other ways, Hoshi invited the Brotherhood monks who had accepted his tattoos to live among the Dragon Clan as a third order. The Order of Hoshi would stand as a balance between Togashi and Hitomi, the medium between contemplation and aggression, serenity and passion.

The Dragon Clan was whole once more.

THE THREE ORDERS AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF SHINSEI

While the Three Orders call themselves monks, and seem to technically be members of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, they also stand apart from the rest of the Brotherhood. Unlike other Shintao monks, the Three Orders do offer their fealty toward a single clan. Though technically monks, many members of the Three Orders openly pursue the political interests of the Dragon Clan, and continue to serve in positions usually reserved for samurai.

Though not all tattooed monks were born samurai, members of the Three Orders are afforded the same respect and responsibilities as samurai within the Dragon Clan. It is an arrangement that many outside the Dragon fail to understand. Tattooed monks encountered outside their homeland are met with a wide range of reactions ranging from open disgust to total confusion, as many are uncertain whether to treat them as samurai or monks.

The Brotherhood regards the Three Orders with equally mixed feelings. Though *ise zumi* have existed during the time of the original Togashi, some of the more traditional sects frown upon the tattooed monks for their bizarre behavior and political affiliations. In contrast, other orders of the Brotherhood regard the Three Orders with quiet awe — after all, these men and women follow a path that allows them to be a part of the world rather than removing themselves from it. They are more than mere souls seeking the path of enlightenment; they are guides who lead others on the path even as they walk it.

NEW THREE ORDERS MECHANICS

Rules for playing members of the Three Orders are presented in full in *Secrets of the Dragon*. The following Favors are character options intended for experienced *ise zumi*, *kikaze zumi*, or *tsurai zumi* who have proved their heroism time and again and stand as living examples of their order's philosophy.

Only one member of each of the Three Orders possesses a Favor at any given time (default NPCs who are intended to hold these Favors in canon Rokugan are listed in the description of each). There is no way to consciously seek these favors; the divine entities that guide the Three Orders sense such selfish behavior and immediately disqualify any individual who seeks their power for such a purpose.

GM's should be careful in allowing player characters to obtain these Favors — gaining such an ability should always be a major event in the campaign. Hitomi, Togashi, and Hoshi do not give these Favors lightly. A soul who has been touched in such a way can not only count on the unfailing loyalty of his Order, but will also stand out as a beacon for minions of the Shadowlands or Lying Darkness. These entities represent everything the Three Orders stand against, and would stop at nothing to corrupt or destroy an individual blessed with these Favors.

Favors count as feats in the d20 System.TM These can be granted when the player chooses a new feat, or they can replace a previously existing feat of the player's choice. If the Favor is lost, the player may choose a new feat to replace the Favor.

Favors count as Advantages, but have no inherent cost as the player does not choose to obtain them. When they are lost, the character gains nothing to replace them.

GRANTING FAVORS

In keeping with the unpredictable nature of the Three Orders, Favors can be granted at any time, not just when gaining experience. It is always up to the GM to decide when a Favor is granted.

LADY MOON'S FAVOR

Hitomi's motivations are inscrutable. At Times she is cruel and emotionless, at others nurturing and protective. She often bestows her favors upon those who are without fear, who display valor and loyalty despite all adversity.

In canon Rokugan, this Favor is currently bestowed upon Hitomi Reju.

LADY MOON'S FAVOR (DRAGON KIHOU)

Prerequisites: Order of Hitomi Dojo, Void Use

Benefit: You may spend a Void Point to summon Lady Moon's power, suffusing your body in an eerie radiance. For a number of rounds equal to your character level your melee attacks ignore damage reduction for targets with the Shadowlands or Lying Darkness subtypes as if you were wielding a crystal or jade weapon. In addition, your melee attacks damage incorporeal targets with either of these subtypes normally.

destiny. This can force an opponent to re-roll a single attack roll, skill check, or saving throw and keep the less favorable result. This ability may only be used against each opponent once per encounter.

THE ETERNAL DRAGON'S FAVOR

You may spend a Void Point to see a split second into the future and choose the more favorable destiny. This can force an opponent to re-roll a single dice roll (skill roll, opposed roll, damage roll, trait roll) and keep the less favorable result. This ability may only be used against each opponent once per day.

THE CELESTIAL WANDERER'S FAVOR

Those who follow the Celestial Wanderer recognize the importance of extremes, but prefer the middle path. Thus those who Lord Hoshi favors have little difficulty maintaining focus despite adversity. The benefits of this Favor are far more subtle than those of Togashi or Hitomi, but for a truly dedicated tsurai zumi this Favor can be quite powerful.

In canon Rokugan, this Favor is currently bestowed upon Hoshi Wayan. However, Wayan has made little effort to conceal the fact that he no longer desires a life of adventure, and would prefer if Hoshi passed his blessings on to someone a bit younger.

THE CELESTIAL WANDERER'S FAVOR DRAGON KIHOU

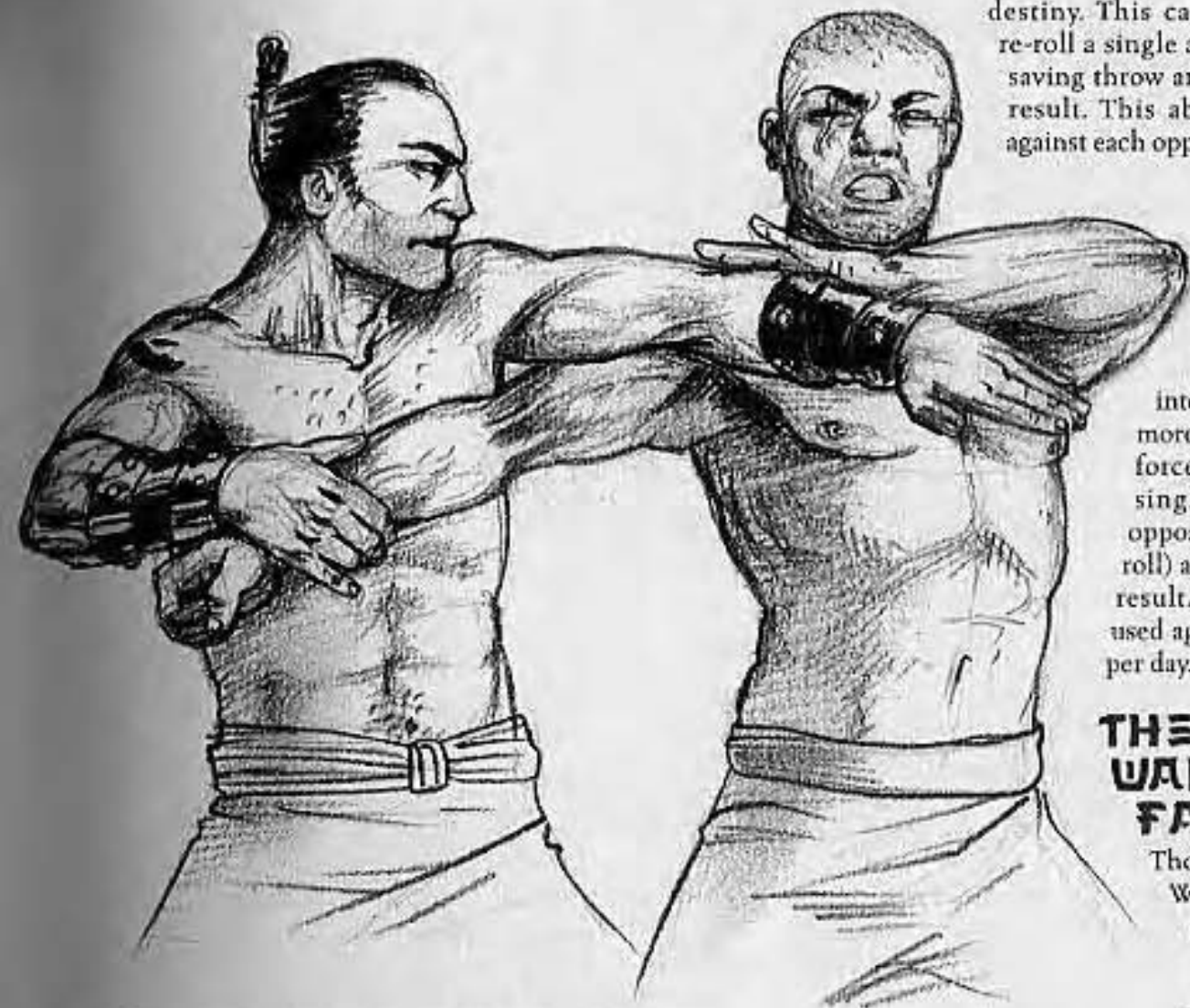
Prerequisites: Order of Hoshi Dojo, Void Use

Benefit: When spending a Void Point to enhance the result of a saving throw, the bonus is equal to your remaining Void Points before the Void Point was spent.

Note: The inkyo's Improved Void Use and Superior Void use abilities, as well as any other effects that increase the bonus offered by spending Void, are added after this ability is factored in.

THE CELESTIAL WANDERER'S FAVOR

Any unfriendly spells targeting you have their TN increased by your remaining Void Points as well as your rank in the opposing element. Any time you spend a Void Point on an contested roll that you did not initiate, you roll and keep two additional dice instead of one.



If you use this feat under the light of the full moon, you also gain a +4 enhancement bonus to all melee attack and damage rolls vs. Shadowlands or Lying Darkness targets.

LADY MOON'S FAVOR

By spending a Void Point, you can suffuse your body in the eerie radiance of Lady Moon. For a number of rounds equal to double your Insight Rank, your melee attacks affect Shadowlands or Lying Darkness corrupted targets as if you attacked with jade or crystal. In addition, you can strike such targets normally if they are incorporeal.

If you use this ability under the light of the full moon, you also roll and keep an extra die on all attack and damage rolls vs. a Shadowlands or Lying Darkness target.

THE ETERNAL DRAGON'S FAVOR

As has always been his way, Togashi rarely exerts his influence upon the mortal world. Though he possessed great knowledge of the future, he only acted upon that knowledge when there was no other choice, as such action inevitably shaped the destiny of all those around him. So it is for those who are blessed with his Favor.

In canon Rokugan, this Favor is currently bestowed upon Togashi Matsuo.

THE ETERNAL DRAGON'S FAVOR DRAGON KIHOU

Prerequisites: Order of Togashi Dojo, Void Use

Benefit: You may spend a Void Point to see a split second into the future and choose the more favorable

WITCH HUNTERS

Yozo ducked into an alley, clutching his chest to catch his breath. Eyes still wide with terror, he peered around the corner. This late at night the streets were silent, empty. Not a soul was to be seen. Believing he had lost his pursuer, the fat old innkeeper sat back against the wall and rested for a moment. A sudden movement in the shadows drew his eye. A ghastly white face with exaggerated red eyebrows and a huge, frowning mouth appeared from the edge of the shadows, surrounded by a shaggy black mane.

"Oni!" Yozo cried out in terror. He rose to his feet and ran for the shadows. A strong hand seized him by the wrist, binding it behind his back. A thick arm wrapped around his throat, tight enough to stifle his cries but not enough to strangle him.

"I am no demon, Yozo-san," a voice whispered, close to his ear. He felt his attacker's hot breath on the back of his neck. "But do not cry out again, or I will be forced to crush your throat."

Yozo nodded rapidly. The grip on his throat loosened. "I am only a poor innkeeper," he babbled quickly. "I have no money for you, nothing of value save my inn, and it is in poor shape."

"How poor, Yozo?" the voice replied. "So poor that you will ask no questions of your guests? So poor that you will turn a blind eye to the rituals they perform in your basement?"

"I did not know they were Bloodspeakers," Yozo said in a shrill voice.

"I never said they were, Yozo," the voice answered. "Is that why you ran from me? Did you think I was some demon they summoned to silence you?"

Yozo nodded.

"You were right," the voice replied. "Their blasphemy has summoned me here. By aiding them you are complicit in their crimes. I am tsukai-sagasu, Yozo-san, do you know what that means?"

"By the Fortunes, a Witch Hunter," the innkeeper replied, visibly quaking in terror now.

"You abandoned the Fortunes' mercy, blasphemer," the voice answered harshly. "Do not call upon them again in my presence."

"Yes, sama," Yozo replied quickly.

"Now tell me how many Bloodspeakers hide in that pit you call an inn," the Witch Hunter said, "and the Fortunes may yet show you mercy for your crimes..."

THE KUNI WITCH HUNTERS

Since its founding, members of the Kuni family have dedicated themselves to understanding the Shadowlands. Early in their history, family members were almost exclusively shugenja. Using the kami's assistance to broaden their perceptions, they plumbed the deepest secrets of the enemy. They used this knowledge to create increasingly powerful forms of magic that might be used as a weapon in the Empire's defense.

This crusade against corruption took a sudden turn in the early sixth century. Soon after the Battle of Stolen Graves it was discovered that Iuchiban's study of maho had begun with the discovery of Kuni Nakanu's. Horrified that their work could be perverted in such a way, the Kuni retreated to their temples to consider what they would do next.

Halting their studies altogether was not an option. The knowledge obtained by Kuni researchers regarding the nature and weaknesses of Shadowlands creatures was too powerful an advantage to merely cast aside. However, it was obvious that something needed to be done. The information the Kuni uncovered could be too easily corrupted. The Kuni themselves were living proof as even the legendary Nakanu was slain by

undead he created in a moment of foolish weakness. Magic was a danger as much as an advantage, for so long as the Kuni could call upon the kami, they could be tempted by foul kansen.

A handful of older Kuni, long since retired to the Brotherhood of Shinsei, stepped forward to offer a solution. The Brotherhood's meditative practices fostered extraordinary self-control and discipline, abilities that could be turned against the Shadowlands. An order of Kuni born without the gift of magic, strengthened by the Brotherhood's meditative focus and martial training, could stand as a vanguard against corruption. These skilled hunters could not only uncover potential tsukai within the Kuni family itself, but could root out blood magic throughout the Empire. And so the tsukai sagasu, Witch Hunters, were born.

As they borrow many of their traditions from the Brotherhood of Shinsei, so do the tsukai-sagasu borrow a number of monastic vows. One vow that most discard, obviously, is a vow of pacifism. Some Witch Hunters retain this vow, though they make exception for any that bear the Shadowlands Taint. Most tsukai-sagasu also take vows of chastity and vows of poverty. When Kuni Utagu stepped forward to become daimyo of the Kuni, the former vow was rescinded in his case so that the family might be an heir. (Ironically he never provided one, though his widow has stepped forward as an able leader of the family.)

In the last few generations, the Kuni have begun to allow shugenja-trained Witch Hunters. This was a major change for the tsukai-sagasu, and one that was considered carefully before being instituted. Those Witch Hunters who demonstrate a gift for magic are exclusively trained in the Kuni Academy, for only there it is believed they will be taught the proper respect for the powers they wield. These hunters are also thoroughly indoctrinated with Shinsei's teachings. These individuals risk more than other Witch Hunters, exposing themselves to the whispers of the kansen. Thus they must show themselves to be stronger than even other Witch Hunters before training is even considered.

WITCH HUNTERS AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF SHINSEI

The Witch Hunters, much like the Dragon Clan's ise zumi, blend the traditions of the warrior training of samurai and the theological studies of a monastic. Many Crab have little use for the Tao, considering Shinsei's philosophies of little value for those who live a life in constant conflict. The Witch Hunters are the exception to this rule, and most tsukai-sagasu can be found delving into the Tao's mysteries when not hunting maho tsukai.

For a Witch Hunter, a life of difficulty is all the more reason to remember Shinsei's wisdom. If your soul cannot find peace, focus, and harmony how can you rightfully stamp out the corruption in others? Study of the Tao grants the tsukai-sagasu the strength of will and confidence they require to resist the lure of darkness and truly stand against the shadows as champions of purity.

SAGASU-DO

New mechanical options for Witch Hunters can be found in Chapter Six, under the new Minor Martial Art, Sagasu-do.

CHAPTER SIX:

MARTIAL ARTS THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE CRAB CLAN

KOBO ICHI-KAI (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

The true origins of kobo ichi-kai, sometimes merely called "kobo," are lost to history. Practitioners of the art claim that it was begun by a clever Crab who became ronin so that he could learn Togashi Kaze's teachings. The Dragon would point out that the original students of kaze-do were true peasants so a samurai, ronin or no, would never find a place in Kaze's dojo. Another tale of its origins describes a trio of Crab bushi who entered the dojo of other Great Clan samurai and attacked their students, studying their unconscious bodies or dissecting their corpses to determine which attacks did the most damage. The various sensei of other dojo laugh at the very idea, and even kobo practitioners only speak of it when particularly inebriated. A third popular element of its origins describes a fifteen year old girl using the techniques to kill an ogre and then, without provocation, maim three samurai from each Great Clan to prove her techniques to the Emperor. Even kobo sensei

agree that this tale is a bit wild, as this sort of behavior would have been more likely to result in the Emperor barring their art forever rather than embracing it. It is generally agreed these tales are merely stories told to bolster the gruesome reputation of the Crab Clan.

The truth is much simpler, though no less impressive. Kobo is an art founded by a simple principle — necessity. After the War Against Fu Leng, many of Hida's servants, now too old or wounded to fight, shaved their head and joined the fledgling Brotherhood of Shinsei. After several years, some of these former samurai returned to Hida, eager to demonstrate the extraordinary martial arts they had learned among the Brotherhood. Hida immediately recognized the value of incorporating unarmed combat into the Crab's arsenal, and thus these monks became the clan's first jiu-jutsu sensei. What started as jiu-jutsu gradually evolved into the style now known as kobo.

STYLE

Since its creation, the Crab style of jiu-jutsu evolved swiftly. Many joint locks and pressure point attacks that had been utilized successfully by other schools did not apply for the Crab, as many of their enemies had inhuman anatomies and often felt no physical pain. In addition, the basic arts of jiu-jutsu were intended as self defense. Jiu-jutsu, optimally, was intended to intimidate or incapacitate an enemy, but not kill him. The Crab soon began to ignore these philosophies, instead seeking a more violent form of martial arts with techniques designed specifically to kill Fu Leng's corrupted servants.

The samurai of each family added their expertise to the style. Hida brute force melded with Hiruma elegance to create strikes that were powerful, yet swift. Kuni expertise in creature anatomy combined with the Kaiu talent for finding weakness in any obstacle. What resulted was so dissimilar from ordinary jiujutsu that, in the third century, the Crab began to call it by a new name — *kobo ichi-kai*.

Kobo ichi-kai may appear clumsy to the initiated, as it relies greatly on powerful backhand strokes, roundhouse kicks, and risky grappling maneuvers. A kobo master knows better. While each kobo maneuver is a risk, it is a calculated risk. A kobo artist watches his opponent carefully, providing a patient defense until the time is right. When the enemy presents an opportunity, the kobo artist seizes it, putting every ounce of energy into a single powerful stroke or crippling lock designed to kill or incapacitate.

PURPOSE

Kobo ichi-kai is, first and foremost, a weapon. It is not a rite of meditation. It is not a means of finding focus. It is not a beautiful art form and the Crab know it. As such it is more easily classified among martial forms such as kenjutsu and kyujutsu than with other unarmed martial arts that focus more on self defense or introspection. It is unusual to see demonstrations

of kobo ichi-kai, unless one seeks such demonstrations on the Kaiu Wall, in the back alleys of Friendly Traveler Village, or in highly competitive and brutal tournaments.

Kobo tournaments utilize a modified form of the style, called *kobo amai* ("soft" kobo or "kind" kobo). When using this style, certain joint locks and strikes are considered illegal. There is no points system in a kobo amai tournament. The match is over when one opponent submits, is hurled from the ring, or can no longer continue fighting.

TRAINING

Kobo ichi-kai is a relatively exclusive martial art form, as the Crab know members of other clans are often unprepared for the kobo training style. While most Rokugani forms of unarmed combat are self defense techniques, exercise, or sport, kobo ichi-kai is an instrument of death. Students are taught to kill or be killed. The training regimen is grueling and sensei are truly merciless. It is not unusual for at least one kobo ichi-kai student to die during training each year in Crab lands, and countless more are injured. The sensei take this all in stride. Better that their students should be injured now, so that they might learn to avoid injury, than for them to die upon the Kaiu Wall.

KOBO ICHI-KAI MECHANICS

The Kobo skill can be used for all unarmed attacks and grappling. The kobo ichi-kai rules presented here overrule those originally presented in *Bearers of Jade*.

NOVICE

A novice kobo student knows several rudimentary joint locks and has just begun to master the art of focusing power into a single perfect stroke.



Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Str 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike
Benefit: As a full attack action you may gain a +2 damage bonus on a single unarmed attack, or gain a +2 bonus to a touch attack to start a grapple.

You gain one and a half times your strength bonus to all damage rolls when fighting unarmed (you may not gain this ability when using the monk's flurry of blows ability).

Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Kobo (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (2 points), Bushi (2 points), Large Advantage (2 points)

If you make any Raises for damage against an opponent while fighting unarmed, you may add your Earth to the resulting Wounds in addition to the normal effects. The Kobo skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

INTERMEDIATE

The experienced student begins to initiate crippling joint locks with lightning speed.

Kobo Ichi-Kai Intermediate [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Str 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice

Benefit: If you successfully use the Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice feat to gain a +2 bonus to damage against an opponent, and strike them successfully, you may make a grapple attempt as a free action. This grapple provokes no attacks of opportunity, and gains the normal +2 bonus provided by Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice.

Kobo Ichi-Kai Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Kobo (3 ranks)

Cost: 16 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (4 points), Bushi (4 points), Large Advantage (4 points)

If you make two raises for damage against an opponent while fighting unarmed, you may begin a grapple as well as inflicting damage normally.

ADVANCED

The continues to learn techniques to take advantage of an enemy's weakness, as well as incorporating knowledge useful against nonhuman opponents.

Kobo Ichi-Kai Advanced [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Str 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice, Kobo Ichi-Kai Intermediate

Benefit: When attacking a prone opponent, your Strength modifier on unarmed attacks increases from one and a half to double. Your critical threat range against prone and helpless opponents increases by one (after effects such as Improved Critical are applied). This ability may not be used with the monk's flurry of blows ability. In addition, any time you are unarmed and would have successfully inflicted a critical hit against an opponent that is immune to critical hits, you instead gain a +2 damage bonus. (If you take the Improved Critical feat and apply it to unarmed attacks, this damage bonus increases to +3.)

Kobo Ichi-Kai Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Kobo (5 ranks)

Cost: 24 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (6 points), Bushi (6 points), Large Advantage (6 points)

When attacking a prone or helpless opponent, you gain a Free Raise on all for damage on unarmed attacks. In addition, the Carapace of any creature you attack is lowered by half your Kobo skill, round down, when using unarmed attacks.

EXPERT

A student who has progressed to this level is a devastating opponent, able to tear fearsome beasts asunder with his bare hands.

Kobo Ichi-Kai Expert [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Str 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice, Intermediate Kobo Ichi-Kai, Kobo Ichi-Kai Advanced.

Benefit: If you make a successful opposed grapple roll against an opponent, you may make a trip attack as a free action. This trip attack provokes no attacks of opportunity. You may choose whether you wish to maintain the grapple and go prone with your opponent or release the grapple as a free action and remain standing over them in the same square.

Note: If you also possess Improved Trip you may make an extra attack against your tripped opponent as normal.

Kobo Ichi-Kai Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Kobo (7 ranks)

Cost: 32 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (8 points), Bushi (8 points), Large Advantage (8 points)

If you succeed at an contested grapple roll with an opponent, you may make an additional contested Strength roll to drive them to the ground. If successful, you may chose to either fall to the earth beside them in a grapple or remain standing over them. If you make two Raises on a contested grapple roll and are successful, you may make an additional unarmed attack against your opponent in that round.

MASTER

The rare kobo student who survives long enough to master this deadly art of combat is an almost unstoppable force on the battlefield. The powerful throws and joint locks match with deadly knowledge of inhuman foes to create one of the most indispensable weapons in the Crab Clan's arsenal.

Kobo Ichi-Kai Master [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Str 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kobo Ichi-Kai Novice, Intermediate Kobo Ichi-Kai, Kobo Ichi-Kai Advanced, Kobo Ichi-Kai Expert.

Benefit: The critical multiplier on your unarmed attacks increases to $\times 4$. You may apply critical hits normally to opponents normally immune to critical hits when making unarmed attacks, but your critical multiplier is only $\times 2$ (however, you retain the damage bonus gained at Expert). If you inflict more than thirty damage on an opponent with a single unarmed attack they must make a Fortitude save (DC equal to half the damage dealt, round down) or be staggered until your next action.

Kobo Ichi-Kai Master

Required Specialized Skill: Kobo (9 ranks)

Cost: 40 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (10 points), Bushi (10 points), Large Advantage (10 points)

When making an unarmed damage roll you may select one die that rolled a 10 and re-roll it twice, keeping the preferred result. If you inflict damage to an opponent greater than ten times their Earth in a single unarmed attack, they suffer a +10 TN penalty for the next round.

SAGASU-DO (MINOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

The history of the art known informally as sagasu-do (the "Hunter's Way") has been passed down between the Kuni Witch Hunters for generations. There are no sagasu-do dojo, no professional sagasu-do sensei. Two practitioners of the art may embrace the style in entirely different manners, but a few common threads remain. The Kuni see the greatest masters of sagasu-do as those Witch Hunters who live the longest – for obviously they must have learned something to survive as long as they do.

STYLE

Sagasu-do borrows heavily from kobo ichi-kai, and in form the two styles are similar. Sagasu-do, however, is a martial art designed for and practiced by Kuni, many of whom combine the art of the shugenja with the combat prowess of a monk. As a result, many of their techniques enhance, or are enhanced by, a Witch Hunter's supernatural abilities. The style focuses above all on the destruction of Shadowlands creatures, and often is of sadly limited use against normal opponents. As most Witch Hunters have magic or traditional fighting abilities to deal with such threats, this is no great weakness.

PURPOSE

Sagasu-do, like kobo ichi-kai, is a tool for killing. Unlike kobo, those who follow the Hunter's Way have not completely disposed of the philosophical foundations upon which the martial arts are based. The Kuni are a shugenja family, after all, and often practice sagasu-do to help find focus during their meditations.

TRAINING

The Witch Hunters adamantly deny the existence of sagasu-do to anyone outside their number. They refuse to teach it to non-Witch Hunters, and a few go so far as to vowing they will not use the techniques in the presence of those they do not plan to kill.

This is essentially a ruse the Witch Hunters have built up over time. Because no two Witch Hunters practice the style the same way, most people believe they have never seen it. The Witch Hunters have taken advantage of this curiosity about their techniques, using them to build their intimidating aura of mystery. From a tsukai-sagasu's standpoint, as long as their enemies seek answers where the truth is obvious, the Witch Hunters continue to have an advantage.

SAGASU-DO MECHANICS

NOVICE

Drawing from the foundations of kobo, a novice sagasu has learned the basic means by which the Witch Hunters have protected themselves for generations. Though most effective against Shadowlands creatures, these techniques are not entirely useless against more mundane opponents.

Note that the spiritual focus required for use of all these techniques demands that one remain pure. Any practitioner who gains any amount of the Shadowlands Taint loses all use of sagasu-do abilities.

Sagasu-do Novice [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Wis 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike or Element Focus (Earth) class ability, Void Use.

Benefit: As a full attack action you may gain a +2 damage bonus on a single unarmed attack. If your target has the Shadowlands subtype, and you are aware of this fact beyond a shadow of a doubt, you may spend a Void Point to increase this damage by your Wisdom modifier. (If the target turns out not to be Tainted, the Void Point is still spent. Thus, if there is the possibility the target was not Tainted there is no true way for you to be sure by using this feat.)

Sagasu-do Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Sagasu-do (1 rank)

Cost: 9 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (3 points), Shugenja or Witch Hunter (3 points, is not cumulative if both), Large Advantage (1 point)

If you make two raises for damage against an opponent while fighting unarmed, you may add your Earth to the resulting Wounds in addition to the normal effects. If your target is Shadowlands and you are aware of this fact beyond the shadow of a doubt, you also gain this bonus whenever you spend Void Points on attack rolls in addition to the normal effect. (If the target turns out not to be Tainted, the Void Point is still spent. Thus, if there is the possibility the target was not Tainted there is no true way for you to be sure by using this ability.)

EXPERT

At this level, sagasu-do quickly steps away from its kobo ichi-kai origins and becomes a more truly unique martial art. The sagasu combines magic with natural skill to inflict greater damage on a corrupted opponent.

Sagasu-do Advanced [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +3, four kiho feats or 2nd level divine spells, Improved Unarmed Strike or Element Focus (Earth) class ability, Sagasu-do Novice, Void Use.

Benefit: Any time you are affected by any spell that detects, harms, or provides special protection against creatures with the Shadowlands subtype, you gain a damage bonus equal to your Charisma modifier against targets with the Shadowlands subtype on all unarmed attacks. In addition, any time such a spell would normally end (either due to being dispelled or due to the spell's duration ending normally) you may spend a Void Point to make the spell last a number of additional

rounds equal to your Wisdom modifier. This may be done once per spell effect, and does not affect spells with an instantaneous duration.

Sagasu-do Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Sagasu-do (5 ranks)
Cost: 27 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (9 points), Shugenja or Witch Hunter (9 points, is not cumulative if both), Large Advantage (3 points)

Benefit: Any time you are affected by any spell that detects, harms, or provides special protection against creatures with the Shadowlands Taint, you roll and keep an extra die of damage on all unarmed attacks against Shadowlands creatures. In addition, any time such a spell would normally end (either due to being dispelled or due to the spell's duration ending normally) you may spend a Void Point to make the spell last a number of additional rounds equal to your Willpower. This may be done once per spell effect, and does not affect spells with an instantaneous duration.

MASTER

The path of a Witch Hunter is a difficult one, and few survive this long. Each Master has his own unique methods of dealing with the corrupted, though some elements of their style are consistent.

Sagasu-do Master [Crab Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, six kiho feats or 6th level divine spells, Improved Unarmed Strike or Element Focus (Earth) class ability, Sagasu-do Advanced, Sagasu-do Novice, Void Use.

Benefit: Any time you successfully kill an opponent with the Shadowlands subtype (in melee or with the use of magic) you immediately regain a Void Point. Any time you make a successful save against a maho spell, you regain a Void Point.

Sagasu-do Master

Required Specialized Skill:

Sagasu-do (9 ranks)

Cost: 45 points

Cost Reductions: Crab Clan member (15 points), Shugenja or Witch Hunter (15 points, is not cumulative if both), Large Advantage (5 points)

Benefit: Any time you successfully kill an opponent with the Shadowlands Taint (in melee or with the use of magic) you immediately regain a Void Point. Any time you make a successful save against a maho spell, you regain a Void Point.

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE CRANE CLAN

MIZU-DO JIUJUTSU (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

As Crane sensei are fond of remarking, arts are organic. By definition all arts evolve over time as practitioners re-interpret forms, styles, and purposes of their lives. Nowhere is this more evident than in the evolution of Mizu-do. Formerly relegated to a training technique

for Artisans to make plays more realistic and an amusing pastime for courtiers, the multiple wars and inter-clan tensions of the past 30 years have led to Mizu-do being further examined and developed.

Emergencies are difficult to predict, and on more than a few occasions, including the infamous slaughter of the Imperial Court during the War Against the Darkness, non-

combatant Cranes have been forced to defend themselves by any means available. In those situations, Mizu-do, as a martial art primarily intended for defense and demonstrations, was sorely lacking. Even though Mizu-do stylists were well equipped to defend themselves, the near total lack of offensive techniques meant that, in many cases, they were only able to prolong the inevitable. Mizu-do was excellent at repelling rash or hasty attacks, but a canny, patient, or persistent opponent would eventually break through, especially if numbers were on his side.

An additional impetus to change was the need for Crane samurai to protect themselves in situations where weapons were unavailable or inappropriate.

Crane bushi were at a significant disadvantage against more pragmatically trained opponents, which hurt the ability of Crane diplomats to negotiate in tense but non-violent situation. Combined, these factors have caused Crane artisans and samurai alike to develop new offensive techniques with which to complement the existing maneuvers of Mizu-do.

STYLE

Mizu-do, as befits a Crane martial art, is a traditional, graceful style that emphasizes beauty and form. The original kata and stances of Mizu-do were derived from the needs of actors to make plays look exciting. As such, the style incorporated a great deal of motion, with flourishes and exaggerated move-



ments throughout. Even with the recent change in focus to a more viable system of combat, the style is still breathtaking to watch, as many flourishes have been retained to aid in distracting or feinting maneuvers.

Mizu-do is about directing, controlling, and restricting mobility. Throws and joint locks play a major role in the style, to restrict the ability of opponents to inflict damage upon the user. Mizu-do combines circular motions to deflect and linear motions to intercept incoming attacks, to disrupt the tempo of aggressors. Hard blocks are rare, agile parries, dodges, and rumbles out of harm's way are more common. Even the direct strikes that have been added to Mizu-do follow this model, with backhands, spinning kicks, and sweeps forming the majority of a Mizu-do stylist's arsenal.

In spite of its non-martial origins, Mizu-do is quite an effective means of self-defense. A typical Mizu-do stylist will enter into combat with an initial kata to intimidate and throw the enemy off-balance. Afterwards, he will initiate a few probing attacks, typically disguised as elaborate dancing feints, to further distract opponents and lure them into an ill-advised attack. Once an opponent commits himself, or an opening is available, the Mizu-do artist will attempt a throw or joint lock to incapacitate the opponent, then finally disable them with a powerful strike while they are helpless.

PURPOSE

Mizu-do is unique among the Empire's major martial arts in that, in spite of its recent evolution, it is still primarily considered a demonstration art. Even given its current combat efficacy, the emphasis is clearly on grace and form. The ability to make a conflict visually stimulating for participants and audience is still given a high priority. In demonstrations, this adds to the entertainment value. In combat, a showy defeat might intimidate enemies or rally allies.

It is easy to find a demonstration of Mizu-do, as many Kakita Artisans are versed in at least the basics and use it during plays. Likewise, its dance-like motions are inherently beautiful, and exhibitions of Mizu-do are regularly held at many Crane courts and events. Mizu-do competitions, where entrants are evaluated on the perfection of their form and purity of their motion by panels of recognized masters, are also quite common.

TRAINING

Despite the openness with which it is displayed, training in Mizu-do is extremely exclusive. Prospective students generally have far more success petitioning the Kakita Artisans for tutelage. Dejected samurai have commented that this makes training even more difficult to obtain than it would otherwise be, due to the fact that even though the Crane are relatively open about exchanging bugei skills, they are fiercely possessive of their dominance in the arts.

MIZU-DO MECHANICS

Note: the Mizu-do rules presented here replace those presented in *Way of the Crane*,™ representing recent evolution of the art form. In addition, the Rank 3 Artisan (Dancing) technique (page 60, *Way of the Crane*™) now reads as follows:

At this rank, the dancer has so sharpened their reflexes, body control and sense of timing that they are able to more effectively perform precise movements in a short period of time. Your Agility and Reflexes are each considered 1 higher when you are performing Mizu-do.

NOVICE

A novice Mizu-do student learns how to avoid and evade attacks by directing both his motion and that of his opponent.

Mizu-do Novice [Crane Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus to Tumble and Perform (dance) checks. These skills are considered class skills for you.

Mizu-do Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Mizu-do (1 rank)

Cost: 13 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (6 points), Artisan (3 points), Artisan: Dancing skill 3 or higher (2 points)

When declaring a Full Defense, you may roll an addition die and add it to your TN to be hit. You may defend against one extra target per round.

INTERMEDIATE

At this level, the Mizu-do student learns to capitalize upon openings that are created when an opponent attacks him.

Mizu-do Intermediate [Crane Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mizu-do Novice.

Benefit: You receive a +3 bonus to unarmed melee attack rolls against any opponent who has attacked you and missed since your last action.

Mizu-do Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Mizu-do (3 ranks)

Cost: 26 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (12 points), Artisan (6 points), Artisan: Dancing skill 3 or higher (4 points).

You receive a Free Raise to on unarmed melee attacks against any opponent who has attacked you and missed since your last action.

ADVANCED

An Advanced Mizu-do student learns how to quickly maneuver out of the path of even the most expert strikes.

Mizu-do Advanced [Crane Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mizu-do Novice, Mizu-do Intermediate.

Benefit: You gain an +4 dodge bonus to AC. This bonus is lost if you have made an attack since your last action. Attacks of opportunity and readied attack actions in response to an opponent attacking you do not count against this bonus.

Mizu-do Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Mizu-do (5 ranks)

Cost: 39 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (18 points), Artisan (9 points), Artisan: Dancing skill 3 or higher (6 points)

You gain a +10 bonus to your TN to be hit when on Full Defense, or if you have only attacked targets who have attacked you within the last round since your last action.

EXPERT

An expert of the style learns how to turn the momentum of a battle in his favor, quickly throwing an aggressive opponent into a crippling hold.

Mizu-do Expert [Crane Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mizu-do Novice, Mizu-do Intermediate, Mizu-do Advanced.

Benefit: On your turn you may ready a move action against a single opponent. If that opponent makes a melee strike against you and misses, you may immediately grapple them. You gain a +4 bonus to this grapple attempt and the opposed Strength roll.

Normal: Move actions may not be used to make an attack.

Mizu-do Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Mizu-do (7 ranks)

Cost: 52 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (24 points), Artisan (12 points), Artisan: Dancing skill 3 or higher (8 points)

On your turn you may delay your action and select a single opponent. If that opponent attempts to attack you in melee and misses, you may immediately grapple them. You gain two Free Raises on this grapple attack.

MASTER

A master of Mizu-do is a living example of beauty and grace. Every movement, every motion, is both breathtaking and effective. Few can hope to breach the flawless defenses or evade the seamless assaults of a master in the art of Mizu-do. Few can hope to escape the deadly embrace of a master's carefully applied locks.

Mizu-do Master

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mizu-do Novice, Mizu-do Intermediate, Mizu-do Advanced.

Benefit: All of your unarmed attacks inflict double damage while in a grapple.

Mizu-do Master

Required Specialized Skill: Mizu-do (9 ranks)

Cost: 65 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (30 points), Artisan (15 points), Artisan: Dancing skill 3 or higher (10 points)

You roll and keep three extra dice for damage in a grapple.

RESPLENDENT CRANE YARIJUTSU (MINOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Though the Crane Clan is best known for their contribution to arts and culture, they are as much as any other Great Clan a clan of warriors. The burden of the clan's defense falls largely on the Daidoji family, who defend their clan's provinces with equal parts cunning and martial prowess. As their duties defending the Crane occupy a great deal of their time, the Daidoji have made few great contributions to Crane social cul-

ture. One of the more notable exceptions to this rule is Resplendent Crane Bujutsu.

The origins of the style are quite simple. The Daidoji have always favored the yari as a weapon — it is a deadly, versatile, and easily crafted weapon. At the Emperor's Winter Court in the late sixth century, a clever Ikoma courtier tricked the brash Daidoji daimyo into entering a tournament for the Emperor's favor. All too late the Daidoji learned that it was not a fighting tournament, but a display of courtly dance. On impulse, the Daidoji took up his yari and performed a series of his family's original kata for the Emperor. The Emperor was so impressed he demanded to know the name of the art, to which the Crane impulsively answered "Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu."

What had once been an informal collection of maneuvers with a spear had become an official martial art style overnight. Over the centuries, the Daidoji have refined Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu, and numerous small dojo for the style exist scattered throughout Daidoji lands.

STYLE

Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu is a graceful style, as the yari is an extremely graceful weapon in skilled hands. The yari can be used to present an impenetrable defense as well as swift attack, keeping enemies at a distance. The student of this art learns all of the advantages of his weapon and is adept at shoring up the yari's few weaknesses. If there is any true disadvantage to this art, it is that it is entirely dependent on a single weapon. As yari are easily crafted or improvised, this is seen as no great weakness.

PURPOSE

Though a beautiful art, Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu is at its heart intended to fortify pikeman in the defense of the Crane Clan. More than a few Crane poets have pointed out that it is an ironic reflection of the other major Crane martial art, Mizu-do. While Mizu-do originated in the peaceful, graceful movements of dancers and evolved into a deadly fighting art, Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu began as a warrior's technique and evolved into a graceful court favorite.

TRAINING

Students of the art spend hours moving through complex kata, spinning the yari through defensive arcs or performing aggressive thrusts and parries. After a time, the style begins to resemble an artful dance. Many Crane learn the style merely for the sheer beauty of it, and demonstrations of Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu are a popular attraction in the courts.

RESPLENDENT CRANE YARIJUTSU MECHANICS

NOVICE

A novice in this style begins to learn to use the yari as both an offensive and defensive weapon.

Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Novice [Crane Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +1, Simple Weapon Proficiency (yari)

Benefit: At the beginning of your turn each round you gain either a +1 bonus to attack rolls or a +1 shield bonus to AC while wielding a yari. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your turn next round. You also add your

base attack bonus to all Perform checks when demonstrating Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu for an audience.

Resplendent Crane Novice [Crane Feat]

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (3 points), Bushi or Harrier (3 points, not cumulative if both)

You can give up the attack bonus normally gained for the Yarijutsu Specialized Weapon Skill when wielding a yari to gain an equal bonus to your TN to be Hit until your next action.

ADVANCED

An Advanced student of Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu learns to use his weapon to best advantage, attacking enemies both at range and in close combat.

Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Advanced [Crane Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Simple Weapon Proficiency (yari), Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Novice

Benefit: When wielding a yari you may attack adjacent opponents. The bonus gained from Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Novice now increases to +2.

Normal: The yari can only be used to attack opponents as a reach weapon.

Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (5 ranks)

Cost: 24 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (9 points), Bushi or Harrier (9 points, not cumulative if both)

Benefit: You continue to gain the polearm bonus to initiative even after the first round of combat when wielding a yari.

MASTER

The master of Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu can draw upon the full potential of his chosen weapon for power, accuracy, or defense.

Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Master [Crane Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +12, Simple Weapon Proficiency (yari), Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Novice, Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Advanced

Benefit: The bonus gained from Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu Novice increases to +3. This bonus may apply as a shield bonus to AC, an attack bonus, or a damage bonus. Alternately, you may gain a +2 to one of these and a +1 to another, or a +1 to all three. In addition, you may make an offhand attack with the butt of your yari for 1d4 bludgeoning damage as if it were a double weapon. All the normal penalties for two-handed fighting apply.

Resplendent Crane Master

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (9 ranks)

Cost: 40 points

Cost Reductions: Crane Clan member (15 points), Bushi or Harrier (15 points, not cumulative if both)

Benefit: Once per round when you strike down an opponent with your yari you gain an additional attack with the butt end of the yari. This does damage as an unarmed strike.

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE DRAGON CLAN

KAZE-DO (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Togashi Kaze is well known throughout the Empire as one of the most famous ise zumi ever known. He lived during the reign of Hantei III, when the Empire was still securing its borders and settling into the lands Sun and Moon had blessed for their children. It was during this era that the Hantei pronounced that only those of the samurai caste would be lawfully allowed to carry conventional weapons. Though this was done ostensibly to accentuate the strength of the samurai caste, it was also intended to curb the possibility of armed peasant revolts.

Unfortunately for many peasants, this meant only that they became ready prey for bandits and wandering beasts from the Shadowlands. Though some samurai responded to the needs of the farmers, others found the matter of no importance weighed against their other concerns. With few large cities founded and fewer organized patrol routes established, the life of the peasantry slowly became a nightmare.

The followers of Shinsei became concerned with the plight of the common man. As they were not samurai, they understood what it was like to be ignored and mistreated by the nobles. However, because they were not samurai, few felt it was their place to take an active hand in the matter and instead returned to their contemplations. One among their number, Togashi Kaze, refused to take part in such negligence and set about finding a way to teach the peasants how to defend themselves.

The result was that Kaze created the first organized form of jiu-jutsu ("the way of hands and feet") and began to teach others his style. Kaze was a gifted teacher, and the simplicity of the art allowed it to spread further once he had taught his first students. Throughout the lands of the Dragon, then the Phoenix, then the Crane, the peasantry learned the art of jiu-jutsu. Bandits and Tainted monsters alike no longer found peasants such easy prey, and Kaze became an infamous figure by demonstrating his art on brash samurai in the streets of cities across the fledgling Empire.

By the time art reached the lands of the Lion, many Akodo generals and Matsu soldiers saw the useful applications of the art. They invited Togashi Kaze to visit them, and teach whatever elements of his art he would share. Kaze refused. So long as the peasants were forced to remain without the tools to arm themselves, he said, he would leave jiu-jutsu in their hands alone. If the sword was fit only for a samurai, then jiu-jutsu would remain fit only for the common man. Kaze's blunt dismissal of the Lion left the Akodo outraged. The Lion refused to press the matter further, not willing to continue to debase themselves by treating a monk as an equal, but they brought the matter to the Hantei's attention.

Intrigued, Hantei III invited Togashi Kaze to his Winter Court, praising his bravery and famous deeds. Kaze accepted, but in the middle of the court, the Emperor commanded the



monk to demonstrate his art for all to see. To the shock of all, Kaze refused his Emperor.

Enraged at such effrontery, Hantei III commanded his Emerald Champion, Doji Kuzume, to strike down the monk for his behavior. If Kaze would not show his style voluntarily, he would do so to save his own life. Kuzume drew his blade and stepped toward the monk, but Kaze spoke that he would not raise his hand to defend himself and he would die peacefully. Kuzume's conscience weighed against his honor, as he was unwilling to fight against such an opponent, and finally he asked permission to commit seppuku.

In the same breath, Hantei III granted Kuzume permission, and temporarily granted a Lion general in attendance Emerald Champion status. He then gave his new Champion his first command — to slay Togashi Kaze. Matsu Noshin did so without hesitation, and Kaze died without once sharing his secrets with a samurai. Members of the Imperial Family point to this legend as a warning of the price of foolish pride. After all, if Kaze's teachings had spread so easily through the peasantry, what gain could Kaze have found in defying the Emperor so? After Kaze's death it was not long before the Seppun guard learned the basics of jujutsu even without Kaze's aid.

Among the Dragon, some quietly whisper that the Emperor never truly discovered Kaze's secrets. Though jujutsu is well known across the Empire, it was not Kaze's greatest secret. His most powerful techniques, the art known as kaze-do, continues to be handed down among the Three Orders of the Dragon Clan.

STYLE

Kaze-do is a fast style that emphasizes incapacitating a foe instead of killing. Students of the art are taught every single part of the body is a weapon and can be used in some fashion during a fight. Adepts of kaze-do seem to fight with wild, unpredictable movements though each strike is carefully calculated. The first principle of Kaze's art was never to strike first. Kaze-do is primarily a style meant for defending against attackers, and is relatively poor at initiating an assault.

In combat, the kaze-do student is alternately a blur of motion and as still as the mountains. Kaze taught that predictability is an enemy like any other, and one that your opponent will use to defeat you. Practitioners of the style attempt to never use the same strike twice in a fight, unless that in itself would be falling into a predictable pattern. Kaze-do effectively brings the physical combat to a more intellectual level, as the kaze-do student attempts to outwit and confuse his opponents, allowing the physical strike to become the confirmation of a battle that has already been won.

PURPOSE

At its heart, kaze-do is a method of defense and nothing more. There are few techniques that are meant to bring down an opponent by sheer force or fury. Most kaze-do students are victorious by taking advantage of an opening created by an attacker or using their momentum against them with a throw or flip. Though not an undisciplined style by any means, it is not overly complicated or graceful, instead focusing on the practical use of the hands and feet to achieve victory.

Because of the style's particularities, it is also effective against larger or armed opponents. Disarming techniques are common, as well as moves that take advantage of an opponent's larger size or momentum. Kaze-do teaches a variety of moves in order to give the student a chance to take advantage of any situation. The result is that while kaze-do is not particularly known for a certain "signature" move or technique, students are exceptionally resourceful.

TRAINING

In honor of Togashi Kaze, the Dragon generally teach anyone who expresses a sincere interest in learning the art. While Kaze never wished the art to be learned by samurai so long as the peasants remained without weapons, in the centuries since ashigaru legions and peasant weapons have again become the norm. Thus, the Togashi believe that Kaze would have been satisfied with such a situation, and have no compunction with teaching the art to samurai.

Because of the art's chaotic and unpredictable nature, many samurai fail at the art if only because they have been trained all their lives to follow explicit patterns of commands and strict forms of combat. Those who can master this unconventional art tend to be free-spirited or imaginative individuals. Between this and the shady reputation of Togashi Kaze, the art is not very popular with samurai outside the Dragon Clan despite the clan's open door policy.

KAZE'S THREE PRINCIPLES

Togashi Kaze taught his students a great deal of philosophy along with the arts of combat. His Dragon nature is evident in any of his texts, as he constantly speaks of the harmony of the universe and ebb and flow of the Elements. Though Kaze kept a great deal of his wisdom secret, he regarded these three truths as most important:

- **Killing is for the cruel.** Kaze-do is an art of defense, not killing, and those who use the art to bring needless pain and suffering shame themselves and the art. This principle commands that a practitioner of kaze-do never instigate violence.
- **Avoidance is preferable to violence.** This is a debated principle, as Kaze was infamous for picking fights with samurai to demonstrate his style. Others point out that Kaze only contradicts his own behavior to show that he, too, was imperfect.
- **Defeat is unavoidable.** Kaze made sure that his students understood that the concept of an "invincible fighter" was fallacy. This lesson served the dual purpose of filling his students with humility while teaching them to never be intimidated by a seemingly unbeatable opponent.

KAZE-DO MECHANICS

NOVICE

The initiate begins to learn the basic concepts of kaze-do, such as looking for any opening in a fight and how to react to aggression.

Kaze-do Novice [Dragon Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: As long as you are unarmed and have not made an attack for the current combat, you gain a +1 dodge bonus to your AC. You also gain a +1 bonus to unarmed attack rolls if you are making an unarmed attack against someone who has attacked you within the last round.

Note: All feats in this style chain that rely upon unarmed attacks may also be performed with a bo staff (quarterstaff).

Kaze-do Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Kaze-do (1 rank)

Cost: 9

Cost Reductions: Dragon Clan member (3 points), Monk (including Tattooed Orders) (3 point), Hands of Stone advantage (1 point).

If you are unarmed and have not attacked for the current round, you may add your Awareness to your TN to be hit. In addition, if you make an unarmed attack upon someone who attacked you within the last round, you may add your Reflexes to the attack roll.

Note: Kaze-do may be used with a bo staff as well as unarmed. All maneuvers in this style chain that refer to unarmed attacks may also be performed with a bo.

The kaze-do skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

INTERMEDIATE

With the primary lessons learned, the student begins to learn how gain advantage in a grapple.

Kaze-do Intermediate [Dragon Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kaze-do Novice

Benefit: Your size category for grappling is considered one higher while you are unarmed.

Kaze-do Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Kaze-do (3 ranks)

Cost: 18 points

Cost Reductions: Dragon Clan member (6 point), Monk (including Tattooed Orders) (6 point), Hands of Stone advantage (2 point).

You roll an additional two dice on all contested grapple rolls.

ADVANCED

As the student progresses in the art of kaze-do, he begins to adjust his style to turn an opponent's weapons against them.

Kaze-do Advanced [Dragon Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kaze-do Novice, Kaze-do Intermediate

Benefit: You gain a +2 dodge bonus to your AC against armed opponents while unarmed. You receive a +4 bonus to disarm attacks.

Kaze-do Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Kaze-do (5 rank)

Cost: 27

Cost Reductions: Dragon Clan member (9 points), Monk (including Tattooed Orders) (9 points), Hands of Stone advantage (3 points).

You gain a +5 bonus to your TN to be hit against armed opponents. You receive a Free Raise on all disarm attempts.

EXPERT

As mastery of Togashi Kaze's teachings continues, the student begins to develop a supernatural awareness of when an enemy has left themselves vulnerable. Kaze-do students are trained to fully exploit these openings to end the fight as quickly as possible.

Kaze-do Expert [Dragon Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kaze-do Novice, Kaze-do Intermediate, Kaze-do Advanced.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls on all attacks of opportunity. You deal an extra 1d8 subdual damage on all attacks while in a grapple.

Kaze-do Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Kaze-do (7 ranks)

Cost: 36

Cost Reductions: Dragon Clan member (12 points), Monk (including Tattooed Orders) (12 points), Hands of Stone advantage (4 points).

You roll and keep two extra dice on damage rolls when in a grapple.

MASTER

When the student has mastered all of the structured teachings of Togashi Kaze, he learns that his journey is hardly complete. Kaze's final lesson is that like the flow of combat, the student must learn to make his own mastery of the style and not be dictated to by its ways. Masters of the art are rare, and rarely share the same fighting philosophy.

Kaze-do Master [Dragon Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kaze-do Novice, Kaze-do Intermediate, Kaze-do Advanced, Kaze-do Expert

Benefit: Any time an opponent attempts to escape a grapple with you and fails, you may immediately make an attack of opportunity against them. Your reach for grapple attacks is extended by five feet.

Kaze-do Master

Required Specialized Skill: Kaze-do (9 ranks)

Cost: 45

Cost Reductions: Dragon Clan member (15 points), Monk (including Tattooed Orders) (15 points), Hands of Stone advantage (5 points).

Once per round, if an opponent attempts to escape a grapple.

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE LION CLAN

MAGARI-YARIJUTSU (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Magari-yarijutsu is a unique martial art practiced exclusively by the Lion Clan, predominantly the Matsu family. The weapon utilizes a strange variant on the yari known as the magari-yari, a triple bladed spear similar in appearance to a trident. The weapon has been somewhat popular with certain branches of the Matsu for centuries, and the art has slowly developed outside of the public eye, but it was not truly brought to the fore until the Clan Wars. Matsu Gohei, alternately regarded as both the hero of the Clan Wars (by the Lion) and the Butcher of the Clan Wars (by the Crane) was never seen without this trademark weapon. Many other Lion samurai wishing to emulate Gohei's example have embraced the style of Magari-yarijutsu.

STYLE

Magari-yarijutsu is an elegant art, filled with broad sweeping maneuvers and brutal thrusts. Many compare it to Resplendent Crane Yarijutsu, but the two styles are in fact very different. While the Crane utilize the yari for a variety of defensive and offensive maneuvers, magari-yarijutsu is an extremely aggressive art. There are no defensive maneuvers, for the style is intended to kill an opponent before he has the opportunity to defend himself.

PURPOSE

As is befitting its Matsu creators, magari-yarijutsu is an art designed exclusively for mortal combat. Though the weapon only differs from the yari in a superficial manner, the sight of it has become synonymous with this art's extremely aggressive style. Bandits in Lion lands frequently flee at the sight of a magari-yari, knowing at a glance that its wielder will be even more brutal and unforgiving than a typical Matsu.

TRAINING

Training in the magari-yari is not a conventional art taught to students preparing for their gempukku, for though the weapon resembles a yari the Matsu do not use it in the same manner as a yari is generally wielded. Sensei at all major Lion dojo watch for students who excel in the use of polearms and who possess the keen perception necessary to use such a weapon to its fullest potential. Such students are sent to a particular dojo in the Matsu lands, where they begin the lengthy process of mastering the magari-yari. It is an exhaustive process, but one that reaps considerable rewards. Those who complete their training often receive prestigious posts in the Lion military, and many have gone on to greatness, as Gohei himself once did.

THE MAGARI-YARI

The magari-yari is a variation of the yari, featuring a trident-like triple blade. These differences are mostly cosmetic — the weapon is mechanically identical to a yari (spear) in both systems.

MAGARI-YARIJUTSU MECHANICS

NOVICE

A beginning student of magari-yarijutsu learns to exploit the advantage of a weapon that is far longer than the traditional weapons used by samurai.

Magari-yarijutsu Novice [Lion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +1, Str 13+, Simple Weapon Proficiency (magari-yari)

Benefit: When performing the charge action with a magari-yari, you may gain an additional +2 attack bonus but suffer an additional -2 AC penalty.

Magari-yarijutsu Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (2 points), Bushi (2 points), Brash (2 points)

When wielding a magari-yari on Full Attack, you may roll and keep an additional die on all attack and damage rolls. If you do so, any enemy attacking you rolls and keeps an extra die on all damage rolls.

INTERMEDIATE

The student who has reached this level can perform brutal charges, impaling unwary opponents upon his blade.

Magari-yarijutsu Intermediate [Lion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +3, Str 13+, Simple Weapon Proficiency (magari-yari), Magari-yarijutsu Novice

Benefit: If you charge and strike an opponent with your magari-yari, you immediately begin a grapple as if you made a successful touch attack, gaining a +4 bonus to your opposed Strength roll. If this opposed roll succeeds, you have impaled your opponent on the magari-yari, and automatically damage them with it on each of your attacks until you release them, you drop your weapon, or they escape the grapple (you cannot use your magari-yari to attack another opponent until the hold is released). You do not need to move into your opponent's square to maintain the grapple, and you may move while you maintain the grapple so long as your opponent remains within reach of your magari-yari and you continue to hold it with both hands.

Magari-yarijutsu Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (3 ranks)

Cost: 16 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (4 points), Bushi (4 points), Brash (4 points)

If you make two Raises on a Full Attack with a magari-yari, you can impale your opponent. To do this, you must win an opposed Strength roll, and thereafter maintain

your hold on your enemy as if they were being grappled. Until you release your enemy, drop your weapon, or attack another opponent you may automatically damage the target with your magari-yari on each of your attacks.

ADVANCED

A character who has reached this level of skill can make desperate attacks with the magari-yari, even at the possible expense of his own life.

Magari-yarijutsu Advanced [Lion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Str 13+, Simple Weapon Proficiency (magari-yari), Magari-yarijutsu Novice, Magari-yarijutsu Intermediate

Benefit: Your reach with a magari-yari is increased by five feet while charging.

Magari-yarijutsu Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (5 ranks)

Cost: 24 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (6 points), Bushi (6 points), Brash (6 points)

Any time you declare Full Attack while wielding a magari-yari, you gain a +10 bonus to your initiative. However, any attacks that occur after your initiative but before you would have gone are considered to be simultaneous to any actions you take (meaning you may strike down several enemies only to fall to them in turn).

EXPERT

The secret of magari-yarijutsu is relentless offense. The expert can deliver increasingly brutal strikes.

Magari-yarijutsu Expert [Lion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Str 13+, Simple Weapon Proficiency (magari-yari), Magari-yarijutsu Novice, Magari-yarijutsu Intermediate, Magari-yarijutsu Advanced.

Benefit: If you successfully strike an opponent with a magari-yari while performing a charge action, you may attempt to stagger your opponent for one round. A Fortitude save (DC equal to damage dealt) negates this effect. This is not effective against targets immune to critical hits.

Magari-yarijutsu Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (7 ranks)

Cost: 14 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (8 points), Bushi (8 points), Brash (8 points)

Before making an attack with a magari-yari, you may spend two Void Points to re-roll all damage dice of seven or higher as if they were ten's. This may only be done on Full Attack.

MASTER

A true master of magari-yarijutsu is an unparalleled engine of destruction on the battlefield, laying waste to any foe within reach of his weapon with a powerful lunge.

Magari-yarijutsu Master [Lion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +12, Str 13+, Simple Weapon Proficiency (magari-yari), Magari-yarijutsu Novice, Magari-yarijutsu Intermediate, Magari-yarijutsu Advanced, Magari-yarijutsu Expert

Benefit: You may attack multiple people within your reach during your movement while performing a charge with a magari-yari. This functions exactly as if you had performed the full attack action, with your normal number of attacks and each attack targeted at a different opponent as you charge (you may not strike the same opponent more than once) and your last attack must be reserved for the original target of the charge. The attack bonus for charging is applied only to the final target.

Magari-yarijutsu Master

Required Specialized Skill: Yarijutsu (Magari-yari-do) (9 ranks)

Cost: 40 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (10 points), Bushi (10 points), Brash (10 points)

The number of Raises you may make while making a Full Attack with a magari-yari are increased by your Insight Rank.

THE ART OF THE SWORD (MINOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

The martial art known simply as 'the art of the sword' is a peculiar style. It is a weapon based martial art, but it does not rely upon use of a weapon to inflict damage.

The martial art was first devised in the early sixth century. Akodo Toru had served well in his role as Lion Champion, and retired to the life of a monk after a life well lived. Though retired, Toru still had the spirit of a warrior and thus dove into learning the unarmed combat styles of the Brotherhood with great relish. The new Lion Champion, Toru's son Ikuo, would often visit his father in the monastery seeking advice. Sometimes, he would watch his father practice his martial kata. Like all Lion generals, Ikuo was constantly seeking any advantage that might grant his soldiers victory in battle. He asked his father if the Brotherhood's unarmed style might be incorporated into the Lion's own kenjutsu, granting bushi a chance to defend themselves with their free hand or the hilt of a blade while pressed into close quarters.

Toru was intrigued by the idea, and dedicated the remainder of his life to creating such a style, a defensive brand of jujutsu to be utilized with the katana in hand. Toru gave his style a simple name, 'the art of the sword,' in hopes that it would be underestimated and utilized only by the most cunning warriors of the Lion. Today only a handful of dojo exist that teach the style, all bushi dojo in Lion lands that also teach the Lion's unique style of kenjutsu.

STYLE

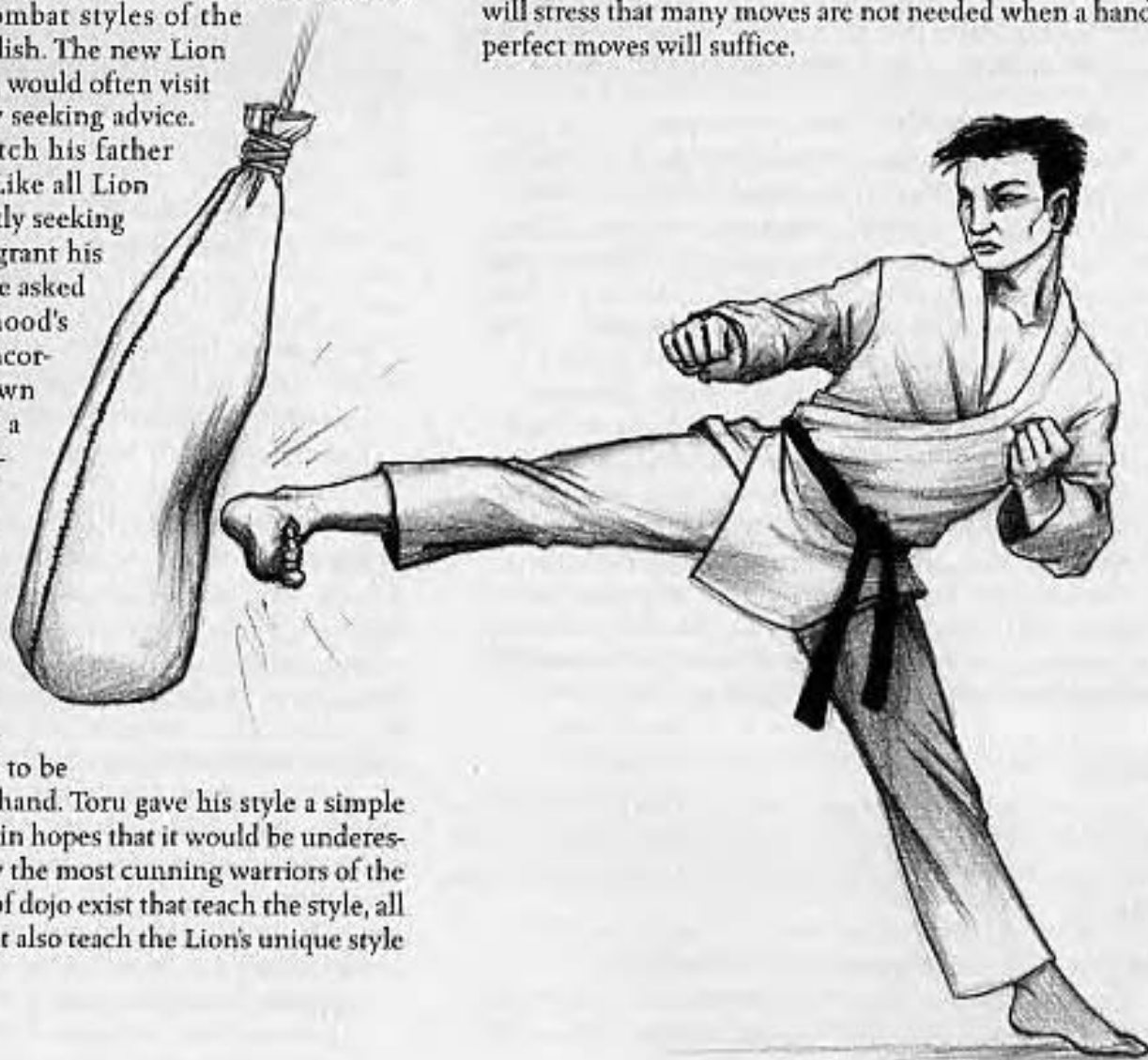
The art of the sword is unique among martial arts in that, while it relies on having a weapon (katana) in hand, does not utilize this weapon for attack. This style is designed specifically to be used by a student also skilled in kenjutsu, providing a series of supplemental moves for a talented swordsman. These unarmed attacks and parries are intended to gain advantage in situations where a blade's longer reach is an impediment, or to allow a swordsman to free himself when pressed into close range where a sword cannot be safely wielded.

PURPOSE

As stated previously, the art of the sword is used almost exclusively to remove oneself from situations where a sword cannot be easily used. This particular style is also favored for its use in meditation. The complex kata that a practitioner must perform to master its subtleties allow one great focus and clarity. Thus, many Lion generals will practice the art of the sword while considering their battle plans, or while clearing their thoughts before praying to the shiryō. All exercises are done with the sword in hand, though it is usually left in its saya during such displays.

TRAINING

The art of the sword seems to be a relatively simple martial art, with only a few definable maneuvers that set it aside from ordinary jujutsu. To be properly utilized, these maneuvers require a great deal of repetition, concentration, and discipline. The movements must be perfected so that they may be performed without thought, so that the practitioner may use them instinctively and return to the true matter at hand – killing the opponent with the sword. A true master of the art will stress that many moves are not needed when a handful of perfect moves will suffice.





ART OF THE SWORD MECHANICS

NOVICE

The novice student of this art begins to learn how to combine unarmed attacks and sword strikes fluidly into a single form.

Art of the Sword Novice [Lion Technique]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +1, Improved Unarmed Strike, Martial Weapon Proficiency (katana).

Benefit: You may wield a katana in one hand as if you had the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat for that weapon. Any of your feats that apply specifically to a katana (Daisho Focus, Daisho Specialization, Improved Critical) now also apply to unarmed strikes.

Art of the Sword Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Kenjutsu (1 rank)

Cost: 9 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (5 points), Bushi (2 point)

You may use your Kenjutsu skill as a specialized weapon skill applying equally to attacks with the katana or unarmed attacks. The Kenjutsu skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

EXPERT

The expert of this style continues to combine kenjutsu and jujutsu, allowing fierce unarmed strikes to be directed against unprepared opponents without a pause in his sword technique.

Art of the Sword Advanced [Lion Technique]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Improved Unarmed Strike, Martial Weapon Proficiency (katana), Art of the Sword Novice.

Benefit: When fighting with a katana you may make an additional unarmed attack with your offhand as if you possessed the Two-Weapon Fighting Feat (a total of -2 to hit with your katana and -2 to hit with the unarmed attack). Your unarmed damage is increased to 1d4 (if already greater than 1d4, you gain a +2 bonus to unarmed damage rolls instead).

Art of the Sword Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Art of the Sword (5 ranks)

Cost: 27 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (15 points), Bushi (6 points)

Benefit: Once per round, you may declare two Raises against an opponent when attacking with a katana; if this attack is successful, you gain an additional unarmed attack against the same opponent. The TN of this attack is increased by 10. You gain a +5 bonus to damage with unarmed attacks.

MASTER

To the master of the art of the sword, the sword and the open hand are one. Such a martial artist is an expert of using unarmed techniques to slip out of harm's way, allowing him to slaughter enemies with a well placed stroke of the katana.

Art of the Sword Master [Lion Technique]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +12, Improved Unarmed Strike, Martial Weapon Proficiency (katana), Art of the Sword Advanced, Art of the Sword Novice, Void Use,

Benefit: Any time an opponent attempts to attack your katana or disarm you when wielding a katana, you gain an immediate attack of opportunity against them (you must use an unarmed strike for this attack, and this attack of opportunity is in addition to any attacks of

opportunity these actions would normally incur). If this attack is successful, the opponent attacks. Any time an opponent attempts to grapple you and fails, you gain an immediate attack of opportunity against them using a katana.

Art of the Sword Master

Required Specialized Skill: Art of the Sword (9 ranks)

Cost: 45 points

Cost Reductions: Lion Clan member (25 points), Bushi (10 points)

Benefit: Any time an opponent attempts to disarm you, you may make an unarmed attack against them. You must declare three Raises to perform this attack. If this attack is successful, the disarm attempt is cancelled.

Any time an opponent attempts to grapple you and fails, you may immediately attack them with your katana. You must declare three Raises to perform this attack.

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE MANTIS CLAN

DRUNKEN MANTIS (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

The origins of what is arguably Rokugan's most bizarre fighting style are hazy at best, as the practitioners of Drunken Mantis are not the sort of martial artists who keep accurate historical records. There are countless stories told regarding the style's origin, each more outlandish than the next. The most popular version is that a high-ranking monk of an unspecified order, during a visit to the Mantis islands, witnessed a monkey that had been given an alcoholic drink. The monk watched as the sailors attempted to catch the monkey without success, confounded by its random rolls and dodges across the crowded docks. The erratic style of Drunken Mantis is alleged to have emerged from this spectacle.

STYLE

Drunken Mantis has evolved very little. It is an extremely individualized art with a basic set of standard maneuvers. One basic premise of this art that many misunderstand is that it neither relies upon nor draws strength from the use of alcohol. While its practitioners do sometimes engage in tournaments while inebriated, and generally hold their liquor better than most, drunkenness is by no means a requirement to practice this art. It is the imitation of drunken, unpredictable movements that truly give this style its strength.

Drunken Mantis is a fluid art, with emphasis on punching and kicking rather than the holds and throws. Movement is key in Drunken Mantis, typically conducted in a staggering, almost stumbling style that befits the name. Punches are incorporated into lunges, sometimes with the attacker landing flat on his face only to roll to his feet again a moment later.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Drunken Mantis is somewhat of a mystery, perhaps even to its practitioners. Those who use Drunken Mantis delight in their ability not only to defeat a foe, but to humiliate them in the process. It is said true masters of the art will incapacitate an opponent before they even realize the supposed drunkard was even purposefully fighting back. Outside the Mantis Isles those who know of this art generally regard it as at worst dishonorable and at best a humorous style rather than a 'serious' martial art. Those who master Drunken Mantis know better. Despite its outrageous appearance, a practitioner must practice the seemingly random dodges and 'accidental' attacks rigorously.

Drunken Mantis tournaments are almost unheard of outside the Mantis islands, although there have been a few in Crab lands. These bear none of the pomp and ritual that many martial arts tournaments have, but rather are little more than barely organized drunken revelries conducted in smoke-filled arenas and conducted in the presence of drinking and gambling, often of spectacular proportions.

TRAINING

Training in Drunken Mantis is a strange and somewhat self-exploratory process. Imbibing copious amounts of alcohol may not be required when in actual combat, but it is a necessary part of the training regimen as the student learns how to relax his body and move in a random, drunken manner. The Mantis are very proud of the art that bears their name, and are quite willing to teach it to any who would learn. The fact that so few among the Great Clans take them up on their offer only assures them of the style's unique qualities.

DRUNKEN MANTIS MECHANICS

NOVICE

A novice in Drunken Mantis has begun to take advantage of the relaxed physical state resembling intoxication, using it to their advantage to duck and weave in a manner that makes it difficult for an opponent to hit them.

Drunken Mantis Novice [Mantis Kiho]

Prerequisites: Con 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: You may ready a move action to stumble away from an attacker as they attempt to attack you. You need not specify a specific target, but may stumble away as the first melee or ranged strike that targets you. You gain a +4 Dodge bonus to AC against this attack. You either move ten feet directly away from the attacker or fall prone, your choice.

Drunken Mantis Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Drunken Mantis (1 rank)

Cost: 7 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (3 points), Daredevil (2 points)

The first time each round an attacker directs a melee or ranged attack against you, you may gain a free +5 bonus to your TN to be hit if you either stagger ten feet backwards away from your attacker or fall prone, your choice. The Drunken Mantis skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

INTERMEDIATE

At this level, Drunken Mantis begins to offer the student clumsy-looking lunges to complement the art's defensive abilities.

Drunken Mantis Intermediate [Mantis Feat, Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +2, Con 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Drunken Mantis Novice

Benefit: You may gain an additional +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with an unarmed strike when charging, but fall prone in your opponent's square at the end of the charge.

Drunken Mantis Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Drunken Mantis (3 ranks)

Cost: 14 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (6 points), Daredevil (4 points)

You may gain a Free Raise on a single unarmed attack against an opponent, but immediately fall prone at their feet.

ADVANCED

At this level the opponent begins to exploit his opponent's attempts to capitalize on apparent (but intentional) mistakes in his technique. Generally this amounts to the practitioner laying down, apparently unconscious, then quickly springing to his feet when an attacker attempts to finish him.

Drunken Mantis Advanced [Mantis Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Con 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Drunken Mantis Novice, Drunken Mantis Intermediate

Benefit: You suffer no penalty to your AC for being prone. On your turn you may ready a free action against a specific opponent. If this opponent attacks you while you are prone and misses, you grab their weapon or body, using the leverage to roll to your feet in your square and attack them with an unarmed strike. If you use this strike to begin a grapple, you gain a +2 bonus to your attack roll.

Drunken Mantis Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Drunken Mantis (5 ranks)

Cost: 21 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (9 points), Daredevil (6 points)

If you are prone you may select a single opponent. If this opponent attempts to attack you, grab their weapon or body, using the leverage to roll to your feet. If you attack them with an unarmed strike within the next round, you gain a Free Raise, two if you attempt to begin a Grapple.

EXPERT

The expert of Drunken Mantis learns how to absorb impacts with drunken flexibility, absorbing hits like a rag doll and staggering back for more.

Drunken Mantis Expert [Mantis Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Con 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Drunken Mantis Novice, Drunken Mantis Intermediate, Drunken Mantis Advanced

Benefit: You may ready a move action to let your body go limp when someone attempts to attack you. You need not specify a specific target, but may do this in reaction to the first melee or ranged strike that targets you. You gain damage reduction 5/- against this attack and stumble ten feet away from your attacker, or damage reduction 10/- if you fall prone in their square. This feat may be used simultaneously with Drunken Mantis Novice.

Drunken Mantis Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Drunken Mantis (7 ranks)

Cost: 28 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (12 points), Daredevil (8 points)

The first time each round an attacker directs a melee or ranged attack against you, you may gain a Carapace rating equal to your Insight Rank if you stagger ten feet backwards away from your attacker or your Insight Rank + 2 if you fall prone, your choice. This ability may be used simultaneously with Drunken Mantis Novice.



MASTER

A true master of Drunken Mantis is extremely unpredictable, his attacks and dodges entirely erratic and random.

Drunken Mantis Master [Mantis Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Con 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Drunken Mantis Novice, Drunken Mantis Intermediate, Drunken Mantis Advanced, Drunken Mantis Expert

Benefit: As a full round action you may move your full movement and return to your starting square, stumbling about and crashing into things (you must move at least ten feet from your starting position at some point in your movement). At the end of this action you gain a +6 dodge bonus to AC that fades at a rate of +1 per round, starting at the end of your next turn. This bonus does not stack if applied multiple times. This dodge bonus applies only to attackers who witnessed your frenzied, confused movements.

Drunken Mantis Master

Required Specialized Skill: Hand-to-hand (Drunken Mantis) (9 ranks)

Cost: 35 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (15 points), Daredevil (10 points)

You may spend a full round stumbling about and crashing into things, moving at least ten feet but returning to your starting point. At the end of this action you gain a +10 bonus to your TN to be hit that fades at a rate of +2 per round, starting at the end of your next turn. This bonus is not cumulative if applied multiple times. This bonus applies only to attackers who witnessed your frenzied, confused movements.

HIMITSUHEIKI (MINOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Himitsuheiki is a highly unconventional and unorthodox fighting style that only barely qualifies to be labeled as such. The principles are uniquely suited to the Mantis mindset, accustomed as they are to utilize a variety of improvised weapons.

Himitsuheiki is a fighting style that has appeared recently, its first real documented students and masters date back to less than a century ago. Men and women who used similar means for combat had appeared throughout history, of course, but only became sufficiently organized to be considered a legitimate fighting style within the past few decades.

STYLE

Watching a master of this bizarre style is like witnessing a gifted Kabuki actor or talented acrobat. The art is one of speed and fluid movement, and it is not uncommon for onlookers to cheer and shout encouragement when a practitioner is caught up in a sudden combat or snatches up a particularly interesting weapon. This is not always a positive development, of course, as drunken samurai have been known to jump in on the other side of combat just to see if they can stop the whirlwind of activity that a himitsuheiki student becomes in adverse situations.

Himitsuheiki is a highly individualized art, with no two practitioners taking the same path to reach mastery. It is not, for most, a killing art; rather, the intent is to bewilder and drive away an opponent, granting the practitioner an opportunity to either make their escape or disable an opponent for a follow-up attack with more conventional weaponry. Some combine Himitsuheiki with other martial arts to create a truly impressive array of unpredictable attacks and countermoves. Though few Great Clan samurai would indulge in an art that uses ropes, bottles, and random debris as weaponry it has become somewhat popular among peasants, ronin, and of course the Mantis.

PURPOSE

The purpose of himitsuheiki is to allow a resourceful opponent to draw upon his environment to gain advantage on an attacker. When attacked, the practitioner can react in an instant to defend and protect himself from those who might otherwise overwhelm and quickly defeat him.

TRAINING

The training for himitsuheiki is more of an adoption of the proper mindset than instruction in a particular set of maneuvers or combat forms. A sensei that takes on a student teaches them to constantly be fully aware of all their surroundings, constantly looking for something, anything, that can be used as a weapon. Successful students quickly develop an impressive skill set. Those who are not skilled quickly abandon the art for something more suited to their abilities.

HIMITSUHEIKI MECHANICS

NOVICE

Students beginning their study of himitsuheiki have learned to use their environment as a weapon, taking advantage of their surroundings and using them to exploit an enemy's weakness.

Himitsuheiki Novice [Mantis Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +1, Dex 13+, Combat Reflexes.

Benefit: You have no attack penalty when using an improvised weapon. You gain a +1 attack bonus when attacking with such weapons.

Improvised weapons are statistically identical to a dagger, club, greatclub, whip, or spear depending on their size and composition, and you also gain proficiency with these weapons as part of this feat. The statistics of a specific improvised weapon are left to the GM's discretion.

Note: A Mantis character may choose this feat as a fighter bonus feat.

Himitsuheiki Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Himitsuheiki (1 rank)

Cost: 10 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (3 points), Bushi (2 points), Crab Hands (3 points)

You may use any mundane object as a weapon without penalty so long as you possess skill in a weapon of the same size. Improvised weapons are statistically identical to the tanto, jo, tetsubo, whip, or yari depending on their size and composition. The statistics of a specific improvised weapon are left to the GM's discretion.

INTERMEDIATE

An experienced student of himitsuheiki can quickly obtain a weapon even in desperate situations and utilize it against the enemy, and can discard weapons quickly to confuse and disorient an opponent.

Himitsuheiki Advanced [Mantis Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Dex 13+, Combat Reflexes, Himitsuheiki Novice

Benefit: Once per round, any time you are without a weapon you may make a Spot check (DC 10) to find a new weapon. If there is conceivably any sort of usable weapon in your immediate area you may pick it up as a free action (or as part of a charge or movement if it is not in your immediate grasp).

You gain a +4 bonus when feinting in combat if you drop your weapon (shoving it toward your enemy or entangling it on his weapon) as part of your attack.

Note: A Mantis character may choose this feat as a fighter bonus feat.

Himitsuheiki Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Hand-to-hand (Himitsuheiki) (5 ranks)

Cost: 28 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (9 points), Bushi (6 points), Crab Hands (9 points)

Once per round, any time you are without a weapon you may make a Perception roll vs. TN 5 to find a new weapon. If there is conceivably any sort of usable weapon in your immediate area you may pick it up and attack with it immediately.

Any time you drop a weapon as part of an attack against an opponent, (shoving it toward your enemy or entangling it on his weapon) you gain a +2 bonus to your attacks against that opponent next round.

ADVANCED

A himitsuheiki master is never unarmed and never without an entire arsenal of weapons. In the hands of such a man, any object is a deadly weapon. All weapons are generally used and quickly discarded with distracting flourishes so that the practitioner can deftly avoid attacks in the confusion.

Himitsuheiki Master [Mantis Technique]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +12, Dex 14+, Combat Reflexes, Himitsuheiki Novice, Himitsuheiki Advanced

Benefit: Your critical threat range is doubled with all improvised weapons. Once per round you gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC until your next turn if you intentionally drop a weapon.

Note: A Mantis character may choose this feat as a fighter bonus feat.

Himitsuheiki Master

Required Specialized Skill: Hand-to-hand (Himitsuheiki) (9 ranks)

Cost: 50 points

Cost Reductions: Mantis Clan member (15 points), Bushi (10 points), Crab Hands (15 points)

You roll and keep one additional die for damage with any improvised weapon. Once per round, you gain a +4 bonus to your TN to be hit until your next turn if you intentionally drop a weapon.

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE PHOENIX CLAN

KINENHI (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

"Choosing between two evils is still choosing evil."

— Shiba Tachiko, first Kinenhi master

HISTORY

Shiba was a Kami of peace and wisdom. Nearly every legend about him speaks of how he retained the serenity of Tengoku even after his fall to the earth. He had the humility required to kneel to Isawa, and he had the presence of mind to see the need to unify the disparate families into a coherent clan.

What is much more rarely discussed is Shiba's martial prowess. He was a brilliantly skilled and resourceful swordsman, and rarely lost a battle. However, he was never talented at unarmed combat. When Shiba went to the Shadowlands searching for the Seven Thunders, he was amazed to witness the unarmed combat style Shinsei used against the Horde. Though Shiba died during the battle his memories lived on in Shiba Tsuzaki, his successor.

Tsuzaki commissioned several of his samurai to develop an unarmed fighting style so that his warriors might defend themselves as well as Shinsei. Over the course of a generation, these samurai worked diligently, visited famous masters outside the clan, and finally came to develop a single style that was a synthesis of many fledgling unarmed combat styles they found across the Empire. This style was named Kinenhi.

Initially, this style was designed to be taught to every Phoenix, bushi or shugenja or scholar or courtier. However, only the bushi were truly required to learn; the shugenja's duties were too important to be distracted, and courtiers or other political functionaries were never truly expected to step forth in defense of the clan anyway.

In the year 1123 a strange magical plague called the Dark-fever swept through Phoenix lands, ravaging many of the cities where the Kinenhi dojos were built. Only one master survived, an old samurai near retirement named Shiba Kyukyo. Kyukyo delayed his retirement to teach the next generation of students, but was further horrified when most were slain by Isawa Tsuke on the Day of Thunder. He sought to rebuild again.

In its campaign to wipe out the Empire's history and traditions, the Lying Darkness saw Kinenhi as an attractive target, practiced as it was by only a single master and a handful of students. On one fateful night the Darkness' minions spilled forth from the shadows and besieged Kyukyo's dojo. The old master and his student stepped forward to battle the Darkness, unafraid of its power and unwilling to be forgotten.

The next morning, Kyukyo's dojo was gone, as if it had never been.

The Phoenix Clan mourned Kinenhi's loss, but counted it as only one of many terrible wrongs their clan was to overcome. Over two decades later, near the end of the War of Spirits, the Phoenix faced the evil of Hantei XVI. When the Phoenix refused to join his forces he began a reign of terror through the clan's villages and farmlands. In the village of Yoake Mura,



the Steel Chrysanthemum's forces met unexpected resistance. A bushi named Shiba Isao and his followers stepped forward to battle the invaders using a style not seen in a generation — Kinenhi.

On the night when the last Kinenhi dojo was destroyed, Kyukyo placed his hopes on Isao, a young prodigy whose skill now equaled that of the old master's. While his brethren stood against the darkness, Isao was ordered to flee the monastery so the style might live on. He reluctantly did so, and for years sought out new students in secret. With his clan threatened again the Kinenhi students could hide no longer. When Phoenix Champion Shiba Tsukune heard of their return she invited Isao to Shiro Shiba to be rewarded for his heroism, and began building a new Kinenhi dojo near the castle.

In the years since, Kinenhi has made something of a comeback. Though there are still few masters, they are all well respected among the Phoenix. Even Shogun Kaneka, now a member of the Phoenix Clan, has begun learning the basics of the art. The Kinenhi masters have welcomed their most famous pupil with open arms. Word of Kinenhi has spread to the Lion, and Kaneka's former allies and clansmen have begun expressing interest in Kinenhi training as a supplement to their own bushi training. Time will tell how many, if any, of these Lion are allowed to study or if this martial art can begin to bridge the lingering bad feelings between Lion and Phoenix from their conflicts in recent years.

Despite this recent popularity, Kinenhi is still a moderately obscure form of martial arts, and one that has changed radically throughout the centuries. Those who are well-versed in martial arts are often familiar enough with it to recognize the name, though few outside the clan would be able to identify it by a demonstration.

STYLE

Surprisingly enough to most who are familiar with Phoenix philosophies, Kinenhi's movements are those of a hard style, dealing with quick blows and power rather than relying on sweeping throws and locks. In addition, defensive maneuvers tend to rely on hard blocks over more graceful maneuvers. Meditation and focus are also important, and though it is an aggressive art, students are cautioned to use it only in self defense. The art is a contradiction to some, a powerful weapon used only by men of peace.

Since Kinenhi's return to the clan, it has evolved yet again. Master Isao's influence has made the style even more aggressive than it was in past generations, a necessary change so that the style (and its practitioners) would survive.

PURPOSE

Kinenhi is a Phoenix martial art, and as such is far more concerned with the reasons why something is done than that they are done. Kinenhi concentrates on the mastery of kata as a way to achieve the mindset necessary for battle; complex maneuvers are practiced until they can be performed as an instinctive reaction to an attack. There are five core precepts, each one considered 'the first,' showing that they are each as important as the one before them.

- One, Strive for Perfection of Character
- One, Guard the Path of Truth
- One, Strive to Excel in the Art
- One, Follow the Way of Courtesy
- One, Avoid Violence



TRAINING

Any Phoenix can learn Kinenhi, if they have the time. The sensei turn away none who have a true desire to learn. No student is ever forced to leave the dojo, though those who do not show promise will not be trained in the more complex techniques.

Physical training is light, often an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening every day is considered sufficient. As in the rest of the art, quality of movement is stressed over quantity. Frequently, sensei ask their students difficult ethical questions while they train, hoping to test the student's mind and body, as well as forcing them to deal with distractions. Doing so, it is said, strengthens character and morals as the student learns the path of kinenhi.

For those outside the clan, admittance to the secrets of Kinenhi is a more difficult endeavor. Some form of examination is mandatory, as acceptance of the five precepts is required before any training begins, and students are watched carefully. For these students, the mid-training questioning is

all the more important; any hint that the student is attempting to betray his sensei by spreading the secrets of Kinenhi without permission can lead to immediate expulsion.

KINENHI MECHANICS

NOVICE

A novice Kinenhi student knows the basic principle of Kinenhi — that violence is a necessary tool, if one to be used reluctantly. Novices learn to defend themselves with rudimentary blocks long before they learn the detailed attack methods of the style.

Kinenhi Novice [Phoenix Kiho]

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike
Benefit: You gain a +2 shield bonus to AC when fighting unarmed.

Kinenhi Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Kinenhi (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Phoenix Clan member (5 points), Bushi or Monk (1 point, not cumulative if both)

You may add your Agility to your TN to be Hit. This counts as armor, and is cumulative with light armor.

INTERMEDIATE

The experienced student begins to learn the swift measured blows that Kinenhi is known for. At this level of skill, the student's power increases greatly.

Kinenhi Intermediate [Phoenix Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Int

13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kinenhi Novice

Benefit: You gain a +6 bonus on all rolls to confirm a critical threat with an unarmed strike.

Kinenhi Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Kinenhi (3 ranks)

Cost: 16 points

Cost Reductions: Phoenix Clan member (10 point), Bushi or Monk (2 points, not cumulative if both),

If you re-roll a 10 on an unarmed damage roll, you may immediately spend a Void Point to roll and keep an additional die of damage. If you roll multiple 10s on a single damage roll this ability may be used as many times as you have Void Points remaining. (As this is not an "action," the Way of the Phoenix technique does not apply to this use of Void.)

ADVANCED

Students of advanced skill are skilled with swift, brutally accurate blows as well as powerful blocks.

Kinenhi Advanced [Phoenix Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Int 13+,

Improved Unarmed Strike, Kinenhi Novice, Kinenhi Intermediate

Benefit: You gain a +4 shield bonus to AC when fighting unarmed (this does not stack with the ability gained at Kinenhi Novice). At the beginning of the round you



may forego this shield bonus till your next action to increase your threat range when fighting unarmed by +1 until your next action. This bonus is applied before bonuses such as the Improved Critical feat.

Kinenhi Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Kinenhi (5 ranks)

Cost: 24 points

Cost Reductions: Phoenix Clan member (15 points), Bushi or Monk (3 points, not cumulative if both)

You may add twice your Agility to your TN to be Hit. This counts as armor, and is cumulative with light armor. This replaces the ability gained at Kinenhi Novice.

On your turn, you may give up the TN bonus granted by this ability until your next turn. If you do so, you may re-roll two dice on an unarmed damage roll. The new die rolls count only if 10's are rolled (and re-rolled normally) otherwise they count as their original values.

EXPERT

A student who has progressed to this level is capable of swiftly dispatching nearly any foe with an economy of blows.

Kinenhi Expert [Phoenix Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Int 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kinenhi Novice, Kinenhi Intermediate, Kinenhi Advanced

Benefit: Once per attack, if you roll a critical threat against an opponent on an unarmed attack, you can give up the right to confirm the critical and instead make another unarmed attack (not necessarily against that opponent) with the same bonus to hit. This free attack invites an attack of opportunity from the target.

Note: This ability may be used against targets normally immune to critical hits. You cannot gain another free attack on the free attack gained from this feat.

Kinenhi Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Kinenhi (7 ranks)

Cost: 32 points

Cost Reductions: Phoenix Clan member (20 points), Bushi or Monk (4 points, not cumulative if both)

Once per round, if you roll more than two 10's on a single unarmed damage roll you may immediately make another unarmed attack (not necessarily against that same opponent). These 10's need not all be kept, merely rolled. If the target survives this attack they may immediately attack you in return.

MASTER

Few Kinenhi masters still exist, though those that do are a force to be reckoned with.

Kinenhi Master

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Int 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kinenhi Novice, Kinenhi Intermediate, Kinenhi Advanced, Kinenhi Expert.

Benefit: On your action, before making attack rolls for a round, you may choose to subtract a number from all your AC and all unarmed melee attack rolls. This number may not exceed your base attack bonus, and applies until your next turn. Any time you roll an unarmed critical threat against an opponent before your next turn, they must make a Will save (DC 10 + double

your Wisdom modifier + the number you subtracted from your AC and unarmed melee attack rolls). If they fail this save, they are stunned until your next action.

Note: Targets immune to critical hits are also immune to this stun effect.

Kinenhi Master

Required Specialized Skill: Kinenhi (9 ranks)

Cost: 40 points

Cost Reductions: Phoenix Clan member (25 points), Bushi or Monk (5 points, not cumulative if both)

You may make Raises on an unarmed damage roll to attempt to stun an opponent with an unarmed attack. You must make at least one Raise to use this ability. The target rolls their Earth vs. a TN of 10 + 5 per Raise made on the attack. You may reduce your own TN to be Hit until your next action to increase this TN, but you may not reduce your TN by an amount greater than the TN bonus gained from Kinenhi Advanced. A stunned target may not move or make any attacks until your next turn.

This ability does not work on undead creatures or other targets immune to either poison or mental effects.

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE SCORPION CLAN

NINJUTSU (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

As a martial art form, ninjutsu has evolved almost exclusively with the Scorpion Clan. It is a strange style, hinging upon the use of many different weapons rather than relying strictly on unarmed attacks or a single weapon. The early techniques of ninjutsu began with the legendary Bayushi Aramoro, the most famous ninja in the history of the Scorpion Clan. Aramoro was an unforgiving and harsh teacher, allowing only his senior students to study his personal combat style. His art was a complex method of disabling an opponent with blinding speed, focusing upon removing the opponent's ability to stage an effective counterattack.

When the Hantei learned of the Scorpion's illegal spy network of ninja, he commanded them destroyed. The Scorpion commanded a great number of ninja to publicly commit seppuku or endure execution, including Aramoro. Few were able to learn Aramoro's true style, and those who did found it nearly impossible to master. Many of the greatest secrets of ninjutsu were taken by Aramoro to his grave, if only because none could live up to his ability. After the Emperor turned his attention elsewhere, the Scorpion began once again training the ninja in secret for the good of the Empire, and some of Aramoro's students survived to pass a lesser version of his art to another generation. Some Scorpion claim that the secrets of Aramoro's style must be recorded in some hidden journal, and many ninja have spent their entire lives searching for such a priceless document.

Over the centuries, the ninja have honed their fighting style and improved upon what Aramoro's students retained. Many great masters, including the Aramoro's own namesake, brother of the infamous Scorpion Champion Bayushi Shoji, have left their indelible mark on the quality of the art. Though the modern ninjutsu fighting style is among the deadliest in the Empire, some still wonder what secrets were lost with the original Aramoro's death.

STYLE

Ninjutsu hinges on the principles of speed and accuracy over stamina and raw power. Ninja are trained to disable or even kill an opponent with several quick, unforeseen attacks then fade away quickly to rest or escape. Taking time to defeat a foe through brute strength is an impractical waste of energy. Delaying an opponent to study technique is less foolish but also frowned upon — a ninja should learn his enemy's weaknesses before combat is joined. A ninja should strike first, and that first strike should count.

The martial art places less emphasis on timing than other combat forms and instead focuses on spacing. Ninja are infamous for staying just outside of an opponent's reach or standing close enough that other martial arts are rendered ineffective. Due to the similarities in their style with "soft" arts that focus on throwing and grappling, such as Mizu-do, ninja generally do not attempt to combat such techniques with unarmed combat, but will strike down a skilled martial artist at range, often using poisoned weapons to wear down their enemy's physical prowess.

PURPOSE

Like many tools in a ninja's arsenal, ninjutsu is only used when other, more practical methods are not applicable. An enemy is much easier to silence with a tanto across their throat, and ninja-to are more effective at hamstringing an opponent than attempting to cause nerve damage with a complex grip to the leg. Ninja resort only to unarmed combat when they must, when proximity does not allow for weapons, or when the ninja finds himself with no weapons at all.

Ninjutsu is never shared with those outside the clan, and only rarely taught to those outside the Shosuro Ninja Academy. Non-ninja who learn the art are almost exclusively agents of the Scorpion who can be expected to have to make quick work of an enemy without the use of weapons. Rarely can such students be found among the Kuroiban shugenja order, but bushi and courtiers who serve as infiltrators learn the art as well. The ruling lords of the Bayushi also generally have some passing familiarity with ninjutsu, if only to better protect themselves from traitors who might utilize it against them.

TRAINING

Besides combat, ninjutsu teaches students a great deal about survival and improvisation. Though ninja have many trademark weapons, they know better to rely on them specifically. Urban and wilderness survival is taught, as well as how to craft improvised weapons and make use of nearly anything as a tool, clothing, or food. Meditative focus is also surprisingly important. A ninja must, above all, control his emotions. In the shadowy world of assassination, emotion can cause poor judgment. A ninja must, above all, focus on the success of his mission. Anything else, any hint of ego or fear, will prevent that success.

Because of the precise nature of ninjutsu's attacks and the amount of force that must be delivered into a small target, a student's fingertips, toes, palms, and heels are usually calloused to a spectacular degree. Ninja train to deliver disabling attacks with a single fingertip or kick by repeatedly striking bins of sand or pebbles, then trees, then stone. It is not unusual for a member of the Scorpion Clan to wear silken gloves with their kimono; this tradition rose partly to hide an assassin's well-worked hands when attempting to pose as a harmless courtier.

NINJUTSU MECHANICS

NOVICE

The basics of ninjutsu encompass knowing how to take advantage of an opponent who is encumbered by armor.

Ninjutsu Novice [Scorpion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +1, Dex 13+, Sneak attack damage +1d6.

Benefit: Any time you successfully strike a flat-footed opponent you may take a five foot step as a free action.

Note: This feat cannot be used when wearing armor with a check penalty greater than zero.

Ninjutsu Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Ninjutsu (1 rank)

Cost: 12

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (3 points), Bayushi or Shosuro (5 points), Quick (2 point).

Any time you attack an opponent unaware of your presence you gain a +5 bonus to your TN to be hit until your next turn.

INTERMEDIATE

As the student progresses, he learns how to subtly exploit an opponent through careful, measured movements.

Ninjutsu Intermediate [Scorpion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +3, Dex 13+, Sneak attack damage +2d6, Ninjutsu Novice.

Benefit: At the beginning of a round you may select a specific opponent. Each time that opponent moves so that you are in their threatened area, you may make an opposed Dexterity check against them. If this check is successful, you may take a five foot step in any direction. If an opponent moves into your threatened area and you move away, their movement immediately stops (though they may use another move action to close in on you if they have one, and you may use this feat again to try to stay out of range).

Note: This feat cannot be used when wearing armor with a check penalty greater than zero.

Ninjutsu Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Ninjutsu (3 ranks)

Cost: 20

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (6 points), Bayushi or Shosuro (6 points), Quick (4 point).

At the beginning of your turn, you may impose a +10 or +20 penalty to all your TN's until your next turn. This number is added as a bonus on your TN to be hit. If all of your enemies are unaware of your presence at the beginning of your turn, you may impose this penalty after your action for the round.

ADVANCED

The ninja who has reached this level of training has learned how to conserve his energy for a cunning strike against his enemy.

Ninjutsu Advanced [Scorpion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Dex 13+, Sneak attack damage +3d6, Ninjutsu Novice, Ninjutsu Intermediate.

Benefit: You may ready a move action against a single opponent. If this opponent moves into your threatened area you may use this move action to immediately make a melee attack against them.

Note: This feat cannot be used when wearing armor with a check penalty greater than zero.

Normal: You may not use move actions to perform attacks.

Ninjutsu Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Ninjutsu (5 ranks)

Cost: 30

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (9 points), Bayushi or Shosuro (9 points), Quick (6 point).

On your action you may delay your attack and target a specific opponent. If this opponent attacks you, you attack just before their attack roll with a Free Raise.

EXPERT

An expert of the art is adept at not only controlling and foiling an enemy's movement, but quick escape should that enemy close the distance.

Ninjutsu Expert [Scorpion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +9, Dex 13+, Sneak attack damage +5d6, Ninjutsu Novice, Ninjutsu Intermediate, Ninjutsu Advanced.

Benefit: Once per round when you are damaged in combat you may make a Reflex save (DC equal to the damage dealt). If this save is successful you still take damage normally but may immediately take a free five foot step in any direction.

Ninjutsu Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Ninjutsu (7 ranks)

Cost: 40

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (12 points), Bayushi or Shosuro (12 points), Quick (8 point).

If you are damaged in combat you may make a contested Reflexes roll with your attacker. If you are successful that attacker may not attack you again this round.

MASTER

The master of ninjutsu is able to take advantage of the slightest opening in his opponent's defense, such a ninja is able to cripple even the most well prepared opponents with a few strikes.

Ninjutsu Master [Scorpion Feat]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +12, Dex 13+, Sneak attack damage +6d6, Ninjutsu Novice, Ninjutsu Intermediate, Ninjutsu Advanced, Ninjutsu Expert.

Benefit: Once per encounter you may make a full attack against a flat-footed opponent as a standard action.

Ninjutsu Master

Required Specialized Skill: Ninjutsu (9 ranks)

Cost: 50 points

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (15 points), Bayushi or Shosuro (15 points), Quick (10 point).

You gain one extra attack per round which may be used against any opponent unaware of your presence.



MARUMOJUTSU (MINOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Based upon the teachings of a somewhat atypical Scorpion Bushi, Bayushi Marumo, the style of Marumojutsu is truly a Scorpion art. Those who know the combat technique respect it or revile it, usually both. Marumo lived during the Clan War, a time when a Scorpion bushi was either dead or in hiding from the Emerald Legions. Like many of his peers, Marumo survived in the guise of a ronin, while still serving the Scorpion lords in secret. Though Marumo had a quiet and inoffensive demeanor, he constantly found himself in trouble with one overzealous clan samurai or another. The scenario was almost always the same — a clan bushi would recognize Marumo as a fallen Scorpion, take some imagined insult at Marumo's words, behavior, or presence, and then attempt to instigate violence. In those times for a lone Scorpion to draw his sword against a samurai was tantamount to suicide.

Though Marumo was an accomplished swordsman and capable of talking his way out of most situations, he realized that not every such encounter was going to end in such a manner. To remedy this, he began studying the basic ways of jujutsu and applied his keen intellect and Scorpion training to develop something new. Studying the arts utilized by the Brotherhood, he began to develop a defensive unarmed combat style, a means by which he could escape combat and leave his enemy alive so that he would not have to worry for vengeful relatives hunting him.

Marumo's style became his passion, and he continued to work on perfecting it long after the Scorpion's reinstatement as a clan. The style soon began to grow in popularity, as many Scorpion courtiers began to see the value in a style that leaves one's enemies alive (to be exploited another day). Marumojutsu has become quite popular with bodyguards, courtiers, and other Scorpion who do not always deem it necessary to take their opponents' lives.

STYLE

The concept of Marumojutsu is simple — defend until the opportunity is presented to incapacitate the enemy. Many defensive arts teach complicated methods of joint locks and throws meant to use the opponent's movements against them. The Scorpion teach that even that amount of effort is a waste when one can just wait for an opponent to defeat himself.

The stance of Marumojutsu is immediately recognizable to one familiar with the art. The legs are squared in a relaxed, casual stance. The left arm is held folded behind the back, out of the way. The right arm is held out to one side, ready to block and parry. Some of the more arrogant practitioners of the art hold the right hand behind the head, in a relaxed posture resembling sleep, to infuriate their opponent.

PURPOSE

Marumojutsu was designed to avoid attack. Because Marumo initially did not wish to offend his opponents or appear a skilled warrior, most of these dodges and parries appear to be pure luck. A student of the art casually sidesteps and parries any strike with relaxed, graceful motion. Though Marumo originally devised this style to avoid infuriating his enemy, modern practitioners project a façade of bored indifference, pretending that the battle is effortless, consciously taunting the enemy while they wait for the moment to strike.

The student of Marumojutsu waits for a single perfect moment and lashes out with blinding speed. The attack is always fierce and strikes the opponent's greatest weakness. This attack strikes at the nerves and chi of the opponent, causing them to become stunned instead of truly wounded. Masters of Marumojutsu are able to patiently wait for an opportunity to strike, calmly defending themselves for minutes (or in some cases even hours) and then leave his opponent completely dazed and unmoving on the ground. What's more, the attacks are designed to do only miniscule physical damage, allowing the Scorpion to truthfully say he did nothing to hurt the man laying facedown in the dirt.

TRAINING

Like many Scorpion arts, students of Marumojutsu are taught to study the nature of human emotion and behavior. Few strikes are taught as part of the regimen, as few strikes are needed. Most of the physical aspect of Marumojutsu centers around countless ways to dodge, block, or deflect an attack. The art also focuses heavily on teaching graceful, fluid motion and structured breathing in order to expend the least amount of effort possible in a fight, hoping to outlast an opponent if possible. If a particularly canny foe presents a flawless defense to match his offensive technique, the Marumojutsu student must be prepared to wait any length of time until the inevitable mistake is made. Students are also taught to be amazingly perceptive, as any mistake must be exploited immediately.

MARUMOJUTSU MECHANICS

NOVICE

At the most basic level, the Marumojutsu student is unbelievably skilled at defending themselves.

Marumojutsu Novice [Scorpion Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: When you declare Total Defense, your Dexterity bonus to AC is doubled. While you are on Total Defense, each time an opponent attacks you and misses in combat, your initiative for that combat increases by 2.

Marumojutsu Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Marumojutsu (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (3 points), Courtier (1 point), Clear Thinker (1 point), Balance (1 point).

When you declare Full Defense, you may add your School Rank to your Agility. While you are on Full Defense, if an opponent attacks you and misses, you may roll an additional die for Initiative for the remainder of the combat. Dice gained this way are cumulative, but only one bonus die may be gained each round.

ADVANCED

As mastery of the art progresses, the Marumojutsu student learns the basic techniques of striking nerves and even affecting the chi of his opponent.

Marumojutsu Advanced [Scorpion Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Marumojutsu Novice

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Benefit: Any time an opponent misses you in combat, you gain a +1 bonus to your next unarmed melee attack against them. This bonus is cumulative, but cannot be greater than your base attack.

Note: The base attack requirement of this class is reduced by one if you possess a Courtier Ability.

Marumojutsu Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Marumojutsu (5 ranks)

Cost: 22 points

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (9 points), Courtier (3 points), Clear Thinker (3 point), Balance (3 point).

Each time an opponent misses you in combat, you gain a Free Raise on your next unarmed melee attack against them. You may not gain more Free Raises in this manner than your Insight Rank.

MASTER

The Marumojutsu master is a feared figure, practically impossible to strike by even the most skilled warrior, and able to wear down any opponent who dares cross him.

Marumojutsu Master [Scorpion Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Marumojutsu Novice, Marumojutsu Advanced.

Benefit: You may target one opponent in combat. Every round you perform no attacks and remain within 30 ft. of this opponent, you gain a +2d6 subdual damage bonus on your next unarmed melee attack against them. You may not gain more damage dice than double your character level.

You may change the target at will, but each time you do so, the subdual damage dice pool is reset to zero.

Note: The base attack requirement of this class is reduced by one for each Courtier Ability you possess, to a minimum of +6.

Marumojutsu Master

Required Specialized Skill: Marumojutsu (9 ranks)

Cost: 40 points

Cost Reductions: Scorpion Clan member (15 points), Courtier (5 points), Clear Thinker (5 points), Balance (5 points).

Benefit: You may target one opponent in combat. Every round you perform no attacks and remain within 30 ft. of this opponent, you gain a free damage die on your next unarmed melee attack against them. You may not gain more damage dice than your Insight Rank, and you may not drive an opponent past the Down level with a strike modified by these damage dice.

You may change the target at will, but each time you do so, the subdual damage dice pool is reset to zero.

BARIQU WRESTLING (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Bariqu wrestling is relatively new to Rokugan, or at least new to most students of hand-to-hand styles. The style has its origins among the Ujik-hai nomads of the Burning Sands, and came to the Empire along Moto family who descended from these barbarians. The Moto have kept such a low profile throughout most of their history in the Empire. Many of their unique traditions, including their combat styles, were unknown until the Khan Moto Gaheris arrived in Rokugan at the side of Lady Shinjo several decades ago. Now that the Moto are among the largest families in the Empire, much of their unique culture is more prominent.

The origins of bariqu are among the oldest of all Moto traditions. The Moto tribes spent the vast majority of their history in the bleak and unforgiving Burning Sands. With resources always in limited supply, power struggles within the tribes had the potential to decimate entire groups, leaving them vulnerable to their enemies and the environment. It was therefore necessary to establish a means of challenging one's leaders without open combat between competing individuals or factions.

Wrestlers wear a metal-studded, sleeveless leather top, white pants, and sturdy riding boots. In previous ages, the wrestlers often went bare-chested. This was partially a way to demonstrate one's physical power and form and partially a way to ensure that all competitors were male. Legends hold that a woman disguised herself as a man to enter the contest on one occasion and revealed her true gender only after she had defeated all challengers and risen to become the greatest bariqu wrestler of her age. Since that time, Moto women have been free to participate as they wish.

STYLE

Bariqu is essentially a recreational form of ritualized combat. It long ago lost its original purpose as a means of challenging a tribal leader, and now is exclusively practiced for sport. It is a grappling art with low, rapid attacks and grabs. A practitioner of bariqu stays low to the ground, slowly circling his opponent while looking for an opportunity to begin a grapple. The traditional style maintains a crude ring, often formed by natural boundaries in outdoor matches. The first to be knocked to the ground or pushed from the ring is declared the loser. More modern variants, many of which are extremely popular, more or less do away with the notion of a ring and call for the wrestlers to fight until one is unable to continue.

A unique practice that has persisted to the modern day is the pre-match dancing that all competitors perform. This bizarre, stylized dance is supposed to mimic the eagle in flight, and is an extremely important ritual element of the combat. Even if a wrestler is defeated, he can claim glory from the match if the onlookers find favor with the style and grace with which he conducts the pre-match dance.

PURPOSE

Bariqu originated from a primitive form of combat designed to prove one warrior's dominance over another. The holds and throws used are designed to immobilize and incapacitate an opponent without causing permanent injury, as one's opponent was also generally a comrade. This is not to say that the style is without real offensive power, however, as a trained combatant can easily extend and increase the holds to the point that bones can be broken with little effort.

Currently, the Moto have little realistic combat use for wrestling. Combat is almost exclusively weapon based. Though bariqu has its place in a warrior's arsenal, Moto warriors usually wrestle only for sport now. Of particular enjoyment to many Moto is testing their skill in unarmed combat against practitioners of other martial arts.

TRAINING

Training in bariqu wrestling begins during childhood, as it is a common pastime among both children and adolescents. It is also the first combat style they begin studying when they prepare for their gempukku, as it builds on skills that the young men already possess and allows their sensei to assess their level of fitness and strength. Wrestling and kenjutsu are the two constants around which years of weapons training is based, and among Moto warriors the two are considered equally noble pursuits.

There are a small number of wrestlers in Moto lands who are so skilled and well known that they have little else they do for the clan. Wealthy lords or patrons sponsor these athletes, traveling around the provinces in a series of tournaments for the pleasure of various minor daimyo or governors. As in days of old, this is a source of great enjoyment for many Unicorn samurai, and these tournaments see heavy attendance and truly staggering amounts of gambling.

BARIQU WRESTLING MECHANICS

NOVICE

A beginning student of bariqu is taught the traditional means of immobilizing a foe through painful holds.

Bariqu Novice [Unicorn Kiho]

Prerequisites: Str 13+

Benefit: You receive +2 bonus on all grapple attacks and opposed grapple checks. Your unarmed damage die, if less than d6, increases to d6 when in a grapple.

Bariqu Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Bariqu (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (3 points), Moto Family (2 points), Large (1 point)

You gain a Free Raise on grapple attacks. You may add your Water ring to the Wounds inflicted every round as a result of a successful grapple. The bariqu skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

INTERMEDIATE

As they advance, students of bariqu learn the essentials of forcing an opponent backward once they have grappled them.

Bariqu Intermediate [Unicorn Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +2, Str 13+, Bariqu Novice

Benefit: If you control a grapple you may make an opposed Strength check as a free action. If you win this check, you release the grapple and shove your opponent five feet away, plus five feet for every five points by which you beat his Strength check.

If you fail this Strength check your opponent immediately gains control of the grapple.

Bariqu Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Bariqu (3 ranks)

Cost: 16 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (6 points), Moto Family (4 points), Large (2 point)

If you attempt to throw an opponent you have grappled (and you control the grapple) you do not need to make the usual two Raises to perform the throw. If you fail to throw your opponent they may throw you in return or immediately escape the grapple.

ADVANCED

Bariqu artists can maneuver opponents held in a grapple with great ease, and can deal great damage with punishing joint locks.

Bariqu Advanced [Unicorn Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Str 13+, Bariqu Novice, Bariqu Intermediate

Benefit: You deal an extra 1d6 subdual damage on all unarmed strikes while in a grapple.

Bariqu Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Bariqu (5 ranks)

Cost: 24 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (9 points), Moto Family (6 points), Large (3 points)

You roll and keep an extra die of damage on all damage rolls in a grapple.

EXPERT

During later training, bariqu practitioners are taught to redouble their efforts, wringing success even from the most daunting failures.

Bariqu Expert [Unicorn Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Str 13+, Bariqu Novice, Bariqu Intermediate, Bariqu Advanced

Benefit: Once per round, immediately after any failed roll during a grapple, you may re-roll and keep the better of the two results. You may also re-roll any damage die that yields a result of 1 during a grapple.

Bariqu Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Bariqu (7 ranks)

Cost: 32 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (12 points), Moto Family (8 points), Large (4 points)

You may spend a Void Point to reroll a failed roll during a grapple, keeping the better of the two results. You may do this once per roll.

MASTER

A master of bariqu can, with a successful hold, immobilize and even paralyze an opponent with a combination of sheer strength and expert manipulation.

Bariqu Master [Unicorn Kiho]



Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Str 13+, Bariqu Novice, Bariqu Intermediate, Bariqu Advanced, Bariqu Expert

Benefit: Any time you deal a critical hit during a grapple your target suffers 2d4 temporary Strength damage.

Bariqu Master

Required Specialized Skill: Wrestling (Bariqu) (9 ranks)

Cost: 40 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (15 points), Moto Family (10 points), Large (5 points)

Any time you deal two Wound levels of damage in a single attack during a grapple, your target's Strength is reduced by one for one hour. A target with zero Strength is paralyzed. A Path to Inner Peace spell cast specifically for this purpose can restore one rank of lost Strength, plus one rank per Raise.

SHIOTOME-DO (MINOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Jiu-jutsu is the most common of all hand-to-hand styles, and was practiced even at the time the Kami fell to Ningendo from the heavens. Almost all specialized martial arts that originate within Rokugan are derived from some basic principle

taught by jiu-jutsu instructors. Lady Shinjo's favored warrior Otaku was said to be an unparalleled master of jiu-jutsu at the time she left Rokugan along with the Ki-Rin Clan.

Otaku and her followers, most notably her daughter Shiko, were at the forefront of Shinjo's army. They faced countless new foes in battle, and studied the same foes after Ide and Iuchi forged treaties between the Ki-Rin and the new cultures they encountered. In each case, they adopted new maneuvers and techniques into their fighting style. As years stretched into decades, their art came to resemble standard jiu-jutsu less and less.

Otaku's followers, warrior women one and all, have embraced the stylized art their founder began hundreds of years ago. The Unicorn Clan's return to Rokugan two and a half centuries ago quickly demonstrated the prowess of Otaku cavalry, but the time since then has proven to many how dangerous they are even when dismounted. During the Shinjo family's reign over the clan, they utilized the Otaku as their rapid-strike force, giving them little opportunity to demonstrate their battle skills other than their legendary mounted combat abilities. Since the Moto have assumed power, however, the renamed Utaku have often been deployed along the Baraunghar or the Khol forces commanded by the Khan. This more traditional military role has allowed the Utaku to demonstrate, at least to their comrades-in-arms and opponents, their vast prowess at other forms of combat, including unarmed combat.

STYLE

Shiotome-do is a crisp, precise art with exact movements and carefully measured strikes, an even balance between patient counterattacks and naked aggression. A skilled practitioner can make punishing strikes to weak areas or nerve clusters, waiting for an attack that they can exploit. When an opponent attacks, the artist catches their arm or leg and uses the leverage to place them in an immobilizing hold, exerting terrible pressure until their opponent submits or loses consciousness.

PURPOSE

This particular jujutsu variant is designed for use against opponents who are larger and weigh more, making it ideal for Utau Battle Maidens to complement their vast weapons training. To the Utau, Shiotome-do is the perfect tool by which to prove female fighting prowess to easily equal, and in many cases surpasses, that of men. It is designed to use the typically smaller, lighter frame of a woman to great advantage against larger, slower foes.

TRAINING

Utau women, even those who are not destined to join the Battle Maidens for one reason or another, are taught the basics of Shiotome-do if only for self-defense. Any among their number who choose or are chosen to pursue martial paths have the option to study Shiotome-do at great length. There are sensei at every major Utau dojo that have mastered its simple strengths.

Training in Shiotome-do is begun early in a potential bushi's career, as the techniques that involve leverage can never be so easily understood as when the student is much smaller than the instructor. It is an empowering experience for young Utau women, and is regarded as a pivotal step in the development of a proper Battle Maiden's outlook on life and death.

The Battle Maidens do not guard the secrets of Shiotome-do quite as closely as much of their training, and a handful of men have mastered the art. Generally these are members of the Utau family, taught how to defend themselves so that they can protect Utau interests at home while the Battle Maidens are away at war.

SHIOTOME-DO MECHANICS

NOVICE

Beginning students of Shiotome-do are taught to find the weaknesses in an opponent's defense and strike at their nerve clusters, disorienting them and leaving them vulnerable to follow-up attacks.

Shiotome-do Novice [Unicorn Kiho]

You may strike at weaknesses in an opponent's defense.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +1, Dex 13, Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: Any time you make a successful unarmed attack against an opponent, you gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls to initiate a grapple with that same opponent for one round. You also gain a +2 bonus to the subsequent opposed grapple check.

Shiotome-do Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Shiotome-do (2 rank)

Cost: 11 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (3 points), Utau family (3 points), Female (3 points)

Whenever you make a successful unarmed attack against an opponent, you gain a Free Raise on any grappling roll made against that same opponent for one round. The Shiotome-do skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

ADVANCED

The intermediate student of Shiotome-do has learned to force a grappled opponent to the ground with ease.

Shiotome-do Advanced [Unicorn Feat, Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Shiotome-do Novice

Benefit: Once per round, if you control a grapple, you may make a trip attack against your opponent as a free action. This attack provokes no attacks of opportunity, and you gain a +2 bonus on your opposed Strength check. If successful you may choose to maintain the grapple (falling prone with your opponent) or release it (leaving them to fall prone in your square). If this trip attack fails, your opponent may not trip you in return.

Shiotome-do Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Shiotome-do (4 rank)

Cost: 33 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (9 points), Utau family (9 points), Female (9 points)

If you control a grapple against an opponent, you may make a contested Strength roll. If successful, your opponent falls to the earth. You may choose to maintain your grapple and fall with them or release them to fall to the earth.



MASTER

The greatest practitioners of Shiotome-do have mastered the merciless holds that characterize the art. Such a warrior can cripple and incapacitate an opponent in moments.

Shiotome-do Master [Unicorn Feat, Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +12, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Shiotome-do Novice, Shiotome-do Advanced

Benefit: Any attacks made against a prone, grappled opponent are automatically critical threats.

Shiotome-do Master

Required Specialized Skill: Hand-to-hand (Shiotome-do) (9 ranks)

Cost: 55 points

Cost Reductions: Unicorn Clan member (15 points), Utaku family (15 points), Female (15 points)

If you are grappling a prone opponent, you roll and keep two extra dice on all damage rolls.

MARTIAL ARTS MARTIAL ARTS OF THE NEZUMI

MOCHATCHIKKAN (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

Most Rokugani sensei would find the idea that the scattered Nezumi tribes might possess a fighting style as deep and complex as a human martial art difficult to believe. Nezumi who practice the fighting style they call Mochatchikkan ("casting-down-the-stalks-of-grass-with-great-skill") would likewise hesitate to compare their style to Rokugani martial arts. From a Nezumi standpoint, however, this is a matter of pride as no human martial art has a long history and legacy that remotely compares to Mochatchikkan. Though its movements may appear uncontrolled, frenzied, and instinctive, *Mochatchikkan* is an ancient and subtle style. It is also one of the few Nezumi traditions believed to predate the fall of their once great civilization.

In modern times, the Nezumi dwell in scattered nomadic tribes throughout the Empire, many of which have had little or no conflict with each other since the Terrible Day when Fu Leng ravaged their society. Nonetheless, Mochatchikkan is a common thread that binds all Nezumi tribes. Every tribe practices this form of unarmed combat, and all call it by the same name. It is the most honored of all Nezumi fighting arts, though two different tribes may practice its techniques in wholly different manners. Those who practice this art are called mocha'mocha ("grass cutters").

The Tch'tch (Rememberers) of the Nezumi are primarily responsible for the style surviving as long as it has. Though they are not warriors, the Tch'tch frequently find the meditative practices of Mochatchikkan valuable for preserving and ordering the memories as is their duty. As the Rememberers' survival was the Nezumi's top priority on the Terrible Day, Mochatchikkan survived with them. During the rough and dangerous years following their society's downfall, the Tch'tch taught Mochatchikkan to any who could learn, and it served

their warriors well. In modern times, it is most commonly practiced by those rare, fearless Nezumi known as Chitatchikkan ("brave-bold-sunlit-warriors-with-great-skill").

As members of the Crab Clan have long held a closer relationship with the Nezumi than most, Crab warriors occasionally express interest in Nezumi fighting techniques. Mochatchikkan is a difficult style for non-Nezumi to learn, as it relies heavily upon the tail, teeth, and prodigious leaping ability of a Ratling. The few humans who have managed to master the style are looked upon with a mixture of awe and pity—for surely these are souls who were destined to become great Nezumi Warriors, became lost on their way to this world, and wandered into a human body by mistake.

STYLE

To a non-Nezumi, Mochatchikkan appears to be a frenzied, chaotic fighting style. A standard attack involves hurling oneself at the enemy headlong, shrieking, biting, and clawing all the while. To appear uncontrolled is, in fact, the first lesson of Mochatchikkan. The novice mocha'mocha is taught to gather all the chaos, emotion, distraction, and rage and cast it out of his mind, to wield them as weapons in a circle around his mind while leaving the center pure. Thus while a mocha'mocha may appear insane, with ruffled fur and wild eyes, buried within this shell of madness is a calculating warrior.

Mochatchikkan teaches that a Nezumi's deadliest weapon is the mind, for all of a Nezumi's other natural weapons are directed by it. The body already knows how to defend itself, though it may not always do so in the most appropriate manner. It is the mind's duty to channel the body's instincts and then allow the body to use its strengths in the most efficient manner. By finding a balance between instinctive aggression and purposeful action, a true master cannot be defeated.

A great deal of variety in style exists between one tribe and another. Some of this is due to tribes developing in seclusion for centuries, each focusing upon a different aspect of Mochatchikkan they find more efficient. Some of this also stems from the genetic diversity of Nezumi. Some Ratlings have sharper teeth than others. Some can leap greater distances. Some are simply stronger. Mochatchikkan teaches each Nezumi to recognize the strengths and weaknesses within their body so that the mind can better focus its strengths against the enemy.

PURPOSE

Mochatchikkan is a tool of survival. The Nezumi use it to defend themselves and their tribes. Like many Nezumi tools, it serves many purposes. In the paws of a Chitatchikkan, it is a weapon solely used for destroying the enemy. For a Nezumi scout, Mochatchikkan training develops greater speed and agility, as well as a means for intimidating enemies or defeating them when escape is not possible. For a Rememberer, the ability to clear the mind of all chaotic distraction is extremely useful in cataloging the complex history of the tribe. Even shamans occasionally practice this art, blending the wild attacks of Mochatchikkan with their potent Name magic.

Mochatchikkan is one of the defining facets of Nezumi culture. Many Nezumi embrace the style merely because it is a remnant of their civilization that somehow escaped being devoured by Tomorrow (synonymous with death among Ratlings). For that reason, it is obviously lucky. "If Mochatchikkan can outrun Tomorrow, best to follow it wherever it is going," is a popular aphorism among Mochatchikkan sensei.

TRAINING

Nezumi have a comparatively short life span, so Mochatchikkan training begins as soon as a young Nezumi can stand upright. Training is a ritual that unites the entire tribe. When one Nezumi begins his Mochatchikkan exercises, it is normal for others to join in, until eventually the entire tribe performs in unison. The finest warrior in the tribe acts as the teacher until another Nezumi proves himself more skilled, then the tribe follows him instead. As in all things with Nezumi, such positions are transient and follow the whims of the tribe.

There are no Mochatchikkan dojo, as Nezumi structures are temporary or seasonal. By Nezumi tradition, Mochatchikkan training is conducted in the open air, surrounded by nature. The Nezumi believe that it is unlucky to train Mochatchikkan while surrounded by walls of earth, wood or stone, for in such a place it cannot easily find escape should Tomorrow come hunting. The Nezumi have no such qualms about using it to fight in such places. Mochatchikkan is a highly versatile combat style quite adaptable to any number of environments.

Humans attempting to learn Mochatchikkan must alter many of the moves out of necessity. Some of the wilder kicks and strikes are difficult without a tail to provide balance, only the most desperate Crab samurai would consider biting an opponent. Fortunately, the same flexibility that allows two Nezumi of widely varying abilities to practice the same style also offers some leeway for human mocha'mocha. A human may practice Mochatchikkan differently from a Ratling warrior. However, as it is the unique mindset of Mochatchikkan that is most important, a true master can recognize this style even when utilized by a human. Nezumi call the modified style of Mochatchikkan used by humans Krtich'chifchikkan ("humans-stumbling-about-with-great-skill.")

MOCHATCHIKKAN MECHANICS

The rules for Mochatchikkan here are intended to supplement, not replace, those originally presented in *Way of the Nezumi*. That volume introduces a number of special Mochatchikkan maneuvers that are available if a Nezumi character possesses special Nezumi feats and abilities. Those abilities are still available for those who qualify for them. The new abilities and maneuvers in this book are available to any practitioners of Mochatchikkan, including humans who attempt to learn this unusual martial art.

Mochatchikkan, as introduced in *Way of the Nezumi*, cannot be learned by human characters. The rules in this book expand on that restriction slightly. Humans may learn a modified version of Mochatchikkan that the Nezumi refer to as Krtich'chifchikkan. This Specialized Weapon skill cannot be used to perform the Leap-Over, Tail-Punch, Weapon Bite, or Tail Grab attacks described in *Way of the Nezumi*, as human anatomy is simply not capable of these feats. In addition, acquiring any Mochatchikkan style chain titles requires two extra skill ranks (as well as a significantly higher experience point expenditure) for humans, meaning that human characters can never truly master Mochatchikkan.

The Mochatchikkan skill may be used for unarmed attacks as well as grappling.

NOVICE

A novice mocha'mocha has just begun to harness the powerful energies of his own survival instinct, allowing him to keep fighting (or to concentrate on escape) despite distractions.

Mochatchikkan Novice [Nezumi Kiho]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus to all Concentration checks, and a +1 to unarmed attack rolls when charging.

Note: Non-Nezumi must have a +2 or higher base attack bonus to acquire this feat.

Mochatchikkan Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Mochatchikkan (1 rank) or Krtich'chifchikkan (3 ranks)

Cost: 15 points

Cost Reductions: Nezumi (11 points), Warrior or Berserker (2 points, not cumulative if both), Rememberer (1 point)

You gain a Free Raise on Meditation skill rolls, as well as a Free Raise in combat on any round in which you charge toward or leap upon an enemy.

INTERMEDIATE

The experienced student learns to draw upon his cool focus to enter a greater frenzy in battle.

Mochatchikkan Intermediate [Nezumi Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mochatchikkan Novice

Benefit: Once per round, as a move action, you may make a Concentration check with a DC equal to your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. If successful, you gain a +2 luck bonus to that ability score for 3d4 rounds. You may only have one of these bonuses at any time, but can cancel a previous bonus as a free action.

Note: Non-Nezumi must have a +4 or higher base attack bonus to acquire this feat.

Mochatchikkan Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Mochatchikkan (3 ranks) or Krtich'chifchikkan (5 ranks)

Cost: 30 points

Cost Reductions: Nezumi (22 points), Warrior or Berserker (4 points, not cumulative if both), Rememberer (2 points)

once per round make a Meditation roll with a TN equal to your Strength, Agility, Reflexes, or Stamina $\times 5$. If successful, that ability score is considered to be one higher for a number of rounds equal to the associated Ring. Only one bonus may be applied to each Trait at one time. You may only have one of these bonuses at any time, but can cancel a previous bonus at will.

ADVANCED

At this level, the mocha'mocha can throw himself into a flurry of motion that confuses an opponent, gradually gaining advantage the longer he maintains his focus.

Mochatchikkan Advanced [Nezumi Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mochatchikkan Novice, Mochatchikkan Intermediate

Benefit: Once per attack, you gain a +1 bonus on an unarmed attack roll against an opponent you attacked within the last round (whether the attack was successful is irrelevant). This bonus is cumulative if applied to the same opponent for consecutive attacks, but after the first bonus you must make a Concentration check as a free action (DC $10 + 5 \times$ the current amount of the bonus). If

this check fails, the bonus remains does not increase, but remains as long as you continue to attack that opponent. If you fail to attack your opponent for one round or more, or attack a different opponent, the bonus is lost.

Note: Non-Nezumi must have a +6 or higher base attack bonus to acquire this feat.

Mochatchikkan Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Mochatchikkan (5 ranks) or Krtich'chifchikkan (7 ranks)

Cost: 45 points

Cost Reductions: Nezumi (33 points), Warrior or Berserker (6 points, not cumulative if both), Rememberer (3 points)

Once per round, you gain a Free Raise on an unarmed attack roll against an opponent you directed an unarmed attack against last round (whether the attack was successful is irrelevant). This bonus is cumulative for consecutive rounds, but after the first bonus you must make a Meditation roll (DC 10 + 5 × the number of Free Raises in the previous round). If this check fails, the bonus remains what it was in the previous round. If you fail to attack the same opponent for one round or more, the bonus is lost.

EXPERT

The expert mocha'mocha possesses incredible focus, even as he seems to enter an uncontrolled fury.

Mochatchikkan Expert [Nezumi Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mochatchikkan Novice, Mochatchikkan Advanced, Mochatchikkan Intermediate.

Benefit: Once per round, as a move action, you may make a Concentration check with a DC equal to your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. If successful, you gain a +4 luck bonus to that ability score for 3d4 rounds. Alternately, you may make a Concentration check vs. your current speed to gain a movement bonus of +20 feet for the same amount of time. You may only have one of these bonuses at any time, but can cancel a previous bonus as a free action.

Note: Non-Nezumi must have a +11 or higher base attack bonus to acquire this feat.

Mochatchikkan Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Mochatchikkan (7 ranks) or Krtich'chifchikkan (9 ranks)

Cost: 60 points

Cost Reductions: Nezumi (44 points), Warrior or Berserker (8 points, not cumulative if both), Rememberer (4 points)

You may spend one round and make a Meditation roll once per round with a TN equal to your Strength, Agility, Reflexes, or Stamina × 5. If successful, that ability score is considered to be two higher for a number of rounds equal to the associated Ring. Only one bonus may be applied to each Trait at one time. Alternately, you may make a Meditation roll vs. your Water × 10 to increase your Water Ring by four for the purposes of movement for the same amount of time. You may only have one of these bonuses at any time, but can cancel a previous bonus at will.

MASTER

The master of Mochatchikkan is a living paradox – an ocean of calm surrounded by a forest of chaos. Such mighty warriors are the last living legacy of the once great Nezumi Empire.

Mochatchikkan Master

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mochatchikkan Novice, Mochatchikkan Advanced, Mochatchikkan Intermediate, Mochatchikkan Expert, must be Nezumi.

Benefit: You suffer no AC penalties when performing the charge action. Each time you successfully strike an opponent with an unarmed attack, you gain a +1 damage bonus on further unarmed attack rolls against them. This bonus is cumulative, but fades if you fail to attack a particular opponent for one round or more unless you make a Concentration check (DC 10 × the number of rounds since you last attacked them).

Mochatchikkan Master

Required Specialized Skill: Mochatchikkan (9 ranks)

Cost: 20 points (Nezumi only)

Cost Reductions: Warrior or Berserker (10 points, not cumulative if both), Rememberer (5 points)

You suffer no penalties if you run and attack an opponent in the same round. Each time you successfully strike an opponent with an unarmed attack, you roll an extra die of damage on future unarmed attacks against them. This bonus is cumulative, but fades if you fail to attack a particular opponent for one round or more unless you make a Meditation roll (TN 10 × the number of rounds since you last attacked them).

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE RONIN

NAGAI MICHINORI (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

A relatively young martial art, nagai michinori has only truly risen to prominence among certain groups of ronin within the last five years. The name of the art simply means "a long way," a simple name for an art created by a truly unique individual — Kaelung.

Kaelung was born in the lands of the Dragon Clan, a member of the Order of Hoshi. After the renegade tattooed man Kokujin murdered several of Kaelung's comrades, he abandoned the order and struck out to find vengeance. Kaelung appeared a handful of times thereafter, becoming something of a legendary figure. He fought both beside and against the Dragon Clan, robbing Mirumoto supply shipments and standing with Togashi Satsu against Kokujin. Though he is a controversial figure among the clan that once claimed his fealty, all recognize that he is an extraordinarily skilled and powerful martial artist.

Kaelung's colorful history and legendary fighting talents eventually led some individuals to seek him out, merely to learn his unique style. Even to find Kaelung was difficult, and

those few prospective students who located him encountered an immediate barrier — Kaelung did not desire to teach. The first few students sampled his style firsthand when Kaelung beat them unconscious where they stood.

Persistence, however, eventually gained Kaelung's attention. After battling Kokuji's minions on many occasions, the lone monk began to see the advantages of teaching his techniques to a band of loyal followers. When his first students asked what name they should call his style, Kaelung replied "nagai michinori," for true mastery was a never-ending journey.

STYLE

Nagai michinori is a fluid and pragmatic style in a state of constant flux. Students are taught not to be bound by any dictates of a single style, but to liberally borrow any maneuvers and techniques that they might find useful. An overriding philosophy of the school dictates that quality of movement always overrides quantity. Better for a fighter to have a handful of moves that are always effective than to know numerous techniques that are often ineffective.

Even given the wide variety encouraged by the school, a few variables remain more or less constant. Students are taught to maintain balance, that all fighting strategies can be opposed through proper application of yin (yielding, positive energy) and yang (hard, aggressive energy). An unprepared enemy (yin) should be met with an aggressive attack (yang), while a brutal assault (yang) should be directed with a parry or sidestep (yin), directing the enemy's movement for a fierce counterattack (yang) while their defenses are down, causing the enemy to collapse in helpless pain (yin).

Students are also taught to remain relaxed, calm, and prepared. Rapid footwork is essential, but even while moving the body remains relaxed, tensing only at the moment of impact for maximum power. Rapid, powerful punches are also a trademark move. A master of the art may need only throw one punch against an opponent, but can focus his entire body weight and his opponent's momentum into a single blow so only one strike is necessary.

PURPOSE

The idea of an art that borrows from other arts sounds simple, but to thread maneuvers from multiple styles into an effective whole is not an idea everyone can master. Some students are simply not imaginative enough to apply their lessons effectively. Some do not have enough dedication to take what they have learned and create a cohesive, individual whole. To complicate matters, Kaelung's teachings are, in many ways, purposefully vague. He knows that true mastery only comes in teaching oneself.

Nagai michinori is a style designed to defeat an opponent swiftly, soundly and decisively. Taken a step further, it is a philosophy for living. The student is taught to keep his mind open to all things, to indulge all opportunities. Accept what brings strength, discard what brings weakness. Above all else nagai michinori demands in an incredible dedication and strong work ethic. To truly succeed in this art, a practitioner must dedicate himself with every fiber of his being. Like Kaelung, the student must train constantly and always strive to better himself.

TRAINING

Finding training in this art can be difficult, as it is essentially restricted to Kaelung and the handful of ronin who follow him. Some students unable to fully master Kaelung's tech-

niques have struck out on their own, and may be able to teach the basics of the style, but all those who have truly grasped it still remain loyal to their outlaw teacher. Fortunately, as nagai michinori stresses strong individualism, a student who is taught the essentials may be able to master the style even without Kaelung's aid. This can be a difficult task, however, as this style requires incredible discipline. As the student only utilizes a handful of moves, all of these moves must be mastered completely. Hours of training each day is essential. Constant effort against worthy opponents is necessary for the student to truly understand his abilities.

It is also important to note that Kaelung is generally distrustful of clan samurai, especially members of his former clan, the Dragon. His students are almost exclusively ronin and peasants. Any members of a clan who wish to gain these techniques should consult their GM to find out exactly how and why they gained Kaelung's trust.

NAGAI MICHINORI MECHANICS

The Nagai Michinori skill can be used for all unarmed attacks and grappling.

NOVICE

A novice nagai michinori student has mastered the basics of footwork, and can transfer this fluid movement into a powerful punch or kick.

Nagai Michinori Novice [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: Once per round you may gain a +1 bonus to AC vs. an attack or a +1 bonus on a single unarmed attack roll. Your ability scores are considered to be three points higher for the purposes of meeting feat prerequisites for any kiho feat, technique feat, or feat on the fighter bonus feat list.

Note: Members of a samurai clan cannot learn this feat unless they take the Different School feat, applying it to Kaelung's teachings rather than to a clan.

Nagai Michinori Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Nagai Michinori (1 rank)

Cost: 8 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (2 points), Major Ally: Kaelung (4 points)

Once per round you may add your Insight Rank to your TN to be Hit vs. a single attack or to a single unarmed attack roll. You gain a two point cost reduction on any martial art technique advantage outside the Nagai Michinori school (costs cannot be reduced below one point).

INTERMEDIATE

As the student advances further into this art, he begins to incorporate powerful maneuvers from other styles.

Nagai Michinori Intermediate [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Improved Unarmed Strike, Nagai michinori Novice.

Benefit: Select any other Intermediate or Novice level martial art feat for which you meet the prerequisites. You gain this feat as a bonus feat. You do not need the Novice prerequisite feat usually required for this feat, and the Nagai Michinori Novice feat applies to this bonus feat's

ability score prerequisites normally. You must be somewhat familiar with the feat you gain, having observed its use at length or fought several of its users.

Note: Members of a samurai clan cannot learn this feat unless they take the Different School feat, applying it to Kaelung's teachings rather than to a clan.

Nagai Michinori Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: Nagai michinori (3 ranks)

Cost: 16 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (4 points), Major Ally: Kaelung (8 points)

Select any other Intermediate or Novice level martial art Advantage. You may gain this Advantage as if you had all applicable cost reductions except for those granted by a Clan or race, with an additional four point cost reduction (this can reduce the cost of the Advantage to a minimum of zero). You must be somewhat familiar with the Advantage you gain, having observed its use at length or fought several of its users.

ADVANCED

The advanced student is an expert at diverting hard yang attacks with swift yin movement.

Nagai Michinori Advanced [Kihō]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Improved Unarmed Strike, Nagai Michinori Novice, Nagai Michinori Intermediate.

Benefit: If you ready an action to attack a specific opponent when they direct a melee attack against you, you gain a +4 dodge bonus to AC against their attacks for that round and +4 bonus to strike that opponent with an unarmed attack (if they trigger your readied action or

invite an attack of opportunity). Your initiative becomes two higher than that opponent on subsequent rounds if they attack you and miss.

Normal: When readying an action against an opponent, your initiative becomes equal to theirs on subsequent rounds.

Note: Members of a samurai clan cannot learn this feat unless they take the Different School feat, applying it to Kaelung's teachings rather than to a clan.

Nagai Michinori Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Nagai michinori (5 ranks)

Cost: 24 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (6 points), Major Ally: Kaelung (12 points)

You may select one opponent with a lower initiative total than yourself. So long as that enemy remains in sight and you delay your attack, you gain a +10 bonus to your TN to be Hit against their next melee attack against you. If they attack you, you can immediately counterattack with a single unarmed attack, gaining two Free Raises to your attack roll.

EXPERT

The expert student continues to incorporate the most powerful moves from other schools, creating a unique, cohesive whole.

Nagai Michinori Expert [Kihō]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Improved Unarmed Strike, Nagai Michinori Novice, Nagai Michinori-Ichi Intermediate, Nagai Michinori Advanced.

Benefit: Select any other Advanced, Intermediate, or Novice level martial art feat for which you meet the prerequisites. You gain this feat as a bonus feat.

You do not need the Novice, or Intermediate prerequisites usually required for this feat, and the Naga Michinori Novice feat applies to this bonus feat's ability score prerequisites normally. You must be somewhat familiar with the feat you gain, having observed its use at length or fought several of its users.

Note: Members of a samurai clan cannot learn this feat unless they take the Different School feat, applying it to Kaelung's teachings rather than to a clan.

Nagai Michinori Expert

Required Specialized Skill: Nagai Michinori (7 ranks)

Cost: 32 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (8 points), Major Ally: Kaelung (16 points)

Select any other Advanced, Intermediate or Novice level martial art Advantage. You may gain this Advantage as if you had all applicable cost reductions except for those granted by a Clan or race, with an additional six point cost reduction (this can reduce the cost of the Advantage to a minimum of zero). You must be somewhat familiar with the Advantage you gain, having observed its use at length or fought several of its users.



MASTER

The master of nagai michinori is a truly unique individual, the master of his own individual style.

Nagai Michinori Master

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Improved Unarmed Strike, Nagai Michinori Novice, Nagai Michinori Intermediate, Nagai Michinori Advanced, Nagai Michinori Expert.

Benefit: Select one opponent at the beginning of a combat. The first time this opponent misses you in combat, you may make an attack of opportunity against them with an unarmed strike.

You may spend 500 XP and twenty-four hours in meditation to unlearn any of the bonus feats gained from Nagai Michinori Expert or Nagai Michinori Intermediate and replace it with another applicable feat.

Note: Members of a samurai clan cannot learn this feat unless they take the Different School feat, applying it to Kaelung's teachings rather than to a clan.

Nagai Michinori Master

Required Specialized Skill: Nagai michinori (9 ranks)

Cost: 40 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (10 points), Major Ally: Kaelung (20 points)

Select one opponent at the beginning of combat. The first time this opponent misses you in combat, you gain two Free Raises on your next unarmed attack against them.

You may spend two character points and twenty-four hours in meditation to unlearn any of the Advantages gained from Nagai Michinori Expert or Nagai Michinori Intermediate and replace it with another applicable Advantage.

CHISAIJUTSU (MINOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

The origins of chisaijutsu are lost to history, as no one knows who first took up the tessen as a weapon. There are many depictions of ancient Lion heroes, including the Emperor's brother Akodo One-Eye, holding a tessen aloft to signal their men of a new attack or tactic, but whether it was always a weapon or adapted as such later is a truth lost to the ages. Many believe that the Lion developed the tessen as a tool and later modified it for use as a weapon at some later point.

The strength of a tessen is in its small size and innocuous appearance. Most samurai do not regard the tessen as a weapon, but rather a tool. As such, they frequently overlook its presence even in the possession of those that they might otherwise prohibit from carrying weaponry. It was this exact quality that led the tessen to become the preferred weapon of the Order of the Tessen, a band of ronin living within Toshi Ranbo.

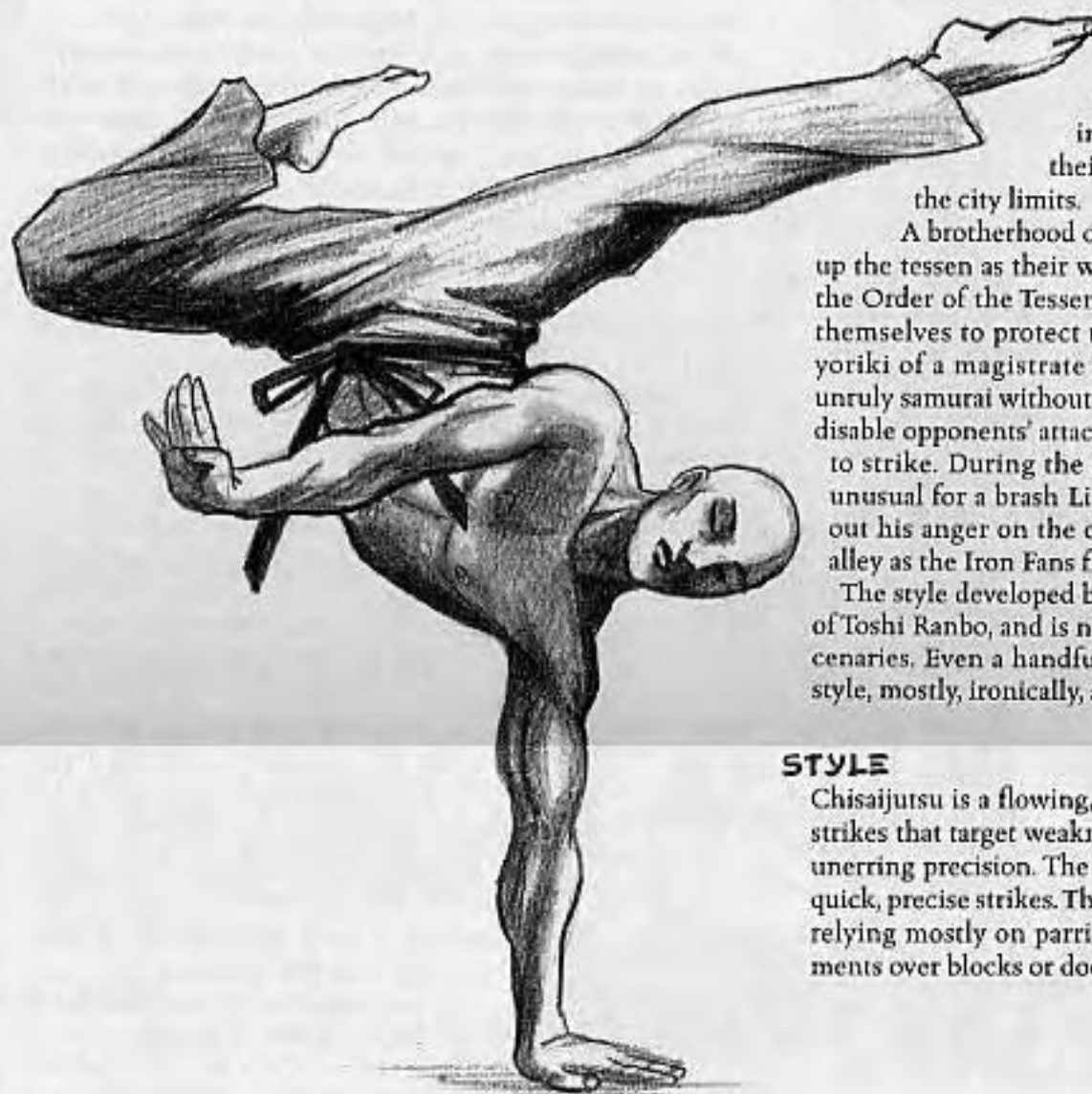
The constant combat of Lion and Crane forces in Toshi Ranbo has taken a terrible toll on its populace over the decades. While resentment may grow in the hearts of peasants who live there, no citizen will risk certain death by giving voice to their outrage. The quiet resentment and sense of hopelessness did not go unnoticed by the Lion and Crane, who regularly imposed laws forbidding those outside their clan from carrying weapons within the city limits.

A brotherhood of ronin dwelling in Toshi Ranbo took up the tessen as their weapon of choice. Naming themselves the Order of the Tessen, or the Iron Fans, they took it upon themselves to protect the peasants in their city. Just as the yoriki of a magistrate might use a sasumata to disable an unruly samurai without injury, the Iron Fans use the tessen to disable opponents' attacks while they wait for an opportunity to strike. During the ongoing feuds in the city it was not unusual for a brash Lion or arrogant Crane seeking to take out his anger on the citizens to end up unconscious in an alley as the Iron Fans fled into the night.

The style developed by the Iron Fans has found its way out of Toshi Ranbo, and is not uncommon among ronin and mercenaries. Even a handful of clan samurai have embraced the style, mostly, ironically, among the Lion and Crane.

STYLE

Chisaijutsu is a flowing, elegant art that uses wide, sweeping strikes that target weaknesses in the opponent's defense with unerring precision. The art does not use holds or throws, but quick, precise strikes. There is also a strong defensive element, relying mostly on parries, redirection, and deceptive movements over blocks or dodges.



PURPOSE

The primary purpose of chisaijutsu is to disarm and disable an opponent without serious injury. Chisaijutsu is not overly offensive, though it is certainly possible to defeat an opponent with it. Most practitioners, even the Iron Fans, typically combine it with another fighting style to provide more direct strikes.

TRAINING

Training in chisaijutsu is a difficult prospect, as the movements required are highly unorthodox. Thus bushi used to more conventional fighting styles sometimes have trouble grasping the basics of the art.

CHISAIJUTSU MECHANICS

NOVICE

An early student of chisaijutsu has learned to use its defensive properties more effectively than the casual soldier trained in the weapon's use.

Chisaijutsu Novice

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +1, Dex 13+, Bluff skill

Benefit: You may use a tessen as a bludgeoning weapon, inflicting 1d6 damage per strike with a critical multiplier of $\times 2$. Any round you attack with a tessen, you lose the shield bonus to AC it normally provides.

If you are wielding two tessen and take the total defense action, the shield bonus to AC from each tessen stacks.

If you have the Two-Weapon Fighting feat you can wield two tessen, you can gain the shield bonus to AC in any round in which you only attack with one of the tessen.

Normal: A tessen provides a +1 shield bonus to AC, and multiple shield bonuses do not stack.

Chisaijutsu Novice

Required Specialized Skill: Chisaijutsu (2 ranks)
Cost: 4 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (1 point), Bushi (1 point)
 When wielding a tessen in each hand and on Full Defense, you may add twice your rank in Chisaijutsu to your TN to be hit for the round.

ADVANCED

Students who continue to study the tessen begin to understand the untapped abilities such a weapon possesses.

Chisaijutsu Advanced

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Dex 13+, Chisaijutsu Novice, Bluff skill

Benefit: If wielding two tessen, you may ready an action against an opponent's melee strike. The first time this opponent attacks you, you may immediately make an opposed attack roll. If your opponent wins, their attack continues as normal. If you win, you attempt to pin their weapon in one of your tessen. Treat this as a grapple, making an opposed Strength roll as normal to maintain your hold. If you win the initial opposed Strength check to pin the weapon, you may make an off-hand attack against your opponent with your other tessen as a free action. Any time after this attack, your opponent can instantly end the grapple by dropping their weapon.

Chisaijutsu Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Chisaijutsu (5 ranks)

Cost: 12 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (3 points), Bushi (3 points)
 When wielding tessen, you gain a free Raise on disarm attacks for each tessen wielded (maximum two).

MASTER

A master of chisaijutsu learns to create a deceptive defensive screen around himself, masking his movements behind the dance of the fans.

Chisaijutsu Master

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +12, Dex 13+, Chisaijutsu Novice, Chisaijutsu Advanced, Bluff skill

Benefit: If you are wielding a tessen, once per round you may make a Bluff check in response to a single melee strike or ranged strike. You may use the result of this Bluff check as your AC against this attack. If you are wielding two tessen you gain a +2 bonus to this Bluff check.

Chisaijutsu Master

Required Specialized Skill: Chisaijutsu (6 rank)

Cost: 15 points

Cost Reductions: Ronin (5 points), Bushi (5 points)
 You may spend a Void Point in reaction to a single melee or ranged attack, and immediately roll your Awareness/Chisaijutsu vs. the attacker's attack roll. If your result is higher, the attack misses. You may only perform this action once per round.

MARTIAL ARTS OF THE GAIJIN

SAINIKA (MAJOR MARTIAL ART)

HISTORY

The origins of sainika are almost as old as the Ivory Kingdoms where it was born. It was once widely known and respected among the people of that region, but time and circumstance have conspired to dramatically change the perception of it. In the modern Kingdoms, there are but a handful that know it, and most belong to highly exclusive orders.

In the ancient lands that would become the Ivory Kingdoms, there were men who wandered the land seeking experience. These men were equal part mystic and teacher, and were known as guru, a title comparable to the Rokugani sensei. The guru practiced the arts of focusing and channeling spiritual power through their bodies, and could manifest this power in startling feats of physical prowess or even through crude healing rituals that helped to cleanse another's body of poison and disease. The rare handful of Rokugani scholars who are familiar with the guru and their practices equate them to high-ranking monks from the Brotherhood of Shinsei, men and women who could harness their inner power and use it to influence the world around them.

Sadly, there were other religious and philosophical groups in existence in the Kingdoms who were in opposition to the

guru. One group in particular, the Cult of Ruhmal, felt that the gurus were a challenge to their religious practices. Over the course of a century, this murderous cult hunted and wiped out the guru almost to a man, stealing their secrets for their own use. Within a few decades, their assassins appeared to be the sole practitioners of *sainika*, dedicating the once sacred art to their unholy deity, the Destroyer.

Fortunately, this was not the case. A few gurus survived the purge of their order, and passed their ways on in secret. During the periods when the Destroyer's cult threatened the Kingdoms' rulers, the guru stepped forward to aid the rightful lords. The gurus not only aided in defeating the Destroyer's assassins, but also passed their arts on to the Kshatriya, an order of warriors sworn to protect the Kingdoms. Although the guru chose not to pass on their spiritual powers, the fighting arts that they had developed were quickly learned and mastered by these righteous warriors.

The centuries since the guru resurfaced have seen remarkable development of *sainika*. Both groups that practice the ancient art, the Ruhmal cultists and the Kshatriya, have developed new and unique techniques and applications for it. The cultists, obviously, have honed their ability to strike and kill their enemies whereas their rivals have learned many more defensive abilities without sacrificing their offensive power. This art has reached Rokugan through the Mantis Clan, who have extensive (if secret) contact with the Ivory Kingdoms. A few members of the Yoritomo family have learned this art from the Kshatriya, and are quite adept, though the only known masters are still in the Ivory Kingdoms.

STYLE

Sainika is a unique art that adopts numerous "poses" that allow the practitioner to attack in unique ways. The art teaches a number of versatile strikes and kicks that can be used from different poses, changing their purpose and target with each new pose. It is a highly adaptable art that teaches multiple approaches to any given situation. Holds and throws are taught, but are secondary to the punches and kicks that the style teaches. It is also a highly athletic art, with jumping and movement emphasized in most poses.

PURPOSE

Sainika is a dark and mysterious art with great religious connotations in the Ivory Kingdoms. It is considered a sacred art, and its maneuvers are sometimes referred to as "the Destroyer's dance," a reference to some sinister god of battle and death that assassins in that distant realm revere as their patron. *Sainika* is practiced for the sole purpose of destroying one's enemies. Those who master the art are considered avatars of the Destroyer in the mortal world, and are feared as no others throughout the Kingdoms.

The converse of this, of course, is seen in the Kshatriya. These men and women are considered blessed warriors by the populace, and revered almost as holy men. These men use the art for much the same purpose as their sworn foes, but the perception of it is marked different among the Kingdom populace. Most, it would seem, do not recognize that both groups are practicing variants of the same art.

TRAINING

Training in the art of *sainika* begins at an early age, earlier even than young samurai are accepted to begin training for their *gempukku*. Potential practitioners among the Ruhmal are selected based not only on the strength and physical condition, but also for displaying an appropriately ruthless attitude. Practitioners are living weapons, honed from a young age to be a perfect killing machine. There is no room in their heart for mercy, compassion, weakness or doubt. Those who display such shortcomings rarely survive their intense training.

The Kshatriya select their students in a similar manner, and choose pupils that are about seven years of age. While this makes it difficult to get an accurate portrait of the pupil's eventual ability level and personality, it is early enough for their teachers to instill the necessary virtues in them, including a sense of morality that will insure the art is used responsibly.

SAINIKA MECHANICS

NOVICE

The first pose taught to students of *sainika* is a low, defensive posture that allows them to turn away many attacks without injury.

Sainika Novice [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike
Benefit: You may spend a move action to enter a defensive posture, gaining a +4 dodge bonus to your AC until your next action.

Note: Rokugani characters cannot take this feat without taking the Different School feat and applying it to the Ivory Kingdoms.

Sainika Novice

Required Specialized Skill: *Sainika* (1 rank)
Cost: 14 points
Cost Reductions: Ivory Kingdoms Gaijin (10 points), Clear Thinker (2 points)

When on Full Defense, you may your rank in *Sainika* to your TN to be Hit.

INTERMEDIATE

The first level of poses taught to a *sainika* student after learning the basics are the essential offensive postures.

Sainika Intermediate [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +2, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, *Sainika* Novice
Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all attacks of opportunity or attacks made as a readied action.

Note: Rokugani characters cannot take this feat without taking the Different School feat and applying it to the Ivory Kingdoms.

Sainika Intermediate

Required Specialized Skill: *Sainika* (3 ranks)
Cost: 28 points
Cost Reductions: Ivory Kingdoms Gaijin (20 points), Clear Thinker (4 points)

If you delay your action on your turn, you gain a Free Raise for every 10 points you subtract from your initiative (to a minimum of zero initiative).

ADVANCED

The third level of training in *sainika* is in the fluidity of movement. Both offensive and defensive, a student of this level can move freely among targets without risk.

Sainika Advanced [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Sainika Novice, Sainika Intermediate

Benefit: Once per round you may move five feet as a free action. This does not count against your total movement for the round and can be done between two consecutive attacks.

Note: Rokugani characters cannot take this feat without taking the Different School feat and applying it to the Ivory Kingdoms.

Sainika Advanced

Required Specialized Skill: Sainika (5 ranks)

Cost: 42 points

Cost Reductions: Ivory Kingdoms Gaijin (30 points), Clear Thinker (6 points)

You may move a number of feet per round equal to your Water ring $\times 7$, as opposed to the normal ring $\times 5$.

EXPERT

The fourth level of training in *sainika* is an introduction to the mystical element the art possesses. It teaches an awakening of the senses to maintain a perfect awareness of the area around the artist during combat, making it difficult to surprise them under the best of circumstances.

Sainika Expert [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +6, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Sainika Novice, Sainika Intermediate, Sainika Advanced

Benefit: Opponents who have a lower Initiative result than you are never considered to be flanking you. Opponents with a higher Initiative score than you must succeed at an opposed Dexterity roll to be considered to be flanking you. Those who have higher initiative and succeed are considered to be flanking you even if the enemy they are flanking you with failed or was ineligible for the roll.

Note: Rokugani characters cannot take this feat without taking the Different School feat and applying it to the Ivory Kingdoms.



Sainika Expert**Required Specialized Skill:** Sainika (7 ranks)**Cost:** 56 points**Cost Reductions:** Ivory Kingdoms Gaijin (40 points), Clear Thinker (8 points)

You do not suffer the normal -5 TN bonus against opponents who flank you unless their initiative is higher than yours. Even in this case, an opponent must succeed at an contested Agility roll against you to impose the penalty when making his attack.

MASTER

A master of sainika has perfected both offensive and defensive postures, and can strike with such force that the physical impact is accompanied with a disruption of the natural spiritual energy within a target's body.

Sainika Master [Kiho]

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +9, Dex 13+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Sainika Novice, Sainika Intermediate, Sainika Advanced, Sainika Expert

Benefit: You must declare that you are using this feat before you make an unarmed attack roll (thus a failed attack roll ruins the attempt). This attack forces a foe damaged by your unarmed strike to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19 + $\frac{1}{2}$ your character level + your Dexterity modifier) in addition to dealing damage normally. If this save fails, the target suffers two points of temporary ability damage to Strength, Wisdom, and Dexterity. You may attempt this feat once per day per four levels you have attained (but see *Special*).

Special: An inkyo with Sainika Master may attempt to use this feat a number of times per day equal to his inkyo level, plus one more time per day for every four levels he has in classes other than inkyo.

Note: Rokugani characters cannot take this feat without taking the Different School feat and applying it to the Ivory Kingdoms.

Sainika Master**Required Specialized Skill:** Sainika (9 ranks)**Cost:** 70 points**Cost Reductions:** Ivory Kingdoms Gaijin (50 points), Clear Thinker (10 points)

You may spend two Void Points when making an unarmed attack to force your opponent to make a contested Void Roll with you. If they fail this roll, they suffer a +5 penalty to all TN's for one hour. You must declare your intent to use this ability before the attack roll is made, so a failed attack means your Void Points are wasted.

"STEP OUT OF MY PATH, LITTLE MONK, OR I WILL DRAW MY SWORD AND SHOW YOU HOW USELESS YOUR ENLIGHTENMENT TRULY IS!" — AKODO SHIGERU, MOMENTS BEFORE BEING INCAPACITATED BY KORO, GRAND MASTER OF TASAI-DO

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Game Masters running the Second Edition L5R RPG will need a copy of the *Legend of the Five Rings Game Master's Guide*™ and the *Player's Guide*™. Players need only the *Player's Guide*.

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